

BECOMING IDEAL CANADIANS:
THE CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND CITIZENSHIP TRIALS OF BRITISH WAR
BRIDES

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THE CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND CITIZENSHIP TRIALS OF BRITISH WAR
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TITLE: Becoming Ideal Canadians: The Cultural Adjustment and Citizenship Trials of British War Brides

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LAY ABSTRACT

Most historical work about British war brides has been overly nostalgic and focussed on the collection and creation of interview anthologies; often created by these women and their children. Discussions of life in Canada and negative experiences are only briefly mentioned.

This dissertation argues that this nostalgic view of war brides in the historical literature hides the immigration, settlement, and citizenship challenges faced by these women in Canada during and after the Second World War. The different experiences of these women reveal biases towards their background and gender, relationships damaged by the trauma of war, bureaucratic incompetence in the immigration and citizenship process, and raises important questions about national belonging and the nature of Canadian citizenship, from the post-war period to the present.

ABSTRACT

Historical work on British war brides has been limited to the creation and collection of nostalgic interview anthologies; often by the women themselves or their children. These anthologies focus on the meeting of Canadian servicemen and British women and the women's journey to and reunion with their husbands in Canada. Discussions of life in Canada and negative experiences are only briefly mentioned.

This dissertation argues that this nostalgic view of war brides in the historical literature hides the immigration, settlement, and citizenship challenges faced by these women in Canada during and after the Second World War. Reception of war brides by the Canadian government and public was not as positive as the current scholarship has suggested. While some war brides flourished in Canada, others experienced adaptational problems, including differences in language and religion, navigating Canada's housing crisis, and hostile in-laws. A few women also experienced problems related to abandonment, abuse, or husbands with undiagnosed post traumatic stress disorder. Since divorce was difficult to get at the time, these women tended to suffer in silence.

Some war brides and their children even experienced problems with their citizenship, due to sexist provisions in the *Canadian Citizenship Act* in 1946, and changes to the *Act* in 1976, which made proof of citizenship necessary for all Canadians; something that many war brides were unaware of. This dissertation examines the creation and evolution of Canadian citizenship from a perspective that highlights its initial racism and sexism, as well as the consistent bureaucratic bungling regarding the application of its provisions since 1947. While these cases were fixed by amendments to the *Citizenship*

Act in 2008 and 2014 by the Harper government, the citizenship conundrums that this community faced raise interesting questions about what citizenship means and who gets to be a Canadian citizen.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO	Archives of Ontario
BAnQ	Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales Québec
BAnQ V-M	Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales Québec Vieux-Montréal
BBC	British Broadcast Corporation
BC	British Columbia
BWBAT	British War Brides Associations of Toronto
c.	Chapters
CBC	Canadian Broadcast Corporations
<i>CCLC</i>	<i>Civil Code of Lower Canada</i>
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CIPO	Canadian Institute of Public Opinion
CIS	Canadian Information Service
CMHQ	Canadian Military Headquarters
CMI at Pier 21	Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21
CNR	Canadian National Railway
CO	Commanding Officer
CRC	Canadian Red Cross
CTA	City of Toronto Archives
<i>Curtis Report</i>	<i>Advisory Committee on Reconstruction: IV. Housing and Community Planning</i>
CWAC	Canadian Women Army Corps
CWB	Canadian Wives Bureau

CWM	Canadian War Museum
DA	Dependence Allowance
DAB	Dependants' Allowance Board
DBT	Dependants' Board of Trustees
<i>DHA</i>	<i>Dominion Housing Act</i>
DMR	Department of Mines and Resources
DND	Department of National Defence
DPR	Directorate of Public Relations
DR	Department of Repatriation
DVA	Department of Veterans Affairs
ESWIC	English-Scots-Welsh-Irish Clubs
Hon.	Honourable
IB	Immigration Branch
IODE	Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire
JAG	Judge Advocate General
L'ACJC	L'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
LCWM	Local Council of Women of Montreal
Lt.-Col.	Lieutenant-Colonel
MCI	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
MCW	Montreal Council of Women
MSWL	Montreal Soldiers' Wives League

MR#	Microfilm reel number
NFB	National Film Board
<i>NHA</i>	<i>National Housing Act</i>
NHS	National Health Services
NB	New Brunswick
no.	Number
PANB	Provincial Archives of New Brunswick
P.C.	Privy Council Number
PRO	Public Relation Officers
SA	Salvation Army
S.C.	Statutes of Canada
UdeMSA	L'Université de Montréal Service des Archives
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
VD	Venereal disease
Vol.	Volume
WC	Wing Commander
WD RCAF	Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Airforce
WHL	Wartime Housing Limited
WI	Women's Institute
WIB	Wartime Information Board
WRCNS	Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service

WTPB	Wartime Trade and Pricing Board
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Organization

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Chelsea V. Barranger is the sole author of this thesis.

Introduction – The Fairy Tale of War Brides

Getting close to her arrival in Canada on the RMS *Mauretania* in early January 1945, Vera T. began repacking her belongings and putting her daughter to sleep. Shortly thereafter, she met with and exchanged addresses with the friends she had made on the trip across the Atlantic, with the hopes of staying in touch when they settled in their new homes. On her arrival in Halifax the next morning, Vera T. and her daughter encountered a newly enlisted Canadian soldier who helped them carry their baggage off the ship. He told Vera T. that he expected to go overseas soon. Before leaving them, the soldier stated that “perhaps he might even find an English wife for himself.”¹ And he may have done just that. Between 1944 and 1947, Canadian authorities shipped 44,886 British wives of Canadian servicemen to Canada – one of them, was my great-grandmother, my Nan Vera T. [Appendix 2 – Image 2.1].² How and why did so many British women, like my Nan, decide to marry Canadian servicemen and leave everything they knew behind them to start a new life in Canada. Why is it that the number of Canadian servicemen’s dependants was higher in the Second World War than the First World War (61,000 vs 48,000)?³ The answers lie in Canada’s early involvement in the Second World War.

¹Summary of the two days from the Travel Diary of Vera T., 6-7 January 1945, private collection.

²Library and Archives Canada [hereafter cited as LAC], Department of National Defence Fonds [hereafter cited as DND], RG24-C-1, microfilm reel [hereafter cited as MR#] C-5219, “1903 Headquarters Central Registry” [hereafter cited as 1903 HCR], History of S.A.A.G. Office and Directorate of Repatriation, 1942-1947, by Geo. H. Ellis, Colonel Director of Repatriation; Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 104; Melynda Jarratt, *War Brides: The Stories of the Women Who Left Everything Behind to Follow the Men They Loved* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), 15-6, 24.

³This paper will use the terms First (1914-1918) and Second World War (1939-1945) as they refer to Canada’s years of involvement in those conflicts. The terms World War One and Two refer to the dates of American involvement in said conflicts. The First World War in Canada is sometimes also referred to as the Great War, which was a common British name for the conflict.

The story of Canada's war brides begins when Canada declared war on Germany on 10 September 1939. By February 1940, it had deployed the 1st Division comprised of roughly 23,000 servicemen to Britain.⁴ The defeat and subsequent retreat of the Allied forces from Europe resulted in Canadian forces being restricted to the defence of the British Isles until the invasion of Sicily in July 1943. As they waited for developments in the war, Canadian servicemen trained, but they also found time for more social pursuits. They lived, ate, and interacted with the British population, and cultivated a variety of relationships with their hosts; they established networks, made friendships, and even found romance. They began courting British women very early on, and as the war dragged on, some of their romances eventually led to marriages. The increasing rate of these marriages alarmed Canada's military as the soldiers wanted their new wives and children to return with them to Canada at the end of the war.

According to an official history of the Directorate of Repatriation, from August 1944 until January 1947, the Canadian government organized the movement of 61,334 dependants; 47,783 wives and 21,950 children at an average cost of \$140.29 per person.⁵

LAC, Immigration Program Sous-Fonds [hereafter cited as IPSF], RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10400, "Subject and case files" [hereafter cited as SCF], Memorandum to F.C. Blair from Mr. Chapman, 30 November 1940; Jonathan Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire: Canada, Britain, and Two World Wars* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2012), 126-7.

⁴Jeffrey Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 230; J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 19, 25; Juliet Gardiner, *Wartime Britain, 1939-1945*, (London: Headline, 2004) 465; C.P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army, 1939-1945: An Official Historical Summary* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, King's Printer, 1948), 7.

⁵The report concluded the total number of servicemen dependants to be 69,733 but estimated the number could be as high as 70,000. British wives accounted for 44,886 of the women moved, with the next closest number being 1,886 Dutch brides [Appendix 1 – Charts 1.1]. Because Canada was not as active in the Pacific Theatre it received comparatively fewer war brides from a diverse background than the United States of America (US). War bride marriages to women not deemed acceptably white or European were also discouraged and number to roughly 224. Included in this list are brides from Italy, North and South Africa, Greece, Algeria, Russia, India, Malay, and the Caribbean. The numbers are complicated by the fact

These numbers reflected dependents moved after the Department of National Defence (DND) took over responsibility for moving service dependants from the Department of Mines and Resources (DMR) in 1944. It does not include those moved to Canada between 1942-1944. Based on these numbers moving service dependants from 1944-1947 cost roughly \$8,604,546. Considering the large number of women and children moved, and the costs involved, it is surprising that Canadian historians, especially historians of the war and immigration, have paid little attention to the subject of war brides.⁶

that the report lists brides from Newfoundland and the Caribbean together with no explanation as to why and no way to determine how many brides were from which area. Canadian society in the 1940s still harboured and reinforced racial hierarchies that affirmed “whiteness” and cast non-white ethnicities as backward or inferior. For example, Italian immigrants were not considered “white” and were treated as the other in Canadian society. While some Canadian soldiers did have affairs with Italian women during the war, their Commanding Officers discouraged them from marrying these women. In addition, the speed at which the Allied forces moved from Sicily into mainland Italy meant that there was limited garrison time to court Italian women and get married. The speed of Allied movement through Italy, when combined with prevalent negative attitudes towards Italian peoples, can help explain why there are so few Italian war brides. LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” History of S.A.A.G. Office and Directorate of Repatriation, 1942-1947, by Geo. H. Ellis, Colonel Director of Repatriation; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 104; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 15-6, 24; Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University, 2010), 72-3, 81. For more information on the discrimination Italians experienced in Canada see Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992).

⁶Both Magda Fahrni and Joan Sangster have argued that work about war brides and their families in the post Second World War period is limited and needs to be addressed. Melynda Jarratt’s work does include brief discussions of historical context but lacks analysis of war brides’ experiences in general. However, the purpose of works like Jarratt’s are the preservation of memory and the importance of that work should not be understated. Current academic examinations of war brides are limited to the following works and dissertations: Magda Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion: Montreal War Veterans Return to Family Life, 1944-1949,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* Volume [hereafter cited as Vol.] 9, no. 1 (1998): 187-208; Sidney Eve Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings: Canadian War Brides and the Fictions of Naturalization,” *Topia* 17 (Spring 2007): 67-86; Joan Sangster, “The Meanings of Mercy: Wife Assault and Spousal Murder in Post-Second World War Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 97, no. 4 (December 2016): 513-545; Jarratt, *War Brides*; Olga Rains, Lloyd Rains, and Melynda Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind: Project Roots and the Canadian War Children of World War II* (Toronto: Dundurn Group, 2006); Elizabeth Young, “‘It’s Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today:’ The Role of Discourse, Memory, and Agency in Uncovering Experiences of Southern Alberta War Brides,” Master’s Thesis, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, 2012; Kendra Horosko, “Deliciously Detailed Narratives: The Use of Food in Stories of British War Brides’ Experiences,” Master’s Thesis, University of Victoria, British Columbia, 2007.

Canadian historians of the war rarely discuss war brides. Their work has generally focussed on strategy and troop deployment with some recent histories including discussions of the experiences of servicemen and women. The Canadian historiography of British immigrant settlement and adaptation has typically focussed on the period before the Second World War and is almost exclusively centred on the migration experiences of male British immigrants. Discussion of female British immigrants has depicted wives as passive or reluctant participants in immigration or focused on single female domestic servants.⁷ This neglect of the history of British immigrants in postwar Canadian history is problematic since it obfuscates the many similarities between British immigrant experiences and that of other immigrant groups.

While Canada's highly restrictive immigration policies were slightly relaxed following the end of the Second World War, immigration remained tightly controlled and regulated up to the late 1960s, with Britons and Americans making up most of the immigrants accepted. Immigrants with darker skin tones, Asian backgrounds, or from countries deemed to be Third World were often denied entry into Canada. If they did arrive in the country they made up small percentages of migrant workers.⁸ Following the opening of Canadian immigration policies in the 1960s, Canada's population became

⁷Marilyn Barber, "Hearing Women's Voices: Female Migration to Canada in the Early Twentieth Century," *Oral History* Vol. 33, no. 1 (Spring, 2005): 68-9; Franca Iacovetta, "Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics: Writing about Immigrants in Canadian Historical Scholarship," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 240, 242.

⁸By relaxed, I am referring to Canada's eventual willingness to allow war refugees into Canada. Immigration policy remained racially exclusive and inordinately favoured immigrants from Britain and the United States of America (US). Reg Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy Since Confederation: Booklet No. 15* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 18-9; Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 154, 176, 179, 198; Gerald Tulchinsky, *Immigration to Canada: Historical Perspective* (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), 4.

increasingly more diverse.⁹ However, British people remained the largest national group of immigrants to Canada between 1945 and 1975.¹⁰ In *Invisible Immigrants: The English in Canada since 1945*, historians Marilyn Barber and Murray Watson argue that British immigrants who came to Canada following the Second World War “have tended to be invisible” to Canadian historians. A similar trend is apparent within the American historiography. Historian Jenel Virden argues that the immigration experiences and stories of British war brides have been “neglected” in the “belief that immigration and assimilation were easy for people of British birth.”¹¹ This commonly held perception helps to explain the absence of an analysis of the immigration experiences of the British, and subsequently war brides, in Canada.

This absence can be further explained by trends in the historical discipline from the 1960s-1990s. Throughout the 1960s-1970s, social and political movements led to an interest in the forgotten or ignored histories of minorities, women, and immigrants; initial scholarship focussed on immigration policy, kinship communities, and the reception of immigrant groups at the hands of the host population.¹² In the 1980s-1990s, historians shifted away from analyzing immigration policy to analyzing the experiences, internal relationships, and agency of immigrant communities.¹³ Historian Franca Iacovetta argues

⁹The policies, while less restrictive then before, were still considered racially and class biased, as often poorer immigrants from countries deemed Second or Third World could not meet the requirements necessary to immigrate to Canada. Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy Since Confederation*, 18-9; Howard Palmer, “Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century,” in *Immigration to Canada: Historical Perspective* ed. Gerald Tulchinsky (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), 313, 315.

¹⁰Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 1.

¹¹Jenel Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly: British War Brides in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 4, 10.

¹²Iacovetta, “Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics,” 222-3;

¹³*Ibid.*, 226, 233.

that this generation of historians came from diverse backgrounds and entered the field due to familial connections or the desire to recover their community's history.¹⁴ Generally, historians in the fields of women, labour, minorities, and immigration aimed to challenge the established historical narrative which centered solely on the actions of white men in the realms of politics, economics, and international affairs. In the 1980s, historians of women began to publish works on exceptional or high-profile women, almost always white, to re-assert women into the history of the country. War brides, typically white women and homemakers, did not fit into the narratives of historians who looked to diversify the writing of Canadian history.¹⁵

War brides are deliberately excluded from Barber and Watson's study of English post-war immigration based on their assertion that "there is already an extensive literature about war brides."¹⁶ This "extensive literature about war brides" involved the collection of oral history with no critical analysis. Since Canadian historians overlooked them, these women and their children preserved their history themselves – attesting to the desire of this community to tell their stories and situate themselves in the broader record of the war. There is indeed an "extensive literature" of interviews and memoirs.¹⁷ Melynda

¹⁴Ibid., 220, 223; Franca Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigration History: Booklet No. 22* (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1997), 20-1.

¹⁵Canadian war brides of the Second World War were predominately British, Dutch, French, German, or Belgium in background.

¹⁶Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 9.

¹⁷The following are a list of works on British war brides who married Canadian servicemen. Almost every book listed is either a memoir or a collected volume of interviews/memoirs for the preservation of the memory and experiences of the community. Even those authors who are not related to war brides, such as Ben Wicks, tend to follow the same pattern as the other works listed here, in that they provide a generalized historical background of the war, followed by full or partial excerpts of accounts of war brides from memoirs or interviews without analysis of said accounts. Jarratt, *War Brides*; Melynda Jarratt, *Captured Hearts: New Brunswick's War Brides* (Fredericton, N.B.: Goose Lane Editions and the New Brunswick Military Heritage Project, 2008); Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*; Olive Fisher

Jarratt, the daughter of a British war bride, for example, has interviewed many war brides and written several books on the subject.¹⁸ Such works have been integral to preserving these women's history. As a result, there is a large pool of war bride oral histories waiting to be the subject of a more critical or academic gaze. Despite their authority and richness, interviews have become pallid transcriptions of each other, focussing predominantly on meetings, departures, and subsequent reunions with their husbands in Canada.¹⁹ Though failed marriages crop up in the stories from time to time, they are presented as the exception to the rule. Negative experiences are written off as trials and tribulations to be overcome for the sake of love or something that happened to only a few women.²⁰

Interviews are so similar that one could be forgiven for assuming every interview was conducted by the same person asking the same questions. The uniformity of the responses also suggests that the interviewer(s) might have expected all the interviewees to

Campbell, *Shattered Dream: Growing Up During the Depression and Coming to Canada as a War Bride* (Renfrew, ON: General Store Publishing House, 2005); Ben Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter: The Remarkable Brides of World War II* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 1992); C.P. Stacey and Barbara M. Wilson, *The Half Million: The Canadians in Britain, 1939-1946* (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1987); Barbara Ladouceur and Phyllis Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights: Canadian War Bride Stories* (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 1995); Joyce Hibbert, *The War Brides* (Toronto: PMA Books, 1978); Joan Walker, *Pardon My Parka* (Winnipeg: Harlequin Books, 1958); Ruth Latta, *The Memory of All That: Canadian Women Remember World War II* (Burnstown, ON: The General Store Publishing House Inc., 1992); Linda Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes: Stories from Canada's British War Brides* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2002); Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 [hereafter cited as CMI at Pier 21], "Oral History Collection – War Brides" [hereafter cited as OHC -WB], <https://www.pier21.ca/research/collections/online-story-collection/war-brides>.

¹⁸She also runs the official Canadian war bride website and has provided her expertise on the subject at Canada's 2005 and 2008 Standing Committees on Citizenship and Immigration. Transcripts of Jarratt's interviews, as well as notes on her work, can be found at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick [hereafter cited as PANB], Melynda Jarratt War Brides Fonds [hereafter cited as MJWB], MC3495.

¹⁹Walker, *Pardon My Parka*; Hibbert, *The War Brides*; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*; Latta, *The Memory of All*; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*; Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*; Jarratt, *Captured Hearts*; Jarratt, *War Brides*; CMI at Pier 21, "OHC – WB."

²⁰Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 128-8; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 212; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*, 3; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 25-6; Young, "It's Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today," 107.

provide the same answers. The result is a nostalgic collective war bride memory, created largely by the community itself. Collective memory refers to instances when a large group of people share a similar memory of an event or time – often these recollections tend to be nostalgic in nature. Over time public perceptions and media representations of past events (or groups of people) can affect how people remember that past.²¹ This is not to say that people lie or bend the truth intentionally, rather their desire to belong or fit into the dominant narrative can influence how they remember – to that person this is their memory.²² For example, British historians, such as Angus Calder and Lucy Noakes, have shown that individuals who grew up in or survived the Blitz either stayed silent – believing their stories had no value – or left out their fear or negative experiences in order to better fit the collective memory of the “people’s war” or the “Blitz spirit.”²³ The creation of such a collective memory can lead to an idealised version of the past or an approved memory, which is often quite exclusive, ignoring or dismissing accounts that do not fit the established narrative.²⁴ Currently the war bride collective memory centers

²¹Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 10; Mark Clapson and Peter J. Larkham, *The Blitz and Its Legacy: Wartime Destruction to Post-War Reconstruction* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), 25-6; Joan Sangster, “Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History,” *Women’s History Review* 3, 1 (December 2006): 11, 15.

²¹Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991), 2-4, 14, 119; Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992); Clapson and Larkham, *The Blitz and Its Legacy*, 25-6; Lucy Noakes, “‘War one the Web’: The BBC’s ‘People’s War’ Website and Memories of Fear in Wartime in 21st Century Britain,” in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* ed. Lucky Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2014): 52-5, 61.

²²Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 10; Clapson and Larkham, *The Blitz and Its Legacy*, 25-6; Sangster, “Telling Our Stories,” 11, 15.

²³The people’s war or the Blitz spirit refers to a nostalgic collective memory of the bombing of the United Kingdom (UK) as a time of British unity and strength. Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*, 2-4, 14, 119; Clapson and Larkham, *The Blitz and Its Legacy*, 25-6; Noakes, “‘War one the Web’,” 52-5, 61.

²⁴Clapson and Larkham, *The Blitz and Its Legacy*, 25-6; Young, “‘It’s Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today,’” 99-100; Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34-5; Alistair Thomson, Michael Frisch, and Paula Hamilton, “The

around perseverance, love conquering all, reunion, and these women's role as Canadian nation-builders.²⁵ While many war brides have positive memories of their settlement experiences and had successful marriages, many did not and it is problematic to diminish or ignore the experiences of those women who do not fit the dominant narrative.

This does not mean we should abandon the use of oral histories.²⁶ Interviews and memoirs of war brides are useful, not solely in terms unveiling their lived experience, but also because they reveal a great deal about how these women came to view themselves both within the war bride collective and the public consciousness. When analyzing their stories, we need to dig deeper into their accounts of overcoming hardship. When considering the happiness of war brides' marriages we must also consider how during the postwar period, divorce was less common than today and more difficult to attain in some provinces than others. While it is impossible to determine how happy these marriages were, this dissertation does not intend to discount these narratives; rather, it seeks to complicate them by examining war brides' lived experience, including the challenges that they faced. This is particularly important since the lives of these women, who lived

Memory and History Debates: Some International Perspectives," *Oral History* Vol. 22, no. 2, 25th Anniversary Issue (Autumn, 1994), 41-2. Other examples of collective memory include soldiers accounts of trench warfare during the First World War. Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 176, 187, 189; Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2005), 4, 8, 10.

²⁵Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 141, 148; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, xi; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, xi-ii; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*, 3; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 32; Young, "It's Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today," 105, 118.

²⁶Oral history studies have demonstrated that despite criticisms otherwise, memory retention and clarity of events is often quite strong, with age playing little to no impact. Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 53, 86; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 10; Clapson and Larkham, *The Blitz and Its Legacy*, 25-6; Karen Szala-Meneok, "Chapter 32: Ethical Research with Older Adults," in *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics* ed. Donna M. Mertens and Pauline E. Ginsberg (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015), 507-8.

through the Great Depression, survived the Second World War, and left everything behind to start a new life in postwar Canada, have acquired an almost fictional quality. Historian Magda Fahrni argues that academic historians' focus on reunion narratives has led to these women's accounts being presented more as romance stories than lived experience. The popular appeal of these stories of brides meeting and being reunited with their soldier husbands has resulted in many Canadian historians remaining silent about the experiences of these couples as they transitioned to family life following the war's conclusion.²⁷ American scholarship on the topic is no different. In Barbara G. Friedman's study of media coverage of American British war brides, she states that, "with few exceptions [these women's] stories have been related as a by-product of war – told as fond memoirs or as the fluff of romantic fiction."²⁸ For too long war brides have been treated as the heroines of Harlequin novels. My project seeks to incorporate them into the historical discourse as complex historical subjects. In addition, by analyzing the role of the Canadian government in the immigration and settlement experiences of white British war brides, I aim to create a foundation for additional scholarship on gender, race, and nationalism in postwar Canada, including histories of non-British war brides.

Ethnicity, class, and gender all informed the choices that the Canadian government, society, and war brides made at the time, as well as how government propaganda and war bride memories of the past have developed.²⁹ Iacovetta argues that the best way to understand the character of postwar Canadian society is to examine "its

²⁷Fahrni, "The Romance of Reunion," 187.

²⁸Barbara G. Friedman, *From the Battlefield to the Bridal Suite: Media Coverage of British War Brides, 1942-1946* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 9.

²⁹Sangster, "Telling Our Stories," 6-7; Barber, "Hearing Women's Voices," 69.

gendered, class and multi-ethnic dimensions.”³⁰ An intersectional lens is essential to this dissertation because gender, ethnicity, and class are social constructions that have been used by nation-states to enforce the status-quo white patriarchal power. Not all women shared the same experiences. Class and ethnic differences and inequalities shaped their experiences.³¹ Thus, an intersectional approach will help me discern how these immigrants experienced life in Canada and the women’s ways of confronting, adapting to, or challenging their circumstances. It also allows me to examine the response of the host population to the arrival and continued presence of war brides in Canada.

The term war bride is both illuminating and problematic. On the surface, it denotes women who married Canadian soldiers and who came to Canada after the war’s end. However, most of the brides were not newly wed; some had been married since early in the war and immigrated with their children. Yet, they were referred to upon arrival in Canada as brides – a moniker still applied 70 years on. The Canadian government and media used the term bride to denote a return to the established gendered roles of men in the public sphere and women in the private sphere. It used the term war bride in both positive and negative ways. While the government and media promoted war brides as ideal immigrants, wives, and domestics, Canadian women used the term to attack the women as “man stealers.” The war bride label also placed the women into a classification separate from the rest of Canadian society, making it difficult for some to feel a sense of belonging in Canada. For these reasons, many British women did not take kindly to being

³⁰Franca Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives: Women Immigrants, Survivors, and Refugees,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980* ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 136.

³¹Gisela Bock, “Women’s History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate,” in *The Feminist History Reader* ed. Sue Morgan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 105.

called a war bride. For the purpose of this dissertation, the term war bride will be used as people at the time perceived this term or differences to be real and important. Further, while initially many war brides disavowed the use of this term, the community today has reclaimed it for nostalgic reasons. It thus provides a useful tool for examining the us *versus* them mentalities that existed within Canada during the period, as well as the collective war bride memory that exists today.

The persistence of the term war bride and all the meanings associated with it in Canadian consciousness meant I had to make careful choices about engaging with the existing literature. Initially, I intended to rely only minimally on the existing war bride memoirs and interviews due to their tendency to focus on the war years and reunion narratives. I aimed to use interviews and questionnaires to push beyond the dominant narrative and find out about the experiences of war brides in Ontario and Québec during the postwar and Cold War years.³² To avoid the reunion narrative trope, my questions ranged from women's expectations of Canada and experiences upon settling in the country to their involvement in work inside and outside the home, as well as their involvement in Canadian women's organizations. However, given the age of women in the community, I did not anticipate accessing a high number of participants.³³ I broadened

³²Participants in the study were given two options for participating. 1. They could participate in an interview, either in person, over the phone, or over a skype like device. 2. They could supply written responses to interview questions that could be e-mailed or mailed in (the postage cost covered by the interviewer). These two options were provided to give the participants several avenues to participate and to meet accessibility requirements (i.e., distance, hearing, etc.). See Appendix 3 for the interview/written response questions.

³³War brides who were 18 in 1941 would be 95 as of 2018. My own great-grandmother passed away before she could be interviewed for this project. By expanding my participant parameters, I had hoped to get a sense of the women's postwar lives from the memories of their husbands and children.

my scope to include interviews with the husbands and children of British war brides, about how they viewed their wife or mother and her Canadian experiences, including cultural traditions or voluntary organizational activities that she participated in. To recruit participants, I contacted the Royal Canadian Legion, branches of the Québec and Ontario Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), and Pier 21, passing along recruitment and project information through their establishments and war bride gatherings. My two-year recruitment effort resulted in the collection of only five written responses to interview questions (1 war bride and 4 children of war brides). The low response rate led me to rely more on the collections of war bride reminiscences than I had originally planned.

To counterbalance the nostalgic and overly positive nature of these reminiscences, I turned to traditional archival sources. Typically, historians of women, gender, minority groups, and immigration turn to oral histories to challenge or complicate the dominant narrative of government or volunteer organizations to try and get at the experience of the people. In my work I had to reverse this approach. With the existing literature centered around women's accounts, I had to use more traditional sources to add context and nuance to the existing published war bride accounts. Library and Archives Canada's (LAC) vast war bride collection contains an abundance of informal records ranging from early government responses to war brides to the functioning of the Canadian Wives Bureau (CWB).³⁴ These government records provided statistics on the number of women moved, as well as insight into the attitude of the Canadian government and military

³⁴The Canadian Wives Bureau (CWB) was created in 1944 by the DND and was responsible for educating war brides on Canada and dealing with travel related problems. It was also charged with ensuring that war brides were educated on the right way to be a Canadian wife and mother.

authorities towards war brides over time. The records of the CWB also contained books, pamphlets, and films used to educate war brides on how to be Canadian. The content of these educational materials and their message about what was or was not considered to be Canadian reveals a great deal about nationalism, gender, and race in Canada. Similarly, the records of the Canadian Red Cross (CRC), Young Women's Christian Organization (YWCA), IODE, Montréal Soldiers' Wives League (MSWL) and L'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française (l'ACJC), provide valuable insight into the work done by Canadian voluntary associates to help settle the brides.

I also examined media sources, such as newspapers, magazines, and programming by the Canadian Broadcast Corporations (CBC) and National Film Board (NFB) to uncover information about the war brides. It is true that media sources provide a limited view into the public mood, as it is impossible to know how they are received. Yet, they provide an excellent glimpse into what material was available to the public at the time, and the ways in which the brides were depicted. Widely read print sources provided a forum for citizens to respond to events or articles through letters to the editor.³⁵ Gallup Polls also provide insight into how Canadians received or viewed war brides. Print media provided a valuable tool to analyze the social constructions promoted by the nation-state, as well as how Canadians responded to these messages.

All these sources provide more context to help read the reminisces through a different, more critical, lens. This critical, intersectional lens helped flesh out the varied

³⁵Valerie Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 8.

experiences of these women as they settled in Canada. Their recollections of their own difficulties settling in Canada provide a better sense of the varied way that British war brides, and war brides from other countries, would have experienced life in Canada. British war brides shared immigration and settlement experiences; yet, the varied class, ethnicity, and language of their Canadian partners meant that they experienced differences regarding their settlement in Canada. A middle-class woman from a big city who married a Toronto businessman had a very different life from a rich one who married a French-Canadian farmer from Québec. Despite the variety of circumstances that met these women in Canada, war brides downplayed or omitted the differences in their experience – a result of the creation of a collective war bride memory.

Since a positive nostalgic collective memory exists, it is likely some women may have remained silent about negative experiences that did not fit the larger approved memory. Some women might not want to admit to themselves or their interviewer that they had made a mistake in coming to Canada. Feminist and oral historians, such as Sherna Berger Gluck, Daphne Patai, and Joan Sangster, have noted that women have been known to withhold negative experiences that would be considered unacceptable to the dominant society or would embarrass or hurt their living relatives when recalling the past.³⁶ The tendency of war bride accounts to end shortly after the women's arrival in Canada means that these differences or difficulties in settling into life in Canada are often less apparent or appear exceptional. However, even positive accounts of these women's

³⁶Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 11; Sangster, "Telling Our Stories," 7, 9-10.

lives in Canada contain brief allusions to potential settlement struggles connected to issues of class and ethnicity.

Historians of war brides need to acknowledge that due to gender constructions and taboo subject matter of the period that these women grew up in, war brides may feel uncomfortable revealing negative, violent, or embarrassing facts about their marriages or initial settlement experiences in Canada within their own biographies or when being interviewed by their daughters. Wishing to shield themselves and their families from potential trauma, shame, or embarrassment, some women in recalling the past may have left out or watered down their negative experiences. Paying attention to the negative accounts, as well as to mentions of class, ethnicity, or language differences in the positive accounts – even if only fleeting mentions – has allowed my research to complicate the uniformity of the war bride settlement experience. These women's accounts are useful to a researcher not solely due to good or bad experiences, but also because they reveal a great deal about gender constructions of the period. The way society viewed, treated, and defined what it meant to be a woman during and after the war shaped the actions and decisions of these women at that time, as well as how they remember that past today.

While initial chapters of the study include a general discussion of war brides who settled across Canada, my analysis of reception, immigration, and settlement experiences will be confined to women who settled in Ontario and Québec, specifically around the cities of Toronto and Montréal. This allows for a more engaged discussion of specific women's struggles and experiences, such as their learning another language or coping with hostile in-laws, as opposed to a general overview of war bride concerns –

which current works of the subject tend to do.³⁷ Currently, accounts and stories from New Brunswick (NB) and the prairies (usually Saskatchewan) dominate the discussion of the war bride experience, with Ontario and Québec making up only a small portion of the collected interviews.³⁸ This has led to stories and accounts being skewed to these provinces, which is problematic since most war brides settled in Ontario, Québec, and British Columbia (BC) [Appendix 1 – Charts 1.2-5].³⁹ Considering civilian war travel restrictions and our knowledge of the movement of soldier's dependants, we can assume that most war brides were likely settling in Ontario and Québec [Appendix 1 – Chart 1.5]. The underrepresentation of the two provinces likely to have had high numbers of war brides in the existing literature made Ontario and Québec the logical focal point for my study.

Ontario and Québec are also a good choice due to their histories as major hubs of immigration and their historical significance as representations of English-Canada and French-Canada. After the Second World War, debates about Canadian nationalism were prominently associated with these two provinces. British war brides would also have very

³⁷Walker, *Pardon My Parka*; Hibbert, *The War Brides*; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*; Latta, *The Memory of All*; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*; Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*; Jarratt, *Captured Hearts*; Jarratt, *War Brides*.

³⁸War bride associations in the Prairies and Maritimes appear to be larger in number and more active than those in the rest of the country. This could be due to more active Legions in those provinces. There is the potential that war bride's destined to more rural communities had stronger connections to each other than those in larger urban centres. Ibid.

³⁹Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1942-46* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942-46). Officials even estimated early in the war that roughly 50% of the potential brides of Canadian servicemen would be travelling to Ontario. Archives of Ontario [hereafter cited as AO], RG 9-7-8 B367386, "Ontario House Administration Files" [hereafter cited as OHAF], Letter to Colonel Drew from J.S.P. Armstrong, 20 March 1944 and 5 April 1945; George D. Taylor, *A History of Ontario House* (researched and compiled by George D. Taylor, 1978) [accessed at LAC].

different experiences of language, religion, and culture settling in Ontario versus Québec. Through an analysis of Canadian government and military policies and attitudes towards these women, as well an examination of their settlement experiences in Ontario and Québec, this project asserts the importance of British war brides in the historiographies of the Second World War, immigration, women's history, and Canadian nationalism.

Many works on war brides assert that the Canadian government undertook the cost and responsibility of moving servicemen's dependants in order to reinforce British cultural traditions, and the ethnic composition of the population of Canada, whilst simultaneously fostering closer ties to the mother country.⁴⁰ Such claims are fascinating, but problematic. No one has analyzed the government's role in the transportation of war brides from 1942-1947 outside of a brief statement of the number of women moved.⁴¹ My analysis reveals that initially, far from embracing British war brides, the Canadian government stood against these marriages, enacting measures to restrict marriages and delaying as long as possible taking responsibility for moving dependants to Canada.

⁴⁰The idea that the Canadian government wanted British war brides is a result of the historiography being largely based on the reminiscences of war brides themselves. Since the CWB was created by the DND to educate war brides on Canada and promote war brides as fine quality immigrants to Canada, it is unsurprising that this community would perceive the Canadian government as desirous of the marriages between British women and Canadian servicemen. Jarratt, *War Brides*, 288; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, xi; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 141; Iacovetta, "Remaking Their Lives," 146; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, xi-ii; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*, 3; Franca Iacovetta and Valerie J. Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker: The Gender Politics of Food," in *Sisters of Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic and Racialized Women in Canadian History* ed. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 194, 197.

⁴¹Discussions of the governments role in the transportation of these women and their children to Canada usually makes up less than a page of the following manuscripts: Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 162; Barry Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years: From Britain and Europe to Canada, 1945-1967* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1986), 1-2; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 24-5; Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 126; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 138; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 104.

Media sources of the period also reflect that war brides received a mixed reception from the Canadian population, its women in particular were against the unions of Canadian soldiers and British women. The idea of British brides as ideal or loved by the Canadian state and society is a later propagandistic development of the war. When the government realized it could not stop the marriages nor avoid the responsibility of transporting the brides to Canada, it quickly shifted gears to promoting the brides in the public eye and emphasizing their importance in building the nation. This message was directed to war brides and the Canadian public during and after the war. In her Masters Thesis, “‘It’s Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today:’ The Role of Discourse, Memory, and Agency in Uncovering Experiences of Southern Alberta War Brides,” Elizabeth Young argues that the collective memories of war brides have become “forever embedded” into the nation building project of the Canadian state.⁴² Nowhere is this notion of nostalgia and nation building more present than in the 2005 Canada Post commemorative war bride stamp with first day cover envelope. The envelope provides a brief summary of the history of war brides as follows: “They adapted, made homes, raised families, and with their husbands, contributed much to the Canada of today.”⁴³

This reading of war brides as being essential due to their British backgrounds and contributions to the country is more problematic when one considers the generally accepted historiography of Canada during and after the Second World War, which argues

⁴²Young, “‘It’s Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today,’” 118; Barbara Ladouceur and Phyllis Spence also argue that war bride histories are an important part of “our Canadian heritage.” Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, xii.

⁴³Canadian War Museum [hereafter cited as CWM], George Metcalf Archival Collection [hereafter cited as GMAC], 20040079-011, “Canada’s War Brides,” Canada Post Commemorative Envelope, 2005.

that during the period, Canada strengthened its desire to be its own nation, and thus sought to break some of its ties to Britain.⁴⁴ Far from using war brides to reinforce the British connection to Canada, the nation's government put a great deal of time and effort into assimilating British war brides into becoming Canadians. However, in their analysis of the development of Canadian nationality and nationalism, historians, such as Jack Granatstein and Ian McKay, have placed considerable emphasis on leading politicians, foreign relations, and economic development, with limited discussions of social and cultural issues or the role of women in the nation building process. British war brides provide a unique opportunity to examine the role of women in the nation building process. The efforts of the CWB to Canadianize war brides raise a few questions, in particular what did it mean to be Canadian during and after the Second World War?

Canadian historians often use the term nation, nationality, and nationalism without clear definitions. Borrowing insight from historian Benedict Anderson, these terms, "have proven notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyze."⁴⁵ Nation, nationality, and nationalism are often (and problematically) used interchangeably. While connected by a central idea, they are not synonymous. The conception of a nation is central to nationality and nationalism. The nation in its broadest definition is a conscious community with a perceived shared geographic territory, history, and culture, and possessing self

⁴⁴These are a few of the major works on the subject: George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970); Donald Creighton, *The Forked Road: Canada, 1939-1957* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976); Bryan D. Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Jose E. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Phillip Buckner, *Canada and the End of Empire* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

⁴⁵Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 3.

determination.⁴⁶ Anderson argues that the concept of nation would be more aptly defined as an “imagined political community.”⁴⁷

Nationality and nationalism arise out of the creation of nations or nation-states.⁴⁸ These imagined communities, are often created by states (government bodies) and then disseminated through organizational bodies, such as churches, the education system, the media, and law enforcement.⁴⁹ In attempting to unite a specific geographic location or group of people under one common identifier, in this case a nation, anyone outside of that location or group becomes defined as the other.⁵⁰ These constructions of race, language,

⁴⁶Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 60. Montserrat Guibernau is a political sociologist whose work focusses on the study of global constructions and expression of nationalism, as well as migration and national identity. Her work brings together discussions of both political and cultural displays of nationalism. Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1992), x.

⁴⁷Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6. Ruth Roach Pierson argues that nations are merely “constructions, fictions.” Ruth Roach Pierson, “Nations: Gendered, Racialized, Crossed with Empire,” in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* ed. Ida Blom, Karen Hageman and Catherine Hall (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 48. Nation should not to be conflated with the term nation-state, as not all nations are states or recognized as such. According to political sociologist Montserrat Guibernau, nation-states are modern political institutions, that arose out of the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Europe. A nation-state is created when a body of people, a state, claims sovereignty over a specific geographic boundary, and all those who inhabit it. A political body is then created to govern said territory and people, who are now perceived to be connected, with the state attempting to create a constructed collectivity through cultural homogenization. Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 60; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 23; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18-9; Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1997), 11.

⁴⁸Like the nation itself, Anderson argues that nation-ness or nationalism are cultural artefacts. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, x. Similarly, sociologist Roger Brubaker, argues that ethnicity, race, and nationhood are not tangible things but rather ways of perceiving, interpreting, and representing the world. Roger Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), 17. Roger Brubaker is a sociologist who has written numerous academic works on ethnicity, nationalism, and citizenship.

⁴⁹Ibid., 12-5; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4-7, 12, 79, 82, 104, 199; Pierson, “Nations,” 48.

⁵⁰Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, 16, 25; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4-7.

class, gender, religion, and location influence how we see the world and treat other people.⁵¹

However, the state alone does not create or dictate nationalism, nor are people's identities confined to it or even led by it.⁵² The conception of the other created in the nation building process has often resulted in violent confrontations with, as well the marginalization of, groups perceived as not belonging to the dominant national narrative, due to differences in peoples' skin colour, heritage, language, etc.⁵³ To create their own sense of belonging, these groups create their own sense of community or nationalism to counter the dominant narrative.⁵⁴ Differences in identities are often overlooked in favour of group coherence.⁵⁵ A nation-state can have multiple conceptions of nation and nationalism. For the purpose of this dissertation, *nation* will be defined as an imagined political community within a specific geographic location, populated by peoples possessing perceived similarities. A *nation-state* is a political institution or body that governs a territory and people, while simultaneously reinforcing conceptions of

⁵¹For example, even though you may never have met someone from a different part of Canada, you become connected to them through the conception of being Canadian – in theory you will feel you have more in common with them being Canadian than you would an American.

⁵²Historian H.V. Nelles has argued: "From the top down and from the bottom up, national communities were forged in the interactive process of producing and manipulating symbols." H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Québec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 171, 319.

⁵³Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, 16; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4-7, 84, 104, 145; Pierson, "Nations," 51-2

⁵⁴Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 11, 16; Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 60; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 25. In *The Art of Nation Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Québec's Tercentenary*, Nelles' examination of Québec's tercentenary showcases the contentiousness of nationalism and nation building, as English, French, and Indigenous communities rejected the national identity being presented by the nation-state in favour of their own individual group identities. Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building*, 319.

⁵⁵Historian Frederick Cooper argues in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, that identity is "fluid, constructed and contested." He asserts that a focus on fixed identities means that historians have yet to fully analyze the complexity of identities, such as their variability and flexibility. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 9.

collectivity and cultural homogeneity. *Nationality* will be defined as a perceived or constructed sense of common identity within a nation or nation-state, in this case Canada. Finally, *nationalism* will be defined as a sense of pride or loyalty associated with one's perceived nationality or nation.

Considering the complexity involved in defining these terms, it is fitting that Canadian nationalism itself has proven particularly difficult to define. The nation-state of Canada contains several disparate nations and nationalisms, including the Indigenous peoples of Canada and Québeckers who seek self-determination. In addition, due to the political dominance of the UK, and its historical and cultural influence, Canadian historians have tended to avoid discussing Canadian nationalism until the post-war period when Canada became more independent from Britain.⁵⁶ Historical works on the subject tend to define postwar Canadian identity in terms of whichever power dominated its foreign relations and economic investment.⁵⁷ While some historians have argued that from the 1960s on Canada created its own unique nationalism, based on civic values or

⁵⁶Unlike in the First World War, Canada did not go to war immediately on the side of the British, but instead waited to declare war to assert its independence. Further, at the end of the Second World War, Canada created its own *Citizenship Act*, meaning the people were now Canadian and not solely British subjects. H.V. Nelles, *A Little History of Canada* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2004), 197, 201; Granatstein, *Canada's War*, 424; Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Post-war Era* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 14.

⁵⁷Most often the UK or the US. For discussions on this topic see the following books: W.L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961); Blair Fraser, *The Search for Identity: Canada, 1945-1967* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967); Grant, *Lament for a Nation*; Creighton, *The Forked Road*; Philip Resnick, *The Land of Cain: Class and Nationalism in English Canada, 1945-1975* (Vancouver, BC: New Star Books, 1977); J.L. Granatstein, *How Britain's Weakness Forced Canada into the Arms of the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994); Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, xiii, 46.

multiculturalism, others have debated whether a Canadian nationalism even exists.⁵⁸

These historians argue that the competing conceptions of nation and nationalism within Canada make it impossible for it to possess a unified sense of nationalism like other countries. This claim presupposes the existence of collective identity within other countries in comparison to Canada.⁵⁹

Many countries possess conflicting nationalisms.⁶⁰ For example, the nation-state of the UK is composed of four unique nations (Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and England).⁶¹ While members of same the nation-state, UK inhabitants still possess strong regional nationalisms. However, in Canada, and within Canadian historiography, immigrants from the UK, such as war brides, are presented as having one collective British identity.⁶² The collective identity of British people becomes more complicated

⁵⁸Mary Vipond argues that rather than a Canadian nationalism, the country is united by its “never ending search for nation,” as the country was formed, in her opinion, out of pragmatism and not nationalistic zeal. Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, x-xi.

⁵⁹For discussions on this topic see the following books: Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building*; Breton, “From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism,” 85-102; Philip Resnick, *Thinking English Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1994); J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998); Andrea Benvenuti and Stuart Ward, “Britain, Europe and the ‘Other Quiet Revolution,’” in *Canada and the End of Empire* ed. Phillip Buckner (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005): 165-182; Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*; Hilda Neatby, “National History,” in *Royal Commission Studies: A Selection of Essays Prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1951), 206-7, 211; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, x-xi.

⁶⁰Italy, has a strong North vs South divide, since state favored economic development and prosperity for the North, left the South to stagnate in comparison. In Spain, Catalonia, the Basque country, and Galicia define themselves as independent, challenging the homogeneity of its nation-state. Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 1-6; Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 60; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 2-3, 27.

⁶¹Linda Colley argues that we need to remember that these four distinct nations have had contentious pasts and varying involvement with each other, e.g., Ireland left the Union in 1920. Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness: An Argument,” *Journal of British Studies* 31 (October 1992): 312-314; Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 60; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 60;.

⁶²In Canada, British identity is an amalgamation of Scottish, Welsh, Irish, and English political, ethnic, and cultural identifiers. English and British are also often used as if they mean the same thing. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, 4-5; Ross McCormack, “Networks among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society: Winnipeg, 1900-1914,” *Histoire Sociale* Vol. 17, no. 34 (November 1984): 357-8; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 1-3. The US and American historians make a similar conflation. Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in*

when we considered that historian Linda Colley has argued that within these four distinct nations there are varying and multiple levels of loyalties based on country, region, locality, and even village.⁶³

Historian Philip Buckner argues that in Commonwealth countries, or as he refers to them “neo-Britain’s,” such as Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, descendants of British immigrants developed a stronger common British identity than the people of the UK.⁶⁴ This British identity did not preclude other identities, but was rather flexible, including multiple identities or nationalisms. This means that one could be British, English, and Canadian.⁶⁵ In fact, many British war brides define themselves in this way today. The formation of a flexible sense of British identity is unsurprising, since research has shown it is common for immigrant groups in new countries to develop immigrant kinship networks or communities to adjust to life in a new country.⁶⁶ Often they put old-

Nineteenth-Century America (London: The Trinity Press, 1972), 64; Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 17; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 221-3.

⁶³Colley, “Britishness and Otherness,” 315.

⁶⁴Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire*, 6. Historian C.P. Champion argues that the distinctions of these nations have become lost in the Canadian historiography due to a “preoccupation” with Britishness – imperialism and the British connection – resulting in a “careless” amalgamation. Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada*, 9.

⁶⁵This collective British identity was still defined in opposition to others. Colley, “Britishness and Otherness,” 325; Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire*, 6; Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada*, 8; Stephen Constantine, “British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth since 1880: From Overseas Settlement to Diaspora,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 31, no. 2 (2003): 19; Constance Backhouse, *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 9.

⁶⁶Kinship networks refers to the connections (be they family or friends) that an immigrant would have in another country. These connections ensured that upon arrival in a new country a recent immigrant (family or individual) would be met at the port, have lodging, food, and potentially a job opportunity. These communities provided a sense of a familiar environment in terms of language, diet, and custom, and helped stave off homesickness or the othering experienced in a new land. McCormack, “Networks among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society,” 357-74; J.C. Lehr, “Peopling the Prairies with Ukrainians,” in *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives* ed. G. Tulchinsky (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1999): 182-3, 192-5; Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants*; Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*.

world grudges aside for a sense of familiarity or faded over generations as families married within the community.⁶⁷ In Canada, this led to the creation of a uniquely British-Canadian identity.

However, Buckner argues that many English-Canadians perceived themselves to be “better Britons.”⁶⁸ Canada was not a replica of Britain. Before the Second World War, emerging shortly after Confederation, English-speaking Canadians developed a distinct understanding of nationality and nationalism – a Canadian identity influenced by but separate from Britain. In his book, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*, historian Carl Berger argues that Canadian imperialists, while calling for imperial unity of the Empire and emphasizing the importance of British sentiments and traditions in Canada from 1867-1914, understood their actions as a type of Canadian nationalism.⁶⁹ Historian Katie Pickles makes a similar argument in her examination of the IODE.⁷⁰ Buckner, Berger, and Pickles all argue that before the Second World War, there existed groups and intellectuals that proposed a certain type of national identity for Canada. This nationalism contained several British components or strong sentiments towards the UK, but it was not solely British. The Government of Canada actively promoted this English-Canadian nationalism prior to the Second World War, as

⁶⁷McCormack, “Networks among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society,” 358, 366-7; Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire*, 6; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 104.

⁶⁸These Canadians believed they had superior land, resources, and health than the British. They also believed the class system in Canada was less rigid. Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire*, 8-9.

⁶⁹Far from a “pallid transcription,” these imperialists embraced and rejected elements of Britishness and believed that Canada would only increase in strength and power in the future. Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 3-4, 9, 259-260.

⁷⁰Pickles argues that the IODE saw themselves as female imperialists, and believed that it was their duty to promote an English-Canadian identity that celebrated British values and culture in Canada, especially regarding assimilating immigrant communities. Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 2-3.

seen in Québec's tercentenary projects that historian H.V. Nelles discusses.⁷¹ An analysis of the Canadian government's role in the movement of British war brides reveals that this English-Canadian nationalism was alive and well during the Second World War.

Through the CWB the Canadian government and military pushed conceptions of English-Canadian nationalism onto its white European population.⁷² Through speaker series, classes, and educational materials, it taught British war brides what it meant to be Canadian, reminding them of the importance of assimilating into the national collective identity.⁷³ CWB educational materials promoted an idealized image of Canada and its past, often ignoring the existence of racial and ethnic tensions within Canadian society. This left brides married to French-Canadian and Indigenous soldiers unprepared for the reality of what their life would be like in Canada. These materials rarely discussed French-Canadians or Indigenous communities, and when they did, they were always presented in a stereotypical fashion reinforcing the general attitude of English-Canadian authorities that these groups were backward and the other, and not representative of what was truly Canadian. This Canadianization process reveals that members of the Liberal Government and Canadian military officials saw and promoted Canadian identity as being different and unique from British, French-Canadian, or Indigenous identities.

This Canadianization process was not focussed solely on fostering nationalism but also gendered behaviour. As new Canadian wives and mothers, British war brides were

⁷¹Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building*, 67, 87, 316.

⁷²Immigrants of a British and Northwestern European (e.g., German, Dutch, Scandinavian, French, etc.) background.

⁷³The CWB materials created for British brides were passed along to war brides from the Netherlands, France, Germany, etc. Thus, these educational materials reveal that war brides, be they British or Dutch, were being treated no different, in that all brides were expected to acclimatize and become Canadian.

taught the Canadian way to run a home and raise children. This maternalist emphasis was not restricted to Canada, but rather was rampant in the postwar period in countries such as the US and UK. The Second World War had disrupted the perceived traditional gender roles and occupations of men and women – men working outside the home and women tending to the house and children. Women, be they lower or working-class, had always engaged in some kind of labour, be it paid or unpaid, in order to supplement their husbands' income or support their families – unfortunately, this labour was always perceived to be of less value than their husbands'.⁷⁴ The manpower requirements of the war disrupted established gender roles as it became necessary to allow women to temporarily enter into the labour force and military – areas that had been denied to them previously – to relieve men for military service.⁷⁵ The Canadian government and society were reluctant to allow women into these areas that had always been masculine, fearing women would become masculinized and sexually loose, leading to the disintegration of femininity and the family unit.⁷⁶ As such, government materials constantly reminded the women of the importance of maintaining their looks, getting married, and the temporary

⁷⁴Katrina Srigley, *Breadwinning Daughters: Young Working Women in a Depression-Era City, 1929-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 3-4, 18, 21; Lara Campbell, *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 42-3; Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Markham, ON: Penguin Books, 1988), 2, 11, 41-44, 56, 81-2; Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Jennifer A. Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity, and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 64; Ruth Roach Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 20, 43, 130.

⁷⁵Ruth Roach Pierson, "Women's Emancipation and the Recruitment of Women into the Canadian Labour Force in World War II," *Historical Papers* Vol. 11, no. 1 (1976): 165; Carolyn Gossage, *Greatcoats and Glamour Boots: Canadian Women at War (1939-1945)* (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2001), 24, 34-36; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 3, 25, 207-8;

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 141; *Ibid.*, 37-8, 64-5; Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All,"* 16, 20, 30, 142, 144-146, 163; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 30-31; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 5-6, 146, 151.

nature of their war work – it was made very clear that these women were expected to vacate their positions once the men returned from war.⁷⁷ Following the conclusion of the war and the demobilization of its troops, the Canadian government pushed an agenda of a return to normalcy, by which it meant men at work and women in the home. This message was communicated to recent immigrants and established Canadians.

The post Second World War and early Cold War period (1946-1960) created a sense of urgency to protect the western capitalist way of life from the Communist other. Iacovetta argues that in Canada there were strong anxieties regarding Communism, immigration, and the desire to return to a normal family life.⁷⁸ The US and its allies, including Canada and the UK, promoted the superiority of the nuclear family in comparison to the working mothers of the Soviet Union, since it was believed that the mother leaving the domestic sphere would devastate the family and the child's development.⁷⁹ To combat Communist ideologies, Canadian immigration officers, voluntary organizations, and designated professionals, including but not limited to social workers and doctors, scrutinized women, be they Canadian or immigrant, regarding their skills as homemakers and mothers. They also instructed these women on the correct Canadian way to cook and run a household.⁸⁰ According to historian Ross McCormack, British wives and mothers ensured both the emotional adjustment of their families to life

⁷⁷These gender expectations and concerns were also apparent in the US and UK. Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 3, 10; Pierson, "*They're Still Women After All*," 11; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 152, 156-7; Jennifer A. Stephens, "Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman: Demobilising Canada's Women Worker's After World War Two," *Atlantis* Vol. 32, no. 1 (2007): 122, 128.

⁷⁸Iacovetta, "Remaking Their Lives," 142.

⁷⁹Susan Prentice, "Workers, Mothers, Reds: Toronto's Postwar Daycare Fight," *Studies in Political Economy* 30 (Autumn 1989): 120, 126, 129-30, 133, 136; Iacovetta, "Remaking Their Lives," 143.

⁸⁰Iacovetta and Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker," 195, 197.

in Canada and also the maintenance of cultural norms, such as food, and values.⁸¹ As a result, Iacovetta and Korinek argue, Canadian professionals and voluntary organizations pressured immigrant women to “adopt Canadian ways” in the home to promote “moral character and citizenship.”⁸² They expected Canadian housewives to raise healthy and happy children to ensure the continuation of the status-quo family structure and, through this, the capitalist world order.⁸³

Despite this, the historiography of Canadian national identity and nationalism contains little discussion of women. According to historian Mrinalini Sinha, the contributions of women in the construction and maintenance of national identities and communities are often minimized or neglected.⁸⁴ She argues that this is a result of historians neglecting the topic of gender in their discussions of nationalism, typically due to their exclusive focus on male subjects (i.e., politicians), and their assumption that women shared the same experiences as men or that their experiences were narrowly home-centered and therefore negligible.⁸⁵ This neglect is problematic since women have played a number of roles in the building and maintenance of national identity, frequently

⁸¹McCormack, “Networks among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society,” 204.

⁸²Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 142.

⁸³Iacovetta and Korinek, “Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker,” 194-7, 200, 219. American war brides experienced similar gender expectations and propaganda in the US. Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 6-7; Sangster, “The Meanings of Mercy,” 520-1.

⁸⁴While some work on the role of women in the development of English-Canadian nationalism exist, they are heavily focussed on specific organizations, such as the IODE or YWCA, and are few. Such works include: Wendy Mitchinson, “The YWCA and Reform in the Nineteenth Century,” *Social History* 12 (November 1979): 368-84; Diana Pedersen, “Providing a Woman’s Conscience: The YWCA, Female Evangelicalism, and the Girl in the City, 1870-1930,” in *Canadian Women: A Reader* ed. Wendy Mitchinson, Paula Bourne, Alison Prentice, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light and Naomi Black (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996): 194-210; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*; Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*. More often than not the role of women in the nation building process is alluded to or minimally discussed.

⁸⁵Mrinalini Sinha, “Gender and Nation,” in *The Feminist History Reader* ed. Sue Morgan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 324-5.

as activists, signifiers of ethnic and cultural boundaries, and the mothers of the national community.⁸⁶ Even more so, since social constructions of race and gender are integral to the construction of Canadian nation-building and nationalism. To belong and be considered Canadian, one needed to fit within the established hierarchies of Canada's white paternalistic society. State officials saw white women as essential to this construction of a white Canada.

According to criminologist and sociologist Mariana Valverde, white women were not just having babies, but reproducing and raising the future generation and thus ensuring the nation's strength as a white civilization.⁸⁷ White reformers, both male and female, believed white women's failure to have enough children and raise them properly would result in "race suicide" – the white populations declining in comparison to other racial groups leading to the end of progress.⁸⁸ Historian and legal scholar Constance Backhouse argues that the ability of white Canadian women to have children made them the "guardians of the race."⁸⁹ As such, in 1920s Regina, white Anglo middle-to-upper class women in the Regina Local Council of Women and Women's Labour League supported discriminatory legislation that prevented Asian employers from hiring white

⁸⁶Ibid., 326.

⁸⁷Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," in *Gendered Conflict: New Essays in Women's History* ed. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 4-5, 16.

⁸⁸White reformers and politicians, such as J.S. Woodsworth and President Theodore Roosevelt, believed and argued that white Anglo-Saxons were the racially superior group, and that the world progressed and declined in relation to the size of the Anglo-Saxon population. These views on racial hierarchies were common and popular in the US, Canada, Britain, etc. leading up to the Second World War. Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 107, 109-10.

⁸⁹Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 141.

women in order to “protect” them from exploitation and prevent a mixing of the races.⁹⁰

Some white women even used their role as mothers of the nation to increase their own authority or access to rights. Historian Lara Campbell argues that during the Great Depression Canadian women used their British backgrounds and roles as mothers to argue that their families were entitled to greater economic rights than “the ‘other’ in the guise of immigrants and agitators, who were seen as less deserving of those rights...”⁹¹

Both Jarratt and Iacovetta maintain that the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of British war brides made them desirable immigrants from the point of view of the Canadian government.⁹² As white women of a British background, war brides represented a prime target for cultural assimilation.

While the historiography has typically discussed the immigration and settlement of British war brides in Canada as an integration – due to similarities in ethnicity, linguistic skills, and culture – this dissertation argues that cultural assimilation is a more suitable term.⁹³ Cultural assimilation refers to the pressure or expectation that a group conform to the values or standards of a dominant group or community, often involving the shedding of one’s cultural, religious, and ethnic identity, either voluntarily or by force. When discussing cultural assimilation in Canada we apply the term to the treatment of First Nations Peoples and foreign immigrants, but not British immigrants – which is more than understandable since many historians have perceived Canada to be British in

⁹⁰Ibid., 140, 154-157.

⁹¹Campbell, *Respectable Citizens*, 14.

⁹²Jarratt, *War Brides*, 32; Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 146; Iacovetta and Korinek, “Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker,” 194.

⁹³Iacovetta and Korinek, “Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker,” 197.

this period, and assumed immigrants from Britain merely integrated into the Canadian population. In addition, the preferential immigration status afforded to them and to Northwestern European immigrants due to their whiteness and historical ties to the country, meant that they never faced the same level of discrimination that other groups in the country faced. However, as this dissertation makes clear, Canada was not British; as such British war brides faced settlement difficulties and assimilationists messages from the Canadian government, media, and the general population.

Iacovetta and Korinek have argued that after the war European immigrants to Canada often faced a barrage of educational programs and media materials designed to pressure them to assimilate.⁹⁴ Similarly, the government and military created specially designed Canadianization materials for British war brides. The process of cultural assimilation in this case is fascinating, due to the perceived similarities between the two groups. Unlike other cases, their process of cultural assimilation was not physically imposed or violent. The CWB encouraged these women to join war bride clubs in the UK where they had classes, reading, and film materials, and welcome messages that all reinforced the importance of their becoming Canadian. These insidious educational materials implied that the brides needed to assimilate or face ostracism and loneliness in their new home – an intimidating message for women destined for an unknown country with no support network or way to get home if things did not work out.

⁹⁴Ibid., 195, 198, 200, 205; Franca Iacovetta, “Making Model Citizens: Gender, Corrupted Democracy, and Immigrant and Refugee Reception Work in Cold War Canada,” in *Whose National Security?: Canadian State Surveillance and the Creation of Enemies* ed. Gary Kinsman, Dieter K. Buse, and Mercedes Steedman (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000), 155-6, 159, 163.

Women's voluntary organizations, such as the IODE, YWCA, and MSWL, also played an important role in promoting the Canadian government's Canadianization message to the brides. Through their local clubs, war brides received educational classes, seminars, and welfare assistance, while simultaneously being exposed to normative Canadian female behaviours. Canadian women, especially those connected to organized voluntary bodies, further promoted the government's pro-Canada message and the war brides' settlement into a new life in Canada.

British war brides destined for Québec also faced pressure to assimilate in French-Canada – in a province where they were far less likely to integrate into the population outside of Montréal or other English hubs. French-Canadians had always rejected the English-Canadian identity promoted by the Canadian government. Within Québec, its English-speaking minority held inordinate power and access to wealth and jobs compared to the majority French-speaking population.⁹⁵ Québeckers viewed British brides as part of a wave of Anglo-immigration that they feared would further marginalize French-Canadians in Québec.⁹⁶ As such, debates emerged around the brides, specifically their willingness or ability to assimilate to the language, religion, and culture of French-Canadians. British brides living in Francophone communities faced immense pressure to assimilate or face ostracism, isolation, and loneliness.

⁹⁵Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Rehabilitation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 7-8; Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Book 1: General Introduction – The Official Languages* (Ottawa: Roger Duhamel, F.R.S.C., Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1967), xlv-xiv; Kenneth McRoberts, *Québec: Social Change and Political Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 74, 101.

⁹⁶Ibid.

However, many British war brides defied or challenged these assimilationist messages by criticizing the quality of the educational materials, or stubbornly maintaining their sense of nationality and nationalism. Far from being passive subjects as the Canadian government and military assumed, British war brides selected which parts of the assimilationist message to accept based on what was most useful to them. By choosing what messages to listen to, they navigated the complex issue of nationalism and identity (English-Canadian vs French-Canadian) in Ontario and Québec. Accounts reveal that while eventually embracing their Canadian nationality and nationalism, they defied the intentions of the Canadian state by also maintaining a strong sense of their distinct British version of nationalism.

The role of war brides in Canadian nation-building is further complicated when one considers their citizenship status and that of their children. Barber and Watson claim that they avoided war brides in their study of English immigrants because “the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1947 officially recognized them as Canadians, although some experienced problems because of incorrect form-filling.”⁹⁷ Their concession that some brides experienced difficulties is an understatement given that war brides have been a part of the official meetings and reports of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on Lost Canadians throughout the 2000s.⁹⁸ Many historians, like Barber and

⁹⁷Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 9.

⁹⁸Lost Canadians refers to those who believe their Canadian citizenship was stripped (many unaware of the fact for years) by provisions in the *Canadian Citizenship Acts* of 1946 or 1976, including: war brides and their children who never naturalized, children born out of wedlock, etc. “Who are the Lost Canadians,” *The Lost Canadians* <http://blog.lostcanadian.com/2008/12/who-are-lost-canadians.html> (accessed November 9, 2015). For more information on the Lost Canadians see Don Chapman, *The Lost Canadians: A Struggle for Citizenship Rights, Equality, and Identity* (Vancouver: Pugwash Publishing, 2015).

Watson, argue that Canada granted war brides citizenship as dependants of their husbands due to a 1945 Order in Council Number (no.) 858 and *The Canadian Citizenship Act* of 1946.⁹⁹ However, unbeknownst to the war brides and their children who came after 1947, or war bride children born out of wedlock or in another country, this citizenship was not given or documented in the same way as for natural born Canadians citizens.¹⁰⁰ From the 1950s to the 2000s, state officials told many war brides and their children that they were not Canadian citizens or asked them to provide proof of citizenship.¹⁰¹ Changes to the *Citizenship Act* in 1976 made proof of citizenship a requirement for all Canadians.¹⁰² Although those women and children who came to Canada before 1947 had been granted citizenship under *The Canadian Citizenship Act* of 1946, making them legally Canadian, many did not possess proof of their citizenship. Upon landing in Canada, war brides received immigration identification cards that were stamped “Landed Immigrant,” but no documentation concerning their citizenship status.¹⁰³ Only within the last twenty years has this issue received any attention, with the issue finally resolved with the passing of *Bill C-37 An Act to Amend the Citizenship Act* in 2008.

⁹⁹A 1945 Order in Council no. 858 allowed the wives of soldiers to enter the country without meeting the requirements of the *Immigration Act* of the time by granting them domicile and citizenship in Canada. Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 73; “Order in Council P.C. 1945-858 and the Lost Canadians: A gateway to Canadian citizenship,” *The Lost Canadians*, <http://blog.lostcanadian.com/2012/05/order-in-council-pc-1945-858-and-lost.html> (accessed November 9, 2015); Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 125-6, 129-130.

¹⁰⁰For example, war brides who divorced their husbands automatically lost their citizenship because it was tied to their marriages to Canadian servicemen. Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 83; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 239; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 130, 179, 182, 185, 224, 275.

¹⁰¹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 238; Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 73-4; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration: Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 2, 10.

¹⁰²Canada, *Citizenship Act*, Statutes of Canada [hereafter cited as S.C.], 1976, Chapters [hereafter cited as c.] 108.

¹⁰³Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 73; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 237-9.

The confusion surrounding citizenship or demands for proof of citizenship hindered war brides and their children from receiving Canadian old age pensions. It was also no doubt traumatic for women and their children who had lived in Canada for almost sixty years to have their citizenship questioned. If Jarratt is correct that war brides and their children were brought to Canada and acculturated to Canadian society in order to promote a certain vision of what it mean to be Canadian, then the issues surrounding their legal status as Canadian citizens must be examined and brought into the discussion of Canadian nation building and nationalism following the Second World War.

The immigration experience of women considered war brides is unique within the study of immigration history. In *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century*, historian Susan Zeiger argues that war brides are considered a spoil of war, in that the marriage of a foreign woman to a soldier from another country represented the assertion of that country's power or dominance over another land.¹⁰⁴ These women were thus viewed as a prize for the soldiers' service, a prize that they wanted to take home. Zeiger argues that during World War One and Two the term war bride took on a privileged status, as most of the brides were white British women, with nation-states, such as the US, Canada, Australia, and UK assuming responsibility for the associated costs of their movement to their new countries. However, war brides from subsequent wars were not treated with the same level of support. For example, Korean and Vietnamese women, were not treated as kindly or provided the

¹⁰⁴Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 3, 5-6.

same supports or transportation assistance that were provided to white brides due to their perceived inferior racial status.¹⁰⁵

While the marriage of Canadian soldiers and British women was likely not an assertion of power or dominance in the way a marriage to a woman of a minority background would be in this time period, it can still be argued that British wives were seen as personal prizes. Often when writing about their wives to the government, Canadian soldiers pressed their rights and service as soldiers, stressing that the Canadian nation-state *de facto* owed them, and thus had to move their dependants as a kind of compensation for war service.¹⁰⁶ In addition, the government always discussed the women in terms of their relationship status to their husbands as wives – in patriarchal terms *the property* of a Canadian male. For example, one discharged soldier writing about information on how to get his wife to Canada concluded by stating that he would like his wife brought to Canada as soon as possible “as it would be very convenient to have a housekeeper.”¹⁰⁷ The letter contains no declarations of love or concern about his wife’s wellbeing, just the assertion that he had a home, was on his own, and his wife would be useful in Canada. Obviously, not every soldier viewed his wife in this manner, but it would be short-sighted to assume that Canadian soldiers did not view their wives as a kind of property or that they would fulfill a certain gendered role back in Canada.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, “SCF,” Memorandum to Mr. Ignatieff from Mr. Little, 22 January 1941, Memorandum to Mr. Munroe from F.C.B., 24 July 1941, Memorandum for file by McG, DDMR, 12 August 1941, and Memorandum to Mr. Pratt, 14 November 1941.

¹⁰⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 174, “Army – Public Relations, Publicity to War Brides and Dependants,” Letter to Canadian Information Service from J. E. Smith, 9 February 1946.

Zeiger also argues that war bride marriages “are a multifaceted prism” through which Americans tried to make sense of relationships with other countries.¹⁰⁸ The same argument could be made in the case of Canada. During the Second World War, at a time when Canada was supposedly British, its government went to great lengths to assimilate British war brides. Since Canadian men had selected these women and the Canadian government determined them to be of good quality, these women needed to be brought into the fold of Canadian life since they would become the mothers – or the producers – of future Canadians. Analyzing British war brides thus reveals a great deal about national, gendered, and racial constructions of western nations in the postwar period.

The immigration and settlement experiences of war brides thus adds to their unique status, as most immigrant women came to Canada with their families. Such women had the benefit of family or kinship networks to aid in their settlement. However, war brides, be they British, Dutch, or German had to rely solely on their husbands as a reason for coming to Canada. In most cases, they arrived before their husbands’ demobilization, meaning that they had to adapt to life as a wife, and in many cases mother, in a foreign country without the benefits of kinship networks or the support of their families. Many faced the very real possibility that they may never see their families again – like the struggles faced by immigrant domestic servants. The rejection or acceptance of their new families and local communities played a significant role in shaping how they adapted to life in Canada. Though the current historiography would suggest that this settlement was easy, war bride accounts, media sources, and government

¹⁰⁸Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 2.

and women's organization records reveal that many experienced hardships, rejection, and, in some cases, abandonment in a new country with few resources or a way to return home. Thus, war brides represent a unique immigrant group; in many ways they were very much alone.

My dissertation is organized into ten chapters. In Chapter 1 I examine the policy, role, and attitude of the Canadian Dominion government, military, and clergy toward British war brides from 1939-1945. This provides a backdrop of British war brides from the First World War and the Canadian government's policies towards them. I then turn to the reasons Canada assumed responsibility for their transportation to Canada during and after the Second World War, and argue that initially Canadian authorities considered such marriages to be ill-advised, with authorities constantly questioning the kinds of women servicemen intended to marry. However, the ever-increasing number of marriages, combined with the actions of the Australian government, changed the Canadian government's attitude and policy towards war brides in 1942.

In Chapter 2 I argue that the Canadian government and military were initially ill-prepared to handle the movement of Canadian servicemen dependants. The Battle of the Atlantic, which ranged from 1939-1945, made civilian travel across the Atlantic next to impossible. In addition, Canadian officials continuously underestimated the number of marriages taking place and the amount of work required to transport war brides to Canada. Complaints directed at the government from the slow movement of dependants prompted the DND to take control of the situation with its creation of the CWB. Despite the experience and resources of the Canadian military, it began as an unorganized and

understaffed venture constantly requesting increased funding and staff from the government and the Canadian military. Slowly attitudes towards the brides changed, as the Canadian government feared that if it did not handle the postwar integration of demobilized veterans correctly, dissatisfied vets would create problems as they had done at the end of the First World War. Thus, the successful integration of war brides into Canadian society became a priority for the state and military.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the CWB's educational efforts to Canadianize British war brides. It created war bride clubs in Britain to teach the women about life and their roles as wives in Canada, and to prepare them for their voyage to their new homes. The educational materials focussed on cooking, shopping, and childcare, along with books that glorified Canada's history and brochures for travel. This left many war brides with a false impression of the country and its history, and a belief that it lacked racial and ethnic tensions. I demonstrate that war brides did not always respond positively to these materials, criticizing their content and attempting to maintain their own national identity.

Chapter 5 and 6 re-evaluate the Canadian public's initial attitudes towards British war brides. In instances when the media and social commentators discussed Canadian attitudes towards these women they are presented as positive and welcoming. These chapters argue that this positive attitude and lack of analysis resulted from a focus on media coverage at the time of British war bride landings in Canada. Any negative encounters between the brides and Canadians are mentioned briefly in newspapers and never analyzed. An analysis of media and government sources, as well as British war bride accounts, reveals that Canadian attitudes towards British war brides ranged from

apathetic, to welcoming or, more often than one would expect, hostile. Not all Canadians, especially Canadian women, viewed British war brides as special, and many were unwilling to welcome the brides into their communities.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 analyze the initial immigration and settlement experiences of war brides in Ontario and Québec. They show that these women faced cultural and sometimes language barriers, while also experiencing the potential of harsh welcomes from in-laws and Canadian women. These women faced many obstacles. For example, they and their husbands were affected by housing shortages, leading to much media speculation that war bride marriages would collapse unless the couple could achieve a fresh start. Some war brides arrived in Canada to find their husbands suffering from undiagnosed battle exhaustion – what we would refer to today as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Wives who ended up in abusive relationships often had limited options other than to suffer at the hands of their husbands since divorce was looked down upon and difficult to acquire. Even worse, once on Canadian soil the government abrogated its responsibility for the women. Many could not afford to return to the UK.

Finally, Chapter 10 jumps backwards and forward in time to examine the citizenship status of British war brides. The status of these women and their children has been vague before and after the creation of the *Canadian Citizenship Act* in 1946. Since 1947, members of this community have faced challenges owing to their lack of proof of citizenship. Most of them had no such proof, as they were unaware of changes in the 1976

Act that made it necessary for them to have such documentation.¹⁰⁹ This resulted in some women and their children losing their ability to vote, claim pensions, or get a passport. The confusion surrounding their citizenship status resulted in the creation of an Immigration Standing Committee in 2005 and 2007. This chapter examines why the status of war brides and their children was so poorly defined and why it has taken almost 70 years for the Canadian government to correct the situation.

For too long historians have avoided the story of Canada's British war brides. Exploring their experiences sheds light on some of the more negative aspects of the Second World War in general, and challenges the victory narratives of the good war and, in the words of Magda Fahrni, "the romance of reunion."¹¹⁰ Not all soldiers behaved nobly during the Second World War, nor did all marriages to war brides turn out happy. The soldiers and civilians, such as war brides, of the Second World War were complex human beings who underwent enormous physical and psychological stress and trauma. A greater analysis of these women, many of whom served during the war, is required. Far from fictional heroines, these were flesh and blood women, like my Nan, who married Canadians for a wide range of reasons from love to escape from a war-ravaged country. When my Nan disembarked at Pier 21 her story did not end; it merely turned a new page. It is time to finally turn a new page in our discussion of soldiers and their war brides. An

¹⁰⁹Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1976, c. 108, section 10; Matrix, "Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings," 73; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 237-9.

¹¹⁰Jeffrey Keshen argues that analysis of the Second World War tends to focus on promoting the good war myth. As a result, negatives experiences, actions, or events connected to the behaviour of the Western allies or on the home front have been obscured or purposefully ignored. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 4-6, 11. Mary Louise Roberts makes a similar argument in the American historiography. Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2013), 7, 10-11, 59, 74, 261.

examination of these women reveals a great deal about the gendered, racialized, and nationalistic constructions of Canada during and after the Second World War, as well as the memory, be it of the war, war brides, or Canada itself, that has developed since.

Chapter 1 – The Canadian Government and “The Problem of British Brides”

On 12 September 1941, the Senior Chaplain of the 2nd Canadian division, the Honourable Major J.G. Cote went to interview a Canadian soldier thinking of marrying a British woman. This interview was not conducted at the request of the soldier, but rather at the behest of his mother who had written to Cote to visit her son. In her letter, the mother told Cote that her “naïve and guileless” son had been influenced into marriage by a “wily female.”¹¹¹ While the mother claimed she was not opposed to her son marrying, she believed he needed to marry “properly.”¹¹² She argued that young soldiers lacked parental guidance aboard, so commanding officers (CO) needed to better examine these matches before granting permission to marry or else the soldiers would not be able to establish “stable and lasting” marriages.¹¹³ The results of Cote’s meeting are unknown, but considering that Canadian government and military officials (including military chaplains) opposed hasty war marriages, it is likely that Cote discouraged the soldier from marrying.

