

**Women's Organizations in Saskatchewan
Report for Culture, Youth, and Recreation**

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INTRODUCTION

The newcomer settlement of that portion of the North-West Territories that became the province of Saskatchewan in 1905 paralleled the tremendous growth of (newcomer) women's organizations in the Dominion of Canada—and elsewhere. For several decades, even beyond the mid-twentieth century, they were important in the lives of a significant minority of women. As well, several of them had an impact upon the community, rural and urban. Today, women's organizations, old or new, have long ceased to play the community-building and development roles that several once did. During the latter half of the twentieth century, some associations disappeared or have been greatly transformed as new needs, demands, and interests became paramount. New ones have sprung up. This report focuses upon several organizations first established in the province in the early twentieth century that deserve to be remembered for their involvement in community-building and development. (They, and many other associations, also had personal effects upon the lives of their activist participants—and in some instances upon certain segments of women in this province. These areas of exploration are not treated in this report except in an occasional peripheral fashion.)

It must be emphasized at the outset that the activists in the organizations being discussed tended to be the “movers and shakers” of their times. As well, members of these early organizations, not surprisingly, were likely to be more affluent and better educated than the average woman. They were usually British Canadian Protestants. (If not British-Canadian, then English, Scottish, or American). They were also primarily married women whose children were old enough to be at least partially independent. (How important a role the availability of domestic servants played in creating the leisure time for participation, especially among the urban women, is uncertain.) Whatever influence the women, urban or rural, were able to exert was likely to be linked to the

influential position of their menfolk—husbands, brothers, sons—in the community. Women, however, often had a personal commitment to service, to making a contribution to the community (new or old), especially (but not solely) in the early twentieth-century reformist era. This commitment was likely rooted in religious conviction and was not infrequently interconnected with a feminist orientation. (This orientation might well blend both maternalist feminism and equal rights feminism, to use the jargon that originated in earlier debate about different sorts of feminism. Women might well see themselves as having a special nurturing or mothering concern not only for the family but for the community, and also argue that women were citizens too and should enjoy equal rights with the men.)

These women, that is, this particular segment of women, became involved in organizational activities for many reasons, not simply what has been suggested so far. Perhaps they were looking for something to do, for a rationale that could be used to justify their leaving the house, for an escape from isolation, for an opportunity to socialize, for a way to contribute, for a way to exert influence upon the larger society in an era when women did not have the vote, for a means of pursuing interests, for a place to develop skills. In some instances organizational work was, in effect, a substitute career, welcome at a time when comfortably off married women rarely worked outside the home. (Once women did get the vote, it should be noted that the many other reasons, singly or in various combinations, continued to operate. They remained operative into the mid-20th century, certainly up to the decade of the 1960s. By then, however, even before the explosive resurgence of feminism, the organizations were waning in influence and attractiveness. Younger women were less likely to be attracted to them, and once activist women retired, so to speak, or gradually died off.)

As initially noted, what is of primary importance in this report is how certain of the once numerous women's organizations contributed to the development and growth of

individual communities and of the province as a whole. The organizations were of several sorts, and with one exception were local branches or offshoots of organizations that had originated in older established areas. The major ones that are to be discussed are the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Provincial Council of Women and the Local Councils of Women, the Young Women's Christian Association, Homemakers' Clubs (or Women's Institutes) of Saskatchewan, the Women Grain Growers, and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire. Briefly covered are the religiously oriented bodies that were the first women's organizations; this material is provided as background and context.

Numerous associations are not being discussed, organizations that did not have as a major objective community service as defined in this report; admittedly, some of the excluded bodies are borderline. Not included are the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the League of Women Voters, and the Voice of Women. Also excluded from consideration in this report are a range of professionally oriented bodies (nurses, teachers, for example) and the numerous bodies that had cultural objectives, for example, the Women's Musical Clubs of Regina and Saskatoon. (The many culturally oriented groups, it should be noted, deserve attention and recognition in their own right since these activist women's groups played an important role in preserving and encouraging diverse cultural interests, including Canadian-based endeavors, and securing the establishment of cultural institutions.)

There are no racial or ethnic bodies included in the discussion, although such organizations as the Immigrant, Refugee, and Visible Minority Women of Saskatchewan have arisen in recent decades. Aboriginal women's groups, also a relatively recent development, are not covered.¹ The primary focus, as earlier mentioned, is upon those organizations that were prominent in the formative decades of newcomer Saskatchewan—and had a newcomer community focus.

Excluded, as well, are auxiliary bodies of various sorts. They made their own distinctive—and varied--contributions, often doing their work in an unsung fashion. Some were auxiliaries to male benevolent societies and, later, service clubs. Others were service clubs in their own right, Quota Clubs or Zonta, for example, and (so far as I've determined at this point) were most prominent in the mid-twentieth century decades.² Still others were auxiliaries to public institutions that were partially dependent upon supportive bodies. Very common were the female hospital auxiliaries that first sprang up in the early decades of the twentieth century. They appear to have been usually composed of locally elite females. (And in at least one instance, there was a distinctive young ladies' group, the Alexandra Club, associated with what became the Regina General Hospital.) Occasional groups that can probably best be described as auxiliary were linked with educational establishments, for example, the Women's Educational Club, organized soon after the founding of Regina College.

THE FIRST WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The first organized women's associations--ladies' aids and female missionary societies--emerged in the mid-nineteenth century when women sought a larger sphere of activity in major Protestant denominations of evangelical or partially evangelical bent—Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Anglicans. Initially, participants faced opposition as they headed into new directions, but soon membership in such bodies became highly respectable. The organizations moved west with newcomer settlement. They became ubiquitous—and were the most common of the women's organizations.

Through these bodies women carved out a special niche for themselves to support the work of the Protestant denominations. Through them they greatly assisted the survival and expansion of their churches within the essentially patriarchal structure of

the institutional church. The ladies' aids (as they were usually called) sought, above all, to contribute to the financial stability of the local congregation. In this sense they did contribute to the development of the newcomer province. (In some instances at least, it should be noted, Aboriginal women participated—apparently in those congregations that were wholly or primarily composed of indigenous peoples.) As for the female missionary societies, they focused upon evangelization of the “heathen,” the domestic-oriented ones focusing upon the Aboriginal population, the foreign-oriented ones upon non-Christian, often colonized, peoples of the globe; the foreign missionary societies appear to have been more popular than the domestic missionary societies. Through their organizational structures (which became national in scope), women were able to exert a degree of control over financing and operating these societies, including selection of missionaries (female). Their authority varied according to circumstances—above all the denominational male willingness to acquiesce in, or to continue to acquiesce in, this “separate” sphere for women. As distasteful as the colonization and evangelization processes are today for most Canadians, the women who were involved need in part at least to be evaluated within the context of the norms of their era.

WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) had many concerns besides the central issue of prohibition. In Saskatchewan members worked not only in their own organization but also through affiliation with Local and Provincial Councils of Women to seek numerous reforms, to uplift community life (according to their perspectives), and to advance the rights of women. WCTU efforts were not uniquely “Saskatchewanian” but reflected common women's concerns, sometimes with a distinctive Saskatchewan flavour.³ (This was also true of the other organizations being discussed in this report.)

The WCTU originated in 1874, initially in the United States, but it quickly appeared in Canada (Ontario) becoming for some decades the largest nationally organized women's organization. (It also spread to some other English-speaking areas of the globe).

Its initial appearance in what was to become Saskatchewan was in the mid-1880s. Regina, for example, had seen the establishment of a local union (as the individual local organization was called) in the 1880s, but only after reorganization in the early 1890s did it apparently sustain growth—and public attention. For a time it was the most active women's organization in the fledgling city. Continuing interest in the WCTU and rapid city growth led to the establishment by 1912 of a second union. By then (1912) there were fifty-three unions in what was now Saskatchewan. Unions in the new province of Alberta had also been rapidly increasing (a total count of ninety-six for both provinces by 1912). In fact, by 1903, just before the end of the territorial era, there were enough unions to justify annual conventions and a central executive. After the creation of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905 joint meetings were held by what was now called the Alberta and Saskatchewan Woman's Christian Union. By 1914 each province had four districts, and it was decided to establish separate provincial organizations with separate conventions.⁴

The Saskatchewan WCTU continued to grow. During the first two years after separation, twenty new local unions were established and two districts were added, for a total of seventy-three unions divided into six districts. By 1915 there were seventy-five unions with an active membership of over 1000. Within a few years, however, membership plummeted. The mid- and late-1920s, however, saw a turnaround. In part a reaction to the defeat of prohibition in the province, in part the result of active organizational efforts, unions increased in number and membership rose. Between 1924 and 1929 twenty-one additional unions came into being for a total of fifty-five.

(Most of the new unions were in small towns and villages that heretofore had not shown much interest in the organization.) Active membership went from 775 to 1211. The WCTU, however, was increasingly unattractive to a younger generation, and while it continued in existence beyond the mid-century mark, it became marginalized. In 1962 only fifteen active unions remained, and during the 1970s the WCTU became inactive.⁵

For several decades, however, the WCTU was a respected women's voice for multi-faceted reform and service to the community. As Marcia McGovern has noted, "during the early decades of the century, the most prominent western feminists seemed to have regarded the WCTU as an attractive, worthwhile and important organization."⁶ It can perhaps best be understood as the major non-denominational voice of organized evangelical Protestant womanhood. It brought women together outside their denominational boundaries—in particular, Methodists, Presbyterians, and to a lesser extent, Baptists. These women--devout, evangelical Protestants--realized that they shared common interests beyond sectarian folds, ones that often focused upon women and children. Central, of course, was the goal of prohibition, which they saw as a religious imperative and a means to alleviate much suffering of women and children rooted in men's drinking—domestic violence, abuse, neglected families, squandering of scarce resources. But it was not their sole objective. In its heyday the WCTU had a wide range of concerns. Many were traditional benevolent charitable sorts of efforts that sought to assist the poor and needy—often but not always women and children. However, the WCTU also sought a range of reforms that numerous individuals and groups were espousing in the early twentieth-century era of reformism, and worked for greater opportunities and rights for women--the Dominion WCTU, in fact, was the first women's organization to call for women's suffrage (in the 1890s).

The numerous departments into which WCTU work was divided suggests their diverse interests, and offered a range of activities that allowed for much picking and

choosing by local unions and individual members. In many respects WCTUers blended old and new. How directly affected they were by the liberalized theology associated with the Social Gospel cannot be determined, but they did affirm in practice the Social Gospel's thrust towards "social salvation." As well, WCTUers, at least on the leadership levels, were caught up in the pull of science, especially the new social science. Saskatchewan, in fact, was apparently the first to rename its department of evangelism a department of social service.

Their diverse interests—and community involvement—are illustrated by examining some of the WCTU's major activities over and beyond its focus upon prohibition. The Saskatoon union, for example, had as its major project for nearly thirty years what was euphemistically called the Rescue Home for Friendless Girls when it opened in about 1910.⁷ As the leading student of the provincial WCTU puts it, the home was established "to deal with women who were already in trouble, partially in the hopes that they could yet be saved, but also out of simple benevolence and concern for the unfortunate."⁸ It was a maternity hospital for unwed mothers (apparently the only major one for several years), but the WCTUers who operated the home also handled a few police cases, and dealt with married women with special problems; an average of fifty-five females were cared for annually, some of them for up to four months. The home was financed mainly by the Saskatoon union itself but some assistance was provided by other unions and by benevolent organizations. As well, the city provided an annual grant. (In 1938 the home was taken over from the Saskatoon WCTU by the Salvation Army.)

Another contribution to the welfare of settler Saskatchewan was WCTU Travellers' Aid work. By 1917 "a fairly extensive network of depots" had been established in the province, Yorkton being the largest one and busy enough to require an agent to be always on duty. In the province as a whole nearly 1000 were assisted in

the WCTU fiscal year 1916-1917. Agents met trains, provided lists of suitable accommodations for an overnight stay, and otherwise assisted travellers, especially mothers and their children. Sometimes they helped girls secure domestic positions in what were deemed good homes, and occasionally gave shelter and assistance to girls “in trouble.”

