

# *An Ambiguous Alliance : Some Aspects of American Influences on Canadian Social Welfare*

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— I —

Canadian social welfare was not an American import. Its historic origins are as varied as the traditions of Canada itself : Catholic charities transplanted to New France in the seventeenth century, the Elizabethan poor law in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the public poor relief system in Ontario and the charities of Protestant churches.<sup>1</sup> American influences on Canadian practice can, however, be distinguished from others, and are important enough to be of particular interest.

The history of welfare and of social thought and reform in Canada has not yet been fully documented. There are no Canadian counterparts of works such as Hofstadter's *Age of Reform*, Pumphrey's *Heritage of American Social Work*, or Bremner's *From the Depths and History of American Philanthropy*. American influences on Canadian welfare therefore cannot yet be seen in the broader context of Progressive reform. Regional interaction, such as that between Nova Scotia and New England, within the Great Lakes area, or on the Pacific Coast, is an equally unexplored question. So is the extent to which Canadian welfare experts have been trained in American universities. Nor have American influences on Canadian welfare in the 1930's been investigated, except that some effort has been made to document a connection between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Bennett's "Square Deal". The reactions

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<sup>1</sup> Richard B. SPLANE, *Social Welfare in Ontario, 1791-1893 : A Study of Public Welfare Administration* (Toronto, 1965). See also George F. DAVIDSON, "Social Welfare in Canada, 1930-1955", in William DIXON, ed., *Social Welfare and the Preservation of Human Values* (Vancouver, 1957); Richard B. SPLANE, "Evolution and Application in Canada of Right Relating to Motherhood and Childhood; Entitlement to Special Care and Assistance", *Labor Gazette*, LVIII (November 1928), 1236-1240; John S. MORGAN, "Social Welfare Services in Canada", in Michael OLIVER, ed., *Social Purpose for Canada* (Toronto, 1961); Elizabeth WALLACE, "The Origins of the Social Welfare State in Canada, 1867-1900", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXV (August 1950), 383-393.

of Canadian social workers and reformers to the relief and reform measures of the New Deal are a particularly inviting subject of research. The *Canadian Forum*, for example, contains interesting material on the CCF's interpretation of the New Deal and its meaning for Canada. The Canadian Welfare Council houses valuable correspondence, briefs and surveys, which document the American contacts of Canadian social workers and their reaction to the Depression. This article, concentrating on the formative period before the Depression, is limited to voluntary and private social welfare organizations and to individual leaders, excluding public welfare administration. It was the work of these organizations that led to state action, thus laying the foundation for the welfare state. The article does not deal with French Canada, because the unique system in that province requires separate extensive treatment.

In the half-century ending with the 1920's, both Canada and the United States were caught in a conflict between materialism and social justice. Both experienced large-scale industrialization, urbanization and the influx of vast immigrant groups which transformed the population in large cities, although these problems did not assume in Canada the same dimensions as in the United States. Thus in both nations the response to industrialism led to a redefinition of values for society as a whole, as well as to a change in welfare practices. The change was evidenced in a revolt against social Darwinism, in a shift in emphasis from the treatment of social symptoms to a campaign against their causes, and consequently in the growing recognition of the state's responsibility to enforce and maintain social justice through legislation. Underlying these changes was a redefinition of poverty as a man-made problem rather than the inevitable result of the natural laws of the economy. The new view of poverty influenced a change in social welfare practices: a substitution of scientific philanthropy for traditional poor relief, a gradual change of strategy from a war on pauperism to a war on poverty and, in the field of child welfare, a recognition of the need for treating dependent and delinquent children separately from adult paupers and criminals.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For these developments in the United States, see: Robert H. BREMNER, *From the Depths: the Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York, 1956) and *A History of American Philanthropy* (Chicago, 1960); see also Richard HOFSTADTER, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955) and Sidney FINE, *Laissez Faire and the General Welfare State* (Ann Arbor, 1964); SPLANE, *Social Welfare in Ontario*, p. 49.

In making these transitions both countries responded pragmatically to their respective needs, adhering to their national styles. In the process, however, Canadian charity workers and reformers relied heavily on American organizations. This was manifest in all areas of social welfare emerging in this period : in prison reform, scientific philanthropy, mental health and child welfare, and in the professionalization of social work.

The formative period in Canadian-American relations in the field of welfare was the years immediately following Confederation and the American civil war. In Canada these developments coincided with the emergence of Ontario as the leading province in social welfare. This was partly due to the energy of John W. Langmuir, Inspector of Asylums, Prisons and Charitable Institutions, in inaugurating a series of provincial welfare measures. As Richard Splane summarized Langmuir's work :

... there was hardly a year from 1868 to 1881 which did not witness major advances in one or more of his fields of corrections, the care of the mentally ill and mentally retarded, the education of the deaf and the expansion and improvement, with provincial financial aid and supervision, of voluntary institutions for the care of the ill, the aged, homeless children, and unmarried mothers.<sup>3</sup>

Like his predecessors, John Langmuir carried on an active communication with American organizations.