Current literature about British war brides in Canada claims that these women were embraced by their new country as ideal immigrants, due to their British background.¹¹⁴ Yet, Cote’s meeting suggest otherwise; his diary entry above is not an exception, but rather the rule of how most Canadian officials viewed marriages between

¹¹¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, “War Diaries” [hereafter cited as WD], J.S. Cote Senior Chaplain (RC) 2 Canadian Divisions, 12 September 1941.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Jarratt, *War Brides*, 288; Wicks, *Promise You’ll Take Care of My Daughter*, xi; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 141; Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 146; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, xi-ii; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*, 3; Iacovetta and Korinek, “Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker,” 194, 197.

Canadian servicemen and British women in the early years of the war (1939-1942). How do we explain such a disparity? First, there exists no analysis of the attitude or policy of the Canadian government and military regarding these marriages, or the movement of servicemen's dependants to Canada during and at the end of the Second World War. If the subject is mentioned by scholars of immigration and war, it is often reduced to a sentence or two regarding the number of women and children moved.¹¹⁵ Second, the existing historiography of war brides is largely based on the reminiscences of war brides themselves. To these women, the efforts of the DND to educate them on life in Canada and to promote them as fine quality immigrants in Canada, meant that the Canadian government was desirous of their marriages to Canadian servicemen.

However, records at LAC reveal that far from embracing these women, the Canadian government and military initially opposed the marriages of Canadian servicemen and British women. Cases of bigamy and concerns over illegitimate children added to the problems faced by officials charged with overseeing the morale of an inactive army in the UK. Military officials were concerned that Canadian servicemen were misrepresenting life in Canada to their prospective brides. Thus, Canadian government and military officials considered these marriages to be ill-advised and questioned the kinds of women servicemen intended to marry. To stop hasty marriages, Canadian military officials restricted the marriages of Canadian servicemen overseas. Yet, rates of servicemen marriage continued to rise and soldiers began demanding that the

¹¹⁵Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 162; Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 1-2; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 24-5; Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 126; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 138; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 104.

Canadian government should be responsible for the transportation of their dependants to Canada – a responsibility the Canadian government undertook in 1942. This shift from restricting marriages to undertaking complete responsibility to pay and transport war brides had little to do with the women's status as ideal immigrants. Rather, the decision of Prime Minister Mackenzie King's War Committee of the Cabinet to transport servicemen's dependants to Canada came down to a combination of a precedent set during the last war and the actions of the Australian and British governments.

Although this movement of British women was a massive undertaking for the Canadian government, it was not the first time that it had arranged such a transport to Canada. At the end of the First World War, the Canadian Government provided free third-class passage to dependants of Canadian servicemen – approximately 48,000 dependants at a cost of \$3,000,000.¹¹⁶ However, during that war thousands of Canadian wives followed their husbands or fiancés to Britain, in order to be close to them while they were fighting overseas – much to the annoyance of Canadian authorities.¹¹⁷ These women were included in the number of dependants moved at the end of the First World War, and so the number of new women to Canada was comparatively fewer than those arriving after the Second World War.

When Canada declared war on Nazi Germany, its national government did not want to repeat the same scenario, and passed a parliamentary order that prohibited civilian women and children from entering the European war zone. The order in council forbade

¹¹⁶LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10400, "SCF," Memo to Blair from Chapman, 30 November 1940; Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 126-7.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, 86.

Canadian women, except for servicewomen and public servants, from sailing to the British Isles or European waters. It otherwise prohibited Passport Officers from granting women passports during the war, and further stipulated that any ship manager, owner, director, or agent that took such passengers would be fined between \$500-\$2000, imprisoned for six months, or both.¹¹⁸ This order in council aimed to protect Canadian civilian women from the dangers of the war and restrict transportation to the essential movement of troops and war related goods. However, it also prevented the mass migration of servicemen's Canadian wives due to the subsequent associated costs of transporting them back to Canada. Minister of Mines and Resources, Thomas Crerar, acknowledged as much in a parliamentary debate in 1943, stating that Canadian wives had not been permitted to follow their husbands due to the cost of bringing them back.¹¹⁹ While the Canadian government prevented the majority of Canadian wives heading to Britain and Europe, the government did not anticipate the sheer number of Canadian servicemen's marriages that were to occur overseas.

During the First World War, Canadian servicemen spent most of their time on the Western Front in France and Belgium, whereas during the Second World War they were confined to the British Isles for 3 years. This confinement disrupted social and gender norms on the isle. Gender ideologies of the time defined men and women by their

¹¹⁸Does include a note that the Secretary of State for External Affairs was authorized to grant exemptions. A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, "Order in Council Prohibiting Women and Children from Entering European War Zone," P.C. 2371, 4 June 1940, in *Proclamations and Orders in Council Relating to the War: Volume 2* (Ottawa: J.G. Patenaude, I.S.O. Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1940), 110-1.

¹¹⁹Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 19th Parliament, 4th Session, Vol. 5 (1943-1944): 5241-2.

physical biology and social and cultural constructions of appropriate gendered roles and behaviours.¹²⁰ Before the war, British women typically lived at home with their parents and their role was that of wife, mother, and caretaker.¹²¹ However, the circumstances of war led to dramatic shifts in these established roles. Britain had mobilized its workforce and its industrial resources, but the demands of a total war also called for the mobilization of its female population to fill a growing labour gap as men were called up for service. In 1941, amendments to *The National Services Act* included the conscription of unmarried women between the ages of 19 and 31 into either the auxiliary services (female branches of the army, navy, and air force) or work within a war related industry.¹²² British women thus stepped outside their traditional roles, working in jobs previously denied to them or determined inappropriate for their sex.¹²³ Many British women were separated from their families, living in camps or hostels and having financial freedom to engage in leisure activities without parental supervision.¹²⁴

Despite this financial independence and social freedom, British women often received mixed messages from the nation's government regarding what were appropriate

¹²⁰Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University, 1988), 32.

¹²¹Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 14, 44, 48; Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 11, 13; Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain since 1880* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 124.

¹²²David Reynolds, *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945* (London: Phoenix Press, 1996), 52-3; Gardiner, *Wartime Britain*, 108; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 13.

¹²³Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, 81. Ruth Frager has argued that in times of social concern or need, female gender roles have been stretched beyond their traditionally defined zones in order to address the pressing need – she calls this concept gender-role elasticity. Ruth A. Frager, *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement of Toronto, 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 6.

¹²⁴Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 16; Friedman, *From the Battlefield to the Bridal Suite*, 21-2; Cate Haste, *'Rules of Desire': Sex in Britain: World War I to the Present* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1992), 102; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain*, 124.

and patriotic female war roles. While official messages of a “people’s war” made it more acceptable for women to make sacrifices along similar lines to men, pre-war gender norms still reinforced the role of wife and mother as the revered ideal.¹²⁵ According to historian Penny Summerfield, wartime housewives were considered “the cornerstone” of both the home and the nation.¹²⁶ Nation building projects typically promote women as mothers of the nation, reproducers of both citizens and culture in patriarchal language or policies designed to protect them.¹²⁷ As such, the British state did not conscript married women, but rather gave them the option to volunteer their services if they chose to do so.¹²⁸ Further, while single women stepped into the workforce and society in a new way, they were constantly reminded by government publications, training sessions, media representations, and advertisements that this change was only temporary. These materials pushed the idea that working women needed to maintain their femininity and thus their desirability to the opposite sex.¹²⁹ They told single women to serve their country in the workforce and military, but when possible, be it during or after the war, to also serve their country as a wife and mother. Yet, many British single women attended social functions that involved interactions with the opposite sex. Facing conflicting pressures surrounding

¹²⁵Mrinalina Sinha argues that us. versus them is often the foundation of the nation. Costs and benefits of national projects fall unequally on men and women, because when women sacrifice along similar lines to men, traditional gender roles are reinforced upon the completion of the crisis. Sinha, “Gender and Nation,” 237, 240, 244.

¹²⁶Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives*, 80. Lesley A. Hall also argues that married women’s roles in the home were considered apart of their war contribution, as well as what was being fought for. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain*, 124.

¹²⁷Sinha, “Gender and Nation,” 238, 242-3; Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 5, 22-3, 26, 37;

¹²⁸Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives*, 80.

¹²⁹Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 11, 14; Friedman, *From the Battlefield to the Bridal Suite*, 21-2, 35. 43-4; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain*, 124.

correct war service and femininity, many young women saw dancing or courting with a soldier as merely fulfilling one's patriotic duty or relaxing after a hard day's work.¹³⁰

Initially, the British public looked unfavourably on how the nation's women fraternized with Canadian servicemen. Upon their arrival in Britain, Canadian servicemen proved themselves to be quite rowdy. An unfamiliar climate, coupled with poor housing conditions and boredom, resulted in servicemen engaging in drunken brawls and vandalism in the first year in the UK.¹³¹ In a report for Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ), C.P. Stacey, a historical officer for the Canadian military and later a distinguished Canadian military historian, noted that morale and relations with the British "left something to be desired" in the first winter.¹³² For example, many British male soldiers and civilians were not always pleased to see Canadians courting their women, claiming that Canadian servicemen took advantage of their overseas absence, and their women were betraying them by not waiting for their return.¹³³ Worse, better paid Canadian and American servicemen could afford to take British women on expensive dates and buy them favours that British servicemen could not afford.¹³⁴ Early in the war it

¹³⁰Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 79-81, 89-92, 109.

¹³¹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 20; Gardiner, *Wartime Britain*, 464-5; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 231.

¹³²Directorate of History and Heritage [hereafter cited as DHH], CMHQ, Report 119, C.P. Stacey, Historical Officer, "Canadian Relations with the People of the United Kingdom, and General Problems of Morale, 1939-44," 30 June 1944 (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1944), 3.

¹³³One war bride recalled that when a returning Englishman found out about her Canadian beau, he asked her, "How could you?" Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 201-2, 262; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 26.

¹³⁴Canadian authorities worried that they would take advantage of this fact. LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "Canadian Military Headquarters, London" [hereafter cited as CMHQL], Memorandum Re: Overseas R.O. 3744 – Permission to Marry by Brigadier J. Mess signed C.S. Booth Brigadier D.A.G. CMHQ, 27 October 1943; Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 151-3, 263-4, 278-9; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 233; Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 21; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, 91.

was not uncommon for fights to break out between British and Canadian servicemen over Canadians moving in on British women.¹³⁵

The poor behaviour of some Canadians did not endear them to the British public, even leading some to speak of a Canadian invasion. In one letter to *The Maple Leaf*, the overseas magazine of the military forces of Canada, Mrs. Valery wrote that things were quiet until the Canadians arrived, but now: “The Canadians were everywhere and we hated it like hell.”¹³⁶ While admitting that over the course of the war relations with Canadian servicemen had improved, it is clear from her wording that initially the Canadians were not well received.¹³⁷ Many war bride accounts contain evidence of this poor reception. Marion G. recalled that her employer told her to stay away from the Canadians because “they’re a tough lot,” while Beatrice C. wrote that at dances, her friends would be very careful around the Canadians due to the poor name that they had made for themselves.¹³⁸ In his report to the CMHQ, C.P. Stacey noted that while relations between Canadian servicemen and the British improved once soldiers began to be billeted with British families, the relations were ultimately “mixed” and ill feeling still existed regarding the visitors’ “unmannerly acts.”¹³⁹

¹³⁵Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 223; DHH, CMHQ, Report 119, C.P. Stacey, “Canadian Relations with the People of the United Kingdom,” 5.

¹³⁶Mrs. Valery, “English Cannot Forget Those Crazy Canadians,” *The Maple Leaf – Belgium*, 11 November 1944.

¹³⁷Ibid. Jarratt’s *War Brides* includes a letter from a Surrey woman expressing a similar dislike of Canadian soldiers and their behaviour in England, as well as a letter from a war bride describing her parents’ dislike of Canadian soldiers. Jarratt, *War Brides*, 20-1.

¹³⁸CMI at Pier 21, S2012.1514.1, Extract from Memoir of Beatrice C., arrived from England, 2 June 1946; Latta, *The Memory of All That*, 140.

¹³⁹DHH, CMHQ, Report 119, Stacey, “Canadian Relations with the People of the United Kingdom,” 5, 8.

Such behaviour made British parents weary of their daughters courting Canadian servicemen. Stories about bigamy, or girls going to Canada and experiencing poverty and hardship, led some parents to tell their daughters to not even speak with the Canadians, or in one case, a mother going so far as to lie that her daughter was not home when her future husband visited on leave so they could marry before he shipped back out.¹⁴⁰ However, due to the social and gendered changes created by war, British parents could not enforce the same parental controls they had before, as it was now patriotic to send both sons and daughters to service. As a result, single daughters had an independent source of means, and often could or had to live away from home, making traditional practices of courtship and parental supervision next to impossible.¹⁴¹

British parents' fears regarding less than chivalrous Canadian servicemen were not entirely unfounded. During the First World War, a number of British women had been left with illegitimate children, and these rates rose during the next war.¹⁴² Throughout the Second World War the Canadian military monitored cases of bigamy, and dealt with multiple cases of illegitimate children.¹⁴³ According to historians John Costello and

¹⁴⁰One war bride recalled that while her parents allowed Canadians over to the house, she was told: "don't get any ideas in your head about marrying one of those foreigners." Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 12; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 8-9; CMI at Pier 21, 07.08.10DS, Dorothy S. audio oral history conducted by Steven Schwinghamer, 10 August 2007, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

¹⁴¹Haste, *'Rules of Desire,'* 102; Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, 48, 54, 80; John Costello, *Love, Sex and War: Changing Values, 1939-1945* (London: Williams Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1985), 19-20.

¹⁴²Historiography on the subject is minimal. Frank W. Notestein, "The Report of the Royal Commission on Population: A Review," *Population Studies* Vol. 3, no. 3 (Dec 1949): 232-3; F.M. Redington and R.D. Clarke, "The Papers of the Royal Commission on Population," *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries (1886-1994)* Vol. 77, no. 1 (June 1951): 84-5; Pat Thane, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints?: Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7, 12-4, 27; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain*, 78-80.

¹⁴³For monthly reports of marriages, births, dependant allowances, bigamous marriages, and illegitimate children see the following: LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 12444, "Canadian Wives Bureau" and LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," files Marriages – Generally. These reports are not in their entirety, certain

Lesley A. Hall, illegitimacy rates in Britain increased during the war, often cases where the couple would have married in the pre-war era.¹⁴⁴ The temporary bend in gender roles, combined with lax parental supervision and fear of death, resulted in increased sexual liaisons and children born out of wedlock – things rarely mentioned in published scholarship.¹⁴⁵ The numbers of illegitimate births has been estimated anywhere between 22,000 to 30,000.¹⁴⁶ It is nearly impossible to calculate the exact number of illegitimate children of Canadian servicemen – to begin, these births were very likely under-reported. In addition, Canadian historian Jeffrey Keshen argues that the emphasis on a popular memory of the Second World War as the good war has led many people to ignore the more sordid sides of the war and Canadian servicemen's behaviour.¹⁴⁷ The emphasis on the positive relationships between soldiers and European women has resulted in a lack of analysis surrounding issues such as illegitimacy. However, it is clear from early attitudes and relations between the Canadians and the British public, and even the records of the Canadian military, that there were concerns about these issues.

years and months are missing. Further, the reports only contain reported instances of illegitimate children, potentially making their numbers low.

¹⁴⁴Costello, *Love, Sex and War*, 17, 276, 278; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain*, 117.

¹⁴⁵Scholarship on the subject is limited to the following: Reynolds, *Rich Relations*, 44-8, 211; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*; Jarratt, *War Brides*; Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*. Mary Louise Roberts argues that discussions of negative representations of American, or Allied, soldiers' actions or relationships and any attempts to challenge the good war myth are far and few between in the American scholarship. Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 7, 10-11, 59, 74, 261.

¹⁴⁶Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 233; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 19. Within the footnotes on page 18, Olga Rains, Lloyd Rains, and Melynda Jarratt discuss how the numbers of illegitimate children of Canadian servicemen have not been compiled yet by LAC or the British Archives. Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*, 16. John Costello also discusses illegitimate children, but his focus is on American not Canadian servicemen. Costello, *Love, Sex and War*, 276.

¹⁴⁷Jeffrey Keshen also argues that Canadian literature on the subject is quite sparse. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 8-9.

Canadian authorities expressed great concern about bigamy, especially early in the war when it appeared relatively easy for servicemen to get away with it. Upon enlisting, some Canadian soldiers lied about their marital status.¹⁴⁸ From the UK it was difficult and time consuming to secure proof or evidence of marriage in Canada, meaning that CO's would accept servicemen at their word. Canadian historian Jonathan Vance cites 22 cases of bigamy that went before the courts, along with 400 maintenance orders involving Canadian servicemen.¹⁴⁹ Although considered exceptions, the number of bigamy cases alarmed Canadian authorities. In a letter to the Right Hon. Viscount Cranborne, Canada's High Commissioner to Britain, Vincent Massey, stated: "The Canadian authorities and I are much concerned as a result of the number of bigamous marriages being contracted by Canadian service personnel in this country."¹⁵⁰ In both memorandums and reports, Canadian authorities refer to the British wives in these circumstances as innocent victims in need of protection.¹⁵¹ This attitude is not surprising, given the established gender ideals of the period; in these conditions, having a bigamous marriage or an illegitimate child caused serious social stigma and marginalization.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memorandum on Bigamous Marriages to All District Officers Commanding by Major General H.F.G. Letson, 7 March 1942, and Memorandum by Captain K.V. Stratton, 10 November 1942; DHH, CMHQ, Report 119, Stacey, "Canadian Relations with the People of the United Kingdom," 21.

¹⁴⁹Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 186-7.

¹⁵⁰LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Letter to The Rt. Hon. Viscount Cranborne from Vincent Massey, 194?. C.P. Stacey also discusses how bigamy had been a problem and of great concern to Canadian authorities. DHH, CMHQ, Report 119, Stacey, "Canadian Relations with the People of the United Kingdom," 21.

¹⁵¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 2049, "1903 Army Headquarters Central Registry," Letter to Secretary Department of National Defence from P.J. Montague, Major General Senior Officer CMHQ, 16 May 1943; LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memo on Bigamous Marriages by Letson, 7 March 1942, and Memo by Stratton, 10 November 1942; LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Letter to Cranborne from Massey, 194?.

¹⁵²Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*, 16; Costello, *Love, Sex and War*, 278

As a result, the Canadian military implemented steps to stop bigamous marriages. It rigorously enforced policies to investigate the marital status of soldiers. If Canadian soldiers wished to marry, they had to certify their marital status, and agree to a monthly pay deduction of \$10 to collect \$200 to pay for their dependants' fare to Canada. Soldiers also had to wait two months to wed and were required to provide certificates demonstrating their fiancées' good character.¹⁵³ If servicemen were found to have illegitimate children, they had to provide maintenance from their own pay.¹⁵⁴ However, the military's actions seemed focussed more on prevention than helping the women who had already been victimized. Captain K.V. Stratton of the CMHQ, noted that several English women had written into CMHQ looking for information on their partners from official sources. The policy of the Dependant's Allowance Board (DAB) was to give the women little to no information on the subject.¹⁵⁵ Concerned that this policy may lead some women to spread a "bad view of the Canadian army," he argued in favour of properly informing them about their cases.¹⁵⁶ Vincent Massey expressed similar concerns about the handling of these cases and a need for a better policy to address the situation.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 186-7; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 136; LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memo by Stratton, 10 November 1942.

¹⁵⁴Maintenance order refers to a court order that stipulates that the parents, married or unmarried, are responsible for the maintenance of their dependants. LAC, Department of Veterans Affairs Fonds [hereafter cited as DVA], RG36, series 18 Dependant's Allowance Board [hereafter cited as DAB], Vol. 29, "Children of Unmarried Mothers" [hereafter cited as CUM], "Canadian Military Headquarters Pay Instruction, no. 172" to CO's and Paymasters signed P. Kelly, Brigadier, Chief Paymaster, Canadian Army Overseas, 12 October 1943; LAC, DVA, RG36, series 18 DAB, Vol. 49, "With Respect to Children Born Out of Wedlock," Memorandum Proposed Procedure with Respect to Children Born Out of Wedlock – DAB, by A. MacNamara, 19 August 1940.

¹⁵⁵LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memo by Stratton, 10 November 1942.

¹⁵⁶Stratton wrote that he felt these women had been "victimized" by servicemen. Ibid.

¹⁵⁷LAC, DVA, RG36, series 18 DAB, Vol. 29, "CUM," Dispatch to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, from Vincent Massey, High Commissioner for Canada, 3 August 1945.

In some circumstances, CO's asked military chaplains to meet with the couple in the hope of resolving the situation – i.e., encouraging marriage, putting the child up for adoption, or ensuring a child was financially supported. Roman Catholic Chaplain W.T. O'Rourke recalled meeting with British welfare officers regarding children of Canadian parentage and the pressure from military authorities to advise or rush marriages in order to “undo as much of the damage as possible.”¹⁵⁸ Matters were made worse when many discharged soldiers abandoned the women they had courted when they returned to Canada. Principal Overseas Protestant Chaplain W.J. Gilling noted the case of a Canadian soldier “seeking an easy way out” by leaving a note telling his girlfriend he was being repatriated.¹⁵⁹ In cases where a Canadian soldier was discharged and either the woman or social service agency aiding her asked for information, Canadian authorities explained that discharged soldiers no longer fell under the jurisdiction of the military; any or all complaints had to be handled between the man and woman.¹⁶⁰ Women in this situation found little recourse, since the army could not force discharged soldiers to provide them financial assistance. Further, Canadian authorities had no funds to provide assistance, and worse, maintenance orders granted in the UK could not be enforced in Canada.¹⁶¹ This left unwed mothers and women in bigamous marriages without financial support, forcing

¹⁵⁸LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, “WD,” W.T. O'Rourke, J. Major Sr. Chaplain (RC) First Cdn Army, February 1944.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., W.J. Gilling H/Lieutenant-Colonel [hereafter cited as Lt-Col.] Principal Chaplain Overseas (P) CMHQ, March 1945.

¹⁶⁰LAC, DVA, RG36, series 18 DAB, Vol. 29, “CUM,” Memorandum to DAB from E.R. Code, Maj. for H.M. Cathcart, 28 June 1946, Memorandum RE: Claims for Illegitimate Children by Women Overseas by F.L. Bell, 12 February 1946, Letter to Lt. Col. W.S. Nurse, DAB Representative CMHQ from R.O.G. Bennett, 19 February 1946, and Memorandum to the Chairman by R. Harvey, 11 December 1945.

¹⁶¹Ibid., Dispatch to the Secretary of State for External Affairs from Vincent Massey, 3 August 1945.

them to fend for themselves and face social stigmatization alone as punishment for their sexual indiscretions. Meanwhile, their Canadian male partners faced little to no repercussions for their actions.

Not every Canadian serviceman was engaged in bamboozling British women for nefarious purposes, but it is important to discuss these relations since it helps to explain the attitude of the Canadian authorities towards legal soldier marriage and respectable courtships. From the beginning of the war Canadian military personnel opposed servicemen marrying overseas, as exemplified by S.S. Langdon, Acting Commissioner of the DMR: “For your personal information I may say that the Military Headquarters here seem to be opposed to the whole scheme...”¹⁶² Considering the degree of concern surrounding immoral soldier behaviour and the preferred status of the British as an immigrant group, it is surprising that Canadian authorities did not support respectable courtships and marriages either. Military leaders believed that marriage distracted soldiers from their military duties, while some military chaplains expressed concerns that marriage would “prevent [a man] from being a good soldier.”¹⁶³ In addition, if a marriage proved troublesome, divorce proceedings were time-consuming and costly.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶²LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, “SCF,” Letter to Mr. Blair from S.S. Langdon Acting Commissioner DMR, 20 February 1942.

¹⁶³Ibid.; LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, “WD,” Cote Senior Chaplain (RC), 29 November 1943, and O’Rourke Sr. Chaplain (RC), 23 May 1943; LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15630, “WD,” Report for the Chaplain Services Overseas – Roman Catholic, October 1944; LAC DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15633, “WD,” Ray McCreery Chaplain (P), 12 and 15 October 1943 and H.S. Bland H/Lt. Col. (P), Canadian Reinforcement Units, 13 September 1944; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 135.

¹⁶⁴Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 95, 97; Friedman, *From the Battlefield to the Bridal Suite*, 25; Gabrielle Fortune, “‘Mr. Jones’ Wives’: War Brides, Marriage, Immigration and Identity Formation,” *Women’s History Review* Vol. 15, no. 4 (September 2006): 587-8.

Military authorities claimed that few marriages from the First World War had proven to be happy due to differences in “race, religion, and customs.”¹⁶⁵ They believed that similar differences would yield unhappy marriages during the Second World War. In a letter to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, and T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, W.W. Judd, General Secretary of the Council for Social Services of the Church of England in Canada, argued that British women were not aware of the “great difference” between life in Canada and life in England.¹⁶⁶ The Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) travellers’ aid service also noted differences in religion and race that made it difficult for brides to settle in Canada.¹⁶⁷ Despite these examples many Canadian historians have labelled British war brides ideal immigrants to Canada, as it was believed that as white Anglo-Saxons they would have little difficulty adapting to the social and cultural norms of Canadian society.¹⁶⁸ But there were some concerns that British wives would not adapt to Canadian life as easily as the existing scholarship would suggest.

¹⁶⁵These authorities claim “their records” indicate that a “pitifully small percentage” of marriages proved happy, but they do not provide any statistics to support this claim or anyway to find records that do. We must thus be critical of this claim as it is unproven. LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, “SCF,” Army Routine Order (21st Army Group) 788 – Permission to Marry n/d; LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, “SCF,” Letter to Blair from Langdon, 20 February 1942; LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, “WD,” Cote Senior Chaplain (RC), 4 July 1943.

¹⁶⁶LAC, William Lyons Mackenzie King Fonds [hereafter cited as WLMK], R10383-7-9-E, MR# C-7038, “Primary Series Correspondence” [hereafter cited as PSC], Letter to The Right Honourable (Hon.) W.L. Mackenzie King, C.N.G., Prime Minister, The Hon. T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, and The Hon. J.L. Ralston, K.C., C.M.G., D.S.C., Minister of National Defence, from W.W. Judd, General Secretary, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada, 9 June 1943.

¹⁶⁷LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, “SCF,” Memorandum – Travellers’ Aid Service of the YWCA Available for Servicemen’s Wives Arriving from Britain by National Council YWCA, 11 March 1944.

¹⁶⁸Young, “‘It’s Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today,’” 79; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 91; Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 146; Wicks, *Promise You’ll Take Care of My Daughter*, xi. A greater discussion of these differences will occur in later chapters.

Canadian military authorities also expressed concern about the reasoning behind overseas marriages. Military Chaplain, Protestant J.W. Forth, had harsh words for the superficial reasoning behind soldiers' desire to marry overseas:

It's all frightfully complicated... and the confessed 'love' that is spouted makes one sick, its nothing except sheer physical attraction and biological urge, that men and women get into them then they call it love... and 'how they feel.' Its very distressing for the future of the country. One lad, who was passionately 'in love' with a girl, and had permission to marry her just through, now finds she has had an affair with another soldier.¹⁶⁹

As this quote suggests, Canadian military authorities who dealt with marriage arrangement, perceived the intention behind some marriages to be less than honourable. Many chaplains and military commanders felt the need to accelerate the marriage process in order to "undo as much damage as possible" when a couple had a pregnancy out of wedlock.¹⁷⁰ Many couples justified their situation by arguing that they had intended to marry all along.¹⁷¹ The uncertainty of the war and fear of death, meant that courtships were short and marriages often took place on leaves.¹⁷² Independence from family supervision, coupled with servicemen's high pay, lack of overseas action, and fear of imminent death, likely influenced Canadian soldiers seeking companionship – whether for love or sexual gratification. Due to high incidences of venereal diseases (VD) in the First World War, during the Second World War Canadian soldiers received increased education about VD. As a result of this education, some soldiers married in order to have

¹⁶⁹LAC DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 16534, "WD," J.W. Forth Major Sr. Chaplain (P), 1 December 1944.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., Vol. 15630, "WD," O'Rourke Sr. Chaplain (RC), 7 January 1944, 15 February 1944; Ibid., Vol. 15633, "WD," McCreery Chaplain (P), 23 October 1943.

¹⁷¹Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain*, 121.

¹⁷²Friedman, *From the Battlefield to the Bridal Suite*, 5, 21-2; Costello, *Love, Sex and War*, 17-8; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 232; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 134.

disease-free sex with a monogamous partner, especially if she would not engage in sex until marriage.¹⁷³

This live-for-the-movement attitude worried CMHQ, since it resulted in hasty marriages. A couple who became both engaged and married within a two week leave period claimed this was “normal for the times.”¹⁷⁴ In another case, after dating briefly a war bride received a letter that her boyfriend had made arrangements for them to marry, much to the surprise of her mother, who felt it was “rather sudden.”¹⁷⁵ Chaplain W.T. O’Rourke noted many cases of soldiers marrying girls they had know only a short while. In one case he tried to reason with a soldier, saying that at home he would never marry a girl he had known for 14 days, but, he was rebuffed with, “things are so different over here.”¹⁷⁶ Agent General for Ontario House in London, J.P.S. Armstrong, worried that the haste of these marriages created problems since the couples knew very little about each other.¹⁷⁷

The 1943 resumption of troop movement in Europe exacerbated this problem, as newlyweds saw little of each other until the war’s conclusion. These couples had to rely on letter writing to get to know their spouses. For example, Irene A. married after a whirlwind 4-month romance. She recalled in a CBC radio program that when she was

¹⁷³Haste, ‘*Rules of Desire*,’ 122; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain*, 121; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 142-3, 232-3.

¹⁷⁴Latta, *The Memory of All That*, 128-9.

¹⁷⁵Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, 164.

¹⁷⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15630, “WD,” O’Rourke Sr. Chaplain (RC), 15 February 1944. For more information on W.T. O’Rourke’s opinions on soldier marriage and his comments on various marriage cases see Vols. 15629-30. C.P. Stacey and Barbara M. Wilson include a similar discussion of this source in *The Half Million*.

¹⁷⁷AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, “OHAF,” Letter to Colonel George Drew, Premier of Ontario, from J.S.P. Armstrong, Agent General of Ontario House, 20 March 1944. Ontario House was a tourism branch opened in London to encourage British emigration to Ontario from England.

heading to Canada she wondered if she still cared about her husband, since they had not seen each other for a year and they were like strangers.¹⁷⁸ Along a similar line, Chaplain E.C. MacDonald questioned what success overseas marriages could have when they will have had “more separation than union?”¹⁷⁹ Though many couples stayed in touch through letter writing, long term separations could take a toll on a marriage, especially when couples knew little about each other.

CMHQ officials were also concerned that not every serviceman was honest about his background and where he came from. In British society class held a distinct and important role in life, quite different than in Canada. Class, status, and power were all intricately connected, determining one’s upbringing, education, wealth, and social circles.¹⁸⁰ Even well into the 1940s class lines were held quite rigidly and social mobility between them was the exception, not the rule.¹⁸¹ Canadian servicemen arriving in Britain did not have the usual markers of social class, at least to British eyes. In Britain, officer commissions were reserved for the wealthy, a practice not observed in the Canadian

¹⁷⁸Canadian Broadcast Corporation [hereafter cited as CBC], “Not Always a Happy Ending for War Brides,” *Canada Watch* (6 March 1982), Radio, 0-0:34 secs.

¹⁷⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15630, “WD,” E.C. MacDonald H/Capt. (RC) Canadian Military, 14 November 1945.

¹⁸⁰A key difference in the class system in Britain has to do with the upper classes. While some with immense wealth qualify as upper class, wealth alone does not dictate class. Position, such as membership in the peerage, connections to the Monarchy, or landownership were just as important. Ross McKibbin argues that the upper class defined itself and was defined by others. A person’s appearance or social activities marked their rank in society. This even influenced sport participation, for example, if you played golf or cricket you were likely wealthy and a member of the upper class, whereas if you played football you were likely poor and a member of the working class. Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1-2, 100, 102, 271; Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Culture in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-3, 21, 51, 173.

¹⁸¹Ross McKibbin argues that education provided little class mobility as obstacles prevented the poorer classes from rising. Religious institutions also maintained the status quo as their useful social networks were close knit and exclusive. McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 271, 381, 527. Jonathan Vance discusses how Canadian soldiers were confused by the British class system and how generations seemed trapped in the same class. Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 174.

military; thus, a soldier's uniform, provided no clues about his social standing.¹⁸² In order to attract a woman, especially if she were of a higher class, some Canadian servicemen lied about their social background.¹⁸³ For example, in a letter to Acting Director of the DMR, A.L. Jolliffe, the Canadian Welfare Council described an incident in which a naval man travelling home to Montréal noticed that a number of British brides were going to very poor districts considering their social standing, a fact he noted, was obvious even to him as a "man of limited background."¹⁸⁴ In another case, a Mrs. Bell, a woman of higher status than her husband, expressed surprise to find herself living with her in-laws and three small children sharing a single bed in a working-class home in Canada.¹⁸⁵ Her husband had apparently earned a commission overseas and to her at least appeared to be of a higher station than he really was. In the end, she tried to return to England.¹⁸⁶

Sometimes husbands did not outright lie but were evasive and withheld information. One bride noted that whenever she asked about where her boyfriend was from, he would tell her he did not want her to get the wrong impression and that she should wait and see.¹⁸⁷ Military authorities appeared to be aware of this behaviour. In an article in *The Maple Leaf*, Major-General Browne admitted that some Canadians had

¹⁸²Pamela Winfield and Brenda Wilson Hasty, *Sentimental Journey: The Stories of GI Brides* (Great Britain: Constable and Company Limited, 1984), 4.

¹⁸³Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 217-8.

¹⁸⁴LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, "SCF," Letter to A.L. Jolliffe from Nora Lea Assistant Executive Director, the Canadian Welfare Council, 26 January 1944.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, Letter to Nora Lea Assistant Executive Director, the Canadian Welfare Council from Kathleen M. Jackson, Edmonton Family Welfare Bureau, 10 November 1943.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10332, "Canadian Wives Bureau," Letter to the Director from Mrs. S.J. Clatworthy, 28 March 1946.

“pulled a long bow in describing their own and general living conditions in Canada.”¹⁸⁸ In fact, the issue appeared commonly enough that it became the subjects of jokes among the troops themselves. A cartoon in *The Maple Leaf* depicted a British woman and child sitting together while a Canadian soldier sweating profusely in the background, a panicked expression on his face, as the child asks: “*Now that the war is over we’ll be soon leaving for Uncle Herbie’s big ranch in Toronto?*”¹⁸⁹ [Appendix 2 – Image 2.2]

It is impossible to determine how many women experienced a shock or surprise upon their arrival in Canada. Clearly, not all Canadian servicemen were dishonest about their social status and place of birth. In fact, some shared the truth of their humbler stations in life and British women choose to marry them anyway. The award-winning autobiography *Pardon My Parka* by Joan Walker is a case in point. An educated city girl and a successful feature writer at a London newspaper, Joan’s future husband, Jim, was from a mining town in Val d’Or Québec. In her account of their deciding to marry, Jim explains to her that life in Val d’Or would be very different from life in London. Joan responded that she would “rather live in a tent in the Gobi Desert with him than in a suite at the Savoy Hotel with anyone else.”¹⁹⁰ Like Jim, many Canadian servicemen told the truth about where they came from and their financial prospects. Similarly, some British women decided that the class of their husbands, even if beneath that of their own, did not matter as they were marrying for love.

¹⁸⁸Torchy Anderson, “Soldiers’ Bride Easily Adjusted to Canadian Life,” *The Maple Leaf – Belgium*, 9 August 1945.

¹⁸⁹Coughlin, “This Army,” *The Maple Leaf – Belgium*, 5 June 1945.

¹⁹⁰Joan Walker won the Stephen Leacock Award in 1954 for the book. Walker, *Pardon My Parka*, 10-1.

Officials at CMHQ also had to contend with concerns about the status or legality of mixed marriages (Protestant and Roman Catholic) within the Province of Québec. The rulings of a few judges in Québec had created doubt regarding the validity of mixed marriages, declaring them invalid and annulling them.¹⁹¹ These judges' reading of Catholic Canon Law did not recognize a marriage unless performed by a Catholic priest.¹⁹² However, on appeal, the courts of the King's Bench for Québec overturned these judgements in 1941, concluding that while the marriages were not in compliance with Canon Law, they still complied with the *Civil Code of Lower Canada (CCLC)*.¹⁹³ The appeals court ruling was supported by an earlier legal case from 1921, which had ruled that if a Roman Catholic chose to marry before a Protestant clergyman, his marriage would be valid.¹⁹⁴ This conclusion was a source of relief for Canadian military authorities. Mixed French-Canadian marriages to British women would be legal and binding and the government would not have to worry about the potential besmirching of a respectable British woman's name.

However, despite the 1941 ruling the issue was raised once again on 15 May 1942, when an English newspaper, *Little Hampton Gazette*, published an article regarding the *CCLC* and French-Canadian marriages. Its author, B.D. Davis, discussed a

¹⁹¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memorandum – Effect of Marriages in England of R.C. Domiciled in Québec by E.P. Lee Lieut. JAG CMHQ, 27 October 1941, Letter to Central Register Office from W.A.I. Anglin Lt.-col. For Senior Officer CMHQ, 29 October 1941, and Memorandum – Relations Between Troops and Civilians by S.G. Parent Captain JAG CMHQ, 27 May 1942.

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Ibid. *Civil Code of Lower Canada* was a legislative enactment passed in 1866, and later replaced in 1993 with the *Civil Code of Québec*. The civil codes were based on the *Napoleonic Code* and a mixture of French and English law relating to private law. Within Canada, Québec was the only province to have a civil code. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/civil-code/>

¹⁹⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memo – Relations Between Troops and Civilians by Parent, 27 May 1942.

conversation his wife had had with a French-Canadian soldier regarding his pending marriage to a British woman. Davis' wife was shocked to learn that the soldier did not intend to take his wife back to Canada. He explained that when he returned to Québec he would have the marriage annulled as "no court in Québec recognises a civil marriage."¹⁹⁵ Davis claimed that he had verified this to be true, and wished that other newspapers spread the word.¹⁹⁶ The author and soldier alike, believed that the marriage could be annulled unless it had been performed by a Rabbi or Roman Catholic or Anglican priest. The CMHQ responded quickly. Captain S.G. Parent, Judge Advocate General (JAG) of the CMHQ, issued a memorandum claiming that misunderstandings about Québec marriage laws had resulted in "a widespread opinion" among Québec troops, that civil marriages could be easily annulled because Québec courts would not accept them.¹⁹⁷ In fact, explained the CMHQ, according to the *Civil Code*, a marriage was considered valid even when "solemnized out of Lower Canada" and therefore valid in Québec, so long as it was solemnized according to the formalities of the place where it was performed.¹⁹⁸ Captain Parent believed this misconception was widespread, warning COs to be suspicious of any Québec soldier who insisted on "marriage before an English registrar" since that might indicate his intention to abandon his British wife upon returning to Canada.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵B.D. Davis, "Law of Canadian Marriage," *Little Hampton Gazette*, 15 May 1942.

¹⁹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷Parent references *The Little Hampton Gazette* article within his memorandum. LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memo – Relations Between Troops and Civilians by Parent, 27 May 1942.

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.* Province of Québec, *Civil Code of Lower Canada: Volume 1* (Montréal: A. Periard, Law Bookseller and Publisher 1889), 56.

¹⁹⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memo – Relations Between Troops and Civilians by Parent, 27 May 1942.

Parent maintained that the proper information needed to be published in the newspaper, and that all COs needed to be better aware of the nature of Québec's marriage laws. A failure to do so, he feared, would result in "blunders" and ill feeling amongst the British general public who feared a rise of bigamy, and the perceived fallout a woman might experience if she discovered her hitherto respectable marriage had in fact been an elaborate rouse.²⁰⁰ Parent's concerns seemed justified, as this misconception regarding Québec marriage laws appeared to be common. In July 1942, the High Commissioner of Canada House, London, received a newspaper cutting from the Mayor of Godalming who was concerned about the status of marriages to Roman Catholic soldiers from Québec.²⁰¹ Canada House asked for clarification on article 135 of the *CCLC* and in response, CMHQ's Legal Aid compiled another report which ultimately agreed with Parent's initial conclusions of the legality of the marriages.²⁰² This widespread confusion is telling. It is unclear how many soldiers tried to use this popular misconception to their advantage, but as the cases of bigamy and illegitimacy have demonstrated, Canadian authorities were concerned about protecting respectable British women from devious actions. Poor behaviour on the part of the forces could upset the British public and their government.

While the CMHQ expressed concern about the behaviour of its servicemen it also worried about the kind of women Canadian soldiers intended to marry. In October 1943, Brigadier C.S. Booth wrote with concern that some soldiers had become involved with

²⁰⁰Ibid.

²⁰¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memorandum by David M. Johnson, 27 July 1942.

²⁰²Ibid., Memorandum – Marriages in U.K. and Foreign Countries of C.A. personnel Domiciled in Québec by J.R.A. Beullac Captain JAG Legal Aid CMHQ, 7 August 1942.

prostitutes on their leaves and married them.²⁰³ He also voiced concerns about reasons behind overseas marriage: “Under a stupid ruling of the British Ministry of Labour, women who marry Canadian soldiers are exempt from national service, and this fact also is known to many of these women.”²⁰⁴ Brigadier Booth believed that British women were marrying Canadians as a way to get out of conscription. He was not alone in his views. A 1941 memorandum on Canadian soldiers marrying in the UK also outlined concerns about marriages being done hastily in order for women to obtain a Dependence Allowance (DA).²⁰⁵ R.O.G. Bennett, Chairman of the DAB, wrote to P.J. Montague, Major General in charge of Administration of the CMHQ, about the DAB concerns about “the moral character” of the English women Canadians were marrying.²⁰⁶

Canadian authorities feared that British prostitutes and women from lower classes were taking advantage of Canadian soldiers. In his diary, senior Chaplain J.S. Cote suggested that there were three types of women in Britain: prostitutes, “more so than at home,” working class women away from home who “if they had any morals, they have discarded them,” and good girls that you would never meet in the pub or on the streets.²⁰⁷ According to him, good girls could only be found in respectable places (heavily implying the home). However, with *The National Service Act* single women were more mobile than before and often met soldiers at work or in social activities, such as dance halls, movies

²⁰³Ibid., Memo Re: Overseas R.O. by Mess signed Booth, 27 October 1943.

²⁰⁴Ibid., “Marriage Ban on Troops,” *The Daily Mail*, 8 June 1942.

²⁰⁵Ibid., Memorandum Marriages – Canadian Soldiers in the U.K. by R.G. Rudolf Major CMHQ, 24 April 1941; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 231-2.

²⁰⁶LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 12497, “CMHQL,” Letter to R.O.G. Bennett, Esq, Chairman DAB, from P.J. Montague, Major General in charge of Administration at CMHQ, 16 November 1944.

²⁰⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, “WD,” Cote Senior Chaplain (RC), 2 November 1943.

etc. Parents, be they of the man or the woman, were not around to provide advice, chaperone, or to scrutinize prospective partners.

The government also expressed concerns that lower class or immoral women would become a financial burden on the Canadian public.²⁰⁸ Further, as was evidenced by blocking Canadian women from going to Britain, the Canadian government wanted to curb or at least dissuade overseas marriages in the hopes of cutting the costs associated with transporting dependants back to Canada at the war's conclusion. British women thus took on a dual image to Canadian authorities. On the one hand, British women were victims of the sexual appetites and immoral behaviour of Canadian servicemen and in need of protection. On the other hand, Canadian authorities saw British women as sexual predators or opportunists looking to get out of patriotic service, while securing themselves financial support at the expense of the soldier, and more importantly the Canadian government. As a result, the state carried on a general policy "to dissuade" Canadian servicemen from marrying overseas.²⁰⁹

Surprisingly, despite the reservations regarding prospective brides, and the potential costs in transporting them, Canada did not ban the overseas marriage of servicemen, as initially the New Zealand Government had.²¹⁰ Instead it put into place several measures to restrict overseas marriages. First, the Canadian had to obtain

²⁰⁸LAC, DND RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," Memo Marriages – Canadian Soldiers in the U.K. by Rudolf, 24 April 1941.

²⁰⁹Ibid.; LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SCF," Army Routine Order (21st Army Group) 788; LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, "SCF," Letter to Blair from Langdon, 20 February 1942.

²¹⁰The New Zealand DND believed that soldiers "were supposed to fight not marry." Fortune, "'Mr. Jones' Wives,'" 587-8.

permission from his CO. Without this, the soldier's wife could not receive a DA.²¹¹ If either the soldier or bride were under 21, they had to get their parents' permission to marry. The bride had to provide a letter of recommendation attesting to her good character from an employer or local clergymen.²¹² The couple also had to meet with a military chaplain to determine if they were serious about the decision they were making and for permission to marry.²¹³ Many chaplains took these marriage interviews very seriously. W.T. O'Rourke believed it would be a "crime" to do otherwise, claiming: "It will bring with it a flood of unhappy homes after the War and the Divorce courts will ring merrily."²¹⁴ At the same time, a memorandum instructed all Roman Catholic Chaplains, not to hold up marriage applications as it would be "unjust" to do so.²¹⁵ Catholic and Protestant Chaplains alike voiced concerns about hasty marriages, and believed it was their duty to complete a thorough investigation regarding the couple's intentions before approving their applications to wed.

The process did not end with this investigation. Afterwards, couples had to fill out a permission to marry form to receive a date upon which they could legally marry and purchase a marriage license. If they missed their short window, they had to purchase a

²¹¹"British War Bride Speaks Out," *Maclean's*, 15 January 1944; LAC, DND RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," History of S.A.A.G. by Geo. H. Ellis; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 20; Stacey and Wilson, *The Half Million*, 136; Jarratt, *Captured Hearts*, 42-3.

²¹²*Ibid.*; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 21-2.

²¹³LAC, DND RG24-C-3, Vol. 15630, "WD," Report for the Chaplain Service Overseas Roman Catholic by Chief of Staff, CMHQ, 19 December 1945; LAC, DND RG24-C-3, Vol. 15633, "WD," Monthly Report of the Canadian Chaplain Service (P) Overseas by Senior Officer, CMHQ, November 1942; Jarratt, *Captured Hearts*, 42-3.

²¹⁴Leave times varied anywhere from 48 hours to a week or more. LAC, DND RG24-C-3, Vol. 15630, "WD," O'Rourke Sr. Chaplain (RC), 23 March 1944.

²¹⁵LAC, DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15630, "WD," Memorandum – To All RC Chaplains, 22 June 1944, and Report for the Chaplain Service Overseas Roman Catholic by MGA, CMHQ, 29 August 1945. The report discusses soldiers becoming angered at chaplains misfiling things or stalling marriages taking place.

new license.²¹⁶ Canadian soldiers also had to set \$200 aside in their own bank to cover their brides' travel fees to Canada.²¹⁷ This payment revealed the soldier's dedication to his new marriage and reduced the likelihood of his abandoning his wife after the war. It also demonstrates that from the start of the war, Canadian authorities had no intention of paying the costs of transporting soldiers' dependants to Canada. Soldiers who asked for government assistance in moving their dependants to Canada were told that they had to pay themselves through private means.²¹⁸ The state granted aid only if private means were unavailable, and then a loan would be issued that had to be repaid upon the soldiers' return to Canada.²¹⁹ Other restrictions included a two to three month waiting period and the requirement for a medical examination for the couple.²²⁰ These measures forced them to wait to get married, which was believed would prevent hasty marriages while the soldiers were on leave. The medical examination aimed to reveal the character of the soldier and bride and identify cases of VD that required treatment.

These requirements fell in line with the existing standards of *The Immigration Act* of 1919. The women and their husbands had to pay their way to Canada, provide

²¹⁶Jarratt, *War Brides*, 23; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 20.

²¹⁷"British War Bride Speaks Out," *Maclean's*, 15 January 1944; LAC, DND RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," "Marriage Ban on Troops," *The Daily Mail*, 8 June 1942 and Memo Re: Overseas R.O. by Mess signed Booth, 27 October 1943; LAC, DND RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," History of S.A.A.G. by Geo. H. Ellis; Vance, *The Maple Leaf Empire*, 186-7.

²¹⁸LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, "SCF," Memorandum by F.C.B, 9 November 1940, Memorandum to Mr. Chapman from F.C.B., 28 November 1940, Memorandum by McG, DMR, 12 August 1941, and Memorandum for Staff: Repatriation of Wives (Widows) and Children, 20 February 1942.

²¹⁹Ibid., Memorandum by F.C. Blair, 29 January 1941, Memo to Mr. Pratt, 14 November 1941, Memorandum to Hon. Mr. Crerar, 26 December 1941, and Memo for Staff, 20 February 1942.

²²⁰LAC, DND RG24, Vol. 12497, "CMHQL," "Marriage Ban on Troops," *The Daily Mail*, 8 June 1942 and Memo Re: Overseas R.O. 3744 by Mess signed Booth, 27 October 1943; LAC, DND RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," "Arrival of War Brides," Broadcast by Greg Clark, 4 April 1944.

assurance of settlement arrangements, and pass a medical examination.²²¹ Although of the preferred racial background, prospective British brides went through a tremendous amount of red tape in order to wed Canadian soldiers. Like prostitutes, immigrant, and working-class women, British war brides fell under intense scrutiny and monitoring by social workers, the clergy, journalists, immigration agents, and military and government officials.²²² Canadian authorities were deeply concerned about the moral character of these prospective brides as their potential lower-class backgrounds implied poverty, disease, and immorality. This intense scrutiny into a bride's character tied conceptions of nation building to fears of VD. Western officials, Canadian, American, and British, expressed serious concerns about VD and how it was spread, especially after a large number of the Allied forces reported high incidents of infection during the First World War.²²³ They blamed women – not men – be they prostitutes, immigrants, or just members of the working-class, for the spread of VD. They viewed regulation and control of these groups as essential to stopping its spread and to maintain the nation's racial purity.²²⁴ Concern over VD rose again at the beginning of the Second World War, resulting in Canadian military and civilian authorities working to better educate Canadian

²²¹LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, "SCF," Letter to Mr. Ignatieff from Mr. Little, 22 January 1941, Letter to Mr. Blair from Mr. Little, 28 January 1941, and Memorandum to Mr. Little from Andrew N. O'Kelly, Assistant Commissioners, 18 February 1941.

²²²Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 40.

²²³Alan Sears, "Immigration Controls as Social Policy: The Case of Canadian Medical Inspection, 1900-1920," *Studies in Political Economy* 33 (Autumn 1990): 92; Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada, 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 102, 122-3; Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race & Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 2, 6-7, 11, 145-6.

²²⁴Sears, "Immigration Controls as Social Policy," 92; Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, 102, 106-7.

soldiers about the disease and its prevention.²²⁵ While men received education, Canadian women received stricter surveillance. In Canada, police forces hired female officers to help search for, handle, and interrogate female suspects at dance halls, parks, or on the streets.²²⁶ Authorities viewed British and Canadian women who went out to pubs, dances, or other social activities at night, as loose or potential prostitutes.²²⁷

Due to this concern, immigration officials demanded that war brides undergo a medical examination before they could enter Canada, even though they had to complete one in order to get married. These officials claimed in one memorandum that pre-marital exams could not be accepted as final since the “women might become infected subsequent to marriage and before sailing to Canada.”²²⁸ This secondary examination demonstrated continued concern regarding the moral character of the British women marrying Canadian soldiers. While medical examinations were required for all potential immigrants, immigration officials often used them to block peoples of colour, as well as working class British immigrants of a perceived mental defect or immoral character.²²⁹ As such, they provided Canadian immigration authorities with great power to determine who could enter Canada. They thus became a test to prove not just that the bride was

²²⁵Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 134-7, 142-3. Penicillin was not used to treat syphilis until 1943. Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, 11.

²²⁶*Ibid.*, 140. The US engaged in similar surveillance of its female population for suspected prostitutes or loose women. Marilyn E. Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality during World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 118-9, 121; Michael Boudreau, *City of Order: Crime and Society in Halifax, 1918-35* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 43, 133.

²²⁷Pierson, “*They’re Still Women After All*,” 16-7, 201, 214.

²²⁸LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, “SCF,” Memorandum by T.A. Crerar and A.L. Jolliffe, 8 July 1943.

²²⁹Sears, “Immigration Controls as Social Policy,” 6, 99-101. Similar immigration restrictions based on female immortality can be seen in British and American immigration policy. Levine, *Prostitution, Race & Politics*, 2, 45; Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4, 31, 47-8.

disease free and of good character, but also that she had been faithful to her husband, while he was away fighting on the front lines.

Some British war brides questioned the need for yet another medical examination.²³⁰ Canada's military and immigration branch knew how unpopular the measure was, but they proved unwavering in enforcing it. For example, one bride wrote to Prime Minister Mackenzie King to ask that the examination be carried out by her personal physician, since she was deeply afraid of doctors and hospitals.²³¹ The letter was passed onto T.A. Crerar, whose private secretary told the Office of the Prime Minister that her request was to be denied and that she needed to be informed that if she wanted to join her husband she would meet with the Canadian physician and that there could be no exceptions.²³² This policy prioritized the opinion of a Canadian physician, rather than her own British one. In the end, these concerns appear to have been misplaced, as so few women proved to be a problem. The DMR reported in July 1943 that of approximately 300 wives medically examined only 4 had been problem cases.²³³

This constant questioning of the moral character of British brides was intrinsically tied to their perceived role as mothers of future white Canadians.²³⁴ Not only were they

²³⁰LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, "SCF," Memo by Crerar and Jolliffe, 8 July 1943 and Memo to Little from O'Kelly, 18 February 1941; LAC, DND RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, "CWB," Letter to CWB from D. McKay, 16 May 1945.

²³¹LAC, WLMK, R10383-7-9-E, MR# C-7048, "PSC," Letter to W.L. Mackenzie King from O.N. Auger, 1 March 1944.

²³²Ibid., Letter to J.W. Pickersgill, esq. Office of the Prime Minister from W.J.F. Pratt, Private Secretary, 31 March 1944.

²³³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, "SCF," Memo by Crerar and Jolliffe, 8 July 1943 and Letter to Brigadier G.B Chisholm, Director of General Medical Services, DND, from A.L. Jolliffe, 15 July 1943. In this letter Jolliffe argues that only 1% of cases proved to be problematic.

²³⁴Valverde, "When the Mother of the Race is Free," 4-5; Sangster, "The Meanings of Mercy," 520-1.

the biological reproducers of the nation, but also the cultural ones.²³⁵ The traditions, values, and morals of the nations were often passed on to the next generation by mothers. As such, Canadian and British women were expected to be good – to marry, stay married, and raise children. Any woman who stepped outside of these accepted roles was deemed loose or bad. Feminist scholar Judith Butler has argued that gender binaries are often so embedded into the public consciousness that any deviation or failure to perform in a manner “considered appropriate to one’s gender” is often met with punishment.²³⁶ This desire to maintain the appropriate gender behaviour is apparent in the actions of Canadian social reformers, and government and military officials, who rigorously monitored and scrutinized British female sexuality. However, the stretching of traditional gender roles in Britain during the war made the line between good or bad women more difficult to discern. The brides’ status as British was not enough to classify them necessarily as of good stock. British brides had to prove their worthiness in order to assuage the fears of Canadian authorities regarding the kinds of women soldiers were marrying and the contribution these women could make to the nation’s future population.

Soldiers, although they were upset with most requirements and inspections, focused on the fact that they were expected to pay for their wives’ transport to Canada. They wrote to military authorities requesting assistance in this matter. Often, they would point out the fact that Canada had paid to transport dependants to Canada during the First

²³⁵Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 22-3, 26, 37, 45; Sinha, “Gender and Nation,” 238, 242-3.

²³⁶Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 178-9.

World War, a point not lost on the government.²³⁷ To make matters worse for the Canadian government, its veterans of the Great War also petitioned the government to grant dependants of the ongoing war free transportation, since it had paid to transport their own wives to Canada decades earlier.²³⁸ Canadian servicemen felt entitled to this accommodation, because they had risked their lives going to fight overseas and felt the least the government could do was foot the bill for the transportation of their dependants. And this request did not appear to be unreasonable. In 1942, marriages between Canadian servicemen and British women were estimated to be roughly 400 a month, with a total of 4,160 marriages by the end of that year. At that time there were 125,000 Canadian soldiers stationed in Britain. This meant that only 3% of the army got married overseas.²³⁹ With such a relatively low rate of marriage among soldiers, the government's reluctance to pay for the transportation of war brides seems odd, certainly from a financial perspective. State officials' efforts to first avoid, then limit, the costs associated with transporting these women, when combined with the ways these officials couched their reluctance in terms of the women's supposed quality and calibre, reveals the extent to which these officials sought out any cost savings they could find, as well as their genuine concern regarding the success of these marriages at the war's end.

²³⁷LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, "SCF," Memo to Mr. Ignatieff from Mr. Little, 22 January 1941, Memo to Mr. Munroe from F.C.B., 24 July 1941, Memo by McG, DDMR, 12 August 1941, and Memo to Mr. Pratt, 14 November 1941.

²³⁸Ibid., Memo to Mr. Pratt, 14 November 1941, Memorandum to Mr. B from the Director, DMR, 24 November 1941, and Memo to Crerar, 26 December 1941.

²³⁹Department of National Defence, *The Canadian in Britain, 1939-1944* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1946), 16, 163; Canada, Parliament, *Debates*, 19th Parliament, 3rd Session, Vol. 2 (1942-1943): 2162.

Yet, before Canadian officials could resolve the situation on their own accord, their stance on the matter became forced by the actions of Australia. At the end of 1941, the Australian government announced that it would fully cover the costs of transportation for the dependants of Australian servicemen. Shortly thereafter, the UK government put forward a similar proposal, and recommended that Canada consider doing the same.²⁴⁰ Canada's High Commissioner to Britain, Vincent Massey, keenly supported this idea, having been communicating with External Affairs to encourage the free transportation of dependants since the beginning of the war.²⁴¹ Upon hearing of Australia's and the UK's plans, Massey had his under-secretary, Lester B. Pearson, write to F.C. Blair, Director of Immigration, to see whether Canada was indeed considering the issue.²⁴² This put the government in a difficult position, something noted in a memorandum to T.A. Crerar: "In light of what Australia and the United Kingdom offer, Canada is placed in the position where it will be very difficult to refuse passage to dependants of men who married overseas."²⁴³ The precedent established by the last war, the entitlement of the nation's soldiers, and the example set by Australia and the UK all prompted the Canadian government to cave on the issue of the transportation of soldier dependants.

²⁴⁰Due to space restrictions and a lack of resources, this dissertation is unable to go into the reasoning behind the Australian government's decision. It is important to note that Australia was largely removed from the European theatre at this time and may have had a smaller number of dependents to transport to its country. LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Letter to Col. H.O. Lawson, Director of Supplies and Transport DND from F.C. Blair, DMR, 6 January 1942 and 15 January 1942.

²⁴¹Ibid., MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," History of S.A.A.G., by Ellis.

²⁴²IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, "SCF," Letter to F.C. Blair, Director of Immigration, from Lester B. Pearson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 15 December 1941.

²⁴³Ibid., Memo to Crerar, 26 December 1941.

The initial attitude of the Canadian government, military, and clergy regarding British war brides was not wholly positive and they did not overtly extol their Britishness as valuable to Canada. Rather, they all treated the women in a contradictory fashion. On the one hand, British women were seen to require protection from the licentious behaviour of immoral Canadian soldiers. On the other hand, they were seen as the immoral ones, portrayed as lower-class temptresses trying to take advantage of Canadian soldiers. Across the board government and military leaders viewed wartime marriages as inadvisable, hasty, and doomed to fail. The Canadian government also had concerns about the costs associated with transporting dependants based on its experiences from the last war. As a result, it installed restrictive measures to impede these marriages. Copious amounts of red tape slowed the process to ensure that all marriages would be authentic, serious, and hopefully long lasting. Brides had to prove their character to marry and to enter Canada with their husbands. However, Canadian authorities underestimated servicemen's desires to marry overseas. Despite government officials' best attempts to avoid the issue, complaints from soldiers, the precedent set by the last war, and the decision of both the Australian and the UK governments to pay for the transport of soldier dependants, forced Canada to take similar actions. Having spent so much time trying to dissuade or prevent Canada servicemen from marrying British women, the Canadian government and military changed their course, leaving them unprepared for the massive task of moving an ever-increasing number of brides to Canada.

Chapter 2 – Ill-Prepared and Overwhelmed: The Canadian Government's Transportation of British Brides to Canada, 1942-5

At the end of 1941, the Australian and UK governments agreed to the free transportation of the dependants of service personnel at the end of the war, placing pressure on the Canadian government to do the same. Following this announcement, the CMHQ voiced its objections to a Canadian free repatriation scheme, claiming that “too many irresponsible marriages” were taking place.²⁴⁴ However, facing pressure from its Allies, the Cabinet of the War Committee agreed – begrudgingly – on 6 January 1942 to provide one way minimum cost transportation (ocean and rails) of soldiers' dependants to Canada. The Immigration Branch (IB) of the Department of Mines and Resources (DMR) took charge of the process. Nevertheless, having spent so much time and effort attempting to prevent or dissuade its servicemen from marrying British women, the Canadian government was unprepared for the task of moving dependants, especially while the war was ongoing.

By 1943, overseas marriages between Canadian servicemen and British women were occurring at an average rate of 2,600 each year.²⁴⁵ At the start of 1944, there were roughly 200,000 Canadian soldiers in the British Isles and some 16,000 British brides – meaning that 8% of Canadian soldiers had married overseas.²⁴⁶ Yet, despite agreeing to pay for and transport these dependants, few women were actually moved to Canada in the

²⁴⁴LAC, DND RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” History of S.A.A.G. by Geo. H. Ellis; LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, “SCF,” Memorandum to C.G.S, A.G., Q.M.G., A/D.M. from O.J. Waters, Private Secretary DND, 1942.

²⁴⁵LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, “SFC,” Excerpt from the 1942-1943 Annual Report of Commissioner of European Emigration for Canada.

²⁴⁶Ibid., Memorandum to T.A. Crerar from A.L. Jolliffe, 19 January 1944; DND, *The Canadian in Britain*, 17; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 230; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 16.

following two years. The Battle of the Atlantic, which ranged from 1939-1945, made civilian travel across the Atlantic next to impossible. German submarines (U-boats) sank British military and commercial ships en masse, putting the British government in crisis, since the island nation relied on imports of oil, fats, and, most importantly, food to survive. While the convoy system – British and Canadian Royal Navy ships escorting merchant ships – provided some protection from the U-boat threat, the persistent danger of sinking limited overseas shipping to the movement of troops and necessary supplies.²⁴⁷ By 1943, the Allies were able to turn the tide of the battle in their favour due to the cracking of the German enigma code, increased convoy sizes, long range aircraft support, and high-frequency direction finding.²⁴⁸ Yet, travel across the Atlantic still remained incredibly dangerous until 1945, and as a result only 1,443 dependants were moved to Canada between 1942-1944.²⁴⁹

Delays in shipping were further exacerbated by the volume of work associated with processing dependants to sail to Canada. Complaints about the slow speed of transportation and poor settlement arrangements in Canada resulted in the Department of National Defence (DND) assuming control of the transportation of servicemen's dependants from the DMR in 1944. When it came to servicemen who had married

²⁴⁷John Keegan, *The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare* (New York: Viking, 1988), 225-6, 229-32; Marc Milner, *Battle of the Atlantic* (St. Catharines, Ont.: Vanwell Pub., 2003), 39-41, 107, 230.

²⁴⁸Enigma refers to a German device used to encode strategic messages during the war. It was incredibly difficult to decode, taking the British until the middle of the war to decrypt. High-frequency direction finding refers to a type of radio direction finder that was used to catch transmitted German submarine radio communications, which meant that escort ships could determine the location of submarines and steer away from them. Ibid.; Ibid., 148-9, 159, 180-1.

²⁴⁹188 dependants were moved between 1942-1943 and 1,255 between 1943-4. LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Letter to Secretary of State for External Affairs from the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, Canada House, 26 May 1944; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 270.

overseas, the DND had grown concerned that the successful postwar re-establishment of these servicemen could be tied to the success of their wartime marriages. If British war brides proved unhappy in Canada, or worse, would not go, then the rehabilitation of their husbands could be adversely affected. As a result, government officials determined that Canada had to be made attractive to British war brides and that the brides needed to undergo Canadianization. This assimilationist program was to be carried out by the DND's new Canadian Wives Bureau (CWB), created in 1944 by the DND to transport and educate British war brides. The DND assumed that it had learned from the earlier mistakes of the DMR, by having the CWB work in co-operation with additional government departments and voluntary organizations. However, the process of moving dependants to Canada also proved equally trying for the CWB, which, like the DMR before it, found itself pushed to its limits.

Moving dependents to Canada proved a challenging logistical task. Before dependants could board a ship, they had to be processed by the IB and their settlement arrangements in Canada had to be approved. This involved a tremendous amount of work, including filing and approving applications, organizing financial arrangements, investigating living arrangements in Canada, coordinating with shipping and rail companies, and issuing exit and entrance permits. The High Commissioner for Canada, at Canada House in London, aided the IB by creating shipping priority lists and contacting dependants regarding travel problems.²⁵⁰ In addition to the frustrations of waiting for

²⁵⁰LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Memorandum re: Transfer of Dependents – UK to Canada by J. Pembroke, Assistant Deputy Minister DND, 3 July 1944.

scarce berths, brides who wished to travel to Canada faced an onerous application process. Each wife had to file an application to the High Commissioner's office, which then forwarded it to the Commanding Officer (CO) to confirm the soldier's status before returning the form. Next, Canadian military medical services subjected dependants to a medical examination. From there, settlement arrangements in Canada had to be investigated and referred to offices in Ottawa. If and when an application was approved, the Passage Priority Committee then arranged travel dates, tickets, and permits.²⁵¹

Investigating settlement arrangements in Canada involved the most time-consuming portion of the application process. The IB initially held that wives should not be transported to Canada unless their husbands were already discharged. Experience from the First World War informed this practice, since contemporary evidence suggested wives who went to Canada ahead of their husbands had been unhappy, and some marriages proved to be unsuccessful.²⁵² If a wife wished to go to Canada ahead of her husband, then settlement arrangements with her husband's relatives had to be investigated and arranged. This time-consuming process did not always guarantee that the dependants went to a suitable location. Despite being told by IB officials that her new home was suitable, Mrs. Bell found that it had no bathroom facilities and that she would have to share a bed with one of her new relatives.²⁵³

²⁵¹LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR # C-10400, "SFC," Excerpt from the 1942-1943 Annual Report of Commissioner of European Emigration for Canada.

²⁵²LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR#C-5218, "1903 HCR," Letter to Lawson from Blair, 6 January 1942 and 15 January 1942.

²⁵³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, "SFC," Letter to Lea from Jackson, 10 November 1943.

After receiving similar reports from Montréal and Halifax, Assistant Executive Director of the Canadian Welfare Council, Nora Lea, wrote to A.L. Jolliffe, Director of Immigration, on the matter. She questioned the qualifications of the individuals tasked with investigating settlement arrangements, arguing that without trained case workers and proper investigations of settlement arrangements, dependants would be unhappy in Canada.²⁵⁴ In a report to Brigadier D.A. White, Chaplain, Capt. J.E. Sheehy, described the story of Mrs. Hicks and her two children, who after arriving in Nova Scotia discovered that they would be sharing a small house of three rooms with five other people. Sheehy eventually arranged for their removal from the home due to its unsuitability.²⁵⁵ White in turn agreed that in future, investigations of living arrangements should be more “thorough,” to avoid frustrating future dependents.²⁵⁶

The IB’s investigation into settlement arrangements reflected some of the ongoing concerns among officials regarding these unions. As discussed in the last chapter, several Canadian officials perceived these women as potential victims in need of protection against an assumed deception by Canadian servicemen. Government officials, believing some Canadian soldiers to be less than truthful about their humble origins, wanted to ensure that these British wives went to good homes. However, by interfering in this manner the government opened itself to criticisms when shortcomings in its investigative process emerged. In a memorandum to Colonel J.M. MacDonald, A.L. Jolliffe, warned that the investigations could create the perception that the government was “criticiz[ing]

²⁵⁴Ibid., Letter to Jolliffe from Lea, 26 January 1944.

²⁵⁵Ibid., MR# C-10401, “SFC,” Memorandum to Secretary, DND, from D.A. White, Brigadier, Military District no. 6 Commanding Officer, 16 October 1944.

²⁵⁶Ibid.

or condemn[ing] the home of a soldier” which could put the DMR on “dangerous ground.”²⁵⁷ Thus, the DMR – and the federal government more broadly – found itself caught in the precarious position of choosing between two equally unsatisfactory options; either the DMR conducted its investigations and risked offending veterans, or it risked sending soldiers’ new wives into potentially unsuitable – or even unsafe – situations, which could offend or endanger the women.

Soldiers and their families also criticized the DMR for not being better organized in its handling of the movement of dependants. Families were not always made aware of dependants’ arrivals and expressed concern that the women lacked proper supervision on the trains. Some women arrived with no money.²⁵⁸ On top of everything else, the DMR was responsible for transportation refunds. When the Canadian government decided to provide free transportation of soldier dependants, it also decided that Canadian soldiers who had already paid, or acquired a loan to send their dependants to Canada were entitled to a reimbursement.²⁵⁹ Canadian servicemen, who were agitated that they had to pay in the first place, quickly applied for their refunds; F.C. Blair noted that the Commissioner in London received dozens of such applications.²⁶⁰ To make matters worse, the number of marriages continued to rise; a “conservative estimate” from September 1942 noted some 30,000 marriages by war’s end.²⁶¹ A.L. Jolliffe was increasingly concerned regarding the

²⁵⁷LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, “SFC,” Memorandum to Colonel J.M. MacDonald, Director of Administration, DND, from A.L. Jolliffe, 1 November 1944.

²⁵⁸Ibid., Memorandum by A.L. Jolliffe, 10 March 1944.

²⁵⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Captain Stratton, from G.G. Congdon, Acting Commissioner, DMR IB, 30 April 1942; LAC, DND RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” History of S.A.A.G. by Geo. H. Ellis.

²⁶⁰Ibid., MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Lt. Col. H. DesRosiers from F.C. Blair, 8 September 1942.

²⁶¹LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, “SFC,” Memo to Crerar from Jolliffe, 19 January 1944.

preparations required to move so many dependants, calling for better advanced planning of the movement of dependants; from ship accommodations to reception and destination arrangements.²⁶² The High Commissioner wrote to the Secretary of State for External Affairs arguing that the work had proved beyond the capacity of the staff of Canada House.²⁶³ The movement of dependants was proving to be too much work for the DMR and Canada House alone.

At the same time, Ontario House, a tourism branch opened in London before the war by Premier Drew to encourage British immigration to Ontario, found itself inundated by British war brides. Although not under their original purview, the staff at Ontario House worked very closely with war brides throughout the war, providing information on Canada and working with immigration officials. Its Agent General, J.S.P. Armstrong, encouraged this work, despite dissatisfaction with the work of the DMR and DND on this matter, which he expressed in many letters to Colonel Drew. For example, on 12 May 1944 he wrote:

Investigation shows that this matter has been bandied about for four years, between the Civil and Military authorities, each taking the attitude that it was the other's responsibility, until two months ago, when we gave our first press announcement that we intended to do something about it. Since then all authorities have suddenly become alive to the situation and shown interest, jealousy guarding what they consider to be their rights and vying with one another in an effort to obtain the most kudos.²⁶⁴

Armstrong believed that neither the DMR nor the DND took the situation of soldiers' dependants seriously. He accused both departments of evading

²⁶²Ibid.

²⁶³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Letter to Secretary of State for External Affairs from the High Commissioner for Canada, 26 May 1944.

²⁶⁴AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, "OHAF," Letter to Drew from Armstrong, 12 May 1944.

responsibility and claimed that they had only started to take the matter more seriously when Ontario House declared its intention to address the problem. This was a bold claim to make, since Ontario House would not have had the means necessary to take responsibility for the movement of all soldiers' dependants. However, Armstrong was clearly agitated that the efforts of Ontario House in this matter went unnoticed.²⁶⁵ He suggested that despite its limited progress, control over the movement of dependants had become a matter of pride and jealousy between the DMR and the DND, a claim not entirely unfounded.

By 1944, the various transportation issues and complaints by dependants came to the attention of the Minister of National Defense, James Ralston, who tasked the DND with investigating them. On 10 March 1944, representatives of the Army, Air Force, Navy, DND, IB, and the Canadian Red Cross Society (CRC) (which had been volunteering to help with dependant movements) met informally in the office of Brigadier M. Noel to discuss these problems. During opening remarks, an unspecified individual explained that responsibility for the movement of soldiers' dependants "had not been settled."²⁶⁶ Meanwhile A.L. Jolliffe expressed frustration at the lack of understanding regarding the accomplishments of the DMR, as well as the problems they faced.²⁶⁷ While the meeting was presented as a collaboration, and the DND did not explicitly claim

²⁶⁵The contributions of Ontario House have also gone unnoticed in the scholarship on British war brides.

²⁶⁶Problems mentioned included family difficulties at the port, poor travel accommodations, supervision, settlement arrangements, and the size of the reception centres. Interestingly, this meeting did not include a representative from Ontario House. LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Memo by Jolliffe, 10 March 1944 and Minutes of an Informal Meeting held in the Office of Brigadier M. Noel, D.A.G., to Discuss the Problems of Canadian Transportation for Dependants of Members of the Canadian Armed Forces, 10 March 1944.

²⁶⁷Ibid.

responsibility for the movement of dependants, it was apparent that it intended to do so soon. In a memo to the Minister of National Defence, the Adjutant-General wrote that there needed to be a “careful detailed study” of the problems involved in moving dependants before a final plan could be completed.²⁶⁸

As a result, from April to June 1944, the Defence Council held numerous meetings about providing transportation for the dependants of soldiers. The DND appeared to be developing an action plan, determining key groups with which it would co-ordinate and total cost estimates for when it assumed control.²⁶⁹ This planning included a dramatic shift in responsibility; since 1942, the DND had only provided assistance to the DMR during the physical movement of dependants to Canada, but in 1944 it assumed full responsibility for the transportation of soldiers’ dependants. The evidence suggests that this change in priorities was tied to concerns regarding post-war soldier rehabilitation. Since the beginning of the war the Canadian Government had been preparing programs to help soldiers thrive and reintegrate into Canadian society at the war’s conclusion.²⁷⁰ Many historians have argued that these programs were not created solely to benefit the veteran, but they were also created to address public fears of a return

²⁶⁸LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Memorandum – Transfer to Canada of Dependents of Army Personnel Serving Overseas to the Minister of National Defence from the Adjutant-General, 5 April 1944.

²⁶⁹Ibid., MR# C-5194, “1903 HCR,” Report – Transportation of Dependents within Canada by L.R. Maringuy, Chief of Naval Personnel, H.F.G. Letson, Adjutant-General, and J.A. Sully, Air Force Member Personnel, 30 May 1944, Extract from Minutes of Meeting of the Defence Council, 9 June 1944, Memorandum to Defence Council from J.R. McDonald, Lieut. Commander Navy Adviser Discharge Affairs, R.M. Hague Colonel Army Adviser Discharge Affairs, and A.C.P. Clayton Group Captain Director of Demobilization, 13 June 1944. In the report, they estimated that depending on the war’s duration, the total number of dependants, distance to travel, etc. that the cost to transport dependants could be as high as \$17,810,317.

²⁷⁰Programs included veteran benefits, gratuities, education, etc. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 8; Granatstein, *Canada’s War*, 254.

to economic depression.²⁷¹ Following the end of the First World War and into the Great Depression, Canada experienced high unemployment rates, resulting in labour unrest and many strike actions, the most well known being the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. In addition to high levels of unemployment, veterans received few benefits after the war. They expressed their outrage on the streets and through the Great War Veterans Association, as they fought to receive better recognition and treatment.²⁷² The Canadian government feared veteran involvement in unions and strikes, worrying that their combat experience made them dangerous. Government officials promoted policies that favoured business, resulting in the interwar period being dominated by strike breaking and portraying union leaders as communists.²⁷³ While the government and employers may have beaten the labour movement into submission in the 1920s, similar concerns regarding the rights of the worker reared their head during the Great Depression.

Despite the massive levels of unemployment and poverty associated with the Great Depression, the federal government refused to take responsibility for unemployment and provided minimal relief. Canadian government officials generally believed that the poor were unemployed due to their own idleness;

²⁷¹Jeffrey Keshen, "Getting it Right the Second Time Round: The Reintegration of Canadian Veterans of World War II," in *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* ed. Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 64; Alvin Finkel, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 126-7; James Struthers, 'No Fault of Their Own: 'Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 213; Granatstein, *Canada's War*, 251.

²⁷²Struthers, 'No Fault of Their Own,' 12, 22-26; Finkel, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada*, 97-8.

