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Eugenics in Comparative Perspective:

Explaining Manitoba and Alberta's Divergence on Eugenics Policy, 1910s to the 1930s

by

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Abstract

This dissertation compares eugenics in Alberta and Manitoba in order to explain their divergence on sexual sterilization policy. Alberta implemented a *Sexual Sterilization Act* in 1928, while Manitoba rejected similar legislation in 1933. This thesis shows that Manitobans actively engaged with national and international discussions and debates about eugenics despite a lack of an official eugenics program. Eugenics was hardly monolithic and by focusing attention only on provinces with formal eugenics programs, historians miss how eugenic ideas manifested themselves in provinces without sterilization legislation, for example in mental institutions, in educational programs, and in child welfare policies. Lack of legislation does not necessarily mean that there was a lack of enthusiasm for eugenic measures.

This dissertation brings a comparative aspect to the history of eugenics in Canada and demonstrates the ways in which eugenic policy was influenced at various levels by an emerging professional class of psychiatrists, by grassroots organizations, by religious groups, and by the unique local conditions including demographic, cultural, and political factors. I argue that Manitoba and Alberta shared similar concerns about “race degeneration,” “defective” immigrants, and the economic costs of running institutions, but there were important subtle differences in the political contexts of the two provinces. These differences served to empower the opposition elements to sexual sterilization in Manitoba, while in Alberta it served to empower grassroots organizations that were adjacent to the government, and at the same time weaken any political critics.

A comparative perspective is valuable in understanding the history of eugenics in Canada especially because of regional differences but more importantly because each province has its own historical, social, and political traditions that help illuminate their distinct approaches to

eugenics. The importance of a comparative perspective to the history of eugenics in Manitoba and Alberta is that it gives us insight into the political and cultural debates that occurred during the interwar period in order to better understand the forces at play and discussions regarding eugenics.

Keywords: History of Medicine, Canadian History, Eugenics, Sexual Sterilization, Mental Hygiene, Manitoba, Alberta

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Introduction

“For ages, the iron rule of the survival of the fittest saw those qualities of strength, endurance, beauty, and intelligence, perpetuated in the race, while Mother Nature, inexorable to the individual, but with the true racial beneficence, allowed the inferiors, the misfits, and the degenerates to be ‘stamped out of existence,’” argued Mrs. Margaret Gunn (1889-1989) in her presidential address at the annual convention of the United Farm Women of Alberta in 1925. “Today we have a complete reversal of this procedure,” Gunn continued, “science, medicine, and philanthropy enable many weaklings to reach maturity, preserve inferiors and degenerates, and take no measure to prevent continuous racial impoverishment. This, then, is a most serious menace of our civilization!”¹ Gunn’s statement captured the concerns over the social, technological, and economic developments that occurred during the late 19th and early 20th century as a result of urbanization, industrialization, demographic changes, and the impact of war. These transformations led to deep anxieties about the decline in the health and well-being of the nation, and the fear of degeneration. Gunn also implied that advances in medicine, public health, sanitation, and the establishment of humanitarian programs protected the “degenerates” who would eventually die off from disease or starvation. By receiving assistance, they survived and reproduced. In other words, for Gunn these measures only stalled the process of natural selection, and increased the possibility of “racial impoverishment.” The worries over “race degeneration” were linked to the larger international eugenic discourse that sought a biological

¹ Provincial Archives of Alberta, United Farmers of Alberta, Premier’s Office Files GR1969.0289/0168, Box 16, Microfilm roll 19 (1925), 69.

explanation to the problems of modernity. Eugenics not only provided a “scientific” justification for social fears and prejudice, it was also an effective strategy for “weeding out” those deemed “defective,” and preventing them, through segregation and sterilization, from “polluting” the “healthy” segments of society.²

The term “eugenics” was coined by British statistician Francis Galton (1822-1911) in 1883 to describe “the science of improving stock.”³ Eugenic theory emerged in Britain in response to the social conditions and concerns over biological degeneration, but eugenic ideas and aims of “race improvement” gained popularity across the globe. Yet, the methods by which these goals were realized and implemented varied between and within states. Despite the distinctiveness of eugenic practices, according to historian Marius Turda, they all shared common principles that linked physical and mental conditions to heredity; that emphasized the relationship between science, medicine, and the health of the nation; and that employed scientific theories for political reasons.⁴

In Canada, eugenics found government health policy manifestations in the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta in the form of sexual sterilization measures. Alberta’s *Sexual Sterilization Act* passed in 1928 (see: Appendix A), and its eugenics program was particularly broad and long lived, ending in 1972. The study of eugenics in Western Canada has concentrated on the history of the movement in provinces with sexual sterilization policies, and there has been little work done on provinces, such as Manitoba, where such legislation was never implemented. By comparing Manitoba and Alberta in order to explain their divergence on

² Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 7.

³ Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 17.

⁴ Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics*, 7.

sexual sterilization policy, I seek to demonstrate that Manitobans actively engaged with national and international discussions and debates about eugenics as well, despite a lack of an official eugenics program. This dissertation brings a comparative aspect to the history of eugenics in Canada and demonstrates the ways in which eugenic policy was influenced at various levels by an emerging professional class, by grassroots organizations, and by unique local conditions including demographic, and political factors. I focus on the period from the 1910s to the 1930s as it represents an increasing fascination with the “science” of eugenics, and eugenic ideas had their greatest impact in Canada during these years. I recognize the importance of analyzing the impact of eugenic legislation on those deemed to be “mentally deficient,” but it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address this important topic. However, scholars such as Erika Dyck,⁵ Jana Grekul,⁶ Claudia Malacrida,⁷ and Karen Stote⁸ have included the experiences of patients in their studies on eugenics.