Although the prison reform and charity organization movements began in England, Canadians encountered their principles and practices through their American followers. In 1890, the Royal Commission on the Prison and Reformatory System in Ontario looked into practices in penal institutions in Canada and the United States. With Langmuir as chairman, the Commission heard testimony in Canadian institutions and visited prisons in Massachusetts, Michigan, New York and Ohio. In its 794-page report, the Commission expressed its concern with the broader social context of crime. At a time when crime was still considered the result of heredity or individual failure, the Commission declared instead that crime resulted from poverty, ill-health and child-neglect. It held state and civic organizations responsible for social problems.<sup>4</sup>

This approach, as the Commission recognized, had been developed in the work of the National (American) Conference of Charities and

<sup>3</sup> SPLANE, *Social Welfare in Ontario*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>4</sup> Royal Commission on the Prison and Reformatory System, in *Ontario Report, Ontario, Sessional Papers* (1891), No. 18, p. 5; for an analysis of the Commission's work and its contributions see SPLANE, *Social Welfare in Ontario*, pp. 54-55, 182-183, 188-193, 268-273.

Corrections, which had a profound impact on Ontario. Founded in 1878 by members of state boards of charities, the Conference dedicated itself to scientific charity. It followed the practices of the London Charity Organization Society (founded in 1869), under whose influence a series of similar societies sprang up in major American cities in the late 1870's and early '80's. From 1880 Canadian members regularly attended the meetings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections. In 1898 the Conference met in Toronto for the first time.<sup>5</sup>

The Toronto meeting marked a turning point in the history of Canadian welfare. Before the meetings, Goldwin Smith,<sup>6</sup> Victorian liberal and Toronto civic leader with an aversion to pauperism, invited two members of the Conference to meet with the mayor of Toronto and a committee of prominent citizens. The two were Alexander Johnson, former president of the National Conference, and Frederick Almy, secretary of the Charity Organization Society in Buffalo. The Board of Associated Charities in Toronto resulted — a clearing house for organized charities. At a later session of the Conference Johnson and Almy promoted rational philanthropy (which became synonymous with charity organization). Three years later Johnson, back in Toronto, further urged his Canadian colleagues to follow the basic principles of charity organization: the specialization of agencies and their coordination "to bring the science of philanthropy and sociology into line with the other sciences of the world". The ultimate goal remained humanitarian rather than scientific: the treatment of each individual as a separate case.<sup>7</sup> It was this emphasis, when put into practice in Canada, as well as in the United States, that gave the movement its significance. For here was the nucleus of the

<sup>5</sup> On the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, see Frank BRUNO, *Trends in Social Work as Reflected in the Proceedings of the National Conference on Social Work 1879-1946* (New York, 1948). On the London Charity Organization Society see DAVID OWEN, *English Philanthropy, 1660-1960* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964); for its American counterparts, see BREMNER, *American Philanthropy*, Chap. 6.

<sup>6</sup> The *Toronto Globe*, 8 November and 11 November 1898; *Toronto World*, 10 November 1898. On Goldwin Smith and his role in organizing charities, see ELIZABETH WALLACE, *Goldwin Smith: Victorian Liberal* (Toronto, 1957), and "Goldwin Smith", *Canadian Welfare*, XLI (March-April 1965), 56-59. The best work on the efforts to organize community services in Toronto is by BERNARD W. LAPPIN, "Stages in the Development of Community Organization Work as a Social Work Method", Ph.D. thesis, School of Social Work, University of Toronto, February 1965.

<sup>7</sup> *Proceedings of the third Canadian Conference of Charities and Corrections* (1901). MARGARET RICH, *A Belief in People: A History of Family Social Work* (New York, 1926); LAPPIN, "Stages in the Development of Community Organization Work", p. 114.

case-work method, as developed by Josephine Shaw Lowell and Mary Richmond, and eventually of professional social work.