²⁷³Finkel, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada*, 96-8; Craig Heron and Myer Siemiatycki, "The Great War, the State, and Working-Class Canada," in *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925* ed. Craig Heron (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 34-6; Craig Heron, "National Contours: Solidarity and Fragmentation," in *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925* ed. Craig Heron (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 289, 295.

leaving charities with the brunt of assistance provisions for the unemployed.²⁷⁴

However, the behaviour of the government combined with the economic stresses of the Great Depression led some Canadians to argue that the Government needed to intervene. British-Canadians grew more concerned about the rights they felt they deserved as Canadian citizens – the right to work and to receive adequate social welfare when unemployment was due to “no fault of their own.”²⁷⁵

The economic upturn of the Second World War did not quiet these demands. Instead, Canadians expressed concern that the same pattern of unemployment and economic depression would return after the war if the government did not step in. At the beginning of the war the federal government prioritized veteran rehabilitation, partially as a way to address the mishandling of veterans at the conclusion of the last war and partially to preclude veteran militancy at the end of the current war.²⁷⁶ Providing veterans with work so that they could retain the title of “breadwinner” stood as a key priority.²⁷⁷ Historian Nancy Christie has argued that the welfare policies of the Second World War were deeply gendered, regulating women’s behaviour and dictating that men

²⁷⁴Struthers, ‘*No Fault of Their Own*,’ 6-7; Shirley Maye Tillotson, *Contributing Citizens: Modern Charitable Fundraising and the Making of the Welfare State, 1920-66* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 4, 24-5; Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 312.

²⁷⁵Struthers, ‘*No Fault of Their Own*,’ 6-7; Campbell, *Respectable Citizen*, 9, 11, 73, 151-2, 183; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap & Water*, 19.

²⁷⁶Keshen, “Getting it Right the Second Time Round,” 62-3, 66, 69-70, 78.

²⁷⁷Breadwinner refers to being the primary financial earner within a family unit. It was often a term used to denote the male head of the household. Being the breadwinner became a socially constructed gender role for men. Not being able to fulfill this role was considered emasculating. During the Great Depression, Canadian men fought for jobs and wages to return them to their status as breadwinners in the home. Christie, *Engendering the State*, 12-4; Campbell, *Respectable Citizen*, 57, 75, 153, 183.

needed to support their dependants as the primary breadwinners.²⁷⁸ Its emphasis on normative gender roles, the nuclear family, and post-war rehabilitation helps to explain why the DND took control of the transport and welfare of soldiers' dependants on 12 August 1944.

However, things were not going as the DND would have liked, as reports show that some British wives in Canada were unhappy and wished to return to Britain and obtain a divorce. Other brides apparently had no intention of going to Canada at all, not liking the idea of leaving behind family and friends for an unknown place. Military chaplains noted this problem in their diaries. Roman Catholic Chaplain, E.W. Kenny, noted that while Scottish and Irish wives seemed eager to leave for Canada, most English wives wanted to stay in the UK, which was a problem since it could lead to the break up of family units.²⁷⁹ Protestant Chaplain, Captain N.F. Sharkey noted his failed efforts to persuade three wives to go to Canada and was flabbergasted that one of the wives was so opposed to the thought of moving to Canada that she even told him that her children could go to Canada without her.²⁸⁰ Her willingness to abandon her children in this way challenged the idea that the home was the foundation of the nation.²⁸¹ If wives could not be convinced to go to Canada, and if their husbands were determined to return home rather than settle in the UK, then such broken families undermined gendered nation building efforts in post-war Canada.

²⁷⁸Christie, *Engendering the State*, 4-6, 310-312. Lara Campbell and Ruth Roach Pierson make similar arguments about the gendered nature and intention of government policy in this period. Campbell, *Respectable Citizen*, 56, 73-5, 151, 153; Pierson, "They're Still Women After All," 79-81.

²⁷⁹LAC, DND RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, "WD," Cote Senior Chaplain (RC), 4 July 1943.

²⁸⁰Ibid., H/Capt. N.F. Sharkey (P), 7 June 1945.

²⁸¹Canada, Parliament, *Debates*, 19th Parliament, 5th Session, Vol. 1 (1944-1945): 262.

J.S.P. Armstrong wrote to Colonel Drew about this matter, noting that the main reason wives refused to go was because they knew little to nothing about Canada. These women's wartime experiences meant that they could play a unique and important role in post-war Canadian life, specifically "in assisting our men during the difficult rehabilitation stage."²⁸² In the last war many veterans felt that the civilians, specifically their spouses, could not understand their war experiences. Armstrong thought that soldiers would be fortunate in having spouses who understood war trauma, and the fact that most returning soldiers would not have married abroad and would lack such a partner made war brides particularly valuable in his mind. He thus argued that educating British war brides about Canada was essential if the government was to encourage them to join their husbands.²⁸³

In addition, some Canadian soldiers wanted to stay in the UK with their new wives. Having invested a great deal of time and money creating post-war rehabilitation programs, many military authorities worried that the wives were responsible for convincing their new husbands to remain abroad.²⁸⁴ The soldiers themselves appeared to be aware of this concern and poked fun at the issue, as exemplified in a cartoon in *The Maple Leaf* depicting a soldier sitting in an armchair with a European woman in his lap, declaring: "Go Home? Hell no? I'm all wrapped up in these European cultural aspects!"

²⁸²AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, "OHAF," Letter to Drew from Armstrong, 20 March 1944.

²⁸³Ibid.

²⁸⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 2052, "P – WFCSORC," Memorandum by C.R. Hill, Colonel Director, Special Services, 21 May 1943 and Letter to Colonel DesRosiers from C.H. Paynes, 11 May 1943.

[Appendix 2 – Image 2.3]²⁸⁵ Fears spread that soldiers might stay behind to enjoy the women – not culture – of Europe.

Canadian military authorities ordered the creation of educational materials to prepare war brides, hoping it would be enough to convince them to go to Canada.²⁸⁶ Yet, more needed to be done to ensure the “Canadianization” of the wives, something with which Canadian church and social reformers appeared eager to help.²⁸⁷ In a 1943 letter to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, W.W. Judd, General Secretary of The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada, wrote that he had received expressions of interest from representatives of various women’s and church societies to help educate new brides about life in Canada.²⁸⁸ Various Canadian groups appeared keen to help educate British wives on everything from cultural-linguistic differences to food preferences. While the Canadian government did not initially take up their offer, its stance changed following complaints regarding settlement arrangements. Clearly, the task was too much work for one department alone.

When it took over from the DMR in 1944, the DND began to turn the discourse surrounding the brides. The brides were no longer the problems once depicted in reports, memorandums, letters, and diaries throughout the early 1940s. Rather, the government and military began hailing them as new fine stock for the nation.²⁸⁹ In fact, an order in council issued on 21 September 1944, P.C. 7318, even suggested that, once they landed,

²⁸⁵Parker, “Points Pending,” *The Maple Leaf – Holland*, 6 November 1945.

²⁸⁶LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 2052, “P - WFCSORC,” Memo by Hill, 21 May 1943.

²⁸⁷Ibid., Letter to DesRosiers from Paynes, 11 May 1943.

²⁸⁸LAC, WLMK, R10383-7-9-E, MR# C-7038, “PSC,” Letter to W.L. Mackenzie King, T.A. Crerar, and J.L. Ralston from W.W. Judd, 9 June 1943.

²⁸⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” History of S.A.A.G., by Ellis.

these women were no longer immigrants, but “Canadian citizens,” stating: “And where the member of the Canadian Armed Forces is either a Canadian citizen or has Canadian domicile, the dependant shall, upon being landed, be deemed to have acquired the same status for the purposes of the said Act.”²⁹⁰

The first step towards their Canadianization was getting the women to Canada, which required resolving the problem of transportation delays that had bogged down the DMR and Canada House. Through meticulous planning and many meetings throughout 1944, the DND realized that alone it could not co-ordinate all aspects of the welfare and transportation of British brides to Canada. It concluded that the only way to guarantee the speedy and efficient transportation of dependants was to work in co-operation with different departments and voluntary organizations.²⁹¹ To ensure a smooth transition, it requested assistance from the IB of the DMR. While complaints had been leveled at the DMR during its time in charge of transporting dependants, they were largely a result of the organization being stretched too thin during the war. To address this issue, it was only charged with medical examinations and settlement arrangements. Since the DND had a broad mandate, it created the CWB in London to assume responsibility for most

²⁹⁰According to this order in council they were no longer immigrants, but Canadian citizens. The classification of Canadian citizen in 1944 is interesting as technically Canadian citizenship did not exist. All Canadians were British subjects. Canadian citizenship was not a legal reality until the 1946 Canadian Citizenship Act. The meaning of citizenship and the repercussions of the use of citizen in 1944 will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 10. A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, “Order in Council re Council re Entry into Canada of Dependants of Members of the Canadian Armed Forces,” P.C. 7318, 21 September 1944, in *Canadian War Orders and Regulations 1944: Volume III* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1944), 601.

²⁹¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Memo – Transfer to Canada of Dependants of Army Personnel from the Adjutant-General, 5 April 1944.

everything else.²⁹² This included practical matters like making arrangements for transportation by sea and rail and securing exit permits and issuing travel identity cards. The CWB also secured wives' release from wartime work, and aided in the transferring of bank deposits, creating nominal rolls of the wives and children sailing to Canada, and ironing out welfare and informational problems.²⁹³ The DND also charged the CWB with ensuring that British war brides were educated on the right way to be a Canadian wife and mother.

To avoid becoming overwhelmed, as the DMR had been, the CWB reached out for additional assistance. It tasked Ontario House and BC House with providing informational, educational, and welfare assistance to all brides going to Ontario and BC.²⁹⁴ In addition to providing general education about Canada, this move made Ontario House responsible for the majority of dependents, since roughly 50% of all brides of Canadian servicemen would be travelling there.²⁹⁵ Despite the size of the task, the CWB appears to have felt confident in its capacity to manage this work, since Ontario House

²⁹²The CWB Repatriation Section, run by Major V.N. Gill, was responsible for organizing the movement of wives to Canada, while its Information Welfare Section took responsibility for educating the women about Canada and dealing with other related matters, under the CWB Director, Lt-Col. D.A. Clarke. Major V.N. Gill had experience within the transportation industry and had helped to create the Canadian Passage Priority Committee – a priority system to determine which dependants or Canadian citizens in the UK were most in need of return to Canada. LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10401, "SCF," Letter to the Director of Immigration, Ottawa, from S.S. Langdon, Commissioner, 14 June 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Memo re: Transfer of Dependents by Pembroke, 3 July 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," History of S.A.A.G., by Ellis.

²⁹³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10401, "SCF," Letter to the Director of Immigration from Langdon, 14 June 1944; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 32; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 34-5.

²⁹⁴Only Ontario and BC had tourism houses in London that assisted war brides. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10325, "CWB – Club Accommodation," Minutes of a Meeting Held at Canadian Wives' Bureau, 1 November 1944; Taylor, *A History of Ontario House*; AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, "OHAF," Letter to Drew from Armstrong, 5 April 1945.

²⁹⁵AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, "OHAF," Letter to Drew from Armstrong, 20 March 1944 and 5 April 1945; Taylor, *A History of Ontario House*. See Appendix 1 – Charts 1.2-5.

was already providing assistance to brides bound for Ontario and Canada, and had even created a bureau to handle brides in early 1944. Its head, Armstrong, believed that Canadian soldiers had chosen excellent wives of intelligence and “good breeding.”²⁹⁶ He felt it was essential that Canadian authorities promoted in the war brides “the right mental attitude for settlement in Canada.”²⁹⁷ As a result, Armstrong had been particularly annoyed by the earlier inactivity of the DMR and DND, and seemed to delight in the CWB admitting that it needed assistance from Ontario House. He made this clear in a letter to Premier Drew, claiming that the CWB was “inadequate” to handle the situation on its own.²⁹⁸ To aid the brides, Ontario House created a reading room with maps, magazines, and books about Canada.²⁹⁹ It also created an Ontario House Club in London for war brides, to provide an opportunity for the women to meet other brides going to the same province, and potentially the same city.³⁰⁰ Despite its substantial involvement in assisting war brides, the scholarship on war brides makes no mention of its work. This gap could be due to the fact that the scholarship and interviews have been primarily based on brides who settled in the West and New Brunswick, and that files on the work of

²⁹⁶This again reflects the preference granted to and the perceived superiority of British immigrants. AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, “OHAF,” Letter to Drew from Armstrong, 20 March 1944.

²⁹⁷Ibid.

²⁹⁸AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, “OHAF,” Letter to Drew from Armstrong, 12 May 1944 and 5 April 1945.

²⁹⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” “Canadians’ British Wives Overlooked by Officials,” by Mollie McGee, *The Globe and Mail*, 24 March 1944. The article is critical of the apparent lack of work being done for war brides by government authorities, while praising the work of Ontario House in the matter. AO, RG 5-18 B235367, “Interdepartmental Correspondence of the Deputy Minister of Travel and Publicity” [hereafter cited as ICDMTP], Report on the Activities of Ontario House by J.S.P. Armstrong, 24 May 1945.

³⁰⁰Most clubs had women heading to different provinces making it difficult to cement friendships that would carry over to everyday life in Canada. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10326, “Canadian Wives Bureau [hereafter cited as CWB] – Clubs Organization,” Memorandum – Organization of Clubs, 194?.

Ontario House are few and far between.³⁰¹ The full extent of its work and the assistance it provided war brides can only be speculated upon based on the limited material available. In any event, it appears that Ontario House assisted the CWB, sharing in the work associated with the education and welfare of British brides destined for Ontario.

Having divided the workload to improve efficiency, the DND moved on to addressing the slow and limited movement of British war brides and their children to Canada by 1944. Shipping shortages, due to attacks in the Atlantic, restrictions on exit permits, and the prioritizing of ferrying servicemen and war related materials had put the movement to a standstill. To address the problem of transport, the DND worked with the American and British governments. For example, the Americans allowed Canada the use of its ships and ports to help increase the number of women moved at a given time.³⁰² The British government also agreed to create a new “special travel certificate” and exit permit for the women and their children and to eliminate some of the bureaucracy for issuing passports and associated formalities.³⁰³ This was especially important as the time and amount of paper work required to create exit permits for the brides had overwhelmed both the DMR and Canada House. The division of labour between the DND and DMR also appeared to be improving the efficiency of the work of the IB. By 1945, Immigration

³⁰¹The work of Ontario House in regards to British brides is mentioned off and on in various documents but never in detail (enough to know they were involved and doing work). LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324-35, “CWB.” Records available at AO are also limited to small batches of correspondence, photos, and brief reports. See AO, RG 9-7-8 B367386, “OHAF,” and AO, RG 5-18 B235367, “ICDMTP.”

³⁰²LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, “CWB – Policy,” Letter to the Secretary of State from Vincent Massey, 20 April 1945.

³⁰³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10401, “SCF,” Letter to the Secretary of State for External Affairs from the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, 26 May 1944. The new Canadian Travel Certificate was going to take the place of the ordinary passport. CWM, GMAC, 20070062-001, Letter to Mrs. M.A. Wright from V.N. Gill Major Officer, Civilian Repatriation Section CWB, 4 September 1945.

authorities were processing applications at a much-improved rate of 3,000 each month.³⁰⁴

As a result, the DND moved on to improving the quality of the transportation experience.

Initially, servicemen's wives and children were shipped to Canada on military vessels that were often crowded and ill-suited to transport children, which caused many complaints. People were also not well informed about their travel arrangements.

Voluntary organizations, such as the Red Cross, and soldiers' families, often did not know when ships were landing in Halifax, making it difficult for reception parties.³⁰⁵

Canadian authorities decided that the transporting of wives needed to be done in keeping with their status as civilians and wives of Canadian servicemen. Minister of National Defence, James Ralston, reflected this attitude in a House of Commons debate in which he informed his colleagues that the DND was endeavouring "to see to it that these girls who are coming home, some with children and some with none, are received and looked after as befits the wives of men who are fighting the battles of Canadian overseas."³⁰⁶

Ralston's references to the women as "girls" captures an element of the patriarchal attitudes towards the brides by implying that they were childlike and in need of protection. His switch to "wives" hints at the shift that happened in the state's attitude to war brides. It was no longer enough to simply move the dependants to Canada; their

³⁰⁴Vincent Massey notes in his letter to the Secretary of State, that the number of applications being processed by 1945 – 3,000 each month – was double the previous figure. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, "CWB – Policy 1," Letter to Secretary of State [name not specified but Paul Martin Sr. was the acting Secretary of State at the time] from Vincent Massey, 20 April 1945.

³⁰⁵LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Minutes of an Informal Meeting held in the Office of Brigadier M. Noel, D.A.G., 10 March 1944.

³⁰⁶Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 19th Parliament, 5th Session, Vol. 1 (1944-1945): 516.

status as war brides – that is, their association with returning servicemen – demanded a higher degree of comfort and dignity during their journeys.

The DND eagerly sought out ways to improve the quality of the war brides' trips to Canada by working with the CRC, which had already been providing support services to dependants. When the DND took control of the movement of dependants it made the CRC the *de facto* lead voluntary organization dealing with war brides in Canada, and as such would oversee and coordinate the efforts of other voluntary organizations.³⁰⁷ Some officials, notably Assistant Deputy Minister for the Army, J. Pembroke and G. Pifher of the National War Services, feared the change in leadership would create tension between the CRC and other volunteer organizations, and argued that the work should be divided among several organizations.³⁰⁸ They correctly judged the mood of the other voluntary organizations. In a letter to A.L. Jolliffe, National President of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), Alice L. Horkins expressed her organization's dissatisfaction with the decision to place the CRC in charge.³⁰⁹ Her letter included the minutes of a recent IODE meeting that included representatives of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Women's Institute (WI) held to discuss how various voluntary organizations could aid in the welcoming of dependants to Canada.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Minutes of an Informal Meeting held in the Office of Brigadier M. Noel, D.A.G., 10 March 1944; LAC, DND, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Memo re: Transfer of Dependants by J. Pembroke, 3 July 1944.

³⁰⁸Ibid.

³⁰⁹The IODE is a Canadian national women's charitable organization. It began as an imperialist group promoting Britain and a British Canadian identity. During the 1960s-1970s the group shifted away from a British ethnic definition of English-Canadian nationalism and moved towards one that was more embracing of multiculturalism and focussed on the physical geography of Canada. An excellent overview and analysis of the history of the organization is Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*.

³¹⁰The Canadian Legion and Canadian Red Cross had been invited but did not attend.

Attendees asserted that this work required co-operation from all the nationally organized societies, as well as church societies and unit auxiliaries, and that the work “should not be the entire responsibility of any one organization.”³¹¹ They were shocked and agitated to hear that the Canadian government had sanctioned the CRC alone to be responsible for dependants, especially after complaints from several other voluntary organizations that the CRC overstepped its boundaries regarding war services.³¹² This stance is not surprising, given that various volunteer organizations had previously offered assistance to dependants in an official capacity, only to have the Canadian government limit their efforts.

Despite this rejection, many of these groups continued to provide essential services to war brides, especially early in the war when both the DMR and DND were doing little to assist servicemen’s dependants. The IODE in particular had been very keen on supporting British war brides. Formed in 1900 by Margaret Polson Murray, it had been created to provide charitable aid to soldiers and their dependants during the Second Boer

³¹¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Mr. A.L. Jolliffe, Acting Director of Immigration, from Alice L. Horkins, National President IODE, 13 March 1944 and Minutes of a Conference Held at the Headquarters of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire to Discuss the Matter of a Welcome and Assistance to Brides of Canadian Servicemen, 3 March 1944.

³¹²The IODE had already expressed agitation with the CRC. The IODE had been sending care packages to the Armed Forces Overseas – and believed it was their purview to do so. However, the CRC also began to do the same. The IODE believed that the CRC needed to stay focussed on the sick and wounded as it was “the proper purpose of the Red Cross.” The situation became tense enough that the Judge Advocate General had to step in to make the two groups co-ordinate on this matter. LAC, Department of National War Services Fonds [hereafter cited as DNWS], RG44, Vol. 6, “Minister’s Files [hereafter cited as MF] – IODE War Services,” Internal Memo of the IODE author and date unknown 194?. Similarly, the St. John Ambulance Association seemed to be having some disagreements with the CRC regarding who was responsible for what war work. LAC, DNWS, RG44, Vol. 1, “MF – Canadian Red Cross Society,” Letter to the Hon. Mr. J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, from L.M. Prepared by Mr. George Pifher for the Minister’s signature, 11 January 1943.

War in South Africa, as well as to promote colonial patriotism.³¹³ Up until the late 1960s, it promoted British cultural heritage and Canada's role within the British Empire. The IODE worked tirelessly through educational materials, work in schools, and even radio broadcasts to promote a British Canadian identity, especially against the perceived other – immigrants of a non-British background.³¹⁴ Historian Nadine Small argues that in its early years the IODE, like many other English-Canadian groups, viewed non-Anglo immigrants as foreigners who had to be assimilated. Its membership remained exclusively white until the end of the First World War.³¹⁵ By the Second World War, IODE policy still held that immigration to Canada should be “on a strictly selective basis of a preponderance of people of British stock.”³¹⁶ This focus on selective immigration fit the general attitude of Canada at the time. During the Great Depression, non-Anglo immigrants and foreigners were cast as agitators and the other, and were often blamed for poverty and unemployment.³¹⁷ As a result, the state implemented restrictive and

³¹³The Second Boer War was a conflict fought from 1899-1902 between the British Empire and the Boer States (the South African Republic and the Orange Free State) over control of South Africa. “Our History,” IODE Canada, <http://www.iode.ca/our-history.html>; Nadine Small, “The ‘Lady Imperialists’ and the Great War: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in Saskatchewan, 1914-1918,” in *“Other” Voices: Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women* ed. David De Brou and Aileen Moffatt (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1995), 76-8.

³¹⁴Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 2-5; Small, “The ‘Lady Imperialists’ and the Great War,” 77-8.

³¹⁵Small, “The ‘Lady Imperialists’ and the Great War,” 77-8.

³¹⁶LAC, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Fonds [hereafter cited as IODE], MG28-I17, Vol. 6, “Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and Children of the Empire,” May 1946, 26-31.

³¹⁷Campbell, *Respectable Citizen*, 14; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap & Water*, 16-7, 19, 28-30, 32; Sears, “Immigration Controls as Social Policy,” 93-5; Angus McLaren, “Stemming the Flood of Defective Aliens,” in *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada* ed. Barrington Walker (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc., 2008), 189-191.

racialized immigration policies that remained in force well into the 1960s.³¹⁸ The IODE believed that the best way to maintain the British quality of the country was to encourage British immigration to Canada.

According to Katie Pickles, the IODE saw the Second World War as an opportunity for Canada to demonstrate its loyalty to Britain and to recruit British immigrants.³¹⁹ The organization found British war brides particularly desirable:

The importance of this work cannot be too strongly stressed for these women and their families will have a large part in the building of our future Canada. Their presence in Canada will ensure the maintenance of British tradition and the strengthening of the bond between Canada and the United Kingdom.³²⁰

To the IODE, British brides represented the ideal immigrant – their background combined with their potentiality to be mothers ensured the continuation of the IODE's constructed British-Canada. Within imagined communities mothers are often depicted as the guardians of culture, morals, and conceptions of citizenship.³²¹ In theory then, a British war bride would instil into her children both culture and loyalty to the mother country. Consequently, the IODE actively encouraged British brides to come to Canada. For example, it sent wedding dresses to Britain for brides who could not afford a dress due to ration restrictions.³²² It even created a pamphlet for war brides entitled *Kith to Kin*, that

³¹⁸Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 127, 154-5, 163; Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Canadian Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010), 325; Broadfoot, *The Immigration Years*, 2; Iacovetta, "Remaking Their Lives," 137-8.

³¹⁹Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 2-3, 5, 91, 97, 103.

³²⁰LAC, IODE, MG28-I17, Vol. 6, "Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting," May 1946, 26-31.

³²¹Iacovetta, "Remaking Their Lives," 142; Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 22, 26; Sinha, "Gender and Nation," 242-3. Anglo white women were considered very important for their ability to have children, making them "guardians of the race." Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 141.

³²²LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10327, "CWB – Enquiries 1 4," Letter to Miss Joyce Bickham from Miss E.B. Griffin for D.A. Clarke, CWB, 19 February 1945. For a greater discussion of the work of the IODE and motivations behind sending these dresses see Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 103-5.

explained the differences between life in Canada and Britain. The pamphlet also included a note reminding war brides of the British women who had come before them: “your path may seem unknown and beset with difficulty but you will find strength in the thought that other women of your race have trod the same way long before you.”³²³ This statement, and many others in the booklet, promoted the notion of Canadian nation building, while stressing the importance of the British, and specifically British women, in the nation building process. However, the DND was not pleased with the pamphlet and even accused the IODE of “peddling” it to war brides without its permission.³²⁴ Apparently, the DND had concerns about some of the pamphlet’s wording – although it did not specify what wording it referred to – if “read too literally” could open the government to criticism.³²⁵ Despite this, it allowed the IODE to continue distributing its pamphlet, one of the most informative for brides, so long as it was made clear that the pamphlet was not a Canadian government document.

The YWCA stood as another group invaluable to the movement of war brides as an organization with a long history of helping women. Its first Canadian chapters emerged in the 1870s to address a perceived growing “girl problem” in urban cities – increasingly young women were working in the cities and living independently from their families, resulting in increased economic and sexual autonomy, which moral reformers

³²³AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin* by Charlotte Whitton (Toronto: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire National Head Office, 1944), 5.

³²⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, “CWB – Pamphlet 1,” Memorandum – Re: IODE Booklet for Canadian Brides to Major General A.E. Walford, DND, 4 January 1945.

³²⁵*Ibid.*, Letter from External to Dominion, 22 December 1944.

feared would lead to destitution and sexual vice.³²⁶ Its mandate aimed to assist in the welfare of young working women, especially immigrants, such as British domestic servants, by providing educational classes, boarding houses, and travellers' aid services at docks and train stations.³²⁷ Throughout the early 1900s, the YWCA, like the IODE, promoted British women's immigration to Canada as being "vital" to Canadian nation building.³²⁸ During the First World War the YWCA provided supervision, along with room and board, for female munitions workers.³²⁹ Considering the YWCA's history, it was little wonder that it played a pivotal role in aiding British war brides during the Second World War. Incoming war brides found its YWCA travellers' aid booths to be particularly helpful. Set up at many rail stations across the country, these booths provided invaluable services, including helping brides find their families in crowded railway stations, providing lodgings when a bride's family did not show up, and even helping sick wives and children get to the hospital.³³⁰ Local associations offered a free year long membership, which provided access to things like French lessons and assistance for dealing with landlords, while also providing childcare for working mothers.³³¹ The

³²⁶Mitchinson, "The YWCA and Reform in the Nineteenth Century," 369; Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 194, 196; Marilyn Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada: Booklet No. 16* (Saint John, N.B.: Keystone Printing & Lithographing Ltd., 1991), 9-10; Casey Ready, *Shelter in a Storm: Revitalizing Feminism in Neoliberal Ontario* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 51.

³²⁷Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 194; Ready, *Shelter in a Storm*, 51.

³²⁸Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada*, 10.

³²⁹Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 203, 205.

³³⁰In 1943 travellers' aid booths were active in 19 major cities. LAC, Young Women's Christian Association of Canada Fonds [hereafter cited as YWCA], MG28-I198, Vol. 47, "Hello Stranger!" by O. Mary Hill, Associate Editor Canadian Business Magazine, *YWCA Quarterly* March 1945; LAC, YWCA, MG28-I198, Vol. 64, "History of the Canadian Y.W.C.A. War Services in World War II, 1939-1946"; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Letter to Directorate of Repatriation, DND, from Louise Gates, General Secretary National Council of the YWCA, 15 January 1945.

³³¹*Ibid*; LAC, YWCA, MG28-I198, Vol. 14, Travellers' Aid Minutes, May, November, and December 1944.

YWCA had been so active working with war brides that it had assumed that it was the logical agency to be tasked with the care of brides and children at Canadian ports and for the duration of their journey across Canada.³³² Even the CRC acknowledged the work of the YWCA, which it often worked closely with on accommodation related issues.³³³

Despite all the YWCA's fine work, the CRC promoted the idea of having only one organization, itself, in charge of moving wartime brides and their families. The DND was keen on the idea and despite the dissatisfaction of other voluntary groups, and even the support of the IB for the YWCA, it sanctioned the CRC to be responsible for the movement of dependants within Canada.³³⁴ Yet, precisely how the CRC came to be in charge of the matter is not clear. At one of the first meetings where the matter came up, A.L. Jolliffe questioned "how the Red Cross came to be handling the whole business," after mentioning the work of other voluntary groups.³³⁵ The CRC's representative, Major D.J. Corrigan, addressed this question by stating his organization had been assisting brides for a long time and that apparently ended the conversation.³³⁶ The only other time the issue appeared again was in a memorandum dated 5 April 1944, which noted that at the end of a three-month trial period – to see how the CRC could handle co-ordinating the

³³²The YWCA felt that their experience with other immigrant groups, their staffs training, and their connections to various volunteer organizations across the country made them the most equipped for the job. LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Report – Travellers' Aid Service of the YWCA Available for Service Men's Wives Arriving from Britain by the National Council YWCA, 194?; LAC, YWCA, MG28-I198, Vol. 7, Annual Meeting 1943.

³³³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Minutes of an Informal Meeting held in the Office of Brigadier M. Noel, D.A.G., 10 March 1944.

³³⁴LAC, YWCA, MG28-I198, Vol. 14, Travellers' Aid Minutes, May 1944.

³³⁵LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, "SFC," Minutes of an Informal Meeting held in the Office of Brigadier M. Noel, 10 March 1944.

³³⁶Ibid.

other voluntary organizations – a final decision would be made.³³⁷ Apparently, the trial period went well. Ultimately, the DND decided that the experience and size of the CRC, consisting of roughly 3,000 branches across Canada, made it the most suitable organization to oversee the transportation of dependants across Canada, including co-ordinating with various voluntary organizations in Canada.³³⁸

At the outset, the DND and CRC alike quickly began working on ways to improve the transportation experience for dependants [Appendix 2 – Image 2.4]. First, the CWB created nominal rolls, containing information about the dependant (including her husband's name, religious denomination, and settlement arrangements in Canada) and distributed them to the CRC.³³⁹ The CWB would then inform the CRC of when the ships transporting the wives and children would be arriving in Canada. Before each voyage the CRC provided dependant families with 48 hours notice of their pending departure.³⁴⁰ While dependants awaited sailing, the British RC arranged hotels and other accommodations for them. From there, the CRC assumed control, providing escort services for the ships to and trains across Canada.³⁴¹ These organizational changes standardized and streamlined the emigration process enabling the CRC – and the voluntary groups it co-ordinated – more time to organize receptions and ensure

³³⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Memorandum – Transfer to Canada of Dependents of Army Personnel from the Adjutant-General, 5 April 1944.

³³⁸Ibid.; Ibid., Letter to MP Mrs. Cora T. Casselman from R.P.F., Deputy Minister (Army), 12 April 1944.

³³⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, "1903 HCR," Letter to the Director Service Dependents from Overseas from F.A. FUOG, Major, DAAG Repat 2, 20 February 1946.

³⁴⁰Ibid.; Ibid., Memorandum – Proposed Press Release Return of Service Dependents by F.A. Fuog, Major, DAAG Repat 2, 23 February 1946.

³⁴¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Memo re: Transfer of Dependents by Pembroke, 3 July 1944; Melynda Jarratt, *Operation Daddy: The Adventures of the Canadian Red Cross Corps* (Fredericton, N.B.: Canadian Red Cross Public Affairs, 1996).

dependants and their families knew when the brides would arrive and what voluntary services were available to them.³⁴² To further improve the travel experience, the CRC provisioned nurseries on the ships and acquired pillows and blankets for the railcars across Canada.³⁴³ It also supplied toys, biscuits, and books for the children, as well as cigarettes, magazines, and newspapers for the mothers. Its volunteers even helped make baby formula.³⁴⁴ CMHQ also ensured that ships to Canada were staffed with medical officers and Canadian Nursing Sisters to provide medical assistance. However, the DND realized that speed and comfort were not enough; it also needed to provide clearer information to dependants regarding what was involved in the free passage scheme to Canada.

Often servicemen and their dependants were not entirely aware of what to do in regards to transportation to Canada. Vincent Massey argued that dependants needed to be better aware of what moving to Canada entailed; specifically, the wait times and the application process so that couples could make an informed decision to go to Canada or remain in England.³⁴⁵ To address these concerns the DND created a number of informational pamphlets to be given out to wives, including *Your Journey to Canada* and

³⁴²LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Casselman from R.P.F, 12 April 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66 part 1, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Miss Louise Gates from J.H. Neeland for F.W. Clarke, 25 January 1945.

³⁴³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10401, “SFC,” Minutes of an Informal Meeting held in the Office of Brigadier M. Noel, D.A.G., 10 March 1944.

³⁴⁴They were further asked to ensure bathrooms on trains had makeup kits (with rouge, lipstick, and Kleenex) as the Americans were providing such a service. LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, “1903 HCR,” Trip Report Red Cross Trip no. 5 by Mrs. H.P. Mackeen, Chairman Red Cross Port Service Committee, April 1944 and Letter to Major General B.W. Browne, Assistant National Commissioner RC, from Deputy Minister (Army), 17 May 1944.

³⁴⁵LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, “CWB – Policy 1,” Letter to Secretary of State from Massey, 20 April 1945.

Dock to Destination. They answered questions regarding the application and transportation process, including information about the free passage scheme, how to apply, and if they could travel with their husbands.³⁴⁶ *Your Journey to Canada*, provided useful advice and information for women waiting to sail. For instance, it told dependants to hold onto their jobs until they received a letter to ship out and to let their employers know ahead of time that they were awaiting passage to Canada.³⁴⁷ This advice was important because soldiers' Dependents Allowance (DA) ended upon their repatriation to Canada, and since there was no way to guarantee when a dependant would be shipping out to Canada, quitting one's job too early could leave a wife without an income and in a potentially difficult position.³⁴⁸ *Dock to Destination*, focussed more on what wives could expect when they landed at the port of disembarkation in Canada. It outlined how they would meet with Canadian immigration officials and the CRC services at the port, and how a nursery would be made available to them so they could rest after their sea voyage.³⁴⁹ The uniformity and detail of the pamphlet aimed to better inform dependants about the requirements for going to Canada and, hopefully, reduce inquiries about transportation. As the CRC would discover, more work lay ahead in improving the experiences of travel for these women.

On top of the application process and exit permits, the CWB was tasked with handling large volumes of correspondence, as well as individual interviews with

³⁴⁶CWM, GMAC, Library Ref: PAM U 773C2 Y68 194?, Pamphlet *Your Journey to Canada*, by the DND; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10325, "CWB – Pamphlet 1," *Dock to Destination* by the DND.

³⁴⁷CWM, GMAC, Library Ref: PAM U 773C2 Y68 194?. Pamphlet *Your Journey to Canada*, by the DND.

³⁴⁸This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

³⁴⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10325, "CWB – Pamphlet 1," *Dock to Destination* by the DND.

dependants regarding their applications, marital problems, and the like.³⁵⁰ It became apparent that the women were not always reading the information materials; the CWB was frustrated by the fact that it constantly faced questions from war brides whose answers could be found in the aforementioned pamphlets.³⁵¹ The issue became a large enough problem that the first edition of the CWB Newsletter noted that the Civilian Repatriation branch received almost 3,000 letters a day, almost all of which regarding questions that were answered by *Your Journey to Canada*. The newsletter advised wives not to ask questions answered in the pamphlet as the correspondence considerably slowed down the functioning of the department.³⁵² The volume of paperwork and enquiries the CWB had to process was indeed overwhelming; in April 1945 the CWB expanded to roughly 20 officers and 23 other ranks responsible for anywhere between 3,500 to 5,000 cases. By July, it requested additional staff, noting that a rush of applications resulted in work “falling into arrears.” It repeated this request in November 1945 and January 1946.³⁵³ Even with this expansion, Major V.N. Gill acknowledged that even more staff

³⁵⁰LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 12546, “Wives Bureau” [hereafter cited as WB], Memorandum – Re-organization and Resignation Canadian Wives Bureau Type ‘B,’ by W.H.S. Macklin, Brigadier, Deputy Chief of Staff and H.D.G. Creray, First Canadian Army, 16 July 1945.

³⁵¹See LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10328-9, “CWB – Enq” for numerous cases of correspondence with questions ranging from could they travel to Canada with their husbands to what the baggage allowance on the ships was.

³⁵²LAC, DND, R112-0-2-E, MR# T-1796, “CMHQ, London,” CWB Newsletter, Colonel W.S. Murdoch, 24 January 1946.

³⁵³LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 12546, “WB,” Memo – Re-organization and Resignation Canadian Wives Bureau Type ‘B,’ by Macklin and Creray, 16 July 1945. On requests in November 1945 and January 1946 see: LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 12546, “WB,” Memorandum – Canadian Military Headquarters General Staff Submission, W.H.S. Macklin, Brigadier, Deputy Chief of General Staff and J.C. Murchie, Chief of Staff CMHQ, 12 November 1945 and 24 January 1946. To see a complete breakdown of the various subsections of the CWB please see Table IV: Canadian War Brides Flow Chart in the appendices of Jarratt, *War Brides*, 271, as well as organizational charts in LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 9975, “CMHQ – WB,” Memorandum to ADAG (B) by Murdoch, 16 January 1946 and LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 DAB, Vol. 24, “D.B.T. Advisory Committee (P) London, England,” Memo re: Transfer of Dependents by Pembroke, 3 July 1944 (also found in LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR”).

would be required in the near future.³⁵⁴ By June 1946, the personnel for the CWB reached roughly 277 people processing applications.³⁵⁵ This need for an expanded workforce was justified considering the number of servicemen's dependants had risen to roughly 36,000 by 1945.³⁵⁶ Yet staffing increases also introduced a new problem of inadequate workspace.

The two divisions of the CWB maintained two separate workspaces: the office of the Information Welfare Section, located on Regent Street in London, and the Civilian Repatriation Section, located on Piccadilly Street, in Sackville House, a office building containing the IB of the DMR and Department of National Health.³⁵⁷ Early on it became apparent that the Civilian Repatriation Section required more office space, as in February of 1945, V.N. Gill noted overcrowding in his department and expressed frustration that available space was being assigned to Canada House for visiting officials, arguing that such use of space "was not justified" and that it was apparent that the CWB would need to expand even more in the future.³⁵⁸ The inadequate workspace soon became a source of criticism among those responsible for the work. Upon visiting the CWB in June 1945, Lt-

³⁵⁴He made this acknowledgement while he himself was in the process of trying to acquire four additional stenographers. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, "CWB – Gen 1 2," Memorandum to CMHQ from V.N. Gill, Major, Civilian Repatriation Section, CWB, 22 February 1945.

³⁵⁵LAC, DND, RG23, Vol. 9975, "CMHQ – WB," Report – Canadian Wives Bureau, Type 'E' War Establishment, June 1946. The report breaks down the number of personnel by department, rank, and position. The Civilian Repatriation Section had the largest number of personnel, numbering 228, due to its administrative function of processing all requests to travel to Canada and attaining the necessary accompanying documents.

³⁵⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Letter to Canadian Broadcasting Corporation from F.W. Clarke, Colonel Director of Repatriation, 10 February 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324, "CWB – Admin CWB 1," Progress Report – Canadian Wives' Bureau by Roy W. Lent, 6 December 1945.

³⁵⁷The Information Welfare Section was in an area designed to make the women feel comfortable and welcomed as they tended to address the women on a one to one basis. Whereas, the Civilian Repatriation Section was placed near the DMR as both were responsible for processing the necessary documents to move the wives to Canada.

³⁵⁸LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, "CWB – Gen 1 2," Memo to CMHQ from Gill, 22 February 1945.

Col. P.J. Montague, Chief of Staff of CMHQ, noted that the work accommodations were “insufficient” for those currently employed there, considering the whole situation to be a “bad show.”³⁵⁹

Montague also noted problems regarding the amount of unopened correspondence and the lack of a suitable waiting room available for the war brides and their children who visited the office.³⁶⁰ He expressed concern that a failure to act quickly in this matter could lead to the situation “getting out of control as the number of brides only continued to grow”³⁶¹ Vincent Massey also received word of inadequate conditions at the Civilian Repatriation Section, including complaints of a lack of suitable food for infants and impersonal treatment of the dependants of servicemen.³⁶²

In response, D.A. Clarke asserted that these criticisms reflected a “complete misunderstanding” of the functions of the CWB. He noted that its location, Sackville House, was a modern office building, without facilities for feeding and accommodation.³⁶³ Clarke defensively dismissed complaints about women’s poor treatment by pointing to letters the CWB had received thanking them for good work.³⁶⁴ Despite all of the careful planning and delineating of work on the part of the DND, it appeared that the Civilian Repatriation Section of the CWB remained understaffed and

³⁵⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 12546, “WB,” Report by P.J. Montague, Lt-Col, Chief of Staff CMHQ, 25 June 1945.

³⁶⁰Ibid.

³⁶¹Ibid.

³⁶²LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, “CWB – Gen 1 3,” Letter to Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey P.C., High Commissioner for Canada from Sgd G.M. Forman, Stanley House Chairman of the Board, 10 May 1945.

³⁶³Ibid., Memorandum to the Office of the High Commissioner by D.A. Clarke, CWB, 14 June 1945.

³⁶⁴Ibid.

overworked. To further offset the work associated with the transportation and education of dependants, the CWB asked war brides themselves to help.

To offset its limited capacity, the CWB encouraged war brides to establish clubs throughout the UK. These clubs had two purposes: provide the women with an avenue to meet other women destined to Canada; and to disseminate informational and educational materials to encourage their Canadianization. The DND had always intended to create such clubs but now found itself stretched too thin to organize them itself. As a result, it placed the onus for the creation, organization, and running of the clubs on the brides. However, for a club to be created the CWB needed to receive a number of requests from wives, which meant that war bride clubs only existed in areas with high concentrations of wives.³⁶⁵ Women who could not reach a club were encouraged to stay in contact with the CWB through correspondence.³⁶⁶ They used Canadian auxiliary service hostel centres for their meetings, and if unavailable, they used rental halls or hotel rooms for club meetings and lectures.³⁶⁷ The clubs aimed to be self-governing, with the wives electing their own officers and arranging the clubs' programmes.³⁶⁸

However, the CWB supplied all educational materials and content, including lecturers, Canadian books, informational pamphlets etc., with the CWB also covering

³⁶⁵LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324, "CWB – Admin CWB 1," Progress Report – CWB by Lent, 6 December 1945.

³⁶⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Memo re: Transfer of Dependants by Pembroke, 3 July 1944.

³⁶⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10326, "CWB – Clubs Organization 1," Memorandum – Organization of Clubs, 1945.

³⁶⁸Ibid., Vol. 10325, "CWB – Clubs Gen 1," Letter to Mr. H.F. Pettman, *The Surrey Advertiser*, from Roy W. Lent, Lt. Col. Director CWB, 26 November 1945.

expenses related to cleaning and heating.³⁶⁹ In exchange, the CWB required that all clubs send reports of their finances and meeting minutes to its offices.³⁷⁰ This allowed it to monitor the clubs and receive feedback regarding the success or failure of various lecturers or films. The clubs provided an important and targeted way to distribute educational materials and transportation information to groups of war brides.³⁷¹ Whenever a wife applied to go to Canada, the CWB automatically sent her various informational pamphlets, and, most importantly, information regarding how to join a war bride club.³⁷² The number of brides and their geographic distribution across the UK made it very difficult for the CWB to run a controlled educational program. These clubs proved essential in the CWB's efforts to Canadianize these women.

Having only begrudgingly accepted the responsibility of transporting dependants to Canada in the first place, it is not surprising that the initial plan for moving dependants was poorly thought out and executed. Preoccupied with the Battle of the Atlantic, the Canadian government and military underestimated the work required to transport dependants to Canada. Thus, the DMR was neither prepared nor given the support required to handle the complex process involved in the matter. While the DND later learned that one department alone could not handle the task, it continued to underestimate the number of marriages and scale of work required to move the ever-increasing number

³⁶⁹Ibid., Letter to Mrs. Cook, Victoria League, from Lieutenant G. Peers for Roy W. Lent, 29 September 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10326, "CWB – Clubs Organization 1," Memorandum – Organization of Clubs, 1945.

³⁷⁰Ibid., Vol. 10326, "CWB – Clubs Organization 1," Memorandum – Organization of Clubs, 1945.

³⁷¹Ibid., Vol. 10325, "CWB – Clubs Gen 1," Transcript Radio – Canadian Army War Diary for 'Eyes Front,' 2 August 1945.

³⁷²Ibid., Vol. 10324, "CWB – Admin CWB 1," Progress Report – CWB by Lent, 6 December 1945.

of dependants to Canada. Despite its best effort, the CWB proved equally overworked and understaffed. However, unlike the DMR, it continued to function successfully and transport brides to Canada due to the assistance provided by the DMR, Ontario House, the CRC, and the brides themselves.

The shift from the government's initial negative perception and attitude regarding British war brides to its eventual recasting of these women as important elements of a broader and successful repatriation process was a necessary, pragmatic adjustment. Having begrudgingly agreed to transport dependants to Canada, the state soon realized the importance of ensuring the success of the wartime marriages that it could not prevent. The Canadian government held genuine fears that British brides would convince their husbands to stay in the UK, or that disillusioned war brides would upset their husbands, hindering their rehabilitation into civilian life. Having learned its lesson from the First World War, the government understood that if the postwar integration of demobilized veterans was not handled correctly, dissatisfied veterans could create problems as they had done previously. It therefore viewed the successful integration of war brides into Canadian society as a priority. These women were no longer problems for the state to deal with, but future Canadian citizens whose Canadianization became a task for the CWB.

Chapter 3 – Image Building: The Canadian Wives Bureau and “promoting the right mental attitude for settlement in Canada”

After assuming control of the transportation of Canadian servicemen's British dependants in 1942, the DND grew concerned that if British war brides were not willing to go to or would not be happy in Canada, then the rehabilitation of their soldier husbands could be adversely affected. By way of response, in 1944 the DND created the CWB to aid in the transport and education of British war brides. It worked through two sections: the Repatriation Section, run by Major V.N. Gill, responsible for organizing the movement of wives to Canada, and the Information Welfare Section, run by the Director of the CWB Lt-Col. D.A. Clarke, responsible for educating the women on Canada and dealing with other related problems.³⁷³ Due to the “non-military nature” of the CWB, it functioned largely independently with only general supervision from CMHQ.³⁷⁴ However, Canadian military authorities created and approved the CWB's educational content. For example, the pamphlets *Welcome to War Brides* (1944) and the *Canadian Cookbook for Brides* (1945) were created specifically to educate British war brides on Canada. Thus, through the CWB the Canadian government and military promoted its conception of what it meant to be Canadian.

Often books dealing with post-war resettlement either do not discuss the CWB or only refer to it briefly, typically regarding the aid it provided women heading to Canada.

³⁷³LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10401, “SCF,” Letter to the Director of Immigration from Langdon, 14 June 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Memo re: Transfer of Dependants by Pembroke, 3 July 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” History of S.A.A.G., by Ellis.

³⁷⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” History of S.A.A.G., by Ellis.

In fact, studies of post-war immigration overlook it entirely.³⁷⁵ These gaps are intriguing considering the work that it did and the substantial amount of records available on the CWB at LAC, including records pertaining to general enquiries, complaints, club activities, educational materials, and its extensive data on things like marriages, births, and club enrollment.³⁷⁶ These records reveal its importance in the organization, running, and successful movement of servicemen's dependants to Canada. Moreover, the CWB was also responsible for the education or, in the words of Canadian authorities and voluntary associations, the "Canadianization" of British wives. It promoted its programs as valuable sources of information on life in Canada. However, they often glossed over or simply ignored certain elements of life in Canada that would become pertinent to a war bride's transition and daily life, such as the ethnic, social, and racial tensions in certain Canadian communities in which these women settled. This left some wives unprepared for their new lives in Canada.

The CWB's first step towards Canadianization was to make Canada more appealing to war brides. As discussed in Chapter 2, some of them did not wish to go to Canada. Authorities suspected this hesitation stemmed from their lack of knowledge about the country, and determined that war brides needed to be educated about life in Canada. However, almost all the CWB educational materials focussed on promoting the

³⁷⁵Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 255; Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*, 114-5; Jarratt, *Captured Hearts*, 15, 40; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 24.

³⁷⁶Unfortunately, access to the main records regarding the establishment and basic functioning of the CWB and irregular cases are still restricted at this time. However, enough unrestricted documents exist, regarding club activities and educational programs, to piece together the basic functioning of the CWB and some of the problem cases it handled.

country rather than educating or preparing the women for life in it. The nature of the war can partially explain this. Although the CWB and Ontario House did their best to provide current Canadian content to war brides, the difficulties and dangers associated with moving people and goods across the Atlantic meant that educational materials on Canada were limited and difficult to deliver to the UK. When possible the CWB would provide war bride clubs with copies of Canadian magazines, such as *Maclean's*, *Chatelaine*, and *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, as well as fashion catalogues from *Eaton's* and *Simpsons*. However, postal restrictions in place until mid-1945 limited the supply of these magazines and catalogues to one per club.³⁷⁷ With limited Canadian media content, the CWB used materials that were most available in the UK – specifically maps and tourism booklets – which were not very helpful to their effort.

Since travel brochures aimed to inform a different audience (tourists and potential immigrants) they focussed on discussing economic opportunities, seasonal activities, and key tourist attractions available within the provinces. They presented an idealized portrait of the provinces, especially its climate and weather [Appendix 2 – Images 2.5-6]. For example, the pamphlets *Come to Montréal* (193?) and *Ontario, The Heart of the New World: Where Your Future Awaits* (1944) featured very few pictures depicting winter in Ontario or Québec. Of *Come to Montréal's* seventy-seven photographs, only 9 were images of winter or winter related sports. Meanwhile, of the ninety-seven photographs

³⁷⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324, "CWB – Aberdeen," Letter to Mrs. E.A. Rollwagen from Mrs. E.P. Lee for D.A. Clarke, Lt. Col. Director CWB, 6 May 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, 10332, "CWB – Library 3," Letter to The Secretary DND from E.G. Weeks, Major-General in Charge of Administration, CMHQ, 21 June 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10325, "CWB – Clubs 33," Letter to Mrs. P.M. Faubert from W.S. Murdoch Colonel Director CWB, 11 April 1946.

contained in *Ontario, The Heart of the New World*, only 4 images showed winter or winter sports.³⁷⁸ Both pamphlets discussed winter solely in terms of sporting activities, describing winter weather as “sunny,” “beautiful,” and “sparkling and invigorating.”³⁷⁹ Neither pamphlet discussed the seasonal extremes in terms of humidity or wind chill that exist within both provinces. Since these pamphlets were created to promote tourism and immigration, it is unsurprising that they promoted idealized versions of the provinces. The CWB viewed them to be useful due to their availability and the fact that they promoted Canada as a country filled with beautiful nature, outdoor activities, and job opportunities for men. While not informative of general life in Canada, the brochures made Canada look exciting and appealing to hesitant brides.

Fortunately for the war brides, tourist pamphlets were neither the principal nor sole source of information on Canada. The CWB also provided them with access to a large collection of books and films on Canada, ensuring that the materials were available to all brides, including those who did not join a war bride club.³⁸⁰ Brides could simply write the CWB and ask for a book from its library list and it would be sent to them by mail.³⁸¹ The war bride clubs also had easy access to the CWB film library which contained films provided by the Canadian Auxiliary Services, the Salvation Army (SA), and the NFB. The CWB book and film library included collections of poetry and songs,

³⁷⁸Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec [hereafter cited as BAnQ], *Come to Montréal*, (Québec: 193?); AO, PAMPH 1946 #19, Ontario Department of Planning and Development, *Ontario, The Heart of the New World: Where Your Future Awaits*, (Toronto: Dept. of Planning and Development, 1944).

³⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 19-21; *Ibid.*, 7, 9, 34.

³⁸⁰The Canadian Legion Educational Services provided this collection to the CWB in 1944. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10331, “CWB – Library,” The Canadian Wives’ Bureau Library.

³⁸¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Memo re: Transfer of Dependents by Pembroke, 3 July 1944.

travel accounts, glorified histories of the country, and profiles of the economic opportunities available in each province.³⁸²

The library also included educational materials related to more mundane topics, like farm life, Canadian cooking, shopping, nutrition, and childcare.³⁸³ More so than educational books and pamphlets, films visually reinforced the importance of proper gender roles in Canadian life. The wives' clubs were provided with several films from the NFB *Knife and Fork* series which focussed on the importance of rationing, canning, and couponing during the war. Throughout the series, which ran from 1944-1946, the films used terms such as "duty," "responsibility," and "good housewife" to reinforce the importance of the homemaker to the war effort, and therefore the nation.³⁸⁴ Many war brides may have seen this messaging as ironic since they had already stepped outside traditional gendered behaviour to meet the demands of the war state through national service and experienced rationing to a greater degree than those living in Canada.

These education materials promoted an idealized image of Canada and its past, ignoring the existence of racial and ethnic tensions within Canadian society. For example, CWB literature about French-Canadians romanticized the history and culture of Québec and promoted the notion that relations between French and English Canadians were good.

³⁸²To see a full list of the books provided by the CWB see the following: LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10331, "CWB – Library."

³⁸³Here are a few of the films listed related to the provinces and their economic industries: *Lumbering in British Columbia, Toilers of the Grand Banks, Farmers of the Prairies, Highways North*, etc. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, "CWB – Enq Film."

³⁸⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, "CWB – Enq Film," *Supper's Ready*, Summary, 1 September 1944, and Canadian Wives' Bureau – Films, 24 September 1946. For a list of films in the series and summaries of the films content see National Film Board of Canada, "Series – Knife and Fork," *National Film Board of Canada*, 22 October 2012, http://nfb.gc.ca/en/?page_id=569&ids=171327&nom=Knife+and+Fork&pagenav=1.

This message is reinforced in *The Lure of Québec* (1941) by W.P. Percival, a tourist guide to the most beautiful attractions of the city, and *The Romance of Québec* (1941), by J.C. Sutherland, a history of the province up until Confederation. In his book, Percival wrongly argues that everyone in Québec was bilingual, and that upon visiting the province, one could see how “easily the two races commingle.”³⁸⁵ Sutherland’s book downplays tensions between Québec’s French and English population, by stressing how culturally similar both groups were. He concludes that both cultures and languages had a place within the country and its “noble” history.³⁸⁶

In reality, most of the province’s population spoke only French. English speaking Canadians were a minority in Québec, settled mostly around English enclaves, like the city of Montréal.³⁸⁷ Inequalities surrounding language riddled the province as the English-speaking minority possessed an inordinate amount of political and economic clout, as people needed English language skills to acquire high ranking positions in both the private and public spheres.³⁸⁸ This put French-Canadians at a disadvantage in the job market – a situation that remained in place well into the 1960s.³⁸⁹ According to Political

³⁸⁵LAC, W.P. Percival, *The Lure of Québec* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1941 reprinted 1946), 3, 11.

³⁸⁶LAC, J.C. Sutherland, *The Romance of Québec* (Toronto: W.J. Gage & Co., Limited, 1941), 223, 226. According to Carl Berger, it was a trend among English-Canadian historians of this period, like G.M. Wrong, to promote the idea that the divides between French and English Canadians were due to a lack of cultural knowledge and language misunderstandings between the two groups. Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing: 1900-1970* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), 17-8.

³⁸⁷Melynda Jarratt argues based on 1941 census records that 85% of the province spoke French, 65% solely French, 12% solely English, and that roughly 27% were bilingual. These numbers reflect a drastically different reality than the one presented to the brides in their educational materials. Jarratt, *War Brides*, 68.

³⁸⁸In addition, the province’s largest employers typically were owned by and promoted English-language interests. Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, 74, 101; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 7-8.

³⁸⁹*Ibid.*, xlv-xiv; McRoberts, *Québec*, 74, 101.

Scientist Kenneth McRoberts, Québec, along with the Maritimes, had the lowest incomes, highest unemployment, and poorest housing standards in the country.³⁹⁰ This reality was not made clear in the CWB educational materials, leaving British wives married to French-Canadians with little knowledge of the linguistic, social, and political realities of life in Québec.

Despite this lack of information, some war brides were fortunate enough to have husbands who explained the importance of French in Québec and that their families spoke little to no English. They often took the initiative to try and learn French by asking the CWB for French classes or books.³⁹¹ Yet, initially the CWB had no French learning materials or plans to acquire any. When, in December 1944, V. Lamarche wrote to it asking for information on life in Québec and the French language, she received a generic book on Canada with instructions that she needed “a general view of the country” before focussing on Québec.³⁹² When a Mrs. Dion inquired about French learning materials in January 1945, the CWB responded that it had no such materials and that she should contact a local bookseller to acquire a French dictionary.³⁹³ A few months later, the CWB informed a Mrs. Therrien that they were intending to acquire French textbooks in the

³⁹⁰McRoberts, *Québec*, 69.

³⁹¹See LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10327, “CWB – Enq 1 2”; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10328, “CWB – Enq 2 1”; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq 4 2.”

³⁹²*Ibid.*, Vol. 10328, “CWB – Enq 2 1,” Letter to CWB from V. Lamarche, 22 December 1944, Letter to V. Lamarche from CWB, 26 December 1944.

³⁹³*Ibid.*, Vol. 10327, “CWB – Enq 1 2,” Letter to Mrs. Dion from Mrs. E.P. Lee for D.A. Clarke, CWB, 13 January 1945.

future.³⁹⁴ The CWB expected war brides to learn French on their own, since the CWB provided few resources to aid them.

Worse, war brides received mixed messages from the CWB about the importance of French language skills in Québec. In one letter, it informed a Mrs. Cleary that Canada was a bilingual nation and that she did not need to speak French unless she was going to a smaller town or village in Québec.³⁹⁵ Responding to a bride's query about teaching in Québec, D.A. Clarke does not mention her need to learn French – even though a handwritten note on the filed letter states: “A knowledge of French is almost essential.”³⁹⁶ The CWB told another bride that it had no French-English dictionaries and that a knowledge of French language as spoken in France would not be of much value within Québec anyway. The CWB offered to send the bride a copy of *Canada Digest*, recommending that she read the French-Canadian articles to learn the language – a difficult task for someone with no background in French, let alone a French-English dictionary.³⁹⁷ While it is certainly true that Canadian and European French are different, especially in regards to colloquialisms and pronunciation, a knowledge of European French would still have proved quite useful in Québec. This was the case for Joan Walker, author of *Pardon My*

³⁹⁴When they intended to have these materials by is unclear. Two months earlier they had told another bride that they would have these materials in six weeks. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10327, “CWB – Enq 1 4,” Letter to Mrs. M. Beaulieu from D.A. Clarke, CWB, 1 March 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq 4 2,” Letter to Mrs. Therrien from Mrs. E.P. Lee for D.A. Clarke, CWB, 18 May 1945.

³⁹⁵Ibid., Vol. 10327, “CWB – Enq 1 2,” Letter to Mrs. E.A. Cleary from Mrs. E.P. Lee for D.A. Clarke, CWB, 23 January 1945.

³⁹⁶Ibid., Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq 4 2,” Letter to Mrs. Tanguay from D.A. Clarke Lt.-Col., Director CWB, 26 May 1945.

³⁹⁷Similarly, the CWB suggested a Mrs. Boissonnault wait until she was in Canada to learn the language since Québec French was “a rather different brand” from European French. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10327, “CWB – Enq 1,” Letter to Mrs. A. Boissonnault from CWB, 4 October 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10331, “CWB – Library 1,” Letter to Mrs. L. Jalbert from Mrs. E.P. Lee for D.A. Clarke, CWB, 10 January 1945.

Parka (1958), who wrote that despite having an intensive knowledge of French, at first, she had a difficult time understanding Québec French. However, she was able to express herself by modifying the speed of her French when speaking to the Québécois population.³⁹⁸ Being able to express yourself in an unfamiliar environment is essential for basic functions, such as determining where to go or purchasing goods. A knowledge of any French would have been better than none.

British brides with no knowledge of the French language and sent ahead of their husbands to isolated corners of rural Québec had no way of expressing themselves. The DMR had tried to avoid this issue.³⁹⁹ Major J.H. Neeland, Director of Repatriation, expressed his concern about the matter and the problems that could ensue. A.L. Jolliffe, Director of the Immigration Branch, wrote that they could not prevent women from sailing to Canada but they could explain to them “in general general terms [sic]” the location of the husband’s home and whether it was a French speaking community. Despite the firm resolution of his response, Jolliffe himself had similar concerns about the issue, expressing his exasperation on the back of the letter: “I’ll certainly be glad when this is all over.”⁴⁰⁰ Despite these concerns, little was being done to prepare these women for the reality of life in Québec. Brides with less than forthcoming husbands were being

³⁹⁸The book is a humorous account of her initial experiences moving to Canada. Walker, *Pardon My Parka*, 42. Melynda Jarratt includes a similar discussion of this source in *War Brides*, 31, 68-9.

³⁹⁹LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10401, “SCF,” Ferry Despatch to Commissioner, London, England from Director, DMR Immigration Branch, 12 January 1945. Melynda Jarratt includes a similar discussion of this source in *War Brides*, 65.

⁴⁰⁰*Ibid.*, Attention – Major J.H. Neeland, Director of Repatriation, DND, by A.L. Jolliffe, Director, Immigration Branch, 26 January 1945. Melynda Jarratt includes a similar discussion of this source in *War Brides*, 65, 68.

led to expect Québec to be a place where the population all spoke the same languages and lived in peace and harmony.

In addition to creating false impressions of life in Québec, CWB educational materials perpetuated stereotypical representations of French-Canadians, dominated by *habitants* living an idyllic rural life.⁴⁰¹ Sometimes this stereotype was reinforced in subtle ways. For example, the cover of *The Lure of Québec* depicts a *habitant* male smoking a pipe, while the cover of *The Romance of Québec* depicts a windmill surrounded by haystacks and farm houses [Appendix 2 – Images 2.7-8]. English-Canadian authors and historians of the day, such as G.M. Wrong, were often more blatant in their use of this stereotype, emphasizing the old-fashioned rural economy and culture of Québec in comparison to the progressive cities and industries of the English-speaking provinces.⁴⁰² English-Canadian authors portrayed what they deemed were the admirable traits of French-Canadians, as a sociable, colorful, and easygoing people.⁴⁰³

Nowhere is this stereotypical representation more prevalent than in the NFB film *Alexis Tremblay: Habitant* (1943) – a film that the CWB provided to British war brides. The film follows the life of Québec farmer Alexis Tremblay and his family throughout

⁴⁰¹The term *habitant* refers to early French settlers who farmed the land along the St. Lawrence River under the authority of a seigneur. While the feudal land system had disappeared, the term *habitant* had slowly evolved over the twentieth century to mean a Québec farmer. The term came to represent a stereotypical representation of French Canada as a rural traditional society. This stereotype was rampant in English Canada and could be found within school textbooks, history books, and even films. It was also popular and promoted by conservative French-Canadian government authorities and Catholic clerical officials well into the 1960s.

⁴⁰²Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, 17.

⁴⁰³*Ibid.*; Scott Mackenzie, *Screening Québec: Québécois Moving Images, National Identity, and the Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 1-2; Jose E. Igartua, “The Genealogy of Stereotypes: French Canadians in Two English-Language Canadian History Textbooks,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol. 42, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 112, 114, 122-3.

one year. Its narrator describes the gendered division of labour on a farm, as well as the social and religious life of the French village of Éboulements. It ignored the cities and burgeoning industries in the province, as well as the sizeable migration of people from rural into urban areas at that time, which reinforced the conception that most French-Canadians were farmers or lived in rural areas.⁴⁰⁴ The film emphasizes qualities associated with the *habitant*, including contentment with a simple life, large families, and the importance of tradition. It states: “And here succeeding generations have tilled the rocky soil of their ancestral farm. Self-reliant and industrialist. Neighbourly and Gay. For 300 years they have held to their way of life, guarding the glory of God and the dignity of man.”⁴⁰⁵ This statement implied that French-Canadians were rigidly traditional and looked to the past and not the future, implying that they were an unmodern society.⁴⁰⁶

This image of French-Canadians as backward or looking to the past is the other side of the *habitant* stereotype – a darker representation used to reinforce the conception of French-Canadians as simple in comparison to English-Canadians.⁴⁰⁷ Historian Jose Igartua has examined a number of English-Canadian elementary school textbooks from 1940-1960 unearthing the characteristics and reasoning behind the *habitant* stereotype. Textbooks presented French-Canadians as rural, easy going, and sociable but also ignorant and backwards, while by contrast, English-Canadians were presented as urban,

⁴⁰⁴Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, 17; McRoberts, *Québec*, 55, 57-8, 72; Mackenzie, *Screening Québec*, 1-2; Igartua, “The Genealogy of Stereotypes,” 124-5.

⁴⁰⁵*Alexis Tremblay: Habitant*, directed by Jane Marsh (NFB of Canada, 1943), online NFB of Canada, 0:58-1:20.

⁴⁰⁶Even some French-Canadians promoted this image of tradition. Kenneth McRoberts argues that some French-Canadians, such as Henri Bourassa and Lionel Groulx, promoted a conservative view of Québec and expressed nostalgia “for the traditional way of life.” McRoberts, *Québec*, 59-61.

⁴⁰⁷Igartua, “The Genealogy of Stereotypes,” 107, 109, 122-5.

educated, and devoted to progress.⁴⁰⁸ The *habitant* stereotype thus reinforced a conception of English-Canadians superiority over French-Canadians.

According to Igartua, throughout 1940-1950, things like textbooks depicted French-Canadians, immigrants, and Indigenous Peoples, as the other – as less than or different from Canadians of a British origin.⁴⁰⁹ Those responsible for nation-building perceived these groups to be disruptive of nation building narratives since they tended to possess their own conceptions of identity and nationalism.⁴¹⁰ However, the importance of French Canada in the formation of the Canadian nation and nation-state could not be ignored nor separated from the history of the country, a fact which is evident in the way both *The Lure of Québec* and *The Romance of Québec* highlight the importance of Québec in the history of the country.⁴¹¹ Yet, when discussing or representing Québec and its peoples, British-Canadian authorities – including politicians, historians, and businessmen – presented French-Canadians as inferior to English-Canadians. This insidious representation ignored and justified the unequal treatment and social injustices experienced by French-Canadians. While the role of French Canada could not be ignored in the early development of the country, the Canadian identity and nationalism the government promoted through the CWB was solely English-Canadian based.

⁴⁰⁸Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, 75-77, 84, 88, 150, 153; Igartua, “The Genealogy of Stereotypes,” 112-114, 122-4.

⁴⁰⁹*Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰For example, French-Canadian nationalism has always been seen as at odds with British-Canadian forms of nationalism. Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, x-xi, 24; McRoberts, *Québec*, 31; Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building*, 63, 67, 319; Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, 71, 74, 99.

⁴¹¹LAC, Sutherland, *The Romance of Québec*, 1-3, 223-6, 229; LAC, Percival, *The Lure of Québec*, x-xvii, 2-3, 9-10.

Equally problematic was the representation, or rather lack of representation, of Indigenous peoples, who were barely mentioned in either the films or books provided by the CWB. When mentioned, they were spoken about in terms of early settlement conflict and, as was the case with French-Canadians, stereotypically. Only one tourist pamphlet handed to war brides referred to Indigenous Peoples, in the caption of one photograph that depicted a chief, his son, and “squaw” in headdresses in front of a totem pole [Appendix 2 – Image 2.9].⁴¹² The use of the term “squaw” is derogatory, denoting independent Indigenous women as sexually promiscuous and immoral. According to Janice Acoose, professor of Indigenous and English literature, stereotypes, such as the “squaw” or the “drunken Indian,” are prevalent and have been used to justify imperialistic expansion into Indigenous territories, as well as present inhuman treatment of Indigenous Peoples under the banner of white benevolence.⁴¹³ The presentation of three Indigenous Peoples in headdresses next to a totem pole, “performing Indian” so to speak, combined with the photo caption that their reserve was just a “short drive” away, reinforced a conception of these people as different or exotic in comparison to white Canadians.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹²“Squaw” is the term used by the authors of the tourist pamphlet. BAnQ, “Come to Montréal,” (Québec: 193?), 12.

⁴¹³Janice Acoose/Misko-Kisikàwihkwè (Red Sky Woman), *Iskwewakkah' ki yaw ni wahkomakanak/Neither Indian Princesses nor Easy Squaws* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1995), 29-30, 39-40, 48-50, 55; Sarah Carter, “Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the ‘Indian Woman’ in the Early Settlement Era in Western Canada,” in *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada* ed. by Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 147-8, 150-1; Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North: Cultural Constructions of Aboriginal Life in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 23.

⁴¹⁴BAnQ, “Come to Montréal,” (Québec: 193?), 12; Christopher E. Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema: Ideology, Difference and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2002), 47. “Performing Indian” is a term that denotes the performance of indigeneity by non-or Indigenous peoples. It often involves a caricature of what white societies have deemed “Indian” in terms of dress, culture, etc. It is an imagined indigeneity which involves an amalgamation of the dress and customs of numerous distinct tribes. The best example can be seen in the Wild West Shows of the American West. These performances were often used to assuage white anxiety and assert white dominance over Indigenous Peoples. Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The*

Films provided by the CWB to war brides were equally problematic and devoid of Indigenous voices and experiences. For example, the summary of the film *Peoples of Canada* (c.1945) promised that it would examine how during “this time of racial hatred” Canada represented a land of tolerance and cooperation.⁴¹⁵ It discusses how people from the “Old World” of “different cultural, social and political backgrounds” had come and thrived in Canada, but it makes no mention of the Indigenous People of Canada.⁴¹⁶ While self-congratulating the nation for overcoming racial divides despite the diverse backgrounds of Canadians, it makes no mention of Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the racial strife they experienced at the time. In fact, only one film on the CWB list appears to be specifically about Indigenous Peoples, *Ipkuck the Igloo Dweller* (n.d.), of which no record remains.

The only other film in the CWB film library that explicitly mentions Indigenous Peoples is the NFB film *Northwest Frontier* (1942). Its summary states that it discusses life in Canada’s Northwest Territories, including the fur trade, mining developments, and

Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture (Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 61-2, 102-3, 108-9, 194; Theodore S. Jojola, “Moo Mesa: Some Thoughts on Stereotypes and Image Appropriation,” in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* ed. by S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 263, 276-7; Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 22. However, it is important to point out that performing indigeneity has also been used as a tool of agency among Indigenous communities to reassert their culture, identities, and political messages. The term is thus complex as it has been used as a source of oppression but has also been reclaimed in some instances as a source of power and resistance. For example, H.V. Nelles discusses how white British and French-Canadian organizers of the Québec tercentenary wanted Indigenous Peoples to perform the role of savages in contrast to the early French settlers in a pageant. However, Nelles points out that the Indigenous participants used this event to challenge this idea and reassert their culture and identity in Canada. Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building*, 172-5, 178-9.

⁴¹⁵LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq Film,” Canadian Wives Bureau Films, 24 September 1946 and Lists of NFB films.

⁴¹⁶Ibid.

“the welfare of Indians and Eskimos.”⁴¹⁷ It depicts Indigenous Peoples of the Northwest Territories as a people in decline or vanishing.⁴¹⁸ The film covers the many ways that white Canadians and authorities of the state, including Indian Agents and Mounties, provided welfare to these Indigenous populations.⁴¹⁹ It portrays government residential and church-run mission schools as providing positive experiences for Indigenous students and their community – when in reality, cultural genocide motivated these schools. Historians have labelled residential schools a national crime. These places exploited Indigenous children for their labour, were overcrowded, and unhygienic. Many children were poorly fed and clothed and often became sick. They were sites of mass psychological, physical, and sexual abuse.⁴²⁰ The complete history of residential schools is still ongoing. And while not every residential school had the same level of abuse and

⁴¹⁷The film uses derogatory terms such as “Eskimo” and “Indian” when referring to Inuit and Indigenous peoples. *Northwest Frontier*, produced by James Beveridge (NFB of Canada, 1942), online NFB of Canada; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq Film,” CWB Films, 24 September 1946 and Lists of NFB films.

⁴¹⁸Its narrator discusses how “Eskimos” lived an uncertain life fighting the cold and hunger, and that the 9 inland tribes of Indians were a “scattered people” of less than 40,000. *Northwest Frontier*, produced by James Beveridge, NFB, 1:02-35, 1:41-51. Daniel Francis argues that the idea of the “vanishing Indian” was not unique to Canada, it was also apparent within the US. Often this idea was used to justify expansionist and assimilation policies in both countries. Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 38, 57; Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema*, 47-8; Coleman, *White Civility*, 14, 171, 207; Timothy C. Winegard, *For King and Kanata: Canadian Indians and the First World War* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), 7.

⁴¹⁹It shows how missionary school teaches Indigenous youth about “health and hygiene,” as well as useful sciences. *Northwest Frontier*, produced by James Beveridge, NFB, 15:46-16:05.

⁴²⁰See the following books for discussions of residential and missionary schools and the treatment of Indigenous youth by the state: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada’s Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Montréal: Published for the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of Canada by McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015); J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); John S. Milloy, “A National Crime”: *The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); Olive Patricia Dickason and William Newbigging, *A Concise History of Canada’s First Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Shelagh Rogers, Mike DeGagne, Jonathan Dewar and Glen Lowry, “Speaking My Truth”: *Reflections on Reconciliation and Residential School* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2012); Ian Mosby, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools,” *Social History* XLVI, no. 91 (May 2013): 615-642.

exploitation, the education of Indigenous youth was deficient to say the least. The legacy of these schools has scarred many individuals, families, and communities to this day.

Discussion of the welfare of Indigenous Peoples found in CWB resources used paternalistic language and reinforced conceptions that Canada's Indigenous Peoples were child-like and in need of assistance from the white man to survive.⁴²¹ CWB sources do not mention years of oppression and people's resistance against the racist and violent actions and policies of government officials, Mounties, and Indian Agents. They presented white Canadians as saviours and superior to Indigenous Peoples, like depictions of French-Canadians. The film presents the culture and lifestyle of Indigenous Peoples as something of the past – even referring to them as a “people in transition,” presenting Indigenous youths enrolled in missionary schools, and undergoing assimilation, as the “new generation of a changing race.”⁴²² This would have left viewers with a stark contrast between the white benevolent advanced future and the outdated Indigenous past, a problem that could only be solved through the aid of white culture and eventual Indigenous assimilation into wider white Canadian culture and life.

These CWB representations of Indigenous Peoples as exotic, childlike, and vanishing are problematic because of their clear racial insensitivity and because they provided war brides with unreliable information about Canada's Indigenous Peoples. In her book, Joan Walker notes that when an Indigenous family moved next door she knew nothing about “Indians” other than the images of “glamorous, red-skinned personages

⁴²¹Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema*, 48, 196-7.

⁴²²*Northwest Frontier*, produced by James Beveridge, NFB, 17:10-20.

with feathered headdresses and a minimum of clothing whose adventures I had followed at a youthful age....”⁴²³ Many brides, like Joan, only knew Indigenous Peoples from their representations in Hollywood films – predominately racialized and exoticized stereotypes as being either murderous or a noble savage, but always a people in decline.⁴²⁴ The CWB clearly did not intend to educate war brides about Canada’s Indigenous Peoples outside of minor stereotypical representations in books and films. One pamphlet *Welcome to War Brides* created by the Canadian Government specifically for war brides, does not mention Canada’s Indigenous People at all. Similarly, the IODE pamphlet *From Kith to Kin* (1944) does not include them in its summary of the history of Canada and only refers to Indigenous Peoples as making up “about one per cent” of the population.⁴²⁵

As discussed earlier, Canadian society organized along gendered and racial lines with white Canadians believed to be at the top of its racial hierarchy.⁴²⁶ This fostered a belief that assimilationist and expansionist policies against Indigenous Peoples were justified, often leading to their exclusion from power structures. During both World Wars, the Canadian military, while having no set policy against Indigenous soldiers, limited their numbers by denying them for not meeting the health and education requirements for enlistment. Poor living conditions on the reserves and inadequate education provided by the Canadian government ensured this exclusion. Indigenous Peoples also faced

⁴²³Walker, *Pardon My Parka*, 172-3.

⁴²⁴Angela Aleiss, *Making the White Man’s Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 4, 8, 57, 59.

⁴²⁵AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 14.

⁴²⁶Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 27, 46-7; Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 70; Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, 2, 14-7; Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 6, 8; Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 23.

discrimination from racist recruiters.⁴²⁷ Restrictions, coupled with the relatively small percentage of Indigenous soldiers in the Canadian army, meant that the potential number of marriages between Indigenous Canadians and British women were lower than that of English or French Canadians.⁴²⁸ Needless to say, broader Canadian society and the state discouraged interracial or mixed marriages in Canada or with British women. For example, Melynda Jarratt provides the account of Jean, who had married an Indigenous soldier, and the way that the Padre of his regiment and the Red Cross tried to dissuade her from going to Canada to live with him.⁴²⁹ She resisted their efforts, going to be with her husband on the reserve and learning the language and culture of her husband's people. While life on the reserve was a shock to Jean, she appeared to have been happy as her family never recalled her complaining.⁴³⁰ Though hers is ultimately a positive story, we must remember that such sources tend to romanticize the women's stories. This, combined with the impossibility of acquiring my own interviews, suggests that less successful cases of mixed marriages have not been widely made apparent or discussed.