Another area of concern was prison work, especially for the WCTU union in Prince Albert where the penitentiary was located. The 1914 Report, for example, indicated that the union had secured jobs for released prisoners and had assisted some men with parole. Assistance, including financial assistance, was also provided to prisoners’ families. The WCTU interest did not end with the direct involvement of the Prince Albert union. Other related work included efforts to secure women jail supervisors and policewomen; they petitioned the government for several years—to no avail.

Like other English-Canadian organizations in this era, the WCTU worried about the influx of continental Europeans who were often perceived as a threat to English-Canadian values. The WCTU engaged in assimilation or Canadianization efforts, activities that were stepped up during the years of the Great War. Especially active in work among foreigners (as it was sometimes known) were unions in Regina, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, and Melville. In 1913, in fact, the Regina unions voted \$1000.00 to hire Nellie Forman. She worked under the auspices of the Department of Work with Foreigners, and taught English in night classes, ran women’s clubs to introduce immigrant women to Canadian ways, and held kitchen garden classes for young immigrant girls. In early 1914 she was asked by the Yorkton District organization to establish her educational program at several centers—it was apparently deemed so effective that when she left the local school board hired three teachers to handle the

English classes. (Forman's work in Regina was apparently supported by Methodist women after the initial direct WCTU involvement.)

The WCTU, then, had a multi-faceted reform program as is suggested by these examples. That programme during and after the Great War "was held in high regard by a wide array of organizations," and at the Women Grain Growers convention in 1915 leaders called for cooperation with the WCTU, "the first organization" of reform.⁹

Still, it was prohibition that the WCTU saw as central to community betterment, and this focus more than anything else led the Saskatchewan WCTU into the struggle to secure women's suffrage (which in the provincial context was primarily a letter writing and, even more so, a petition-signing campaign). It appears that relatively few Saskatchewan WCTUers were initially adamant suffragists, but many joined the votes for women movement when many male prohibitionists associated with the Banish the Bar campaign were unwilling to do more than support a temporary limited female suffrage to allow them to vote in a proposed referendum. Whatever the exact stimuli, WCTUers began to support the suffrage movement in far greater numbers than previously, and they made up the core of the urban segment supporting the suffrage campaign.¹⁰ As for earlier interest, the WCTU had called for extension of the women's municipal franchise, and in early 1913 the Regina Union held the first debate on the topic of provincial suffrage at the home of a leading member. At the end of that debate the women present endorsed suffrage. They also passed a resolution calling for the vote for the "wives and mothers" of the province, and sent a copy to Premier Walter Scott. But not until the Women Grain Growers under Violet McNaughton's leadership were activated did the movement really gain steam.

In the meantime Canada had gone to war, and the WCTU turned much of its attention to the war effort. Fund-raising for numerous war-related projects was undertaken, monies being sent to numerous projects, relief funds, and assistance

programmes. Of especial importance were the Dry Canteens overseas associated with the military YMCA--about \$3000.00 of slightly more than \$4000.00 raised for patriotic purposes went to support the establishment and maintenance of them. War work did not occupy the exclusive attention of most WCTUers who believed that social and moral reform was part of women's patriotic duty. The war emphasis, however, was clearly dominant at the Dominion WCTU convention that was held in Regina in June 1916 (its 250 delegates making it the largest WCTU Dominion Convention to that time). Interestingly, a major guest speaker was one of the well-known militant suffragettes of the English Women's Social and Political Union, Emmeline Pankhurst. She spoke, however, largely about how women could best carry out their patriotic duties in terms of the war effort.¹¹

The hopes that WCTUers entertained for the future were largely dashed, and while the organization remained active, its many involvements began to narrow. As for the matter of drinking alcohol, the WCTUers began to concentrate upon an educational emphasis, calling for scientific temperance instruction in the schools and sponsoring school essay contests. The organization also fought against liberalization of the restrictive laws governing the consumption of alcoholic beverages. As well, the WCTU remained adamantly opposed to tobacco use, and became increasingly concerned about the use of drugs.

LOCAL COUNCILS OF WOMEN AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

The Provincial Council of Women (PCW) and the Local Councils of Women (LCWs) sought to be the unified voices of Saskatchewan organized women well into the twentieth century; they were linked to the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), (founded 1893) and the International Council of Women (founded in 1883.)

Council concerns were those of numerous bodies of organized women, a wide range of objectives that were perceived, above all, to better the lives of women and children and to contribute to the development and enhancement of community life. In Saskatchewan, as elsewhere, Councils were to be non-partisan and non-sectarian, and to practice the golden rule—"Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." Active Council members, confident that they had made important contributions, have often left behind extensive records of their perceived achievements.¹² Today what remains of the Councils—in this province or elsewhere--is marginalized.

As for developments in what became Saskatchewan the first organization dated from 1895 when the Local Council of Women was established in Regina. (There are variants of name, and it was sometimes called Regina Local Council of Women, or, post-World War II, the Regina Council of Women).¹³ Not until the era of the Great War did other Local Councils appear in the new province, but in 1916 they were established in Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert. In 1918 one was founded in Swift Current. (The one in Prince Albert periodically appeared and disappeared. Several other locals had brief lives--Weyburn, Estevan, Mossbank, and Yorkton). The four major ones were Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Swift Current. Shortly after the Great War, the Provincial Council of Women was formed. Its emergence was largely due to the efforts of Christina Murray (Mrs. Walter C., wife of the University of Saskatchewan president).¹⁴ She was instrumental in securing NCWC approval for province-wide bodies, and Saskatchewan was the first province to establish a PCW, the formal date of organization being 1919.

The Councils' organizational structure can confuse the unwary. Regardless of level—local, provincial, or national—Council membership was of affiliated (or federated) organizations, not individual women. Although a woman who was a member of an affiliated body was technically a Council member, the active participants were generally

women who had been chosen to represent each affiliate. The affiliates were of many sorts. So far as the LCWs are concerned, their affiliates, especially in the earlier years, might be primarily ladies' aid or female missionary societies. Other affiliates of LCWs came to be drawn from a wide range of "local" bodies (which often were also organized on provincial and/or national levels). The Provincial Council of Women was generally composed of women's organizations with provincial status; as well, the LCWs were represented. The NCWC was composed in large part of national-level bodies that wanted affiliation. A particular women's organization might be affiliated on all three levels, on one level, or on two. (The WCTU, for example, was not an affiliate of the NCWC in its heyday but the Saskatchewan WCTU did become an affiliate of the PCW, and local unions were likely to be affiliated with the LCWs in Saskatchewan. The Women Grain Growers, a provincial organization, was for a time affiliated with the PCW, the Regina LCW (at least in 1920), where its presence was a bit of an anomaly, and the NCWC (1917 to the 1920s). On a daily basis, the most active were the LCWs. In them urban women could direct their efforts towards the perceived needs of their city at a particular time in its history.

The following discussion first focuses upon the major LCWs, and then briefly examines the work of the PCW. Because of the disparate nature of available information, the coverage is uneven, but does, I think, make clear the sorts of matters that concerned the Councils.

The Regina LCW, as noted, was the first to emerge in what was to become Saskatchewan (1895), and it played a distinctive instrumental role in establishing certain locally important institutions. It was, in fact, founded to secure a hospital, apparently in the face of a good deal of apathy and hostility among the citizenry. (Given that the women, locally prominent, worked to some extent in conjunction with the male establishment, one wonders who first decided that a LCW was the appropriate vehicle to

secure what a segment of the citizenry believed to be a vitally important institution.) The LCW was successful, and a small cottage hospital opened in 1898, the origin of what was to become Regina General Hospital. No LCW member, however, sat on the board of the new institution; conventional wisdom deemed that a man's job. As supportive workers, however, they were welcome. The LCW did secure the services of the new Victorian Order of Nurses to staff the cottage hospital, and members also did extensive auxiliary work. For a few years the LCW appears to have become largely inactive, but then it played an instrumental role in the establishment of a Children's Aid Society (1908) and the Young Women's Christian Association (1910) in the city.

Although its institution-building days had essentially ended, the Regina LCW supported and worked for innumerable improvements in the lives of women, children, and the community. It did so in part by working through standing committees. The first were appointed in 1909, their names and scope similar to those of other Councils: Laws for Women and Children and White Slave Traffic, Custodial Care of Aged and Feeble minded, Press, Education and Playgrounds, Immigration, Objectionable Printed Matter, and Public Health. (Soon to be added were ones concerning Babies and Child Welfare. Over the years committees were added, dropped, or transformed as new interests and needs arose. One such example was growing attention to the film industry.) Then--and later--not all of its efforts were successful as, for example, the pre-Great War effort to recruit and provide temporary housing for the domestic servants so badly needed, especially in rural areas. As for affiliated societies, they numbered nineteen in 1910.¹⁵ Mainly ladies' aid, auxiliary, and missionary societies connected with the churches, they also included hospital auxiliaries (Alexandra Club and Lady Patronesses, Grey Nun's Hospital), Daughters and Maids of England, Kanata Club (a local group that met to hear members' papers on a range of topics, including women's rights), Women's Morning

Musical, WCTU, and YWCA. (Several of the denominational women's groups had been among the original ten affiliates of 1895-1896 as had been the WCTU.)

With the coming of the Great War, the Regina LCW—and nearly all its affiliated societies--turned to war work, including fund-raising, but it also continued its other work. As for supporting the burgeoning drive for women suffrage, the Regina LCW was involved, and the WCTU, an affiliate, was quite active. Numerous women wore both hats. Subsequently the LCW did play an important role in encouraging women to run for local office as school board members initially, and then as “women aldermen.” The first woman to sit on city council, in fact, was Helena B. Walker (Mrs. Ashley M.) who was an LCW candidate, and was first elected in 1932. (Support for women in civic offices continued, and the spate of women aldermen during the 1940s and 1950s were largely women who had been active in Council affairs.) The LCW also urged appointment of women to civic boards and to positions like that of policewoman. (The latter was not attained.) As well, the LCW displayed recurring interest in women's legal status. In fact, during the Great War era it had seen to the publication of a booklet outlining laws pertinent to women and children. The LCW also sought to reduce legal inequities, especially those facing married women. As well, concerns were expressed for women as workers, albeit its opposition to white women working for “oriental” males is seen as unacceptably racist today. Among other interests were securing a home for delinquent girls. (This was not attained.)

By the opening of the 1920s there were about forty-two affiliates, and in 1923 it was stated that the Regina LCW was the fourth largest in Canada. In 1925 affiliates had risen to about forty-six societies. Most remained denominational women's groups but Roman Catholic women increased their presence, the new Catholic Women's League (CWL) a member as was the junior CWL, and also present was the Hebrew Women's Benevolent Association. As well, affiliates included the Ladies Orange Benevolent

Association, American Women's Club, Civic Economics Association, Girls Work Board, Homemakers Club, Orpheus Club, Regina Nurses Association, University Women's Club, Women's Educational Club, Women's Labor League, Women's Musical Club, and Women's Teachers Association, as well as old standbys like the YWCA and WCTU unions. By the end of the decade the then forty affiliates included the Employed Girls Council and Salvation Army.

The 1920s was a decade of extensive activities. The LCW was instrumental in the establishment of a Milk Fund to provide milk for needy babies in Regina; it began in 1921 and continued until the late 1950s when government-based assistance programs eliminated its *raison d'être*. The LCW also began a program of supervised playgrounds that continued until the city took over in 1933. Very important was the work of the Arts and Letters Committee established in 1920; among its many achievements in future years was promotion of visual art, including Saskatchewan—and Canadian--paintings, and the gradual amassing of a body of paintings that eventually was donated to Regina College. The LCW had many other concerns, too, including conditions of work for women, and it quickly reached its financial objective in the Every Woman's Fund project masterminded by the PCW.