The 1898 Toronto meeting of the National Conference on Charities and Corrections led also to the establishment of the Canadian Conference on Charities and Corrections. J. J. Kelso, a Toronto social reformer, and other Canadian leaders urged Canadians to follow the American example and to establish an organization which would implement the exchange of ideas dealing with the "criminal, defective, delinquent and dependent classes". They argued that a Canadian organization could serve as a "powerful means for mutual instruction and enlightenment", the first step towards the development of "economical and scientific" philanthropy in Canada.<sup>8</sup> Thus the Canadian Conference on Charities and Corrections was founded on the principles and objectives of its American predecessor. It met biennially and the topics discussed matched those of the American Conference: prison reform, treatment and management of houses of refuge, juvenile delinquency, protection of children and rational administration of charities.<sup>9</sup>

Paradoxically, child welfare — the sphere in which the American influence on Canada was most significant — was also the area in which Canada developed a unique style. The impetus for the Ontario child welfare movement came from John Joseph Kelso, who had acted as a personal link between Canada and the United States since 1886 and was the legendary father of the Canadian child welfare movement. Although recent scholarship has demonstrated that the child welfare movement preceded Kelso, his dramatization of social needs and his crusade to solve them were critical.<sup>10</sup> At the age of twenty-two, when a court reporter for the *Toronto Globe*, Kelso became committed to child welfare because of his sympathy for juvenile delinquents, waifs and abused children in

<sup>8</sup> For the text of the circular see *Proceedings of the Second Canadian Conference of Charities and Corrections* (Toronto, 1899), pp. 25-26. The Canadian Conference of Charities and Corrections was in existence till 1917 when it became the Canadian Conference on Public Welfare. It ceased to exist in 1921, to rise again as Canadian Conference on Social Work.

<sup>9</sup> These topics were condensed from the *Proceedings of the Canadian Conference of Charities and Corrections, 1899-1909*. Compare with *Proceedings of the National Conference on Charities and Corrections*.

<sup>10</sup> On the Kelso myth see SPLANE, "Towards a History of Social Welfare", *Canadian Welfare*, XLI (March-April 1965), 56-59. The only judicious work devoted to Kelso is by Ian BAIN, "The Role of J. J. Kelso in the Launching of the Child Welfare Movement in Ontario", unpublished Master of Social Work thesis, University of Toronto, December 1954. The author is currently writing a biography of J. J. Kelso for the Canadian Biographical Series.

the Toronto streets and courts. In compelling editorials he aroused public interest in the curbing of cruelty, first toward animals and then toward children. In 1887 his work led to the founding of the Toronto Humane Society, patterned after the American Humane Association in New York. In that year, too, Canadian members attended the American Humane Society meeting in Rochester, New York. The following year, the American Humane Society met in Toronto.<sup>11</sup> In 1891 Kelso mobilized public support for the founding of the Toronto Children's Aid Society, modeled after the New York Children's Aid Society. From its inception, however, its goals and prescribed functions exceeded those of the New York Society: the establishment of a children's shelter, separate trials of juvenile offenders, the appointment of a probation officer for the court.<sup>12</sup>

The Society lobbied successfully for the Ontario Children's Protection Act of 1893.<sup>13</sup> An earlier provincial statute, "Act for the Protection and Reformation of Neglected Children", had been passed in 1888 at the instigation of the Toronto Humane Society. It had defined a "neglected" child and empowered judges to commit such a child to a reformatory, industrial school or any charitable society. It had also provided for separate trial of juvenile delinquents. The law passed in 1893, however, was the first comprehensive act of the kind on the North American continent. It authorized the foundation of children's aid societies to assume legal guardianship of neglected and abused children and, if necessary, to place them in homes. The Act also established the office of Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children, which Kelso assumed and held for the next thirty-nine years.<sup>14</sup> The Ontario Act was typically Canadian in its successful blending of various influence into a consistent pattern. In part it was based on a British Act for the protection of

<sup>11</sup> Joseph J. KELSO, *Protection of Children: Early History of the Humane and Children's Aid Movement in Ontario, 1886-1893* (Toronto, 1911), pp. 5-20. These pages also contain copies of Kelso's moving editorials on the plight of children. See also Kelso's papers. I am indebted to Mr. Martin Kelso for permission to see his father's papers and to quote from them.

<sup>12</sup> TORONTO CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY, *Annual Report for 1892* (Toronto, 1893), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Ontario: An Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children, 1893. 56 Vic. (Ont.), c. 45.

<sup>14</sup> For Kelso's work as Superintendent, see *Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children, Ontario, Sessional Papers*. Especially the earlier reports are revealing. With his journalistic talent and enthusiasm Kelso produced reports vivid in style, full of sermons and propaganda, especially touching in their case stories of various children.

children, passed in 1889.<sup>15</sup> From the United States Kelso brought the pattern of the New York Children's Aid Society; the result was a marriage between public authority and a community-centred, privately administered child welfare agency.