In cases like Jean's, the Canadian military and CWB quickly stepped in to discourage such mixed marriages. This happened in the case of one Miss S. Mason, who in 1946 wrote to the CWB asking for advice regarding her situation. She explained that

⁴²⁷Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*, 162-3; Robert J. Talbot, "'It Would Be Best to Leave Us Alone': First Nations Responses to the Canadian War Effort," *Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol. 45, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 99-100; Winegard, *For King and Kanata*, 9-10.

⁴²⁸P. Whitney Lackenbauer cites that the Indian Affairs Branch officially reported 3,090 status Indians participated in the Second World War (not including non-status Indians or Metis numbers which were excluded from the count). P. Whitney Lackenbauer with John Moses, R. Scot Sheffield and Maxime Gohier, *A Commemorative History of Aboriginal People in the Canadian Military* (Ottawa: National Defence, 2010), 119, 137, 139. Janice Summersby cites similar numbers. Janice Summersby, *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields* (Ottawa: Veterans Affairs, 1993), 20.

⁴²⁹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 37-9.

⁴³⁰*Ibid.*

for the last three years she had been in courtship with a Canadian soldier who had recently gone home and written her to ask for her hand in marriage. However, a friend in his unit had informed her that her boyfriend was an Indian— something that surprised her greatly as she “knew one or two boys that were Indians they had colored skins. My boy is not in the least, his skins is the same as mine so I don’t know if it is true...”⁴³¹ This excerpt is revealing in that it suggests her uncertainty about her partner’s identity, as well as her concern over the issue. Having never doubted her boyfriend or worried about his skin colour or background before, she now expresses concerns about going to Canada because she had heard “that an Indian in Canada is classed a nigger in America” and that they were “looked down upon.”⁴³² Miss Mason was clearly aware of discrimination and the second-class status afforded to peoples of colour in the US and more generally throughout the British Empire. Her query expressed her fears of that treatment toward both her boyfriend and ultimately herself. Her writing to the CWB for advice about her situation reflects her unease about the matter.

The CWB response did little to clarify or assuage Miss Mason’s fears about Canadian attitudes towards Indigenous Peoples and mixed marriages. It advised her to verify whether her boyfriend was a “North American Indian” or a “Half Breed.”⁴³³ It suggested a number of ways to determine his race, such as asking him directly or having the CWB “discreetly” check where he came from, or determining his religion since it

⁴³¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, “CWB – Gen 1 5,” Letter to CWB from Miss S. Mason, 1946.

⁴³²“Nigger” is a racist slur and derogative term used against African American peoples in the US, as well as against peoples of African backgrounds by whites in other western and European countries. White people used the term to assert power and dominance over peoples of an African background. Ibid.

⁴³³“Half Breed” is a racist and derogative term referring to individuals of interracial partnerships. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, “CWB – Gen 1 5,” Letter to Miss S. Mason from CWB, 19 January 1946.

argued, most Indigenous Peoples were Roman Catholic.⁴³⁴ It advised that if he indeed was Indigenous that she should give “considerable thought to the wisdom of marrying him.”⁴³⁵ It then proceeded to explain that Indigenous Peoples in Canada “are well respected and the educated ones often held positions of responsibility.” Yet, it added that “mixed marriages” were ill advised because they led to “unhappiness;” however it does not explain why this would be the case.⁴³⁶ The CWB did explain that life on a reserve “is very different to that pursued by white men,” and suggested that she get in touch with a military chaplain.⁴³⁷ The CWB’s statements implied that Indigenous Peoples were different and thus marriage between the two races would be incompatible and unwise – a negative view of miscegenation that proliferated in Canadian society for decades. The CWB’s withholding of information about how and why Miss Mason’s life would be different if she married an Indigenous man is clearly deliberate.

Those who chose to marry their Indigenous partners had to rely on information from their husbands for the reality of what their life would be like in Canada since the CWB provided little to no information on the subject. In the two examples presented, it did not stipulate that under the *Indian Act* their marriage to Indigenous men would result in their receiving the same status as their husbands, and all that that legally entailed for better or for worse. For example, in 1947, one British war bride found herself arrested and convicted for purchasing alcohol, since the *Indian Act* “provisions prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages to Indians technically apply to people thus classed, including white

⁴³⁴Ibid.

⁴³⁵Ibid.

⁴³⁶Ibid.

⁴³⁷Ibid.

wives.”⁴³⁸ While the war bride saw no reason as to why she could not purchase alcohol, since she could in the UK, her new status in Canada prevented her from doing so.

The DND and CWB desired and assumed, ultimately correctly, that most British women would marry white English-speaking Canadians of predominately British or European backgrounds. Thus, they may not have felt it necessary to provide educational materials for other minority cases. Further, Canadian officials did not want mixed marriages happening, be they between white British women and French-Canadians or with Indigenous men. They deemed such marriages undesirable, on the basis that such couples were incompatible; such unions would ultimately end in estrangement or divorce. Since it did not encourage these marriages it is not entirely surprising that the state withheld or provided limited and biased information about these two groups. Ultimately, they chose educational content that reinforced a propagandistic image of Canada, where various ethnic groups lived together in harmony under the rule of a benevolent state. Thus, the Canadianization the government, military, and CWB instilled in British war brides was solely a *white English* Canadian identity.

⁴³⁸According to the Indian Act, an Indian is classed as any male person of Indian blood who belongs to a band and his wife and children. Canada, *Indians Act*, S.C., 1876, c. 18; “British Bride Ruled an Indian in Liquor Case,” *Globe and Mail*, 3 April 1947.

Chapter 4 – Image Making: Educating and Preparing “the wives for assimilation into Canadian life”

At the same time the CWB was educating British war brides about Canada, it was also attempting to shape the women into its vision of ideal Canadians – expecting them to shed their British identity in favour of a Canadian one. However, while spending a considerable time defining what was not Canadian, the CWB and government authorities charged with implementing the program were unclear in defining what it meant to be Canadian. But they did make clear what gender roles they expected these women to fill in their new home. The CWB inundated war brides with educational materials designed to reinforce gender normative behaviour – dividing men and women into breadwinning husbands and fathers and home-making wives and mothers – in order to ensure a return to postwar normalcy. While many women appreciated the help that the CWB provided, some wives were more critical of the paternalistic – and at times patronizing – treatment that they received.

The educational materials provided to war brides never explicitly defined what it meant to be Canadian, but rather what was not. For example, the IODE pamphlet *From Kith to Kin* – distributed unofficially to most brides – stated: “And, please, do not hurt our feelings either by pooling us all together on this side and calling us ‘Americans’, or saying ‘America’ and ‘Americans’ when you mean the United States and its people.”⁴³⁹ The fact that such a statement had to be made suggests that it was common for people to pool Canada and the US together. The IODE implied that such a suggestion was not only

⁴³⁹AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 7.

unpopular but offensive – as it would hurt Canadian feelings. The pamphlet *Welcome to War Brides*, created by the Canadian Government, provided the best example of defining what was not Canadian. Under the section “Canadian Citizenship,” it informed wives that, “Canada is not just an extension of Britain, nor is she subordinate or subject in any way to the United Kingdom Government. She is a sovereign nation in her own right – one of the free countries which constitute the British Commonwealth of Nations.”⁴⁴⁰ Its authors went further to explain the independent status of Canada, stating:

It is rather important that you realize at the outset that your new homeland has equality of status with all other members of the British Commonwealth, including the United Kingdom. If you should unwittingly convey the impression that you regard Canada as in any way a dependency of Britain, you are likely to find that many people will temper their welcome with coolness. Canadians are proud that they stand on their own feet as a nation, that they have made their own declarations of war against the enemy countries, that they manage not only their own domestic affairs but also their foreign affairs, that they are not only co-operating fully with the other members of the British Commonwealth and the other United Nations but have, on occasion, assumed a degree of leadership in some of the military and supply aspects of the war.⁴⁴¹

Rather than explaining the legal status of citizenship in Canada, as its title would suggest, the section was preoccupied with assertions about the autonomy of the Canadian nation-state. Its authors seemed determined to remind these British women that Canada and Canadians were neither beholden to the UK nor beneath the British. The DND apparently determined that this needed to be stressed presumably due to the women’s lack of knowledge regarding Canada.⁴⁴² This could be read as being purely educational.

⁴⁴⁰*Welcome to War Brides*, 12.

⁴⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴⁴²Later in the pamphlet, it points out that Canadians tended to know more about Britain than Britons did about Canada. *Ibid.*, 19.

However, the amount of attention dedicated to this idea – an entire page when the initial example would be enough – suggests much more than an educational goal. Its language and length forcefully asserted the independence of the Canadian nation-state, Canadian identity, and nationalism. This pamphlet’s emphasis on the autonomy of the Canadian nation state fits well with arguments made by Jack Granatstein and others that Canada came of age during the Second World War.⁴⁴³

The pamphlet warned that Canadians, “will temper their welcome with coolness” if the brides mistook Canada to be a dependant of Britain.⁴⁴⁴ This cautionary statement aimed to remind the women that they were expected to learn about and respect the independent status of Canada, or risk angering their new Canadian families and friends. It was also chiding. It reflected the paternalistic and repetitive nature of the pamphlet. For example, its authors stated that Canadians, despite being democratic and fun loving, do not take kindly to “show-offs” or criticism, stating: “... but it might be just as well to remember that they don’t like criticism based solely on the fact that some Canadian customs may be different from those of other countries.”⁴⁴⁵ This statement cautioned brides who were dissatisfied about cultural differences to keep their opinions to themselves, a message that asserted and affirmed a uniquely Canadian cultural identity to which these women were expected to conform. Often, this caution insinuated cultural assumptions on the part of British women, implying that people from the UK were stuck

⁴⁴³Granatstein, *Canada’s War*, 424; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 14; Nelles, *A Little History of Canada*, 197, 201.

⁴⁴⁴*Welcome to War Brides*, 12.

⁴⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 18.

up. When it explained food practices in Canada for example, *From Kith to Kin* advised the women not to be either “too shy or ‘uppish’” when asking their in-laws questions.⁴⁴⁶

Pamphlets given to the brides also informed them of the importance of assimilating into Canadian life as quickly as possible. This expectation was far from subtle. For example, *Welcome to War Brides*, includes a section entitled, “What Are Canadians Like?” which provides an example of a war bride who it claims successfully settled in Canada.⁴⁴⁷ It advised that if war brides were to “go prepared to like the country and its people,” they would “be welcome with open arms” by Canada’s people.⁴⁴⁸ The key to successful integration, it maintained, was the correct mental attitude. One would not find happiness, nor truly settle in the country, if one’s thoughts and heart remained in England. In the words of the unnamed bride she would “make a good Canadian – or die in the attempt!”⁴⁴⁹ While clearly a hyperbole, the section read as the only way to be happy in Canada was to shed the past and become Canadian.⁴⁵⁰

Despite the intent and focus to Canadianize the brides, authors provided very limited information on the country itself. The two most informative pamphlets provided to them, *Welcome to War Brides* and *From Kith to Kin*, gave very brief and generalized information. When discussing its different provinces, both pamphlets focussed heavily on provincial economic markets and primary industries of trade.⁴⁵¹ Small generalized

⁴⁴⁶AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 22-3.

⁴⁴⁷No name or information about this bride is provided. One wonders if the bride mentioned is real or merely a fabricated example to get the Canadian Governments message of assimilation across.

⁴⁴⁸*Welcome to War Brides*, 18.

⁴⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁵¹*Ibid.*, 14-5; AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 37-40.

paragraphs explained differences in terms of money, climate, and religion in Canada versus the UK.⁴⁵² Although they acknowledged the large amounts of snow, intense cold, and humidity, which were common to the Canadian climate, the pamphlets downplayed the extremes of these conditions.⁴⁵³ Further, discussion of the climate or how to prepare for such a transition – for example the purchasing of a heavy winter coat – was limited as the pamphlets focussed on discussing the joys of seasonal outdoor activities.

Considering the government's initial disapproval of its publication, the IODE's pamphlet was more informative than the one provided by the DND. While still short and generalized, it provided a breakdown of a number of topics including but not limited to the various seasons, with warnings about blackflies and mosquitoes in the summer, that granting divorce was more restrictive in Canada than in Britain, and that the vast spaces in the West between houses and cities could potentially lead to loneliness.⁴⁵⁴ Most importantly, its last few pages provided a directory of information. It outlined the various government departments and provincial authorities, chief authorities of Churches, and the names of the main welfare services and women's organizations in Canada.⁴⁵⁵ This information provided the brides with a better sense of the conditions of the country, as well as the services available to them, than *Welcome to War Brides*. However, the goal of these pamphlets was less about educating war brides about Canada than encouraging their Canadianization. This involved both reinforcing the right mental attitude and cultivating correct gendered behaviour.

⁴⁵²Ibid., 16-7, 8-9, 32-3; Ibid., 7-8, 20.

⁴⁵³Ibid.; Ibid., 10, 12, 22, 27-36.

⁴⁵⁴Ibid., 10, 12, 22, 27-36.

⁴⁵⁵Ibid., 42-6.

Like the volunteer associations that had helped prepare the brides for life in Canada, Canadian government and military officials went to great lengths to create a post-war life for veterans, particularly regarding rehabilitation programs. As discussed in Chapter 2, these programs and later welfare state policies were designed to help ease veteran resettlement back into civilian life, but perhaps more importantly, they aimed to prevent the social unrest that followed the First World War. Government officials believed that veteran training programs and financial assistance would alleviate unemployment problems. Key to their success lay in the demobilisation of Canadian women from the military and workforce since it would open jobs for returning male soldiers. This concern to address male unemployment reflects the government's postwar aim to return to normalcy, i.e., re-establishing the appropriate gendered roles of men as the primary breadwinners and women as homemakers and mothers.⁴⁵⁶

Historian Jennifer Stephens argues that the postwar homemaker ideal promoted by the Canadian state reinforced a specific vision of what it meant to be Canadian – a white middle-class patriarchal society.⁴⁵⁷ In addition, Nancy Christie argues that family cohesion and gender roles were intricately tied to concerns about the social and economic stability of the nation.⁴⁵⁸ Thus, people stepping outside the bounds of acceptable models of gendered behaviour implied the collapse of society. Public health – and in particular

⁴⁵⁶This gendered division was merely an “ideal” since women, especially working-class women, might well have to work outside the home to supplement their husband's income for their family's survival. Pierson, *“They're Still Women After All,”* 79-81; Christie, *Engendering the State*, 4-6, 310-312; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 7-8; Campbell, *Respectable Citizen*, 56, 73-5, 151, 153.

⁴⁵⁷Iacovetta and Korinek, “Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker,” 191, 219; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 7-8.

⁴⁵⁸Christie, *Engendering the State*, 311-2; Iacovetta and Korinek, “Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker,” 191, 194.

the importance of producing healthy children – became tied to the conception of a strong nation-state. This resulted in the state increasingly monitoring and giving advice regarding child welfare and rearing.⁴⁵⁹

To ensure the successful re-integration of Canadian women into the home, the government relied upon a number of programs and experts. The interwar period had seen a rise in their influence, specifically doctors, psychologists, church, and social workers. They pushed reforms and programs designed to reinforce white middle-class nation building.⁴⁶⁰ During the war, and well into the Cold War period, the creation and expansion of the welfare state increased the influence of these reformers as they worked more closely with the Canadian state as professionals.⁴⁶¹ Government officials tasked them with promoting behaviour that presupposed particular gender and class roles. For example, near the end of the war the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) created the Home Service program for Canadian servicewomen. It used psychologists to promote domestic and pro-natalist policies that discouraged them from going into the paid labour force after their wartime service. They also promoted a notion of female citizenship that tied it to women's roles as heterosexual wives and mothers.⁴⁶²

Women felt tremendous pressure to conform to gender roles. Teachers, social service workers, immigration officers, and media outlets, including popular magazines

⁴⁵⁹Iacovetta and Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker," 194-5, 219.

⁴⁶⁰Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, 102, 106-7; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap & Water*, 29, 104-5; Ivana Caccia, *Managing the Canadian Mosaic in Wartime: Shaping Citizenship Policy, 1939-1945* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 42-3.

⁴⁶¹Iacovetta and Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker," 435; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 6-8, 16-7, 185-7, 203.

⁴⁶²Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 185-7, 203; Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-war Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 18, 30.

like *Chatelaine*, all advised them to fall in line with the status quo.⁴⁶³ This push of females into domesticity succeeded in the sense that most women indeed moved from the labour force into the home at the war's conclusion. However, they often had little choice in this matter. After the war, the Canadian government cut funding for childcare, pushed employers to hire male veterans over women, and denied women access to civil service jobs. Women faced limited employment opportunities, largely in retail, textile, or secretarial work. Typically, they received lower wages, unless they were lucky enough to be a nurse or teacher, and even then fewer had benefits or job security.⁴⁶⁴ Those who did not conform to gender ideals were often presented as morally unfit or pitiable.⁴⁶⁵ Men held the right to work while women did not; most people viewed their labour as merely supplemental to their husbands' income.⁴⁶⁶ These ideas affected all Canadian women, especially immigrant women, like British war brides.

British war brides also deeply felt the insidious suggestion that the success or failure of their marriages hinged upon their ability to assimilate into Canadian life. For example, the author of one magazine article discussing a cookbook created for war brides, pointed out how high the stakes were in the simple task of coffee making; "this one single solitary malpractice sufficient grounds for divorce."⁴⁶⁷ While clearly a tongue in cheek

⁴⁶³Iacovetta and Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker," 195-6, 197, 199-200; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 166; Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 16.

⁴⁶⁴Ann Porter, *Gendered States: Women, Unemployment Insurance and the Political Economy of the Welfare State in Canada, 1945-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 37-42; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 203; Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 18, 20-1

⁴⁶⁵Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 178-9; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 166.

⁴⁶⁶Christie, *Engendering the State*, 307; Sangster, *Transforming*, 20-1.

⁴⁶⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," Magazine clipping – "Liberty's Short Report: What's Cooking?," 28 September 1946.

statement for humor's sake, Canadian women received such messages on a regular basis. Canadian magazines told them to look pretty and avoid criticizing their husbands, or else face the potential of his leaving. A husband's decision to leave a marriage was always framed as the fault of a wife's misdeeds.⁴⁶⁸ This advice sprinkled over many years through magazines put enormous pressure on women to perform in a certain way to ensure the successful running of the home and their husbands' happiness. Their own happiness never appeared to be a major concern. This can be seen in the *Welcome to War Brides* pamphlet, which told the women to assimilate for the benefit of their families, and to keep their homesickness to themselves.⁴⁶⁹ This advice reinforced the common ideology of the postwar period in Canada, that held that a good wife would subordinate her own interests and desires to the interests and desires of her husband.

The topics covered by the CWB's lecture series reinforced the importance of homemaking and motherhood to the Canadianization of British war brides. While speakers discussed topics such as Canadian sports, travel, and literature, most of their talks centered on domestic topics: cooking, decorating the home, beauty regimes, childcare, and shopping.⁴⁷⁰ They were not solely the purview of the CWB, as many war bride clubs requested lectures and materials related to domestic topics. These requests are unsurprising. As discussed in Chapter 1, the British and Canadian states had been

⁴⁶⁸For some examples see the following articles: Irene Parrott, "The Bride as a Hostess," *Saturday Night*, 11 December 1943; Dorothy Dix, "For Better ... For Worse," *Chatelaine*, May 1944; N/A, "Comment – Se Faire Belle," *La Revue Moderne*, December 1944; Adele Saunders, "Divorce in Canada," *Chatelaine*, April 1945; Beverly Grey, "Housewives are a Sorry Lot," *Chatelaine*, March 1950.

⁴⁶⁹*Welcome to War Brides*, 19-22.

⁴⁷⁰LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," Report of Activities for Canadian Wives Club by Catherine Prout, CWB Salvation Army Canadian Wives Services, 30 September 1945.

reinforcing the importance of being a wife and mother throughout the war. Consequently, many of the women expected to return to the home following the war's conclusion and wished to have classes to hone their domestic skills and learn the differences between British and Canadian foods and home conveniences.

While many of the brides asked that the CWB cover domestic related topics, it is important to keep in mind that it really had no choice in the matter. Early on, the Canadian military and CWB had determined the content of the lectures to be provided to them. It reflected the Canadian government's stance on the proper roles and behaviours of men and women. As was the case with all the educational materials created or used by the CWB, it carefully controlled and crafted its lectures to promote Canadianization – how to become a good Canadian wife and mother. The CWB took the hiring of speakers quite seriously, carefully selecting and vetting their lecture content.⁴⁷¹ It sought out speakers with experience living in the UK. For example, Mrs. K.C. Burness, a prominent speaker at CWB clubs, had been a war bride during the First World War.⁴⁷² Her own experiences made it easier for her to relate to the wives and made her knowledge about the challenges

⁴⁷¹LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 "DAB," Vol. 24, Memo Re: Transfer of Dependents, by Pembroke, 3 July 1944.

⁴⁷²Following her husband's death in 1941, she was brought over to speak to war brides due to her experiences. LAC, WLMK, R10383-7-9-E, MR# C-7050, "PSC," Letter to N.A. Robertson, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs from Patrick Duff, Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, 5 April 1944; LAC, WLMK, R10383-7-9-E, MR# C-7055, "PSC," Letter to A.L. Jolliffe, Director of Immigration, from N.A. Robertson, 6 April 1944. For more examples of speakers with experience living in Canada and the UK see the following: LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10325, "CWB – Club 8," Letter to Mrs. P. Ritchie from Mrs. E.P. Lee, 29 June 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10325, "CWB – Club Lecturers," Report Lecture Tour to Canadian Wives' Clubs by Mrs. R. Morris Wilson, Civilian Lecturer, n/d, and Letter to Moles, CWB, from Dr. Alexander H. Smith, 8 September 1945 and 25 September 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324, "CWB – Aberdeen 1," Minutes, October 1945.

adapting to Canadian life more authoritative. In addition, the DND and CWB looked for speakers with formal training or a university education.⁴⁷³

The training and experience of these speakers denoted them as authorities on their subject, and thus worthy of attention and respect. For example, when Mrs. Burness visited the Heather Club for Wives of Canadians, its president noted how her experience made her “qualified” to lecture on what made a good Canadian housewife.⁴⁷⁴ Lecturers spoke on a rotational basis to clubs with 50 or more members to reach the highest concentration of wives possible.⁴⁷⁵ The use of professionals to speak to, educate, or guide war brides reflects a continuation of the scrutiny and monitoring the women had already experienced at the hands of the Canadian government and military in regards to their moral character and health. Having proved themselves the war brides were expected to undergo instruction at the hands of expert speakers chosen by the state. Through their lectures and classes, these lecturers promoted the ideal of the white middle-class homemaking Canadian woman.⁴⁷⁶

The promotion of middle-class domestic ideals is also apparent in the *Canadian Cookbook for British Brides*, created and provided by the Canadian Women’s Voluntary Services and Department of National War Services. This useful book explains differences

⁴⁷³LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Reverend Canon W.W. Judd, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England by A.R. Deputy Minister Army, 8 January 1945.

⁴⁷⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, “CWB – Glasgow,” Minutes of General Meeting of the Heather Club for Wives of Canadians, Mrs. K.C. Burness visit, 18 June 1946.

⁴⁷⁵Ibid., Vol. 10324, “CWB – Bognorregis 1,” Letter to Canadian Regus Club members from V.N. Gill, Lt. Col. Director, CWB, n/d; LAC, DND, R112-0-2-E, MR# T-1796, “CMHQ, London,” CWB Newsletter, Murdoch, 24 January 1946.

⁴⁷⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” Report of Activities for CWB by Prout, 30 September 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324, “CWB – Aberdeen 2,” Minutes, May 1946; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, “CWB – Glasgow,” Minutes of General Meeting of the Heather Club for Wives of Canadians, 18 June 1946 and Mrs. Hart visit, 30 July 1946.

in cooking measurements and names for cuts of meat in Canada that differed from the UK. It even provides useful tidbits of culinary information and taste, such as Canadians' general preference for coffee over tea.⁴⁷⁷ Considering their treatment in the educational materials, it is not surprising that the cookbook contained no recipes from French-Canadian or Indigenous food traditions. While the cookbook is full of recipes considered to be traditionally British, including roasts, potato salad, fruit crumble, raisin biscuits, etc., it did not list recipes deemed traditionally French-Canadian, such as pea soup or tourtière, or any dishes associated with Indigenous communities, such as three sisters soup or bannock. Clearly, Canadian authorities aimed to promote only a *white English* Canadian identity.

Like the educational pamphlets discussed above, the cookbook addresses women with a paternalistic and patronizing tone. It suggests a detailed list of what a housewife ought to have in her kitchen, including items such as a kettle, can opener, and frying pan. Its photographs explain the use of a number of common cooking tools, such as a butter knife and salad fork, items with which war brides would have already been familiar.⁴⁷⁸ While it is possible that this content was well intentioned, its inclusion nonetheless implies that these British women had little experience with cooking and other domestic tasks to the degree that they needed be instructed on the use of a butter knife. Such a suggestion was baseless and patronizing; these women would have invariably learned how to cook in order to help their mothers or support themselves while living away from home.

⁴⁷⁷City of Toronto Archives [hereafter cited as CTA], Fonds 2, Series 607, File 200 "World War II Cookbooks" [hereafter cited as WW2C], Division of Women's Voluntary Services, *Canadian Cookbook for British Brides* (Department of National War Services, 1945), 2-3, 8-9, 12-3, 29.

⁴⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 5-7.

In addition, many utensils recommended in the cookbook, such as a bouillon spoon, sherbet glasses, and fruit dishes, would not have commonly graced Canadian or British tables.⁴⁷⁹ These items would be considered a luxury or an unnecessary expenditure for most working- or middle-class females. Their inclusion reflects the cookbook authors' attempt to promote class ideals, or it could simply be that the authors themselves were tone-deaf to the economic reality of most families in the UK and Canada of the day.

Recipes in the *Canadian Cookbook for British Brides* also conveyed a sense of food abundance in Canada. For example, recipes relating to soups, salads, meats, and vegetables barely fill a page or two, whereas the cookbook dedicates nine pages to baking and desserts, declaring Canadians' love of pies and doughnuts: "If you can make good doughnuts your husband will think you're wonderful!"⁴⁸⁰ Aside from implying that Canadians had a penchant for sweets, the section reveals a clear insensitivity to the reality of daily life in wartime Britain.⁴⁸¹ While Canada experienced wartime rationing, it was nowhere near as drastic, nor long-lasting, as that experienced by the British.⁴⁸² Wartime diets in the UK centered on an increased consumption of bread, milk, and potatoes with a reduction in fats, meats, fish, fruit, and fresh eggs.⁴⁸³ British women were the targets of

⁴⁷⁹Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸⁰Ibid., 20-8.

⁴⁸¹Since Britain is an island nation, it was dependant on foodstuffs and additional supplies from its commonwealth partners and colonial territories. Throughout the war, German submarines attacked shipping convoys destined to Britain, severely limiting the stockpiles of necessary supplies within the UK to starve the nation into submission. As a result, from the beginning of the war until 1954 the UK instituted tight rationing controls of food and eventually commodities, such as clothing. The British Ministry of Food prioritized subsistence activities to stretch supplies as far as they could go.

⁴⁸²Rationing in the UK remained in place until 1954, where as rationing in Canada was ended around 1946.

⁴⁸³Rationing of this sort was presented to the British people as a way for them to support the war effort. The foreword of *Food Facts for the Kitchen Front: A Book on Wartime Recipes and Hints* by Lord Woolton Minister of Food, states that housewives are war workers and that cookbooks such as this were a "serviceable weapon" for them during the war. CTA, Fonds 2, Series 607, File 200, "WW2C," *Food Facts*

extensive food propaganda and educational content that emphasized the importance of cutting back on unnecessary or unavailable foods. State sponsored cookbooks stressed: “what we can get is good for us” and “what we cannot get is quite unimportant.”⁴⁸⁴ The need for rationing and the associated techniques for saving as much as possible stuck with many of these women for the rest of their lives. For example, the daughters of one war bride recalled how when cracking an egg their mother would always use her pinky finger to scrape out as much of the yolk and egg white as possible, a technique she had learned during the war.⁴⁸⁵

As most British war brides had not had fruit, such as oranges or bananas, or desserts since before the war, the abundance of food that Canada supposedly offered was very attractive.⁴⁸⁶ When reflecting on a club demonstration centered around popular desserts, one bride recalled: “we had our mouths watering with the mention of strawberry shortcake and meringue pies with whipped cream and bananas etc.”⁴⁸⁷ The description of cakes and desserts must have felt like a tantalizing promise to women who had been getting by stretching soup thin. The food provided to the women on their journey further

for the Kitchen Front: A Book on Wartime Recipes and Hints (London and Glasgow: Collins, circa 1940-1945), 4; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption, 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 31, 36-7; Derek J. Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food: British Diet from the 1890s to the 1990s* (UK: The Boydell Press, 2003), 148; Gardiner, *Wartime Britain*, 145.

⁴⁸⁴CTA, Fonds 2, Series 607, File 200, “WW2C,” *Food Facts for the Kitchen Front*, 6; CTA, Fonds 2, Series 607, File 200, “WW2C,” *Good Housekeeping Magazine, Good Housekeeping’s Book of Thrifty War-Time Recipes* (London: Good Housekeeping Magazine, circa 1940-1945), 3, 26; CTA, Fonds 2, Series 607, File 200, “WW2C,” Ambrose Heath, *How to Cook in War-Time* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1942), 3-4; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 101, 110.

⁴⁸⁵Susan, Carol, and Ginny B., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 10 October 2016.

⁴⁸⁶These fruits were also rare in Canada.

⁴⁸⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10331, “CWB – London SW 1,” Minutes of the Meeting of the Cockney Canucks Wives Club, 19 February 1946.

highlighted the scarcity in the UK versus the abundance promised in Canada. Ship menus included a vast array of foodstuffs including ice cream, bacon, roasted lamb, oranges, fresh bread, apple pie, butter, scones, pancakes, chocolate, tea, and coffee [Appendix 2 – Images 2.10-11].⁴⁸⁸ These menus stood out in the minds of the women, as most war bride accounts describe their shock at the quantity and quality of food provided to them on their journey. Joan B. describes how the lunches provided were “the fanciest” she had since before the war and her astonishment that she could buy anything, from chocolate to cigarettes, at the ship’s canteen.⁴⁸⁹ Vera T. wrote in her travel diary about how the ships had all the chocolate and sweets you could want, and how her siblings would chuckle at the thought of her eating her daughter’s discarded ice cream.⁴⁹⁰ Such things made a lasting impression on the women; Rosemary D. kept a careful record of what she had for each specific meal, including oranges, pears, and fresh buttered rolls.⁴⁹¹

Unfortunately for many brides, be they on their own, pregnant, or with their young children, the rich diet, combined with the rough seas of the Atlantic Ocean, resulted in many of the women suffering from severe seasickness.⁴⁹² Illness during crossings was so frequent that it was parodied in a comic strip [Appendix 2 – Image 2.12]. In the cartoon, two brides gorge themselves while another is sick through the port window with the

⁴⁸⁸CMI at Pier 21, R2013.1616.22, Menu – RMS *Aquitania*, 27 July 1946; CMI at Pier 21, DI2014.463.5, Menu – SS *Letitia*, 17 May 1946; CMI at Pier 21, D2015.372.6, Menu – SS *Union-Castle Line*, 11 May 1945; CMI at Pier 21, DI2016.509.3, Menu – SS *Franconia*, 7 April 1946.

⁴⁸⁹Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, 22-3.

⁴⁹⁰Excerpt from the Travel Diary of Vera T., 1-3 January 1945, private collection.

⁴⁹¹CWM, GMAC, 20060167-001, Account by Rosemary D., 17 March 1946.

⁴⁹²CMI at Pier 21, 07.08.10DS; CMI at Pier 21, S2015.154.1, Extract from the Immigration Story of Olive W., arrived from Britain, August 1945; CMI at Pier 21, DI2016.297.1c, Excerpt from the Travel Journal of Leona N., arrived in Canada 26 April 1946; Jarratt, *Operation Daddy*, 3.

caption of: “*This is the first good meal we’ve had in six years and now look at her.*”⁴⁹³

This cartoon reflected the sentiment of awe attached to the food provided to them and the willingness of the women to risk making themselves sick for a moment of indulgence.

Through cookbooks, cooking classes, and lectures on homemaking, the CWB went to great lengths to spread the message that the Canadian way of living and maintaining a home was different from and superior to that of the British. For example, when war bride Elise T. arrived in Canada, she received a letter from Geo. H. Ellis, Director of Repatriation, with an enclosed copy of the *Canadian Cookbook for Brides*. Ellis informed her that the cookbook would prove essential as British dishes would not turn out correctly in Canada due to differences in flour and baking powder, implying that it would be better for her to learn Canadian recipes.⁴⁹⁴ However, the illusion of Canada as a place of abundance and modernity was quickly dispelled for those brides destined to rural areas with no plumbing or roads that could only be accessed by horse and sled.⁴⁹⁵

Joan Sangster argues that such messages or representations by the state or in the media were not universally endorsed or accepted by women. She cautions historians to look at the climate and atmosphere of these women’s lives, and how such ideas of conformity laid the “parameters of what was possible, preferable, or impossible for women.”⁴⁹⁶ Most British war brides understood the magnitude of the decision they were

⁴⁹³PANB, MJWB, MC3495, “MS1A99 – War Bride Research Material,” Newspaper Clipping Here N’There With Luzny “Brides Mess Deck,” 1946.

⁴⁹⁴CMI at Pier 21, DI22013.911.20, Letter to Elise T. from Geo. H. Ellis, Colonel, Director of Repatriation, 194?.

⁴⁹⁵Ibid., S2013.1616.1, Extract from the Immigration Story of Nessa W., arrived from England 194?; Latta, *The Memory of All That*, 142; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 38, 58, 111, 262.

⁴⁹⁶Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 18.

making by coming to Canada and the challenges they would likely face. Throughout the war they wrote in to the CWB and other authorities, as we saw in the case of French-Canadian wives, to get as much information as they could before they travelled to Canada. The diligence and intellect of many of these women was not lost on the CWB. D.A. Clarke acknowledged that while many of Canada's soldiers were young and unaware of the difficulties ahead of them after the war, their wives were "more self-reliant."⁴⁹⁷ Furthermore, while the Canadian government had paid to transport them to Canada, it did not provide assistance for a return home if things did not work out, and the cost of an Atlantic voyage was beyond the means of most war brides. Thus, for British war brides concerned about the success or failure of their marriages and new life in Canada, the messages and advice provided by the Canadian government could not be taken lightly.

Their general acceptance of official forms of advice did not mean that British war brides were not critical of or did not challenge its assimilationist messages. Some brides defied the message of Canadianization and continued to exert their own sense of national identity and pride, often in subtle ways. For example, while learning the provided lyrics to "Maple Leaf Forever" and "O' Canada," the Aberdeen war bride club continued to sing "Auld Lang Syne" and "Hail Caledonia." Both songs asserted the women's sense of Scottish identity. The lyrics to "Hail Caledonia" stated that the Irish and English could keep their valleys and shamrocks "for the blood leaps in my veins, when I hear the bag-

⁴⁹⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, "CWB – Gen 1," Letter to Mrs. W.M. Lebon from D.A. Clarke, CWB, 8 December 1944.

pipes strains, Scotland, dear old Scotland for ever.”⁴⁹⁸ This desire to maintain Scottish identity through song can also be seen in the account of Rosemary D., who wrote of Scottish brides singing nothing but Scottish songs while boarding the ships to Canada.⁴⁹⁹ Others defied their Canadianization training by continuing to cook and feed their families British foods.⁵⁰⁰ Or, far from holding their tongues, as the Canadian government materials suggested, many war brides compared the differences between life in Canada and Britain. For example, Mona expressed dismay to see empty yards as opposed to the gardens and valleys she used to walk in.⁵⁰¹ While not overt examples of flag waving patriotism, such instances demonstrate a desire on the part of some war brides to maintain their own sense of nationalism and national identity in defiance of or alongside the Canadian nationalism that inundated their lives.

Some war brides even found the message and content of the CWB materials to be offensive. War bride Joan W. recalled how all the classes on cooking and clothing gave her “the impression that they thought we were a little stupid.”⁵⁰² Another woman had a particularly strong negative reaction to the CWB educational content and wrote to the CWB to let them know her thoughts on the matter. In her letter, Mrs. B. McCaw stated that she found the pamphlet *Welcome to War Brides* to be “one of the rudest pieces of

⁴⁹⁸Ibid., Vol. 10324, “CWB – Aberdeen 1,” Report on Aberdeen by Mrs. E.P. Lee, 21 June 1945.

⁴⁹⁹CWM, GMAC, 20060167-001.

⁵⁰⁰Susan, Carol, and Ginny B., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 10 October 2016; Dennis H., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 28 October 2016.

⁵⁰¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324, “CWB – Aberdeen 1,” Newspaper Clipping, “Young Bride Writes from Canada” by Mona, n/d. Other brides expressed a similar sentiment of sorrow of not being able to wonder the moors or walk across patch works of farms and trails. Janet Craig-James, “Thoughts of a British War Bride,” *Chatelaine*, February 1945; Robin B. “War Bride,” *Chatelaine*, June 1945.

⁵⁰²*Canada Remembers: Part Three – Endings and Beginnings, 1945*, directed by Terence Macartney-Filgate (NFB of Canada, 1995), online NFB of Canada, 35:09-20.

writing it is possible to meet.”⁵⁰³ She argued that it promoted the notion that you would not be welcome in Canada “unless you dropped every spot of individuality and turned yourself into an automan of what a Canadian likes [sic].”⁵⁰⁴ Clearly, she found its assimilationist message to be aggressive and offensive. She noted the irony of its title, welcoming the brides, while its contents lambasted them and told them to become Canadian. She concluded her letter by stating: “There is one thing an Englishman would not do, and that is to ask a Canadian girl to turn English on coming to live here.”⁵⁰⁵ While it is likely that the British government promoted similar assimilationist policies, the suggestion that the British would not act in such a manner, reflects Mrs. McCaw’s pride in her own English identity.

The CWB was very quick to respond to Mrs. McCaw’s concerns, noting that it did “not often receive much in the way of criticism.”⁵⁰⁶ D.A. Clarke asserted that the pamphlet aimed to prepare these women for life in Canada and that it was not their intention to suggest that Englishwomen should “cast off their old established customs.”⁵⁰⁷ While he suggested that the pamphlet was not intended to be aggressive or dismissive of English identity and culture, Clarke provided no alternative reading of its content. Rather, he suggested that to some degree war brides ought to assimilate in order to “enjoy their different surroundings,” referring to the identity and customs of British brides as being

⁵⁰³LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10328, “CWB – 65 Enq 3 1,” Letter to CWB from Mrs. B. McCaw, 8 January 1944.

⁵⁰⁴Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶Ibid., Letter to Mrs. B. McCaw from D.A. Clarke, CWB, 10 January 1944.

⁵⁰⁷Ibid.

“old.”⁵⁰⁸ This interchange reflects a clear instance of D.A. Clarke’s damage control, since he not only thanked her for her criticisms but also offered to send her detailed information about her final destination in Canada.

This response was not good enough for Mrs. McCaw, who wrote again to the CWB to clarify the nature of her complaint. She argued that Canadian soldiers had chosen English, Scottish, and Irish brides, and yet, while claiming to be welcoming, the pamphlet provided no kind words to them, rather just offensive remarks about how to make oneself agreeable to Canada.⁵⁰⁹ She also expressed her agitation that the Canadian state focussed so much on educating British war brides when most of these women knew “how to behave,” and those who did not, she pointed out, would not be improved by lecturing.⁵¹⁰ At no point did she challenge the idea that Canadians should be proud of their country. Rather, she expressed confusion and distress, as far from the warm welcome she expected, she faced the aggressive promotion of the notion that war brides like herself needed to shed their sense of identity and nationalism in order to appease the Canadian public. Her correspondence with the CWB reflects a clear sense of her English pride – an identity that she was not willing to cast aside in order to become Canadian.

The content of the CWB educational materials reveals a great deal about the Canadian nation-state’s understanding and promotion of Canadian nationalism and proper gender roles during the war. While never explicitly defining what it meant to be Canadian, the published materials nevertheless promote a nationalism centered around

⁵⁰⁸Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹Ibid., Letter to CWB from Mrs. B. McCaw, 12 January 1944.

⁵¹⁰Ibid.

whiteness, patriarchy, middle-class values, and a sense of identity that was presented as separate, and at times superior, to that of the British. Sometimes this nationalism was subtly presented through NFB films or lectures on cooking, while at other times the message of Canadianization was more blatant. British war brides had to work within the confines of these messages in order to navigate and settle into their new lives in Canada. However, that did not mean their wholehearted acceptance of these assimilationist messages. While many did their best to become suitably Canadian, others proudly maintained their sense of UK nationality and difference. Although the state and the CWB assured war brides that they would be welcomed in Canada, the concerns of Mrs. McCaw that such hospitality was only reserved for those who assimilated would be proved valid, since many British war brides faced intense criticism from Canadian women surrounding their moral and ethnic character once in Canada.

Chapter 5 – Canadian Attitudes toward British War Brides: “Should Canucks Wed English Gals?”

In a letter to a Montréal newspaper, war bride Mona tried to warn other war brides that the “fuss” the Canadian government and military had made about British war brides was a mistake.⁵¹¹ Far from welcoming or embracing her as she had been led to expect, the Canadian population that Mona had encountered treated her with apathy and pushed her to assimilate as soon as possible.⁵¹² Mona’s description of Canadian attitudes towards British war brides was not unusual. Yet, if one were to look up British war brides online, they would find photos, video, and stories emphasizing the love, perseverance, and reunion of soldiers and their wives and children following the Second World War [Appendix 2 – Images 2.13-4]. British war brides are now and were framed as ideal or special immigrants. The full story is more complicated.

Newsreels during the war informed war brides that Canada and Canadians were welcoming and would be excited to have them. One *Canadian Army Newsreel* stated that Canada was “proud of 18, 000 adopted daughters,” while another in the same year asserted: “to her new citizens Canada extends the hearty hand of welcome.”⁵¹³ Canadian government officials praised and framed the women as ideal immigrants. In a Senate debate, the Hon. Davies noted that the brides he had met “were all of the highest type,” while in the Ontario Legislature, the Hon. William J. Stewart argued that the arrival of the

⁵¹¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10324, “CWB – Aberdeen 1,” “Young Bride Writes from Canada” by Mona, n/d, newspaper clipping from unknown Montréal paper.

⁵¹²Ibid.

⁵¹³CBC, “War Brides Land in Canada,” *Canadian Army Newsreel* (1 March 1944), Radio, 0:15-0:20s; CBC, “Newsreel Shows ‘A Way to a New Life’ for War Brides,” *Canadian Army Newsreel* (9 December 1944), Radio, 1:13-1:18.

brides and children was “a cause of rejoicing” as now people could say that “out of evil some good may come.”⁵¹⁴ These messages of welcome and acceptance were also rampant within the Canadianization materials provided to British war brides.⁵¹⁵ The introduction to the IODE *Kith to Kin* pamphlet stated: “We welcome you to share with us your heritage; you who have married our sons, our brothers and our kin are now of our same kith.”⁵¹⁶ These kinds of messages were designed to create the impression that British war brides would be especially welcomed in Canada, but this was not always the case.

Current literature rarely discusses the subject of Canadian attitudes towards British war brides. If and when it does, these attitudes are presented as positive and welcoming.⁵¹⁷ Negative encounters with Canadians are only briefly mentioned and never discussed in any length.⁵¹⁸ This lack of balance is a result of a focus on positive media coverage of family reunions and welcoming crowds.⁵¹⁹ The historiographical focus on positive Canadians’ and British war brides’ mutual receptions and interactions ignores the complex interactions between the two groups, which ranged from positive, to mixed, to antagonistic. Not all Canadians, especially Canadian women, viewed British war brides as special, and many were unwilling to welcome the brides into their communities.

⁵¹⁴Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Official Reports of Debates*, 21st Parliament, Vol. 1 (8 March 1944): 507; Canada, Parliament, Senate, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 2nd Session, Vol. 1 (1946): 662.

⁵¹⁵*Welcome to War Brides*, 1; CTA, Fonds 2, Series 607, File 200 “WW2C,” Division of Women’s Voluntary Services, *Canadian Cookbook for Brides*, 1.

⁵¹⁶AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 5.

⁵¹⁷Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 146; Sangster, “The Meanings of Mercy,” 520-1.

⁵¹⁸Jarratt, *War Brides*, 16-8; Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 3; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*, 3.

⁵¹⁹Magda Fahrni has pointed out that a focus on reunion has resulted in historians ignoring the postwar settlement and adaptation experiences of soldiers and their families. Specifically focusing on Montréal, Fahrni discusses how not all war brides received a warm welcome from Canadians. Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion,” 199-200; Sangster, “The Meanings of Mercy,” 515, 520-1.

In a 1943 article in the *Globe and Mail*, Lt. Col. Gray “pleaded” that Canadians needed to be more welcoming of British war brides or else they would go back to the UK.⁵²⁰ The ever-increasing number of overseas marriages, combined with concerns about the potential negative reception of brides in Canada, led to the creation of a 1944 Gallup Poll by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (CIPO) to gauge the attitudes of the Canadian public on the subject. The poll, entitled “Should Canucks Wed English Gals?” asked Canadians: “A great number of Canadian soldiers are marrying girls in Britain. Do you approve of this or not?” The results of the poll showed that of those polled, 46% of Canadians approved of the marriages, while 41% disapproved and 13% remained undecided. These results surprised the institute since it was the first time that it had noticed “any notable difference between the way the sexes think,” as 60% of Canadian men approved of the marriages, while 53% of Canadian women disapproved of them.⁵²¹ The results of the survey suggest that almost half of the population, most specifically Canadian women, stood opposed to Canadian soldiers’ overseas marriages to British women. The CIPO noted that of the women who disapproved, most were single.⁵²²

It is no surprise that single Canadian women would be hostile to the idea of overseas marriages since Ontario and Québec media provided vast coverage of these marriages, often emphasizing the idea that Canadian women seemed left behind or in

⁵²⁰“Pleads War Brides Be Made Welcome,” *Globe and Mail*, 1 December 1943.

⁵²¹This Gallup Poll makes no mention of the number of survey respondents. Canadian Institute of Public Opinion [hereafter cited as CIPO], “Should Canucks Wed English Gals?,” *Gallup Poll of Canada*, 10 May 1944; “Sexes Differ on Subject if Service Men’s Brides,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 10 May 1944.

⁵²²*Ibid.*

competition with British women for the affections of Canadian men.⁵²³ One article in the *Globe and Mail* referred to Canadian-British marriages as “home front heart casualties,” and argued that Canadian men were “forgetting” the women they left in Canada.⁵²⁴ An article in the *Toronto Star* noted that it was only natural that Canadian girls “who ‘lost’ their men to British girls during the war should be bitter about it...”⁵²⁵ Whereas articles in both the *Montréal Herald* and *Gazette* pointed out that with the inroads into Europe in 1945, Canadian women also had “the added burden” of contending with the affections of Belgian, Dutch, and French women for Canadian soldiers.⁵²⁶ Numerous articles like these framed Canadian women as the unfair victims of British and continental European man stealers.

Chatelaine noted the bitterness of these women as Canadian men married all across Europe in what they “dubbed World War II Operation Matrimony,” suggesting that the women perceived the men to be more occupied with finding a spouse overseas than fighting the war.⁵²⁷ Another example of this bitterness was apparent in the memory of a Welsh war bride, Iris, regarding her interaction with a Canadian nurse. During a medical exam in Canada, Iris recalled how a nurse was very hostile towards her, arguing that British women had stolen all the men, leaving her with no one to dance with when

⁵²³Media sources analyzed in this chapter include CBC broadcasts and Montréal and Toronto based newspapers and magazines, including *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *Chatelaine*. According to Valerie J. Korinek, until the creation of a French version of *Chatelaine* in the 1960s, the magazine was merely translated into French for Québec audiences – meaning there was a large overlap between the content of both English and French *Chatelaine* in this period. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 60, 66.

⁵²⁴“War Bride Arrivals Are Such Nice People,” *Globe and Mail*, 16 February 1944.

⁵²⁵“What to Do About British Brides,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 September 1946.

⁵²⁶“French-Canadian Troops Reap Most Romantic Successes on Continent,” *Montréal Herald*, 19 June 1945; “Canadian Men on Western Front Can Still Find Time for Romance,” *Gazette*, 19 January 1945.

⁵²⁷Margaret Ecker Francis, “Don’t Trust the German Women,” *Chatelaine*, June 1946, 16.

she graduated nursing school.⁵²⁸ The nurse expected and believed it was her right to have access to Canadian men, and she was angry at Iris for her access to and success in acquiring a Canadian husband. Such women were inculcated with the message that being a fulltime wife and mother was their proper place in Canadian society.⁵²⁹ Thus, the nurse's anger was most likely tied to fears of not finding a husband and becoming a spinster.⁵³⁰

While not all Canadians had gone overseas to serve, the media's portrayal of overseas marriages created the impression that there were not enough men to go around. Some people treated this portrayal as ludicrous: one letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* argued that the argument "does not hold water," whereas Anne Francis, in an article in *Saturday Night*, argued that Canadian women were being "unreasonable" since there was no shortage of men.⁵³¹ However, some Canadians took the matter very seriously, as can be seen in a senate debate in which Canada's first female Senator, the Hon. Cairine Wilson, pleaded that immigration be opened "to provide husbands for Canadian girls who

⁵²⁸CMI at Pier 21, 06.07.12IK, Iris J. audio oral history conducted by Emily Beastin, 12 July 2006, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

⁵²⁹These gender expectations were also apparent in the US and UK. Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 3, 10; Pierson, "They're Still Women After All," 11; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 152, 156-7; Stephens, "Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman," 122, 128.

⁵³⁰Spinster is a term that generally refers to an unmarried woman or a woman who is considered too old to get married. It has been used as a derogatory remark against unmarried women – implying that they had failed in their natural role of wife and mother. Since it was difficult for women to find work with pay high enough to support themselves in this period, spinsterhood was also tied to conceptions of poverty or being a burden on one's family for financial support.

⁵³¹"Welcome to the War Bride," *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 1944; Anne Francis, "Those British Wives: It Is Our Move to Understand Them," *Saturday Night*, 9 September 1944.

lost a competition with incoming war brides.”⁵³² According to the *Montréal Herald*, Wilson’s remark was met with general applause.⁵³³

Canadian servicemen also experienced some criticism for their decisions to marry British war brides. In one *Maclean’s* article, a Canadian woman accused Canadian soldiers of giving them “a shabby deal when they marry British girls,” arguing that the men should wait to come home to properly compare the women before making a decision to wed.⁵³⁴ A similar attitude surfaced in the *Toronto Daily Star* where a female author accused Canadian men of going “shopping” overseas when there were “lovely Canadian girls right at home.”⁵³⁵ Canadian woman responded to overseas marriages in a similar fashion to that of British soldiers to British women marrying Canadians, in that the act of marrying an outsider was viewed and framed as a kind of betrayal. While some Canadians defended or framed these marriages as understandable, considering the time spent overseas and the natural inclinations of young men, others viewed the marriages as insulting to the fine women at home.⁵³⁶

However, not all Canadian men choose to marry overseas. Many Canadian soldiers were already engaged and stayed faithful, choosing to marry when they returned home. Some soldiers were particularly proud of this fact as can be see in an article in the

⁵³²Within her “plea,” Wilson also mentioned the amount of “broken hearts” among the women of Canada. Canada, Parliament, Senate, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 2nd Session, Vol. 1 (1946): 664.

⁵³³“Would Provide Mates for War Bride Victims,” *Montréal Herald*, 20 August 1946.

⁵³⁴She argued that a failure to do so could lead too many soldiers becoming disillusioned with their British wives upon returning to Canada. “Canadian Girls Talk Back,” *Maclean’s*, 15 February 1944, 47.

⁵³⁵“What to Do About British Brides,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 September 1946.

⁵³⁶“French-Canadian Troops Reap Most Romantic Success on Continent,” *Montréal Herald*, 15 February 1944; Ralph Allen, War Correspondent London, “War Cupid Defended,” *Globe and Mail*, 7 April 1944; “But No Cause for Alarm,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 July 1945; “Son Follows Dad’s Lead Takes English War Bride,” *Toronto Telegram*, 7 May 1946; Mary-Etta Macpherson, “Our Men ... and Those British Women,” *Chatelaine*, April 1944, 16, 57.

Maple Leaf, where a Canadian soldier stated: “Lady, I’ve seen the women on the Continent and in England and I wouldn’t trade one golden strand of my (Canadian) honey’s hair for the whole lot.”⁵³⁷ The soldier’s account framed Canadian women as being superior to British and European women. In Canada, accounts of servicemen’s marriages to Canadian women were framed to emphasize the merit of choosing a Canadian wife over a British one. The *Chatelaine* article, “I Waited to Marry a Canadian Girl,” discussed the combat experience of a Canadian soldier, Chuck, and his decision to wait to marry his Canadian girl, Norma, after the war. Although Chuck admitted that “he had a close shave or two in Britain” – implying he almost did not wait for Norma – the author still praised him for thwarting temptation and making the right choice in marrying a Canadian, unlike his friends.⁵³⁸ The praise and approval of Chuck’s decision is further apparent in the article’s two-page photo spread of the couple on their wedding day and during their daily routine at home [Appendix 2 – Image 2.15].⁵³⁹ Such articles demonstrate that servicemen who waited or came back and married Canadian women were presented as good or honourable in comparison to those who married overseas. While some Canadian men were criticized for their choice to marry overseas, in general, war brides took the brunt of the blame for their marriages or “thefts” of Canadian men.

Overtly critical media pieces discussing the merits of British women in contrast to Canadian women further strained relations between them. In an article in *Maclean’s* comparing English and Canadian women, its author concluded that while the two were

⁵³⁷“Very Sympathetic to War Brides Desire,” *Maple Leaf – England*, 24 October 1945.

⁵³⁸Lotta Dempsey, “I Waited to Marry a Canadian Girl,” *Chatelaine*, August 1945, 13-4.

⁵³⁹*Ibid.*

equal in terms of attractiveness, English women were intelligent and introspective, whereas Canadian women seemed more occupied with “trivialities,” such as which fork to use.⁵⁴⁰ Criticism of Canadian women as being unintellectual or focussed on frivolities appeared to have been commonplace. Wilfred Sanders’ *Chatelaine* article, “Women are Disappointing,” accused Canadian women of having no opinions of their own, while in *Saturday Night*, R.N. Macdonald accused them of being narrow-minded, prejudicial, and critical of women they did not know.⁵⁴¹ Other articles presented Canadian women as childish or unworthy of Canadian veterans. In the *Globe and Mail* a group of veterans at the University of Toronto accused female students of being immature and unapproachable compared to their European counterparts.⁵⁴² One soldier wrote to the *Maple Leaf* that he would “take an English girl anytime” since Canadian women would not even look at him until he put on the uniform, implying that they were stuck up.⁵⁴³ Other articles chided Canadian women for their greediness in the face of rationing.⁵⁴⁴

Chatelaine’s Margaret Ecker Francis addressed such issues in her article “Nostalgia.” She argued that returned Canadian soldiers looked back on their time in the UK with nostalgic rose-coloured glasses.⁵⁴⁵ In particular, she noted how veterans criticized Canadian women for complaining about rationing, noting one instance where a

⁵⁴⁰Roland Wild, “Now, About You Girls...,” *Maclean’s*, 1 October 1946, 59.

⁵⁴¹Wilfred Sanders, “Women are Disappointing,” *Chatelaine* March 1944, 9; R.N. Macdonald, “Are Canadian Women Open to a Charge of Narrow-Mindedness?,” *Saturday Night*, 18 November 1944, 22.

⁵⁴²“War Brides Back Vet Critics of Stand-Offish Canada Girls,” *Globe and Mail*, 24 December 1946.

⁵⁴³Pte. Tom Peep, “Dope on the Dame Situation,” *Maple Leaf – France*, 16 August 1944.

⁵⁴⁴“War Bride Amazed at Plenitude Here,” *Globe and Mail*, 31 August 1944; Francis, “Those British Wives,” *Saturday Night*, 9 September 1944; “The Homemaker – The British Bride,” *Globe and Mail*, 13 August 1945; Margaret Ecker Francis, “Nostalgia,” *Chatelaine*, November 1946, 28; “Our 42,000 Overseas Brides... Are They Making a Success of Marriage?,” *Chatelaine*, March 1947, 79.

⁵⁴⁵Francis, “Nostalgia,” *Chatelaine*, November 1946.

soldier chided a Canadian women: “in Britain the women haven’t a tenth of the things you have for cooking, yet they manage to be a lot more cheerful about it than you do.”⁵⁴⁶ According to Francis, in the minds of the veterans, specifically the aforementioned soldier, since British women had it far worse in the UK, Canadian women had no right to complain. Surprisingly, given the negative atmosphere, she advised Canadian women to ignore letters with British girlfriends and not to get upset by comparisons with them.⁵⁴⁷ In 1944, Mary-Etta Macpherson expressed a similar sentiment in the *Chatelaine* article “Our Men ... and Those British Women.” She argued that Canadian soldiers had chosen to marry British women and there was nothing Canadian women could do about it. She pointed out that due to their time spent in Britain, Canadian men had come to admire British women and their contribution to the war effort – the author conceded that even she had come to admire and like them.⁵⁴⁸ However, not all Canadian women were willing to give brides, be they British or European, any such welcome or chance.

Yet, not all negative attitudes towards British war brides were solely held by English-Canadian women. In the Gallup Poll of 1944, 61% of Québec participants disapproved of Canadian soldiers’ overseas marriages to British women.⁵⁴⁹ They feared that too many Anglo immigrants to Canada would result in a greater marginalization of French-Canadians in Québec than already existed.⁵⁵⁰ One article written in *L’Action*

⁵⁴⁶Ibid., 28.

⁵⁴⁷Ibid., 40.

⁵⁴⁸Macpherson, “Our Men ... and Those British Women,” *Chatelaine*, April 1944, 16, 57.

⁵⁴⁹CIPO, “Should Canucks Wed English Gals?,” *Gallup Poll of Canada*, 10 May 1944.

⁵⁵⁰As mentioned previously, within Québec the English-speaking minority held inordinate power and access to wealth and jobs compared to the majority French-speaking population. Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 7-8; Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, xlv-xiv; McRoberts, *Québec*, 74, 101.

Nationale argued that French Canadian public opinion generally opposed immigration, especially Anglo immigration, for this reason.⁵⁵¹ In addition, it expressed concerns about war brides' inability or unwillingness to learn the French language or accept the Roman Catholic religion of French-Canadians.⁵⁵² Despite acknowledging the superior education of British brides, L'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française (l'ACJC) refused to accept or welcome the brides. It argued that the brides had taken French-Canadian men and were not "morally" worthy of their French-Canadian husbands.⁵⁵³ It also expressed concerns over language differences and questioned whether the children of such marriages would be French or English.⁵⁵⁴ Many viewed such marriages to be unwise and unlikely to succeed due to linguistic and religious differences.

English speaking Canadians also criticized British war brides concerning their British identity for their alleged pretentiousness. One episode of the CBC's radio program, *Mirror for Women*, conveyed the tale of a recently arrived war bride whose neighbours had advised her landlady not to take on "an English girl because she would be so hard to please."⁵⁵⁵ Though the landlady proved most welcoming, her neighbours

⁵⁵¹Dominique Beaudin, "Le Canada Français et l'Immigration," *L'Action Nationale*, March 1948, 161.

⁵⁵²The Catholic Association of French Canadian Youth. L'Université de Montréal Service des Archives [hereafter cited as UdeMSA], Action Catholique Canadienne [hereafter cited as ACC], P16 04/52, "Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse, Comité Provincial du Québec," *Mémoire sur la Famille*, 194?. Magda Fahrni includes a similar discussion of this source in her footnotes in "The Romance of Reunion," 200.

⁵⁵³Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales Québec Vieux-Montréal [hereafter cited as BAnQ V-M], Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique Fonds [hereafter cited as JOC], P104, container 240, "Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse," *Mémoires Soumis par le Comité Central de L'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française à La Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse à l'Occasion du Congrès Provincial du Québec à l'Université de Montréal*, 27-8 Janvier 1945. For a similar discussion of this source see Fahrni, "The Romance of Reunion," 200.

⁵⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁵CBC, "War Brides Getting Settled – Finally," *Mirror for Women* (17 July 1944), Radio, 0:14-0:20.

viewed the English as stuck up or snooty. Another war bride similarly noted that Canadians tended to view such brides as “pampered and lazy,” a view that it took a long time for her to change.⁵⁵⁶ One bride recalled that if she mentioned how something was done back home in England, she would receive blank stares, “as if they were thinking, another Limey thinks she is too good for us, doesn’t she?”⁵⁵⁷ Being called English did not simply denote one’s place of origin; the term also had pejorative connotations. According to Barber and Watson, the term English came to be used as an insult against English immigrants. Some Canadians viewed them as stuck up, especially if they came from a high social standing, but also perceived them as unwilling to assimilate into Canadian life due to a sense of English superiority.⁵⁵⁸ Slightings directed at or rejections of British war brides can be seen as some Canadians rejecting a colonial mentality and asserting Canadian superiority over the British.

Many Canadians could not or did not bother to differentiate between the backgrounds of British brides, assuming they were all English. For example, during a hostile encounter a Canadian nurse told Welsh war bride Iris that she did not like “English girls.” When Iris corrected the nurse saying that she was in fact Welsh, the nurse tersely responded: “same thing.”⁵⁵⁹ In some people’s minds the concepts of English and British became associated with presumed pretentious or elitist attitudes, but yet they also show how easily Canadians conflated the terms as being interchangeable, reducing a variety of cultural and social heritages into the simple moniker of “British.” Iris,

⁵⁵⁶Joyce Hibbert, *The War Brides*, (Toronto: PMA Books, 1978), 82.

⁵⁵⁷Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 242.

⁵⁵⁸Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 111.

⁵⁵⁹CMI at Pier 21, 06.07.12IK.

meanwhile, resented being called English and proudly asserted her Welsh identity. In other cases, negative attitudes toward war brides were subtler, as can be seen in the case of Scottish war bride Nessa who had recently settled in Alberta. She recalled an odd encounter one morning when several people came over to her house unannounced; they did not wish to chat but to merely look at her. As everyone left, Nessa recalled that one of the gentleman told her husband that they “Just wanted to see what you picked up over there.”⁵⁶⁰ She described that the experience made her feel like an “unpopular virus,” and that her visitors did not seem to be all that impressed.⁵⁶¹ While not explicitly attacking her ethnicity, their unwillingness to speak to Nessa and the hostile nature of the gentleman’s comment, suggest that the community viewed her as different and unwelcome.

This hostility towards British immigrants was not limited to stereotypical perceptions of the English or a rejection of a colonial mentality; it was also tied to economic concerns in the period. Barber and Watson argue that scarcity during the Great Depression, coupled with fears of another economic downturn following the war’s conclusion, left many Canadians generally hostile to immigrants of any type.⁵⁶² Since British immigrants made up the majority of immigrants to Canada in this period, they often were the targets of prejudicial and hostile treatment by people who feared another economic depression. In *The Immigrant Years: From Britain and Europe to Canada, 1945-1967*, Barry Broadfoot details the story of a Canadian woman yelling at an immigrant British wife and child over the issue of jobs. She called them “goddamned

⁵⁶⁰Ibid., S2013.1616.1.

⁵⁶¹Ibid.

⁵⁶²Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 113.

English,” accused them of stealing jobs from Canadians, and blamed them for the deaths of Canadian soldiers at Dieppe. The girl in Broadfoot’s story said that she never encountered that kind of attitude again, but she mentioned that her father, also a British immigrant, did.⁵⁶³ Barber and Watson also cite many examples of British immigrants in Canada in the aftermath of the war experiencing criticism or rejection, including accusations of job stealing and even signs reading “No English Need Apply.”⁵⁶⁴

Such criticisms about the ethnicity of British war brides are fascinating since the historiography generally defines Canada and English-Canadians in this period as British. Many Canadian historians have argued that until the establishment of Canadian citizenship in 1946, no unique sense of Canadian nationality or nationalism existed. Some even argue that no true unifying Canadian nationalism exists even today.⁵⁶⁵ Thus, it has been presumed that since Canada was a British Dominion and Canadians were legally British subjects, English-speaking Canadians defined their nationality and nationalism as British, and nothing more. However, historians such as Carl Berger, Philip Buckner, C.P. Champion, and Katie Pickles, have argued that a separate English-speaking Canadian national identity and nationalism existed before the creation of the *Citizenship Act* – a

⁵⁶³Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 192.

⁵⁶⁴Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 111, 113.

⁵⁶⁵For discussions on this topic see the following books: Neatby, “National History,” 205-16; Morton, *The Canadian Identity*; Blair Fraser, *The Search for Identity: Canada, 1945-1967* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967); Grant, *Lament for a Nation*; Creighton, *The Forked Road*; Resnick, *The Land of Cain*; Breton, “From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism,” 85-102; Granatstein, *How Britain’s Weakness Forced Canada into the Arms of the United States*; Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*; Hillmer and Granatstein, *Empire to Umpire*; Resnick, *Thinking English Canada*; Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?*; Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building*; Benvenuti and Ward, “Britain, Europe and the ‘Other Quiet Revolution,’” 165-182; Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*.

stance upheld in this dissertation.⁵⁶⁶ The previous chapter shows how the Canadian state perceived and promoted an English-Canadian identity and nationalism that was separate from that of the British in the 1940s build up to the *Citizenship Act*. Further, as Iacovetta and Korinek have demonstrated the Canadian state used social experts and the media to encourage immigrants in Canada to abandon their ethnic identities and assimilate to life in their new home, to encourage Canadianization in the country itself.⁵⁶⁷

This sense of Canadian nationalism was also apparent in the interactions of British war brides and English-speaking Canadians. Many Canadians did not see themselves as British but rather Canadian. They thus defined the unfamiliar behaviour or critical attitudes of British war brides as being different from themselves – affectively making war brides “the other.” It quickly became apparent to many war brides that the CWB’s Canadianization material was correct to warn them to avoid criticizing Canada, since British war brides who did so were rebuked. One war bride, Joan, recalled how being unhappy or having a hard time adjusting elicited the Canadian response of: “if you don’t like it, go back to where you came from.”⁵⁶⁸ Welsh war bride Iris experienced such hostility when having trouble finding her injured husband in Toronto. When she criticized the way Canadians ran their hospitals in comparison to the UK, her landlady’s daughter retorted: “you English girls make me sick, you come over here to make your living and all you do is criticize the country.”⁵⁶⁹ Certainly some Canadians saw themselves as more

⁵⁶⁶Berger, *The Sense of Power*, 3-4, 9, 259-260; Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire*, 8-9; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 2-3; Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada*, 8-9.

⁵⁶⁷Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 261, 286; Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 139, 142.

⁵⁶⁸Shelley Saywell, *Women in War* (Markham, Ont: Viking Press, 1985), 34-6.

⁵⁶⁹CMI at Pier 21, 06.07.12IK.

British than Canadian, but such encounters reveal tensions between Canadians and newly arrived British war brides.

In 1944, the negative treatment and hostility British war brides faced in Canada eventually spilled onto the pages of *Maclean's*. One unidentified war bride ignored the advice of the CWB by discussing her grievances with Canada and its people in the article “British War Bride Speaks Out” [Appendix 2 – Image 2.16].⁵⁷⁰ It detailed a conversation about her expectations in coming to Canada, her experiences in the country, as well as her feelings about many issues – rationing, Canadian-British marriages, and Canadian treatment of British war brides generally. She began by discussing her own status as a war bride. Even though she was from London, she insisted on calling herself and being called a British war bride, as opposed to an English one. She noted that the brides hailed from different parts of the British Isles and that not all of them would appreciate being called “English.”⁵⁷¹ While not explicit, the section comes across as a warning about Canadian tendencies to conflate English with British, something that upset certain brides.

The author then turned her discussion to how Canada had more than met her expectations and that she had been very lucky to have such a welcoming family. However, the bride noted feeling a certain “atmosphere” in Canada, reading as if she and her husband had to prove themselves innocent of some kind of misdeed in their having gotten married.⁵⁷² She explained that she was not surprised by such negative attitudes given the gossip that British women were “taking the cream of Canada’s young men.”⁵⁷³

⁵⁷⁰Melynda Jarratt includes a similar discussion of this source in *War Brides*, 16-7.

⁵⁷¹“British War Bride Speaks Out,” *Maclean's*, 15 January 1944, 10.

⁵⁷²*Ibid.*

⁵⁷³*Ibid.*

She indicated that many British brides were aware of concerns over the kinds of women and marriages taking place due to failed marriages and gossip from the last war – something she argued was unfair as while some of these marriages had failed many had also succeeded. She pointed out the difficult process involved to marry a Canadian, including the required permissions, paperwork, and fees. With such a rigorous system in place, she argued, unhappy marriages were unlikely, implying that the length and rigor of the process likely weeded out undesirable women or uncommitted couples.⁵⁷⁴

Her defence of wartime brides also pointed out to readers that the initial drunken and rowdy behaviour of Canadian soldiers meant that they were not well received in the UK.⁵⁷⁵ She argued that just as her husband had to sell himself to her family, war brides had to sell themselves to the Canadian public. For example, she hoped to fit in better by avoiding saying things like “back home in England.” She argued that a statement could be considered offensive to Canadians and could unintentionally imply that British ways were superior to Canadian ones.⁵⁷⁶ However, she also noted how hard it was to keep quiet about certain differences in Canada, like rationing. She recalled that while shopping with her mother-in-law at a butcher shop, she observed a Canadian woman arguing with the butcher about a cut of meat stating: “all the good pork is going to the English. I guess I’ll have to take a chicken.”⁵⁷⁷ The bride found this to be quite upsetting as she noted that most pork sent to the UK went to the soldiers, not the British people. She stated that she had wanted to, but refrained, from saying: “Over there you don’t tell the butcher what you

⁵⁷⁴Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷Ibid.

want. You ask him what he can let you have and you count yourself lucky if it isn't shoulder or neck or mutton."⁵⁷⁸ Her experience with wartime rationing made it difficult for her to sympathize with what appeared to her to be trivial complaints in comparison to life in the UK or Europe. Such Canadian complaints reflected an ignorance of the abundance that North America possessed being physically untouched by the war.

"British War Bride Speaks Out" reads as a piece both defensive and educational, to vent frustration but also to improve relations between Canadians and British brides. For example, the bride critiqued Canadian men's depiction of British women as more serious than Canadian women as unfair, believing that British women being so close to the war just had a different view of life.⁵⁷⁹ While critical of Canadian conceptions of war brides and rationing, the author was also critical of her own behaviour. She acknowledged that at times she could be overly critical due to her wartime experiences.⁵⁸⁰ Yet, her article was by no means entirely negative. The bride often discussed the youth and beauty of Canada, the opportunities it afforded immigrants, and her desire to fit in and have a successful marriage.⁵⁸¹ In fact, it concluded with the positive assertion that all war brides knew that their new lives would be hard, but that they intended to make a success of them.

Unfortunately for the bride, some Canadian women appeared to have only read the more critical sections of the piece eliciting several angry reactions in the next

⁵⁷⁸Later in the article, she also criticized her sister-in-law for complaining about the price of peaches. She angrily noted how plentiful fruit was in Canada and how even working-class families could afford it. Whereas in the UK you could not afford fruit, with two or three oranges a month being provided to children only. *Ibid.*, 10, 42.

⁵⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 42-3.

⁵⁸¹*Ibid.*

Maclean's. “Toronto Mother” wrote to its editor that the bride’s article reeked of “egotism and smugness.” She claimed that the bride would never become Canadian as she had a “certain contempt for us and our way of life.”⁵⁸² Increasingly hostile, the letter went on to claim that British women were “having the time of their lives” in comparison to Canadian women who did not have the same access to men.⁵⁸³ In addition, the author stated that Canadian women spent their spare time volunteering in hospitals and war plants, “not conscripted like the girls in Great Britain.”⁵⁸⁴ Underlining these criticisms lay a clear sense of nationalism and a rejection of a colonial mentality, as “Toronto Mother” defended Canada from what she perceived to be an ungrateful outsider. This pro-Canada sentiment was clearest in her comparison of the war work of Canadian and British women, where she lauded volunteering as more honorable than conscript service, and implied that if not conscripted, British women would not have served. While offensive, this comment reflected the disparity between the war experiences of British and Canadian women – “Toronto Mother” assumed that British women were out enjoying themselves, either ignoring or being ignorant of the reality of wartime life in the UK, including experiences of rationing and bombing.

Other letters written to the editor of *Maclean's* also criticized the bride’s article. N. Thompson argued that the bride did not have the right to criticize Canada having only lived there for three months. She advised that the best way to fit in would be to stop being critical.⁵⁸⁵ Another woman, “Canadian Girl,” wrote that she read the bride’s article with

⁵⁸²Toronto Mother, “Canadian Girls Talk Back,” *Maclean's*, 15 February 1944, 47.

⁵⁸³*Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁵N. Thompson, Toronto, “Canadian Girls Talk Back,” *Maclean's*, 15 February 1944, 47.

“disgust.” She argued that, “as in the last war,” Canadian men would become disillusioned with their British brides, and that if she did not like life in Canada then she could return “to her own home.”⁵⁸⁶ “Canadian Girl” went even farther in her criticism, claiming that her Canadian fiancé had been killed fighting overseas, and expressing anger in the knowledge that her fiancé died fighting to protect Britain “so that British girls could marry Canadian boys to come out here and criticize our war of life.”⁵⁸⁷ Like “Toronto Mother,” “Canadian Girl” framed the bride, and British war brides in general, as ungrateful outsiders and unworthy of the sacrifice of Canadians in the war.⁵⁸⁸ Based on such criticism, it appeared that the only way a bride could be welcomed in Canada, or become Canadian, was to shed her sense of British identity and keep her mouth shut.

British war brides also responded to the bride’s piece. “Another British War Bride” criticized her assertion that Canadian-British marriages could happen for any reason other than love, such as a Hollywood appeal or a desire to leave the country.⁵⁸⁹ By contrast, a war bride from the First World War expressed words of welcome to the country and even her own home.⁵⁹⁰ Interestingly, Evelyn, a Canadian war bride in England from the First World War, sympathized with what the bride identified as “Canadian aloofness.” She experienced similar encounters and treatment in the UK. She would not only welcome the bride, but do her best to be welcoming and understanding if

⁵⁸⁶Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸Canadian Girl’s anger that Canadian men were dying to protect Britain is very similar to the account mentioned earlier, where a Canadian woman accosted a British mother and daughter in a general store. Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 192.

⁵⁸⁹Another British War Bride, Edmonton, “Canadian Girls Talk Back,” *Maclean’s*, 15 February 1944, 47.

⁵⁹⁰Emily Cockayne, N.B., “Canadian Girls Talk Back,” *Maclean’s*, 15 February 1944, 47.

her son married a war bride.⁵⁹¹ None of these women criticized the article's critique of Canadians; instead they offered wishes of welcome and agreement with her larger concerns – a stark contrast to the angry letters written by Canadian women.

The debate did not end there. A month later *Maclean's* published two more letters on the subject, this time written by Canadian men. They did not criticize the bride or her article, but rather the Canadian women's responses. One author, "Old Veteran," questioned why there was any "fuss" over the bride's article, arguing that based on his reading of it the author would be "a distinct asset to Canada."⁵⁹² He claimed that English girls were not as critical of Canadian war brides as Canadian girls were of British war brides.⁵⁹³ While expressing sympathy for "Canadian Girl" and the loss of her fiancé, he pointed out that Englishmen were dying for Canadians as well, as the war was about "fighting as much for Canada as England. Fighting in fact for the freedom of the world."⁵⁹⁴ He believed that her harsh rebuttals had lost sight of what the war was truly about. Amused by it all, he suggested that Canadians could learn something from the war brides – although what was to be learnt from them he left unclear.⁵⁹⁵

Where "Old Veteran's" letter provided gentle criticisms, a second letter forwarded far more scathing criticisms of the Canadian women. Through satire, sweeping generalizations, and hyperbole, its author "Just A Canadian," criticized the female author's complaints, as well as Canadians in general, whom it labelled as overly

⁵⁹¹Evelyn J. Smart, Winnipeg, "Canadian Girls Talk Back," *Maclean's*, 15 February 1944, 47.

⁵⁹²Old Veteran, Alberta, "Letters," *Maclean's*, 15 April 1944, 53.