Although financial pressures led to reduced activity during the Great Depression, the number of affiliates remained high (forty-two in 1935), and the LCW remained involved in, and concerned about, many issues, including relief, health care, and peace. When war again erupted, war work became a major focus, and the LCW played a prominent role. In the postwar era community revitalization was a major preoccupation. Housing, for example, was seriously deficient, and an ongoing problem. The 1950s saw the RCW (as it was now called) undertake a major effort to improve housing and secure support for subsidized housing, working hard, but unsuccessfully for voter endorsement of a by-law. (This concern about housing problems became connected, above all, with

the name of Jackie Hoag, whose work led to her receiving national recognition.) The Council's last major endeavor was securing the preservation and restoration of Government House, a project begun in the late 1960s and concluded in 1980.

In the meantime, the RCW continued to support numerous measures promoted by a wide variety of bodies that were perceived to be for the good of the community. And its affiliates were indicative of many shifts that had taken place over the years. As well, the RCW had displayed occasional interest in women's rights issues. To some extent it did support implementation of recommendations made in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (1970), and one of its members (Agnes Davidson) was especially active, serving, for example, as RCW representative with the Regina Status of Women. (In 1995 the RCW commemorated its 100th anniversary, but it had long since lost its activist public face.)

In contrast, it appears that the Saskatoon Council of Women more actively promoted women's rights during the years of resurgent feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, at least when one reads the accounts of yearly activities presented at the annual PCW meetings.¹⁶ The LCW in Saskatoon had been one of three formed in 1916, and its establishment resulted from the efforts of Christina Murray and the Regina-based western vice-president of the NCWC, Mrs. T.J. Bennett (who also was actively involved in the establishment of the other LCWs established then). Given its date of establishment, the LCW in Saskatoon did not play an institution-building role like Regina's LCW. Nevertheless, it actively contributed to community betterment for many decades. Its standing committees, of course, were similar to those in Regina--and elsewhere. In 1926 they included Immigration, Education, Laws, Home Economics, Press, Public Health, and League of Nations. Its numerous affiliates numbered thirty-five at the time of its tenth anniversary. Mainly they were Protestant ladies' aids or auxiliaries and missionary societies, but also included were the Hebrew Women's

League and Catholic Women's League. Other affiliates were six chapters of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Ladies Orange Benevolent Association, University Women's Club, Graduate Nurses Association, Woman Teachers' Association, Fortnightly Club, Women's Canadian Club, YWCA Board, and a WCTU union. At mid-century the number was the same, but the list of affiliates was indicative of the shifts in women's interests and organizations that had been occurring. In 1966 affiliates numbered briefly an all-time high of sixty, but clippings suggest a lack of direction and decline in interest.

At present there is little easily accessible information about the achievements of the Saskatoon LCW.¹⁷ It did, however, have concerns like those commonly espoused by organized women, and an address given at the silver anniversary tea briefly summarized the highlights of its work up to 1941. In occasional instances work begun in a LCW committee led to separate organizations. In 1922 a committee was established to focus attention upon the handicrafts of the diverse groups in the province, and from this work arose the Arts and Crafts society; it was the first body to emerge from, then separate from, the Saskatoon LCW. The 1920s also saw the Home and School Club develop out of the work of the Education committee. Later, in about 1934, the LCW formed kindergartens under its guidance that later became a separate organization.

In several instances the Saskatoon LCW sought amelioration of people's lives or community betterment. For example, a 1927 LCW petition for a public comfort station led to its later construction, and apparently the LCW was instrumental in securing the city employment of a social service worker in 1929. The LCW also petitioned government for a school for the deaf, and Council deserved "some credit for its appearance in 1929." Children were a concern. In 1918 the LCW requested that Saskatoon city council introduce supervised playgrounds--with the assistance of the Citizens' Educational Council (formerly the Equal Franchise League) a beginning was

made. In 1930 the LCW arranged pre-school medical examinations, and mid-morning lunches were provided for undernourished children. Subsequently the LCW was able to obtain medical inspection and supervision of public school children. The LCW also sought to assist girls or women. In 1917 it first noted the need for a home for delinquent girls—and was still petitioning for one in 1941. More successful had been its work for mothers' allowances and juvenile courts. The LCW also assisted with the work of the new Minimum Wage Board. In 1929 it sought a prohibition against little girls serving as vendors, and this became law. Of course, it participated in the Every Woman's Fund. Numerous health issues early engaged the LCW. In 1919, for example, it asked that health certificates for food handlers in restaurants and bakeries be required, a request later granted. Although its work on meat inspection was not fully successful, the LCW was able in 1926 to realize its objective of a city by-law that required the serving of pasteurized milk in restaurants. Other interests included sponsorship of a cinema bulletin and request for film classification.

The Depression decade saw some LCW involvement in efforts to assist those in need. Glimpses of this work include its 1933 work with the City Relief Board to provide diets for the unemployed, and (in 1934 apparently) its establishment of a clothing relief bureau and organization of sewing groups.

With the coming of World War II, the LCW in Saskatoon—as elsewhere--turned much of its attention to war work. To briefly note just a few of its later activities, these included the establishment of the Saskatoon Citizenship Council (1955), and late in the 1950s the sparking of the organization of the Society for the Chronically III. In 1965 the SCW (as it was now usually known) decided that its jubilee project would focus upon the historic Victoria Schoolhouse. As noted, the SCW did increasingly turn attention to issues of women's rights.

The Moose Jaw LCW, founded in late 1916, soon had thirteen affiliates, and by 1918, twenty-four. (Thereafter the number seems to have hovered in the twenties, and in 1960 there were twenty-nine affiliations.) The originally affiliated societies included several women's religious bodies (the women's missionary societies of four churches, two ladies' aids, and a Roman Catholic women's group), several "secular" auxiliary sorts of groups (Ladies' Aid of Returned Soldiers League, Ladies' Auxiliary of the Providence Hospital, Review No. 2, Women's Benefit Association Maccabees, Olive Branch, Rebekah Lodge, the G.T.A Brotherhood Locomotive Engineers), and the Equal Franchise League. By 1923 affiliates (then twenty-nine) included additional ladies' aids and missionary societies as well as such organizations as Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, University Women's Club, Graduate Nurses Association, YWCA, and WCTU. The new Catholic Women's League belonged—as did the Orange Benevolent Society (Ladies). Soon came affiliation of the Employed Girls Council and over the years such groups as Canadian Daughters League, Business Girls Council, Hadassah, Women's Co-operative Society, CCF Women's Club, Liberal Woman's Association, Girl Guides, Canadian Women's Club, Salvation Army, Business and Professional Women's Club, Kinettes, as well as others joined. (These are listed to give an indication of the scope of involvement that the Moose Jaw LCW had, and they often appear also as affiliates of the LCWs in other cities.)

Initially the work of the Moose Jaw LCW had been mainly "patriotic" but it did support a range of efforts, largely focused upon women, it appears. Among them were hiring of a police woman. (Moose Jaw city council, though reneging on an apparent agreement to hire one, did accept, for a time anyway, a "matron" "attached to a benevolent society."). Other concerns then included support of a YWCA swimming pool, Baby Welfare (and the employment of a Baby Welfare Nurse, with some financial

assistance from the city), and an employment service (presumably for domestic servants).

After the Great War, full attention was placed upon women, children, and the community. The LCW, for example, supported appointment of a school nurse, school children's dental examinations, supervised playgrounds, and a downtown comfort station. It, too, called for a home for delinquent girls. (In the case of Moose Jaw, one opened in 1920, under supervision of the Salvation Army and partially financed by the provincial government. The precise role of the LCW in securing it needs to be studied.) Among other concerns was reduction of high infant and maternal mortality rates.

The Moose Jaw LCW also endorsed a half-day Wednesday holiday for retail establishments (females were frequently employed in them). During the Depression era it did provide assistance to unemployed girls, but further research is necessary. The body did encourage women's civic participation, including running for local office. The first woman to sit on city council, in fact, was a woman supported by the LCW: Mrs. H.D. Hedley, who was elected in 1935. Also successfully supported that year was a Mrs. J.H. Laird who was elected a member of the public school board.

During World War II, the LCW engaged in war work. Its later successes included the establishment, finally, in 1950 of the Victorian Order of Nurses in Moose Jaw. (It should be noted that as with the other LCWs, it did concern itself with numerous health care issues.) Dwindling in numbers and influence, though still seeking to improve the lives of Moose Jaw citizens, the MJCW disbanded in the course of 1983-early 1984.

The fourth of the major LCWs in Saskatchewan, the Swift Current LCW, emerged from a meeting of "interested women" held in Central School 11 May 1918. They heard an address by Mrs. Murray, and decided that the growing city of Swift Current could not afford to be without a LCW. The LCW in Swift Current had, of course, interests similar to the other LCWs: advancement of women and children and community betterment.

Among its concerns were milk drives, dental funds for needy children, and appointment of a public health nurse. It also was quite involved in baby welfare measures, first sponsoring a well baby clinic in 1921. Its milk fund, which dated from the 1930s and was still in operation in 1957, became one of its best-known projects. As with other LCWs, relief issues were a concern in the 1930s as were such matters as films, peace, and disarmament. The LCW also evinced concern for women in local elective and appointed office, and Mrs. Rachel May, first Swift Current woman to be elected to city council in 1936 served as convener of the child welfare committee. In the postwar era its interests continued to include education, and came to embrace also such disparate activities as working with New Canadians and undertaking the publication of a history of Swift Current as its Golden Jubilee project, Golden Furrows.

As late as 1967 a special supplement of the Swift Current Sun, 31 March, carried a big article headlined "Local Council of Women Mainstay of Community." For better or worse, this could be said, from an historical perspective, about the other LCWs and the PCW as well. By then, however, they were experiencing a waning of interest. Despite efforts to revitalize the bodies, there was no turn-around in the future. Two of the LCWs eventually disbanded completely: Moose Jaw and Swift Current.

The PCW, founded in April 1919, sought to provide a province-wide voice for organized women, urban and rural, with similar interests. The preamble in its constitution stated that it sought to further the aims of the NCWC "and to deal especially with those matters which are under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government."¹⁸ Present at the founding meeting held in the Saskatoon Young Women's Christian Association were delegates from the WCTU, Provincial Nurses Association, Citizens Educational League, Women Grain Growers, Homemakers Clubs of Saskatchewan, and Local Councils of Saskatoon, Regina, and Moose Jaw. Soon to be added was the then influential Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (a member from the mid-1920s to

1946). Subsequently, affiliates (or federates) increased, and over the years some organizations left while others joined. In 1952, for example, there were thirteen “federates.” A list of 1954 indicated that affiliates included besides the four LCWs, Provincial Homemakers Clubs, Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association, WCTU, Women’s Missionary Society, United Church, Saskatchewan Women’s Co-operative Guide, Consumers Association of Canada, Ukrainian Women’s Association of Canada, Barbers and Beauticians, and Saskatchewan Physical Therapist Association.

Like the LCWs, the PCW had standing committees, the original four being Legislation, Household Economics, Public Health, and Education. Shortly thereafter, the Child Welfare committee was added, and, apparently in 1924, Natural Resources. Later in the 1920s came Immigration and the League of Nations.

The first annual meeting had been held in the Regina YWCA, April 1920, and subsequent meetings alternated among Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Swift Current. These annual meetings included reports from affiliates and, very importantly, discussion of resolutions submitted by affiliated groups (about which more later).

In 1922 the fledgling PCW launched a project of greater magnitude than any future one. It was decided at a special meeting to establish the Every Woman’s Fund to provide financial assistance to mothers who could not otherwise afford to go to the new Qu’Appelle sanatorium for treatment of tuberculosis. The objective of \$50,000 (quite a large sum for the time) was not reached within a year as originally hoped, but was reached within a few years. (Beginning in the late 1920s, funding for such women was handled by the government.)