The epoch-making principle embodied in the Ontario child welfare system was the preference for foster-home placement over the institution. As the Ontario Act was passed, the debate continued among American social workers as to the relative merits of the two methods. In Ontario the home plan won, mostly because of Kelso's perseverance. He even dissolved a number of refuges and reformatories for juvenile delinquents in Ontario, and successfully placed their inmates with families. Typically for Canada, the example for foster home placement came both from American social workers, and from a South Australian statute of 1872.<sup>16</sup>

In his early years as Superintendent, Kelso made his office the headquarters of a crusade which reached beyond the boundaries of Ontario. He was invited to bring his collection of "magic lantern" slides to provincial legislatures, cabinets and citizens' meetings from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. Kelso's papers contain a vast collection of newspaper clippings and letters describing his contact with other provinces. The slides contain a moving, sometimes pathetic, collection of children's photographs in the "before" (placement) and "after" stages. As other provinces adopted the Ontario system, Ontario became a bridge for American influences in other parts of Canada.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to his child-saving crusades and his administrative work, Kelso spearheaded the Toronto settlement movement and the playground association, and along with other reformers fought for an effective juvenile court.

"Evangelia", the first settlement in Toronto, was founded in 1899 by Sarah Libby Carson, who had founded Christedora House in New York.

<sup>15</sup> Great Britain: An Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to and Better Protection of Children, 1889. 52 and 53 Vic., c. 44.

<sup>16</sup> On the debate in the National Conference, see BRUNO, *Trends in Social Work*, pp. 64-65. In his diary, Kelso refers to the debate and concludes with great pride that Canada preferred the foster home method. See also address by Edward T. Devine at the Sixth Canadian Conference on Charities and Corrections, *Proceedings* (1903), pp. 11-13. On the Australian model of the Ontario Act, see CANADIAN WELFARE COUNCIL, *Child Protection in Canada* (Ottawa, 1943), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> On the development of the child welfare program in other provinces, see Charlotte WHITTON, "Child Welfare Legislation in Canada, 1920-1925", *Social Welfare*, VIII (January 1926), 79-86; H. Hastings HART, "Twenty-five Years of Child Welfare Work in Canada", *The Survey*, XL (11 May 1918), 171.

In 1910 Robert Falconer, President of Toronto University, led the movement for the foundation of the University Settlement. The following year, Kelso chaired the meeting which organized Central Neighborhood House. Then in 1912 the Presbyterian Church founded St. Christopher House. Since Miss Carson's original settlement did not develop, she aided in the organization of the University Settlement and St. Christopher House. Subsequently she helped the Presbyterian Church organize settlements in other parts of Canada.<sup>18</sup>

The juvenile court movement in Canada is an even more striking example of a criss-cross pattern of influences. Kelso started this movement for a juvenile court in Toronto as early as 1886.<sup>19</sup> As a result of the Children's Protection Act of 1888, Toronto made a weak attempt towards the establishment of a juvenile court. Kelso continued to agitate for an effective court in Toronto, and the forming of an effective provincial law. In 1893 he met Harvey B. Hurd, who was forming the legislation for the Chicago Juvenile Court, and who became its first judge in 1899. In 1906 Kelso drafted a provincial law, which he patterned on the Illinois Act. Also in 1906 Kelso met with Judge Lindsey, the founder of the juvenile court movement in the United States, and induced him to come to Toronto the following year to publicize the movement. The first effective juvenile court in Canada was established in Winnipeg in 1909.

As early as 1893, Kelso had encountered a new generation of social reformers in the circle around Jane Addams at Hull House. More interested in the eradication of poverty than the administration of charity, they fought for housing reform, the elimination of child labor, adequate working conditions, playgrounds, juvenile courts and the assumption of social responsibility by the federal government. As early as 1893 Kelso presented papers on waif-saving and on child placement at the International Humane Congress at the Chicago World Fair, where in addition to Jane Addams and Judge Ben Lindsey, he met Edward T. Devine, editor of the *Survey*.<sup>20</sup> His diaries and correspondence indicate that this contact with American leaders led to his translation of emotional commitment into

<sup>18</sup> See "The University Settlement, 1910-1911" (Toronto, 1912), a pamphlet issued by the Settlement; Ethel PARKER and John HADDAD, "St. Christopher House" (mimeographed material in the files of the University Settlement, Toronto). On the Neighborhood House, see the news release of 1 May 1911, in the Kelso papers.

<sup>19</sup> Kelso papers, "Juvenile Court" scrapbook; BAIN, *The Role of Kelso*, pp. 71-94.

<sup>20</sup> *The Chicago Tribune*, 13 October 1893; see Kelso's diary for his description of the event and his meeting with Jane Addams.

a consistent reform program.<sup>21</sup> Especially significant was his participation in President Theodore Roosevelt's White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1909. At the Conference he met Jacob Riis, the New York muckraking journalist who exposed the misery of tenements; Lillian Wald, founder of the Henry Street Settlement and the Visiting Nurses Association in New York; and Grace Abbott, the child welfare reformer. The 1909 conference marked the first recognition of the needs and rights of children by the American federal government and laid the foundation for the establishment of the United States Children's Bureau in 1912.