⁵⁹³*Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵*Ibid.*

defensive and incapable of taking constructive feedback. He wrote that the bride should have known better than to criticize Canadian ways, as “Canadians never engage in the pastime of self criticism.”⁵⁹⁶ In his view, while the English were capable of being critical of themselves, Canadians “don’t admit faults.”⁵⁹⁷ He asserted that the knowledge that Canadians were incapable of self-criticism was so well known that, “personages visiting Canada appear to be forewarned of this national peculiarity, and in their public speeches pour on the old oil.”⁵⁹⁸ Thus, a failure to perform or laud Canada in this fashion could be harmful. He provided the example of one “prominent stage personality” who tried to be critical of Canada, and noted that while he did not think he was “assassinated,” he no longer had a career.⁵⁹⁹

The author’s use of the term assassinated reflects the poignant satire of the piece, as when one thinks of assassination one tends to think of physical death, but in this instance the author’s usage implied social death – the musician was not killed but the musician’s career and social standing were. Thus, he argued that because of her criticisms the bride would likely be “ostracized for life,” and that her best course of action should have been to “join in the general chorus of hand-clapping.”⁶⁰⁰ The author’s use of exaggeration reinforced his larger criticism that the Canadian women had taken the bride’s criticisms too personally.⁶⁰¹ It seemed that the 1944 Gallup Poll was correct, since

⁵⁹⁶Just a Canadian, Toronto, “Letters,” *Maclean’s*, 15 April 1944, 53.

⁵⁹⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁹It is unclear if the author is referring to a real or fictitious person in this example. *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁰*Ibid.*

⁶⁰¹*Ibid.*

these accounts reveal that Canadian men and women did indeed have strong differing opinions regarding the issue of British war brides.

The current historiographical focus on the positive Canadian reception of British war brides ignores the complex interactions between the two groups, which ranged from positive, to mixed, to antagonistic. Not all Canadians, especially Canadian women, viewed British war brides as special. Many were unwilling to welcome the brides into their communities. These varying attitudes reveal a great deal about gender constructions and wartime conceptions of Canadian identity. As Judith Butler, Denise Riley, and Bell Hooks have argued, the conception of the unity of “women” is problematic since it all too often lumps together groups of women with different cultural identities, races, religions, classes, and experiences.⁶⁰² Specifically, “white women” have been lumped into one category of discussion, largely due to the historical tendency of white women to frame themselves as a group versus others, be it in the fight for the vote or their discriminatory treatment of minorities in Canada.⁶⁰³ However, even amongst women deemed white there were/are hierarchies and barriers to acceptance, be they class, religious, or ethnicity-based differences. Despite them, however, within the Canadian historiography on immigration

⁶⁰²Both Riley and Butler argue that this unity of women is a social construction that has been used to categorize differences between men and women in order to determine their treatment and access to rights within society. Denise Riley, *‘Am I That Name?’: Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988), 1-2, 6-7; Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 19-20; Judith Butler, “Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Questions of ‘Postmodernism,’” in *The Feminist History Reader* ed. Sue Morgan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 200. Bell Hooks has argued that too often our discussion of deconstruction centres around white academic discourse. As a result, engagement with minority voices, in her example black voices, are limited, which is problematic and needs to be addressed. Bell Hook, “Postmodern Blackness,” in *The Feminist History Reader* ed. Sue Morgan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 192-5.

⁶⁰³Butler, “Contingent Foundations,” 200; Campbell, *Respectable Citizens*, 14; Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 140, 154-157; Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 167-8.

and war brides, British and Canadian women are often treated as one and the same.⁶⁰⁴

Some historians have argued that such a position ignores or trivializes the difficulties British immigrants experienced adapting to life in North America, while not facing the same levels of discrimination as other groups. It is problematic to assume that since British immigrants spoke English and shared some cultural traditions of their new homes that they easily adjusted or were not targets of assimilationist nation-building projects.⁶⁰⁵

Canada was a British dominion, but a substantial portion of its population did not necessarily see itself as British – a fact made apparent in the population’s treatment of British war brides. The message being distributed by the state, and clearly circulating among the general population, was that Canada was its own independent nation and not inferior to the UK. Thus, negative criticisms of British war brides in the general Canadian public, be they French or English speaking, framed them as ungrateful outsiders if they did not conform to Canadian standards or dared to criticize Canadian ways of doing things. It has often been suggested that British war brides were welcomed because of their background, but it would seem to be the exact opposite or at least far more complicated; their backgrounds were often targeted as something to be cast aside and marked the women as different from the rest of the population. While there were Canadians who saw themselves as more British than Canadian, the discussed encounters reveal that a separate Canadian identity existed among some English-Canadians that predated the *Citizenship Act* and created tension between Canadians and newly arrived British war brides.

⁶⁰⁴Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 4-5; Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 146; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 28, 32; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 43, 252.

⁶⁰⁵Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 3, 5-6; Constantine, “British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth since 1880,” 16-9, 25-8; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 97, 99-101, 111-15.

Chapter 6 – “A well-prized gift to Canada:” Countering Anti-British War Bride Sentiment Among the Canadian Population

The 1944 Gallup Poll, “Should Canucks Wed English Gals?,” revealed that the Canadian population was split on the issue of British women marrying Canadian soldiers, with 41% of respondents disapproving and 13% undecided on the matter.⁶⁰⁶ The fact that half the country appeared to be against these marriages came as a shock to those Canadians who favoured them, especially volunteer and church organizations, which saw British women as ideal immigrants and the mothers of future Canadians. Thus, volunteer, local, and church organizations worked diligently to counter negative Canadian perceptions of British war brides by promoting them as an asset to the country.

The Canadian government did not appear to be as shocked by the population’s hostility to incoming brides. Since initially both it and the military had doubted the viability of war bride marriages, officials appeared to have assumed that the Canadian public would be equally skeptical. As a result, government officials created positive media representations of the brides in order to sell the idea of the marriages to the public. They tightly controlled media messages surrounding, as well as access to, British war brides upon their arrival in Canada, in order to counter negative representations of them and to create a positive narrative of love and family reunion. Canadian government, church, volunteer, and local officials worked tirelessly to combat negative perceptions of British war brides as outsiders, encouraging Canadians to embrace them to help ensure their successful assimilation into the Canadian way of life. Despite their efforts, hostile

⁶⁰⁶CIPO, “Should Canucks Wed English Gals?,” *Gallup Poll of Canada*, 10 May 1944.

attitudes towards British war brides were invigorated by disputes over shipping priorities at the end of the war. Selling these marriages to Canadians proved more difficult than these groups had anticipated.

As discussed in Chapter 2, when the Canadian government assumed responsibility for the transport of soldiers' dependants in 1942, organizations such as the CRC, YWCA, WI, and IODE became committed to and deeply involved in providing assistance and support for moving dependants both to and across Canada. Unlike the assistance provided by the Canadian government, these groups did not end their work once the brides arrived in Canada. They continued to work with the brides while they and their families settled into their new lives, providing them with information and support services. Branches of the YWCA, for example, organized welcoming parties, as well as cooking and French classes, to better acquaint the brides with their local communities.⁶⁰⁷ The IODE held dances and dinners for new brides to introduce them to the club and to help them meet other brides in their area.⁶⁰⁸ Similarly, branches of the CRC arranged local gatherings, such as tea or Christmas parties, to help war brides integrate into their new communities.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁷LAC, Montréal Young Women's Christian Association Fonds [hereafter cited as MYWCA], MG28-I240, Vol. 13, YWCA – War Services Committee Minutes, 13 November 1944; LAC, YWCA, MG28-I198, Vol. 14, no. 9, Traveller's Aid Minute Book, 14 November 1944 and 19 December 1944; AO, F974 MU3527 B290050, "Young Women's Christian Association of Metropolitan Toronto," Annual Reports 1945 and 1946.

⁶⁰⁸CMI at Pier 21, S2012.475.1, Extract from Memoir of Ivy K., arrived in Canada 18 September 1946, Halifax, Nova Scotia; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, "1903 HCR," Letter to Browne from Deputy Minister (Army), 17 May 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, "Repatriation – Dependants Can. Army Personnel in Canada – Social Service Policy" [hereafter cited as R-DCAPC-SSP], The Council for Social Service, The Church of England in Canada [hereafter cited as CSS, CEC], *The Bulletin* no. 119, 16 March 1945, 2.

⁶⁰⁹"Welcome Brides of Soldiers at Informal Party," *Hamilton Spectator*, 13 October 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, "R-DCAPC-SSP," CSS, CEC, *The Bulletin* no. 119, 16 March 1945, 2.

Local organizations also played an important role in the reception and settlement of new British war brides. In Québec, the Montréal Soldiers' Wives League (MSWL) threw welcoming parties and visited the brides in their new homes to check on how they were doing.⁶¹⁰ Montréal's Acorn Club – a British women's organization that functioned as a continuation of the war bride clubs formed in the UK – often visited, called, or wrote to newly arrived brides in the Montréal area. It organized talks on Canadian subjects, provided French lessons, and even organized community activities, such as cooking and knitting competitions and friendly debates.⁶¹¹ It also worked in tandem with other voluntary groups, such as the YWCA, Montréal Council of Women (MCW), and St. George Society, to expand the women's knowledge of the community groups and services available to them.⁶¹²

In Ontario, the British War Brides Associations of Toronto (BWBAT) performed a similar function. It did many things like explaining the differences in Canadian currency and shopping and helping the women and their husbands find homes and jobs.⁶¹³ Across Canada, WI branches provided similar supports in rural communities, giving a newly arrived bride a sense of familiarity and comfort, since the organization had originally developed in the UK.⁶¹⁴ The aid, support, and community engagement provided by these

⁶¹⁰LAC, Montréal Soldier's Wives League Fonds [hereafter cited as MSWL], MG28-I311, Vol. 2, "Welfare Committee MSWL, 1939-1945," Letter to Mrs. Elder, President MSWL from Mrs. Guy Robinson, Chairman Welfare Committee MSWL, 10 January 1944.

⁶¹¹"Acorn Club Holds 2nd Annual Meet," *Gazette*, 25 March 1947; BAnQ V-M, Montréal Council of Women Fonds [hereafter cited as MCW], P653, container 1, "Rapports Annuels, 1943-44," Report of the Migration Committee, 1943-44 by (Mrs. Thain) Naraby MacDowell, 20 October 1943, 45.

⁶¹²*Ibid.*

⁶¹³"Women in War: British War Brides Face Many Problems," *Toronto Telegram*, 14 July 1945.

⁶¹⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, "1903 HCR," Letter to the Hon. Minister of Immigration from Ette H. Dow, Women's Institutes of Canada, 7 March 1944.

groups helped these women establish themselves in Canada, while also providing a welcome respite from the criticisms and hostile encounters some brides faced upon their arrival in Canada.

However, complex motivations lay behind the positive reception of these voluntary groups. As noted in Chapter 2, pro-British groups like the IODE had a vested interest in the successful settlement of British war brides, as it viewed them as important for maintaining ties to the UK in Canada.⁶¹⁵ Other groups, like the WI, were invested in promoting Canadian identity. Thus, the receptions and classes provided to British war brides functioned in two ways. On the surface, these voluntary groups provided the brides with a sense of comfort and familiarity, as they welcomed them to Canada and gave them a place to belong and receive support. Beneath the surface though, many of these voluntary groups, through their classes and social activities, reinforced the importance of the Canadian government's message of Canadianization – if you assimilate quickly you will belong. For example, in a letter Etta H. Dow of the WI of Canada, asked the then sitting Minister of Immigration for the names of incoming brides in order to help them adjust “to Canadian methods and customs” and make them feel as if “they are a well-prized gift to Canada.”⁶¹⁶ The initial settlement aid provided by organizations like the

⁶¹⁵Katie Pickles argues that the IODE were female imperialists. She also argues, in agreement with Carl Berger, that these imperialists were interested in promoting British cultural identity in Canada in order to create a British-Canadian identity that was influenced by the UK but still separate. LAC, IODE, MG28-I17, Vol. 6, “Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting,” May 1946, 26-31; Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 2-3, 5, 91, 97, 103, 122-3.

⁶¹⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, “1903 HCR,” Letter to the Minister of Immigration from Dow, 7 March 1944.

IODE, YWCA, and CRC were compassionate and kind. More importantly, they reinforced assimilationist messages.

These voluntary groups welcomed the brides and provided them a way to feel connected during a time of great insecurity and loneliness. War brides, many on their own from their families for the first time, often went ahead of their husbands to a new country and a new family as well.⁶¹⁷ The women's engagement with voluntary organizations represented a trade off that many of them were apparently willing to pay – a broadening of their social circles at the price of receiving repetitive assimilationist messages. The voluntary groups also played an important role as brides' allies, defending them from and countering negative rumors circling amongst the Canadian public. Sometimes voluntary groups promoted simple messages of understanding. The BWBAT used the *Toronto Telegram* to communicate that while British war brides needed help adjusting to life in Canada, Canadians also needed "coaching" in the "art of understanding."⁶¹⁸ This message was a gentle reminder that the ideas and customs of Canadians and British brides were not necessarily the same. Understanding from both sides was required for the brides to feel welcome.⁶¹⁹

In some instances, these voluntary groups were more critical of Canadian women, arguing that they needed to behave better towards war brides. For example, the March 1945 issue of the Anglican Church's *The Bulletin* dedicated its pages solely to the subject

⁶¹⁷Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 129-32.

⁶¹⁸"Women in War: British War Brides Face Many Problems," *Toronto Telegram*, 14 July 1945.

⁶¹⁹*Ibid.*

of the poor treatment that British war brides received at the hands of Canadian women.⁶²⁰ The issue began with a forward by Madeline Wodehouse, the President of the Dominion Board of the Women's Auxiliary, arguing that women of their church needed to understand and help "these new daughters of Canada."⁶²¹ She added that Canadians owed much to English women, noting their history in helping to build Canada. She argued that Canadians should feel "privileged" in being able to return the kindness that the English had extended to Canadian men during the war.⁶²² Throughout, Wodehouse emphasizes the word "owe," stressing to her readers a sense of moral duty, be it Christian or Canadian, in helping British war brides.

This message of Canadian moral duty is also apparent in an editorial note written by Reverend Canon W.W. Judd. While acknowledging that some brides might be problematic, or not willing to help themselves, he argued that most brides deserved, "the most sympathetic and most skilled care from clergy, social workers, or specifically chosen women."⁶²³ Judd points out that while the CRC, IODE, and other groups were responsible for the brides' initial receptions in Canada, "the long steady work of happily integrating them into social and church life" fell onto the women of Canada.⁶²⁴ Both Judd and Wodehouse conclude their articles by acknowledging that "mistakes and misunderstandings" were bound to occur, which was why this specific issue of *The*

⁶²⁰A monthly religious bulletin created by the Council of Social Service of the Church of England in Canada.

⁶²¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, "R-DCAPC-SSP," CSS, CEC, *The Bulletin* no. 119, 16 March 1945, 1.

⁶²²*Ibid.*

⁶²³*Ibid.*, 2.

⁶²⁴*Ibid.*

Bulletin had been created to promote “better understanding.”⁶²⁵ The authors, by framing Canadian receptions of British war brides as a social and moral duty, subtly imply that a failure to be understanding represented both a personal fault and a failing of their church, community, and country – a lot of pressure to put on the shoulders of Canadian women.

To help Canadian women build “understanding,” *The Bulletin* included a detailed report by the President of Montréal’s Acorn Club, Mrs. F.G.T. Dawson. She began by reminding Canadians that British war brides needed to settle down and make good citizens. She listed key reasons why their settlement needed to succeed. She considered the brides to be “good material from a sound nation” who were already the wives of Canadian men. Given these facts, their happy settlement would help their husbands settle back into civilian life. Moreover, they would be the mothers of future Canadians.⁶²⁶ Dawson’s list of reasons echoed some of the concerns expressed by the Canadian military discussed in Chapter 2 – particularly about the importance of brides’ in ensuring their husbands’ peaceful transition to civilian life. Her arguments also reinforced the sentiments of the IODE, that these women, being British, were a valuable immigrant group to the country. However, the most fascinating aspect of Dawson’s list, was her use of the term “good material” when referring to the British women. According to Susan Zeiger’s study of American war brides, war brides are “the spoil of war.” Essentially, the marriage of a soldier to a woman in another country can be seen to represent power over a foreign land and its people, in terms of the conquering or extraction of its resources, in

⁶²⁵Ibid., 1-2.

⁶²⁶Ibid., 3.

this instance women.⁶²⁷ Dawson's points reinforce this idea of the women as "spoils" or "goods." As the wives of Canadians, in patriarchal terms, they were each the property of a Canadian male. Since Canadian men selected and determined them to be of good quality, these women needed to be brought into the fold of Canadian life since they would become the mothers – *aka* the producers – of future Canadians. Thus, the male gaze determined the value of the women in light of their ability to produce children. As such, Dawson's arguments can also be read as a subtle reminder to Canadian women of the importance of the status quo of heteronormative gendered behaviour in postwar Canadian society.

Dawson's article also aimed to promote understanding as she explained the viewpoint of newly arrived brides in Canada. Canadians needed to concede that British war brides experienced difficulties, she maintained. These problems were "very real, not just imagined."⁶²⁸ For example, she pointed out that like their husbands, many of the brides were also returning to civilian life, albeit in a new land. While Canada's countryside was beautiful, black flies and mosquitoes were not. And, while given talks about the climate, it appears that most of the brides did not know about the extremes of temperature in Canada.⁶²⁹ By raising these issues, Dawson provided concrete examples of the challenges and adjustments that many British war brides faced in Canada. She also

⁶²⁷Susan Zeiger does note that the treatment of British war brides, and other white continental European war brides, was much better than those of an Asian or non-white background. Power dynamics in these relationships were drastically different, as Britain was an ally to Canada, whereas other countries such as Italy or Japan, were classified not solely as the enemy but also racially inferior. Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 2-5.

⁶²⁸LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, "R-DCAPC-SSP," CSS, CEC, *The Bulletin* no. 119, 16 March 1945, 3.

⁶²⁹*Ibid.*, 3-5.

discussed the ways in which Canadians misunderstood these women or made them feel unwelcome. For example, in England it was rude to ask personal questions, whereas in Canada it was a friendly gesture – so brides could appear cold or rude for not responding. Then there was the Canadian preoccupation with commenting on accents and differences in parlance (e.g., petrol vs. gas) that made war brides feel not only self-conscious but also “a stranger” – this issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7.⁶³⁰

Mrs. Dawson criticized how sometimes Canadians thought that their way of doing things was the best, ignoring that what was suitable in one country may not have been suitable in another – echoing the sentiments of “Just A Canadian” in Chapter 5.⁶³¹ She added that when brides clung to British ways or compared their new life in Canada with their old one in Britain, they were not doing so out of spite or a sense of superiority, but often to make conversation or express the newness of something.⁶³² Unfortunately, Dawson argued some Canadians interpreted this practice to mean that brides were criticizing Canada, leading to antagonisms. Dawson provided one example of a young war bride who told her mother-in-law that “we don’t do it that way at home” to which her mother-in-law responded by chiding her that, “this is how we do things in Canada,” and informing her to never make such comparisons again. This exchange left the young bride in tears.⁶³³

To Dawson, Canadian women’s sense of entitlement to Canadian men and defensiveness surrounding any criticism of Canada, hindered the assimilation of British

⁶³⁰Ibid., 5.

⁶³¹Ibid., 5-6.

⁶³²Ibid.

⁶³³Ibid., 5.

war brides, and by implication, hurt their husbands' and children's chances of settling into a happy peacetime life. She held Canadian women responsible for being understanding and helping the brides settle in Canada. This immense pressure placed on Canadian women is congruent with popular perceptions of the role of women within the nation building process. After all, women were considered not just to be the producers of the future of the country, but also the guardians of its traditions and culture. This meant that Canadian women would be considered indispensable in aiding in the assimilation of immigrant women into Canadian life.⁶³⁴ Further, since family cohesion was considered key to the survival and success of the nation, it is not surprising that Canadian women were essentially being told to put away their personal grudges for the greater good of the family, that is, the country at large.⁶³⁵

The Canadian government and military also became involved in controlling how print media represented and covered war brides. By 1945, misinformation, criticism, and negative publicity surrounding them resulted in some military and government officials calling for intervention through public relations.⁶³⁶ In a letter to Colonel P.I. Jennings in April 1945, Colonel F.W. Clarke, Director of Repatriation, argued that misleading and uninformed newspaper reports, stirred up "prejudice and casts slurs" on these women and

⁶³⁴Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free,'" 4-5, 16; Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 140, 154-157; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 32; Iacovetta, "Remaking Their Lives," 146; Iacovetta and Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker," 194; Jacqueline Stevens, *Reproducing the State* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 48-9, 143, 196, 220.

⁶³⁵Christie, *Engendering the State*, 311-2; Iacovetta and Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker," 191, 194; Stevens, *Reproducing the State*, 48-9, 143, 196, 220.

⁶³⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Memorandum Dependents from Overseas – Interpretation of Settlement Arrangements by A.E. Walford, Major General Adjutant General, 23 January 1945, and Letter to Colonel P.I. Jennings from F.W. Clarke, Colonel Director of Repatriation, 28 April 1945.

their children.⁶³⁷ Other government officials concurred. In the fall of 1945, the Army Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) began addressing these concerns by promoting correct information to be disseminated to the general public. Its instructions were to ensure that “every effort” be made to keep Canadian newspaper editors “advised to the correct facts.”⁶³⁸ The DPR was also to provide “adequate coverage” of the first large group of brides about to land in Halifax in February 1946.⁶³⁹

The DPR provided tightly controlled coverage of war bride landings in Halifax, and the women’s subsequent travel by railway across the country. Throughout 1946-1947, it arranged for members of the Canadian Women Army Corps (CWAC) to accompany war brides as they travelled by train across the country, to help provide regional Public Relation Officers (PRO) with brief biographical sketches of the women. These sketches and photographs would then be passed on to members of the local press at each station.⁶⁴⁰ In areas where no PRO existed, a member of the PR staff would ride the Canadian National Railway (CNR) with the brides and “advise local newspapers.”⁶⁴¹ The government and military even controlled who had access to the trains transporting the brides. Reporters needed permission to access them – which few received. In February of 1946, the Army granted the necessary permission to only two female writers.⁶⁴²

⁶³⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Jennings from Clarke, 28 April 1945.

⁶³⁸LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 174, “Public Relations, Publicity War Brides and Dependants Generally” [hereafter cited as PR, PWBDG], Memorandum Attn: D.D.P.R. Newspaper Article by Bert Wemp from F.M. Payne, Lt.-Col., Directorate of Public Relations (Army), 27 November 1945.

⁶³⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 174, “PR, PWBDG,” Memorandum Directorate of Public Relations (Army) from F.M. Payne, Lt.-Col., Directorate of Public Relations (Army), 6 February 1946.

⁶⁴⁰Ibid., Letter to All P.R.O.S. (Public Relations Officers) from P. Slattery, Major for G.G. Yates, Lt.-Col, 20 February 1946.

⁶⁴¹Ibid.

⁶⁴²These two reporters were Aune Sandland of the *Montréal Herald* and Anita Freedman of the *Globe and Mail*. Ibid., Memorandum Embarkation Commandant by Movement Control, 7 February 1946 and

The PRO's use of carefully selected and well-crafted stories and photographs enabled the Canadian government and military to control and manipulate the public image of British war brides in Canada. It is unsurprising then that stories of love, war, and family reunions, and photographs of reunited couples embracing or holding babies, filled the pages of Canadian newspapers.⁶⁴³ Of course, this control was not absolute, and not every newspaper provided the same enthusiastic coverage. In Québec, neither *Le Devoir* nor the *Montréal-Matin* covered war bride arrivals. On 7 March 1946, when other Ontario and Québec newspapers were filled with glowing stories and images of war bride landings, *Le Devoir* merely announced that a war bride ship had landed, detailing only the number of brides.⁶⁴⁴ The *Montréal-Matin* only mentioned British war brides in terms of arrival and divorce numbers.⁶⁴⁵ In these instances both newspapers were possibly resisting the Canadian government and military attempts at media control, or, even more likely, reflected French Canada's neutral or even negative reception of British war brides.

Negative rumors about war brides were widespread enough that some of the women expressed their fears about coming to Canada. British war bride Marjorie stated

Memorandum Press Coverage on Special Trains, 8 February 1946; "Our Aune Sandland to Meet War Brides," *Montréal Herald*, 9 February 1946.

⁶⁴³Here is a list of a few such stories and images – note the similar dates and tones of the headlines: "Reunion Happy as War Brides Arrive in City," *Hamilton Spectator*, 6 January 1946; "British Brides are Greeted by their Husbands," *Hamilton Spectator*, 13 February 1946; "Joyous Scenes Enacted as 30 War Brides Arrive," *Globe and Mail*, 17 January 1946; Soldier Husbands Happily Welcome Overseas Brides," *Globe and Mail*, 6 March 1946; "It's a Happy Welcome to Ottawa For Baby Cheryl," *Ottawa Journal*, 5 March 1946; "Brides, Babies, Bawling U.K.'s Greeting to Us," *Montréal Herald*, 13 February 1946; "Blue Eyed Bundles from Britain Thrill Grandparents, Poppa Too," *Montréal Herald*, 7 March 1946; "Families Reunited as British Brides Arrive Here," *Montréal Star*, 13 February 1946; "Confetti Thrown as Brides Arrive," *Gazette*, 7 March 1946; "Retrouver Son Mari," *La Presse*, 13 February 1946; "Jane-Margaret et Son Papa..." *La Presse*, 7 March 1946.

⁶⁴⁴"Le 'Lady Nelson' à Halifax Demain," *Le Devoir*, 7 March 1946.

⁶⁴⁵"Prête Au Divorce," *Montréal-Matin*, 22 April 1946; "L'Angleterre Avant Son Mari," *Montréal-Matin*, 20 May 1946; "Le 'Queen Mary' à Halifax, le 4 Juillet," *Montréal-Matin*, 7 July 1946.

that she had heard so much about the resentment and dislike by Canadian women that she, “almost expected stones to be thrown” when they got off of the ship.⁶⁴⁶ English war bride Margret discussed how she had anticipated that Canadian women would be bitter and resentful towards them, since her husband had dropped a Canadian girlfriend for her.⁶⁴⁷ She expected Canadian women to bear a grudge that war brides “had taken their men.”⁶⁴⁸ Some women experienced criticism as soon as they got off the boat in Canada. Upon landing in Halifax, Canadian soldiers accosted Vera L., accusing her of only loving her French-Canadian husband’s accent. They argued that she was silly in coming to Canada. The criticism bothered Vera so much, that she took off her war bride pin so that no one would see it and associate her with being a war bride.⁶⁴⁹ Similarly, a poem written by war bride Victoria described how she “resolved” to never call herself a war bride after being called a “man-stealer” by some Canadian women.⁶⁵⁰ As Dawson had warned, negative encounters with Canadians appeared to reinforce the idea that the brides were unwelcome or the other, making their settlement into Canadian society difficult.

The war’s conclusion made matters worse, as some British war brides demanded to be transported to Canada before Canadian soldiers. This soured the Canadian public’s perception of them. As discussed in Chapter 2, wartime conditions limited the transportation of dependants to Canada. War brides and their husbands often had no idea

⁶⁴⁶Aune Sandland, “Brides Say They Were Frightened at First,” *Montréal Herald*, 12 February 1946.

⁶⁴⁷CMI at Pier 21, 07.08.12ME, Margret E. audio oral history conducted by Kevin L., 12 August 2007, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

⁶⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁹Sandland, “Brides Say They Were Frightened at First,” *Montréal Herald*, 12 February 1946.

⁶⁵⁰CWM, GMAC, Margaret Patricia Eaton and Victoria Eaton, *Seeking Grace: A Journey Through Grief, Healing and Beyond ... Poems* (Moncton, NB: Eagles’ Wings Press, 2006), 25.

how long it would be until they would be reunited in Canada, an issue parodied by a cartoon of a British woman visiting a fortune teller published in *The Maple Leaf* [Appendix 2 – Image 2.17]. The fortune teller informs her that she will meet and marry a Canadian and, “if you are lucky, I see an ocean voyage in late ’47 or early ’48!”⁶⁵¹ The cartoon poked fun at the fact that marriages happened quickly, but transportation to Canada moved at an alarmingly slow pace. War brides often had no idea of when they would be heading to Canada, leaving the women in a state of limbo. Announcements about shipping out to Canada often came without any warning, leaving little time to say goodbye to one’s family let alone quit one’s job, or manage one’s estate.⁶⁵² As a result, early in the war some women, who believed that they would be moved to Canada quickly, quit their jobs only to live out of their suitcases for ages. This was a common enough occurrence that the DND and CWB advised against such a course of action.⁶⁵³ If a bride’s passage to Canada was delayed by weeks, months, or even a year, quitting one’s job left the woman unable to care for herself, let alone her young children.⁶⁵⁴

The issue became further complicated upon their husbands’ discharge, since brides lost access to their husbands’ Dependents Allowance (DA). When returned soldiers

⁶⁵¹ABE, “I See a Tall Dark Canadian Airman...,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 22 December 1945.

⁶⁵²A letter to Mrs. M.A. Wright from the CWB demonstrates that upon receiving notice that you would be departing for Canada, war brides were given 24 hours notice to leave. CWM, GMAC, 20070062-001, Letter to Mrs. M.A. Wright from V.N. Gill, Major Officer, Civilian Repatriation Section, CWB, 4 February 1946; Wicks, *Promise You’ll Take Care of My Daughter*, 34-5, 53.

⁶⁵³The DND and CWB advised war brides not to quit their jobs as there was no telling when they would be sent to Canada. CWM, GMAC, Library Ref: PAM U 773C2 Y68 194?, Pamphlet *Your Journey to Canada*, by the DND; CWM, GMAC, 20070062-001, Letter to Mrs. M.A. Wright from V.N. Gill, Major Officer, Civilian Repatriation Section, CWB, 21 May 1945.

⁶⁵⁴UK, Parliament, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates* [hereafter cited as *Deb*], House of Commons [hereafter cited as HC], 5th Series [hereafter cited as 5th Ser], 22 August 1945, Vol. 413, column number [hereafter cited as cols] 623; Letter from Editor, “Take it Easy Gals,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 5 October 1945.

became civilians government and military officials expected them to fulfil the role of breadwinner by finding employment and sending money to their family in the UK.⁶⁵⁵ However, this was easier said than done, and this policy put an immense financial strain on a couple, since the husband had to work to financially support himself in Canada while sending money to support his wife and whatever children they had in the UK. Many men complained about this. In a letter to the Department of Repatriation (DR), ex-serviceman E. Dunford expressed frustration at both having no idea when his wife would be coming to Canada and his inability to support her without DA.⁶⁵⁶ Another soldier wrote of his displeasure over the cancellation of his DA, since it left his wife and 5-month-old child with no financial support in England. He detailed how she had looked to the RC, Immigration Offices, and various other social services for assistance, but to no avail.⁶⁵⁷ He expressed anger at having “no assurance” that his wife and child would be taken care of, arguing that as a soldier he was “entitled to answers as to whether the Government is going to look after my family in England, or it isn’t.”⁶⁵⁸ Other veterans expressed anger that they could not start farms with their government grants without the assistance of their wives.⁶⁵⁹ It is not surprising then, that throughout 1945, the CWB reported receiving 2-3,000 letters a day from impatient and angry wives, while the Secretary of War Services

⁶⁵⁵LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 “DAB,” Vol. 24, A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, “Order in Council Providing Financial Assistance to Dependents of Former Members of the Forces Residing Outside of Canada, etc. July PC 53/5275,” 17 July 1944; S/SGT Bob Stark, “British Brides Not Occupying Troop Space,” *The Maple Leaf – Belgium*, 18 August 1945; CWM, GMAC, 20070062-001, Letter to Mrs. M.A. Wright from G.R. Swann, for Treasury Officer, 26 November 1945.

⁶⁵⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” Letter to the Department of Repatriation from E. Dunford, 28 August 1945.

⁶⁵⁷Ibid., Edward G. Vaughan, “Discharged Soldier’s Wife Loses Her Allowance,” 1945.

⁶⁵⁸Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹Al Palmer, “Space Split 50-50 with Troops is OK with Them,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 13 October 1945.

reported receiving hundreds of inquiries from discharged soldiers. All wanted to know when the brides would be sent to Canada.⁶⁶⁰

The Canadian government appeared to take note of these complaints, and the financial concerns various couples faced. In 1944 and 1945 it authorized the Dependants' Board of Trustees (DBT)⁶⁶¹ to provide financial assistance to dependants in cases where delays caused "hardship," providing emergency funds and some maintenance.⁶⁶² However, the Board wished to avoid unnecessarily paying charges for an "abnormally long period."⁶⁶³ J. Pembroke, Chairman of the DBT, felt that the unknown timeframe for moving dependants to Canada could put undue financial pressure on the Board. He wanted to remove "unnecessary expenditure" by applying pressure to prioritize sending the brides to Canada.⁶⁶⁴ Ultimately, its desire to save costs, and ability to determine

⁶⁶⁰LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," Letter to the Hon. Dough Abbott, Minister of National Defence, from Wm. Dray, Lt. Col. Secretary for War Services, 26 October 1945; "Canadian Wives Bureau Swamped with Demands 'When Do We Go,'" *The Maple Leaf – Belgium*, 29 August 1945. Article also noted that husbands were writing similar letters as well.

⁶⁶¹On 2 January 1942, the federal government passed P.C. 18 creating the Dependants' Supplementary Grants Fund and a Board of Trustees, which became known as the Dependants' Board of Trustees. Its purpose was to provide supplementary grants or special assistance to dependants of members of the armed forces in emergency cases that were not covered by Marriage Allowance or Dependence Allowance Regulations. In 1943, P.C. 9239 expanded the Board's coverage to include the maintenance of overseas dependants of former servicemen awaiting passage to Canada. A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, "Dependants' Board of Trustees Order," P.C. 9239, 2 December 1943, in *Canadian War Orders and Regulations 1943: Volume IV* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1944), 582; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 157-8.

⁶⁶²LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 "DAB," Vol. 24, A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, "Order in Council Providing Financial Assistance to Dependants of Former Members of the Forces Residing Outside of Canada, etc. July PC 53/5275," 17 July 1944. The government authorized a similar order in council again in 1945. A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, "Order in Council Authorizing Assistance to Dependants of Former Members of the Armed Forces Residing Outside of Canada, P.C. 154/7500," 21 November 1945.

⁶⁶³*Ibid.*, Memorandum to Mr. A. Ross, Deputy Minister DND (Army) from Wing Commander, G. W. Dunn, 20 November 1945.

⁶⁶⁴*Ibid.*

assistance on a case by case basis, meant that not every bride who lost her DA received support.

War bride concerns also grew surrounding shipping priority lists, since rumours circulated that generals and higher-ranking soldiers' wives received preferential treatment, being sent to Canada sooner than other brides – something the DR denied.⁶⁶⁵ To war brides who struggled financially to get by, the idea that wealthier brides received priority transport to Canada was insulting. The tendency for members of the British public, including members of the House of Commons, to question when the brides would be leaving also caused great stress, since it implied that the longer the transportation took the more likely their Canadian spouses would desert them.⁶⁶⁶ Even living accommodations stressed the women since landlords in heavily congested British cities were not inclined to accept war brides and their children, seeing them as problem tenants due to their financial instability and likelihood of departing at a moments notice.⁶⁶⁷

The Canadian government attempted to address the concerns of the brides and British public by issuing a new order in council, P.C. 154/7500, to remove the case by case nature of earlier orders, and guaranteeing all British war brides awaiting

⁶⁶⁵This was also a concern being expressed by Canadian men. LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Letter to Colonel G. Ellis, DND, from Miss Laskier, Secretary to Mr. Plewman, Canadian Red Cross Society, Toronto, 17 October 1944 and Letter to Miss Laskier, Canadian Red Cross Society, from G. Ellis, Lt-Col., For Director, D Repatriation, 19 October 1944; CMI at Pier 21, 06.07.12IK.

⁶⁶⁶CMI at Pier 21, 06.07.12IK; UK, Parliament, *Deb*, HC, 5th Ser, 15 October 1945, Vol. 414, cols 670-2.

⁶⁶⁷LAC, DND, RG24, Vol. 2052, "P – WFCSORC," "The Accommodation Problem," 194?; UK, Parliament, *Deb*, HC, 5th Ser, 15 October 1945, Vol. 414, cols 670-2; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, "CWB – Hostels 1," Letter to CWB from Mrs. Marie C. Tracey, 1 June 1945. In one memorandum, Roy W. Lent and D.A. Clarke acknowledged that the housing situation in the UK was quite serious and would only worsen with demobilization of British servicemen. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, "CWB – Policy 1," Memorandum to DAG from Roy W. Lent and D.A. Clarke, 25 July 1945.

transportation to Canada a DA.⁶⁶⁸ Yet, the DBT remained concerned about the decision and the financial burden placed on it. Pembroke again summarized his objections: “I think we are being called on to pay a high price for the main purpose (as I see it) of avoiding UK criticism. I doubt if any other country is doing anything like this under similar circumstances.”⁶⁶⁹ He also argued that extending the DA relieved Canadian men “of their financial responsibilities.”⁶⁷⁰ Since men in this period were supposed to be breadwinners, their inability or, in Pembroke’s mind, unwillingness to support their dependants was shameful. In his eyes it rewarded Canadian men for shirking their responsibilities as husbands, fathers, and men. As before, the Canadian government and military overlooked Pembroke’s concerns and implemented the order for the sake of alleviating the financial concerns of brides awaiting transport, which they hoped would also reduce inquiries and complaints regarding departure dates.

Yet, the continuation of DA did not end calls for the priority shipping of British war brides to Canada. In fact, the issue became increasingly heated at the war’s end, when the Canadian government announced that servicemen would receive priority shipping home. Canada’s Minister of National Defence, the Hon. Douglas Abbot, argued that the decision to move servicemen first was “obvious,” since a great number of Canadian

⁶⁶⁸LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 “DAB,” Vol. 24, A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, “Statutory Orders and Regulations - Order in Council Authorizing Assistance to Dependants of Former Members of the Armed Forces Residing Outside of Canada, P.C. 154/7500,” 7 January 1946; Sam Koffman, “‘English Wives’ Allowance Continues After Discharge,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 5 October 1945.

⁶⁶⁹LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 “DAB,” Vol. 24, Letter to Alex Ross, Deputy Minister DND (Army) from J. Pembroke, Chairman DBT, 15 October 1945.

⁶⁷⁰*Ibid.*

soldiers had not seen their Canadian wives in years.⁶⁷¹ The government's insistence on this matter was not surprising – both it and the military had been working tirelessly on post-war veteran programs. It understood that soldiers who had been serving since the beginning of the war wanted to get home as soon as possible. Of them, soldiers with British wives only made up a tiny percentage, less than .045%, of Canada's forces. The decision was also tied to Canadian attitudes surrounding the brides themselves. In one memorandum, Major General H.A. Young noted that in his trips across Canada that the general mood of the public, especially wives, was strongly "adverse" to dependants coming home before servicemen.⁶⁷² Both the public and press pointed out how unfair it would be for Canadian couples who had been separated for years to have British wives return home first.⁶⁷³ The government's decision reflected both a practical, pro-Canada stance, and an attempt to temper the Canadian public's attitude towards war brides.

Frustrated with delays and inaction, some brides, destined for both Canada and the US, became increasingly active in their demands to be sent to North America right away. They protested at Britain's Parliament and the Embassies of Canada and the US, demanding that shipping be divided evenly between soldiers and brides.⁶⁷⁴ One small group of brides brought their protest to Prime Minister Mackenzie King during his visit to

⁶⁷¹Canada, Parliament, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 1 (1945): 976; "Repats Home Ahead Brides Says Ottawa," *The Maple Leaf – Holland*, 20 October 1945; "Parliament – U.S. and Canadian Soldiers' Wives," *The Times*, 16 October 1945.

⁶⁷²LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," Memorandum – Return of Dependents UK to Canada by H.A. Young, Major General, Quartermaster General, 26 July 1945.

⁶⁷³*Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁴"War Brides Awaiting Ships Protest to King on Delay," *Montréal Herald*, 12 October 1945; Palmer "Space Split 50-50 with Troops is Ok with Them," *The Maple Leaf – England*, 13 October 1945; "Repats Home Ahead Brides Says Ottawa," *The Maple Leaf – Holland*, 20 October 1945; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 31-2; Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 116-7; Friedman, *From the Battlefield to the Bridal Suite*, 98-9

London, something that did little to endear them to the Canadian public.⁶⁷⁵ Whereas before the brides experienced the ire of single Canadian women, they now faced the outrage and anger of married Canadian women who wrote numerous letters to Canadian newspapers criticizing their behaviour.⁶⁷⁶ Their demands and many letters sent to the DND and CWB, rendered them a nuisance to the Canadian military. In one memorandum, the Army's Director of Public Relations, demanded that the DR, yet again, explain to the war brides why Canadian servicemen deserved to go home first. He acknowledged that such a statement would not "stop the sniping at the Army," but hopefully it would reduce the effect of their criticisms.⁶⁷⁷ The terse tone of this memorandum reflected both irritation and frustration; to officials the brides clearly did not get it, being unable to accept the idea that returning Canadian soldiers first was more important to the Canadian government, military, and people of Canada than returning soldiers' dependants.

The brides' behaviour shocked and outraged Canadian soldiers, both married and unmarried. They expressed their anger at the women's perceived sense of superiority to Canadian servicemen, with the editor of the *Maple Leaf* questioning: "Do you REALLY rate the priority you think you do?"⁶⁷⁸ He argued that the brides ought to be more mindful of the privileges granted to them, such as the continuation of DA, before "clamoring

⁶⁷⁵"Brides Appeal to Premier," *Montréal Star*, 12 October 1945; "War Brides Awaiting Ships Protest to King on Delay," *Montréal Herald*, 12 October 1945.

⁶⁷⁶Repats Home Ahead Brides Says Ottawa," *The Maple Leaf – Holland*, 20 October 1945; "English Brides Riles Wives in Canada," *The Maple Leaf – England*, 17 October 1945.

⁶⁷⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," Memorandum – D. Repat by W.E. Auston, Lt.-Col., for R.S. Malone, Col. Director of Public Relations (Army), 28 July 1945.

⁶⁷⁸Letter from the Editor, "Take it Easy, Gals," *The Maple Leaf – England*, 5 October 1945; "Beefs, Queries and Answers – Concerning the Brides," *The Maple Leaf – England*, 25 October 1945; "Dear Editor: My Problem is This," *The Maple Leaf – Germany*, 16 November 1945.

indignantly to be sent to Canada.”⁶⁷⁹ At one hotly contested meeting on the issue reported upon in October 1945, one soldier reminded the brides of the many soldiers with Canadian wives or girls at home, only to have a war bride shout out, “he doesn’t have to keep his girl – does he?”⁶⁸⁰ Unmarried soldiers, too, felt that the brides characterized them as underserving of expedited transportation home since they were not married. Corporal Patterson argued that since he had served his country, why should his marital status determine when he went home?⁶⁸¹ Signalman McMurtie had harsher words for the brides, advising that they needed to “shut up and be patient.” Other soldiers questioned why the brides could not wait, opining that if the couples could not stand a few months apart then they should not have gotten married in the first place.⁶⁸² One Canadian servicewoman entered the debate, stating, “If such narrow-minded brides are to become citizens of Canada, God help Canada.”⁶⁸³

These varying attitudes regarding the reception of British war brides reveal a great deal about gender constructions during the war and its immediate aftermath. Throughout the war the *Maple Leaf*, and Canadian servicemen in general, had been supportive of overseas marriages and the concessions made to war brides and their husbands. However, the brides’ arguments that they were just as, or in some cases, even more deserving of priority transport back to Canada as servicemen, was a stance that members of the Canadian military could not support. The women’s demands challenged the worthiness of

⁶⁷⁹Letter from the Editor, “Take it Easy, Gals,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 5 October 1945.

⁶⁸⁰“Very Few Sympathetic to War Brides Desire,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 24 October 1945.

⁶⁸¹“Beefs, Queries and Answers – Concerning the Brides,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 25 October 1945.

⁶⁸²*Ibid.*

⁶⁸³*Ibid.*

the service and sacrifice of Canadian men by arguing that their statuses as wives and mothers made them as worthy of priority shipping. Since the First World War, military service had become equated with martial citizenship – the most honourable and masculine way that a man could contribute to his nation was as a citizen soldier.⁶⁸⁴ In comparison, the most honourable way a woman could contribute to her nation was through motherhood.⁶⁸⁵ The women's protests and demands thus reveal that they equated their service as equal to that of the servicemen and were thus just as worthy of being shipped first. In a time and society that prioritized the status and welfare of men over women, such a stance would indeed have been shocking. Perhaps the work of the CWB in promoting the brides as ideal immigrants and emphasizing their roles as the mothers of future Canadians was more effective than they had anticipated.

Despite the efforts of the Canadian government, military, and voluntary groups to promote a positive reception, the behaviour of the brides regarding their transport to Canada, did little to endear them to a Canadian public that was already divided on the issue of British war brides. Unfortunately, for some British war brides, the hostility of the Canadian population was merely one of many settlement challenges they would face starting their new lives in Canada.

⁶⁸⁴Vance, *Death So Noble*, 115-6, 136, 141; Francine D'Amico, "Citizen Soldier? Class, Race, Gender, Sexuality and the US Military," in *States of Conflict: Gender, Violence and Resistance* ed. Susie Jacobs, Ruth Jacobson and Jen Marchbank (New York: Zed Books, 2000), 105, 107, 110-1; Robert Rutherford, *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada's Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 200-1; Sinha, "Gender and Nation," 330; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 89; Campbell, *Respectable Citizens*, 163-5.

⁶⁸⁵D'Amico, "Citizen Soldier?," 110-1; Sinha, "Gender and Nation," 330-1; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 107, 204

Chapter 7 – Alone in a “Completely Strange Country”: British War Bride Settlement Experiences in Ontario and Québec

In 1945, O. Mary Hill wrote an article for the *YWCA Quarterly*, entitled “Hello, Stranger!,” which focussed on the work of YWCA Travellers’ Aid in assisting newly arrived British war brides in Canada. The article began with the story of a mother patiently awaiting the arrival of her son’s British war bride at a train station and interacting with a YWCA Travellers’ Aid employee. The employee asked the woman if she was excited to meet her daughter-in-law, to which she replied: “My son loves her, we will all love her.”⁶⁸⁶ Through this article, Hill – like other media representations of war bride receptions at the time – propagated the notion that Canadians, in particular parents, were eager to welcome war brides into their families.

As discussed in Chapter 5, British war brides experienced quite a mixed reception in both English and French speaking Canada, in particular among single Canadian women who opposed their marriages and viewed them as outsiders. In 1946 – when most brides had been moved to Canada – CIPO completed another Gallup Poll to see if Canadian attitudes towards British war brides had improved. The new poll asked: “Have you met any British war brides?” and “Do you think the government should have made it more difficult for Canadian servicemen to marry overseas, and bring their wives to this country, or not?” In response to the first question, the poll showed that 58% of respondents had met a British war bride, and that more women than men had encountered them.⁶⁸⁷ The

⁶⁸⁶LAC, YWCA, MG28-I198, Vol. 47, “Hello Stranger!” by Hill, *YWCA Quarterly*, March 1945, 16.

⁶⁸⁷CIPO, “Public Esteems War Brides, Those Cool Haven’t Met Any,” *Gallup Poll of Canada*, 18 December 1946.

results revealed that 49% of respondents felt that overseas marriages should not have been made more difficult, while 33% of respondents preferred the opposite.⁶⁸⁸ These results suggested that while Canadian public opinion of the brides was improving, the country was still fairly divided on the issue.⁶⁸⁹ In fact, the *Globe and Mail* characterized a number of initial meetings between British war brides and their Canadian in-laws as ranging “from polite hostility to studied rudeness.”⁶⁹⁰

Such mixed attitudes meant that for many women, their arrival in Canada did not mark their journey’s end, but rather the beginning of a new phase requiring them to adapt to both the differences in the Canadian way of life and to the attitudes and preferences of their new families. In most cases, British war brides were moved before their husbands’ demobilization, meaning that they lived with their husbands’ parents or siblings upon arrival in Canada. These in-laws and siblings were crucial to the success of the brides’ adaptation to life in a new county. A shared living situation could be unbearable if the bride was not accepted by her new family, a situation that was often worsened by the inability of the couple to find a home of their own due to Canada’s postwar housing crisis – a topic that will be addressed in Chapter 8. Yet, according to Magda Fahrni, Canadian historians have remained silent on this period of postwar transition of soldiers and their families.⁶⁹¹ Postwar historiographies have tended to focus on the political and economic aspects of the Cold War, with discussions of family life largely centered around the

⁶⁸⁸A slight increase from that Gallup Poll of 1944 in which 41% disapproved of said marriages. Ibid.; CIPO, “Should Canucks Wed English Gals?,” *Gallup Poll of Canada*, 10 May 1944.

⁶⁸⁹Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰Allen, “War Cupid Defended,” *Globe and Mail*, 7 April 1944.

⁶⁹¹Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion,” 188-9.

suburban nuclear family and the prosperous consumer culture of the 1950s – though recent work has complicated our understanding of the prosperity and homogeneity of the period.⁶⁹² A focus on the return to normalcy in the postwar and Cold War period, coupled with the penchant of historians to maintain the good war myth of the Second World War, has resulted in the immediate postwar lives of soldiers and their British war brides being framed as “romantic reunions.”⁶⁹³ The trials and tribulations that these couples faced as they transitioned to civilian life are rarely discussed and largely ignored.⁶⁹⁴

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 addresses this omission by examining the challenges British war brides and their husbands faced settling in postwar Ontario and Québec. The current

⁶⁹²Histories that focus on the political and economic elements of the postwar and Cold War period include the following: Denis Smith, *Diplomacy of Fear: Canada and the Cold War, 1941-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Granatstein, *How Britain's Weakness Forced Canada into the Arms of the United States*; Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Greg Donaghy, *Canada and the Early Cold War, 1943-1957* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1998); Robert Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Matthew Farish, “The Cold War on Canadian Soil: Militarizing a Northern Environment,” *Environmental History* 12 (October 2007): 920-50; Andrew Burtch, *Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada's Cold War Civil Defence* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012); Asa McKercher, *Camelot and Canada: Canadian-American Relations in the Kennedy Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Gender, social, and cultural historians have complicated our view of the period by moving away from the traditional discussions of politics and economics. Prentice, “Workers, Mothers, Reds,” 115-41; Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60,” *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. LXXII, no. 4 (1991): 471-504; Robert Rutherford, “Fatherhood and the Social Construction of Memory: Breadwinning and Male Parenting on a Job Frontier, 1945-1966,” in *Gender and History in Canada* ed. Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd, 1996): 357-376; Mona Gleason, “Psychology and the Construction of the ‘Normal’ Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60,” *Canadian Historical Review* 78 (September 1997): 442-77; Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*; Richard Cavell, *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Iacovetta and Korinek, “Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker,” 190-230; Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford, *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945-75* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).

⁶⁹³As discussed in Chapter 1, Jeffrey Keshen has argued that the emphasis on the memory of the Second World War as the good war has led many to ignore the more sordid sides of the war and Canadian servicemen's behaviour. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 8-9; Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion,” 188-9.

⁶⁹⁴Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion,” 188-9; Sangster, “The Meanings of Mercy,” 520-1.

historiography has focussed too much on happy stories of reunion and settlement, with adaptational issues being framed as mild nuisances to be overcome and almost always centered around urban brides living on rural farms. In addition, Canadian immigration historians have argued that the similarities between Britain and Canada meant that British war brides and other British immigrants in this period had little to no adaptational issues to face, especially in comparison to immigrants of a minority background.⁶⁹⁵ By no means does this dissertation seek to claim that British war brides experienced the same level of hardship, prejudice, or adaptational struggles in Canada as marginalized groups (such as Italian immigrants or Hungarian refugees) in this period. However, upon their arrival in Canada, British war brides did experience similar adaption-based issues related to language, religion, and homesickness as other immigrant groups. For better or for worse the brides had set forth on a new life in Canada, and despite the education and preparation provided by the CWB, many British war brides found that they were not fully prepared for the differences between life in Canada and the UK.

To some brides the differences between the two countries were apparent from the moment they landed in port. After days of travelling on the Atlantic Ocean, British war brides were corralled onto rail cars to continue their journeys to their new homes across Canada [Appendix 2 – Images 2.18-9]. In her travel diary, Rosemary wrote of the “wildness” of the country, with its miles of woodlands and frozen lakes.⁶⁹⁶ Another woman recalled how a number of brides crowded the window in order to get a look at the

⁶⁹⁵Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 4-5; Iacovetta, “Remaking Their Lives,” 146; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 28, 32; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 43, 252.

⁶⁹⁶CWM, GMAC, 20060167-001, Travel Dairy of Rosemary D., 17 March 1946.

Great Lakes and were surprised to still be traveling along Lake Superior “eight hours later.”⁶⁹⁷ Another bride recalled how her young child was amazed by all the lights.⁶⁹⁸ After years of living in blackouts, brightly lit cities would have been a novelty for the women and a surprise to their young children who were too young to recall life before the war.⁶⁹⁹ The journey also entailed a great deal of uncertainty: a number of stories had circulated of brides having no one waiting for them – either due to a mix-up regarding arrival times or because the bride had been abandoned, leaving these travel-fatigued women, many with small children, worried about finding themselves in a similar situation.⁷⁰⁰ Having left everything and everyone they knew from the UK behind them, the thought that no one would be awaiting them was unsettling at best and frightening at worst.

These women’s fears and anxieties were certainly not helped when, upon arrival at their designated train stations, they were swarmed by the press and crowds of awaiting families [Appendix 2 – Image 2.20]. While many British war brides greeted their husbands and new families with great joy, the process could be quite confusing, or even overwhelming, for many women. In the general flurry of getting off the trains, having names read aloud, meeting husbands and families, and talking to the press, several “mix ups” occurred. One husband spent all day waiting for his wife in Toronto, only to learn

⁶⁹⁷Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 72.

⁶⁹⁸Excerpt from the Travel Diary of Vera T., 8 January 1945, private collection; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, 162-7.

⁶⁹⁹During the war the UK government-initiated blackouts, meaning that all outdoor lights at night were minimized to reduce targeted German attacks. The blackouts also involved using heavy blackout curtains when indoor lights were on in urban areas.

⁷⁰⁰Jarratt, *War Brides*, 110; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 65, 68.

that she was on a train headed to Owen Sound.⁷⁰¹ One reunited family quickly realized that in the shuffle of disembarking from the train one child had been left on the train, which was already heading to the next station.⁷⁰² At Union Station in Toronto, a Sargent Graves and Mrs. Graves starred in confusion at one another, as a mix-up of similar last names had united the wrong wife and husband.⁷⁰³ Similarly, the widows of two Canadian servicemen were accidentally switched placing them in the wrong family.⁷⁰⁴ At times, even correctly matched couples experienced some confusion, such as a number of women who, while dating, had only ever seen their husbands in uniform, and did not immediately recognize them when reunited.⁷⁰⁵

Language differences could add to the confusion at train stations. Most British war brides spoke no French and many of their new French-Canadian relatives spoke little to no English, creating some of the very barriers that had concerned CWB and immigration officials.⁷⁰⁶ An example of this scenario was recounted in an article in *La Presse*, about a French-Canadian sister-in-law who greeted her brother's British bride, and discovered that they could not speak to one another. Fortunately for the women, a local radio broadcaster assisted them by acting as an interpreter.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰¹"War Bride Loses Baby in Train Mix-Up, Special Motor Ride Re-Unites Family," *Toronto Telegram*, 17 February 1945.

⁷⁰²In this instance, another war bride had helped the mother with her children while disembarking, and the mother had assumed her kids were with Red Cross Workers. Luckily, the child was found and reunited with his family shortly thereafter. Ibid.

⁷⁰³"Not His Wife, Not Her Hubby," *Toronto Telegram*, 20 April 1945.

⁷⁰⁴Here is another example of a similar mix-up at Union Station. "War Bride Mistakes Respective Families," *Gazette*, 4 September 1946.

⁷⁰⁵Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 95, 116-7; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 73, 161.

⁷⁰⁶"Families Reunited as British Brides Arrive Here," *Montréal Star*, 13 February 1946; Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 203; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 74, 85.

⁷⁰⁷"Retrouver Son Mari," *La Presse*, 13 February 1946.

Women destined to communities outside of Montréal, especially remote communities, did not have the same opportunities to engage with fellow English speakers.⁷⁰⁸ In some fortunate scenarios, husbands or in-laws worked out a system of communication and taught the bride French. For example, British war bride Joan learned French words by pointing at household items and her mother-in-law would teach her the words. Through this system Joan was able to learn enough French to hold a conversation.⁷⁰⁹ In cases where the family was not accommodating, the brides had to make due on their own. One bride, Joyce, recalled how her husband grew irritated translating for her and that her sister-in-law refused to teach her French, so Joyce slowly learned by speaking with her young nieces and nephews.⁷¹⁰

As discussed in Chapter 3, the CWB failed to provide adequate knowledge about Québec and did not provide French-related educational materials or classes. Perhaps unsurprisingly, *Maclean's* reported that many Québec-based British war brides were unable to do basic tasks, such as haggling with the butcher or asking for the price of a dress, and had been completely unaware of the necessity of knowing French in Québec.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁸The population of Montréal in 1951 was 1,395,400, of which 35% spoke only French, 23% spoke only English and 39% spoke both French and English. The remaining percentage of people spoke neither French nor English. Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Ninth Census of Canada, 1951: Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts – Montréal* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1953), 4. Melynda Jarratt argues based on 1941 census records that 85% of the province spoke French, 65% solely French, 12% solely English, and that roughly 27% were bilingual. Jarratt, *War Brides*, 68. According to Magda Fahrni, the 1941 census cites 62.6% of the residents of Montréal had French origins and only 24.7% British origins. Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 29. Kenneth McRoberts argues that Montréal was the “major, perhaps the only environment in the province where French-Canadians lived side by side with a large community of Anglophones.” McRoberts, *Québec*, 74.

⁷⁰⁹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 75.

⁷¹⁰*Ibid.*, 85.

⁷¹¹“Cross Country – Québec,” *Maclean's*, 15 March 1945; “Cross Country – Québec,” *Maclean's*, 15 December 1945.

To try and address this problem, a number of women's voluntary organizations provided free French classes. These classes proved popular; *Maclean's* noted an increase in the number of French classes for brides in Québec between March and December 1945, and reports by the Montréal YWCA showed that enrollment in its French courses was rising – with 214 overseas wives attending their free courses in conversational French in 1945 – indicating that “a real need is being met.”⁷¹²

British brides without French found themselves isolated, and in some instances, ostracized, within their communities. One son of a war bride recalled that most of his neighbours were French and did not include “the English,” i.e., him and his mother, in activities.⁷¹³ Similarly, one bride described the hostility French-Canadians in her community showed towards “les Anglais.” In response, the plucky bride argued with members of her new Church that “God must have made les Anglais too? I told them, for if he didn't, who did? The devil isn't a maker: he is a destroyer.”⁷¹⁴ Unfortunately for the bride, it appears her argument fell on deaf ears, as she continued to be excluded from the community's social life and felt very much alone.⁷¹⁵ *The Montréal Herald* covered the story of a 19-year-old British bride living with her in-laws where the relationship had “gone sour.” The woman's lack of French had left her alienated from her in-laws and the

⁷¹²Ibid.; *The Montréal Herald* noted that British war brides were very anxious to learn the French language. “War Brides Disillusioned, ‘Ranches’ Are Only Flats,” *Montréal Herald*, 17 May 1945; LAC, MYWCA, MG28-I240, “Annual Report 1943-6, Vol. 38,” “Education Department Report – 1945.”

⁷¹³Dennis H., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 28 October 2016. The respondent did not specify further about the kinds of activities they were not welcomed to take part in.

⁷¹⁴Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 92.

⁷¹⁵Ibid.

larger community, resulting in her lashing out at her in-laws that she had survived the Blitz and that her relatives did not appreciate her ways of seeing and doing things.⁷¹⁶

Even British war brides who could speak French still had difficulties expressing themselves and struggled to understand the differences in Québec French slang, pronunciations, and dialects.⁷¹⁷ Joan Walker wrote that having studied Parisian French at a Swiss finishing school, she could not understand the French-Canadian contractors working on her new house, nor they her.⁷¹⁸ Even though another bride's French was good enough to go to the store and buy groceries, she realized her French "was totally useless" because she found Canadian French "absolutely impossible."⁷¹⁹ These differences were a source of frustration for French-speaking British war brides who believed that settling into Québec would pose no problems for them. To an extent, their French did give them a distinct advantage over other brides; although these women had to adjust to different slang and pronunciations, their working knowledge of French allowed them to interact with the community and do personal errands in ways that were impossible for Anglophone brides who more often became isolated without the assistance of their husbands or new relations.

Sometimes, a bride's language *and* religion could lead to discrimination, such as English war bride Olive, who was harassed by an elderly Catholic French-Canadian priest while recovering from hernia surgery at a Catholic hospital in Bagotville, Québec. The priest complained that she since she was an English Protestant, Olive "had no right to be

⁷¹⁶"Deserted War Brides Problems Related," *Montréal Herald*, 19 May 1944.

⁷¹⁷Walker, *Pardon My Parka*, 42; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 90; Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 45.

⁷¹⁸*Ibid.*, Melynda Jarratt includes a similar discussion of this source in *War Brides*, 31, 68-9.

⁷¹⁹Broadfoot, *The Immigrant*, 46.

in there” and that she needed to leave. Shortly after the priest’s second visit, Olive was asked to leave the hospital.⁷²⁰

It was often expected by French-Canadian husbands, in-laws, and the family priests that these women would convert or at least raise their children as Catholics.⁷²¹ Mrs. Marentette, for example, converted to Catholicism, as her husband’s family were “very strong Roman Catholics.”⁷²² Sometimes the Catholic Church made life difficult for couples if the bride would not convert. For example, a Roman Catholic priest refused to baptise the child of a Mrs. Marchand and her husband. Despite their religious differences the couple had agreed to raise their child as Roman Catholic – Mrs. Marchand had even signed an ecclesiastical form promising this.⁷²³ In regards to their situation, the CWB responded that a consulting priest on the matter had informed them that an ecclesiastical form of this kind was not enough. The couple would have to have their marriage solemnized in the Catholic Church or else the Church would have “no assurance that either parent would bring up the child a Catholic.”⁷²⁴ Some British war brides were

⁷²⁰Olive had this surgery in 1960. Campbell, *Shattered Dream*, 110-1.

⁷²¹The majority of French-Canadians in Québec were Roman Catholics, whereas most British war brides were members of the Church of England, or other Protestant churches (Presbyterian or Methodist). To give a sense of the supremacy of Catholicism in Québec, according to census records of the city of Montréal in 1951 – where most of the English-speaking population of the province resided – roughly 75% of the city’s inhabitants were Roman Catholic, 7% were Church of England and roughly 3% were Presbyterian. Remaining percentages made up of members of the following faiths: Baptist, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Lutheran, Mennonite, United Church of Canada, Ukrainian Catholic, and other. Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Ninth Census of Canada, 1951*, 4. “Québécois Find Brides Overseas,” *Globe and Mail*, 1 March 1944; Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001) 16-7, 162-3; Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2006), 15-9, 26.

⁷²²In this case the British war bride had married into a French-Canadian family living in Windsor, Ontario. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq 3 3,” Letter to General Browne, Assistant National Commissioner Canadian Red Cross Society from Vincent Crompton, Red Cross Liaison Officer, 15 March 1945.

⁷²³*Ibid.*, “CWB – Enq 3 4,” Letter to Miss Griffin, CWB, from Mrs. E. Marchand, 13 July 1945.

⁷²⁴*Ibid.*, Letter to Mrs. Marchand from Miss Griffin for D.A. Clarke, CWB, 16 July 1945.

willing to do just that. English war bride Violet married at the registry officer and had a Catholic ceremony for her husband.⁷²⁵

Other British war brides refused to convert or make such accommodations to appease their husbands or new relations. One bride recalled how her mother-in-law constantly told her husband that she should join the church, to which the bride responded: “..I’d say no, I was an Anglican, I had my own religion...”⁷²⁶ She told her husband that if her mother-in-law or local priest did not like her decision “that was just too bad.”⁷²⁷ While that bride never experienced “being spat” on in the street, she said she did become known as “the English woman” in the community.⁷²⁸ Even Catholic war brides faced ostracism within the French-Canadian community due to their Anglo backgrounds. One Catholic British war bride argued that she never felt “at home” in the church, as the church promoted “la culture Canadienne,” and was deeply rooted in fear and hostility towards strangers, especially “les Anglais.”⁷²⁹

Language and religious differences between British war brides and their French-Canadian relatives were intrinsically tied to French-Canadian nationalism.⁷³⁰ Due to

⁷²⁵Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, 74.

⁷²⁶Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 45.

⁷²⁷*Ibid.*

⁷²⁸*Ibid.*

⁷²⁹Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 90.

⁷³⁰Tensions between English and French speaking Canadians date back to the colonial period, but were exacerbated following the rebellions of 1837-8, when the Durham Report recommended the unification of the predominately French Lower Canada and the predominately Anglo Upper Canada into the Province of Canada in the *Act of Union, 1840*. Discriminatory measures in the *Act*, such as banning the use of French in the Legislative Assembly, further divided English and French speaking populations in Canada. The movement of French-Canadians across Canada and to the US, combined with an ever-increasing Anglo immigration into the province – and their inordinate amount of political and economic influence within the province, at the expense of the French speaking community – further imbedded the notion of French-Canadians as an oppressed majority in Québec. The issue of conscription during both world wars deeply divided French and English-speaking Canadians, leading some to fear an outbreak of civil war Canada. *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, xlv-xiv; Granatstein, *Canada’s War*;

anxiety surrounding an ever-increasing Anglo presence in Québec, the province was the least receptive to post-war immigration.⁷³¹ In an article in *L'Action Nationale*, Dominique Beaudin argued that allowing immigrants, specifically British immigrants, into Canada only increased the numerical supremacy of Anglo-Canadians.⁷³² This anti-immigration stance was tied to fears that English-speakers were intent on diminishing or assimilating the culture of French-Canadians. Sometimes this anxiety also centered around attacks on the Catholic faith. In a 1945 report, “The General Situation of Catholicism in Canada,” the authors stated that one of the “ennemis du catholicisme” were anti-Catholic forces, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and “Orangistes” – the Orange Order.⁷³³ Stereotypical depictions or conceptions of French-Canadian culture and religion by English-Canadians further created wedges between the two communities.

A.I. Silver, *The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation, 1864-1900* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1997), 15, 17, 24; J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997); McRoberts, *Québec*, 74, 101; Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 6, 137; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 7-8; Martin F. Auger, “On the Brink of Civil War: The Canadian Government and the Suppression of the 1918 Québec Easter Riots,” *Canadian Historical Review* 89, 4 (December 2008): 503-540; Andrew Theobald, *The Bitter Harvest of War: New Brunswick and the Conscription Crisis of 1917* (Fredericton, N.B.: Goose Lane Editions/New Brunswick Military Heritage Project, 2008).

⁷³¹CIPO, “Canadians Favor Picked Immigration After the War,” *Gallup Poll of Canada*, 27 January 1943.

⁷³²Since 1917, this French language monthly magazine published critical analysis of Québec's linguistic, social, cultural, and economic realities.

⁷³³The report argued that these groups in Québec attacked the Catholic Church and promoted the idea that Catholics were “Rome dominated” or “priest ridden” – that Catholics could not think for themselves and did what ever the Pope told them to. BAnQ Vieux-Montréal, JOC, P104, container 240, “Situation du Catholicisme au Canada, 1945-50” [hereafter cited as SCC]. Situation Générale du Catholicisme au Canada, 1945, 6-7. Since the early 1800s, Catholics in Canada had experienced attacks and discrimination at the hands of the Orange Order – a British-Protestant fraternal organization with members in high ranking political and social positions – who presented Catholics as bigots and anti-Empire. Mark McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 283; David A. Wilson, *The Orange Order in Canada* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2007), 10, 14.

Since British war brides were English women, and predominately Protestant, they were outsiders whose marriages were a further watering down of the French-Canadian culture and composition of Québec. Due to this perceived outsider status, some French-Canadian in-laws proved unwilling to welcome British brides into their homes or greeted the women with “coolness.”⁷³⁴ One war bride recalled that in the eyes of the village she lived in, her husband had “degraded himself” by marrying “l’ennemi” and had “betrayed” the community.⁷³⁵ While her mother-in-law was always nice to her, the bride felt it was clear that she found “no joy” in their marriage – as the bride could never truly be French-Canadian.⁷³⁶ These mixed-marriages were further disheartening to French-Canadian relatives as during this period the idea that a healthy family meant a healthy society was engrained into the public consciousness, resulting in a number of post-war programs centered around promoting and fostering the family.⁷³⁷ Relatives who felt that these mixed marriages were ill-conceived or destined to fail would have seen these marriages as a detriment to the community. British brides who did attempt to embrace the French language and Catholic religion were often still viewed as English or outsiders within French speaking communities, even if their new families proved welcoming.

British war brides in Ontario also experienced unwelcoming in-laws and a community that viewed them as outsiders. One bride recalled how a large number of

⁷³⁴LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Memorandum – Dependents from Overseas Settlement Arrangements and Priorities by Colonel F.W. Clarke, Director of Repatriation, 14 March 1945.

⁷³⁵Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 92.

⁷³⁶*Ibid.*

⁷³⁷UdeMSA, ACC, P16 04/52, “Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse Comite Provincial du Québec,” *Mémoire sur la Famille*, 194?, 4. Magda Fahrni includes a similar discussion of this source in her footnotes in “The Romance of Reunion,” 200.

older Canadians resented her and other brides for having “taken the men from their daughters.”⁷³⁸ She also found her in-laws far from welcoming as her partner had “ditched his Canadian girl for me,” a decision that had not gone over well with his family.⁷³⁹ English war bride Pam recalled that while her in-laws had been welcoming, she knew of families that “hated the girl [war bride] before they saw her because she was different from Canadian girls.”⁷⁴⁰ British war brides, Mrs. Brookes and Mrs. Fogg, complained that Canadians frequently accused them of looking at Canada as a colony and nothing more – the women felt that such an attitude was only persistent in the Canadian mind.⁷⁴¹ These examples demonstrate that similar to French-Canadian parents, English-Canadian parents were not always keen on their sons marrying outside of the community – these parents expected and wanted their sons to marry Canadian girls.

English-Canadian parents often made their displeasure with their son’s choice of bride known when the woman made a mistake or compared Canadian and British ways of doing things. One bride wrote that after asking her mother-in-law if she would like help cleaning up after tea, her mother-in-law replied: “We don’t call it tea, it’s supper” and “Don’t be telling people there was only tea when [sic] I gave you.”⁷⁴² The bride in this case had not expected such a harsh response. Instead of teaching her new daughter-in-law differences in terminology, the mother-in-law assumed that the daughter-in-law was slighting her.

⁷³⁸Saywell, *Women in War*, 34.

⁷³⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁰“Our 42,000 Overseas Brides... Are They Making a Success of Marriage?,” *Chatelaine*, March 1947, 79.

⁷⁴¹Allen Carroll, “Majority of War Brides Happy in Canadian Life,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 September 1946.

⁷⁴²CWM, GMAC, Eaton and Eaton, *Seeking Grace*, 26.

Sometimes Canadian in-laws' dislike of their sons' British war brides could become abusive. One set of in-laws in Montréal threw a glass of milk in the face of their daughter-in-law, before kicking the young woman and her baby out onto the street following a violent quarrel about differences in religion and race.⁷⁴³ English war bride Elizabeth, in London, Ontario, recalled how her mother-in-law kept her socially isolated, not allowing any visitors "at her house." Elizabeth endured various forms of psychological abuse for years until her family finally moved and lived separately from her mother-in-law.⁷⁴⁴ Before leaving for Canada, English war bride Olive's mother-in-law wrote to her that it would "best" for her not to go to Canada and that she should divorce her son in England – Olive's husband Ian was not aware of this letter.⁷⁴⁵ Once in Canada, her mother-in-law prevented her from talking about her family, stating: "You chose to come and live over here, so you gave up your family; now you only have one and that is us. Don't ever mention your family in this house again."⁷⁴⁶ In another case in Ontario, Scottish war bride Margaret recalled that her father-in-law considered her to be too opinionated and once said to her husband: "Are you going to hit her or am I?"⁷⁴⁷

In these cases, the in-laws endorsed abuse – physical or psychological – as appropriate tactics to discipline incoming brides in order to instil in them a sense of a

⁷⁴³"Ladies' Corps Aides Brides," *Montréal Herald*, 15 May 1945.

⁷⁴⁴This move only happened following an emotional breakdown at Elizabeth's doctor's office. Since Elizabeth did not wish to upset her husband with accusations against his mother, she remained silent about the abuse for years. Jarratt, *War Brides*, 126-7.

⁷⁴⁵This relationship did not improve once Olive arrived in Canada. Upon arriving in Halifax, Olive's new mother-in-law greeted her by dictating which chores she would be doing, such as the scrubbing the floors. Campbell, *Shattered Dream*, 50, 54.

⁷⁴⁶Eventually, Olive and her husband moved to Ontario in order to get away from this abuse. *Ibid.*, 57.

⁷⁴⁷Jarratt, *War Brides*, 115.

women's position in their home or their deep-seated dislike of the bride. British war brides who faced such abuse – be it in Québec, Ontario, or Nova Scotia – often had little recourse, especially in isolated communities. In almost all cases, brides' new in-laws were providing them, and in many cases their young children, with a home – and in Canada's housing crisis one could not easily move from one home to another. In addition, in-laws represented the brides' main point of contact with Canada and their new communities, and were the parents of their husbands, meaning British war brides in abusive households had to either develop strategies to survive their situations or bear the abuse in silence for years in order to succeed in their marriages.

One area that British war brides bound for Ontario did not think they would have to develop a strategy to cope with was the question of language. While most Ontarians and British war brides spoke English, differences in accents and terminologies were common between the two groups. Before even arriving in Canada the Canadian military and voluntary organizations had argued that British brides needed to make their language more Canadian. The *Canadian Cookbook for Brides* and the IODE pamphlet "Kith to Kin" contained examples and corrections of how Canadians spoke including but not limited to the following: radio not wireless, movie not cinema, apartment not flat, long distance call not trunk, and molasses not treacle.⁷⁴⁸ Despite the lectures and materials teaching Canadian terms and ways of speaking, some women found the transition difficult. One bride recalled how she struggled learning and switching her English terms

⁷⁴⁸AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 6, 11-2; CTA, Fonds 2, Series 607, File 200 "WW2C," Division of Women's Voluntary Services, *Canadian Cookbook for Brides*, 2-3.

for Canadian ones, such as elevator rather than lift.⁷⁴⁹ British war brides were quick to learn that harmless words or expressions in the UK had different and sometimes scandalous meanings in Canada. In a CBC radio broadcast in 1944, war bride Jacqueline discussed how when she went to the meat market she did not know that a Sunday joint was called a roast in Canada until a new friend teased her that “no nice girl talks about a joint.”⁷⁵⁰ Numerous British war brides, and other British immigrants, found out, often embarrassingly, that in Canada to “knock someone up” meant to get them pregnant, whereas in the UK to “knock someone up” meant to wake someone up.⁷⁵¹ On the one hand the emphasis on Canadian terms and sayings could be seen as a further rejection of the colonial mentality. However, on the other hand, as made clear in the last example, these were also practical recommendations to help the women avoid social faux pas.

Some British war brides were surprised to discover that English speaking Canadians could not understand their accents. One bride from London recalled that upon arrival in Canada she had to point at the items she wished to order on a menu as the waitress could not understand her when she spoke. The bride had assumed that since Canada was apart of the British Empire she would have no troubles.⁷⁵² Scottish war bride Margaret recalled that her Canadian family often teased her for accent, resulting in her correcting it until she lost her accent altogether.⁷⁵³ In their study of English immigration to Canada post 1945, Barber and Watson noted that English immigrants were often

⁷⁴⁹Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 100-1.

⁷⁵⁰CBC, “War Brides Getting Settled – Finally,” *Mirror for Women* (17 July 1944), Radio, 01:40-02:00.

⁷⁵¹Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 100-1; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 103-4.

⁷⁵²Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 121.

⁷⁵³Jarratt, *War Brides*, 115.

frustrated by their status as “audible immigrants” – outwardly you could not tell they were an immigrant until they spoke revealing a heavy or noticeable accent or different way of speaking.⁷⁵⁴

Interviews with English immigrants who came to Canada in the postwar period show, similar to the war bride examples mentioned, that Canadians often had difficulty understanding them, leading to some English immigrants taking classes to tone down or lose their accents, in order to be better understood but also to blend further into Canadian society.⁷⁵⁵ British brides who struggled to fit into their new homes found that not only their actions but their way of speaking was being challenged. Teasing and pressure to modify or correct their accents or use of terminology added to the women’s sense of difference within their families and newly adopted country. While many British war brides never lost their accents, some women who were ostracised by the general public or pressured by their families did all that they could to lose their accents in order to fit in.

To many British war brides, a major obstacle to their attempts to assimilate into Canadian society was their status as war brides. The term war bride is itself problematic. On the surface, the term denotes women who married Canadian soldiers and came to Canada after the war’s conclusion. However, as Chapter 5 demonstrates, many Canadians associated the term, and thus the women, with the idea of man stealing.⁷⁵⁶ The term was also a constant reminder of the brides’ status as wives. Government, military, and media

⁷⁵⁴Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 102-7. Jenel Virden argues that British war brides in the US also felt othered or foreign due to their accents. Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 121-2.