Mainly, the PCW sought to influence public policy, by calling for what was deemed appropriate provincial legislation or calling attention to problems that required remedy. For several decades PCW participants annually discussed in earnest resolutions brought forward from the affiliates, including the LCWs, and decided which

ones would be the focus of the annual discussion with Cabinet members. PCW concerns were wide ranging, including immigration issues; laws and policies affecting women as wives, mothers, workers, and as individuals; greater representation of women on agencies, boards, and commissions; film censorship; children's welfare; laws affecting illegitimacy; relief measures; peace issues; health care provision; marriage; care of delinquents and "mental defectives"; mental health clinics; cancer treatment; legal issues; reform of, and improvement in, education; library development; public health measures; additional medical personnel and expansion of health-care facilities; housing problems; treatment of women offenders; and radio and comics content. The list could go on. By the 1960s interest in the plight of the Aboriginal population was growing, and there was during the year 1965-1966 "[a] thorough study of the plight of the Indian and Metis citizens in the Province."¹

For several decades the PCW had enough clout to meet annually with the government. More often than not, however, they failed in getting the government to act, but occasionally they were successful. As well members were appointed to various boards. Over the decades they included such bodies as the Saskatchewan Minimum Wage Board, the Saskatchewan Social Service Council, and the Saskatchewan Commission for Control of Cancer, as well as several wartime boards. Additional appointments appear to have been made as governmental bodies of various sorts proliferated in the CCF government that took over in 1944. At the 26th annual PCW meeting, for example, in 1945, it was reported that the PCW was represented on the Provincial Film Board, Library Board, Advisory Committee to Health Services Planning Committee, Consultant representative to Technical Education, Provincial Nutrition Council, and Provincial Advisory Committee for Homemaker's School. Subsequent

¹ The Provincial Council of Women of Saskatchewan in Affiliation with the National Council of Women of Canada Provincial Council History 1919-1984 (n.p., n.d). SAB, Regina, R-E1865.

annual meetings noted boards on which the PWC was represented, and in 1950 it was reported that more women were being represented on boards as they proved themselves capable. Sometimes noted at the PCW annual meetings were appointments of women to other provincially significant boards and local civic boards, and election of women to local office. (This was not consistently done. As well, it is difficult to ascertain whether only LCW women got mentioned. In most instances, of course, the women so chosen were ones with a Council connection.)

By the late twentieth century, the PCW had become marginalized as had the LCWs.

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The establishment of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Saskatchewan was a response of evangelical Protestant womanhood to a perceived need: assisting the young women who were pouring into the rapidly expanding (though small) cities of the new province. Of especial initial importance was the provision of respectable accommodation, making available at affordable prices "a Christian home" away from home for young women who came to work or study. A wide range of ancillary services quickly developed. YWCA programmes adapted over the decades to accord with shifting perceptions of womanhood and changing needs and demands.¹⁹

Originating in England in the mid-nineteenth century (1855), the YWCA had spread to Canada. The first Saskatchewan YWCA was established in Moose Jaw (1907), then Regina and Saskatoon (1910), and Prince Albert (1912). Only the Moose Jaw YWCA has ceased to exist; amalgamated with the YMCA since the mid-1950s, it completely disappeared in summer 2004 when the Family YMCA came into being in that city.

Formal organization of the Moose Jaw YWCA began in September 1907 after a survey of “young ladies” by local women indicated support for the project. Membership began to grow, reaching well into the hundreds in the mid-1920s (706 in 1925, for example.)

The initial objective was accommodation. The home first used as a residence soon became too small, and efforts to secure enough space led ultimately to a decision in February 1912 to erect a structure (which still stands). It was formally opened in May 1914 (and a pool was added ten years later). The residential accommodations met a serious felt need for room and board, and, as was common in YWCAs, both permanent and transient residents were accepted. (In the mid-1920s there were spaces for ninety-two females, including staff, and perhaps forty or so of this number were “permanent” residents.)

Also important was Travellers’ Aid work (a major effort of YWCAs and sometimes other bodies like the WCTU). The Moose Jaw YWCA began this work in 1912, and was helped by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Women regularly met the numerous trains passing through the city, and they provided assistance when necessary, with special, although not exclusive, attention to women and girls. In 1918, for example, 2837 trains were met and over 4000 people assisted at the railway station. According to the 1926 annual report, 3749 trains were met during the year. (Nearly as many trains were met in the depression year 1931.) Financial exigencies led to temporary discontinuation of Travellers’ Aid in late 1937.

Many services have been provided over the decades, but a few glimpses must suffice. Among them were classes--sewing and millinery instruction, English-language teaching, for example, employment services (especially placement of domestic servants), and physical activities, an extensive array that included organized sports

(badminton, basketball, hockey). A variety of clubs came and went during the decades, early ones including a club for English domestic servants and a glee club.

The YWCA also attempted to meet the needs of girls and women in other ways. For example, in 1927 the board supported a request of the Employed Girls' Council that a forty-eight hour week and a half-day Wednesday holiday for ten months of the year be implemented. The Depression brought new challenges as the YWCA attempted to respond to the wrenching need of growing numbers of females who were out of work or penniless. (As early as 1930, free meals were given to unemployed girls and a committee sought to make arrangements with the city to care for girls without resources.) Jobs were sought for the unemployed (generally ones in domestic service).

Financial difficulties mounted during the 1930s, and although the Moose Jaw YWCA was very active during World War II, it subsequently faced increasing difficulties in face of the needs and demands of the postwar era. Apparently a downward slide was occurring that could not be stopped, and by 1950 a possible merger with the YMCA was being discussed. (In the mid-1950s the amalgamation occurred.)

Three years after the Moose Jaw YWCA had been founded, women in Regina and Saskatoon established YWCAs (1910). Again the primary need was for respectable and affordable accommodations for young women who were arriving in large numbers to work or study in the two rapidly growing cities. Both YWCAs were housed in a series of temporary structures until permanent ones were erected in 1912 with some financial help from their respective cities. Their origins, however, are quite different. In Regina the LCW played an instrumental role in the establishment of the YWCA. In Saskatoon, Christ Church Women's Auxiliary and the Golden West Chapter of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire were central as was an individual woman, Miss Millicent Simcox, a Church of England deaconess who was already engaged in Travellers' Aid work.

The Regina YWCA grew quickly, becoming the fourth largest YWCA in Canada, with several hundred members and an extensive array of activities.²⁰ Its first cafeteria and restroom opened in May 1910, and classes were soon developed. As well, Travellers' Aid started early in 1911, its work including the bringing of women and children from the railway station to wait in the YWCA facility for their next train (sometimes staying overnight). Classes were offered, and clubs began operating, among the early ones a club for domestic servants from "the old country." Physical education was another important early activity, and soon after the new facility opened a Physical Director was hired. (In 1925 a swimming pool opened, the result apparently of efforts on the part of the Y girls themselves and the support of the LCW.)

During the Great War the Regina YWCA did war work, assisting soldiers' families and the Canadian Red Cross, for example, while continuing regular services. It also began an extensive program of work to meet the perceived needs of teen age girls. It supported Girl Guides, Camp fire Girls, and, of course, the new Canadian Girls in Training—the Regina YWCA, in fact, was involved in the sponsorship of the first girls' camp at Lumsden.²¹ (In 1919 CGIT work was taken over by the churches.) In 1916 a Girls' Work Secretary was hired, and this sphere of work continued to grow, even during the 1930s. The Great War era also saw the establishment of a vacation home near Fort Qu'Appelle for "tired city dwellers" and CGIT groups; it lasted from 1917 to 1937.

During the interwar decades of the 1920s and 1930s the Regina YWCA continued its extensive programs, but the 1930s was a difficult decade, as it struggled with shrinking resources in face of rising demands for handling serious problems of girls without jobs or money. Its efforts included the resumption (until 1936) of job placement in domestic service. The year 1934 saw near insolvency but use of building fund money and membership in the Regina Community Chest, beginning 1935, helped.

During World War II the YWCA supported the war effort, sometimes carrying out work in conjunction with federal programs and agencies. Its involvements included work with service personnel, including families (and it even helped to provide billets for the first Regina platoon of the Canadian Women's Army Corps). Housing then, and later, remained a problem, and the Y became very crowded. In the postwar era the Regina YWCA sought to respond to the needs of a changing community. Its many activities included work with New Canadians, for example, and by the mid-1950s it was turning attention to the problems of Aboriginal females. Later involvements came to include provision of emergency housing for women and day care facilities. In 1981 the Regina YWCA began its Women of Distinction annual awards. (It might also be noted that a new building was erected in the 1960s that has just been renovated.)

The Saskatoon YWCA, described as deserving "credit for starting a great many worthwhile endeavors,"²² also remains active. It, like the Regina YWCA, is housed in its second "permanent" facility. The first opened in 1912, a structure smaller than original plans called for, and one that had neither gym nor swimming pool. (Subsequently arrangements were made to use the YMCA facilities once a week—on a strictly segregated basis.) Hundreds of women were members in its heyday. For example, in 1915 membership was 550, and during the 1920s it fluctuated, 800 in 1925 being apparently a high point. By 1946 membership was down to 144 although about 3000 people used the facilities. There were, in fact, discussions about amalgamation with the YMCA but in 1951 it was decided that this would not solve the problems of either association. By the mid-1950s membership had considerably increased (and later went down).

A central feature of the Saskatoon YWCA's work from the beginning was Travellers' Aid, which was described even in the mid-1950s as work that "remained one of its chief preoccupations."²³ (It was, however, phased out during that decade.) In fact,

the Saskatoon YWCA essentially grew out of the Travellers' Aid work that was Fawcett's raison d'être. In 1912, the year that a permanent facility opened, 976 trains were met, and 232 girls, apparently all immigrants, were sent to the YWCA as their first home in Canada. In 1914 the committee that assisted with Travellers' Aid was enlarged, and representatives from the women's church auxiliaries were added (an arrangement that continued into the 1950s). At times Travellers' Aid enlarged its sphere of activity. During the 1930s, for example, its workers were attempting to provide multi-faceted assistance. By 1935 it had become overburdened, and reorganization of work included its turning over of its responsibilities for unmarried mothers to Bethany Hospital. During World War II Travellers Aid for a time provided assistance to service men and their families, work that was turned over to a separate committee. After World War II, Travellers' Aid turned its attention to newly arriving immigrants, and by the mid-1950s lacked sufficient financial resources to meet the need.

The Saskatoon YWCA had, of course, a wide range of classes and clubs that adapted over the decades to changing needs--for example, 1937 saw the establishment of a club initially called the Young Married Women's Club. Other activities included support of a camp at Watrous, established in 1917, and lasting until 1951

Among many concerns were female employment issues. Domestic service was an area of recurring interest. In fact, in 1927 the Saskatoon YWCA became an official hostel for the Women's British Immigration League, and for a time provided free temporary housing for British domestics on their way to positions in the province. Placement of domestic servants was the prime objective of the employment bureau of the early YWCA that resurfaced in 1931 in face of Depression pressures. Training for domestic service was also a concern as was improvement in conditions of work and wages. Female employment was seen as encompassing more than domestic service, however. In 1920, for example, the Girls Council had been formed, "to represent every

line of work in which girls were employed.”²⁴ Some of the clubs were for employed girls, and eventually extended to business and professional women.

During the Depression years the Saskatoon YWCA grappled with the serious problems of assisting females in need of jobs and assistance, and in about 1932 the Girls' Work Secretary began one of the first Y attempts to provide guidance and counseling. The YWCA increasingly faced financial difficulties that threatened programs and services, and brought retrenchment.

The coming of World War II saw the Saskatoon YWCA, like the others, undertaking numerous supportive efforts, including work with the Hostess Houses near army camps.

The 1950s was a time of rethinking and assessment. Clubs for girls were rapidly becoming part of the past, and the YWCA closed its camp. The need for residential accommodations remained high though, and there was a waiting list for permanent residents (a two year limit). In recent decades it has undertaken new sorts of programs, including assistance immigrants. In 1982 it began its own Awards of Distinction programme.

The fourth, and last, of the YWCAs that were established in Saskatchewan, dates from 1912. Late that year women in Prince Albert decided that it was time to establish one, primarily because of the lack of room and board for girls. As well, girls who were moving into the city for work needed other assistance. A house was purchased, in part with funds secured by their own fund-raising, in part with city funds.²⁵

It too became active in Travelers' Aid work, in fact, the end of the first year of operations saw 600 women and girls traveling alone receiving assistance, and 419 travellers stayed briefly at the YWCA in Prince Albert.