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The founding of the United States Children's Bureau in 1912 sparked Canadian demand for a similar organization. The Social Service Council led the Canadian movement as part of a national crusade for social reform. Formed at the Social Service Congress of 1914 "to arouse interest and enlist all Canadians on behalf of improving social, economic and ethical conditions in Canada", the Social Service Council (S.S.C.) was the response of the churches to industrialization. Its predecessor had been the Moral and Reform League founded in 1907, dedicated to temperance and sabbatarianism, its membership limited to the churches. The S.C.C., in its first sessions, discussed the Sabbath, the new responsibilities of the Church in an industrial society, commercialized vice and the white slave traffics, the "humanizing of religion" and political purity. It also discussed the plight of Canadian Indians, labour problems and — in a session headed by Kelso — child welfare.<sup>22</sup> Broadly conceived, it had representatives not only from the churches, but from Parliament and provincial legislatures, the Dominion Grange and the Farmers' Association, the Canadian Purity Association and the Salvation Army. One member described the atmosphere at the Congress as an "old-time revival with the right kind of sinners present".<sup>23</sup> In its insistence on social responsibility of the churches as well as in its moralistic tone and comprehensive reform program, the S.S.C. paralleled both the social justice movement of the Progressives and the Social Gospel in the United States. Its program

<sup>21</sup> For a summary of Kelso's reform program, see J. J. KELSO, "Some First Principles in Social Welfare Work", *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children, Ontario, Sessional Papers* (1910).

<sup>22</sup> THE SOCIAL SERVICE CONGRESS, *Reports and Proceedings* (Ottawa, 1914).

<sup>23</sup> *The Survey*, XXXII (1914), 95.

included labour legislation, workmen's compensation, mothers' allowances, an advanced system of child welfare, reform in politics, temperance and the eradication of social diseases.<sup>24</sup> The importance of the Council rested not only in its influence on national legislation, but also in its function as the training ground for social workers and reformers. Its journal, *Social Welfare*, established in 1919, mirrored the development of welfare and social reform movements in Canada, and Canadian communication with social workers in the United States. From its foundation, the Social Service Council, along with the National Council of Women and other voluntary organizations, insisted on the recognition of child welfare as a national concern and advocated its redefinition as preventive as well as protective work. They saw the first step in this direction in the creation of a federal Children's Bureau.<sup>25</sup>

Federal action came only after World War I had stimulated national concern for health and welfare. The Dominion Department of Health, established in 1919, added a Children's Division in the following year. The organizations which had agitated for a children's bureau, however, were skeptical of this agency from its inception. They feared that it would concentrate exclusively on child hygiene. Dr. Helen McMurchy, Head of the Division, certainly took a broader view of child welfare. She was restricted, however, by the fact that by the terms of the British North American Act, the federal division could not exercise welfare measures. It seems that the activities of the government's Child Welfare Division centred mostly around the circulation of information, and coordination of various provincial agencies and departments related to child welfare. Dr. McMurchy relied heavily on publications of the U.S.C.B., but aspired to develop literature that would fit Canadian needs.<sup>26</sup> In response to pressure from voluntary organizations, the Department of Health convened representatives of 180 groups in October 1920, at the first Dominion Child Welfare Conference.<sup>27</sup> On that occasion, the Canadian Council on

<sup>24</sup> *Reports and Proceedings*, p. 358.

<sup>25</sup> D. B. HARKNESS, "A Child Welfare Bureau", *Social Welfare*, I (March 1919), 134; *ibid.*, II (February 1920), 121.

<sup>26</sup> Charlotte WHITTON, "Memorabilia", *Canadian Welfare*, XXIV (15 January 1949), 66; CANADA, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, *Handbook of Child Welfare Work in Canada*, edited by Helen McMURCHY (Ottawa, 1923), p. 9. For the policies and activities of the Division, see DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, CHILDREN'S DIVISION, *Progress Reports, 1920-1932*; DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, *Annual Reports, 1919-1933*.

<sup>27</sup> "Proceedings of the first Dominion Conference on Child Welfare", 19-20 October 1920 (mimeographed), in files of the C.W.C.

Child Welfare (C.C.C.W.) was founded, a voluntary agency, supported by federal subsidies and designated to serve as a national clearing house for child welfare, to issue professional guidance materials, to inform public opinion, and to formulate briefs for legislation. Thus the Canadian Council on Child Welfare combined functions parallel to those of both the Child Welfare League of America (a private organization) and the United States Children's Bureau. Although the initial stimulus came from the example of the United States Children's Bureau, the Canadian organization was unique in serving as a bridge between private organizations and public policy.<sup>28</sup>

This is not to say that the Council replaced a government children's bureau. Although its functions were gradually taken over by the Council, the Children's Division of the Department of Health continued until 1932. When Dr. Helen McMurchy retired as head of the Division, her position was offered to Charlotte Whitton, Executive Director of the C.C.C.W. With the empire builder's intuition for good timing, Miss Whitton turned down the honour and suggested that the C.C.C.W. absorb the Division's functions.<sup>29</sup> Her proposal was carried out in 1933.