⁷⁵⁵Broadfoot, *The Immigrant*, 243; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 103-5.

⁷⁵⁶A. Beverley Baxter, M.P., “London Letter – War Marriages and Divorces,” *Maclean’s*, 15 December 1944; CWM, GMAC, Eaton and Eaton, *Seeking Grace*, 25.

coverage of the arrival of British war brides in Canada often focussed on young brides, their newborns, and the reunions of the soldiers and their dependants, creating the impression that a number of the women had only recently married.⁷⁵⁷ Various brides recalled that while disembarking at Halifax a band would greet the women playing “Here Comes the Bride” or crowds would throw confetti at the women as they disembarked at the train station, again, as if the women had recently wed.⁷⁵⁸ This imagery created the impression of a new beginning and that servicemen were on the path to adjusting to civilian life – further promoting the government’s policy of a return to normalcy at the end of the war. However, most British war brides were not blushing brides, as many had been married since 1940, with some having children close to the age of 4 years old upon arrival in Canada. Even to this day, 70 years on, the women are still referred to as war brides.

The term war bride then (and to this date) denoted the women’s status as a special class of immigrant. This status marked them as not only different from other immigrant groups but also from the larger Canadian population itself. Anne Sanders, a British war guest in Canada during the war, wrote an article in 1944 in Toronto’s *Saturday Night* to British war brides on how they would grow to resent such a status. She

⁷⁵⁷CBC, “War Brides Land in Canada,” *Canadian Army Newsreel* (1 March 1944), Radio, 0:00-0:44s; CBC, “Newsreel Shows ‘A Way to a New Life’ for War Brides,” *Canadian Army Newsreel* (9 December 1944), Radio, 0:00-1:19. Listed are but a few examples of newspaper coverage and photo spreads of reunions of soldiers with their young war brides and children: “Tired British War Brides and Their Tearful Babies,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 January 1945; “Fathers Are Fun and Fascinating to Children Arriving from Overseas,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 February 1946; “Families Reunited as British Brides Arrive Here,” *Montréal Star*, 13 February 1946; “Les Femmes de Soldats Reviennent,” *La Presse* 13 February 1946; “It’s a Happy Welcome to Ottawa for Baby Cheryl,” *Ottawa Journal*, 5 March 1946; “Confetti Thrown as Brides Arrive,” *Gazette*, 7 March 1946; “Here First View of Our Toronto,” *Toronto Telegram*, 9 March 1946.

⁷⁵⁸“Confetti Thrown as Brides Arrive,” *Gazette*, 7 March 1946; CWM, GMAC, 20060167-001; Ladouceur and Spence, *Blackouts to Bright Lights*, 20-5; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 120.

argued that while at first labels afforded you an image of glamour or allure in Canada, they also created an artificial grouping of war brides (or war guests) as separate or distinct from Canadians. Sanders echoed the advice of CWB educational materials that these women needed to assimilate quickly so that instead of being introduced as a “war bride” they could be introduced as simply “Mrs. So and So.”⁷⁵⁹ According to Sanders, no longer being referred to as a war bride represented the woman’s successful settlement into Canadian society.

Saunders’ claims appeared well-founded, since many women resented or rejected being called a war bride. Victoria hated being called a war bride due to its association with man stealing, while Vera hid the fact she that was a war bride after being accosted by Canadian soldiers who questioned her dedication to her French-Canadian husband.⁷⁶⁰ The children of one British war bride recalled that their mother found the label bride inappropriate given that she had arrived in Canada with two children and a third on the way.⁷⁶¹ This dislike of the label appeared to be widespread, as a 1947 DVA cross-country survey found that one major “gripe” war brides had in Canada was being called a war bride two years after the war.⁷⁶² Complaints about the label war bride or being teased for one’s accent may appear trivial, but it is important to remember that these women were

⁷⁵⁹ Anne Sanders, “A War Guest Speaks to the War Brides,” *Saturday Night*, 1 April 1944.

⁷⁶⁰ Sandland, “Brides Say They Were Frightened at First,” *Montréal Herald*, 12 February 1946; CWM, GMAC, Eaton and Eaton, *Seeking Grace*, 25.

⁷⁶¹ Her rejection of this term continued throughout her life and her children attributed it to her never having joined a war bride organization as she grew older. Susan, Carol, and Ginny B., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 10 October 2016.

⁷⁶² Several papers referred to the women’s dislike of the label war bride by referring to their complaint as a gripe, implying that their concerns were trivial. “Most War Brides Happy but Girls Resent Label,” *Globe and Mail*, 22 May 1947; “Majority of War Brides Happy, Official Canadian Survey Shows,” *Gazette*, 22 May 1947; “War Brides Don’t Like that Title,” *Montréal Herald*, 22 May 1947.

already experiencing serious difficulties, such as hostile mothers-in-laws. As such, trivial differences between life in Canada and Britain could make the women feel even more isolated or estranged from their new families or communities.

The status of the brides as wives and mothers created an additional wedge between these women and their Canadian mothers-in-law. Prior to marriage, soldiers' DAs were allotted to their mothers. According to Magda Fahrni, the transfer of DA from mothers to new wives transformed and strained the mother-son relationship.⁷⁶³ Not only had the son's primary allegiance shifted, but so had his financial obligations. Such a transfer could be detrimental to elderly and widowed mothers who relied on their sons' DA to make ends meet.⁷⁶⁴ Fahrni argues that elderly and widowed mothers regarded this situation to be unfair as their sons' new wives tended to be healthier and more likely able to financially support themselves. These mothers also felt that they were owed some type of financial support for sacrificing their sons for the sake of the country.⁷⁶⁵

Family dynamics were undoubtedly further strained by the fact that many marriages had taken place without the consent of the family. The speed of courtships, the status of the brides as outsiders in Canada, and the failure of sons to often consult parents about their relationships created a sore spot between Canadian soldiers and their families. The criticisms and chidings British war brides received from Canadian mothers-in-law were often an attempt to assert authority in the home, as well as to show their displeasure

⁷⁶³Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 74-5.

⁷⁶⁴This letter notes that was indeed a concern for some mothers who were left in financial hardship without access to their son's DA. LAC, MSWL, MG28-I311, "Welfare Committee MSWL, 1939-45, Vol 2," Letter to Mrs. Robinson, Chairman Welfare Committee MSWL from Janet Bennett Welfare Committee, 23 May 1944.

⁷⁶⁵Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 75.

at their evolving family dynamics. For example, one war bride recalled in a poem how her mother-in-law greeted her by stating: “I am boss in my kitchen.”⁷⁶⁶ This hostile greeting reflected the mother-in-law’s attempt to assert that if they had to double up due to the housing crisis, in her house she was in charge – after all, the kitchen was considered the center of female authority within the home.

Postwar media representations and housing construction during this period emphasized the importance of the kitchen to the home and the role of the wife within it.⁷⁶⁷ In her autobiography, war bride Joan Walker recalled that when looking for houses in Québec she noticed that the kitchens were bigger than the other rooms. The housing agent explained to Joan that the large size of the kitchen was a result of the kitchen being the room “dearest to a woman’s heart. In which she spends all her time.”⁷⁶⁸ This focus on the kitchen and domestic duties was surprising to a number of British brides, as while they cooked and cleaned in the UK, they always found that they had time for shopping or socializing later in the day, but Canadian women appeared to them “exhausted from cooking and cleaning all the time.”⁷⁶⁹ Canadian women had been raised to see the private sphere of the home – and their roles as wives, mothers, and caretakers within said home – as their proper place in Canadian society.⁷⁷⁰ To some Canadian women the kitchen was

⁷⁶⁶CWM, GMAC, Eaton and Eaton, *Seeking Grace*, 27.

⁷⁶⁷Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams,” 474, 477; 86; Susan M. Hartmann, “Women’s Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War Years,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994) 85-6; Korinek, *Roughing It In the Suburbs*, 127, 131, 135, 146, 261; Campbell, *Respectable Citizen*, 25, 27-8.

⁷⁶⁸Walker, *Pardon My Parka*, 28.

⁷⁶⁹“Our 42,000 Overseas Brides... Are They Making a Success of Marriage?,” *Chatelaine*, March 1947.

⁷⁷⁰Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams,” 473-4; Pierson, “*They’re Still Women After All*,” 79-81; Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 3, 5; Christie, *Engendering the State*, 4-6, 310-312; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 166-7; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 7-8; Campbell, *Respectable Citizen*, 56, 73-5, 151, 153.

central to their sense of identity, but to many young British brides, who had engaged in various forms of war work, it was not. For example, one bride told her mother-in-law that she did not believe that women “were intended to be kitchen slaves.”⁷⁷¹

British brides also noted additional differences in social and gendered behaviour in Canada versus the UK. In an article in *Chatelaine* British war brides across Canada discussed being confused that Canadian women would promise to “call them up” but never did.⁷⁷² The author, Mary Elle Macpherson, informed the brides that in Canada telling someone you “will call them up” meant that you should slowly become friends. In the UK, telling someone you would “call them up” was considered a fixed invitation and a failure to follow up was considered rude.⁷⁷³ Joan Walker described a similar perplexing trend in social behavior when trying to host a party at her home in Val d’Or. Throughout the party, the two genders refused to mingle and kept segregating themselves in different rooms. Joan described the situation as a kind of game:

To me, after years of such parties, it is more like a game of Prisoners’ Base. An equator, or invisible line, is drawn across the room in which a party is held. At one end are the men. At the other the women. Occasionally some intrepid female, or one in whom old habits die hard, like me, finds herself at the wrong or masculine end of the room indulging in small and backchat. A silence falls and of a sudden she realizes where she is and makes a wild, mad dash back to her own end of the room, arriving among her compatriots, pale and trembling, and horrified at her own valor, to be fortified with another drink.⁷⁷⁴

From Joan’s experience in England, such segregation would result in a poor party, but this was not the case in Québec as gendered segregation at parties appeared the norm.

⁷⁷¹Ibid.

⁷⁷²Mary Elle Macpherson, “Come Up and See Us Some Time,” *Chatelaine*, August 1944, 64.

⁷⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴Walker, *Pardon My Parka*, 169.

Joan also noted similar gender segregation during a weekend fishing trip that she took with her husband and his friends. She recalled that her presence on the trip was considered odd, as women in Canada were “for the most part, left strictly at home.”⁷⁷⁵ During the weekend, her husband informed her that she would have to clean the dishes after dinner with no complaints because “in the bush a woman’s place is in the home.”⁷⁷⁵ Joan found that Canada had “far stricter” gender segregation than in England, “with none of that nice, gay comraderie” that she had experienced while serving alongside British men during the war.⁷⁷⁶

One English war bride, who eventually returned to the UK, found the differences between life in Canada and the UK to be unbearable. She argued that upon her husband’s arrival in Canada, he acted differently. The couple used to have drinks with dinner, but in Canada his parents would not allow alcohol or smoking in their home.⁷⁷⁷ Similar to the examples previously discussed, the bride was surprised to find that in Canada, men and women lived segregated lives, with men going out and women staying home to cook or gossip – the bride argued that such segregation had made Canadian women “unintelligent” as they only ever wanted to gossip.⁷⁷⁸ This English bride found that the expectations of how a woman should behave in Canada compared to the UK were restrictive and intolerable. In discussing why her marriage failed, she stated: “I guess

⁷⁷⁵Ibid., 52-3.

⁷⁷⁶Ibid., 53.

⁷⁷⁷“Our 42,000 Overseas Brides... Are They Making a Success of Marriage?,” *Chatelaine*, March 1947, 11, 52.

⁷⁷⁸Ibid.

marriage between people with different backgrounds and countries doesn't often work out, so I'm going back to where I belong.”⁷⁷⁹

It is likely that these gendered differences stemmed from urban/rural divides and differences in attitudes towards female war work in Canada versus the UK. British women who had grown up and worked in urban settings during the war had greater independence from their parents and the financial freedom to go where they liked compared to rural women. In addition, some British women had a less rigid conception of gender roles due to their war service – as they worked alongside British men in industries that had been male-dominated before the war. While Canadian women, especially urban women, engaged in war service – working in factories, farms, and in various forces of the Canadian military – their service had not been mandatory as it was in Britain.⁷⁸⁰ Further, Canadian government officials and the general public were initially quite hostile to women entering into the workforce, arguing that such work would make them mannish or lead to the disintegration of the family unit.⁷⁸¹ As a result, Canadian women were bombarded with propaganda that reinforced the temporary nature of war work and the importance of appropriate gender roles following the war's conclusion – i.e., wives and mothers in the home.⁷⁸² Although similar propaganda existed in the UK, the pressing

⁷⁷⁹Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰Pierson, “*They're Still Women After All*,” 14, 142, 144-6; Gossage, *Greatcoats and Glamour Boots*, 34-6; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 3-4.

⁷⁸¹The Canadian government and military did not want women to enter the military and only did so after Canadian women began mobilizing themselves and the British government began to put pressure on the Canadian government to recruit women to release men for military service overseas. Also, while Canadians were hostile to women in war services, especially in Québec, attitudes did begin to turn favorably near the war's conclusion as a result of the hard and good work of women in the services. Ibid.; Ibid., 30-2, 34-6; Ibid., 5, 31, 64; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 146, 175.

⁷⁸²Pierson, “Women's Emancipation and the Recruitment of Women,” 141; Pierson, “*They're Still Women After All*,” 14, 142, 144-6; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 207-8, 215.

need for female labour in the UK, and the resulting *National Service Act*, caused a larger bending of gender roles and interactions in the UK than in Canada – leading some British war brides to feel disconnected from the emphasis on the home in Canada.

Adaptational issues left many British war brides homesick for the UK. Canadian magazines and newspapers blamed this homesickness on the women's inability to fully settle into Canadian life, as the housing shortage – to be discussed in the next chapter – prevented them from establishing their own homes.⁷⁸³ Living with in-laws, especially in isolated communities, contributed to a brides' sense of homesickness.⁷⁸⁴ Feelings of loneliness were often exacerbated by boredom. War bride Ivy described her initial time in Canada as full of boredom, loneliness, and homesickness, until she was able to find a part-time job and make her first Canadian friend.⁷⁸⁵ Similarly, war bride Doris alleviated her boredom by finding a job. While the job gave her purpose, she and her husband had different schedules and she recalled crying from loneliness on her first day off.⁷⁸⁶ War bride Pat tried to combat her homesickness by joining the English-Scots-Welsh-Irish Clubs (ESWIC) in Ottawa but she eventually stopped going since it only seemed to make her homesickness worse.⁷⁸⁷ Another war bride described her homesickness in Canada; "Homesickness hits you below the belt. It sneaks up on you in a song, a line of poetry or a

⁷⁸³"War Brides Need Said Good Housing," *Montréal Herald*, 16 May 1945; "Majority of War Brides Happy in Canadian Life," *Globe and Mail*, 27 September 1946; "Our 42,000 Overseas Brides... Are They Making a Success of Marriage?," *Chatelaine*, March 1947.

⁷⁸⁴As was seen in the case of war bride Elizabeth, abuse at the hands of her mother-in-law, coupled with social isolation left Elizabeth deeply depressed and homesick. Jarratt, *War Brides*, 126-7.

⁷⁸⁵CMI at Pier 21, S2012.475.1.

⁷⁸⁶"Our 42,000 Overseas Brides... Are They Making a Success of Marriage?," *Chatelaine*, March 1947, 79.

⁷⁸⁷Wicks, *Promise You'll Take Care of My Daughter*, 151.

smell. Burning leaves and newly-cut grass brings tears to my eyes, reminding me of our garden and my dad tending it.”⁷⁸⁸

Some British brides addressed their homesickness by taking a trip to the UK shortly after arriving in Canada, in what became known as the \$1,000 cure.⁷⁸⁹ Often, they described their visits as making it easier for them to live in Canada. English war brides Ivy and Beatrice recalled feeling more settled after visiting their families.⁷⁹⁰ While another woman recalled that “the ordeal of saying goodbye to her parents” again was enough reason for her to stay in Canada.⁷⁹¹ For these women being able to see their families so soon after leaving for Canada alleviated some of their depression and reinforced their resolve to make a life for themselves in Canada. However, it is important to keep in mind that these women were privileged in being able to return to the UK so soon after arriving in Canada, since travel restrictions in the period and the cost of the trip were beyond the means of most war brides and their husbands. Few women returned home in the 1940s and 1950s.

Most British war brides who did visit the UK did so in the 1960s and 1970s after years of saving up the money to travel. While these women looked forward to their trips, many found that their nostalgic memories of home were dashed, as the country they had known had changed drastically in the 20 odd years they had been gone. One bride

⁷⁸⁸Similarly, in a poem in *Chatelaine*, war bride Janet described looking for markers of home: searching for country lanes and moors only to find checkerboard fences and maple trees or trying to listen for familiar accents like a “brogue or Scottish burr” to no avail. Craig-James, “Thoughts of a British War Bride,” *Chatelaine*, February 1945, 39; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 124.

⁷⁸⁹Marilyn Barber and Murray Watson also discuss how the \$1000 cure was common among English immigrants in general. Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 129-31.

⁷⁹⁰CMI at Pier 21, S2012.475.1; CMI at Pier 21, S2012.1514.1.

⁷⁹¹Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 128-30.

recalled feeling disappointed going back home to London in 1972, with her first impression of the famous streets and underground being one of dirt.⁷⁹² Another war bride recalled being disappointed at the landmarks that had disappeared and the primrose lanes replaced by traffic laybys.⁷⁹³ Irish war bride Evyleen recalled that when she returned to Ireland 22 years later it had been too long; all of the people she had known had died or moved away.⁷⁹⁴ One bride who visited England once her children had grown up, found that the England of her childhood had “vanished.”⁷⁹⁵

Brides who were disillusioned at how the UK had changed from their memory of it, were still lucky enough to have been able to go in the first place, since many did not get the chance or could not afford to return “home.” The son of one war bride recalled how his mother had always wished to return to Scotland one day, but was sadly unable to do so.⁷⁹⁶ The thought of being unable to return home or never seeing one’s family again was often the main cause of war bride homesickness – a fear that proved quite founded as many brides never saw their families again after leaving the UK. For example, the parents of English war brides Olive, Dorothy, and Rene passed away shortly after these women arrived in Canada.⁷⁹⁷ Even those war brides lucky enough to return to England at some point and time, often returned after their parents had already passed on. War bride Marion

⁷⁹²Ibid., 131.

⁷⁹³Ibid. A traffic layby is a place at the side of a road where a vehicle can stop for a short time without interrupting other traffic.

⁷⁹⁴CMI at Pier 21, 98.11.23EF, Evyleen F., audio oral history conducted by Shelley Miller, 23 November 1998, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

⁷⁹⁵Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 131-2.

⁷⁹⁶Dennis H., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 28 October 2016.

⁷⁹⁷CMI at Pier 21, 07.08.10DS; Janet B., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 2 October 2016; Susan, Carol, and Ginny, Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 10 October 2016; Campbell, *Shattered Dream*, 80.

was unable to return to England until 1968, and sadly recalled how a friend of her mother's informed her that her mother used to say: "I know Marion will be home this year" – Marion's mother passed away before Marion returned to England.⁷⁹⁸ Though some war brides' parents came to visit their daughters in Canada, and a few lucky brides' parents immigrated to Canada, most majority of these women last saw their parents as they boarded their ships to Canada.⁷⁹⁹ One war bride who had not returned to England explained that she did not wish to go back, stating: "It is simply that England is not the England of my recollections. Times, people and places change. There's no going back."⁸⁰⁰ For many war brides the UK could not live up to the nostalgic memories of home that they had built up in their minds.

Homesickness, loneliness, and boredom that were often exacerbated by differences in language, religion, and gender expectations, as well as hostile in-laws, shaped British war brides' settlement experiences and adaptation to Canadian life in varying ways – some in positive ways and some in negative ways. Some women created strategies to adapt to differences in life in Canada by working with their in-laws to learn a new language or finding a job to fill their time and make Canadian friends. Some war brides even came together at war bride clubs in Toronto and Montréal to share their stories and provide comfort to one another. Welsh war bride Morfydd recalled that several brides from French-Canadian hubs in Montréal would visit the Acorn Club as a refuge to address feelings of isolation and alienation.⁸⁰¹ However, brides in isolated

⁷⁹⁸Latta, *The Memory of All That*, 143.

⁷⁹⁹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 111, 120, 132, 154.

⁸⁰⁰Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 125.

⁸⁰¹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 88.

communities did not always have the same coping mechanisms available to them as women in more urban areas. Many war brides did settle into happy homes and had welcoming families to help them overcome settlement differences. However, many also did not. Initial settlement experiences of British war brides were complex and varied. The situation for many of these women was often worsened by their inability to start a home of their own, having to share overcrowded dwellings with in-laws who were not always keen on their presence. But in the postwar period a home of one's own was difficult to find.

Chapter 8 – “Where is the Home I Left Before I Went Overseas?”: The Effect of the Housing Crisis on British War Bride Marriages in Ontario and Québec

In 1945, Mrs. A.E. Hatfield of the YWCA wrote to Col. Clarke objecting to soldiers and their brides living with their in-laws: “I greatly fear that few marriages will have a chance to survive unless action can be taken to give the British brides an opportunity to start their marital lives in a home of their own unhindered and unhampered by the interference of relatives.”⁸⁰² However, in the midst of a national housing crisis returning soldiers and their new brides often had little choice but to double up with their in-laws.⁸⁰³ Due to this crisis, these couples, many of whom had married after a short period of courtship and had been separated throughout the war, had to reacquaint themselves, and in some cases meet their children for the first time, while living with their in-laws.

Canadian government and military officials, as well as voluntary organizations across the country, believed that relations between Canadian in-laws and British war brides could sour easily if homes were overcrowded or in-laws were antagonistic to the incoming bride.⁸⁰⁴ Such living conditions could also strain marriages, especially when a Canadian soldier had been less than truthful about his social class background. Those couples who could not or would not live with servicemen’s parents often had few alternatives due to housing shortages and expensive rents. The lack of available and

⁸⁰²LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, “Army - Repatriation Dependents Canadian Army Personnel in Canada Social Service, 1945-1947” [hereafter cited as A-RDCAPCSS, 1945-7], Letter to Col. F.W. Clarke from Mrs. A.E. Hatfield, Chairman War Services Rooms Registry Committee YWCA, 23 May 1945.

⁸⁰³Doubling up was a common working-class strategy for when families fell on hard times, especially during the Great Depression. If a relative or close family friend had lost a job, the families would usually double up living space to try and support each other.

⁸⁰⁴Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 65, 73-4.

affordable housing led to some returned veterans and their families being evicted from their homes. In extreme cases, they invoked squatter rights by taking over abandoned buildings. The housing situation shocked British war brides who had been promised a land of prosperity by the CWB. Couples navigating the stagnant housing market learned that making a home for oneself in the postwar period could be quite difficult.

This situation was long in the making. As early as 1931, Canada had fallen behind in housing and building accommodations, especially in comparison to the UK whose active housing policy during the Great Depression made Canada's appear "slight by contrast," resulting in overcrowding in Canadian cities.⁸⁰⁵ Unemployment and the reduced incomes of the Great Depression, the movement of peoples from rural to urban centres for war work, and the need to conserve war materials, all exacerbated a pre-existing housing crisis in Canada.⁸⁰⁶ The 1944 findings of the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction (the *Curtis Report*) estimated that of 27 major Canadian cities almost one-fifth of them were overcrowded, with Toronto and Montréal having the most overcrowded dwellings [Appendix 1 – Chart 1.6].⁸⁰⁷

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s Canada attempted to address its housing situation through legislation, beginning with the *Dominion Housing Act (DHA)* of 1935,

⁸⁰⁵Canada, Advisory Committee on Reconstruction (chaired by C.A. Curtis), *Final Report of the Subcommittee – Advisory Committee on Reconstruction: IV. Housing and Community Planning* [hereafter referred as the *Curtis Report*] (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1944), 9, 33; Blair Fraser, "Hovels for Heroes," *Maclean's*, 15 October 1945, 63.

⁸⁰⁶The *Curtis Report* was created to review existing legislation and administration related to housing throughout Canada, in order to consider an adequate housing program for Canada following the war. Canada. *Curtis Report*, 95; Jill Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947: Canadian Housing Policy at the Crossroads," *Urban History Review* Vol. XV, no. 1 (June 1986): 4, 42, 44.

⁸⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 89, 93; *Ibid.*, 42-4.

which aimed to revive the building industry. It would be replaced by the *National Housing Act (NHA)* of 1938, which itself was amended in 1940 and 1944. According to John Weaver and Michael Doucet, the 1935 *DHA* was significant not for its effect on housing – the *Curtis Report* argued that the use made of the *DHA* was “disappointing” – but because it set a precedent for defining a role for the federal government in Canada’s housing sector.⁸⁰⁸ The 1938 *NHA* further expanded the government’s role, as the National Housing Administration in the Department of Finance operated the *Act*.⁸⁰⁹ The 1938 *Act* encouraged home ownership by having the government guarantee loans, making mortgage insurance more readily available, especially in smaller or remote areas where lending institutions tended not to approve loans.⁸¹⁰ Part II of the *Act* also represented the first time that the federal government recognised social housing as an ongoing concern, since it authorized providing loans for the construction of low-income rental projects.⁸¹¹ However, it was not used, being difficult to implement.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁸Canada, *Curtis Report*, 27; O.J. Firestone, *Residential Real Estate in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), 481; John Weaver and Michael Doucet, *Housing the North American City* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 128-9; Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 11.

⁸⁰⁹W.C. Clark, the deputy Minister of Finance (who had helped draft the 1935 *DHA* and 1938 and 1944 versions of the *NHA*), designed the *Acts* to stimulate the building of new homes by working in close consultation with representatives of mortgage lending institutions.

⁸¹⁰Canada, *Curtis Report*, 27-8; Firestone, *Residential Real Estate in Canada*, 482-4; John R. Miron, *Housing in Postwar Canada: Demographic Change, Household Formation, and Housing Demand* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988), 8, 242-3.

⁸¹¹*Ibid.*

⁸¹²Part II of the *Act* heavily burdened the provinces by making them guarantee municipal efforts, as well as made building unattractive to municipalities as they could only tax the housing projects at 1% of the value of construction costs. Canada, *Curtis Report*, 27-8; Wade, “Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947,” 46; Weaver and Doucet, *Housing the North American City*, 128-9; Jill Wade, *Houses for All: The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver, 1919-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 101; Harris, *Creeping Conformity*, 11. John Bacher argues that such measures greatly discouraged use of the legislation, and the *Curtis Report* noted that when provinces and municipalities applied part II of the legislation, progress was slow, due to difficulties in plan preparation and acquisition of sites, with numerous projects left uncompleted at the advent of the war, leading to no housing being built under the provision. John Bacher,

The influx of workers, servicemen, and their families into cities to meet wartime needs further intensified Canada's housing crisis to the point that it was considered a "detriment to the war effort."⁸¹³ As a result, Ottawa amended the *NHA* in 1940 to further promote home ownership, as well as provide emergency measures to regulate the housing market.⁸¹⁴ For example, the Wartime Housing Limited (WHL) was created in 1941 to provide inexpensive rental accommodations and build prefabricated structures for war workers and veterans.⁸¹⁵ That same year the government also established the Advisory Committee on Postwar Reconstruction to develop a housing plan for the country following the war's conclusion.⁸¹⁶ Government intervention in the housing market came through new controls on construction, materials, rent, and evictions. A new Wartime Trade and Pricing Board (WTPB) also established a rental board to set rates and adjudicate landlord-tenant disputes.⁸¹⁷ Such intervention was necessary as overcrowding and a lack of available accommodations were so severe during this period that most people in Montréal and Toronto rented rather than owned their dwellings. They paid an average of \$36 in rent a month in Toronto and \$26 in Montréal [Appendix 1 – Chart 1.7].

"W.C. Clark and the Politics of Canadian Housing Policy," *Urban History Review* Vol. 17, no. 1 (June 1988): 8.

⁸¹³Bacher, "W.C. Clark and the Politics of Canadian Housing Policy," 9; John Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 129.

⁸¹⁴Wade, *Houses for All*, 5, 95, 116.

⁸¹⁵Canada, *Curtis Report*, 35; Weaver and Doucet, *Housing the North American City*, 128-9; Harris, *Creeping Conformity*, 11.

⁸¹⁶Additional government measures followed, such as the *Veterans Land Act of 1942*, which allowed veterans to purchase land (of their own choice) with the help of government loans, with additional funding for livestock and equipment. Firestone, *Residential Real Estate in Canada*, 487; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 274-5.

⁸¹⁷Wade, *Houses for All*, 116; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 82.

Landlords across the country took advantage of housing shortages to increase rent rates, even on run down properties or undesirable locations. *Maclean's* reported that one apartment building charged \$30 a month for two unfurnished rooms, with eight families sharing a single bathroom. In another case, one family living in a basement apartment had its rent increased from \$5 to \$60 a month.⁸¹⁸ Some landlords abused the housing crisis further by cutting people's power and heating to force out poorer and elderly tenants who could not pay higher rates.⁸¹⁹ The WTPB and eviction freezes aimed to stop such behaviour; however, landlords continued to take advantage of the housing crisis as many tenants would not approach the Board fearing reprisals and being unable to find anywhere else to live.⁸²⁰

Worse, the 1944 findings of the *Curtis Report*, revealed that despite its wartime efforts, Canada remained behind in building accommodations. Its authors recommended a housing program of "large dimensions" across the country funded by both private and public means.⁸²¹ In response, the Canadian government created the 1944 *NHA* which reaffirmed the loan method found in earlier versions of the Act, made mortgage money more widely available, and introduced the Integrated Housing Plan, under which the

⁸¹⁸Fraser, "Hovels for Heroes," *Maclean's*, 15 October 1945, 5, 63. The article also includes a story of a landlord bullying a veteran into spending \$500 for the furniture in the apartment even though there was none. The House of Commons debates includes discussion of a similar situation, as well as another landlord forcing tenants to pay \$500 for the key to their accommodations. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 2nd Session, Vol. 1 (1946): 185-6.

⁸¹⁹Wade, *Houses for All*, 113.

⁸²⁰Fraser, "Hovels for Heroes," *Maclean's*, 15 October 1945, 5; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 83.

⁸²¹The report argued this building should focus on "home ownership, home improvement, slum clearance, low-rental projects, and rural and farm housing" – with special attention given to low-rental and farm housing. Canada, *Curtis Report*, 9; Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 41; Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace*, 169, 170.

federal government provided joint loans for veterans' dwellings.⁸²² Although helpful, the government focused on a postwar program that "promoted private enterprise and home ownership" to the neglect of low-income housing.⁸²³ Such a policy did not help the larger victims of the housing crisis, low income earners and their families. Instead it reflected the Canadian government's focus on policies and legislation centered around veteran rehabilitation.⁸²⁴ So, while Canadian housing production had become more regulated, co-ordinated, and better financed, building in the immediate post-war period remained limited with scarce resources, resulting in the housing crisis continuing into the 1950s.⁸²⁵

The mass movement of British war brides and their dependants between 1942 and 1948 added to Canada's housing crisis. These women soon experienced the effects of the crisis, with government officials and voluntary organizations reporting many cases of them living in unsuitable accommodations, ranging from being overcrowded to downright unsanitary.⁸²⁶ D. Gordon, Chairman of the WPTB, wrote to Ian Mackenzie, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, that there were no living accommodations available in the major cities, with homes in the areas being heavily congested and unsatisfactory. This meant

⁸²²Canada, *National Housing Act*, S.C., 1944, c. 46; Firestone, *Residential Real Estate in Canada*, 491-4; Wade, *Houses for All*, 101; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 85-6.

⁸²³Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 41.

⁸²⁴In addition, deputy Finance Minister Clark encouraged government aid to home building for the wealthy and opposed low cost subsidized rental housing believing it encouraged "lethargy" in the poor. Clark did not want the Canadian government to become landlords, and believed that the best way to address the crisis, as well as unemployment issues, was to encourage the private sector to build with finance coming from banks and insurance companies. Bacher, "W.C. Clark and the Politics of Canadian Housing Policy," 7; Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace*, 24, 121; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 75.

⁸²⁵Weaver and Doucet, *Housing the North American City*, 128-9, 132; Harris, *Creeping Conformity*, 116-9; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 86-7, 91-3.

⁸²⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," Letter to Dr. James J. McCann, Minister of National War Services from Finley McRae, President of the Canadian Red Cross Society, 27 April 1945; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, "1903 HCR," Letter to N.D.H.Q. from Mavis Reed, Ladies Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Engineers, 15 March 1945; "War Brides Need Said Good Housing," *Montréal Herald*, 16 May 1945.

that the WPTB would be under “heavy pressure to meet distress cases of servicemen’s families.”⁸²⁷ In the House of Commons, Donald M. Fleming (Progressive Conservative Eglington) noted that the government had not met the housing problem, but had merely “taken adequate measures to cope with it,” resulting in veterans and their families “living in hovels, garrets or cellar basements.”⁸²⁸ Fleming considered such conditions to be unacceptable given the soldiers’ service to their country and felt that the housing crisis could also explain why veterans were having a difficult time finding employment, as they were struggling to find a place for their families to live.⁸²⁹

A number of politicians, churches, and voluntary organizations grew concerned that if nothing was done to address the housing crisis then failed wartime marriages would result.⁸³⁰ The Québec provincial committee of the Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse argued that the scarcity of housing in Québec was, “one of the primary causes of the evils which eat away at the family.”⁸³¹ Likewise, Norman J. M. Lockhart (Progressive Conservative Lincoln) argued that the housing crisis led to marriage separations.⁸³² This anxiety surrounding the effect of the housing crisis and doubling up on postwar marriages

⁸²⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Ian Mackenzie, Minister of Veterans Affairs, from D. Gordon, Chairman Wartime Prices and Trade Board, 10 April 1945.

⁸²⁸Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 2nd Session, Vol. 1 (1946): 185-6.

⁸²⁹*Ibid.*

⁸³⁰For example, in a letter to Secretary of State Paul Martin, Vincent Massey, the Canadian High Commissioner to London, argued that the housing crisis would only further accentuate the settlement and adjustment problems faced by servicemen and their families. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, “CWB – Policy 1,” Letter to Secretary of State from Massey, 20 April 1945. As noted in earlier chapters, these groups also feared that the failure of veterans to settle into postwar civilian life could lead to dissatisfaction like the kind of unrest seen in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. Wives were seen in as essential to the success of soldier’s resettlement, thus the concern about failed marriages.

⁸³¹Canadian Youth Commission. UdeMSA, ACC, P16 04/52, “Commission Canadienne de la Jeunesse Comité Provincial du Québec,” *Mémoire sur la Famille*, 194?, 7.

⁸³²Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 3 (1945): 3302.

was encapsulated in a 1947 cartoon published in *Chatelaine* [Appendix 2 – Image 2.21]. It depicts a bride and groom before a preacher, with a concerned look on his face. He reads their vows, “*In sickness and in health and through all current shortages ...?*”⁸³³ Such issues concerned the Council for Social Service of the Anglican Church so much that it presented a resolution to the Federal Government that: “British brides and their husbands constitute a very special group of young people who must be established in a happy and effective family basis at once if they are to avoid the danger of future economic, social, and marital difficulties.”⁸³⁴

However, as noted by Mrs. A.E. Hatfield, Chairman of War Services Rooms Registry Committee YWCA, and the Local Council of Women of Montréal (LCWM), houses and apartments were not only difficult to find, but were also priced outside the reach of servicemen’s incomes.⁸³⁵ This meant that soldiers and their families often had no other choice than to stay with in-laws, even if their living arrangements were unsuitable. The housing situation was particularly bleak in Toronto and Montréal. A public meeting on housing in Montréal in June 1943 revealed public health concerns over the housing situation, as families paid good money to live in temporary accommodations in stores, warehouses, garages, sheds, and “dwellings condemned by the City’s Department of Health.”⁸³⁶ In 1944, Dr. J.C. Flanagan, Chairman of the Social Service Committee of the

⁸³³Cartoon, “In sickness and in health and through all current shortages ...?,” *Chatelaine*, March 1947, 49.

⁸³⁴“War Brides Need Said Good Housing,” *Montréal Herald*, 16 May 1945.

⁸³⁵LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, “R-DCAPC-SSP,” Letter to Clark from Hatfield, 23 May 1945; BAnQ V-M, MCW, P653, container 1, “Fifty-Fourth Year Book and Annual Report, 1947-1948,” Mrs. A.C. Barbara Morton, “Report of the Housing and Town Planning Committee, 1947-48,” August 1948.

⁸³⁶BAnQ V-M, MCW, P653, container 5, “Minutes, 1943,” Copy of a Resolution Passed at a Public Meeting on Housing Held in Montréal on June 23 1943. Miss Kerry reporting on the housing conditions in

Diocese of Montréal, believed that the housing situation in Montréal required immediate action. He wrote to T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, pleading for the building of low rental dwellings for soldiers and their families “in the interests of humane and just treatment of these new Canadian citizens.”⁸³⁷ By 1947, the situation had not improved as the LCWM reported that four hundred veteran families lived in Montréal’s emergency shelters. This, he argued, demonstrated the “crying need” for low cost housing. Contractors responded by telling him it was “out of the question” considering the inflated price of building materials and labour and the need for government subsidies and co-operation among the federal, provincial, and municipal governments.⁸³⁸

Toronto’s housing situation was not much better, with half of its returning veterans having no place to live, leading the city to respond to the influx of war brides with “alarm.”⁸³⁹ The *Globe and Mail* reported that British war brides could be seen walking the streets of Toronto with their infants in their arms looking for homes, agreeing to pay what they could not afford, and living in places not fit for them to live in.⁸⁴⁰ In the House of Commons, Fleming reported that Toronto’s Department of Welfare noted an 18% increase in family applications for accommodations. This had happened in just three

Montréal to the Montréal Council of Women, reported similar living conditions in 1945. BAnQ V-M, MCW, P653, container 5, “Minutes, 1945,” Minutes, March 1945.

⁸³⁷LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10401, “SCF,” Letter to T.A. Crerar from Dr. J.C. Flanagan, Chairman, Social Service Committee of the Diocese of Montréal, 11 November 1944.

⁸³⁸BAnQ V-M, MCW, P653, container 1, “Fifty Third Year Book and Annual Report, 1946-1947,” (Mrs. A.C.) Barbara Morton, Chairman, “Report of the Housing and Town Planning Committee, 1947-1948,” August 1947.

⁸³⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq 3 3,” Letter to F.H. Nicholas from D.A. Clarke, CWB, 25 April 1945; LAC, Privy Council Office Fonds, RG2-B-2, Vol. 99, “Rehabilitation and Demobilization – Veterans’ Housing – Rehabilitation Information Committee, 1945-1947,” Rehabilitation Information Committee Press Survey on Rehabilitation for February 1946.

⁸⁴⁰“War Brides, Seeking Homes, Adds to Housing Problem,” *Globe and Mail*, 12 April 1944.

months.⁸⁴¹ British war brides were also not exempted from the harsh tactics of landlords, as one bride had to find a new place to live since she was expecting a child only to learn that her landlady “won’t stand for children,” since it could scare away potential renters.⁸⁴² Accommodation problems were so common that Muriel Tucker of Toronto’s Welfare Council wrote to Major J.H. Neeland that many war brides came to the attention of its various agencies because of the city’s poor living conditions.⁸⁴³

F.W. Clarke noted that while voluntary services assisted in dealing with adaptational issues and finding homes for servicemen and their wives, the degree of the crisis made the task “extremely difficult.”⁸⁴⁴ Voluntary organizations grew increasingly frustrated with the government’s handling of the crisis. In its report on housing and town planning, the LCWM found Montréal’s housing conditions for veterans and their families to be “appalling.” Regarding the government’s handling of the situation, it wrote that the “problem had become a football tossed between the Federal and Municipal governments,” with voluntary organizations trying to toss the ball in the right direction.⁸⁴⁵ Similarly, in Ottawa Finley McRae, President of the Canadian Red Cross Society, argued that the severity of housing conditions required immediate government attention.⁸⁴⁶ He suggested removing female members of CWAC, Women’s Royal Canadian Naval Service

⁸⁴¹Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 2nd Session, Vol. 1 (1946): 185-7.

⁸⁴²“War Brides, Seeking Homes, Adds to Housing Problem,” *Globe and Mail*, 12 April 1944.

⁸⁴³LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Major J.H. Neeland, Major, from Muriel Tucker, Assistant, Welfare Council of Toronto, 14 March 1945.

⁸⁴⁴*Ibid.*, Memo – Dependents from Overseas Settlement Arrangements and Priorities by Clarke, 14 March 1945.

⁸⁴⁵BAnQ V-M, MCW, P653, container 1, “Fifty First Year Book and Annual Report, 1944-1945,” Miss Elizabeth Fisher, Chairman, “Report of the Committee on Housing and Town Planning,” September 1945.

⁸⁴⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” Letter to McCann from McRae, 27 April 1945.

(WRCNS), and the Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Airforce (WD RCAF) from their "excellent accommodation" to fix the situation. He argued that offering female servicewomen homes while soldiers' wives suffered would be a "black eye to Canada in its responsibility to these new citizens."⁸⁴⁷

McRae's comment reveals a great deal about gender norms in Canadian during and after the war. To him, like many others, a British war bride, the wife of a serviceman, and thus a mother, or potential mother, of future Canadians, was more entitled to the accommodations available in Ottawa than a Canadian servicewoman. His reasoning had many layers. The British brides were the wives of Canadian soldiers – in patriarchal terms the property of Canadian men – and ought to be treated with respect, since a failure to do so was disrespectful to the soldiers. A British bride who had children had fulfilled her normative gender role of wife and mother, a role that the Canadian government promoted both during and after the war, and thus was more worthy than a single Canadian servicewoman. In fact, the Canadian government, military, and society had resisted the very idea of Canadian women serving in the military in the first place, believing it to be man's work and that such service would make the women masculine. While Canadian women served in Canada's military, both it and the state considered this a temporary situation, to fill absent male roles; when absent men returned it would change.

Such attitudes towards Canadian servicewomen are fascinating, since like Canadian servicewomen, British women who had engaged in various forms of war service faced similar pressures and challenges at the war's end. In both countries women

⁸⁴⁷Ibid.

who had worked during the war and wished to continue do so afterward had few alternatives. After the war the Canadian government cut funding for childcare, pushed employers to hire male veterans over women, and denied women access to jobs within the civil service.⁸⁴⁸ Women in Canada faced limited employment opportunities, and both the state and public at large viewed those who did not conform to gendered ideals as being morally unfit or pitiable.⁸⁴⁹ Of this scenario, Joan Sangster has argued that women in the postwar period had to look at their situations and determine what “was possible, preferable, or impossible” for them to achieve.⁸⁵⁰ Some women were forced out of the workforce and into the home, while other women, including British war brides, exhausted from years of depression and war, found the idea of domesticity to be appealing.

Nowhere was the message of domesticity and home ownership more apparent than in the Canadian magazines distributed to the brides by the CWB in the UK. Articles in *Chatelaine* and *La Revue Moderne* emphasized the importance of planning, building, and decorating homes [Appendix 2 – Images 2.22-3].⁸⁵¹ *Chatelaine* advised that it was a

⁸⁴⁸Porter, *Gendered States*, 37-42; Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl*, 203; Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 18, 20-1

⁸⁴⁹Judith Butler has argued that gender binaries are often so imbedded into the public consciousness that any deviation or failure to perform in a manner “considered appropriate to one’s gender” is often met with punishment. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 178-9; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 166;

⁸⁵⁰Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 18.

⁸⁵¹The following are a sample of a few of the articles focussed on housing and decoration in *Chatelaine* and *La Revue Moderne*: John Caulfield Smith, “Choosing a Homesite,” and Frances Steinhoff Sanders, “Preparing the Setting,” *Chatelaine*, April 1945; John Caulfield Smith, “Oh! Half Dormers!,” *Chatelaine*, May 1945; John Caulfield Smith, “Individuality in a Planned Community,” *Chatelaine*, July 1945; “A House for Holidays,” *Chatelaine*, August 1945; John Caulfield Smith, “Can You Afford Home Ownership,” *Chatelaine*, November 1945; John Caulfield Smith, “A House with its Gardens,” *Chatelaine*, May 1946; John Caulfield Smith, “Québec’s Holiday Houses,” *Chatelaine*, February 1947; Kenneth J. McArdle, “Rajeunissant Le Foyer,” and “L’Immortelle Catalogne,” *La Revue Moderne*, Juillet 1944; “Rafraichissez,” *La Revue Moderne*, Mai 1945; Cyrille Felteau, “Intérieur et Personnalité,” *La Revue Moderne*, Mars 1946.

“woman’s job to create the home within a home.”⁸⁵² These magazines, as well as CWB lectures, tended to avoid discussing the housing crisis. The closest they came to addressing it was to advise women and their husbands to be patient and rent while waiting for homes to be built, telling them not to purchase a home beyond their means or risk eviction.⁸⁵³ CWB lectures and Canadian magazine articles tended to focus on encouraging domesticity by inundating British war brides with images of postwar prosperity tied to conceptions of breadwinning husbands and homemaking wives.⁸⁵⁴ Women who read *Maclean’s* magazine would get a more realistic depiction of the housing situation in Canada. Yet, the number of its articles about housing – only 2 between 1945 and 1949 compared to *Chatelaine’s* 11 articles published between 1945 and 1947 – were minimal. This meant it was easy for British war brides to come away with a more positive view of Canada’s housing situation than it warranted.⁸⁵⁵

Unlike their wives, Canadian soldiers received more realistic information about the state of housing in Canada. Their paper, *Maple Leaf*, covered the crisis extensively, meaning the soldiers were well apprised about the lack of suitable homes and overcrowding in major Canadian cities.⁸⁵⁶ For example, it reported that Toronto had a

⁸⁵²Smith, “Oh! Half Dormers!,” *Chatelaine*, May 1945; Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 131, 135, 141, 260-1.

⁸⁵³Smith, “Can You Afford Home Ownership,” *Chatelaine*, November 1945.

⁸⁵⁴Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 131, 135, 141, 260-1.

⁸⁵⁵Fraser, “Hovels for Heroes,” *Maclean’s*, 15 October 1945; Blair Fraser, “Houses, Houses, Where are the Houses,” *Maclean’s*, 1 March 1949. See footnote 851 for list of articles on housing in *Chatelaine* between 1945-7.

⁸⁵⁶“More Housing Problems,” *The Maple Leaf – Italy*, 15 January 1945; Major R.K. Beamish, “But It’s Tough Finding Any Castles,” *The Maple Leaf – Italy*, 15 February 1945; “Survey Shows Lack of Housing,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 1 August 1945; “Canadian Housing Problem has Homeless in Desperate State,” *The Maple Leaf – England*, 4 October 1945; “Housing Picture for Vets Still Overseas Not Bright,” *The Maple Leaf – Germany*, 17 December 1945.

wait list of roughly 5,000 unfilled housing applications, and that in Montréal countless servicemen and their families were “practically homeless,” with at least 1,000 people in quarters in urgent need of repairs.⁸⁵⁷ It is hardly surprising that so many Canadian servicemen chose to double up with their parents, seeing it as the most practical solution during the housing crisis. But, the practice of doubling up had unintended consequences, as it often revealed class disparities between the families of newly married couples.

In some cases, the “humble homes” that servicemen had described to their British brides turned out to be “shacks.”⁸⁵⁸ The CRC reported that a Mrs. Marentette in Windsor was living in accommodations well below her social standing back in England. The Red Cross Liaison Officer felt that if given the chance Mrs. Marentette would make a good citizen, “in spite of a lot of disappointment in her husband’s family.”⁸⁵⁹ Shortly after her arrival in Canada, Mrs. Frances moved to her own accommodations after finding her in-laws’ home in Verdun was overcrowded and littered with bed bugs and lice.⁸⁶⁰ While her social background is not known, considering her judgement of the conditions of her in-laws’ home, she likely came from a home of some means. The condition of her in-laws’ home led Mrs. Frances to state that “Canada was not nearly as advanced as England.”⁸⁶¹

Brides from a working or poorer class background also saw class social disparities in Canada. Scottish war bride Margaret, and English war bride Joan, recalled being

⁸⁵⁷“Housing Picture for Vets Still Overseas Not Bright,” *The Maple Leaf – Germany*, 17 December 1945.

⁸⁵⁸LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Memorandum to CMHQ stamped H. Neeland for A.E. Walford, Major General, Adjutant General, 15 January 1945; “Nylons, Bananas, Dresses, Pears, Fill First Day of War Bride Here,” *Gazette*, 7 March 1946.

⁸⁵⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10329, “CWB – Enq 3 3,” Letter to Browne from Crompton, 15 March 1945.

⁸⁶⁰LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to N.D.H.Q. from Reed, 15 March 1945.

⁸⁶¹*Ibid.*

shocked by the lack of indoor plumbing, electricity, gas, and water on farms in both Ontario and Québec.⁸⁶² Margaret recalled that she had thought that she had lived humbly in Scotland until she saw her in-laws' home in Canada.⁸⁶³ In a poem war bride Victoria described her new living conditions: "Being THE ONE gives her a rosy glow; keeps her warm when the coal furnace fails, water freezes in the pipes and snow drifts in under the door, none of which was mentioned in the little booklet welcoming ' _ _ _ brides' to Canada."⁸⁶⁴ The shock of these women regarding Canadian living conditions is unsurprising, since while still experiencing shortages in some parts of the country, the *Curtis Report* noted that housing construction and living standards in the UK outpaced Canada.⁸⁶⁵ As a result, a number of British brides found their accommodations in Canada to be less than satisfactory, since even poorer and working-class Britons had had access to indoor plumbing and electricity in the UK.

Couples also faced urban-rural disparities, as many British war brides who had grown up in cities found themselves living on farms in Canada. War bride Marion, who had grown up in an industrial city, found it difficult to adjust to living on a farm and barely being able to see her neighbours' lights several miles away.⁸⁶⁶ Edna from Liverpool found herself on a farm with never-ending chores, while Edith from London

⁸⁶²Jarratt, *War Brides*, 74, 114.

⁸⁶³*Ibid.*, 114.

⁸⁶⁴CWM, GMAC, Eaton and Eaton, *Seeking Grace*, 25.

⁸⁶⁵In 1919 the UK had begun slum clearance and housing construction to raise standards of living, and ensured that every home had bathrooms and good sources of water. Canada, *Curtis Report*, 9, 33-4, 39-43, 49-50, 59.

⁸⁶⁶Latta, *The Memory of All That*, 142.

ended up on a farm outside Chatham helping take care of chickens.⁸⁶⁷ While these brides successfully transitioned to their new way of life, their recollections make clear that upon their arrival in Canada life on a farm was a drastic departure from how they were used to living. For some brides this departure was too great. The marriage between city girl Ellen and her Canadian husband failed, with Ellen attributing the failure to her “intellectual and cosmopolitan background in Europe.”⁸⁶⁸ In other words, she considered herself too well educated and sophisticated to live and work on a farm.

Many British war brides became disenchanted with Canada as a result of their living conditions. Mrs. L.W. Haslitt, President of the Acorn Club of Montréal, reported that British brides found the living conditions in Canada “hard to appreciate in a land that has remained remote from the actual devastation of war.”⁸⁶⁹ An article in *Maclean's* reported that some war brides had stated that they would “rather live in rubble in England than some of the houses in Montréal.”⁸⁷⁰ Canadian soldiers also expressed dissatisfaction with the living situation in Canada, with one telling the magazine that “bombing or no bombing he can find a better place to live there than here.”⁸⁷¹ Considering that the

⁸⁶⁷CMI at Pier 21, S2012.792.1, Extract from Memoir of Edna S., England; CMI at Pier 21, S2012.1989.1, Extract from Memoir of Edith W., arrived from England, 23 May 1945.

⁸⁶⁸“Our 42,000 Overseas Brides... Are They Making a Success of Marriage?,” *Chatelaine*, March 1947, 53, 78.

⁸⁶⁹“War Brides Disillusioned, ‘Ranches’ Are Only Flats,” *Montréal Herald*, 17 May 1945. A memorandum from the DND noted that some brides expressed the sentiment that: “we would not have come out so soon if it had all been explained to us clearly.” LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Memo to CMHQ stamped Neeland for Walford, 15 January 1945.

⁸⁷⁰“Cross Country – Québec,” *Maclean's*, 15 August 1945.

⁸⁷¹BANQ V-M, MCW, P653, container 1, “Fiftieth Year Book and Annual Report, 1943-44,” Mrs. Thain Naraby, “Report of the Migration Committee, 1943-44,” September 1944; Fraser, “Hovels for Heroes,” *Maclean's*, 15 October 1945, 63; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, “1903 HCR,” Letter to DND HQ from F. Danylchuk, 3 March 1947; LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5220, “1903 HCR,” Letter to Sir from Mavis Flanagan, n.d.

Canadian government and military had spent a large amount of time, money, and effort into educating British brides on Canada to ensure the brides and their husbands came to Canada as opposed to staying in the UK, one would think that it would be disturbed by these accounts, but it appeared unphased. Having moved the servicemen and their dependants to Canada, they were no longer responsible for them. Considering the cost to travel overseas and the continued priority shipping of returned servicemen and goods, only a small portion of Canadian servicemen and their British brides could afford to return to the UK. As a result, the Canadian government had little reason to be concerned about a mass exodus of servicemen and their dependants to the UK.

Since only wealthy couples could afford to return to the UK, most Canadian servicemen and their British wives had no choice but to stay in Canada and navigate the housing crisis. According to the MSWL, in 1945 the severity of the housing situation had begun to negatively affect the morale of returning soldiers and their families.⁸⁷² Mrs. Fallis noted that upon her arrival in Toronto, Canada had appeared like a “a promised land” with its abundance of food and clothing, but that image had been shattered following her family’s eviction from their home.⁸⁷³ Such events worsened the morale of Canadian servicemen and their British war brides with the threat of their living on the streets. Often there was no alternative.⁸⁷⁴ Public “agitation” surrounding the housing

⁸⁷²LAC, MSWL, MG28-I311, Vol. 1, “Housing Report, 1942-45,” MSWL Housing Report, 29 January 1945.

⁸⁷³“War Bride Finds Canada Laws Daft After She’s Evicted from Own Home,” *Globe and Mail*, 4 February 1947.

⁸⁷⁴Fraser, “Hovels for Heroes,” *Maclean’s*, 15 October 1945, 5; Wade, “Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947,” 46.

crisis and evictions resulted in the government freezing evictions, but the order did not come in time for everyone, and evictions continued throughout the war.⁸⁷⁵

The *Gazette* reported considerable “disillusionment and defeat” in the eyes of two war brides and their families. They, along with 16 other families (72 children in total), had been evicted from a building belonging to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They took the building over as squatters.⁸⁷⁶ Patrick Pichette, Canadian veteran, husband, and father, told the paper of how they wanted to pay rent for it but were not allowed, since the owners wanted them out. The *Gazette* reported that since the families had no where else to go, they decided to sleep and live just outside the building.⁸⁷⁷ The disillusionment of Pichette, a man who had spent five years serving in the Canadian military was palpable. He asked, “Where is the home I left before I went overseas?”⁸⁷⁸

In Ottawa the situation was no better. There 21 veterans and their families with no where else to live invoked squatters’ rights by taking over the Kildare barracks located across the street from Laurier House, the home of Prime Minister Mackenzie King. A week earlier, the newly formed Veterans Housing League had marched on Parliament Hill to plead the case of housing for 27 families, but to no avail. Twenty-one of those families took part in the occupation of Kildare barracks.⁸⁷⁹ Quite simply, they were fed up

⁸⁷⁵Ibid., 6; Wade, *Houses for All*, 5; Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace*, 174-5.

⁸⁷⁶A squatter action refers to when a person(s) occupy a building or location that they do not own, pay rent, or have permission to use. “Two English War-Brides Watch Sheriff Move Household Effects,” *Gazette*, 16 July 1947.

⁸⁷⁷Ibid.

⁸⁷⁸Ibid.

⁸⁷⁹CBC, “WWII Soldiers Arrive Home – To No Home,” *CBC Radio News* (5 September 1946), Radio, 01:18-35 secs.

with the “red tape and procrastination of officialdom.”⁸⁸⁰ Like the Montréal squatters, the Ottawa families made clear that they were willing to pay rent for their accommodations. However, the veterans at Kildare barracks argued that the price of rent should be based not on the space occupied, but upon their ability to pay the rent, which they argued should not exceed 1/5th of their families’ income.⁸⁸¹

Though the Veterans Housing League and Mayor Stanley Lewis had announced that housing would be available “soon” for the families squatting in Kildare barracks, three years later 34 families were still squatting there. Like the case in Montréal, they were evicted in 1949, after having water and power shut off for over the course of a month.⁸⁸² At the time of eviction 4 of the 34 families had found housing, paying monthly rents of around \$75-85.⁸⁸³ In both Montréal and Ottawa, the squatter veterans and their families were disappointed and disillusioned by a lack of action on the part of the government. They took matters into their own hands to provide accommodations for their families – accommodations that they believed they were entitled to because of their war service.⁸⁸⁴ Their anger and disappointment appeared commonplace as *Maclean’s* reported that one welfare worker had stated: “Don’t quote me, but I think the boys are going to tear

⁸⁸⁰Ibid., 01:02-10 secs.

⁸⁸¹Ibid., 01:44-02:12 secs.

⁸⁸²“Find New Units for 22 Families in Kildare House,” *Globe and Mail*, 18 September 1946. It is unclear how many of the 34 squatter families were part of the original 21 families that had taken possession of the barracks in 1946. “Squatters Squeezed: Threaten to Shut Off Barracks’ Light, Water,” *Globe and Mail*, 22 August 1949; “10 Families Stay in Barracks Home; Await Eviction,” *Globe and Mail*, 2 September 1949.

⁸⁸³Bearing in mind that the average monthly income was reported at \$127 a month, their rent comprised roughly 60% of their monthly income. Ibid.; CBC, “WWII Soldiers Arrive Home – To No Home,” *CBC Radio News* (5 September 1946), Radio, 1:52-02:03 secs; “Report Evicted by Kildare Guard,” *Evening Citizen*, 2 September 1949.

⁸⁸⁴“War Brides of Ex-Pow’s Expected but Husbands Are Without Homes,” *Gazette*, 12 January 1946; “Épouses de Guerre Qui S’en Retournent,” *La Presse*, 31 October 1946; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 34-6, 41, 44, 65, 73-4; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 29.

the lid right off if this situation goes on much longer. And – don't quote me – I can't say I blame them.”⁸⁸⁵

Since Canada was physically untouched by the war, British war brides had assumed that Canadian living conditions and housing would be better than what they had experienced in bombed out Britain. So, they were shocked by the housing shortages, overcrowded and unhygienic homes, and the high rent rates in Canada. So most Canadian servicemen and their families opted to double up with their in-laws. While some in-laws were welcoming and helped their new daughters-in-law settle into their new lives in Canada, other in-laws were cold and unhelpful, and in some instances cruel and abusive. Since living on one's own was not an option, many couples felt that the strain of living with their in-laws was preferable to facing eviction or having to squat. Up until the early 1950s, British war brides and their husbands who wished to build a home of their own, found that their dreams would have to be put on hold. While some women dreamt of the days when they could build their own home, other British war brides found themselves facing additional challenges in the postwar period that made their lives more akin to a bad dream.

⁸⁸⁵Fraser, “Hovels for Heroes,” *Maclean's*, 15 October 1945, 65.

Chapter 9 – “Are You Going to Hit Her or Am I?”: The Darker Side of the War Bride Fairy Tale

Modern retellings of fairy tales have tended to erase or soften their darker side. Similarly, historical accounts of British war brides have focussed on “romantic reunions” and dismissed darker traumatic experiences in Canada as the minor trials and tribulations experienced by only a few women.⁸⁸⁶ The challenge of transitioning from military to civilian life was not always as smooth as government authorities or media sources had suggested, since some soldiers returned home affected by battle exhaustion – what would be diagnosed today as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Due to social stigmas surrounding mental illness at the time, some soldiers self-medicated, often resulting in addictions and violence directed at their wives.⁸⁸⁷ British war brides who endured psychological and physical abuse from their partners or were abandoned in Canada, often had little recourse, since discussing spousal abuse was taboo and divorce was stigmatized, costly, and each province had its own laws on the matter. To further complicate things, Canada’s and Britain’s governments abrogated their responsibility to the brides, expecting them to deal with matters on their own or to turn to local voluntary organizations for help. For these women reuniting with Prince Charming did not mean the start of a fairy tale life, but rather perils and monsters to combat in a land far away from the people they loved.

⁸⁸⁶Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion,” 187; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 25-6; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 128-8; Campbell, *Shattered Dream*; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*, 3; Wicks, *Promise You’ll Take Care of My Daughter*, 212; Young, “It’s Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today,” 107.

⁸⁸⁷War brides, as well as Canadian wives.

Not all servicemen, or their new families, returned to Canada unscathed by the war. Battle exhaustion, referred to by various names in the period, including shell shock, shattered nerves and battle neurosis, was difficult to diagnose and treat. Military doctors could not understand or explain why some soldiers suffered battle exhaustion in combat while others did not.⁸⁸⁸ Advancements in diagnostics and treatments of neuropsychiatric disorders from the First to the Second World War were limited. As a result, Canadian military officials saw it less as an illness in need of medical treatment and more as an issue of morale to be overcome through discipline, will power, and punishment.⁸⁸⁹ Thus, military doctors focussed upon conserving manpower by getting men back to the front as soon as possible and ridding themselves of difficult cases.⁸⁹⁰ While the Canadian military employed psychiatric doctors during the war to study and treat soldiers, their services ended at the war's conclusion. Canadian authorities' postwar demobilization and rehabilitation plans centered around providing education, homes, and jobs for returning servicemen, not psychiatric treatments or supports.⁸⁹¹ DVA programs provided financial

⁸⁸⁸Terry Copp and Bill McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Canadian Army, 1939-1945* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 153; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 270-1; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 81; Adam Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured: Psychological Trauma in the Canadian Military from the First World War to Afghanistan* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 17-8.

⁸⁸⁹Terry Copp, "From Neurasthenia to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Canadian Veterans and the Problems of Persistent Emotional Disabilities," in *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* ed. Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 150; Robert C. Engen, *Strangers in Arms: Combat Motivation in the Canadian Army, 1943-1945* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 147-8; Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured*, 53.

⁸⁹⁰Copp and McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion*, 149-50; Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured*, 54-5.

⁸⁹¹It is important to note that mental illness was still not well understood by the medical community and was heavily stigmatized by society in general. Treatment for mental health in the twentieth century ranged from speaking with your doctor about your problems to shock therapy. In extreme cases lobotomies were implemented. Thus, some Canadian soldiers may not have wished to speak with a medical professional even if the government had retained medical services to treat veterans after the war. LAC, Canada, Department of Veterans Affairs, *Back to Civil Life: Prepared to Inform Members of the Armed Forces and*

support to soldiers with war-related physical disabilities, not psychiatric ones. But even this support was often temporary, unless government authorities ruled that the soldier had a permanent physical disability requiring assistance for life. Government authorities believed that financial support would only lead to dependence, and that a soldier's successful integration back into civilian life rested on his ability to support himself and his dependants.⁸⁹² Because military and civilian doctors and government authorities did not understand how to diagnose and treat neurological ailments, and tended to see them as evidence of cowardice, the DVA typically denied veterans suffering from neuropsychiatric ailments pensions until 1959.⁸⁹³

Many authorities in this period believed that the best way to support veterans with psychological ailments was to turn to the family as a center of postwar healing. They advised families to ignore the potential long-term consequences of mental trauma, advising that and if one had to discuss the issue, to handle it with humor.⁸⁹⁴ Information provided to the parents and wives of soldiers often toned down the severity of common types of war-related trauma, like shell shock. In 1945, the popular radio program, the CBC's *The Soldier's Return*, told parents and wives that while war changed people, it did not irreparably damage them:

I suspect almost everyone has heard of the term 'shell shock.' It is no more a medical diagnosis than are army terms such as 'bomb happy,' 'barrack whacky,' 'convoy jitters,' and so on. For there has been so much publicity given to these psychiatric casualties that people are apt to become unduly worried and alarmed

Canadians Generally of Steps Taken for Civilian Rehabilitation of Those Who Served (Department of Veterans Affairs, 1945), 4; Copp and McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion*, 157-8.

⁸⁹²Ibid., 47.

⁸⁹³Terry Copp, "From Neurasthenia to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," 153-4; Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 270-1; Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured*, 18, 70.

⁸⁹⁴Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 64, 81.

about them. The vast majority of these men are not suffering from any permanent serious disability. The nervous system has not been damaged. They can and do recover completely. Their subsequent re-adjustment to civilian life need not be affected at all by their experience.⁸⁹⁵

Regarding men appearing to be “unstable,” the CBC commentator argued that they could still find civilian jobs and advised wives and families to be patient and understanding, but not to be too sympathetic, since doing so could create the impression that the soldier had a permanent disability.⁸⁹⁶ The advice contained in *The Soldier's Return* framed shell shock and other neurological ailments as being either non-existent or not severe enough to be of any meaningful concern. However, by also discussing how to treat soldiers who appeared “unstable,” and stating that men, “can and do recover,” the program contradicted itself by admitting that something could be wrong with returning soldiers; though it never clarified what the issue was if shell shock was not the problem.

This emphasis on toning down or dismissing the mental health conditions of soldiers reflected the Wartime Information Board's (WIB) larger attitudes about postwar soldier re-adjustment. In a letter to Colonel H.M. Hague, Army Adviser Discharge Affairs, one representative of the WIB, secretary G.C. Andrew, outlined its measures taken in 1945 to disseminate information to the families of servicemen about the needs of soldiers in postwar Canada. In addition to the CBC's *The Soldier's Return*, Andrew discussed the series of four pamphlets that the WIB created, as well as its new radio

⁸⁹⁵The program aimed to provide information to help families re-establish servicemen and women back into civilian life at the war's end. The radio talk was so popular that a digest of the series was published and released to the public. LAC, CBC, *The Soldier's Return: A Digest of the Series Broadcast on the CBC Trans Canada Network* (Toronto: A Publication of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1945), 9-10, 23.

⁸⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 23-4, 26.

program, “The Johnny Home Show,” to help treat “the problems” of service and civilian adjustment “good naturedly.”⁸⁹⁷ Andrew pointed to a new film script – the script and author were not identified – that had been turned down for “stressing too much the abnormal rather than the normal psychological problems of adjustment.”⁸⁹⁸ He concluded that he personally felt more could be done in the way of “good natured humorous treatment of adjustment problems” in order to avoid the more “obvious difficulties.”⁸⁹⁹

The tendency of authorities, such as the WIB and CBC, to dismiss or tone down the mental health issues of returning soldiers, was not based on callousness but rather social stigmas surrounding mental illness at the time.⁹⁰⁰ In addition to doctors not understanding how to diagnose or treat battle exhaustion, its varied symptoms were often associated with hysteria – a psychological disorder where stress manifested in physical symptoms (e.g., extremes of emotion) – an illness that was attributed to women.⁹⁰¹ The idea that a soldier, the epitome of masculinity and patriotism, could suffer from battle exhaustion, challenged conceptions of traditional gender constructions, since men were supposed to be strong and reasonable, while women were expected to be weak and hysterical.

Worse, if a soldier were psychologically unwell then he could not fulfil his gendered duties as a husband, father, and breadwinner. In the eyes of the state this meant

⁸⁹⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, “Social Science Repatriation, Social Problems General, 1944-1945” [hereafter cited as SSR, SPG, 1944-5], Letter to Colonel H.M. Hague, Army Adviser Discharge Affairs, from G.C. Andrew, Secretary, WIB, 27 April 1945.

⁸⁹⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰⁰Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured*, 11, 15, 18.

⁹⁰¹Mark S. Micale, *Hysterical Men: The Hidden History of Male Nervous Illness* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 5-7, 280-1; Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured*, 11-2, 35.

that he would become dependant on it for support, much in the same way that women were dependant on their husbands.⁹⁰² Such gendered constructions, deeply embedded in Canadian society, influenced medical attitudes towards the diagnosis and treatment of battle exhaustion.⁹⁰³ Historian Adam Montgomery argues that by the end of the Second World War general consensus held that “every man had his breaking point.” However, government and medical authorities still shamed these veterans, painting them as “shirkers” of their masculine duties.⁹⁰⁴ Since battle exhaustion was not well understood and associated with cowardice and laziness, Canadian authorities focussed their efforts on areas of soldier rehabilitation that they could control: provide jobs, education, and homes to prevent the veteran unemployment that happened after the First World War. The state expected soldiers suffering from battle exhaustion to turn to their families for support.

This strategy ignored the psychological effect of the war on war brides – an issue that has not been addressed in the current historiography. European and Asian war brides endured years of military service, bombings and occupation, in some cases losing their homes, neighbours, family and friends. In her autobiography, British war bride Olive recalled how the neighbour’s son was killed in a bombing shortly after offering his shelter to her and her sister.⁹⁰⁵ Olive, who had already been traumatized by one bombing

⁹⁰²Nancy Christie argues that Canadian government welfare policies from 1900-1945 reinforced gender roles, specifically the male breadwinner, by privileging male wage earners, and diminishing the importance of the work of women. Christie, *Engendering the State*. Ann Porter also argues that gender was central to the construction of the postwar welfare state and privileged male breadwinners over female workers. Porter, *Gendered States*, 37-9.

⁹⁰³Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured*, 18, 61-2

⁹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 18, 57-8, 66-7

⁹⁰⁵Campbell, *Shattered Dream*, 19-20.

incident, recalled how she and her family were once asked to help dig through the rubble of another for survivors:

We joined the other few people who were rummaging through the bricks looking for any sign of life, and limbs started showing up. As I was digging I was praying that I would not have to remove limb parts. I wanted to be able to help someone who was still alive. We kept digging down with our bare hands.⁹⁰⁶

After three hours of digging the search was called off.⁹⁰⁷ Clearly, this experience unsettled Olive and became etched into her memory. Another British war bride, Rene, recalled how the earth would shake when the bombs landed and how people started living by the policy of “what will be will be.”⁹⁰⁸ The trauma of these wartime experiences often followed these women and their children to Canada. Two of Rene’s daughters, both born in England during the war, were frightened by thunderstorms and fireworks in Ontario, as the loud noises and flashes of lights seemed “very much like the bombs and rockets that came down on London.”⁹⁰⁹ Similarly, British war brides in Burlington reported to the *Hamilton Spectator* that they detested fire sirens, since they vividly reminded them of their experiences during air raids.⁹¹⁰

Very few anthologies of British war bride reminiscences contain accounts of such trauma. These accounts are rarely discussed, or if they are mentioned, the women quickly shift into a discussion of happier times, a tactic which likely was a coping mechanism for them. As discussed in Chapter 2, Canadian military authorities and the CWB believed that these experiences allowed these women to better understand their husbands’ war

⁹⁰⁶Ibid., 23.

⁹⁰⁷Ibid.

⁹⁰⁸Memoir of Ed and Rene, private collection.

⁹⁰⁹Susan, Carol, and Ginny B., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 10 October 2016.

⁹¹⁰“Burlington Fire Siren Unpopular with War Brides,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 26 April 1946.

experiences. War brides were expected to put aside their own psychological problems in order to help their husbands manage theirs for the good of the family, since it considered their own mental health to be less important in comparison. These women had to deal with their trauma on their own, with their families an ocean away and with no guarantee of support from their new Canadian families. Historians have overlooked the traumatic war experiences of war brides, be they British, Dutch, or German – an issue that can only be briefly mentioned here.

The best-case scenario for couples dealing with battle exhaustion was for them to communicate and support one another. Some soldiers did just that and were very open about their condition and how they were trying to take care of themselves. For example, in 1945 Canadian soldier Frederick wrote to his British bride Vera to explain why he had asked to be demoted from a sergeant to a driver in Italy:

A man can only last so long in the actual front-line sweets. I'm not trying to frighten you darling but I am trying to give you the explanation that I feel is due to you. If a chap stays in the front line one of three things will eventually happen to him, that is if he stays there long enough. First he will sooner or later get careless if he does or I should say when he does he will get himself knocked off. Secondly through the fortunes of war he will get smashed up. Lastly from the continual strain his nerves will go.⁹¹¹

Frederick explains that since the recent killing of his driver next to him, his nerves had started to go. He asked to be demoted so that no one would see him “crack” under pressure.⁹¹² Frederick wanted his wife to understand what he was experiencing during the war. He also wanted to combat the idea that he was a coward, as evidenced by his

⁹¹¹Letter to Vera from Frederick T., 6 June 1945, private collection.

⁹¹²Ibid.

implored her to talk to his friend George and his father (both of whom had served in the military) since they would tell her the same thing.⁹¹³ Frederick's justifying his reason for taking a demotion provides a glimpse into how a soldier viewed battle exhaustion. He makes the case that soldiers "cracking" was not about cowardice but "continual strain" and that losing one's "nerve" was common. However, his wording suggests that having your fellow soldiers see you "crack" was an embarrassing or shameful thing, so shameful that Frederick would rather be demoted than be seen to "crack." Considering that Canadian government and military authorities associated battle exhaustion with cowardice or low morale, Frederick's justification for his decision is telling.⁹¹⁴

Often soldiers, idealized as being stoic and brave by the general population, did their best to combat accusations of cowardice by presenting themselves as fine or normal, even if they were not. This idea of the pressure placed on soldiers to present themselves as unchanged by their war service is encapsulated in a poem published in *Chatelaine*, Katherine Morrill's "They're Back." It begins with someone commenting on Canadian soldiers returning from war as being "back intact."⁹¹⁵ The author then describes the men as she sees them:

I strained to see them, as they passed, these men, intact. A scar went by, a jagged mark cutting crookedly across a face. A limp kept up the pace with difficulty. Deep-sunken eyes looked out and up; below, lips ... chewed like gum. No trembling now, head high, step proudly, you're a soldier, man, a veteran. Chew those lips hard! No tears ... no tears ... no tears You're a soldier, man ...⁹¹⁶

⁹¹³Ibid.

⁹¹⁴Frederick was not looking to shirk his duties – as drivers still faced the risk of injury or death – but rather wished to put himself in a position where he could better tend to his mental health.

⁹¹⁵Katherine Morrill, "They're Back," *Chatelaine*, December 1945, 42.

⁹¹⁶Ibid.

The author's description conveys the idea that these returned soldiers are neither fine nor intact, but rather physically and mentally scarred. She draws attention to the societal expectation placed on them to be patriotic and stoic, and to hide their pain by emphasizing that the soldiers must refrain from crying and "chew those lips."⁹¹⁷ Many saw emotional displays as undermining or tarnishing the masculinity associated with military service. Due to the association of battle exhaustion with cowardice, the taboo of mental illness, the difficulty acquiring a pension if diagnosed with battle exhaustion, and the pressure to embody masculine ideals of the period, most soldiers did not share or discuss their traumatic war experiences with their wives or families. Instead many choose to manage their conditions alone. This could be a difficult task as the symptoms of battle exhaustion varied and often affected the day-to-day lives of the soldiers and their families.⁹¹⁸

Despite soldiers' best efforts to hide or dismiss their conditions their wives could often tell that something was wrong. Several British war bride accounts contain the statement: "he wasn't the same man I married" – i.e., their husbands' war experiences and trauma had changed them.⁹¹⁹ War bride Henrietta recalled that once discharged in Canada her husband seemed a different man than the one she had known in England. Though he never physically abused her, he did psychologically, by being argumentative and making

⁹¹⁷Ibid.

⁹¹⁸Symptoms can include violent outbursts, irritability, insomnia, nightmares, and being easily startled by loud noises. Jeffrey Keshen argues that many soldiers returned home with neurological ailments, though totals are difficult to pin point as many soldiers went undiagnosed and others concealed or dismissed their symptoms. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 270; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 81.

⁹¹⁹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 79; Sangster, "The Meanings of Mercy," 28.

her feel that she should never have come to Canada to be with him.⁹²⁰ To Henrietta, her loving husband returned from the war cantankerous and distant. This kind of experience was not confined to war brides, as Canadian wives noted similar changes in the behaviour of their husbands.⁹²¹ While some soldiers returned distant, others soldiers managed their war trauma by self-medicating through booze.⁹²² In a discussion of struggling war bride marriages in Toronto, Reverend Fred Smith of Toronto's Queen Street United Church attributed drinking as the cause of marriage breakups.⁹²³ The child of one war bride recalled that his father became a heavy drinker following his service on the front line in Italy. He attributed this drinking, which was difficult for his mother, to his father suffering from undiagnosed PTSD.⁹²⁴

In some cases, soldiers with untreated battle exhaustion abused their wives and children – war brides and Canadian wives. The Montréal Acorn club reported on the case of a quarrelsome couple, whose husband had been discharged for nerves. A regimented auxiliary member referred to that case as “hopeless.”⁹²⁵ The Ladies Auxiliary of Montréal's Royal Canadian Engineers reported that a Mr. Hill beat his wife and child.⁹²⁶

⁹²⁰Jarratt, *War Brides*, 79.