Soon the YWCA was also acting as an employment bureau. And once again this appears to have focused upon placement of domestic servants. Classes were also held to improve skills and so ensure better pay and conditions of work.

During the first several years of existence, including the war years, the Prince Albert YWCA also undertook other work. For example, it assisted in provision of English-language classes, helped runaway girls, cared for children in need, and established a summer camp for young women. It also became a place where soldiers could socialize, and provided assistance to soldiers' wives who needed financial assistance.

Postwar finances were difficult, and the Y apparently closed its doors in the summer of 1919. In 1922, however, financial assistance from Kiwanis allowed for reopening. Travellers' Aid work was also re-established, and during the interwar decades about 2000 trains per month were met.

In response to Depression needs, there were increased efforts to find jobs for girls. Training for domestic service work was again made available, and there was also apparently some discussion focusing upon improvement of work conditions. The YWCA also sought to provide free accommodation for penniless girls, and other sorts of assistance.

During World War II the Prince Albert YWCA was extensively involved in the city war effort. Work ranged from surveying available living quarters for military families to providing social gatherings for wives and service women. Even so, YWCA membership was not as attractive as it once had been—it averaged seventy-eight, including "Honorary Members" (who apparently were male). (This contrasts sharply with early membership figures. By the end of the initial year of operation, membership had already grown to 133, including seventy-two "Honorary Members," and in 1915, there had been 401 members, including 201 "Honorary Members.")

In the post war era the Prince Albert YWCA engaged in numerous activities while still providing its core service: accessible accommodation. Classes continued, help was given women with disabilities or health problems, and Travelers Aid was maintained, becoming focused upon women and girls from abroad. The facility also continued to be a place for meetings of women's clubs, and provision for their special events helped to bring in funds. In the mid-1950s, although membership was only fifty, the finances of the Prince Albert YWCA were in good shape unlike the crisis in Moose Jaw. The organization has been able to continue operation in Prince Albert, and in 1990 began to offer Women of Distinction awards. (How the YWCA there responded to the new demands and pressures that were evident by the 1970s requires extensive additional research, but it did play an important role in providing services during the early decades of the twentieth-century.)

The four YWCAs, then, have responded in many ways to assist Saskatchewan females, especially young women. Although their efforts may often appear narrowly restrictive today, they must be evaluated within the context of the era in which they thrived. (And in some instances the YWCAs have been among those who sought new directions.) As well, the YWCAs, both directly and indirectly, have contributed to community development and enhancement, their work only glimpsed in this overview. The Saskatoon YWCA appears to have been especially active in this regard, but a definite assessment awaits further research.

HOMEMAKERS' CLUBS OF SASKATCHEWAN (WOMEN'S INSTITUTES)

Largely a rural organization, the Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan (HCS)²⁶ has been non-partisan and non-sectarian in orientation, its aim to alleviate rural women's social isolation and to assist their "women's work" of improving

home and community life. For many decades the Clubs did just that, and so enhanced the fabric of rural life. (Although membership was not limited to bona fide farm women, the vast majority did come from farms. Some also came from hamlets or villages, and apparently occasional clubs sprang up in urban centers.)

Like most of the women's organizations in the new province, the "Homemakers" had originated elsewhere. First established in Ontario (1897), the organization, which was known as the Women's Institutes, quickly spread. Only in Saskatchewan was a different name used. (Not until 1971 was it changed.)²⁷ As with several other women's organizations, the Clubs became part of a larger network--a national body, Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC), founded 1919, and an international one, the Associated Country Women of the world (ACWW), formed in 1933.

The formal date of organization for the HCS was early 1911. A special program for women was held at the Collegiate Institute in Regina 31 January 1911 when the Agricultural Societies were meeting. This gathering is usually referred to as the first HCS convention, and brought together forty-two women from eighteen different centers. The groups were for the most part newly organized, but occasional ones were a few years old; probably the earliest had originated in Rocanville in 1907 (the Prosperity Homekeepers Society). The role of males, in particular F. Hedley Auld, director of agricultural extension at the new university in Saskatoon, in bringing about the establishment of the HCS has been a question. Early accounts place a greater emphasis upon male input than later ones. Male support was, indeed, present, then, and later, but whether more important as impetus or constraint may not be entirely certain.

The Clubs quickly proved popular—and their activities received newspaper coverage, including, after Violet McNaughton became women's editor of the Western Producer in 1925, regular coverage in that major farm paper. The rapid HCS growth,

then eventual decline, parallels the story of the Saskatchewan agricultural economy. By spring 1913 forty-four clubs were reported. By the Great War's end there were approximately 192 clubs with about 5,000 members. More were established, bringing the number in 1926 to 214 Clubs, and in 1928 to 228 clubs with 5,500 members. Despite, or perhaps because of, the Great Depression, membership actually increased during the 1930s. In 1931 fifteen new clubs were established, for a total of 238, and by 1939 there were 408 Clubs with 8,300 members. The peak was reached in 1940: 425 Clubs with a membership of 8,625. A decade later, however, there were over 5200 women in 330 clubs. Decline speeded up as extensive rural depopulation occurred. Today there are about 150 members in fifteen branches. (It should be noted that in 1940 there were fourteen Homemakers' Clubs on Indian reserves, the result of an effort begun in 1937. In 1954, at which time there were twenty-five such Clubs, the Indian women held their own convention.)²⁸

The Homemakers' Clubs were closely associated with the University of Saskatchewan through association with the department (later division) of Women's Work, and received some indirect financial assistance through the extension department. Until 1936 funding was also provided for the annual conventions at the University (first held in 1912). They attracted many participants, the one in 1928, for example, drawing 250 visitors. Quite strong was the homemaking emphasis, and numerous pamphlets and other information to assist woman as homemaker came to be available through the Department/Division of Women's Work. The Directors commonly gave lectures in a range of HCS settings. In the postwar era, funding available to the Homemakers through the University was gradually eroded.

Homemakers developed an extensive organizational network. District conventions, for example, were first held in 1922. That year also saw the establishment of convenerhips, their first reports being made at the 1926 annual convention. The

convenerships, which initially included child welfare, home economics, home & industry, legislation, agriculture, public health, and immigration, underwent changes as the decades passed, and covered such areas as arts and literature, education, home economics, and environment. These indicate the wide range of interests that the HCS represented.

That the HCS sought to enhance rural women's roles is certainly suggested by the draft constitution that was approved at the 1911 convention. It listed five objectives, and "aimed at improving homemaking, citizenship, the community life and the leadership abilities of the participants, as well as promoting national and international understanding, tolerance and good will."²⁹ Women who actively participated in the association saw themselves as having special responsibilities as women, but how "feminist" this understanding is difficult to ascertain. Well-known feminists of the Prairie West were present at the 1911 convention: Nellie McClung and Lillian Beynon (known as Lillian Laurie of the Winnipeg Free Press). It was Beynon, in fact, who had been working hard to interest Prairie West women in the institutes, and Auld had asked her for assistance, the eventual upshot of which was her organizational efforts undertaken for several months in the winter of 1910-1911. Also speaking at the 1911 convention were E. Cora Hind and Catherine Gillispie Motherwell. (It should be noted that the HCS never officially participated in the suffrage movement, its non-partisan stance being used as rationale.)

Always central was emphasis upon proper homemaking. Provincial conventions, district conventions, and local meetings were places where members could receive the latest information about food handling and preparation, proper nutrition, childcare, home decoration. Information also was made available on topics such as treatment of, or prevention of, contagious diseases, practical health care remedies, sanitation, and other public health concerns. These emphases fit well with the pervasive conviction that the

woman—as wife, mother, homemaker—had prime responsibility for such matters. These concerns continued into the postwar era, and more attention was given the inadequate material environment of most homemakers. Perhaps the most significant change was rural electrification, and Homemakers helped to promote use of, and information about, the new world of electricity, and held demonstrations.

The HCS was long concerned about youth training' especially girls, for life on the farm. It played a major role in the development of Farm Girls' Week at the University of Saskatchewan that originated in late 1920s. Actively lobbying for its establishment was Mrs. E. Ducie, provincial president of the Homemakers, 1926-1929 (and ad hoc member of the Provincial Council of Agricultural Instruction) as well as a member of the advisory council to the College of Agriculture. Subsequently, Homemakers' Clubs were the primary sponsors of the girls who attended. The first Farm Girls' Week, held in 1928, saw a registration of 120 girls, mainly members of junior homemakers' clubs. At the annual Farm Girls' Weeks young women were given short courses such as homemaking, care of gardens, poultry-raising, and handicrafts to make them effective and efficient farm wives. HCS interest in training rural youth was also seen in its central role in development of the Homecraft Clubs that originated in 1936, As well, Homemakers were actively involved in the farm girls' camps and farm boys' camps held during most of the major fairs in the province.

Concerned, too, with general matters relating to education, especially locally, Homemakers sought to introduce school lunches and improve hygienic conditions, for example. They also held oratorical contests, gave awards for academic achievement, worked to provide playgrounds equipment, rinks, books, libraries, and pianos, and at Christmas would put up a tree with gifts and favours. In the 1930s, some Homemakers went off in new directions, for example, seeking election as trustees on local school boards.

Important from the outset was work oriented towards the general community, and through these activities Homemakers made numerous contributions to the growth, development, and well-being of the local community. Establishment of libraries was an important objective, and creation of a small local circulating library was often a first move. By the Great War's end the Clubs administered forty-seven circulating libraries, and libraries had been established in twenty-four communities—both programs were assisted by university funding. Other assistance and money from the government helped also to provide at least some accessibility to library books. Another major objective was establishment of reading rooms and restrooms to make more comfortable trips to the local community, especially for farm women. Homemakers also worked to establish clubrooms and community halls. Sometimes library, rest room, clubroom, and hall were combined in the same building. These--and a myriad of other projects--required money, and the local HCS members were ingenious fund-raisers, sponsoring teas, dances, suppers, sales, and other events (activities which also contributed to the building or reinforcement of the local social fabric).

Also important were their unceasing efforts to improve health care in rural areas, their objectives including assistance to pregnant women and new mothers, and provision of medical personnel and hospitals. For example, Homemakers supported efforts to secure maternity grants (initiated in 1919), and during the 1920s they were involved with the Every Woman Fund. (It might be noted that the HCS—as well as the Women Grain Growers Association—had affiliation with the PCW that spearheaded this effort.) Homemakers also raised monies to assist patient care, and a local Club assisted the development of the first Red Cross Outpost Hospital in Canada, at Paddockwood. In many ways the HCS was involved in working for health care measures, facilities, and personnel in the latter 1920s. Clubs also held clinics, and were especially active during the 1930s in this regard (sometimes working in conjunction with others). They focused

upon children's health—baby clinics, inoculation clinics, dental clinics, eye examination clinics, and tonsil and adenoid clinics. During the 1930s the HCS also discussed delivery of health care. Some Clubs became formally affiliated with the Saskatchewan State Hospital and Medical League that sought socialized medicine, the Clubs lengthy experience with health care problems leading them to work actively for state-paid hospitalization.

Although not an original objective, the Clubs quite early undertook relief assistance. In 1913 the economic bubble burst, and then came severe drought in 1914. Clubs responded to appeals from the Department of Agriculture, and collected warm clothing. They also provided local assistance on their own. After the Great War erupted, Clubs assisted Red Cross efforts--some in fact operated as Red Cross "units"--and responded to appeals of relief funds that were seeking to alleviate civilian suffering abroad. The 1930s, of course, saw extensive involvement in efforts to reduce suffering in the province. Clubs worked with the Red Cross, the Relief Commission, and local agencies in larger towns, and also contributed to the Lieutenant-Governor's Emergency Fund. Other work included distribution of food sent from better off parts of the province and parcels from Central Canada. Clubs also raised monies to buy clothing and other items, and they made clothes too.