The C.C.C.W. was now the most important of Canadian welfare agencies. Besides being a national body, it linked private and public welfare, its functions expanded beyond child and family services to encompass all aspects of social welfare, and it reflected the separation between professional social work and the semi-religious crusade for social justice. In 1929 the C.C.C.W. expanded to include a Family Service Division, and in 1935 it incorporated the Central Committee of Community Chests and Councils in Canada, changing its name to the Canadian Welfare

<sup>28</sup> For an analysis of the relationship between the voluntary agency and public welfare, see Norman DAHL, "Why the Voluntary Welfare Agency?" *Canadian Labour*, XI (November 1965), p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Whitton to Murray McLean, Minister of Pensions and National Health, 18 September 1933. See also Miss Whitton's letter to the editor of *Saturday Night*, 26 February 1934, explaining the transfer. A memorandum issued by the Dominion Department of Pensions and National Health explains the legal and administrative implications of the transfer. See WHITTON, "Memorandum *re* Transfer of Certain Activities of the Child Welfare Division of the Dominion Department of Pensions and National Health", 29 October 1934. The Canadian Medical Association protested this transfer. It felt that the trend should be a transfer of powers from the non-official agencies to the official ones. It saw the reverse trend as deplorable: "Memorandum for Council concerning Discontinuance of the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Pensions and National Health", 1932. These memoranda are in a file of the early records of the Children's Division with the present Child and Maternal Health Division. I am indebted to the Division for permission to see and cite this correspondence. Letters cited below and not otherwise located are from this file.

Council. Thus the Council developed into "that beloved octopus" and concentrated in one agency divisions that parallel seven American national organizations. Charlotte Whitton, until her retirement in 1943, was largely responsible for the importance the Council assumed and for the American influence on it. Although trained as an historian, Miss Whitton served her apprenticeship with the Social Service Council and had social work experience with the Anglican Church's Welfare Division. Her powerful personality and her administrative talent were largely responsible for the emergence of the Council as the single national clearing house for all aspects of welfare in Canada.

From its inception the C.C.C.W. maintained close contact with the Child Welfare League of America and the Children's Bureau. Miss Whitton worked closely with Grace Abbott, Chief of the United States Children's Bureau, and served with her on the Child Welfare Committee of the League of Nations.<sup>30</sup> As a result of these contacts, the C.C.C.W. set its standards according to those of the Children's Bureau, the Child Welfare League of America and the Child Welfare Committee of the League of Nations.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the Council published the Children's Charter of the League throughout Canada and lobbied for legislation to match the League's child labour standards.<sup>32</sup> In developing its pro-

<sup>30</sup> Author's interview of Charlotte Whitton, August 1966. See Charlotte Whitton's correspondence with Katharine Lenroot in executive files, C.W.C. See also Edith ABBOTT, "Three American Pioneers in International Social Welfare", *Compass*, XXVIII (May 1947), 37.

<sup>31</sup> I. W. MACMILLAN, "Standards of Child Welfare", *Social Welfare*, II (April 1920), 178. See the Child Welfare League of America's standards, printed in *Child Welfare News*, II (15 February 1926), 3; Julia C. LATHROP, "Participation in International Child Welfare Work", *ibid.*, (5 August 1926), 1; "Some of the Essentials in a Modern Child Welfare Program", *Bulletin of the Child Welfare League of America* (15 April 1925), quoted in *Social Welfare*, VII (July 1925), 188. See also Grace Abbott's address to the fifth Annual Conference on Child Welfare, *Proceedings, Fifth Annual Conference on Child Welfare* (Ottawa, 1925), p. 254; "General Recommendations of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection", *Social Welfare*, VIII (January 1931), 80; "Five-year programme of the C.C.C.W., 1925-1930", *Social Welfare*, VIII (October 1925), 4-5.

<sup>32</sup> Fifth Annual Conference on Child Welfare, *Proceedings and Papers* (Ottawa, 1925), pp. 10-16. See Miss Whitton's letter to the Secretary of the Social Service Council, 17 June 1926: "...I am going to attempt to... arouse interest in the ratification of the Child Labor Conventions. Yesterday the Industrial Life Committee in the House of Commons reported in favor of the ratification policy. This should be a good time at which to strike." Also, Miss Whitton's letter to the Ontario Social Service Council, 16 June 1927, and Fifth Canadian Conference on Child Welfare, *Proceedings and Papers* (Ottawa, 1925), pp. 10-16. At this meeting Miss Whitton compared the functions of the Council with those of the Consultative Commission of Great Britain and the Congressional Association of the U.S. in their preparation of proposals for legislation and efforts to put it into effect. The Sixth Canadian Conference on Child Welfare was dedicated to the "Child's Rights" as defined in the Children's Charter in Geneva. The topics at the Conference were organized accordingly. Sixth Annual Conference on Child Welfare, *Proceedings and Papers* (Ottawa, 1927); *Social Welfare*, IX (May 1927), 415.