⁹²¹It is not always possible to determine if a soldier's behaviour after the war was a result of their war service and subsequent trauma, hasty marriages, addiction or mental health issues that predated the war. The individuals mentioned in this section equated the soldier's behaviour or change in behaviour to their war service.

⁹²²Soldiers returning from the First World War also turned to alcohol to self medicate or mask their trauma. Montgomery, *The Invisible Injured*, 75.

⁹²³He cited the example of one family which had five sons who “were alcoholic victims.” “Five U.K. Brides in Toronto Having Marital Troubles,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 5 March 1946.

⁹²⁴Dennis H., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 28 October 2016.

⁹²⁵In another case, it observed that a bride, an expectant mother, was found crying on her apartment steps but had refused to disclose her problems to them. LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, Vol. 66, “A-RDCAPCSS, 1945-7,” Report of Acorn Club Activities, March 1941-June 1944, 194?

⁹²⁶LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5218, “1903 HCR,” Letter to the National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ), Department of Repatriation, from the Ladies Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Engineers, Montréal, 15 March 1945.

A letter to the secretary of the DND, J.C. Murchie, Chief of Staff CMHQ, described one particularly violent instance of spousal abuse when discussing the case of a missing discharged soldier in Toronto. The man had served during the war and had been placed in a mental institution twice, before being discharged for “nerve and mental trouble.”⁹²⁷ His condition was so severe that he attacked his wife with a meat chopper just four weeks before their wedding. This led Murchie to advise that the bride to try and get a divorce to “be free of such a nightmare.”⁹²⁸

Extreme cases of abuse could lead to the death of either spouse. In 1948, an abused British war bride, Jean Kelly McAllister, murdered her husband, John, in Lindsey, Ontario. Upon her arrival in Canada, Jean suffered several unfortunate circumstances, including becoming ill, having a hysterectomy, and her husband becoming increasingly violent toward her. The abuse became so severe that she shot and killed him.⁹²⁹ In the early stages of her murder trial, Jean’s in-laws portrayed Jean and John’s marriage as happy. It was only during the trial, when the extent of Jean’s abuse became clear that John’s parents admitted that their son’s mental state had changed since the war.⁹³⁰ Families commonly hid, denied, or accepted instances of domestic violence. Consider the example discussed in Chapter 7, Scottish war bride Margaret’s father-in-law asking her husband: “Are you going to hit her or am I?”⁹³¹ The father-in-law saw violence as a

⁹²⁷LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10334, “CWB – UK 1 2,” Letter to Secretary DND from J.C. Murchie, Chief of Staff CMHQ, 15 November 1945.

⁹²⁸*Ibid.*

⁹²⁹Alen Barris, “Cursed, Beaten, Hated, War Bride Tells Jurors,” *Globe and Mail*, 5 November 1948; Joan Sangster includes a similar discussion of this case and sources in “The Meanings of Mercy.”

⁹³⁰Sangster, “The Meanings of Mercy,” 523

⁹³¹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 115.

corrective measure to teach Margaret her place within the family. Since domestic violence was considered acceptable, or in extreme cases, such as Jean's, ignored or not discussed out of shame, women in abusive relationships had few options and limited support structures.

For many abused women, divorce in this period was not readily secured. Mainstream Canadian society discouraged and disapproved of it, since the social and economic stability of the nation was popularly perceived to be tied to family cohesion and adherence to gendered roles.⁹³² The nation's major Christian religions did not condone divorce, with church officials often advising wives to stay in troubled marriages for the stability of the family unit.⁹³³ The nation's media sources also promoted the importance of women toughing it out in a troubled marriage. Many articles in *Chatelaine* stressed that a wife's job was to make the marriage work. Adele Saunders, in her article "Divorce in Canada," laments the days when marriage was considered sacred, life-long, and children were not "uprooted" from a "normal family life," after noting a rise in divorce rates since 1918.⁹³⁴ Worse, articles published in *Chatelaine* blamed women if a marriage was failing or experiencing troubles. In "A Note to Brides," Ruth MacLachlan Franks argued that too many brides set high standards that their husbands could not meet.⁹³⁵ The author of

⁹³²James G. Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991), 27; Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*, 73; Christie, *Engendering the State*, 311-2; Iacovetta and Korinek, "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker," 191, 194; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 71.

⁹³³Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*, 32-3, 40-1; Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*, 54, 73; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 71.

⁹³⁴Adele Saunders cites that in 1918 there was one divorce for every 500 marriages, whereas in 1943 there was one divorce for every 23 marriages. Saunders, "Divorce in Canada," *Chatelaine*, April 1945, 10-1.

⁹³⁵Ruth MacLachlan Franks, "A Note to Brides: Don't Delay Parenthood," *Chatelaine*, May 1946.

“Housewives are a Sorry Lot,” accused Canadian housewives of nagging, being lazy, expecting too much from their husbands, and never being satisfied.⁹³⁶ While in “For Better... for Worse,” Dorothy Dix stated that women needed to take their husbands, “as is,” and urged them to not be a “matrimonial quitter.”⁹³⁷ These articles reinforced the notion that the only way a marriage could succeed was for the wife to overlook her husband’s flaws and to keep her complaints and needs to herself – if she did not then she would be the reason for her marriage’s failure. Thus, women in Canada faced intense pressure to not only marry but ensure the success of their marriage, regardless of their own happiness and circumstances – even if they were experiencing abuse.

Acquiring a divorce in Canada was neither easy, nor was it always possible, up until the 1960s. In the 1940s, Canada’s divorce legislation was complicated and far more restrictive than Britain’s.⁹³⁸ Initially, marriage and divorce laws were provincial matters, each having different legislation. By Confederation divorce statutes fell under the jurisdiction of the federal government.⁹³⁹ Access to divorce depended on legislation that each province created before 1867. However, not all provinces had such legislation. For example, the *Civil Code* of Québec did not permit divorce.⁹⁴⁰ If a couple wished to divorce, they had to petition the federal government to receive a parliamentary divorce –

⁹³⁶Grey, “Housewives are a Sorry Lot,” *Chatelaine*, March 1950.

⁹³⁷Dorothy Dix was a popular and widely read American journalist and columnist. Dix, “For Better... For Worse,” *Chatelaine*, May 1944, 9.

⁹³⁸AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 22-3; Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*, 9; Aysan Sev’er, *Women and Divorce in Canada: A Sociological Analysis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 109.

⁹³⁹Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*, 49.

⁹⁴⁰AO, PAMPH 1944 #19, *From Kith to Kin*, 22-3; Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*, 49; Sev’er, *Women and Divorce in Canada*, 108.

a process both expensive and time-consuming.⁹⁴¹ Worse, adultery was the only acceptable grounds for divorce at this time.⁹⁴² The immorality associated with adultery meant that couples who acquired parliamentary divorce could face social stigma and ostracization. To work around this outdated and restrictive system, some couples acquired divorces in the US or in Europe. Yet, these divorces were not legal in Canada; if either partner tried to remarry in Canada, they could face charges of bigamy.⁹⁴³

Some Canadian couples bypassed divorce by living separate lives. In extreme cases, some people abandoned their spouses and children.⁹⁴⁴ Abandonment of one's family was a serious issue, since it typically caused severe financial hardship for abandoned wives and their children. At this time, women faced an uphill battle; their labour outside the home was discouraged and did not receive equal pay to men. Many women found it difficult to support themselves, let alone their dependants. Since abandonment was not considered grounds for divorce, an abandoned wife would have difficulty starting over, unless she was willing to face the social stigma of living in sin with a new partner. Abandonment or desertion was particularly problematic for war brides since without support from their husbands or new in-laws, they were left stranded in a new and foreign country with no family, place to stay, or way to support themselves.

⁹⁴¹Couples had to petition the government at least eight days before the opening of Parliament and pay the costs for the entire process (i.e., parliamentary fees, solicitor fees, etc.). Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*, 50-1; Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 71.

⁹⁴²Non-support, desertion, or abuse were not considered acceptable causes for divorce in Canada at this time. Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*, 36, 170; Sev'er, *Women and Divorce in Canada*, 110.

⁹⁴³Ibid., 227-8; Ibid.

⁹⁴⁴Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 73.

According to reports sent to the DND and DBT by Wing Commander G.W. Dunn, Canadian servicemen abandoned their British war brides for a number of reasons: husbands skirting their marital responsibilities; accusing their spouses of infidelity; or, while appearing willing to make his marriage work, not expediting a wife's repatriation to Canada.⁹⁴⁵ In cases where the husband refused to uphold his marital duty, his British war bride could find herself alone at a train station with nowhere to go – a fear shared by many brides.⁹⁴⁶ In one sad case, a young bride, Doris, arrived in Toronto not understanding that her husband, who lived in St. Catharine's, had no intention of living with or supporting her. Newspapers reported that Doris walked 70 miles in the pouring rain to find her husband, only for him to refuse to speak to her.⁹⁴⁷ Doris eventually returned to the UK.⁹⁴⁸

While the Canadian government had paid to bring war brides and their children to Canada, it had no intention of paying for return trips – a fact that was made well know to abandoned war brides and their parents who wrote to the CWB seeking assistance.⁹⁴⁹ The government maintained that its responsibility for transporting them ended once the

⁹⁴⁵LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 DAB, Vol. 24, "D.B.T. Canadian War Orders and Regulations, 1944-5," Letter to Jack Pembroke, Chairman Dependants' Board of Trustees from W/Commander G.W. Dunn, 23 March 1945; LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 DAB, Vol. 24, "D.B.T. Canadian War Orders and Regulations, 1944-5," Memorandum to Deputy Minister DND (Army) from W/Commander G.W. Dunn, 11 July 1945; LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 DAB, Vol. 29, "CUM," Letter to the Secretary of State for External Affairs from Massey, 3 August 1945.

⁹⁴⁶Jarratt, *War Brides*, 110; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 65, 68.

⁹⁴⁷Doris did state that she had received a lift one time, but due to the intoxication of the drivers "was afraid to accept any more rides." The young bride also stated that she did not fully comprehend the distance when she started walking. The *Toronto Daily Star* reported that local police advised Doris to seek a divorce and that the CRC was doing its best to try and help her. "War Bride Plods 70 Miles in Rain, Seeking Husband," *Toronto Daily Star*, 6 May 1946; "War Bride Abandoned but in Love," *Montréal Herald*, 7 May 1946.

⁹⁴⁸"I'm Going Back to England Unclaimed War Bride Says," *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 May 1946.

⁹⁴⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, "CWB – Gen 1 5," Letter to Mrs. H.M. Call from Miss E.B. Griffin for V.N. Gill, CWB, 1 August 1946; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, "CWB – Gen 1 5," Letter to J.H. Saville from Miss E.B. Griffin for V.N. Gill, CWB, 10 August 1946.

women were in Canada.⁹⁵⁰ Before the creation of the welfare state in the postwar period, the Canadian state held that individuals were responsible for taking care of themselves, and, if needed, they could turn to voluntary or charitable organizations for support.⁹⁵¹ As well, the British government did not provide war brides assistance, since through their marriages they had become Canadian citizens and fell under the purview of its government. While some British politicians sympathized with war brides who sought a divorce in Canada, the British could not interfere in Canadian matters.⁹⁵²

Those brides in need had the option of going to the nearest British consular office to ask for help – but this would not be easy for those living in remote locations. Often, in seeking to help matters, British representatives would first “try and adjust the difference between the girl and her Canadian or American husband.”⁹⁵³ Such attempts reveal how valued marriage was in this period. If a representative was unable to reunite the couple, he could provide legal advice or funds for a trip home on the promise of repayment – which many brides and their families could not afford.⁹⁵⁴ In some cases, some brides were luckily enough to receive financial assistance from their fellow war brides in the UK. For

⁹⁵⁰The government had no legal responsibility to return these women to Britain after moving them to Canada. The issue here is whether the state had a moral duty to intervene in these cases. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, government officials had to walk a fine line or else they could be seen to be interfering in the personal lives of soldiers and their families.

⁹⁵¹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10330, “CWB – Gen 1 5,” Letter to Miss E.B. Griffin, CWB, from H.M. Call, 27 June 1946 and Letter to Call from Griffin, 1 August 1946; LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 DAB, Vol. 29, “CUM,” Memo to DAB from Code for Cathcart, 28 June 1946.

⁹⁵²UK, Parliament, *Deb*, House of Lords (HL), 5th Series, 5 October 1944, Vol. 133, cols. 393-402; UK, Parliament, *Deb*, HC, 5th Series, 24 October 1944, Vol. 404, cols. 63-94.

⁹⁵³“Will Ask Attlee to Reveal Facts on War Weddings,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 8 January 1947.

⁹⁵⁴*Ibid.*

example, the Northampton war bride club created a collection for a member who had been deserted by her husband upon her arrival in Canada.⁹⁵⁵

Some war brides found themselves abandoned before they even stepped foot on a ship. The CWB and CMHQ received many letters from British war brides who could not contact their husbands in Canada, had received no financial support, or had been told by their husbands to stay in the UK. One woman, Doris H. wrote to the CMHQ that she sought a divorce from her husband because he would not support her, she never heard from him, and she frankly had no idea of his whereabouts.⁹⁵⁶ Another woman, Mrs. Catt wrote to the CWB that her husband was discharged and wrote to her not to come to Canada as he wanted “his freedom.” She recalled that he warned that if she did come, “he would make my life hell.”⁹⁵⁷ In her case, while D.A. Clarke of the CWB sympathized with her – stating that her husband should be providing her with some support and that she was “well rid of him” based on his actions – he advised her that he could not provide her with definite information “until I hear the true story from Canada.”⁹⁵⁸

Women abandoned in this fashion had little recourse for their situation, best exemplified in the case of Mrs. Cakman. Initially her husband had wanted her to go to Canada, but upon his return there he appeared to have changed his mind and advised her

⁹⁵⁵LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10333, “CWB – Northampton 1,” The Rose and the Maple Leaf Club Minutes, 7 May 1945.

⁹⁵⁶Ibid., Vol. 10334, “CWB – Remain in the UK 1,” Letter to the Secretary, DND, from J.C. Murchie, Chief of Staff, CMHQ, 22 October 1945. A Mrs. Evans recounted a similar experience in her letter to the CWB. LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10327, “CWB – Enq 1,” Letter to the CWB, from Mrs. Clarice F. Evans, 30 October 1944.

⁹⁵⁷Ibid., Vol. 10327, “CWB – Enq 1,” Letter to the CWB from Mrs. Catt, 24 September 1944.

⁹⁵⁸Ibid., Letter to Mrs. Catt from D.A. Clarke, Director CWB, 28 September 1944.

to stay in the UK.⁹⁵⁹ Mrs. Cakman, who was expecting their second child, was left in a difficult position with no income or support for her children. When her husband was discharged, he became a private citizen. This meant that the CMHQ would not provide her with any assistance.⁹⁶⁰ Upon their marriage, her official permanent residence became tied to that of her husbands', meaning that she was now considered a Canadian resident and therefore could not get a divorce in the UK.⁹⁶¹ Mrs. Cakman, like other British wives abandoned in the UK, would have to go to Canada to acquire a divorce or court order of support, since a British court order was not be enforceable in Canada.⁹⁶² Both the trip and legal process would be extremely expensive and complicated.⁹⁶³ These women could pay a lawyer in Canada to carry out the process on their behalf, but again, this process was expensive. British wives who could not afford a costly divorce or whose husbands refused to divorce them or provide them support were left in a marriage that they could not end.

Some Canadians found this legal situation and the treatment of abandoned war brides and their children to be unacceptable. In an opinion piece in the *Globe and Mail* one writer argued that it was wrong that the military could not order discharged Canadian soldiers to pay child support. The author felt that something had to be done because

⁹⁵⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10334, "CWB – Remain in the UK 1 2," Letter to the Secretary, DND, from J.C. Murchie, Chief of Staff, CMHQ, 3 December 1945.

⁹⁶⁰Ibid.

⁹⁶¹UK, Parliament, *Deb*, HL, 5th Series, 5 October 1944, Vol. 133, cols. 393-402; UK, Parliament, *Deb*, HC, 5th Series, 24 October 1944, Vol. 404, cols. 63-94.

⁹⁶²LAC, DVA, RG36, Series 18 DAB, Vol. 29, "CUM," Letter to the Secretary of State for External Affairs from Massey, 3 August 1945; "An Obvious Injustice," *Globe and Mail*, 2 December 1945; Andrew Bell, "Canada Must Aid These Deserted Dependents," *Saturday Night*, 1 June 1946.

⁹⁶³The woman would have to pay for her travel and legal fees, as well as find her husband. And depending on whether the province had divorce laws or not, she would have to petition the Canadian federal government for a divorce. As previously discussed, the sole acceptable grounds for divorce in Canada was adultery; meaning one of the two spouses would have to admit to having an affair or provide proof of their partner's infidelity.

Canadians were anxious that “no injustices continue.”⁹⁶⁴ The *Montréal Herald* also editorialized on the issue of abandonment. Over the course of May 1945, it ran a series of articles about the “problems facing British war brides,” such as the plight of deserted brides, it deemed “a national problem.”⁹⁶⁵ In one article, it pointed out the problematic attitude of the Canadian government in expecting abandoned brides in Canada to turn to social welfare agencies for assistance, when the government often provided the women with no real sense of which agencies to turn to, or even where they were located.⁹⁶⁶ If a bride could find a welfare agency, her case would often become bogged down by red tape and investigations.⁹⁶⁷ The newspaper argued that settlement problems, marital disharmony, or abandonment issues, were made worse for these women when they realized the “land of milk and honey” that their Canadian husbands and the CWB had told them about was, at least in some cases, a “poor substitute for what they had known in England.”⁹⁶⁸

Even the House of Commons discussed the abandonment of war brides. On 10 April 1945, Alfred Brooks (Progressive Conservative, Royal, NB) discussed how the

⁹⁶⁴“An Obvious Injustice,” *Globe and Mail*, 2 December 1945.

⁹⁶⁵The articles published in May include the following: “Deserted War Brides Become National Problem in Canada,” *Montréal Herald*, 7 May 1945; “Deserted War Brides Should Know About Social Welfare Agencies,” *Montréal Herald*, 9 May 1945; “War Brides’ Welfare Red Cross Problem,” *Montréal Herald*, 11 May 1945; “Deserted War Bride Problems Related,” *Montréal Herald*, 19 May 1945; “Government Agencies Agitated Over War Brides’ Problems,” *Montréal Herald*, 23 May 1945.

⁹⁶⁶“Deserted War Brides Become National Problem in Canada,” *Montréal Herald*, 7 May 1945; “Deserted War Brides Should Know About Social Welfare Agencies,” *Montréal Herald*, 9 May 1945.

⁹⁶⁷“Deserted War Brides Should Know About Social Welfare Agencies,” *Montréal Herald*, 9 May 1945; “Deserted War Brides Problems Related,” *Montréal Herald*, 19 May 1945.

⁹⁶⁸“Deserted War Brides Become National Problem in Canada,” *Montréal Herald*, 7 May 1945; “Deserted War Brides Should Know About Social Welfare Agencies,” *Montréal Herald*, 9 May 1947; “War Brides’ Welfare Red Cross Problem,” *Montréal Herald*, 11 May 1945; “Government Agencies Agitated Over War Brides’ Problems,” *Montréal Herald*, 23 May 1945.

CRC and other organizations in his province had asked him to bring to the attention of the House the issue of deserted brides in order to inquire whether the DND or other government department was looking into the matter.⁹⁶⁹ He highlighted the case of one British war bride, whose husband had become an alcoholic and abandoned her following a car accident that left her with a severe back injury. She was left alone, with no friends, family, or financial support.⁹⁷⁰ Brooks argued that advising women in this situation to turn to charitable organizations was wrong because they were often not able to provide any meaningful assistance. Support of these women should be a government responsibility, he argued, and he believed in time more sad cases were sure to appear.⁹⁷¹

Assistant Commissioner of the CRC, Beverley Browne, dismissed these concerns, stating: “There are only a handful of deserted wives in all of the seven to eight thousand British brides who have come to Canada”⁹⁷² This is an interesting remark considering Brooks claimed that CRC workers had come to him concerned about the matter. The *Montréal Herald* commented on this response, wondering just how many brides made up a “handful.”⁹⁷³ Like Brooks, it maintained that the situation was only going to get worse. Andrew Bell, in an article in *Saturday Night*, commented that the situation was particularly bleak for these women, since the Canadian and British governments only offered them the “empty hand of sympathy.”⁹⁷⁴

⁹⁶⁹Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 19th Parliament, 6th Session, Vol. 1 (1945): 716.

⁹⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁹⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁹⁷²“Deserted War Brides Become National Problem in Canada,” *Montréal Herald*, 7 May 1945.

⁹⁷³*Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁴Bell, “Canada Must Aid These Deserted Dependents,” *Saturday Night*, 1 June 1946.

Media coverage and popular concerns about these abandoned women and their desire to get a divorce caused many Canadians to become concerned about the potential failure of war bride marriages in general. During and after the Second World War, Canadians expressed anxiety concerning rising divorce rates, especially those caused by hasty war time marriages, like those between servicemen and war brides.⁹⁷⁵ Divorce rates in Canada had been on the rise since 1900 and continued to rise rapidly during and after the Second World War. However, despite this rise, the overall number of divorces in Canada during this period was still quite low with divorces in 1951 representing only .04% of Canada's overall population [Appendix 1 – Charts 1.8-1.9].⁹⁷⁶

The relatively low rate of divorce, and the difficulty associated with acquiring one, did not stop newspapers in Ontario and Québec from creating the impression that many war bride marriages were failing. Some media stories centered around the folly of young soldiers marrying overseas too quickly. *The Hamilton Spectator*, *The Montréal Star*, and *The Toronto Daily Star* reported that, "hasty overseas marriages" were bound to end in misery without pre-emptive action, such as clerical counselling.⁹⁷⁷ Other papers focussed on stories of divorce and British war brides returning to the UK on heartbreak ships. In 1946 *La Presse* reported on the return of 20 British war brides to England, while

⁹⁷⁵LAC, Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth, Marriage and the Family* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), 56, 99.

⁹⁷⁶Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1956* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1956). James G. Snell notes that in 1900 the total number of divorces in Canada was 11, compared to 2,369 in 1940. Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*, 9-11. Magda Fahrni notes that divorce petitions to the Dominion government rose in Montréal during the war and postwar period. Fahrni, *Household Politics*, 71.

⁹⁷⁷"Dorothy Dix Says – Misery in Hasty Marriages," *Montréal Star*, 8 April 1944; "Hasty Overseas Marriages Cause C.A.S. Much Work," *Hamilton Spectator*, 9 February 1946; "Five U.K. Brides in Toronto Having Marital Troubles," *Toronto Daily Star*, 5 March 1946.

the *Gazette* reported on a bride seeking a divorce and returning to the UK with a number of other brides on the same ship.⁹⁷⁸ Around the same time, *The Montréal-Matin* devoted many articles to failed war bride marriages, including coverage of a story where a British war bride petitioned for divorce after her husband left her for a local hairdresser.⁹⁷⁹

The public and media attention surrounding failed war bride marriages in Canada concerned government officials. As discussed in Chapter 6, in 1945 the DPR was directed to counter such negative coverage. Despite its best efforts to control the media narrative, stories about divorce and abandonment continued to appear in newspapers across Canada, leading in 1947 to the Canadian Information Service (CIS) being tasked with counteracting “adverse publicity.”⁹⁸⁰ It worked with the Immigration Branch and CRC to try and determine just how many British brides had returned to the UK, getting PRO’s to conduct field work on select cases.⁹⁸¹ CIS also worked in collaboration with the DVA, “to counteract the adverse publicity of the heartbreak ship variety” in the press.⁹⁸²

In an attempt to address public concern and media attention that fixated on failed war bride marriages, the DVA conducted a Canada wide survey, sponsored by the government’s rehabilitation information committee, to determine the status of servicemen-war bride marriages.⁹⁸³ Many newspapers in Ontario and Québec reported on

⁹⁷⁸“Bride Leaves Husband, Blames Housing Lack,” *Gazette*, 6 July 1946; “Épouses de Guerre Qui S’en Retournent,” *La Presse*, 31 October 1946.

⁹⁷⁹“Une Mariée de Guerre Obtient Son Divorce,” *Montréal-Matin*, 19 January 1945; “Prête au Divorce,” *Montréal-Matin*, 22 April 1946; “L’Angleterre Avant Son Mari,” *Montréal-Matin*, 20 May 1946.

⁹⁸⁰LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A 1, MR# C-10402, “SCF,” Letter to Mr. Jolliffe from L.B. Connery, Superintendent of Publicity, 10 January 1947.

⁹⁸¹*Ibid.*

⁹⁸²*Ibid.*

⁹⁸³Melynda Jarratt includes a similar discussion of this source in *War Brides*, 28-9.

the contents of this survey in May, 1947. The survey's findings countered negative images, suggesting that most couples were "clicking," with 3 or 4 out of 100 couples experiencing unhappiness. Divorce rates were "negligible" – with only 2 divorces reported in New Brunswick.⁹⁸⁴ On 22 May, every Ontario and Québec newspaper examined for this dissertation, contained an article about the survey with the same wording about its content. This uniformity suggests that the DVA submitted the article to newspapers across Canada to run.

The actual DVA report is not included in the newspapers examined and my attempts to find it have been in vain, which is disappointing. The media coverage tended to be vague, emphasizing marriage successes – unsurprising considering government officials had expressed concern that too much attention was being given to problematic cases. Newspaper articles provided limited statistical information from the survey outside of the results of the "typical example" of New Brunswick – which the DVA "selected" to share the results of.⁹⁸⁵ The papers make no mention of figures for divorce or separation in the other provinces. The survey results as reported by the press suggest that most marriages were happy since divorce rates were low, but the social stigma attached to divorce and the difficulty in acquiring a divorce at this time meant that not all unhappy couples were willing or able to end their marriages. It is thus problematic to claim that

⁹⁸⁴Here are a few examples for context: "Survey Shows Most War Brides Happy in Canada," *Globe and Mail*, 22 May 1947; "Majority of War Brides Happy, Official Canadian Survey Shows," *Gazette*, 22 May 1947; "War Brides Don't Like that Title," *Montréal Herald*, 22 May 1947; "War Marriages Clicking Says Veterans Depart.," *Montréal Star*, 22 May 1947; "Les Épouses de Guerre se Disent Heureuses," *La Presse*, 22 May 1947.

⁹⁸⁵*Ibid.*

since divorce rates were low, Canadian servicemen-war bride marriages were overwhelmingly a success, as couples often had no choice but to stay married.

The popular emphasis on the “romantic reunion” of Canadian servicemen and their British war brides has resulted in the tendency to see traumatic or negative experiences of some women as minor trials and tribulations.⁹⁸⁶ It is by no means the intention of this chapter to suggest that most war brides were trapped in unhappy abusive relationships. Many had happy and successful marriages. But some of these women had to learn to balance the battle exhaustion of their partners and potentially themselves, while others experienced abuse, abandonment, or divorce. The darker side of the war bride experience, and postwar Canadian couples in general, has deserved examination. Life in Canada was not easy, nor always fair, for war brides. As Chapters 7-9 demonstrate, British war brides faced many adaptational challenges in Canada that complicate the current positive narrative of the historiography of war brides in Canada during and after the Second World War. Many had to work at their marriages, facing numerous obstacles that prevented them from having a “happily ever after” in Canada. For those women lucky enough to have achieved happiness in Canada, their “happily ever afters” were complicated years later when their status as Canadian citizens was placed in doubt.

⁹⁸⁶Fahrni, “The Romance of Reunion,” 187; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 25-6; Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 128-8; Campbell, *Shattered Dream*; Granfield, *Brass Buttons and Silver Horseshoes*, 3; Wicks, *Promise You’ll Take Care of My Daughter*, 212; Young, “It’s Hard to Recall Those Things When Life is So Different Today,” 107.

Chapter 10 – The Citizenship Conundrum: “They and their children don’t want to be told when they inquire that they’re not Canadian citizens”

Following the death of her Canadian husband in 1994, Scottish war bride Eileen Gillies planned to visit family in Scotland. Imagine her surprise when the passport office informed her that she was not a Canadian citizen and that she needed various official documents belonging to both herself and her husband – birth certificates and landing papers – to prove her status. Unfortunately for her, she had lost these documents when a tree struck her Vancouver home in 1991.⁹⁸⁷ In an interview with Bob Gillingham of the *CBC Evening News*, Gillies explained how she had also been told that changes to the *Citizenship Act* in 1976 meant that she had to apply for proof of Canadian citizenship. According to Gillies, this was something that the government had never told her to do.

To try and resolve the situation, Gillingham contacted Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) which assigned a representative to her case.⁹⁸⁸ The representative from CIC explained that her case was complicated. She had not applied for Canadian citizenship, nor did she qualify for automatic citizenship since “normally” it was reserved for those born in Canada or those who had Canadian parents. Fortunately, a “provision” existed to grant war brides citizenship, but it “was a matter of proving that” in order to secure to a passport.⁹⁸⁹ While her case was eventually resolved and she was given a passport, her situation was not an isolated one.

⁹⁸⁷CBC, “War Bride Loses, Then Recovers Canadian Citizenship,” *CBC Evening News* (2 August 1994), Television, 00:00-00:57.

⁹⁸⁸From 1994-2015 the department was referred to as Citizenship and Immigration Canada. In 2015 the department name was changed to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship in Canada (IRCC). Ibid., 00:58-01:29.

⁹⁸⁹The representative did not elaborate as to what provision, but we can assume that she is referring to the one within the *Citizenship Act, 1946*. Ibid., 01:30-02:05.

From the 1950s to the 2000s many war brides and their children have been told that they were not Canadian citizens or that they needed to supply proof of their citizenship.⁹⁹⁰ Most of them had no such proof. Nor were they ever made aware of the changes in the 1976 *Act* that required they obtain the necessary documents.⁹⁹¹ The *Citizenship Act* of 1946 had declared them to be Canadians and the brides believed this to be true. As individuals, however, they had to show the documentation that confirmed their qualification under the general declaration.

Canadian historians themselves appear divided on the status of these women and their children. Marilyn Barber, Murray Watson, and Barry Broadfoot argue that the state granted war brides and their children citizenship before their arrival in Canada, making them citizens of, and not immigrants to, Canada.⁹⁹² However, Sidney Eve Matrix (professor of film, cultural, and media studies) argues the opposite, that because their travel documents were stamped “landed immigrant,” the women were in fact immigrants to, not citizens of, Canada. To become citizens, war brides and their children had to fill out the necessary paperwork to receive proof of citizenship – which most did not do.⁹⁹³ She argues that changes to the *Citizenship Act* in 1976 stressed that these women and their children had to apply for proof of citizenship – which again, many did not do. She contends that these women and children were never entitled to, but rather only eligible for, citizenship in Canada.⁹⁹⁴

⁹⁹⁰Changes to the *Act* in 1976 made proof of citizenship a requirement for all Canadians. Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1976, c. 108, section 10.

⁹⁹¹*Ibid.*; Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 73; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 237-9.

⁹⁹²Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years*, 1-2; Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 9.

⁹⁹³Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 71-3.

⁹⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 67, 73-4; 80.

The idea that war brides and their children may not in fact have had the documentation at hand to prove that they came under the war bride's status has been overlooked by government officials and the Canadian press likely due to their case-specific nature.⁹⁹⁵ However, this changed during the 1990s and early 2000s, when the high-profile cases and advocacy work of Don Chapman and Joe Taylor brought the issue to the attention of the Canadian public. As a result, in 2007, the government created a Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration to investigate the lost or challenged citizenship status of individuals who believed themselves to be Canadian citizens, but were not officially considered so due to changes in or poor drafting of Canada's *Citizenship Acts*.⁹⁹⁶ Confusion surrounding their citizenship has consequences. Many people have been denied the right to vote, to get passports, or to claim pensions until they could prove their status. For some, this situation has been psychologically damaging, since their identity as Canadian citizens has been questioned even though they have lived in Canada for most of their lives.

This chapter examines why the status of war brides and their children was so poorly defined, and why it has taken almost 70 years for the Canadian government to correct the issue. This situation provides an excellent opportunity to examine the creation and evolution of Canadian citizenship from a perspective that highlights not only its

⁹⁹⁵Matrix, "Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings," 69-72.

⁹⁹⁶These individuals have dubbed themselves Lost Canadians – individuals, including but not limited to war brides, children of war brides, children born out of wedlock, and children whose fathers became citizens of another country. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (21 April 2005): 1-2; "'Lost' Canadians get Citizenship," *Globe and Mail*, 20 February 2007; Lois Harder, "'In Canada of All Places': National Belonging and the Lost Canadians," *Citizenship Studies* Vol. 14, no. 2 (April 2010): 203, 206-7; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, xii, 130, 224.

initial racism and sexism, but also the consistent bureaucratic bungling regarding the application of its provisions since 1947. The issues surrounding the legal status of British war brides and their children as Canadian citizens must be examined and brought into the discussion of Canadian nation building following the Second World War since it raises important questions about what it means and who gets to be a Canadian citizen today.

To a considerable degree, citizenship has been connected to Canada's status under the Crown. By the early twentieth century, the white Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa) maintained autonomy in domestic affairs, but remained under the Sovereignty of the Crown.⁹⁹⁷ Thus, all individuals born or naturalized within the British Empire and Commonwealth were British subjects who could claim a right to move freely throughout it. While in theory everyone had equal status, in practice access to rights and privileges was denied to some based on their gender or race.⁹⁹⁸ British officials believed that this shared status was essential to maintain imperial unity and strength. However, some Dominions, such as Canada, found this status to be problematic.

The idea that all members of the Empire could freely move throughout it directly affected each Dominion's ability to control the movement of peoples into and across its territories.⁹⁹⁹ Canada initially attempted to circumvent this policy through its *Immigration*

⁹⁹⁷Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of the World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 99.

⁹⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 92-3, 115; Rieko Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth and Modern Britain* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 119; Jatinder Mann, "The Evolution of Common Citizenship, 1945-1948 in Canada, Britain and Australia," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* Vol. 50, no. 3 (July 2012): 294.

⁹⁹⁹Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 2, 11-3; Randall Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain: The British Nationality Act," *Twentieth Century British History* Vol. 10, no. 1 (1999): 71, 75; Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship*, 113-9; Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Canadian Mosaic*, 115-6.

Act, 1910, which allowed officials to prohibit the entry of immigrants “belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate” or “of immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character.”¹⁰⁰⁰ It also included the Continuous Voyage Regulation, that prohibited the landing of any immigrants who did not come to Canada by continuous voyage from their home countries.¹⁰⁰¹ These regulations made it incredibly difficult for immigrants from India, Japan, and Southeast Asia, to immigrate to Canada. Since Indians were technically “British subjects” and Japan was an imperial ally, the *Act* caused problems for the British. For example, in 1914, Canada refused to allow the SS *Komagata Maru* – which carried people from India – entry into Canadian ports. To many Southeast Asians, this incident was proof of their second-class status in the Empire, turning public opinion against the British in India.¹⁰⁰² Such racist regulations demonstrate that Canadian lawmakers wanted to challenge UK parliamentary power by ensuring that only individuals of an acceptable white background could immigrate to Canada.

During the interwar years (1919-1938), rising Dominion nationalism further challenged the Empire’s claim of a single imperial nationality. While the Dominions supported the British during the First World War, their service during the conflict led to increased nationalism at home, leading to the creation of Canada’s *Nationals Act* of 1921.¹⁰⁰³ In an attempt to cement Commonwealth bonds, the British government created

¹⁰⁰⁰Canada, *The Immigration Act*, S.C., 1910, c. 27, s. 38; Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 110-2; Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Canadian Mosaic*, 139.

¹⁰⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰²Hugh Johnston, “[Komagata Maru](#),” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 7 February 2006; John Herd Thompson, “‘Canada and the British Empire,’ 1901-1939,” in *Canada and the British Empire* ed. Philip Buckner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 93-4.

¹⁰⁰³Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*, 271; Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 169, 171-2.

the 1931 *Statute of Westminster*, which allowed the Dominions of Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa greater autonomy from the Crown. It made them no longer bound, other than by choice, to past or future British laws.¹⁰⁰⁴ However, the British government still controlled Canada's *Constitution* until its repatriation in 1982. Before its *Citizenship Act* of 1946, Canada did not possess its own legal citizenship status.

Canadians were British subjects – either natural-born British subjects or immigrants who came to Canada and applied for and received naturalization as British subjects.¹⁰⁰⁵

However, use of the terms Canadian citizens in the *Immigration Act, 1910* and Canadian nationals in the *Canadian Nationals Act, 1921* complicated the legal status of Canadians.

While the two terms – citizen and national – are often conflated, they are not synonymous.¹⁰⁰⁶ The term national refers to nationality – feelings of a connection to a particular nation – or one's place of origin or birth.¹⁰⁰⁷ Citizenship is a twentieth century legal concept evolving out of war, travel, and the creation of welfare states. It denotes one's belonging to a nation-state and access to political, social, and economic rights within that nation-state, such as being able to vote in government elections.¹⁰⁰⁸ While these terms have defined meanings and legal statutes, their use and meaning in the 1910 and 1921 *Acts* were neither obvious nor consistent. The *Immigration Act, 1910* defined

¹⁰⁰⁴Philippa Levine argues that most Dominions did not sever ties with Britain as a result of the *Statute of Westminster*. Levine, *The British Empire*, 172-3.

¹⁰⁰⁵Canada, *British Nationality, Naturalization and Aliens Act*, S.C., 1914, c. 44.

¹⁰⁰⁶Janine Brodie, "Three Stories of Canadian Citizenship," in *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn and Robert Menzie (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2002), 45; Caccia, *Managing the Canadian Mosaic in Wartime*, 202-3.

¹⁰⁰⁷For example, individuals born in the UK are considered British nationals. Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 61-2.

¹⁰⁰⁸Brodie, "Three Stories of Canadian Citizenship," 46; Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 24, 61-2; Caccia, *Managing the Canadian Mosaic in Wartime*, 202-3.

the term “Canadian citizens” as follows: “i. a person born in Canada who has not become an alien; ii. a British subject who has Canadian domicile; or iii. a person naturalized under the laws of Canada who has not subsequently become an alien or lost Canadian domicile.”¹⁰⁰⁹ Its use of the term citizens was conspicuous since the two *Acts* that bookended the 1910 *Act* – the *Aliens and Naturalization Act, 1868*, and the *British Nationality, Naturalization and Aliens Act, 1914* – make no use or mention of the term Canadian citizen. Instead, both *Acts* define Canadians “as natural born British subjects” born in Canada, having domiciled in Canada, or having attained naturalization within Canada – the exact wording used to define “Canadian citizens” in the 1910 *Act*.¹⁰¹⁰ The term thus distinguished British subjects born and naturalized in Canada from those British subjects or “aliens” immigrating to Canada.¹⁰¹¹ It represented an early attempt by lawmakers to add local specificity to the concept of the sovereignty of the British Crown – British subject and citizen of Canada, that is, someone domiciled in Canada.

In 1921 the *Canadian Nationals Act* defined Canadian nationals as follows:

(a) any British subject who is a Canadian citizen within the meaning of the Immigration Act chapter twenty-seven of the statutes of 1910, as heretofore amended; (b) the wife of any such citizen; any person born out of Canada, whose father was a Canadian National at the time of that person’s birth, or with regard to persons born before the passing of this Act, any person whose father at the time of such birth, possessed all the qualifications of a Canadian National, as defined in this Act.¹⁰¹²

¹⁰⁰⁹Canada, *The Immigration Act*, S.C., 1910, c. 27.

¹⁰¹⁰Canada, *Aliens and Naturalization Act*, S.C., 1868, c. 66; Canada, *British Nationality, Naturalization and Aliens*, S.C., 1914, c. 44.

¹⁰¹¹“Aliens” was a term used in immigration legislation to refer to individuals who were citizens or nationals of a given country who wished to immigrate to another country. In Canadian immigration legislation, it usually referred to non-British subjects.

¹⁰¹²Canada, *Canadian Nationals Act*, S.C., 1921, c. 4.

This definition is confusing since it defined Canadian nationals the same ways as Canadian citizens in the 1910 *Act*, i.e., British subjects domiciled in Canada. However, the status of Canadian nationals also applied to the wives of Canadians and those born out of Canada to Canadian parents. Thus, the meaning of Canadian nationals in the 1921 *Act* identified individuals born or naturalized in or who possessed Canadian nationality. In both the 1910 and 1921 *Acts* the use and definition of citizen and national were attempts by the Parliament of Canada to add local specificity to the concept of the sovereignty of the British Crown, which made everyone under the Crown a subject.¹⁰¹³ However, we have to extrapolate from the confusing and poorly defined use of these terms that these lawmakers did not have the authority, power, or courage to change the status quo to create a legal status for Canadians that was completely distinct from the British Crown.

The concepts of British subject and Canadian citizen and national were a source of confusion for Members of Parliament (MPs) and the Canadian public, who were not experts in constitutional law. In a 1944 House of Commons debate about the Census, James Arthur Ross (Progressive Conservative, Souris) argued that Canada needed to better recognize and define Canadian citizenship in a similar manner to what the United States had done, i.e., a more formal naturalization process.¹⁰¹⁴ James A. MacKinnon (Progressive Conservative, Edmonton West) responded by pointing out that Ross was

¹⁰¹³Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Canadian and Other Nationals," *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931* (Ottawa: Published by the Authority of the Hon. H.H. Stevens, M.P., Minister of Trade and Commerce, 1933), 1-2; George T. Tamaki, "The Citizenship Act, 1946," *University of Toronto Law Journal* Vol. 7, no. 1 (1947): 72-3; Brodie, "Three Stories of Canadian Citizenship," 46-7.

¹⁰¹⁴At this time many immigrants were not naturalized and choose not do so unless their loyalty was questioned during wartime and they were required to register as "enemy aliens." Mr. Ross's suggestion was not possible due to the sovereignty of the Crown in Canada. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 19th Parliament, 5th Session, Vol. 5 (1944-1945): 5307-9.

confusing nationality and racial origin, which was what the Census was tracking. When Ross asked MacKinnon to define what he meant by Canadian national, MacKinnon directed Ross to review the *Canadian Nationals Act*.¹⁰¹⁵ In response, Ross argued that Canadians across the country did not appreciate that their government did not recognize Canadian citizenship. Later, Louis St. Laurent – then Minister of Justice and future Prime Minister of Canada – argued that the definition under the *Canadian Nationals Act* was not clear, as a Canadian national could be understood as a British subject living in Canada.¹⁰¹⁶ This debate amongst the MPs demonstrates that the legal concept of Canadian citizenship was, like the Canadian Constitution, entangled with the paramountcy of the Crown.

Secretary of State Paul Martin acknowledged the confusion surrounding these terms in a 1945 House of Commons debate about Canadian citizenship. He stated, “‘Canadian nationals’ have hitherto been defined under the *Canadian Nationals Act*, but, the definition had virtually no significance. The term ‘Canadian citizen’ is now, in strict accuracy, only an immigration status.”¹⁰¹⁷ Martin also noted that of the MPs in the House, “few of us know what it means when the words ‘Canadian citizen’ are used at the present time, or how that status differs from ‘Canadian national.’”¹⁰¹⁸ Ultimately, the use of citizen and national in the 1910 and 1921 *Acts* did not create distinct statuses – Canadians were British subjects, even if they wanted to be distinct from the Crown. One would assume that if Canadians were British subjects and they married British women – who

¹⁰¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁷Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 2 (1945): 1335.

¹⁰¹⁸Ibid.

were also British subjects – that there would be no question as to the legal status of the wives, but that was not to be the case.

The language used in the 1910 and 1921 *Acts* inadvertently created citizenship problems for war brides and their children. Confusion regarding the meaning of the terms Canadian citizen and national resulted in unclear and inconsistent interpretations of the legal status of the dependants of Canadian servicemen by lay observers, and occasionally public officials, throughout the war. In February 1943, Protestant Chaplain J. Gordon Jones noted that his office had received several inquiries from British women marrying Canadian soldiers about whether or not they became Canadian citizens upon marriage to a Canadian.¹⁰¹⁹ In a letter to the Acting District Superintendent for the Atlantic region, A.G. Christie, Ottawa-based Immigration Inspector in Charge in Nova Scotia, wrote that a local newspaper had published an editorial that English women who married Canadian servicemen “become Canadian citizens by virtue of their marriage, and will be legally full-fledged Canadians when they accompany their husbands to Canada.”¹⁰²⁰ In February 1941, the Immigration Branch (IB) had to correct Warrant Officer Gillan’s assumption that his wife had become a Canadian citizen upon their marriage.¹⁰²¹

To clarify the issue, on 26 January 1944 Deputy JAG, Colonel W.A.I. Anglin, released a memorandum to all legal officers of the CMHQ that explained the meaning and application of the terms British subject, Canadian nationality, and Canadian citizenship

¹⁰¹⁹LAC DND, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15633, “WD,” J. Gordon Jones, Hon. Major, Senior Chaplain (P) 1 Canadian Division, 24 February 1943.

¹⁰²⁰LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10400, “SCF,” Letter to Acting District Superintendent, Atlantic, Ottawa, from Sgd. A.G. Christie, Immigration Inspector in Charge, 19 August 1943.

¹⁰²¹Ibid., Memo to Little from O’Kelly, 18 February 1941.

within the existing legislation. It stated that British women who married Canadian men remained British subjects and became Canadian nationals – not citizens.¹⁰²² Marriage to a Canadian did not grant a British wife citizenship but, rather, the ability to become a citizen after living in Canada for five years.¹⁰²³ An 14 April 1944 Cabinet War Committee made a similar conclusion.¹⁰²⁴ However, in a meeting one week later it expressed concerns that the 1910 *Immigration Act*'s prohibitory provisions meant that dependants of Canadian servicemen could be denied entry into Canada unless classified as citizens.¹⁰²⁵ Thus, the War Committee decided that dependants should be given the status of Canadian citizens.¹⁰²⁶

On 21 September 1944, the Canadian government issued Order in Council P.C. 7318, which stated that the dependants of Canadian servicemen who applied for admission to Canada would be permitted to enter Canada and, *upon landing in the country*, they would receive the same citizenship status as their husbands or fathers.¹⁰²⁷ This placed dependants outside the *Immigration Act*'s prohibited classes since they would

¹⁰²²LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10331, "CWB – Lee Glen 1," Memorandum on Canadian Citizenship and Nationality to all Legal Officers from W.A.I. Anglin, Col, DJAG, CMHQ, 26 January 1944.

¹⁰²³*Ibid.*

¹⁰²⁴LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10402, "SCF," "A Brief History of the Movement of Servicemen's Dependants in Second World War Which Commenced September 3rd 1939," by W.R Baskerville, 31 December 1947.

¹⁰²⁵Individuals suffering from illness or contagious diseases, or considered an idiot, were prohibited from entering Canada under the *Immigration Act*. This meant that dependants could be refused entry to Canada due to illness, failed medical examinations, or a child having a physical or learning disability. Canada, *The Immigration Act*, S.C., 1910, c. 27; LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10402, "SCF," "A Brief History of the Movement of Servicemen's Dependants," by Baskerville, 31 December 1947.

¹⁰²⁶It was believed that granting dependents this status would remove the possibility of their being denied entry to, or facing deportation from, Canada. However, the government still expected these dependants to seek medical documentation that they were free from infection before they could enter the country. Canada LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10402, "SCF," "A Brief History of the Movement of Servicemen's Dependants," by Baskerville, 31 December 1947.

¹⁰²⁷A.D.P. Heeney, "Order in Council re Council re Entry into Canada of Dependants of Members of the Canadian Armed Forces," P.C. 7318, 21 September 1944, 601.

no longer be immigrants but Canadian citizens.¹⁰²⁸ Unfortunately, P.C. 7318 did not resolve people's confusion regarding the status of soldiers' dependants. Over the course of October 1944, D.A. Clarke, Director of the CWB, answered many letters from war brides still confused about their citizenship status.¹⁰²⁹ These letters reveal a disconnect between the way lawmakers and lay people understood the citizenship of war brides.

Within months, a new Order in Council P.C. 858 (9 February 1945) was issued to clarify matters further. It stated that dependants of Canadian servicemen acquired the same status as their husbands or fathers if they wished to *enter* Canada – this meant that they would be considered citizens before landing in the country.¹⁰³⁰ While the government attempted to clarify the status of these women with P.C. 7318 and P.C. 858, it made no changes to the CWB educational pamphlets, which were the brides' primary source of information about Canada.¹⁰³¹ As a result, the CWB continued to receive letters from women asking for clarification about their status.

¹⁰²⁸Ibid.; LAC, IPSF, RG76-I-A, MR# C-10402, "SCF," "A Brief History of the Movement of Servicemen's Dependents," by Baskerville, 31 December 1947.

¹⁰²⁹LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10328, "CWB – Enq 2," Letter to Mrs. M.D. Linge from Mrs. E.P. Lee for D.A. Clarke, CWB, 2 October 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10327, "CWB – Enq 1," Letter to CWB from Mrs. Caron, 6 October 1944 and Letter to Mrs. Caron from D.A. Clarke, 9 October 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10328, "CWB – Enq 2," Letter to Mrs. A. Houston from D.A. Clarke, 9 October 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10327, "CWB – Enq 1," Letter to Department of National Defence, CMHQ, from C. W. Beddows, 13 October 1944 and Letter to Pte Beddows from D.A. Clarke, Director, CWB, 20 October 1944; LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10328, "CWB – Enq 3," Letter to Mrs. V. Parker from D.A. Clarke, CWB, 14 October 1944 and Letter to Mrs. F.R. MacKay from D.A. Clarke, CWB, 23 October 1944.

¹⁰³⁰LAC, DND RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, "1903 HCR," A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, "Order in Council re entry into Canada of dependants of members of the Canadian Armed Forces," P.C. 858, 9 February 1945.

¹⁰³¹As discussed in Chapter 4, these pamphlets already contained no definition or explanation about the meaning of Canadian citizenship. While the DND's *Dock to Destination* (194?) pamphlet discussed citizenship, it merely explained that upon landing in Canada immigration officials would finish the formalities that would "automatically make you [war brides and their children] a Canadian citizen." LAC, DND, RG24-C-2, Vol. 10325, "CWB – Pamphlet 1," *Dock to Destination* by the DND.

A speech to war brides by Prime Minister Mackenzie King on 31 August 1946 muddled the situation further. King was returning to Canada from the UK aboard the *Queen Mary*, which also contained many war brides and their children. During the trip, King gave a speech to this group, congratulating them on their choice of partners, the soldiers on their choice of brides, and the country of Canada for adding such fine women to its “citizenship.”¹⁰³² His use of citizen here was meant as a signifier of welcoming the women into the Canadian community, not as a marker of legal standing. However, many of the women there took his speech to mean that they had become Canadian citizens. But Canadians were still British subjects under Crown sovereignty; Canadian citizenship was not a separate legal category but rather an indicator of local domicile within the Empire. While Canadian officials understood this fact, many of them desired or believed that Canadian citizenship should have a greater meaning than a mere status distinction.

In 1945, Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s government announced its intention to introduce new legislation respecting citizenship, nationality, naturalization, and the status of “aliens” in Canada. In his announcement the Prime Minister noted that, “one of the symbols of nationhood” that Canada lacked was a “clearly defined nationality or citizenship status,” which Secretary of State Paul Martin’s new citizenship Bill would remedy.¹⁰³³ According to the new legislation, those born in Canada, or “aliens” who became naturalized in Canada, would still be British subjects, but they would be first and

¹⁰³²Lt. Col. W.E. Sutherland, Ship Commandant of the *Queen Mary*, gave a similar welcoming speech to the brides that referenced King’s speech throughout. CWM, GMAC, REF PAM FOLIO 1 D 810 W7 T7 1997, Note of Appreciation by Lt.-Col. W.E. Sutherland OBE. Ship’s Commandant H.M.T. *Queen Mary*, 31 August 1946; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 238; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 81.

¹⁰³³Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 2 (1945): 1335-7; Mann, “The Evolution of Common Citizenship,” 296.

foremost Canadian citizens.¹⁰³⁴ The British government initially reacted with surprise and concern over Canada's decision to create a localized citizenship. Britain's Empire and Commonwealth had been essential to its survival during the war and was also deemed necessary to aid in its recovery following the war's conclusion.¹⁰³⁵ The creation of localized citizenship could potentially threaten this unity, as well as Britain's status as the imperial centre, by emphasizing the importance of local loyalties before imperial ones.¹⁰³⁶ The British also worried that Canada would be setting a precedent that other Dominions would wish to follow. This concern appeared to be well founded since Australia followed Canada's example, creating its *Australian Citizenship Act* in 1948.¹⁰³⁷ Canada refused to withdraw or delay its new legislation, forcing the United Kingdom's government to adapt in order to maintain both its status at the centre of and connections with the British Empire and Commonwealth.¹⁰³⁸ Canada's 1945 announcement of, and its subsequent creation of, Canadian citizenship through the 1946 *Citizenship Act*, culminated years of debate regarding the status of Canadians. It represented the desire of most Canadians to assert both greater autonomy and a nationalism distinct from the British. This, however,

¹⁰³⁴Ibid.; Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1946, c. 15; Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain," 73.

¹⁰³⁵Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 1-5; Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship*, 108.

¹⁰³⁶Mann, "The Evolution of Common Citizenship," 94; Philip Girard, "If Two Ride a Horse, One Must Ride in Front': Married Women's Nationality and the Law in Canada, 1880-1950," *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 94, no. 1 (March 2013): 51-2.

¹⁰³⁷Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 9; Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain," 75; Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship*, 115; Mann, "The Evolution of Common Citizenship," 306.

¹⁰³⁸In response, the British government created the *British Nationality Act, 1948* which created the status of citizen of the UK and Colonies and allowed each Commonwealth member state to legislate its own citizenship, while simultaneously maintaining a shared status of British subject. The *Act* was an attempt to strengthen and unify Britain's relationships with its Imperial possessions while simultaneously accommodating the growing nationalism of predominately white Dominions. UK, *British Nationality Act, 1948*, c. 56; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 14, 17, 25; Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain," 67-68, 73-6, 78-9; Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship*, 116-7; Mann, "The Evolution of Common Citizenship," 293-4.

did not mean that Canadian officials or citizens were ashamed of or rejected their status as British subjects; some Canadians still may have valued this status, something recognized in the new legislation.¹⁰³⁹ While Canadians remained British subjects under the sovereignty of the Crown, they became Canadians first and foremost at home and on the world stage.

The *Citizenship Act* also provided clarity about the status of the dependants of Canadian servicemen. It considered a woman who married a Canadian citizen or had been a British subject who had lawfully been admitted to Canada for permanent residence before its creation on 1 January 1947 to be a Canadian citizen.¹⁰⁴⁰ It did not guarantee war brides who landed in Canada after this date the same status. This meant that war brides and their husbands who chose to stay in the UK for a period after the war, or those who were transported by the government during 1947-1948 were not considered citizens under the *Act*.¹⁰⁴¹ It also continued a legacy of sexist regulations concerning Canadian naturalization and citizenship. Amendments to the *Naturalization Act* in 1932 had resulted in Canadian women losing their status as British subjects upon marriage to an “alien” husband.¹⁰⁴² While the new *Citizenship Act* ended this practice, it contained new provisions for war brides that tied their Canadian citizenship to their marriage to a

¹⁰³⁹Tamaki, “The Citizenship Act, 1946,” 82-3; Mann, “The Evolution of Common Citizenship,” 296-7, 301.

¹⁰⁴⁰Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1946, c. 15.

¹⁰⁴¹Joe Serge, “War Bride Isn’t a Citizen Despite 35 Years in Canada,” *Toronto Star*, 19 January 1991; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 1.

¹⁰⁴²“Alien” nationalities included but were not limited to the following countries: Austria, Belgium, China, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, etc. Government of Canada, “Loss of Canadian Citizenship and British Subject Status, and Acquisition and Restoration of Canadian Citizenship,” *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada*, 2015.

Canadian serviceman. If a war bride divorced her husband, then she would lose her Canadian citizenship. For example, English war bride Gwen was informed in 1969 that she had lost her citizenship because she had divorced her husband, while war bride Rose, who had divorced her husband and married another Canadian, was informed at 75 years of age that she had lost her citizenship when she divorced her first husband.¹⁰⁴³ Thus, the citizenship granted to war brides was sexist in nature and not a guaranteed right, but rather conditional on their fulfilment of the heteronormative marital agreement.

Even some British war brides who stayed married to their Canadian husbands experienced problems regarding their citizenship status. Throughout the 1950 and 1960s, government officials contacted some women telling them to apply for citizenship papers.¹⁰⁴⁴ In 1958, the passport office informed war bride Nelly that she could not get a passport until she submitted a certificate of citizenship. It advised her to contact the Registrar of Canadian Citizenship, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa.¹⁰⁴⁵ Melynda Jarratt discusses two similar cases in her book on war brides.¹⁰⁴⁶ War bride Christine recalled that in 1952, after moving to Montréal for her husband's new job, the government notified her that she needed to apply to become a Canadian citizen.¹⁰⁴⁷ In all of these cases government officials advised the women to apply for a

¹⁰⁴³Matrix, "Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings," 71; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 238.

¹⁰⁴⁴Jarratt, *War Brides*, 238.

¹⁰⁴⁵CMI at Pier 21, DI2016.466.4, letter to Nelly P. from E. Woodrow, Passport Officer at the Dept of External Affairs, Ottawa, 5 December 1958; CMI at Pier 21, DI2016.466.5, letter to Nelly P. from J.E. Duggan, Registrar of Canadian Citizenship, 12 December 1958.

¹⁰⁴⁶She discusses the story of two women returning from a trip to the UK only to be informed by Canadian customs that they had to apply for a certificate of citizenship and pay a fee. War brides were not the only group asked to provide such proof of citizenship. Individuals born in the US but raised in Canada were also expected to acquire and provide proof of citizenship to government agencies. Jarratt, *War Brides*, 238.

¹⁰⁴⁷Christine H., Questionnaire Provided by Chelsea Barranger, 17 October 2016.

certificate of citizenship in order to prove their status as Canadian citizens – which they did. It is not unreasonable for the state to ask for proof of citizenship. This documentation is essential for accessing major components of Canada's welfare state, for example, healthcare and pensions.

Government officials asking war brides for proof of citizenship often becomes a problem when the women do not possess such documentation, which happened often. The materials provided to war brides at the time, such as Orders in Council and the *Canadian Citizenship Act*, all informed these women that their citizenship was “automatic” and did not state that they needed to apply for proof of citizenship. Further, when the brides landed at Pier 21 in Halifax, immigration officials merely stamped their travel certificates “landed immigrant” and made no mention of the women's need to apply for such documentation.¹⁰⁴⁸ Since these women believed that they and their children had acquired automatic citizenship, they did not think about applying for a certificate of citizenship. By contrast, American officials and legislation clearly stipulated that war bride marriage to an American serviceman did not guarantee citizenship. They instructed war brides to apply for citizenship by filling out an application for naturalization after having resided in the US for a period of 3 years.¹⁰⁴⁹ The clear stance and wording of American legislation regarding war bride citizenship resulted in less confusion than that experienced by their

¹⁰⁴⁸“Canadian Travel Certificate of Vera T.” issued by the authority of the High Commissioner for Canada at Canada House, London, 12 December 1944, private collection; Kevin Bissett, “Thousands of War Brides and Their Children are Discovering They Are Not Canadian Citizens,” *Calgary Herald*, 22 April 2005; Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 73; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 237.

¹⁰⁴⁹Typically, residency in the US was five years, but the American government reduced the window to three years for war brides. Jenel Virden notes that while some war brides applied for citizenship right away, most waited an average of eight years before applying, with some even waiting twenty or thirty years. Virden, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, 40-1, 50-1, 140-1.

Canadian counterparts.¹⁰⁵⁰ Based on the letters sent by the Canadian government to Nelly and others, the state understood that these women lacked the necessary documentation. Instead of making a public announcement to address the issue, agents of the Canadian state decided to treat the problem on a piecemeal basis. This practice or lack of attention to detail would later cause problems for both war brides and the state.

Canada's *Citizenship Act* also did not guarantee citizenship for a war bride's dependant children. During the war, the state deemed children born into married families to be legitimate, with their citizenship status derived from their father. It deemed children born outside of wedlock, however, to be illegitimate, with them deriving their citizenship status from their mother.¹⁰⁵¹ Over the course of the war, many Canadian servicemen and British women had children out of wedlock.¹⁰⁵² For some couples, renewed fighting in the European theatre made it difficult, if not impossible, for a man to get a leave in order to get married. This led to some children being born before a couple wed. Yet, legislation of the day decreed that even if the parents of the child eventually wed, a child born before the marriage would still be considered illegitimate. Since they derived their citizenship from their mothers, they would be British and not Canadian.¹⁰⁵³ Children deemed

¹⁰⁵⁰This is largely a result of the independent status of the US, which meant it had greater control creating legislation regarding immigration and citizenship than Canada did due to the paramountcy of the Crown.

¹⁰⁵¹Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1946, c. 15, part 1, section 5. Government of Canada, "Loss of Canadian Citizenship and British Subject Status, and Acquisition and Restoration of Canadian Citizenship," *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada*, 2015.

¹⁰⁵²As discussed in Chapter 1, scholarship on this subject is limited and the number of illegitimate children is only an estimate (20,000-30,000). Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 233; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 19; Rains, Rains, and Jarratt, *Voices of the Left Behind*, 16.

¹⁰⁵³If the couple were able to wed before the birth, then the child was considered legitimate by the state. Harder, "In Canada of All Places," 214-5; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (21 April 2005): 3; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and*

legitimate and granted Canadian citizenship, could lose it if their parents naturalized or acquired the citizenship of a new country – thus forfeiting their child’s citizenship. To address this issue, the *Act* contained a provision that enabled children to retain their citizenship if they were living in Canada, or asked to keep their status up until their 21st birthday.¹⁰⁵⁴ In both cases, the status of a dependant child was not guaranteed, but rather contingent on a specific set of circumstances and conditions that most children were unaware of. Due to social taboos of the period, parents who wed after their child was born likely concealed their illegitimate births, meaning that these children may not have known that any legislation applied to them. Children born in Canada may have incorrectly assumed that their citizenship could not be forfeited by their parents. As a result, many children of Canadian servicemen did not understand how the state limited their status, a status that they believed they were entitled to by virtue of having a Canadian father.

Reforms to the *Citizenship Act* in 1976 further complicated the citizenship status of Canada’s war brides and their children.¹⁰⁵⁵ One positive feature of the *Act* was that it enabled children born outside of Canada or whose parents had moved and renounced their citizenship to apply to retain their status to the age of 28.¹⁰⁵⁶ However, it also contained a

Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians: A Report on the Loss of Canadian Citizenship, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 6.

¹⁰⁵⁴Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1946, c. 15, part 3, subsection 18 (2); Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 1; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 3; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 10.

¹⁰⁵⁵Like previous legislation, the new *Citizenship Act*, continued the pattern of asserting Canada’s distinction and independence from the UK. The new *Act* defined Canadians as Canadian citizens first and foremost, removed the immigration distinction between British subjects and “aliens,” and no longer referred to Canadians, or those citizens or nationals of the Commonwealth, as British subjects, but rather Commonwealth citizens. Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1976, c. 108, part 1, section 3-5, part 8, section 31.

¹⁰⁵⁶*Ibid.*, part 2, section 7.

provision – entitled Resumption of Citizenship – that stated that a woman who had acquired citizenship by reason of her marriage to a Canadian before 1947 would acquire “citizenship immediately upon the receipt by the Minister of a notice in writing by her that she elects to be a citizen.”¹⁰⁵⁷ This provision was likely created to address the problem that many war brides had no proof of citizenship, which was essential for accessing parts of the Canadian welfare state. However, individuals who considered themselves citizens do not often read new legislation pertaining to citizenship. While it would be unreasonable to ask the state to contact or track down every affected individual, an announcement made on the radio or television could have increased transparency about these changes. From the materials reviewed for this dissertation it appears that this did not occur. This provision shows that the state endeavored to solve a known problem, but its decision not to widely promote the changes made by the new *Act* meant that most war brides and their children did not write into the government to receive proof of their citizenship – they simply did not know that this was required of them.

From the 1980s to the 2000s, Canadian newspapers and media outlets began to report many accounts of war brides and their children being told by government officials that they were not Canadian citizens, or that they needed to prove their citizenship. The *Calgary Herald* reported on two generations of soldiers’ dependants struggling with this issue. A war bride learned that she was not a citizen when she tried to get a passport in

¹⁰⁵⁷Minister in the *Act* is defined as a member of the Queen’s Privy council for Canada as designated by the Governor in Council to act as the Minister for the purposes of this *Act*. No more information is provided. Ibid., part 3, section 10, subsection 2.

1961. In 2005, her 62-year-old daughter was told the same thing.¹⁰⁵⁸ Two siblings, Marion and Peter, likewise discovered their citizenship problem when applying for their passports. Marion had been born out of wedlock to an English war bride and Canadian serviceman – her father had been fighting in Europe when her mother discovered that she was pregnant. Her parents wed shortly after her birth, and their family, including her older half-brother Peter (from her mother's earlier marriage), went to Canada. While both siblings lived their entire lives in Canada, with Peter serving 25 years in the Canadian Navy, CIC officials informed them that they were not citizens and would have to apply for permanent residence in Canada.¹⁰⁵⁹

Even a Canadian Senator, Romeo Dallaire, got caught up in this red tape. He had been born in the Netherlands in 1946 to a Canadian soldier and a Dutch war bride. In 1972 he experienced difficulties trying to get a passport for overseas military service. Though he had spent his entire life in Québec and was serving in the Canadian military at the time, government agents told him that since he had not applied to keep his status as a Canadian citizen before the age of 24 he was not a citizen.¹⁰⁶⁰ These cases reveal a range of problems associated with the 1946 and 1976 *Acts*, specifically, their provisions related to illegitimate children and proof of citizenship. In some cases, the people assumed that they had lost their citizenship when they merely needed to apply for proof of it. In other

¹⁰⁵⁸Bissett, "Thousands of War Brides and their Children are Discovering They Are Not Canadian Citizens," *Calgary Herald*, 22 April 2005.

¹⁰⁵⁹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 251-3.

¹⁰⁶⁰Dallaire was able to retain his status by finding numerous records of his early life and landing in Canada and standing before a citizenship judge. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 8; CBC, "Children of WWII Troops Still Fighting for Canadian Citizenship," *CBC News*, 4 July 2006; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 245; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 179, 185.

cases, such as Marion's and Peter's, sexist provisions in the 1946 *Act* meant that they had never had citizenship to begin with.

In 2001, Philip Mayfield of the Canadian Alliance Party questioned Elinor Caplan, then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), about why government officials told war bride Ivy T. of BC that she had to apply to again to become a Canadian citizen. He asked why and when was her citizenship revoked? And who had been authorized to summarily revoke it?¹⁰⁶¹ Mayfield's questions reveal a general level of confusion, on the part of some lay people and MPs, surrounding the citizenship status of war brides and their children – something quite reminiscent of wartime discussions.¹⁰⁶² Many CIC officials also appeared confused or inconsistent in their reading of the status of war brides and their children. Worse, they often became aware of this citizenship dilemma only when war bride families contacted them regarding their difficulties getting a passport.¹⁰⁶³ Why has this been the case?

Since 1969, Passport Canada has required proof of citizenship – a birth certificate or certificate of citizenship – for a Canadian to get a passport. Before this date passport requirements were laxer and proof of citizenship was not required.¹⁰⁶⁴ Presumably, the

¹⁰⁶¹Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 37th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 137 (2001-2002): 4355.

¹⁰⁶²In her article "Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings: Canadian War Brides and the Fictions of Naturalization," Sidney Eve Matrix discusses two examples of war brides writing into both the *Toronto Star* and the *Gazette* regarding their citizenship status and problems regarding proof of citizenship. Responses to their queries demonstrate confusion about the provisions of the *Citizenship Act* with some arguing the women were citizens and others arguing they were not and had to apply for citizenship. Matrix, "Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings," 69-71.

¹⁰⁶³CBC, "War Bride Loses, Then Recovers Canadian Citizenship," *CBC Evening News* (2 August 1994), Television, 01:30-02:05.

¹⁰⁶⁴Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 2; Government of Canada, "History of Passports," *Immigration and Citizenship*, 2014.

documentation required and expense associated with international travel meant that initially only those war brides and children from medium to higher socio-economic positions discovered a problem with their citizenship status. This explains why initial reports on the subject were limited until the 1990s. The number of reported incidents rose when travel became more affordable among Canada's general population. Even more cases emerged following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York, which caused further tightening of passport requirements. In 2007, Canadians had to show a passport to enter the US – whereas before that they merely needed to present a driver's license. This resulted in even more families from varied socio-economic backgrounds becoming aware of their ambiguous citizenship status.¹⁰⁶⁵

Once flagged, the process of resolving the question of citizenship or proving one's status could be quite difficult for war brides and their children, since not all CIC officials understood the 1946 *Act's* provision of automatic citizenship.¹⁰⁶⁶ Even when they did recognize the unique status of this group, its members still needed to prove their citizenship by providing many documents, including birth and marriage certificates and proof of landing in Canada.¹⁰⁶⁷ The government expected women who had lost such

¹⁰⁶⁵Ibid.; Matrix, "Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings," 73-4; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 239-40; Harder, "In Canada of All Places," 203-4.

¹⁰⁶⁶CBC, "War Bride Loses, Then Recovers Canadian Citizenship," *CBC Evening News* (2 August 1994), Television, 01:30-02:05; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 3-6; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 3, 22; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, ix.

¹⁰⁶⁷CBC, "War Bride Loses, Then Recovers Canadian Citizenship," *CBC Evening News* (2 August 1994), Television, 01:30-02:05; Bissett, "Thousands of War Brides and their Children are Discovering They Are Not Canadian Citizens," *Calgary Herald*, 22 April 2005; Matrix, "Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings," 73-4.

documents due to moving, fires, or other circumstances over the years, such as Eileen Gillies, to go back to where they came from or to pay to obtain new documentation which, considering their age, was often an onerous and expensive process.¹⁰⁶⁸ Worse, it was not always possible for dependants to provide proof of their landing. For example, CIC officials asked Patricia, the daughter of a war bride, to prove her status by providing a copy of the passenger list of the ship she had arrived on as a child.¹⁰⁶⁹ But acquiring passenger lists from the Second World War is easier said than done. Strict security and secrecy measures during wartime meant that some ships did not keep accurate passenger lists. In addition, while some passenger lists are available at LAC on microfilm, the process of going through them can be time-consuming and difficult for those who do not know how to work the machines.¹⁰⁷⁰ Those lucky enough to get the necessary documentation still faced a frustrating process full of inconsistent advice from CIC officials, delays, and additional costs before they could re-establish their citizenship status or get proof of citizenship.¹⁰⁷¹ In these incidents, CIC officials proved quite inflexible by

¹⁰⁶⁸CBC, “War Bride Loses, Then Recovers Canadian Citizenship,” *CBC Evening News* (2 August 1994), Television, 00:00-00:57; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 4, 11; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 3.

¹⁰⁶⁹Bissett, “Thousands of War Brides and their Children are Discovering They Are Not Canadian Citizens,” *Calgary Herald*, 22 April 2005; Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 73-4.

¹⁰⁷⁰Melynda Jarratt has spent years going through microfilm at LAC to create passengers lists for these women and children to use as evidence. Bissett, “Thousands of War Brides and their Children are Discovering They Are Not Canadian Citizens,” *Calgary Herald*, 22 April 2005; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (10 May 2005): 12; Matrix, “Mediated Citizenship and Contested Belongings,” 73-4; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1st Session (26 March 2007): 7.

¹⁰⁷¹Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 3, 22; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, ix.

failing to work with the applicants or applying discretion for specific cases. Because many of these cases happened on a piecemeal basis over the years, and sometimes happened to be resolved privately before a citizenship judge or an appeal to the Governor General, the trials and tribulations of war brides and their children received limited media attention; that is, until Don Chapman and Joe Taylor brought this issue to the forefront of the public consciousness in 2005 and 2006.

Don Chapman was born in Vancouver, BC, to two Canadian parents. When he was young, his father moved his family to the US for work, but they frequently travelled to and from Canada to see relatives.¹⁰⁷² In 1961, when his father became a US citizen, 6-year-old Don did too, since the 1946 *Citizenship Act* did not recognize dual citizenship.¹⁰⁷³ At the age of 18, Chapman approached CIC officials in Vancouver to determine the possibility of his recovering his citizenship, only to be told no.¹⁰⁷⁴ At the time, Chapman did not know that they had been wrong in their assessment of his status, since he had until the age of 21 to return to Canada and ask for his citizenship to be reinstated.¹⁰⁷⁵ In trying to understand how and why he had lost his status, he met other individuals, including war brides and their children, who experienced similar problems with their citizenship.¹⁰⁷⁶ In the 1990s, he began contacting politicians and the media to

¹⁰⁷²Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 13-4; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 6-7.

¹⁰⁷³As children derived their citizenship from their fathers. Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1946, c. 15, part 1, section 5 and part 3, section 16; Harder, “In Canada of All Places,” 211; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 6-7.

¹⁰⁷⁴Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 6-7, 10-11.

¹⁰⁷⁵Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 1946, c. 15, part 3, subsection 18 (2).

¹⁰⁷⁶Jarratt, *War Brides*, 254; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 11-2, 30-34.

raise people's awareness of the problems that he and a myriad of other individuals faced. Through his efforts Chapman became the *de facto* leader of this group, who have dubbed themselves the Lost Canadians, individuals who believe that their status has been lost or not recognized as a result of the 1946 *Citizenship Act*.¹⁰⁷⁷

At the same time Don Chapman was raising awareness about and connecting with Lost Canadians across the country, Joe Taylor, the child of a British war bride, was taking his citizenship claims to the Canadian courts. Taylor had been born out of wedlock in 1944 to a British woman and Canadian serviceman. After his birth, his parents married and settled in BC. Their marriage failed shortly thereafter, and his mother decided to return to England with her son in 1946.¹⁰⁷⁸ Though he grew up in England, Taylor understood himself to be both a British and a Canadian citizen.¹⁰⁷⁹ In his mid-twenties, he approached Canada House in London about moving back to Canada. Officials there provided him with application forms for immigration, telling him that he needed a sponsor in Canada. Although he completed the forms and wrote to his father in BC asking for his sponsorship, after months of no word Taylor went about building a life for himself in the UK.¹⁰⁸⁰ Thirty years later, after several visits to BC, and even purchasing a home in

¹⁰⁷⁷Lost Canadians – individuals, including but not limited to war brides, children of war brides, children born out of wedlock, children whose fathers became citizens of another country, etc. who believe that they are Canadians citizens, but have lost or were not officially considered citizens due to changes in or obscure and sexist wording in Canada's *Citizenship Acts*. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 13-4; 'Lost' Canadians get Citizenship," *Globe and Mail*, 20 February 2007; Harder, "'In Canada of All Places,'" 211; Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, xii, 12-3, 15, 16-26, 130, 224.

¹⁰⁷⁸Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 14; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 240-2.

¹⁰⁷⁹Taylor v. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration [2006] FC 1053 at paras 19.

¹⁰⁸⁰Ibid., at paras 21-2; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 245-6.

Victoria, Taylor decided that he wanted to live in Canada permanently.¹⁰⁸¹ In 2003, he applied for a certificate of Canadian citizenship but was denied on the grounds that he had lost his citizenship because he had failed to apply before his 24th birthday. When he submitted a second application over a year later, he was informed that he never had citizenship to begin with since he was born out of wedlock.¹⁰⁸² When Taylor's appeals to Canadian immigration and government officials, including then sitting Prime Minister Paul Martin and MCI Joe Volpe, went unheeded, he took his case to the Canadian courts leading to a review by the Federal Court.¹⁰⁸³

Media coverage of Chapman's, Taylor's, and other Lost Canadians' stories began to draw public attention to their cause. Throughout the 2000s, MPs began to speak out about the issue in the House of Commons and in the press, arguing that it was ridiculous that Canadian-born people had to go through a naturalization process normally associated with recent immigrants.¹⁰⁸⁴ This rise in attention to the citizenship dilemmas of the Lost Canadians coincided with the creation of a 2005 Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration by the then sitting Liberal Government. The Committee, chaired by Andrew Telegdi, aimed to study Canada's citizenship law and identify pressing citizenship issues. It provided Lost Canadians the ability to testify directly to government officials about

¹⁰⁸¹Ibid., at paras 19-25; Ibid.

¹⁰⁸²Taylor v. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration [2006] FC 1053 at paras 25-26; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 14-15.

¹⁰⁸³Ibid., at paras 26-7; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 246.