It was during the 1930s that the HCS became more active in drama. In 1935, for example, sixty-eight Clubs produced a play, and four held successful drama festivals. Both local Clubs and district conventions found that presentations of drama and holding of competitions were good fund-raisers. Gradually interest stretched across the province, and there was support for further development, including Provincial and Dominion Drama Festivals. As for the plays, they were largely ones that were broadly "accessible," that is, they appealed to a wide population range and could be produced with minimal expertise. HCS also increased support for arts and literature, the emphasis

often being upon the “accessible,” Clubs, for example, enthusiastically supporting the reading tours of poetess Edna Jacques. Later, when the Saskatchewan Arts Board was established after World War II, Homemakers made extensive use of its traveling programmes.

As for World War II, Clubs turned their attention to multi-faceted support for the war effort, again working closely with the Red Cross, and as the homefront effort intensified--use of ration cards, food substitutions, conservation, and the like--Clubs sought to follow guidelines. The HCS also supported the Wartime Prices and Trade Board that aimed to hold down inflation. Homemakers added their own voice to the growing concern about venereal disease, studied the issue at most of the clubs, and had representation at a conference held in Regina in 1944. With the end of the war, Clubs welcomed the returning servicemen and servicewomen, and war brides as well. And, as the need for relief efforts overseas became clear, they pitched in.

Homemakers did not completely curtail their other activities during the war. In fact, Clubs began to look into the proposed expansion in size of school units, a matter that occupied them for several years. (More activist than usual, the Clubs often concluded that larger school units were needed and worked to secure support to initiate them, a process that continued into the 1950s.) Another important matter as World War II neared its end was reconstruction. Bertha Oxner, Director of Women’s Work, was asked to prepare a brief on behalf of the Homemakers for the Saskatchewan Re-Construction Council. She circulated questionnaires to many leading Homemakers, and responses indicated interest in educational matters (improvement of facilities), development of social and recreational opportunities, and housing improvement. (As for this last, housing improvement, Homemakers were greatly interested in finding ways to improve the rural home, and the HCS was represented by two women on a body set up by the provincial government, the Saskatchewan Farm Housing Committee.)

Although active, postwar Homemakers found themselves living in a greatly changed world—and one in which government plans and initiatives moved more extensively into areas that had long been of prime concern to them. Education and health, for example. Also, expansion of library services. Clubs, not surprisingly, supported the initiatives, and in the case of the first of the regional libraries, the one operating out of Prince Albert, the Homemakers played a prime role in securing its establishment. (Such facilities were badly needed. At mid-century about 70 percent of people in the province had no access to public libraries—the national average was about 30 percent.)

In these, and other, endeavors, the Homemakers did continue to play a supporting role, even an auxiliary sort of function. As well, HCS remained an influential body at mid-century, still serving “as representative of and a ‘pipeline’ to rural Saskatchewan.”³⁰ Homemakers were represented on several bodies: Advisory Council of the University College of Agriculture, Advisory Council of Health Services Planning Committee, Provincial Film Board, Provincial Council of Women, Canadian Association of Consumers, and the Practical Education Committee. They were also actively involved in that major governmental study of the 1950s, the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life. A leading Homemaker, Nancy Adams, was one of the six members of the Commission, questionnaires were circulated, Homemakers, as individuals and club members were encouraged to participate, and the provincial body prepared a brief for the Royal Commission.

As rural Saskatchewan declined in numbers and importance, the women of the Homemakers’ Clubs became increasingly marginalized. The name change of 1971 signaled not the onset of a new and vigorous phase but was simply window-dressing as it turned out. Nevertheless, the Clubs had been for several decades a contributor to the fabric of rural life and its improvement. How often their members wore hats in other

organizations with similar objectives is difficult to determine, but in general it can be stated that many did.

WOMEN GRAIN GROWERS

Although in existence for little more than a decade (1913/1914-1926), the Women Grain Growers (WGG)³¹ was a women's farm organization that left its mark upon the new province. An expression of what has been called "agrarian feminism,"³² it was concerned with farm women's social and intellectual isolation, and sought recognition of women's farm partnership, improvement of their economic contribution to the family farm, and more equitable status for women. It also worked for community betterment, the enhancement of cultural, social, and health amenities in rural communities."³³ The WGG was distinctive to Saskatchewan, but had close ties with like-minded women elsewhere, in particular the influential Beynon sisters who were Winnipeg-based.

There were interconnections of the WGG with the Homemakers, including support from the same prominent Prairie West feminists, a somewhat overlapping membership, and co-operation upon common objectives. The WGG, however, in Georgina Taylor's analysis, was part of the strain of farm/rural women's organizations that fed into later groups like the United Farmers of Canada (UFC) Women's Section (variant names also), formed 1926, and its successor, the Saskatchewan Farmers Union, formed 1949 (which retained a structure for women like that of the UFC). Its stance was, in contrast to the Homemakers, more political, more radical, more gender-conscious. Nevertheless, the two worked together on common objectives like health care, libraries, schools, restrooms, and Taylor argues convincingly that the two organizations were not divided by hostility and tension.

WGG origins date back to the “Women’s Congress” that was held at the time of the convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association (SGGA) in February 1913. At least fifty women, more likely twice that, were present during three days of meetings at Convocation Hall, University of Saskatchewan. (Programme arrangements were in the hands of the Beynon sisters—Lillian Beynon Thomas [Lillian Laurie] and Francis Marion Beynon—and speakers included Lillian Beynon Thomas, E. Cora Hind, and Nellie McClung.) During the following year organizational work was undertaken, and in February 1914 at the annual SGGA convention, held that year in Moose Jaw, the WGG was formally founded. Over eighty women were registered. In 1915 the convention was held in Regina, the SGGA meeting in Metropolitan Methodist Church, the WGG meeting in Knox Presbyterian Church (their original site was the McCallum-Hill Building but it was too small to accommodate the number of women who came—about 200, presumably both delegates and visitors).

In the mid-1920s there occurred amalgamation of the SGGA and the Farmers’ Union, the new body called the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), and the old WGG folded. (The tradition of a women’s presence in a farm organization did continue. The Saskatchewan UFC had a Woman President as well as a President, who could be theoretically, but never was, a woman. As well, two women were to be on the Board of Directors. Its successor, the National Farmers’ Union continued these formal arrangements.)

Although several of its leaders were prominent, none stands out as does Violet McNaughton, president from early 1914 to early 1918. She was instrumental in the establishment of the WGG, helped to organize farm women in Alberta, Ontario, and Manitoba, and gained a national, even international, reputation while being a “household name” on the prairies, operating from Saskatchewan (Harris area and Saskatoon).

The WGG was closely associated with the SGGA, the powerful male farmers organization with 10, 000 members. WGG members had to be women with a bona fide farm connection—mothers, sisters, wives or daughters of farmers, not simply rural dwellers. The initial years saw the working out of the distinctive arrangements whereby women were full members of the SGGA but also had their own distinctive organization, an unusual set of arrangements for that era. Women would have full membership in the SGGA as well as the right to organize a Women's Section (essentially run by an executive made up of the president and other officers) and the right to establish women's groups on the local level. In 1919 came further change when it was agreed that three members of the WGG Board of Directors would also sit on the SGGA Board of Directors. These arrangements did not go unchallenged but enough males were in favour to secure their acceptance.

Initially, at the 1913 Congress, the women decided to adopt the SGGA constitution, but with the addition of three clauses that the SGGA would be asked to incorporate in its constitution in 1914. (The SGGA never did so.) The clauses illustrate some common ground with the Homemakers as well as differences—and WGG objectives:

To establish libraries, literary societies, reading rooms, arrange lectures and to further extend the knowledge of the members and their families along economic and social lines, with the view of elevating the standard of living in rural communities.

To encourage members to provide suitable halls or meeting places and properly equip and furnish the same for social and educational benefits of the members.

To foster and encourage the co-operative method of distribution of farm products and the supplying of staple commodities.³⁴

The WGG quickly expanded. Early in 1914, there were only five local clubs, but by 1915 there were sixty, and two years later the number had jumped up to 100, encompassing about 1600 members. By May 1919 an estimate was given of at least

6000 women members in the SGGA locals and in the WGG. This figure suggests that about one-sixth of SGGA members were women. This expansion was taking place largely during the era of the Great War, and the stance of the WGG regarding war work is an interesting one. McNaughton herself was a pacifist, and she wrote and spoke against the war, joined the Women's Peace Party in 1916 (it became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919), and, of course, wanted nothing to do with an organization like the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire. She, did, however, refrain from criticism of war work, including the raising of extensive funds for a range of relief projects as well as for an ambulance that was undertaken by WGG members.

WGG objectives were many, as is suggested by the clauses proposed but never accepted in the SGGA constitution. Another statement elaborates numerous concerns. The constitution adopted by the WGG at the 1914 convention aimed

First and foremost to further those causes they were advocating, making such causes planks in the platform of the Women Grain Growers' Association, namely the Banish the Bar Movement, Woman's Franchise, Policy of Peace, Rural Education, Co-operation and [the] Establishment of Social Centres; and secondly, to help and strengthen the men's organization.³⁵

Although in existence for just over a decade, the WGG left a significant imprint upon the history of newcomer Saskatchewan. A major contribution was its role in attainment of the vote for women in the province, the formal date March 1916 (Saskatchewan being the second province to grant the vote). This was an initial objective of the WGG—and a measure at least given lip service to by the SGGA men from the 1913 Saskatoon convention onwards. Close co-operation with urban women was essential, McNaughton believed, especially the WCTU, and she led the establishment of the Provincial Equal Franchise Board (1915). (As briefly noted earlier, suffrage activism was deemed political and therefore unsuitable for the Homemakers to

undertake, but numerous HCS members also wore also a pro-women's suffrage WGG hat.) WGG members played a very active role in the petition-signing campaign that was the central feature of women's suffrage activism in the province. (These petitions with thousands of names were the response to Premier Scott's statement that women had to prove they wanted the vote.) WGG members were included in the delegation that took thousands upon thousands of signatures on petitions to the Legislative Assembly and met with Premier Scott in May 1915. Seeking also to advance in other ways a more equitable status for women, the WGG was a supporter of the 1915 Homestead Act that sought to protect women from sale of the home quarter section without their consent

A prime WGG concern (and one in which they worked often with the Homemakers) was improvement of health care in rural areas. (It was dreadfully inadequate, and especially impacted women and children. Among worrisome issues were the high maternal and infant mortality rates and the often prohibitively high costs of care when available.). The WGG campaigned for "medical care within the reach of all," by which was meant an increase in midwives, nurses, and doctors as well as hospitals in rural Saskatchewan, and their accessibility in terms of proximity and cost.³⁶ Interest was initially expressed at the 1914 founding convention, and the campaign was at its height between 1914 and 1920. The issue was discussed at the provincial conventions in both WGG and general sessions as well as in WGG and SGGA locals. Besides working in conjunction with the SGGA, the WGG worked with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. A few gains were made in 1916 and 1917. The provincial government moved to allow through legislative changes municipal doctors whose salaries would be guaranteed by the municipality, provision for three or more adjoining municipalities to establish a municipal (or union) hospital, and greater municipal authority in securing services of a nurse. Further, grants were provided for hospitalization. Then came the strenuous effort to secure municipal action and taxpayer support. In 1919 the

WGG prepared to further promote implementation. According to Taylor, who uses considerable evidence to back up her position, the role of the WGG and its president, Violet McNaughton, in starting on the road to medicare has been greatly undervalued. The WGG was also interested in utilization of properly certified midwives who would be trained and paid through funds from the government (a proposal that never became law, apparently in large part because of the opposition of nurses.) and called for school medical examinations.

Among its many interests were improved laws for women, improvement of rural education, support for home economics, labour-saving conveniences in the home, lack of farm labour, especially seasonal domestic help, library development (of special interest were traveling libraries), establishment of restrooms in rural communities where farm women who came into town for the day would have a place to go, community halls, and the marketing of farm “by-products.” As to the last, the WGG was looking into the co-operative marketing of butter and eggs, the latter especially, by early 1915, and one of the last efforts of the WGG was organization of the Saskatchewan Egg and Poultry Poll, a women’s producer co-operative in 1925.³⁷ (It might be noted that, although WGG members participated in the prohibition movement, it was not a prime concern of the leadership.)