gramme, the Council and other Canadian agencies turned to the United States for reference materials, professional literature, advice and experts. Miss Whitton wrote regularly for the publications of the U.S.C.B. and the Child Welfare League of America. Newly-appointed executives turned immediately for advice to the U.S. One official summarized the relationship with the U.S.C.B. :

Indeed so warm is the relationship, and so much have we depended upon your very generous sharing of information and advice, that we have come to regard the staff and publications of the Children's Bureau almost as our other selves.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the most consistent, most general, and most continuous aspect of American influence on Canadian welfare was in the area of practical expertise and professional guidance. The most effective communication was through the invitation to American experts to investigate Canadian agencies or institutions whenever revisions or reorganizations were needed. In March 1921, the Child Welfare Council of Toronto brought C. C. Carstens, Director of the Child Welfare League of America, to investigate the various child-caring agencies of the city, and to propose plans for the reorganization of the city's child welfare program. In his report Mr. Carstens concluded that "Children are thoughtlessly removed from good mothers for no better reason than poverty, when a reasonable allowance could keep them together and preserve the all-important family tie." He insisted that government inspection should hold child-caring agencies receiving public funds responsible for maintaining good standards. As a result of Carsten's report the Child Welfare Committee of Toronto was reorganized and Robert H. Mills was appointed director. It was a turning point in the history of child welfare in Ontario.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1920's the Social Service Council credited American influences, operating through the C.C.C.W., with the secularization of Canadian social work. A Canadian who attended the National Conference on Social Work was shocked by the "absolute divorcing of Christian and religious impulse from all social service activities". To one accustomed to church

<sup>33</sup> Nora Lee to Maud Morlock, Head of the Information Division of the U.S.C.B., 12 June 1944.

<sup>34</sup> Interview of Miss Nora Lee; "A Report on Child Welfare in Toronto", *Social Welfare*, III (June 1921), 234; LAPPIN, "Stages in the Development of Community Organization", pp. 221-222. Dr. Carstens was called again to Toronto in 1925, to investigate all the city's social agencies, and produced the "Community Audit", *ibid.*, p. 252.

leadership and support of social work, American agencies appeared "highly technical, professionally elect, yet somewhat coldly efficient . . . Can permanent constructive social work be accomplished without . . . reliance on [religious] principles?"<sup>35</sup> Whatever the importance of religious principle, the separation of religious organizations and social work in Canada was clearly imminent. By 1928, leaders of the Social Service Council recognized that they could not keep up with the needs for research and specialized literature. They admitted that the C.C.C.W. was better equipped for this purpose, and looked for a graceful retreat. After many deliberations the Social Service Council transferred its research responsibilities to the C.C.C.W., although *Social Welfare* continued to serve for some time as the organ for both the churches and social workers.<sup>36</sup>

Canadians were borrowers, not imitators. Their attitude towards the United States was marked by an ambiguity not restricted to welfare. Canadians admitted their dependence on American experience and professional literature, but at the same time they stressed the need for a frame of reference and resources geared to Canadian conditions. The borrowing continued simultaneously with arguments for independence.

In the 1920's, Canadians who attended the National Conference objected to the emphasis on minute data and specialization. More important, they asked, "Are our problems in Canada not assuming decidedly national markings, which would make a week's fellowship between the workers of Montreal and Winnipeg more valuable than between those of Winnipeg and Pittsburgh, say?"<sup>37</sup> Worse, they felt that American social workers were so involved in their own problems that "even the ugly stepdaughter place that we have long held, as a somewhat anomalous fiftieth state, is being filled with the controversies of the United States workers".<sup>38</sup> Finally, Canadian social workers took the initiative for the creation of a Canadian Conference of Social Work in 1924, when the

<sup>35</sup> "The National Conference on Social Work", *Social Welfare*, II (June 1920), 232-233.

<sup>36</sup> J. Phillips Jones, Director of the Social Service Council to Charlotte Whitton, 21 December 1928; Whitton to Jones, same date; Minutes of a special meeting of the Social Service Council, 7 February 1929.

<sup>37</sup> *Social Welfare*, II (June 1920), 233. The writers did not spell out what they considered to be unique Canadian problems. It seems that they were referring to the lack of specialization in Canadian agencies, the tendency of child welfare agencies to deal with family welfare, and the combination of private-public agencies.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

National Conference met in Toronto.<sup>39</sup> Two years later they organized the Canadian Association along the lines of the American organization. They held their first meeting in 1928, and subsequently met every two years.