¹⁰⁸⁴Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 37th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 137 (2001-2002): 4355; Bissett, "Thousands of War Brides and Their Children are Discovering They Are Not Canadian Citizens," *Calgary Herald*, 22 April 2005; Jacqueline Chartier, "War Brides and Their Children: While Some Live the Canadian Dream, Many Others Battle for Their Citizenship," *Esprit de Corps*, July 2007; Lois Harder and Lyubov Zhyznomirska, "Claims of Belonging: Recent Tales of Trouble in Canadian Citizenship," *Ethnicities* 12 (3) (2012): 310.

their uncertain citizenship status and their experiences with the CIC, including their struggles related to fees, access to pensions, and the loss of their ability to vote.¹⁰⁸⁵

Speaking to the Committee on behalf of the war bride community in April 2005, Melynda Jarrett provided a brief overview of the history of war brides and their current citizenship dilemma, specifically regarding their problems obtaining passports without proof of citizenship, and their difficulty navigating the CIC to resolve the issue.¹⁰⁸⁶ In response to her testimony, the Chair noted that he found the situation “disturbing” as the Department of Immigration had spent millions of dollars trying to strip fraudulent citizenship, but no money or time to rectify this situation. This created a citizenship “Gordian knot,” especially for the children of war brides.¹⁰⁸⁷

In May 2005, the Committee met again, with a presentation by Daniel Jean, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Program Development, of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. He argued that war brides were automatically made citizens according to the 1946 *Act*, with the issue being solely about proof of citizenship.¹⁰⁸⁸ He argued that while some individuals found out as adults that they were not citizens, these were “isolated cases.”¹⁰⁸⁹ He noted the implementation of measures, such as updating the

¹⁰⁸⁵Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session (21 April 2005): 5-6; Jacqueline Chartier, “War Brides and Their Children: While Some Live the Canadian Dream, Many Others Battle for Their Citizenship,” *Esprit de Corps*, July 2007; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 240, 253-4.

¹⁰⁸⁶Jarratt also pointed out what she thought was the irony of her testifying to the citizenship problems of these women in the very same year that Canada Post released a commemorative first day cover to honour these women for their contribution to Canadian nation building. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session, (21 April 2005): 2, 1-6.

¹⁰⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁸⁸Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, Evidence*, 38th Parliament, 1st Session, (10 May 2005): 1-4.

¹⁰⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 2.

CIC website and educating call support centre staff to be better informed about the war bride situation, to provide better information to those affected.¹⁰⁹⁰ In the question period that followed, one member of the Committee, Bill Siksay, asked whether it was not contradictory to guarantee citizenship to these women and children only to “arbitrarily” strip them of it. Jean responded: “The way you phrase your question, you’re suggesting that citizenship should not be lost under any circumstances. That’s not the way citizenship legislation has been structured over time.”¹⁰⁹¹ When another Committee member, Inky Mark, discussed the struggle his brother faced trying to get his old age pension – his brother had lost his citizenship documentation and only through Mark’s intervention was the matter resolved – Jean, again, characterized this as an “isolated incident” and attested to the “fairly easy process” of replacing proof of citizenship.¹⁰⁹² The subsequent testimony of Jarratt challenged Jean’s picturesque representation of the workings of the CIC and the ease of acquiring proof of citizenship.

Jarratt noted many examples of war brides and their children who had been told by CIC officials that they were not citizens. She also discussed the difficulty they faced in acquiring proof of citizenship, including the case of one man who provided the requested identification and yet his status still had not been resolved.¹⁰⁹³ When asked later in the session whether she felt the problem was one of politics or bureaucracy, Jarratt stated: “I don’t think it’s politics; I think it’s bureaucracy. I think the bureaucracy is incapable of handling what they call unique, isolated cases. They’re not unique; there are a lot of them.

¹⁰⁹⁰Ibid.

¹⁰⁹¹Ibid., 6.

¹⁰⁹²Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁹³Ibid., 7-9.

I'm getting them.”¹⁰⁹⁴ She further provided a human face to this issue in her description of a war bride who was undergoing cancer treatment.¹⁰⁹⁵ She pointed out that for that woman, the costs of acquiring new certificates and the time waiting to resolve the issue was a matter of life and death.¹⁰⁹⁶ The divergent testimonies of Jean and Jarratt – who it should be noted had met to discuss how to improve the situation – reflect the difference between a bureaucratic reading of the issue and the lived experience of people affected by it. The CIC may have had a policy specific to the war brides' citizenship dilemma; however, many examples discussed throughout this chapter demonstrate that not all CIC officials implemented the policy in the easy fashion described by Jean.

Although the Committee's October 2005 final report concluded that Canada's citizenship legislation needed to be revised, it did not include any recommendations regarding the dilemmas faced by Lost Canadians.¹⁰⁹⁷ Further attention to the issue came when Joe Taylor's case was heard before the Federal Court in BC on 30 May 2006. It centered around two key questions: whether a person who was born out of wedlock and outside Canada before 15 February 1977 can derive Canadian citizenship only from his or her mother? And, whether people, born outside Canada before 15 February 1977, automatically lost citizenship if they failed to register a declaration of retention of

¹⁰⁹⁴Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁹⁵Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁹⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁹⁷Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration – Updating Canada's Citizenship Laws: It's Time*, 12th Report (October 2005): 3-4.

citizenship between their 21st and 24th birthdays?¹⁰⁹⁸ The answer to both questions would have immense repercussions for the children of war brides.

During the hearing, the representative of the MCI argued that the Citizen Officer who handled Taylor's case deemed him not to be a citizen since he was born out of wedlock outside of Canada.¹⁰⁹⁹ Taylor and his lawyer countered, stating that focusing solely on the *Citizenship Act* of 1946 ignored the provisions of the 1945 Order in Council P.C. 858 that made the dependants of Canadian servicemen automatically Canadians, which the MCI argued did not grant citizenship, but only the right to land in Canada.¹¹⁰⁰ Taylor's lawyer argued that prior and existing legislation was discriminatory, since his citizenship was denied due to illegitimacy, which infringed on Taylor's right to equality guaranteed in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The MCI countered that *Charter* rights ought not be "retroactively" applied.¹¹⁰¹ The MCI also submitted that if the Citizenship Officer erred when interpreting the law, Taylor still lost his citizenship by not applying to keep his status before his 24th birthday. When Taylor stated that he had no knowledge of this requirement, the MIC responded that "ignorance of the law is no excuse."¹¹⁰²

The judge in the case, Luc Martineau, ruled in Taylor's favor, declaring him a Canadian citizen and directing the MCI to issue him a certificate of citizenship.¹¹⁰³ He

¹⁰⁹⁸Taylor v. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration [2006] FC 1053 at paras 10; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 14-15.

¹⁰⁹⁹His parents had married but it was after his birth.

¹¹⁰⁰Taylor v. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration [2006] FC 1053 at paras 30-32, 38-9.

¹¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, at paras 42-3.

¹¹⁰²*Ibid.*, at paras 40.

¹¹⁰³*Ibid.*, at paras 284.

concluded that denying Taylor's ability to derive his citizenship from his father violated gender and marital status equality protections in the *Charter*. Further, he questioned why Parliament in 1977 had no problem retroactively correcting discriminatory legislation against women, but saw no reason in 2006 to correct injustices caused to illegitimate children born abroad or after 1947.¹¹⁰⁴ He concluded that due process had not been fulfilled since the Government of Canada had not provided adequate notice to those affected by the provision of their need to apply to retain their status before their 24th birthday.¹¹⁰⁵ Martineau's contentious decision prompted the then sitting Conservative Government to quickly appeal the case. It argued that the government could not reasonably notify every individual affected by a change to legislation; that was an impossible task. The then acting MIC, Diane Finley, argued that if unchallenged the ruling left the government unable to apply the law, since anyone could argue that they were not contacted about changes to it.¹¹⁰⁶

Telegdi, the Chair of the Standing Committee, was frustrated by the decision, decrying the government's concerns as "rubbish" and describing the situation as a "bureaucratic nightmare."¹¹⁰⁷ Dallaire argued that the Conservatives' decision was "inhumane," with "bureaucratic terrorists" more interested in their own benefit than that

¹¹⁰⁴Ibid., at paras 282-3.

¹¹⁰⁵Ibid., at paras 247-50, 282; Harder, "'In Canada of All Places,'" 213.

¹¹⁰⁶Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1 Session (19 February 2007): 1-4; CBC, "In Depth: Lost Canadians, War Babies in Limbo," *CBC News*, March 2007; Ian Mulgrew, "Canadians Who Aren't," *Vancouver Sun*, 15 September 2007.

¹¹⁰⁷Andrew Mayeda, "War Brides' Children Engaged in 'Foolish' Fight: Citizenship Denied," *National Post*, 5 October 2006; CBC, "In Depth: Lost Canadians, War Babies in Limbo," *CBC News*, March 2007.

of their citizens.¹¹⁰⁸ The *National Post* called it “foolish,” while newspapers in Toronto, Edmonton, and Vancouver labelled the denial of citizenship of the son of a Canadian veteran as unfair.¹¹⁰⁹ The appeal also caused similar Lost Canadian cases to be delayed until its final judgement. On the delay of her case, Sheila Walshe of Kelowna BC – who had been fighting for her citizenship for 16 years – asked the CBC: “Do you think CIC will award me my citizenship posthumously? ... Will they let me be buried a Canadian, if they won’t let me live as one? I’m serious, because it is that important to me ... it’s my total identity.”¹¹¹⁰

Increased public awareness and outcry regarding the citizenship problems of Lost Canadians led the Conservative government to create a Standing Committee on the loss of Canadian citizenship in 2007.¹¹¹¹ In one of its first meetings, Diane Finley argued that the number of people impacted by provisions and amendments to the *Citizenship Act* in 1946 and 1976 was limited, with her estimating only about 450 anomalous cases.¹¹¹² Similar to Jean’s testimony of May 2005, Finley painted a picture of isolated cases

¹¹⁰⁸Dallaire further argued that the government was supposed to comply with laws in order to help citizens but this government seemed to see it the other way, interpreting and using their authority to only help themselves. Ibid.; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1st Session (26 February 2007): 3-4.

¹¹⁰⁹Oliver Moore, “War Bride’s Son Fights for Citizenship,” *Globe and Mail*, 3 October 2006; Mayeda, “War Brides’ Children Engaged in ‘Foolish’ Fight,” *National Post*, 5 October 2006; Mulgrew, “Canadians Who Aren’t,” *Vancouver Sun*, 15 September 2007; Richard Foot, “Children of War Brides Might Not be Canadians After All,” *Edmonton Journal*, 3 November 2007

¹¹¹⁰CBC, “In Depth: Lost Canadians, War Babies in Limbo,” *CBC News*, March 2007.

¹¹¹¹The Committee’s creation coincided with the 60th anniversary of the enactment of the original *Citizenship Act* in 1947 and 30th anniversary of the 1977 amended *Citizenship Act*. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 1.

¹¹¹²Diane Finley implied throughout her testimony that the issue was small and receiving disproportionate attention. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1st Session (19 February 2007): 1-4; Harder, “‘In Canada of All Places,’” 203.

efficiently being handled by CIC officials. However, testimony given to the new Standing Committee challenged both Finley's estimations and the competency of CIC officials. In his testimony to the 2007 Committee, Barry Edmonston, a demographer at the University of Victoria, presented figures far larger than the numbers presented by the MIC, estimating affected individuals in the tens of thousands. However, he did concede that it was likely that only a small subset of the 25,000 to 30,000 war brides and 6,000 war babies residing in Canada were experiencing problems, i.e., having to provide documents and not having them.¹¹¹³

Committee members also noted how some CIC officials tended to defer blame from themselves to the individuals in these cases. Letters denying people's citizenship often provided claimants with no information about avenues for recourse; they expected people to look up certificates or shipping lists on their own.¹¹¹⁴ In one example, the CIC informed children of armed forced personnel born abroad between 1947 to 1977 that their DND issued certificates of birth did not count as proof of citizenship; instead they should have had a document known as Registration of Birth Abroad. Yet, Richard Fadden, Deputy Minister Department of Citizenship and Immigration, explained that according to the rules it was the DND's job to register these children with the Registrar of Canadian Citizenship in order to generate the document, but sometimes they did not. When Siksay asked whether this issue was one of bureaucratic error, Fadden responded that while a

¹¹¹³Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 1-8; Harder, "In Canada of All Places," 203.

¹¹¹⁴Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1st Session (26 March 2007): 1-7.

possibility, it was also the responsibility of the parents to “make sure things are done properly as well.”¹¹¹⁵ In this case, Fadden framed the failure of the DND to register the births of children of servicemen born abroad as the failure of the children’s parents to ensure that the DND had done its job. Fadden’s rebuttal echoed Dallaire’s complaint to the media that government officials appeared more concerned with protecting themselves than admitting to their past failings and addressing the problems of affected individuals.

In March 2007, the next session of the Committee focussed on the testimonies of Chapman, Jarratt, and others who self-identified as Lost Canadians. They revealed a common feeling of confusion surrounding how, when, and why citizenship status had been lost, as well as frustration that a deadline to retain citizenship had existed but that they had never been made aware of this fact.¹¹¹⁶ They also expressed their dissatisfaction with the CIC’s handling of their cases, particularly long delays in filing applications.¹¹¹⁷ Other witnesses stressed the ridiculous nature of the situation. Christina Godlewska, a student articling with the BC Civil Liberties Association, argued that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration needed to realign its priorities, since it focussed more on keeping citizenship “special” than ensuring that Canadians “are never lost or rejected or turned away by their country.”¹¹¹⁸ Donald Galloway, Professor of Law at the University

¹¹¹⁵Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1st Session (19 February 2007): 6-7.

¹¹¹⁶Both Don Chapman and Melynda Jarratt reiterated their testimonies from the prior Standing Committee, including points about individuals living and working in Canada their entire lives only to be told that they had to prove they were Canadians, as well as continuing the strategy of appealing to ethnic nationalism by citing the military service of a number of affected individuals’ husbands, fathers, or grandfathers. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1st Session (26 March 2007): 1-7.

¹¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 11-2, 14, 17.

of Victoria, argued, “We’re not just dealing with historical anomalies concerning people who have arrived in Canada and are being mistreated or people who were born here and were mistreated. It’s something that continues.”¹¹¹⁹ He characterized the citizenship situation as the government “not shirking but overlooking” the interests of its citizens.¹¹²⁰

Before the release of the Standing Committee’s final report, the Federal Court of Appeal released its ruling regarding the appeal of the Martineau decision on 2 November 2007. While expressing sympathy for Taylor’s situation, Judge Robert Décary disagreed with Martineau’s ruling. He argued that citizenship was not created until the 1946 *Act* and that the Order in Councils mentioned did not make one a citizen, but merely allowed one entry into Canada.¹¹²¹ He further argued that the *Charter* ought not be applied retroactively, noting that the Supreme Court had held that not every situation involving events before the *Charter* should involve a retrospective application of it.¹¹²² He noted that had Taylor been considered legitimate, the loss provision of the *Citizenship Act* would still have applied. In response to Taylor’s argument about lack of fairness and notice, the judge ruled that the legislative process in Canada was public – ignorance of the law was no excuse since “a person is presumed to know the law and is bound by the law.”¹¹²³ Judge Décary ruled that Taylor was not a citizen, and that if he wanted to be one he could apply for it under the current *Act*.¹¹²⁴

¹¹¹⁹Donald Galloway felt that in the past Canadians governments had acted to quickly to resolve visible problems without taking the time to look for and address the more “invisible problems.” *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 17.

¹¹²¹The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Joseph Taylor [2007] FCA 349 at paras 56-7.

¹¹²²*Ibid.*, at paras 59-60, 71.

¹¹²³*Ibid.*, at paras 59-60, 82-5, 89-93.

¹¹²⁴*Ibid.*, at paras 108.

The Standing Committee's final report on the loss of Canadian citizenship disagreed with judge Décary and the MIC, arguing that major mistakes had been made because the law did not match the evolving ideals of Canadian society.¹¹²⁵ In its opinion, systemic issues in the CIC, such as excessive delays, high costs, inconsistent information, and its insensitivity to the situations of affected individuals, worsened the situation.¹¹²⁶ It argued that the process of resolving citizenship problems needed to be more open and transparent so that affected individuals could resolve problems quickly and efficiently.¹¹²⁷ It argued that the *Citizenship Act* needed to be amended to reflect modern Canadian values, that citizenship should be a permanent status, lost only by renunciation of it, and that rules determining who was a citizen needed to be fewer in number, as well as clearer and easier for people to understand. It declared that citizenship should apply to all – not just those born after a specific date – and those who had lost it thusly should have it “resumed retroactive to the date it was lost.”¹¹²⁸ It recommended that amendments to the *Act* should list the following as Canadian citizens: anyone born in Canada at any time; anyone born abroad at any time to a Canadian mother or father; and anyone who was naturalized to Canada at any time.¹¹²⁹ The Committee also recommended that the Minister seek approval through the Governor in Council for a special grant of citizenship for Taylor.¹¹³⁰

¹¹²⁵Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration - Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session (December 2007): 30, 32.

¹¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 19, 30.

¹¹²⁷*Ibid.*, 30-1.

¹¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 26-37.

¹¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 28-9.

¹¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 32.

Shortly after the release of the Committee's report, the Conservative government announced that it would amend the *Citizenship Act* to address the issue of Lost Canadians. Considering the actions of the MIC in challenging Taylor's court cases, this decision did not come about lightly. Following judge Décary's ruling, Taylor reportedly intended to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada.¹¹³¹ Around the same time, the Conservative government cancelled the Court Challenges Program, essentially cutting Taylor off from funding to support his court case, making him risk bankruptcy to continue his fight.¹¹³² However, negative press coverage caused by its appeal of Taylor's case in the face of popular support for Taylor and others like him, combined with the final report of the Standing Committee, put the MIC in a poor situation. If it continued to do nothing then it would continue to face public and media pressure to resolve the situation. Worse, if it allowed Taylor's case to go to the Supreme Court, it risked losing the case and creating a legal precedent that could open retroactive applications of the *Charter*. It seemed that Harper's Government did not wish to take such a chance, since it offered Taylor a special grant of citizenship – which he accepted, becoming a Canadian citizen on 24 January 2008 after having spent six years and roughly \$60,000 in legal costs to be so recognized.¹¹³³

¹¹³¹Ibid., 17.

¹¹³²The Court Challenges Program provided financial assistance for important court cases that advanced language and equality rights. Ibid., 18; CBC, "Scrapped Court Challenges Program Still 5-7 Years from Winding Down," *CBC News*, 4 March 2015; Teresa Healy and Stuart Trew, *The Harper Record, 2008-2015* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2015), 46.

¹¹³³Don Mills, "Ottawa Responds to 'Lost Canadians'; Government Drafts Legislation to Meet Issue," *National Post*, 3 December 2007; Daphne Bramham, "It's Official: Joe Taylor is Finally a Canadian Citizen," *Vancouver Sun*, 25 January 2008; CTV News Staff, "Lost Canadian Becomes Citizen over 60 Years Later," *CTV News*, 25 January 2008; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 247.

In a letter to Norman Doyle, Chair of the 2007 Standing Committee, Diane Finley reported that the Conservative government would be proposing a new Bill – C-37 – to amend the *Citizenship Act* to “bring Canadian citizenship laws into the modern era.”¹¹³⁴ It would rectify the situation so that anyone who became a citizen on 1 January 1947, or was born on or after that date in Canada or aboard, or who was naturalized on or after that date, and had lost citizenship or not had it confirmed, would be recognized.¹¹³⁵ The government still required proof of citizenship to qualify, leaving some individuals facing the same problems as before.¹¹³⁶ While the new amendments resolved a number of cases, they did not address all issues, chiefly children born out of wedlock before 1 January 1947 who still did not qualify as Canadian citizens.¹¹³⁷ These individuals were expected to apply for a special grant through the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who would examine cases on an individual basis.¹¹³⁸ Though some, like Taylor, have applied for this status, others have refused to do so, seeing the grant as insufficient since it does not recognize their Canadian citizenship from their date of arrival in Canada.¹¹³⁹

In 2014, the Conservative government amended the *Citizenship Act* yet again, with provisions to further resolve the citizenship problems of Lost Canadians, such as recognizing those born before 1 January 1947 as citizens.¹¹⁴⁰ However, it also increased

¹¹³⁴Letter to Norman Doyle, M.P., Chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, from Diane Finley, M.P., Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, 2 April 2008; Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 2008, c. 14.

¹¹³⁵*Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, section 3, subsection 1 (f-g); Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 275.

¹¹³⁶Chapman, *The Lost Canadians*, 275, 277.

¹¹³⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹³⁸Taylor v. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration [2006] FC 1053 at paras 21-2; Jarratt, *War Brides*, 253; Harder, “‘In Canada of All Places,’” 207-8; Harder and Zhyznomirska, “Claims of Belonging,” 310.

¹¹³⁹Jarratt, *War Brides*, 254.

¹¹⁴⁰Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 2014, c. 22, section 2; Healy and Trew, *The Harper Record*, 114.

restrictions on who could qualify as a citizen – increasing residency periods – and gave the government increased powers to revoke citizenship in cases of treason or acts of terrorism.¹¹⁴¹ It also weakened the roles of citizenship judges in granting citizenship and eliminated appeals to the Federal Courts when a citizenship application was refused – effectively stopping future cases like Taylor’s.¹¹⁴² While many Lost Canadians could secure their right to be called citizens, the legislation made it difficult for some newcomers to Canada to secure the same rights. New arrivals could not appeal to ethnic nationalism or Canadian military service in a good war to raise public awareness and support for their plight.

While Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government replaced and altered the wording of several of the 2014 amendments in 2017, the fact remains that citizenship legislation can be amended in such a way that one could go to bed one night a citizen and wake up the next day with one’s status in question.¹¹⁴³ The loss of citizenship or the inability to prove citizenship has real world consequences for people, affecting their ability to take part in democratic processes, such as voting, or accessing the welfare state. Further, the cases of Eileen Gillies, Don Chapman, Joe Taylor, and Sheila Walshe suggest that there are psychological effects connected to losing one’s citizenship – anger, frustration, and a sense of loss and a disconnect from one’s sense of self and involvement in the larger Canadian community. The convoluted and complicated process that denied some war

¹¹⁴¹Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C. 2014, c. 22, section 10, subsections 2-3, 6

¹¹⁴²*Ibid.*, section 3, subsection 5; John Carlaw, “A Party for New Canadians?: The Rhetoric and Reality of Neoconservative Citizenship and Immigration Policy,” in *The Harper Record, 2008-2015* ed. Teresa Healy and Stuart Trew (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2015), 114-6.

¹¹⁴³Canada, *Citizenship Act*, S.C., 2017, c. 14.

brides and their children their citizenship or made it difficult for them to get proof of citizenship, raises interesting questions about the meaning of citizenship rights, belonging, and identity in Canada today and in the future.

Canadian citizenship has not been a fixed right. Our initial citizenship legislation was sexist and coupled with racist immigration policies to ensure the development of a heteronormative white Canada. For some war brides and their children granted automatic citizenship, it had a shelf life with strings attached to it. The government's request that this group provide proof of citizenship is not inherently problematic. As the welfare state expanded in the postwar period the government required proof of citizenship to access it and deter fraud. For most Canadians, a birth certificate or certificate of citizenship was enough. However, some war brides and their children either never received or lost their proof of citizenship. In theory, CIC officials could have easily resolved many of these cases by exercising their own discretion. But, the report of the Standing Committee shows that was not the case, since some officials lacked confidence in their reading of policy or simply proved inflexible in working with applicants.

A disconnect between lawmakers' and lay peoples' understanding of the law, combined with bureaucratic mismanagement, left some war brides and their children confused about what their status was and how they could fix their situation. The issue was only resolved following amendments to the *Citizenship Acts* in 2014. However, other amendments to this *Act* demonstrate a continuity in the exclusionary nature of Canada's immigration and citizenship legislation, and show existing, past, and even future legislation can be amended in ways that weaken or deny rights without public knowledge.

If it took some war brides – the women presented by the government as being instrumental to Canada's development in the postwar period – almost 60 years for their citizenship issues to come to light and be resolved by the government, what chance do newcomers to Canada have getting their issues addressed?

Many questions remain. How do we define citizenship, identity, and belonging, so as not to exclude those who are most vulnerable? Is ignorance of the law always applicable? Should we not consider issues of equity and fairness when reading the law? How do we adjust legislation to better bridge the gap between specialist and lay knowledge of the law? Is it our responsibility as citizens to be hyper-vigilant and to be aware of new amendments as past governments have argued? Or, should the Canadian government be more diligent in making the public aware of these provisions? The answers to these questions are as complex as the issue of citizenship legislation itself. What the citizenship conundrums of war brides and their children reveal is how tenuous the concept and application of Canadian citizenship really is, as our status, like theirs, is not always clear, permanent, or assured.

Epilogue: Belonging and Laying Claim to Citizenship

In 2017, *The Guardian* newspaper reported that the British government had wrongly classified thousands of individuals who had immigrated to the UK from Caribbean countries between 1948 and 1971 as illegal immigrants, despite having legally landed in the UK. These people, dubbed the Windrush Generation, lost jobs, homes, benefits, and access to the National Health Services (NHS). They also faced detainment and deportation.¹¹⁴⁴ How did this happen? Investigative reporters traced the issue to changes in the *Immigration Act* in 1973, which granted specific individuals, such as the Windrush Generation, indefinite leave to remain, live, and work in the UK without restriction. Under the *Act* some members of the community were granted right of abode in the UK – the unrestricted right to enter and leave the country – and others became British citizens.¹¹⁴⁵ Yet, subsequent changes to British immigration legislation in 2012 required people to show their citizenship papers and legal landing status cards to be able to work, rent homes, and access the NHS.¹¹⁴⁶ According to then Home Secretary, Theresa May, this policy aimed “to create, here in Britain, a really hostile environment for illegal

¹¹⁴⁴The name Windrush comes from the *SS Empire Windrush* which docked at Tilbury Docks, Essex, on 22 June 1948. The ship was one of many that brought Caribbean immigrants to the UK shortly after the conclusion of the Second World War as a response to post-war labour shortages. The number of individuals wrongfully deported has been estimated to be around 60-80 people. Amelia Gentleman, “‘I Can’t Eat or Sleep’: The Woman Threatened with Deportation After 50 Years in Britain,” *The Guardian*, 28 November 2017; British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), “Windrush Generation: Who Are They and Why Are They Facing Problems?,” *BBC News*, 18 April 2018; Amelia Gentleman, “Windrush Victims Classed as Criminals in Government Blunder,” *The Guardian*, 15 November 2018.

¹¹⁴⁵*Ibid.* UK, *Windrush Scheme Casework Guidance* (Published for Home Office Staff on 22 August 2018), 8. Indefinite leave to remain does not grant voting rights or access to a passport. However, right of abode does grant these rights.

¹¹⁴⁶Amelia Hill, “‘Hostile Environment’: The Hardline Home Office Policy Tearing Families Part,” *The Guardian*, 28 November 2017; Gentleman, “‘I Can’t Eat or Sleep,’” *The Guardian*, 28 November 2017; BBC, “Windrush Generation,” *BBC News*, 18 April 2018; CBC, “Theresa May Says So-Called Windrush Immigrants from Caribbean Will Stay in Britain,” *CBC News*, 18 April 2018.

immigrants.”¹¹⁴⁷ Unfortunately, many members of the Windrush Generation lacked such documentation, meaning they could not work or access the welfare state. In 1973, the British Home Office did not record or issue any paperwork confirming people’s statuses under the new *Act*. Despite warnings from Home Office staff not to do so, in 2010 it destroyed an archive of landing slips documenting the Windrush era arrivals.¹¹⁴⁸ To make matters worse, many of the affected individuals had been young children when they arrived in the UK, landing under their parents’ passports and not their own. This left them with no proof of their legal entry into the country.¹¹⁴⁹ Many people could not get the documentation to prove their legal status, despite having lived and worked in the UK their entire lives.

At the outset of the scandal, Prime Minister Theresa May’s Conservative government denied any wrongdoing, pleading ignorance about the Windrush Generation situation. However, widespread media coverage and leaked documents that contradicted government statements led to the resignation of Home Secretary Amber Rudd in April 2018.¹¹⁵⁰ In response to the scandal, the British government announced its intention to provide compensation to affected individuals, and it waived citizenship fees for the

¹¹⁴⁷Hill, ““Hostile Environment,”” *The Guardian*, 28 November 2017; Jamie Grierson, “Hostile Environment: An Anatomy of a Policy Disaster,” *The Guardian*, 27 August 2018.

¹¹⁴⁸Whistleblowers reported that they had warned the government that such an action would result in some immigrants having no record of their arrival and could cause future hardship. Amelia Gentleman, “Whistleblowers Contradict No 10 Over Destroyed Windrush Landing Cards,” *The Guardian*, 18 April 2018.

¹¹⁴⁹A number of these children never applied for passports as adults. Ibid.; BBC, “Windrush Generation,” *BBC News*, 18 April 2018; Guardian Staff, ““It’s Inhumane”: The Windrush Victims Who Have Lost Jobs, Homes and Loved Ones,” *The Guardian*, 20 April 2018.

¹¹⁵⁰Gentleman, “Whistleblowers Contradict No 10 Over Destroyed Windrush Landing Cards,” *The Guardian*, 18 April 2018; Heather Stewart, Amelia Gentleman, and Nick Hopkins, “Amber Rudd Resigns Hours After Guardian Publishes Deportation Targets Letter,” *The Guardian*, 30 April 2018; BBC, “Amber Rudd Resigns as Home Secretary,” *BBC News*, 30 April 2018.

families of the Windrush Generation.¹¹⁵¹ As of early 2019, the government's compensation scheme has not been implemented, leading to continual hardships in the community.¹¹⁵²

What does this issue have to do with the experiences of British war brides in Canada? These two stories are markedly different. The Windrush Generation experienced xenophobic and racist treatment in the UK, whereas British war brides in Canada have been presented as ideal immigrants. While some British war brides and their children experienced a temporary loss of voting rights, passports, and in some cases pensions, they did not experience the level of financial hardship, detainment, or deportation that the Windrush have. Yet, these stories share a common thread. Government schemes brought both groups to another country at the end of the Second World War. Both governments promised these groups legal landing status or citizenship rights yet did not give them any documentation to prove this. These governments also did not tell them how to apply for necessary documentation, nor did they inform them of changes to immigration legislation (specifically proof of citizenship or landing). This placed people's legal status in limbo.

The stories of both groups have also been integrated into the nostalgic collective memory of their new countries' pasts. In 2005, Canada Post published a first day envelope commemorating the 60th anniversary of the landing of British war brides in Canada, which lauded their role in the building of postwar Canada. The 2012 opening

¹¹⁵¹Piper Crerar, Anne Perkins and Amelia Gentleman, "Windrush Generation Will Get UK Citizenship, Say Amber Rudd," *The Guardian*, 23 April 2018; Grierson, "Hostile Environment," *The Guardian*, 27 August 2018.

¹¹⁵²As of 2019, only one person has received financial assistance from the Government. Amelia Gentleman, "Home Office Windrush Fund Helped Only One Person by End of 2018," *The Guardian*, 7 February 2019.

ceremonies of the London Olympic Games commemorated the SS *Empire Windrush* and the immigrants that it brought to Britain just after the Second World War.¹¹⁵³ These nostalgic portrayals belied the reality of people's lived experiences, ignoring the years of cruel bureaucratic mismanagement that war brides and the Windrush Generation have faced.

The issue of who can *belong to*, or *lay claim to*, citizenship and national identity, lay at the core of the citizenship conundrums of these groups. The aggressive agenda of the 2018 “hostile environment” policy – to rid the UK of all illegal immigrants – has had devastating effects on the Windrush Generation, leading to many people losing their jobs and homes.¹¹⁵⁴ Some of them have been denied the ability to travel or re-enter the country, making them miss deaths and funerals of their loved ones.¹¹⁵⁵ This group has suffered extreme financial hardship and irreparable psychological damage at the hands of their government. Despite having lived, worked, and paid taxes their whole lives in the UK, May's policy framed them as not only illegal, but unwanted immigrants. The effect of the government's actions towards this community is best summarized by the statement of Ms. O'Connor who told *The Guardian*: “They made me feel like I'm not British.”¹¹⁵⁶

Access to citizenship has always been politically charged and exclusionary at its worst. As countries around the world continue to tighten immigration policies to combat threats of terrorism or xenophobic fears of increased immigration, as seen in the case of Canada and the UK, it is likely that more historic immigrant groups may discover that

¹¹⁵³BBC, “Windrush Generation,” *BBC News*, 18 April 2018.

¹¹⁵⁴Staff, “‘It's Inhumane,’” *The Guardian*, 20 April 2018.

¹¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*

their citizenship or landing status is questioned. No doubt others will face struggles like these two groups. Public awareness of these issues and the speed at which governments respond to these problems may be shaped by the race and class of those affected individuals. As these cases have demonstrated, the ability to claim a connection to the historic nation building of the country can help affected groups achieve a degree of media and public sympathy and support. However, that legacy has its limitations. Some British war brides – the supposed darlings of Canadian immigration history – did not have their citizenship status resolved for many years. The experiences of the Windrush Generation and some British war brides and their children demonstrate that racism, sexism, and bureaucratic rigor are not matters of the past, but problems that plague access to citizenship within the Commonwealth and other countries to this day.

In the case of British war brides, becoming Canadian – in both the legal and psychological sense – has been a complicated and decades long journey. This dissertation has demonstrated that from the early 1800s to the late 1940s Canada has struggled to define the legal status of its citizens, as well as a collective national identity. What has remained consistent since the beginning of the Second World War is the nation's insistence on what it is not – i.e., British or American. My research has shown that government officials, as well as English and French speakers in Ontario and Québec, understood their nation and national identity to be distinct from that of the British and Americans. While many English Canadians still had bonds or sentiments of familiarity towards the UK, they did not necessarily see themselves as solely British, but also

Canadian citizens – even though the term had no legal meaning until 1947 and the country was, and still is today, under Crown sovereignty.

To date historians have paid little attention to the war bride community, presuming that as British immigrants in Canada they experienced limited adjustments and were embraced by the Canadian community. Or they overestimate the “extensive literature” on the subject.¹¹⁵⁷ As a result, active war brides and their children have worked tirelessly to preserve and disseminate their own history. The efforts of these individuals, most importantly Melynda Jarratt, have led to the creation of an immense collection of war bride interviews and memoirs. These accounts are a great source for historians since they provide insight into immigration, marriage, and gender constructions in Canada during and after the war. The rare records of negative experiences and the silences evident in these accounts also reveal a great deal about social taboos of the period and their long-term impact on the way these women remember and share their pasts.

The plethora of government and media sources on war brides also provides invaluable insight into the evolving English-Canadian nationalism of the war years. The Canada of the war years was a country of mixed nationalisms. Its government wished to assert and promote a national identity – a white English-speaking patriarchal society – across the country and on the world stage. Although popular with many English-Canadians in Ontario and Québec, it was not always accepted by those English-speakers who preferred to still identify as British subjects. It also excluded French and Indigenous populations. According to the conventional accounts, British war brides usually

¹¹⁵⁷Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 9.

assimilated willingly into the national identity promoted by CWB educational materials. However, some women bucked these assimilationist efforts by proudly asserting their British identities or embracing a mixed British-Canadian nationalism.

This sense of a distinct Canadian identity is most apparent in the government's treatment of British war brides throughout the war. Initially, government, military, and clerical officials opposed the marriages between British women and Canadian servicemen. The current historiographical claim that the backgrounds of these women made them ideal and sought after in the eyes of Canadian authorities is a fallacy. Their backgrounds did not protect them from accusations of prostitution or attempting to swindle young Canadian men into marriage. While the Canadian government expressed concern regarding the conduct of its servicemen with British women, specifically concerning bigamous marriages and illegitimate children, it did little to help these women. Instead, it focussed on deterrents to ensure that fewer Canadian-British marriages took place. However, couples that navigated the paperwork and bureaucracy in order to get married still faced suspicion from Canadian authorities regarding their love, morality, and character. Ultimately, the government's decision to pay for the door-to-door transportation scheme of servicemen's dependants was not a reflection of its predilection for British immigrants, but rather a begrudging acquiescence to the protests of its servicemen and its Australian and British allies.

Once the Canadian government had assumed control of the transportation of its servicemen's dependants to Canada, officials became concerned that if British war brides were not willing to go to – or would not be happy in – Canada, then the post-war

rehabilitation of their husbands could be adversely affected. Thus, the DND created the CWB to make Canada appear more attractive, as well as to educate and mold each British woman into the archetypal Canadian wife and mother. Its educational materials promoted the shedding of the women's British identity, placing immense pressure on them to assimilate into Canadian society as quick as possible. While never explicit in its definition of what it meant to be Canadian, the content of CWB educational materials provides a glimpse into what Canadian officials at the time perceived Canadian identity to be – a white English patriarchal society influenced by but distinct from the British. This distinct English-Canadian identity and nationalism appeared to be shared to some degree by the English-speaking populations of Ontario and Québec. Negative encounters between British war brides and English-speaking Ontarians or Québeckers stemmed from the women's criticisms of – or perceived inability to assimilate into – English-Canadian society. British war brides bound for French Canadian or Indigenous communities encountered identities that differed from their CWB education. Although many of them arrived to find welcoming families in Ontario and Québec, others did not, and faced rejection from both their new families and communities, despite their attempts to assimilate.

The story of these women does not end with their reunions with their husbands and their initial settlement in Canada. Like many immigrant groups before and after them, they had to learn to adapt to differences in climate, food, language, gender expectations, and customs, while simultaneously combatting homesickness and the fact that they would likely never see their families again. Canada was not always the land of abundance that

CWB lectures and pamphlets had depicted. It had dramatically poorer rural communities and its housing crisis left most major cities overcrowded with little to no housing available. Some reunited couples had to double up with in-laws, and in extreme cases, squat in unoccupied buildings to avoid living on the streets.

Worse, some British war brides experienced physical abuse. Others faced the difficulty of navigating their husbands' (and their own) PTSD. These women were often trapped in their marriages since divorce was both difficult to come by and stigmatized in this period in Canada. Many did not have the money to pay for a return trip to the UK. Given the situation it is not surprising that British war bride accounts tend to emphasize successful marriages. As any married couple will attest, marriage – good and bad marriages – require work, and these women, who had been told that it was essential that they kept their marriages and families together, took great pride in having done so. Considering the taboo nature of abuse and divorce some of these brides may have had little choice but to suffer in silence – a silence that they may not be ready to break.

Historians researching war brides should consider the gender constructions and taboo subject matter of the period when conducting interviews or analysing their stories. Some may have felt uncomfortable revealing embarrassing or traumatic facts about their marriages, such as violence, or initial experiences settling in Canada. We also cannot ignore the pressure some may have felt to fit into the nostalgic collective war bride memory. It is impossible to determine how happy some of these marriages and settlement experiences were, and by no means does my project intend to discount the claims of women that they were happy within their marriages and lives in Canada. Rather, I seek to

broaden the possible scope of the lived experience of British war brides in Canada – both the good and the bad. These women's accounts are useful to researchers not solely because they record good or bad experiences, but because they also reveal a great deal about the pressures Canadian and British women faced from their governments, media, and families to conform to domestic ideals. The way that society viewed, treated, and defined what it meant to be a woman during and after the war shaped the actions and decisions of these women at that time, as well as their memory of the past today.

There is much more work to be completed regarding war brides of the Second World War, yet, due to limits of finances, time, space, and the availability of living information, this dissertation could only focus on the settlement experiences and Canadian reception of British war brides in Ontario and Québec. A nationwide comparative study could reveal more information about conflicting conceptions of Canadian identity at the provincial and national level. Future projects could also engage in a transnational comparison of the treatment and reception of British war brides in other Commonwealth countries. For example, Australian officials were quick to take responsibility for their war brides, whereas Canadian officials were hesitant to do this, and New Zealand officials initially passed laws to stop wartime marriages. A comparison of these three countries could complement the growing literature on evolving white Dominion nationalism and local politics in this period.

While little has been written on British war brides, there exists even less scholarship on war brides of a non-British background. Did Canadian government officials' attitudes towards and treatment of Dutch, German, French, and other war brides

differ from that of British ones? Was the assimilationist message the CWB promoted to British women the same as that promoted to brides of a different background? How did Canadians respond to these brides in comparison to the British ones? Did non-British war brides encounter the same citizenship problems? These questions could provide further valuable insight into ethnic relations, immigration experiences, gender expectations, and nationalism in Canada during and after the Second World War.

This dissertation has also noted the breadth of social history yet to be completed on Canada and the Second World War. There is limited work on British war brides who were abandoned by their Canadian husbands in the UK. These women were often trapped in marriages that they could not end due to differences in jurisdictions, laws, and customs between Canada and the UK. A greater examination of this issue could provide interesting insights into Canadian government, military, and veteran relations, as well as political and social tensions between the UK and Canada over this issue. Similarly, the history of the overseas illegitimate children of these servicemen could provide more insights into occasions of less than admirable behaviour of our veterans during the war. As historians we need to be more willing to complicate the nostalgic depiction of this era.

The stories and experiences of these women, much like those of the Windrush Generation, highlight not only the historic and continued legacy of exclusionary immigration policies in the Commonwealth, but also bureaucratic mismanagement and the indifference of some government officials to resolve such issues. Officials' treatment of these communities reveals how ingrained the imagined community of nation states has become in our world today. State officials have gone to extreme degrees to safeguard

their nations from the alleged threat of the imaginary other, even if that means creating policies that turn members of its own community into outsiders. The struggles of these groups demonstrate that citizenship and legal landing status are not just a matter of access to rights and services, but also tied inextricably to one's sense of national belonging.

My research on British war brides, like the work of many before me, stemmed from my connection to my great-grandmother Vera, an English war bride. In the second year of my PhD my Nan passed away before I could interview her for this project. As I learned more and more about the varied experiences of women like my Nan, I grew frustrated that I had never asked her more about herself, as my Nan's stories of the war often focussed on my great-grandfather's service in the Canadian forces. Before my Nan's funeral, my family discovered a box of letters from my great-grandfather to her, as well as her travel diary of her voyage to Canada. These documents revealed my Nan's story. It was the story of a young woman surviving bombings, working and dating during the war, and leaving everything and everyone she knew behind her to start a new life in Canada. Her hardships, flaws, and the mistakes that she made along her journey, allowed me to understand my Nan in a way that I never truly did when she was still alive. The stories of British war brides, like my Nan, reveal a great deal about the gendered, racialized, and nationalistic constructions of Canada during and after the Second World War, as well as the memory, be it of the war, war brides, or Canada itself, that has developed since. They were complex human beings whose physical and psychological stress and trauma have previously been under-evaluated. Greater research on war brides and the social history of Canada during and after the war will likely complicate and

expand our understanding of this period in Canadian history – just as my Nan’s documents have changed how I viewed and understood her.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Charts

Chart 1.1: War Brides of Canadian Servicemen by Country of Origin from August 1944 to December 1946

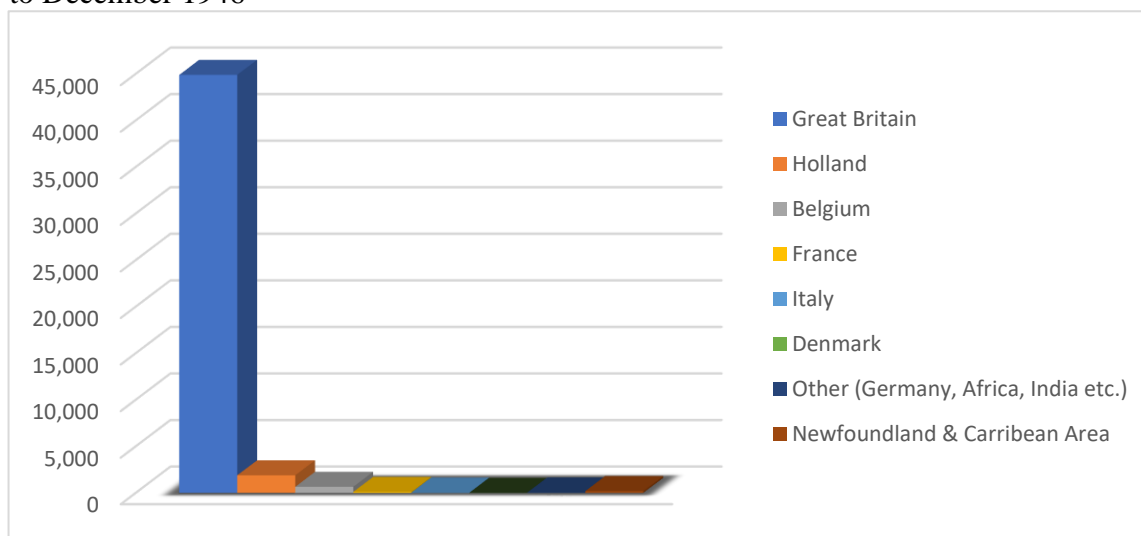


Chart 1.1: The numbers and breakdown by country of origin, including Newfoundland being lumped together with the Caribbean, are how the data was provided. There is no explanation for this lumping together – although it could be because the islands were considered British possessions – nor is there a way to break the numbers apart based on the information provided. War brides were also still being moved in 1947-1948 but specific breakdowns of numbers are not known. Considering the total number of war brides moved is estimated to be close to 70,000 it is likely the rates per group relatively similar.

Source: LAC, DND, RG24-C-1, MR# C-5219, “1903 HCR,” History of S.A.A.G., by Ellis. Melynda Jarratt includes a similar discussion of this source in *War Brides*, 269.

Chart 1.2: Immigration by Intended Destination and Occupation, 1947 – Dependant Wives

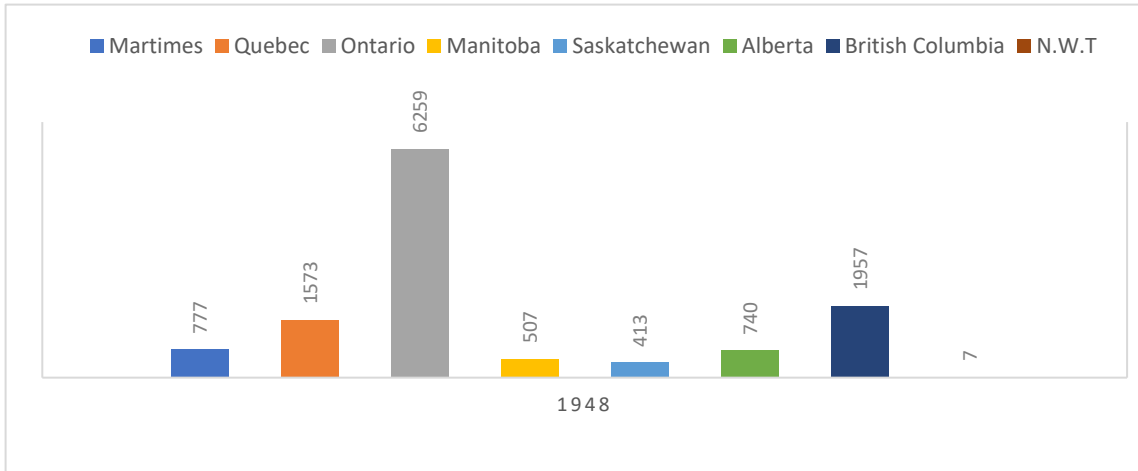
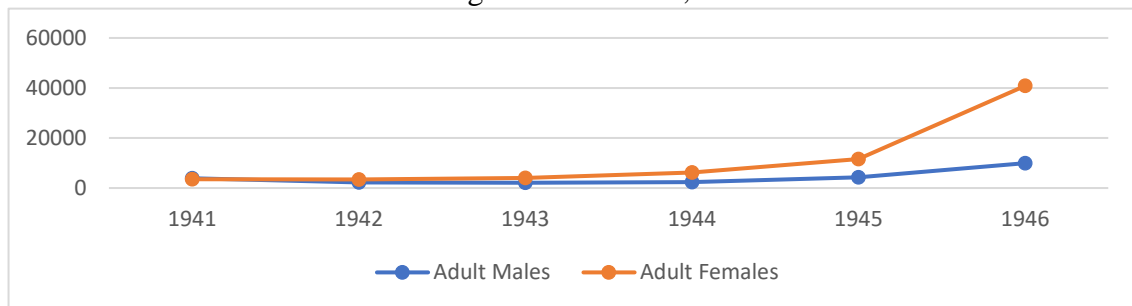


Chart 1.2: *Canada Year Books* charted key trends in Canada’s economy, population, society, and environment, and contained sections that charted the occupations of immigrants coming to Canada and which provinces they settled in (e.g., farmer, labourer, female domestic, dependant wives, etc.). Between 1942-1946 these occupations were not listed. *The Canada Year Book* removed the section due to the number of wives and children of servicemen arriving and general curtailing of other immigration during the war, stating that “the statistics of occupations are, therefore, meaningless and have been discontinued until circumstances warrant the reappearance of the data.”¹¹⁵⁸ While we can assume the numbers for 1942-1946 are predominately composed of servicemen’s dependants, we cannot concretely state the totals for each province. However, the statistics for 1947 resumed the use of occupations, including dependants of servicemen, and reveal that most dependants were settling in Ontario, Québec, and British Columbia.

Source(s): Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1947* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 181. The numbers and breakdown by province, with the Maritimes lumped together, are how the data was provided.

Chart 1.3: Sex Distribution of Immigrants to Canada, 1942-1946



¹¹⁵⁸Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1942-46* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1942-46).

Chart 1.4: Immigrant Arrivals to Canada, 1942-1946 – UK and US

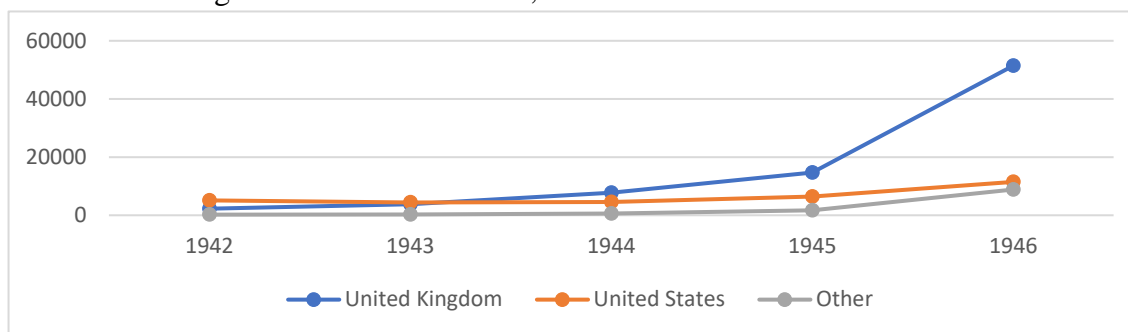
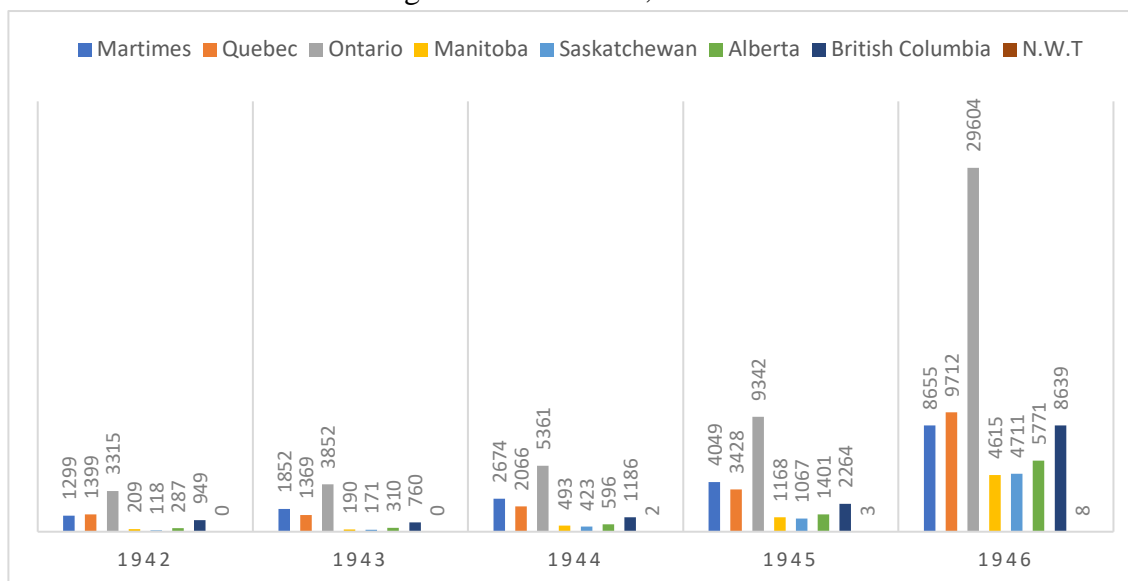


Chart 1.5: Destination of Immigrants into Canada, 1942-1946



Charts 1.3-5: Statistics from *The Canada Year Book* reveal that adult women made up a larger number of immigrants to Canada than adult men during the war. The statistics also reveal that most immigrants to Canada were of a British background. The numbers of British and female immigrants to Canada coincide with the movement of soldiers' dependants to Canada and are likely representative of war bride immigration to Canada. Most of these immigrants settled in Ontario, Québec, and British Columbia.

Source(s): Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book*, 1942-46.

Chart 1.6: Overcrowded Dwellings in Major Canadian Cities, 1941 (Populations over 30,000)

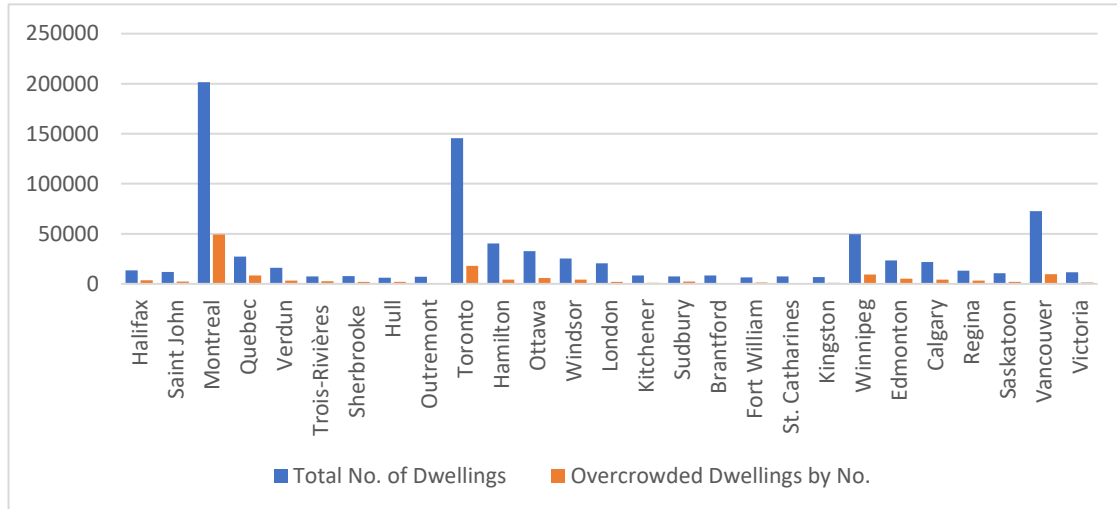


Chart 1.6: 24.4% dwellings of in Montréal were overcrowded and 12% of dwellings in Toronto were overcrowded.

Source: Canada, *Curtis Report*, 96.

Chart 1.7: Owner versus Tenant Occupied Dwellings in Montréal and Toronto, 1941

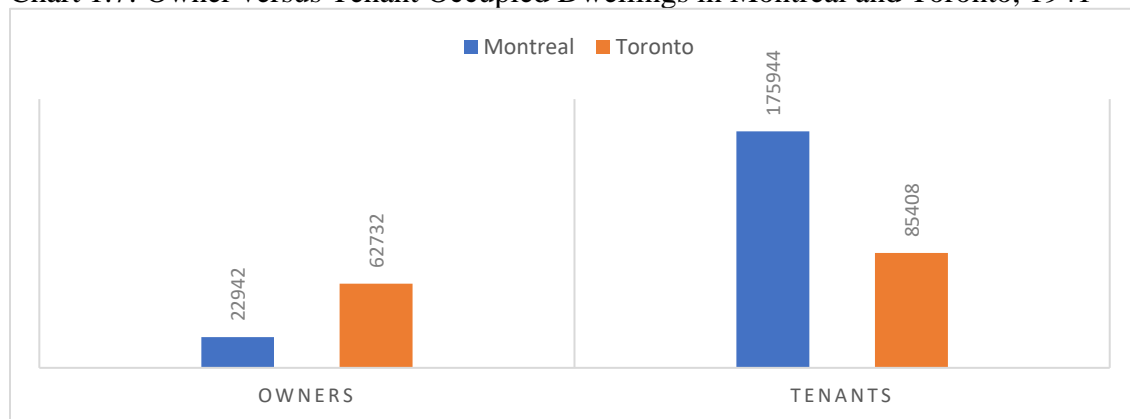


Chart 1.7 shows that of those occupying dwellings in these two major cities more people rented (57% in Toronto and 88% in Montréal) than owned their homes. Dwellings in the statistics refer to single houses, semi-detached homes, apartments and flats, sections of rows and terraces. Jill Wade also notes a decline in home ownership and rise in tenancy in this period. Wade, “Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947,” 42.

Source: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Eighth Census of Canada, 1941 – Volume IX: Housing* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty and Controller of Stationery, 1949), 6, 98.

Chart 1.8: Total Number of Divorces in Canada, 1901-1951

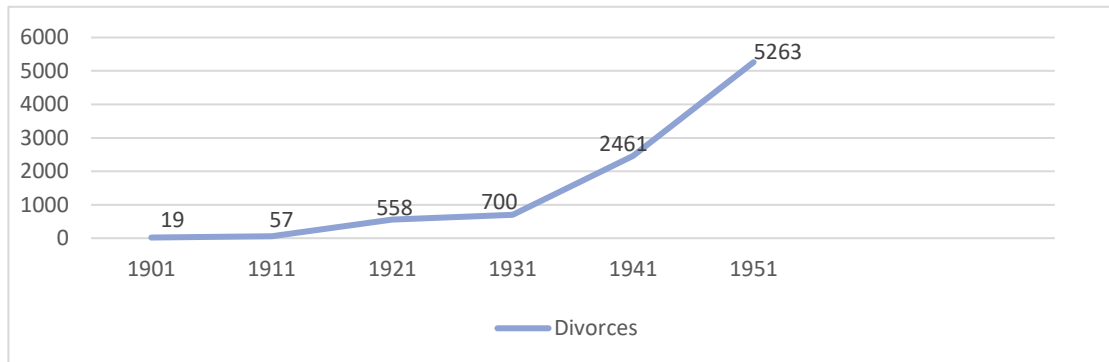


Chart 1.8: The number of divorces in Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century were low and only started to rise following the end of the First World War. These numbers increased sharply during and after the Second World War.

Source: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book*, 1956.

Table 1.9: Total Number of Divorces in Canada Compared to the Population of Canada, 1951

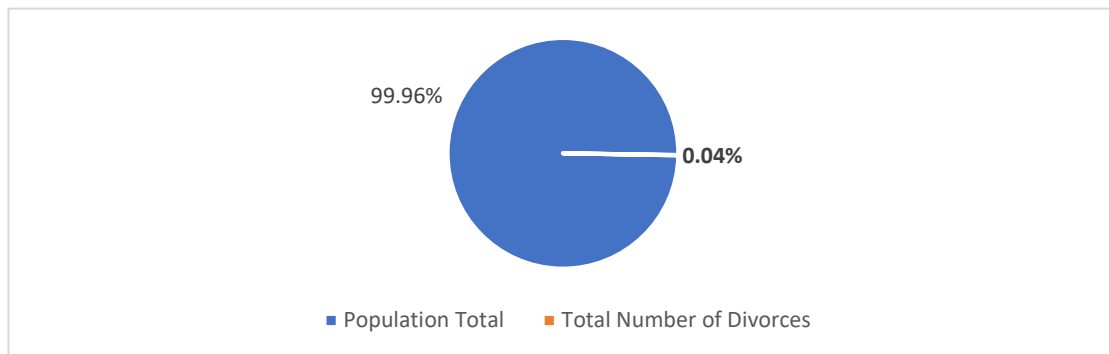


Chart 1.9: The total population of Canada in 1951 was 14,009,429 and the total number of divorces at this time were 5263, meaning only 0.04% of Canadians had acquired a divorce.

Source: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book*, 1956.

Appendix 2 – Images

Image 2.1 Portrait of my Nan, Vera T., and my great-grandfather, Frederick T.



Source: Private Collection.

Image 2.2: “This Army”



Source: Coughlin, “This Army,” *The Maple Leaf* – Belgium, 5 June 1945.

Image 2.3: “Points Pending”



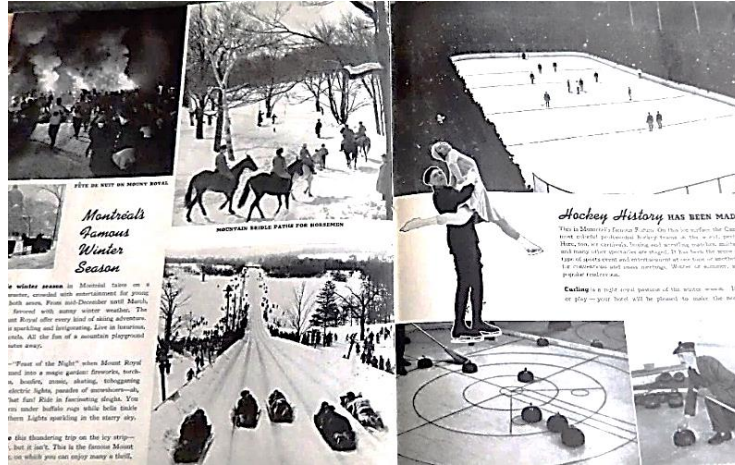
Source: Parker, “Points Pending,” *The Maple Leaf – Holland*, 6 November 1945.

Image 2.4: Lt.-Col. D.A. Clarke of the CWB and Miss M.R. Duff of CRC Hostels at Train Station taking Canadian war bride and children to Liverpool en route to Canada. This picture reflects the collaborative nature of the free passage scheme, as well as the close relationship between the CWB and the CRC.



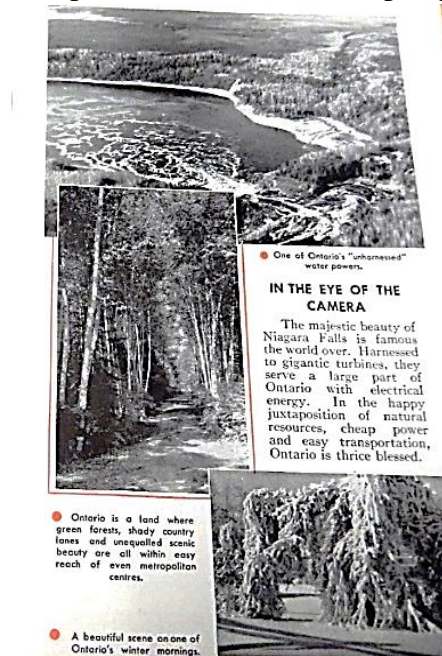
Source: LAC, DND, R112-0-2-E, “Canadian Forces Joint Imagery Centre (CFJIC) – Photographs – Army,” accession number 1967-052 NPC, item number 43450, Photographer Charles H. Richer, Photograph of Lt.-Col. D.A. Clarke of the CWB and Miss M.R. Duff of CRC Hostels at Train Station taking Canadian war bride and children to Liverpool en route to Canada, 4 December 1944.

Image 2.5: Come to Montréal – one of the few sections on winter and dedicated entirely to winter activities.



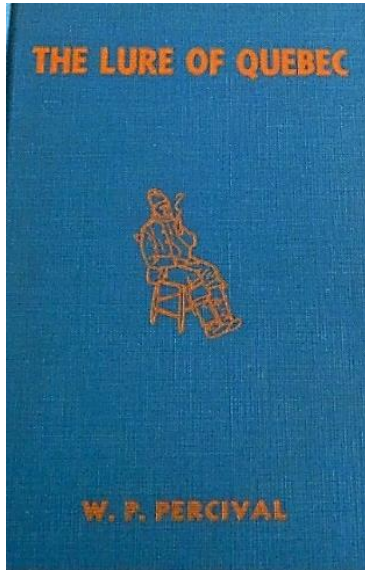
Source: BANQ, *Come to Montréal*, (Québec: 1937), 19-21.

Image 2.6: Ontario, The Heart of the New World: Where Your Future Awaits – one of four pictures of winter in the pamphlet.

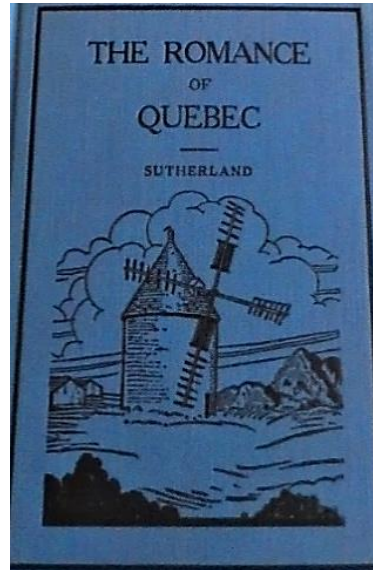


Source: AO, PAMPH 1946 #19, Ontario Department of Planning and Development, *Ontario, The Heart of the New World*, 7, 9, 34.

Images 2.7: The Lure of Québec



Images 2.8: The Romance of Québec



Source(s): LAC, Percival, *The Lure of Québec*; LAC, Sutherland, *The Romance of Québec*.

Image 2.9: *Come to Montréal* – The text reads as follows: “Under the leadership of Chief Poking Fire, seen here with his squaw and son, the Indians at Caughnawaga Reservation live peacefully today where their ancestors camped. A short drive on Route no. 3 over the Honoré Mercier Bridge takes you to the reservation. Kateri Tekakwitha “Lily of the Mohawks,” early Christian Indian martyr, lived here when her own tribe drove her from home.”



Source: BAnQ, *Come to Montréal*, (Québec: 193?), 12.


Image 2.10: Menu – RMS *Aquitania*

Saturday, July 27, 1946

BREAKFAST	
Fresh Fruit	
Rolled Oats	Corn Flakes
Fresh Codfish Cakes, Tomato Sauce	
OR	
Broiled Breakfast Bacon	
Fried, Turned or Boiled Egg	
Fresh Bread	White Rolls
Preserves	Tea
	Coffee
LUNCHEON	
Thick Ox Tail Soup	
Poached Fillets of Turbot, Bercy	
OR	
Grilled Ham Slice, Sausage and Tomatoes	
Buttered Green Cabbage	
Saute and Baked Jacket Potatoes	
OR	
COLD:—Rolled Ox Tongue	Luncheon Sausage
Vegetable and Sliced Beetroot Salad, French Dressing	Apple Pie
OR	
Biscuits and Cheese	Coffee
DINNER	
Consommé Celestine	
Fried Fillets of Sole, Tartare	
OR	
Roast Vermont Turkey, Chipolata	
Buttered French Beans	
Boiled and Roast Potatoes	
Ice Cream	
OR	
Biscuits and Cheese	Coffee

Image 2.11: Menu – SS *Union-Castle Line*

UNION-CASTLE LINE.

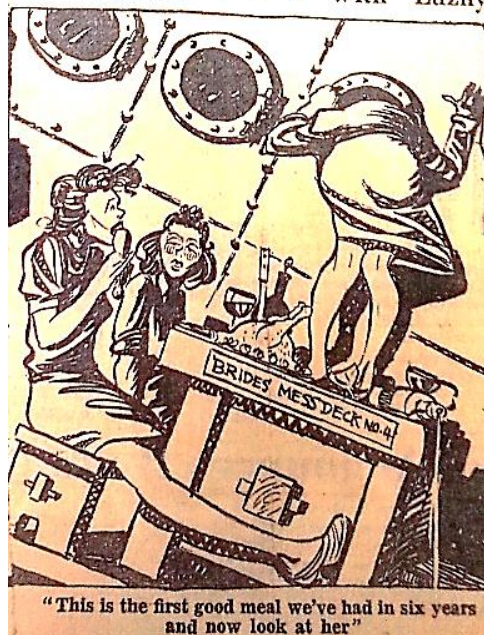


Breakfast.	
Oatmeal Porridge	Crispies
Suprême of Blue Cod Meunière	
Grilled Bacon with Snow Potatoes	
Calf's Liver Sauté Piquante	
Children : Boiled Egg	
—	
Wholemeal Scones	
White and Brown Rolls	
Preserves	
Tea	Coffee
Luncheon.	
Cockie Leekie Soup	
Tronçons of Plaiçe Souchet	
Sea Pie Royale	
Persillée Potatoes	
COLD	
Smoked Ham	
Collared Head	
Mixed Salad	
SWEETS.	
Baked Jam Roll	
Children : Milk Rice Pudding	
May 11th, 1945.	
Passengers are requested kindly to refrain from smoking in the Saloon.	

Source(s): CMI at Pier 21, R2013.1616.22, Menu – RMS *Aquitania*, 27 July 1946; CMI at Pier 21, D2015.372.6, Menu – SS *Union-Castle Line*, 11 May 1945.

Image 2.12: Here N'There With Luzny "Brides Mess Deck," 1946.

Here N'There - - - with Luzny



Source: PANB, MJWB, MC3495, "MS1A99 – War Bride Research Material," Newspaper Clipping Here N'There With Luzny "Brides Mess Deck," 1946.

Image 2.13: “Two English sisters....”



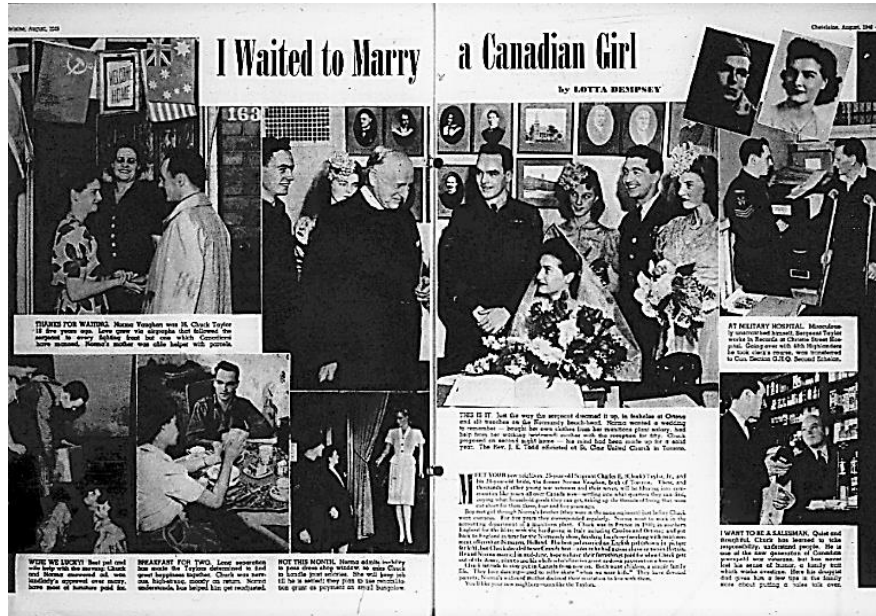
Image 2.14: “Families Reunited as British Brides Arrive Here”

Families Reunited as British Brides Arrive Here



Source(s): Image 15.1 is a news clipping of my Nan and her sister (who was also a war bride) reuniting at Union Station in Toronto. “Two English Sisters...” Unknown Newspaper, August 1945; “Families Reunited as British Brides Arrive Here,” *Montréal Star*, 13 February 1946.

Image 2.15: “I Waited to Marry a Canadian Girl”



Source: Lotta Dempsey, “I Waited to Marry a Canadian Girl,” *Chatelaine*, August 1945, 13-4.

Image 2.16: “British War Bride Speaks Out”



Source: “British War Bride Speaks Out,” *Maclean's*, 15 January 1944, 10.

Image 2.17: “I See a Tall Dark Canadian Airman...”



“I see a tall, dark Canadian airman—Repat Number 118
—he will marry you, and if you are lucky I see an ocean
voyage in late '47 or early '48!”

Source: ABE, “I See a Tall Dark Canadian Airman...,” *The Maple Leaf* – England, 22 December 1945.

Image 2.18: “Mrs. Elizabeth Rae and Daughter Anne Aboard the Train Taking them to Liverpool, where they are to Embark on the SS *Mauretania* as Part of the First Large Group of British War Brides to Sail to Canada”



Source: LAC, DND, R112-0-2-E, “(CFJIC) – Photographs – Army,” accession number 1967-052 NPC, item number 59942, Photographer Arthur L. Cole, Photograph of Mrs. Elizabeth Rae and daughter Anne aboard the train taking them to Liverpool, where they are to embark on the SS *Mauretania* as part of the first large group of British War Brides to sail to Canada, 4 February 1946.

Image 2.19: “War Brides and Their Children en Route to Canada, 17 April 1944”



Source: LAC, DND, R112-0-2-E, “(CFJIC) – Photographs – Army,” accession number 1967-052 NPC, item number 32022, Photographer W.J. Hynes, Photograph of War Brides and Their Children en Route to Canada, 17 April 1944.

Image 2.20: “Fathers are Fun and Fascinating to Children Arriving from Overseas”



Source: “Fathers are fun and fascinating to children arriving from overseas,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 February 1946.

Image 2.21: “In sickness and in health and through all current shortages ...?”



Source: Cartoon, “In sickness and in health and through all current shortages ...?,” *Chatelaine*, March 1947, 49.

Image 2.22: “A House With its Gardens”



Source: John Caulfield Smith, “A House with its Gardens,” *Chatelaine*, May 1946.

Image 2.23: “Rafrachissez”



Source: "Rafrachissez," *La Revue Moderne*, Mai 1945.

Appendix 3 – Interview/ Written Response Questions

Interview/ Written Response Questions for British War Brides

1. Background information:
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. What church did you go to?
 - c. Did you/do you identify as being Irish, Scottish, English or Welsh?
 - d. What was your social background?
 - e. What does 'British' mean to you? Did you/do you consider yourself 'British'?
2. Before you came to Canada what did you know about it? What were your expectations?
3. When did you get engaged/married? Was it easy to get married? If not, what difficulties did you face?
4. Please tell me about the trip to Canada?
5. Did you face any difficulties adapting to life in Canada? Ex. food, climate, etc.
6. When and how did you become a Canadian citizen? Have you ever experienced any citizenship issues?
7. How were you treated by the general public? Did you experience any prejudice or mistreatment? ex. did people comment on your accent, religion etc.?
8. Did/do you miss anything about Britain?
9. Did you feel isolated in Canada? Did your spouse and his family help you deal with those feelings?
10. What do you think it meant to be 'Canadian'? Ex. what was 'Canadian' food, etc.
11. Did you ever feel pressure to conform to 'Canadian' behaviour? Ex. classes on cooking or to lose your accent?
12. Upon your arrival in Canada or any point thereafter did you work inside or outside the home?
13. Did you join any clubs, such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire or church groups? Why or why not?

14. Did you find yourself drawn to others of a 'British' background?
15. Are there any major events of the 1950's and 1960's that made an impression on you?
16. Did your family celebrate Victoria Day or Dominion Day? How? What was your impression of how other Canadians celebrated them?
17. What did you think of the Maple Leaf Canadian flag?
18. At what point if any did you feel or identify yourself as Canadian?
19. Did you join a War Bride's association? Why or why not?
20. Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your experiences?

Interview/ Written Response Questions for the Husbands of British War Brides

1. Background information:
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. What church did you go to?
 - c. What was your families background?
 - d. What did 'British' mean to you? What did 'Canadian' mean to you? Did you/do you consider yourself British, Canadian, both, or none?
2. What did you tell your wife about Canada?
3. When did you get engaged/married? Was it easy to get married? If not, what difficulties did you face?
4. Was your family happy or upset about your marriage to a British War Bride?
5. Did your wife face any difficulties adapting to life in Canada? How did you help your wife adjust to life in Canada?
6. When and how did your wife become a Canadian citizen? Did she ever experience any citizenship issues?
7. How were British war brides treated by the general public? ex. did people comment on their accent?
8. Did your wife miss anything about Britain?

9. Did your wife work inside or outside the home?
10. Was your wife apart of any clubs, such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire or church groups?
11. Did your wife spend time with others of a 'British' background?
12. Did your family celebrate Victoria Day or Dominion Day? How?
13. What did you and your wife think of the Maple Leaf Canadian flag?
14. Did your wife join a War Bride's association? Why or why not?
15. Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your experiences?

Interview/ Written Response Questions for the Children of British War Brides

1. Background information:
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. Where in Canada did you grow up?
 - c. What church did you go to?
 - d. What was your social background?
 - e. What did 'British' mean to you? Did you or your family identity as British, Canadian, both or none?
2. What kinds of foods did your mother prepare when you were growing up?
3. Did you notice any differences in the language, foods or activities of your family compared to other families?
4. Was your family involved in British clubs or events? Ex. Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Highland Games etc.
5. Did you find your family was connected to other families of a 'British' background?
6. Did you or your mother face any prejudice regarding her 'British' background? ex. religion, accent, food etc.
7. Did your mom work inside or outside the home?
8. Do you know if your mother ever took classes to be more 'Canadian?' Ex. cooking, accent, etc.

9. Did your family celebrate Victoria Day or Dominion Day? What was your impression of how your family celebrated it compared to other families?
10. Did your mother ever mention wishing to visit Great Britain? Did your family ever go? If so, what was your opinion of it?
11. Have you or your mother faced any citizenship issues? If so, please tell me.
12. Did your mother ever join a War Bride's association? Why or why not?
13. Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your experiences?