The WGG, which always retained a distinctive farm emphasis, appears to have had a working relationship with Saskatchewan’s urban women. Tensions did surface both in the Provincial Equal Franchise Board and in the PCW to which the WGG (and the HCS) belonged. Far greater tensions between urban and farm women, however, were experienced on the national level within the National Council of the Women of Canada.

Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire

For over half a century there were numerous Saskatchewan Chapters (and a provincial-level body) of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE). Although ostensibly non-sectarian and non-partisan, this imperial-minded women's organization was open during its heyday only to women of British background. It was the voice of Empire, Canadian identity within Empire, military action in support of Empire, and commemoration of wartime heroism.³⁸ The IODE did, however, also come to engage in numerous philanthropic and educational efforts that contributed to community development and betterment albeit within a framework that apotheosized British/English Canadian ways. Its motto, 'One Flag, One Throne, One Empire, well summarizes its stance.

Originating during the Boer War, national headquarters were established in Toronto in October 1901. Although Chapters proliferated, relatively little interest was shown in what became Saskatchewan--or elsewhere in the Prairie West--until 1909 when seven members of the National Executive undertook an organizing tour in western Canada. The result: seven Chapters in Saskatchewan--Battleford, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina, and Grenfell.³⁹ Apparently the IODE had not been entirely without a presence prior to this. In Regina, what happened in 1909 was likely a reorganization of a previously extant body, and formation of the Forget chapter at a meeting at Government House. In Moose Jaw, the first IODE had been founded to establish the general hospital there, then became a hospital auxiliary, and once again became an IODE chapter in 1909. On the eve of the Great War there were twenty local Chapters in the province. (And in October 1914 a Provincial Chapter was formed.)

These Saskatchewan members were likely to be women who lived in the cities or larger towns but rural women also displayed an interest. As noted, a would-be member had to be British in background, but not all who qualified “ethnically” were necessarily welcome. Nadine Small points out that a woman had to apply for admission to a Chapter, and go through a selection process. She also notes the IODE’s essentially class-bound nature that was related to costs of membership. These costs were relatively high, the numerous social obligations and charitable events, for example, were likely to require appropriate—and expensive dress.⁴⁰

With the advent of the Great War, the IODE demonstrated its effectiveness, and became an attractive organization for activist female supporters of the war effort. Membership everywhere greatly increased, and in Saskatchewan thirty-three new Chapters were organized. The IODE emphasized women’s home-front self-sacrifice and self-discipline in face of the sacrifices being made by soldiers and by civilians in war torn lands. At home the greatest sacrifice, said the IODE, was women’s giving up of their menfolk to the war effort. Members sought to ensure that men went off to war—and made life miserable for men perceived as slackers. Sometimes recruitment meetings were held under auspices of IODE chapters, a move often requested by recruiting officers. An incident in Swift Current is an example of the lengths they occasionally went to. The IODE Chapter set up a tent at a local fair that was “for men only”—it was a recruitment tent. As the war went on, the IODE supported manpower registration and, eventually, conscription.

The IODE assisted the war effort in numerous other ways, prioritizing the needs of Canadian soldiers but also assisting the Allies, military and civilian. Very important were their fundraising efforts. Even before the war officially began, Saskatchewan women helped to raise funds for a hospital ship. (What eventually materialized was not a ship but a significant amount of money for naval hospitals in Britain). Saskatchewan

IODE Chapters also provided funds to a Regina doctor for equipment to use in the Army Medical Corps and funds to purchase an ambulance. Best known and most important, however, was assistance to the Canadian Red Cross Society. The IODE helped to organize branches of the Red Cross in provincial cities, gave money to support Red Cross work, and produced hospital supplies and clothing. IODE chapters also responded to requests from European relief associations by providing goods of various sorts—carloads of flour to Belgium for example—or financial help. The perpetual need for funds led the IODE to hone its fundraising skills. Members were not merely expected to ante up as much money of their own as possible. They were also expected to raise funds among the public, and undertake numerous projects, ice carnivals or vaudeville, for example. Most common though was the afternoon tea. To get money from the general public IODE members also went from door to door and made general appeals.⁴¹

Funds raised, of course, were also used to assist the Canadian war effort, their foremost concern. If it cost little or nothing to emphasize the importance of conservation of resources, the same could not be said about the numerous forms of assistance to service personnel. The work began at home when IODE chapters attempted to ensure the comfort of soldiers in recruiting centres and training camps. This they did in many ways, making bed ticks for young men in North Battleford, for example, and operating recreation rooms, soldiers clubs, social events, including sports days and dances, and card parties. Farewell celebrations were held when the young men left for Europe, and “comforts” were given them. Soldiers overseas were supplied with comforts, and at holiday time they were given gifts and food; those suffering in prison camps also were assisted. Above all, the IODE was to be remembered for its incessant knitting of needed items (socks, for example), a lowly but appreciated activity.

IODE Chapters also attempted to assist soldiers’ dependents, widows, and orphans. Services included social clubs for wives and mothers, Christmas goodies,

relief for needy dependents (prior to the establishment of the Canadian Patriotic Fund), companionship, and guidance. (How welcome the guidance is debatable.) The IODE also assisted when soldiers were killed or wounded, sent letters of congratulations when promotions or awards were received, helped soldiers to return to civilian life, aided convalescents, and provided also some help to the men who had been mentally affected.⁴² Finally, with the war's end, the IODE honoured and commemorated the heroism and sacrifice of the soldiers.

The Saskatchewan IODE's work was not distinctive, but here and elsewhere in the Dominion it was well prepared when war erupted, and was "prompt, efficient and focused."⁴³ Practically all the women's organizations engaged in war work, of course, but the IODE was particularly well situated to play a commanding role. Two decades later, the IODE carried out similar activities, but its work during World War II no longer represented a "pioneering" endeavor. It again engaged in commemorative activities, an example being the IODE involvement in installation of a stained glass war memorial in the Royal Legion Hall in Regina (1955). As might be expected, the IODE did play a major role in assisting the settlement of the British war brides immediately after the war.

At war's end IODE was still an attractive organization. In 1946 there were two Municipal Chapters (mainly composed of the directors of Primary Chapters in locales where there were several), fifty-seven Primary Chapters, and two Junior Chapters; Primary Chapter membership, however, was now 1940, a drop of 184 from the previous year. Well over a decade later, at the beginning of the 1960s decade, there were sixty-five Primary, four Junior, and two Municipal Chapters, but provincial membership had declined to 1538. By decade's end dwindling numbers led to organizational efforts and reassessment, but the IODE, despite shifts in focus, was unable to regain its former vigor in a significantly transformed society and culture.⁴⁴

In its heyday the IODE, it must be emphasized, engaged in activities ranging far beyond involvement in two major war efforts. Important, too, is the fact that this other work was not merely nationalist (and imperial)-oriented in nature. The IODE also engaged in extensive philanthropic and educational work with a community orientation. A major interest has been education (not all of which was focused upon glorification of Empire and British Canada). For decades, the Saskatchewan IODE has provided scholarships and bursaries, and the Provincial Chapter apparently was initiator of overseas study assistance after the Great War. It was also soon after the Great War that the IODE joined in the crusade against tuberculosis. They undertook development of a children's pavilion at the Fort San Tuberculosis Sanatorium with space for thirty-five patients and then establishment of a baby's preventorium. Various chapters became involved in other health-oriented activities over the years, baby and children's clinics, for example.

The Provincial Chapter supported development of library facilities in some communities. It also made films available through its Film Department (an area of increasing work), and at mid-century started a traveling art program.

At mid-century the IODE was also a leader among the women's organizations that began to focus attention upon the plight of Canadian aboriginals. The Provincial Chapter did several things. Through its Film Department it acquired The No Longer Vanishing Indian [precise title?] in 1951. It provided bursaries for Indian and Metis girls to study at the University of Saskatchewan, then return north to act as teachers' aides, an example of the ongoing IODE concern for education. It sponsored a leadership training course for Indian girls in Prince Albert. As well, it undertook as its 75th Anniversary Project a Book-Audio Cassette program for aboriginal children in co-operation with the Saskatchewan Provincial Library. Initially, it held a writing contest, and then the stories and tape recordings were to be made available in English and Cree,

books to be given free to regional, band, or northern libraries.⁴⁵ In the meantime, back in the early 1960s, the IODE in Regina had been a prime mover in getting established the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre in that city.

At the time of the National Annual Meeting in Regina in 1959, the Leader-Post had extolled the IODE. It was, an editorial stated, a “traditionally significant and important organization,” “the largest voluntary, patriotic, non-sectarian, non-partisan philanthropic women’s organization in Canada.” The IODE is “an instrument of Canadian unity and Canadian unity within that great and honorable tradition binding the British Commonwealth and finding its symbolic fulfillment in Her Majesty the Queen.” The editorial concluded by quoting the following: The organization “stimulates patriotism, fosters unity within the Commonwealth, provides an efficient organization ready for prompt and united action in time of emergency, and furthers good works for the benefit of Canada and its people.”⁴⁶ A decade later, the IODE was becoming a part of a Canadian past that more and more citizens wished to forget. In its heyday, however, it did function as a vehicle of community development and betterment within a then prioritized intellectual framework.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As noted in the Introduction, the organizations discussed in this report were the major associations of organized women that contributed to community development and enhancement during the formative years of this province and well into the twentieth century. Their efforts illustrate the general thrusts of what were deemed to be appropriate spheres of activity for women of a particular sort, those of favoured ethnocultural heritage, above-average educational levels, and more comfortably off (and likely to be women married to “men of substance” or perhaps associated as sister or

daughter. These “spheres” included education, health care, assistance to those in need, as well as numerous other expressions of service on behalf of citizenship and community. (A major area not discussed is women’s involvement in the arts, as previously noted.) In brief, the women were part of local elites, and sought to re-establish familiar institutions and patterns of life, ameliorate harsh conditions of existence, and provide amenities in ways according to their perspectives.

These organizations (with the exception of the short-lived WGG) appear to have moved over the decades from driving force to supportive efforts to, at best, supportive voice. This is a very large generalization, but an apt one. During the latter half of the twentieth century, these organizations lost their *raison d’être*. Times were changing. Both urban and rural worlds were transformed, governments undertook greater responsibilities, removing from women’s purview numerous concerns, and women developed new interests and attitudes (symbolized, above all, in resurgent feminism). The once major organizations no longer had the “woman power” or the opportunities of a passing generation, and were decidedly unattractive to younger women. New (and more transient) groups sprang up to deal with concerns of women themselves—their advancement, removal of barriers, for example. As well, those women who remain activist may be more likely to be participating in groups with men to secure many objectives.

II. SUGGESTED SITES FOR RECOGNITION OF WOMEN’S CONTRIBUTIONS

In order to commemorate Saskatchewan women’s organizations that contributed to community development and betterment, it may be necessary to think in terms of recognition that is not always linked to specific historic buildings, if this is indeed

possible. What follows is incomplete and tentative, and during April the author of this report plans to investigate certain possible sites.

THE FIRST WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Should CYR wish to consider recognition of these denominationally-related Protestant women's organizations, there are numerous churches that have at least municipal heritage status at the present time. (Of course, if recognition is given to them, then probably some recognition should be given for at the least, the Roman Catholics—the Catholic Women's League first appeared in Saskatchewan about 1919 in Regina—or so my current research suggests, and soon emerged in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. For several decades Jewish women's groups also existed.)

WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

A possible site for commemoration would be Regina's Metropolitan Methodist church, now Knox-Metropolitan United Church of Canada, which already has heritage status. It appears that all the evening meetings of the Dominion WCTU convention 1916 were held there. As well, Metropolitan's women were in the forefront of WCTU activity in the city of Regina, and a very early union was established there.⁴⁷

PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL COUNCILS OF WOMEN

Since the PCW was conceived in part as a body that would lobby for needed legislative changes, and for decades met annually with the Premier and cabinet, it would appear that the Legislative Assembly building would be an appropriate site to commemorate that body.

The Regina LCW. Buildings with extensive connections to the LCW no longer exist, including the two former city halls. There were meetings held at the Hotel

Saskatchewan, for example, annual meetings in the mid-1960s. It is a heritage site, so perhaps a link could be made with it.