Even the most zealous advocates of Canadian independence eloquently acknowledged their indebtedness to American social work methods, literature and staff. Carl A. Dawson, Director of the McGill School of Social Work, said that Canada would continue to draw guidance and inspiration from the U.S. He insisted, however, on the need for adequate research facilities in Canada; since the social sciences were poorly supported, Canadian students went to the U.S. and did not return. True, he said, organizations such as the C.C.C.W. and the Social Service Council performed research, but their primary function was service. American example taught that welfare organizations should look to properly equipped universities for research.<sup>40</sup>

Another manifestation of the effort to develop Canadian services for Canadian needs was in the creation of the Family Service Division as an addition to the C.C.C.W. It became apparent that the Council's work in the area of child welfare could not be separated from the broader field of family welfare services. In 1929 an open conference discussed the need for a Canadian agency to provide family services, like the Family Welfare Association of America. The conference concluded that, "while the more highly organized communities in Canada are able to derive benefit from the specialized technical services offered by American organizations, the promotive and educational emphasis required in the smaller communities with few resources can best be accomplished under the auspices of a Canadian organization".<sup>41</sup> The Family Service Division of the C.C.C.W. was founded in response to this recommendation, and the Council was reorganized as the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare. Both the Council and the local agencies continued to turn to the Family Welfare Association of America for information.

<sup>39</sup> C. A. DAWSON, "The Canadian Conference on Social Work", *Social Welfare*, X (February 1928), 101.

<sup>40</sup> DAWSON, "Social Research in Canada", *Social Welfare* (27 July 1929), 470. See also Clarence HINCKS, "The Canadian Conference on Social Work and the Future", *Social Welfare*, X (May 1928), 176; F. N. STAPLEFORD, General Secretary of the Toronto Neighborhood Workers Association, in *Social Welfare*, X (October 1927), 10; David DONNISON, "Observations on University Training for Social Work in Great Britain and North America", *Social Service Review*, XXIX (December 1955), 341-351.

<sup>41</sup> *Child Welfare News*, V (November 1929), 89-91.

## — III —

By the 1940's Canadian ambivalence towards American influences had become obvious. The greater the dependence on American guidance, the more intense the resentment. Canadian agencies were turning directly to American organizations rather than working through their national clearing house. Ironically, when the Council wanted to know what problems Canadian agencies were faced with, it asked the U.S.C.B. and the Family Welfare Association of America for annual lists of queries they had received from Canadian agencies. Dr. George Davidson, Executive Director of the Council, admitted to the Director of the Family Welfare Association of America :

We are not deluding ourselves, however, as to the extent of the services that we are likely to be able to give. Family agencies generally will have to continue to look to your help in most fields, with the exception of purely local Canadian problems...<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, he insisted that social work had to be "Canadianized" if it expected to receive government support. He observed that since the retirement of Prime Minister Bennett, the Canadian Welfare Council's activities had received no public endorsement from the government, because its work was regarded as an Americanism. "I have", he wrote, "to fight continuously [the image] that 'federated charities' and 'scientific social work' are 'American imports into Canada'."<sup>43</sup> He further explained that the Canadian government was suspicious of American influences, because ever since Roosevelt's New Deal, Canadians had identified American welfare with a growth in the powers of the federal government. He concluded that Canadian welfare had to "flow East and West in one great unity, instead of North and South" and that the Council itself should publish professional literature, perhaps less specialized but more specifically Canadian. Dr. Davidson and his successors equipped the Canadian Welfare Council to serve Canadian needs. At the same time, however, the Canadian Welfare Council itself continued to act as an important transmitter of American precedents.

The pattern of Canadian-American relations in the welfare field is uneven and cross-stitched. It is further complicated by regionalism, since

<sup>42</sup> Dr. George Davidson to Director of the Family Welfare Association of America.

<sup>43</sup> Dr. George Davidson to Executive Secretary of the Family Service Bureau, Hamilton, Ontario, 18 December 1941.

individual provinces have developed their own systems and tended towards greater affinity with their American neighbors than with other Canadian provinces. Nevertheless, during the formative stages in Canadian welfare from the 1880's through the 1920's, there was a consistent reliance on American experience and its blending with Canadian traditions. A few years ago Frank Underhill characterized Canadian-American relations succinctly: "Somewhere on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, during our centenary celebrations in 1967, there should be erected a monument to this American ogre, who has so often performed the function of saving us from drift and indecision."<sup>44</sup> The field of social welfare, however, demonstrates a consistent cooperation between Canada and the United States, independent of political tensions between the two nations and emanating from mutual respect, not from fear of the ogre.

<sup>44</sup> *The Image of Confederation* (Ottawa, 1964), p. 4.