The Moose Jaw LCW. The strongest link is with the public library in that city. The LCW was organized there, and the library was also commonly used for their meetings. (It was also among the sites used when the PCW met in Moose Jaw.) Original portions of the library apparently still remain though encased by a more recently constructed edifice.

The Saskatoon LCW. Unfortunately a major site link no longer exists. The YWCA was the place where organizational meetings took place, and meetings were often held there for several decades. In 1957 meetings were shifted to the new City Hall which I believe still stands.

The Swift Current LCW. It grew out of an organizational meeting at Central School. At present I do not know whether this building still exists. There are references to some meetings at the city hall. Minutes, handwritten and microfilmed, have not been read thoroughly to ascertain whether a specific site is mentioned as a regular meeting place.

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The only remaining building that was originally constructed for use as a YWCA building is in Moose Jaw, and is apparently at present wholly or partially in the hands of a Calgary developer. I shall be checking out the situation in the next few weeks. Since it (and the WCTU) were heavily involved in Travellers' Aid work in urban centers, perhaps some recognition could be given this once crucial activity via a railway station.

HOMEMAKERS' CLUBS/WOMEN'S INSTITUTE OF SASKATCHEWAN

Although some local Clubs had clubrooms during the heyday of the organization, these have largely—or completely—disappeared. I am still checking out the situation in

Pense. The Club there, which no longer exists, was one of the earliest ones to be founded, and was quite active for several decades. As well, its work is well documented. One lead tells me that the building became a private residence, acquired an addition, and is currently for sale. Another source tells me that the building has not existed for quite a long time. Pense was not only one of the earliest Clubs to come into being but also was for decades a leading Club in the province. It is, as well, one of several Clubs that has a decently documented history. A possible link might be made between the HCS and Pioneer Hall, now a designated heritage site.

Although a cairn with a plaque on the grounds of the University of Saskatchewan recognizes the HCS, linkage to a building, if one can be found, would be ideal. Perhaps one possibility is recognition of the SHC through its decades-long connection with the Director of Women's Work who was housed in the College Building, University of Saskatchewan.

WOMEN GRAIN GROWERS

Due to the efforts of Georgina Taylor, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Parks Canada, has erected commemorative plaques in Saskatoon and Harris that honour Violet McNaughton. The initial meeting of what became the WGG was held in Convocation Hall in Saskatoon. The site of the 1914 meeting, Knox Presbyterian Church, no longer exists. A site associated with a subsequent convention may be standing, or even be a designated heritage site at present.

IMPERIAL ORDER DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPIRE

Government House, Regina, where the Forget Chapter emerged in 1909 may be an appropriate site. Also, the Royal Legion building in Regina where the stained glass window is located. The site(s) of national-level conventions held in Regina and Saskatoon may also be appropriate.

¹ Among early efforts was a conference held 10 June 1971 in Prince Albert, which led to a decision to elect a steering committee to work towards the setting up of a province-wide association of Indian women. See Western Producer, 6 Jan. 1972, 35.

² See the clippings scrapbooks in the Local History Room, Saskatoon Public Library Main Branch (Francis Morrison Library).

³ The subsequent discussion of the WCTU is based largely upon Marcia A. McGovern, "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union Movement in Saskatchewan, 1886-1930: A Regional Perspective of the International White Ribbon Movement" (MA Thesis, University of Regina, 1977). That different provinces dealt in distinctive ways with similar problems is demonstrated in Nancy M. Sheehan, "'Women Helping Women': The WCTU and the Foreign Population in the West, 1905-1930," International Journal of Women's Studies 6 (Nov./Dec. 1983): 395-411. She discusses Saskatchewan and Alberta.

⁴ For many years the reports of the annual conventions provided a good look at what individual WCTU unions and the provincial body were involved in.

⁵ Bruce Johnstone, "WCTU fought good fight," Weekender, 5 Jan. 1980, 14. This article was one of several special articles produced for the province's Golden Jubilee celebration.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁷ It was later known as the WCTU Maternity Hospital and then Bethany Hospital, and was taken over by the Salvation Army in 1938.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁰ Violet McNaughton, leader of the Women Grain Growers, believed that this urban segment was crucial, a necessary element in the pro-suffrage coalition.

¹¹ Other speakers included Nellie McClung and the Dominion President Mrs. Gordon Wright. The delegates heard calls for supporting soldiers, raising funds, working in munitions factories to free men for military service, studying the use and preservation of national resources, using the vote to win the war, assisting postwar reconstruction, and working for a national women's suffrage to ensure better handling of the war effort. War itself remained distasteful as evidence in the call to educate children so as to avert future war.

¹² There are extensive manuscript collections housed at the Saskatchewan Archives Board for the Provincial Council of Women (PCW) and for the four major locals. This material is available at the Regina branch in original or microform versions for all but Saskatoon Council of Women, which is housed in the Archives branch there. There are also some institutional histories that can be found in these collections; the most developed ones are for Regina Council of Women and the PCW.

¹³ Name usage also varied with regard to the other LCWs.

¹⁴ When referring to individual women, this author is including the Christian first name of the woman when available. During the decades being discussed married women were most often referred to as Mrs. "so-and-so," the husband's Christian name, or more often, his initials, being used, as well as his surname.

¹⁵ This list of affiliates (as well as the lists for the 1920s have been drawn from Janet Eliza Jane Harvey, "The Regina Council of Women, 1895-1929" (M.A. thesis, University of Regina, 1991), Appendix B, 240-44. As for numbers, there is some slight variance between Harvey's lists and the counts found in the institutional histories.

¹⁶ The SCW scrapbooks, however, have few relevant clippings, and among those pasted in is part of a Chatelaine interview with Helen Hnatyshyn (Mrs. John), an RCW (and NCWC) leader opposing women's lib. See Saskatoon Council of Women, IX, 9, Scrapbooks, 1928-1971, S-B82, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon Branch.

¹⁷ The Saskatoon LCW has practically no institutional histories. An unidentified scrapbook clipping, notated 31 Oct. 1959, refers to a 1926 booklet, Ten Years in Retrospect.

¹⁸ The Provincial Council of Women of Saskatchewan in Affiliation with the National Council of Women of Canada Provincial Council History 1919-1984 (n.p., n.d.), 1. A copy of this publication is available in folder R-E1865, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina Branch.

¹⁹ This account is based largely upon the official history published in 1955: Building Fellowship: A History of the Y.W.C.A. in Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: Modern Press, [c1955]), which is available at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina branch. See R-E3817. Each of the four narratives was written by different women with their own priorities (and availability of sources) governing coverage. Hence direct comparisons are frequently impossible. A partial separate history of the Saskatoon Y is available: Catherine Olive Tomlinson Wylie, "'God's own cornerstones, our daughters': the Saskatoon Young Women's Christian Association, 1910-1939" (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1989).

²⁰ The authors of the Regina account, Mrs. R.J. Rowe, Mrs. W.B. Clipsham, Mrs. R.B. LeDrew, and Mrs. G.H. Pope, provide little information about membership figures.

²¹ The Dominion YWCA had helped to bring into existence the CGIT.

²² *Ibid.*, 126.

²³ Mrs. B.W. Currie and Mrs. W.A. Friebe, "The Y.W.C.A. in Saskatoon 1910-1953," in Building Fellowship, 126.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

²⁵ How involved the four cities were with financing various aspects of YWCA work cannot be easily determined with available materials. It appears to have varied considerably, with Prince Albert perhaps more reliant upon civic funds.

²⁶ This was the official name of the organization for several decades. More often it was referred to as Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs.

²⁷ According to the major authorized history--Saskatchewan Women's Institute, Legacy: A History of Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs and Women's Institutes, 1911-1988 (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Women's Institute, 1988), 26--the first director of Women's Work at the University wanted to change the name to Women's Institutes to conform with Dominion usage. Although the then existing local clubs supported the change, the University President, Walter C. Murray rejected a name change, arguing that the use of "homemakers" suggested that the organization would less likely engage in activities that would embarrass the university or the government than an organization named Women's Institutes which was too independent sounding for his liking." In the early 1930s another effort to change the name also failed; the Board of Governors of the University rejected the proposal.

²⁸ Current figures are from Irene Seiberling, "Sask. Pioneer women have tradition on menu" ("Anything & Everything"), Leader-Post, 5 Feb. 2005, A8.

²⁹ Legacy, 8. A recently completed thesis examines the organization in terms of the interrelationship of rural/farm women and the then pervasive domestic ideology. See Jennifer Milne, "Cultivating Domesticity: The Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 1911-1961 (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2004).

³⁰ Legacy, 50.

³¹ Variant names include Women Grain Growers Association, Saskatchewan Women Grain Growers', and Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association.

³² This section of the report is largely based upon Georgina M. Taylor, "'Ground for Common Action': Violet McNaughton's Agrarian Feminism and the Origins of the Farm Women's Movement in Canada" (Ph.D thesis, Carleton University, 1997). Taylor uses the WGG variant. Also used is the work of Rudolph George Marchildon: "The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association: A Study in Agrarian Activism" (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1981); and "Improving the Quality of Rural Life in Saskatchewan: Some Activities of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, 1913-1920," in Building Beyond the Homestead: Rural History of the Prairies, ed. David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), 89-109.

³³ Marchildon, "Improving the Quality of Rural Life in Saskatchewan," in Building Beyond the Homestead, ed. Jones and MacPherson, [89].

³⁴ Taylor, "'Ground for Common Action,'" 263-64.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 335. Square brackets inserted by Taylor.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 377.

³⁷ In the 31 May 1928 issue of the Western Producer there appeared on the United Farmers' page a summary of WGG and United Farm Women's achievements. It is

reproduced as Appendix III in *Ibid.*, 553-55. In several instances the farm women are seemingly credited with achievements that were only partially the result of their interest and efforts. Very useful for discussion of major WGG interests are Marchildon, "Improving the Quality of Rural Life in Saskatchewan," in Building Beyond the Homestead, ed. Jones and MacPherson, and the thesis upon which the essay is based ("The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association").

³⁸ The IODE, obviously, did not share the peace-oriented stance that women's organizations tended to exhibit early twentieth-century. Rather, the IODE supported increased military and naval strength, and also affirmed the importance of physical and military training of boys and young men in Boy Scouts and cadet drill corps.

³⁹ Little work has been done on the IODE in Saskatchewan. What has been done focuses upon emergence of the IODE and its work during the Great War. See Nadine Small, "The 'Lady Imperialists' and the Great War: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in Saskatchewan, 1914-1918," in "Other" Voices: Historical Voices on Saskatchewan Women, ed. David De Brou and Aileen Moffatt (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), 76-93. That essay is based upon Small's thesis: "'Stand By the Union Jack': The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in the Prairie Provinces During the Great War, 1914-1918 (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1988). Some of the account in this report is based upon Small's work but the author has also examined portions of the voluminous manuscript collection, R-598, at the Regina Branch of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, including the two official histories of the national chapter (as it was called).

⁴⁰ Small, "'The Lady Imperialists,'" 80.

⁴¹ Just how much was raised by the Saskatchewan IODE is uncertain, but nationally the IODE is said to have raised over \$5 million.

⁴² This assistance to the mentally affected men apparently extended little beyond provision of money for treats.

⁴³ Small, "'The Lady Imperialists,'" 92.

⁴⁴ Occasional national meetings were held in Saskatchewan, two in Regina—1945 and 1959, two in Saskatoon--1951 and 1970. See May G. Kertland, I.O.D.E.: The Third Twenty-Five Years, 1950-1975 (Don Mills: Best, 1975), photo section, 78, 95-97.

⁴⁵ Whether this project was fully completed needs to be checked out.

⁴⁶ Clipping, notated Leader-Post, 30 May 1959, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Provincial Chapter, R-598, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina.

⁴⁷ Previous information had led me to believe that the First Baptist church would be an appropriate site, but according to coverage in the Morning Leader the evening meetings were held at Metropolitan Methodist. Only a poorly microfilmed copy of the Morning Leader, portions of which were illegible, was available for checking, I might add.