While historians have also written about eugenics in neighbouring Saskatchewan,⁹ this is the first study of the eugenics movement in Manitoba. Manitoba like other provinces shared similar concerns about the mental and physical health of its citizens. Indeed, it was Manitoba that

⁵ Erika Dyck, *Facing Eugenics: Reproduction, Sterilization and the Politics of Choice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

⁶ Jana Grekul, “Sterilization in Alberta, 1928-1972: Gender Matters,” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 45 (2008): 247-266.

⁷ Claudia Malacrida, *A Special Place in Hell: Institutional Life in Alberta Eugenic Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

⁸ Karen Stote, *An Act of Genocide: Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2015).

⁹ See Erika Dyck and Alex Deighton, *Managing Madness: Weyburn Mental Hospital and the Transformation of Psychiatric Care in Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017); Alex Deighton, “The Nature of Eugenic Thought and Limits of Eugenic Practice in Interwar Saskatchewan,” in *Eugenics at the Edges of Empire: New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and South Africa*, eds. Diane B. Paul, Hamish G. Spencer, and John Stenhouse (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 63-84; Karolina Kowalewski and Jasmine Mayne, “The Translation of Eugenic Ideology into Public Health Policy: The Case of Alberta and Saskatchewan” in *The Proceedings of the 18th Annual History of Medicine Days Conference 2009*, eds. Lisa Peterman, Kerry Sun, and Frank W. Stahnisch (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 53-74.

first requested that the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene conduct a survey of its mental institutions in 1918, and influenced other provinces to follow in its footsteps. As historian Ian Dowbiggin has shown, the findings and recommendations of the Committee including the possible sterilization of “abnormal populations” was taken up by social reformers and politicians, and in turn influenced the introduction of eugenic legislation in Canada’s west.¹⁰ Secondly, Manitoba like other western Canadian provinces shared similar social anxieties about immigration during the early years of the 20th century. The concerns over the changing composition of Canada was expressed in *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909), written by James Shaver Woodsworth (1874-1942), an influential social reformer and the superintendent of the All Peoples’ Mission in Winnipeg.¹¹ Including Manitoba in this study highlights the complex relationship between the Catholic Church in the province and eugenics. The discussion of religion and eugenics has often been marginalized in Canadian historiography outside of the Province of Quebec. Lastly, Manitoba’s case illustrates that although the sterilization clause (see: Appendix B) was defeated in the legislature in 1933, the segregation in mental institutions of those with developmental disabilities continued throughout the 20th century.

I decided to compare Manitoba and Alberta for several reasons: First, both provinces had experienced significant political changes during the interwar period, which contributed to the election of populist third parties: Albertans elected the United Farmers of Alberta in 1921, and Manitobans unexpectedly elected the United Farmers of Manitoba (later Liberal-Progressives) in 1922. Secondly, enthusiasm for eugenics was present in both provinces, and both shared similar

¹⁰ Ian Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada, 1880-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 179-180.

¹¹ James S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1909, reprint 1972).

concerns about “race degeneration.” Third, due to the economic downturn of the late 1920s and early 1930s, both governments believed that the cost to run mental institutions needed to be reduced. Further, both believed that “mentally defective” individuals threatened the health and well-being of residents in their provinces. This belief was primarily based on evidence from the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene surveys conducted, by psychiatrists Clarence Hincks (1885-1964) and Charles Kirk (C. K.) Clarke (1857-1924) in Manitoba in 1918 and Alberta in 1921.¹² These surveys revealed that “mental deficiency” and “feeble-mindedness” were rampant in both provinces and recommended eugenic measures, such as sterilization to control the reproduction of these targeted groups.¹³

Historiography

Scholars first started to write about eugenics in Canada from a socially critical lens in the late 1960s and 1970s within the context of Alberta’s long eugenics program and growing condemnations of it. In 1969, three years before the repeal of the *Sexual Sterilization Act*, geneticists Kennedy G. McWhirter and Jan Weijer provided a scientific critique of Alberta’s eugenic legislation and questioned its construction which they claimed was based on an outdated

¹² See for example, Erna Kurbegović, “The influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” *Western Humanities Review* 69, no.3 (2015): 298-332.

¹³ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene “Survey of the Province of Manitoba,” *Canadian Journal of Mental Hygiene* (1919-1920): 77-82; Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 99; The terms mental defective or feeble-minded was often used to describe an individual with intellectual disabilities. As sociologist Gerald V. O’Brien suggests, such terms were so imprecise and broad that their definition could be expanded to include a vast number of marginalized individuals. See Gerald V. O’Brien, *Framing the Moron: The Social Construction of Feeble-mindedness in the American Eugenics Era* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 6.

and basic understanding of genetics. Due to a flawed understanding of genetics, they argued, along with a broad view of what constituted “mental deficiency,” the Alberta eugenics program targeted vulnerable, “young, poor [and] uninfluential” individuals.¹⁴ Critiques of Canadian eugenics began in the 1930s and were primarily voiced by the Roman Catholics and the scientific community, particularly geneticists and biologists.¹⁵ Scientists argued that eugenicists had a simple understanding of heredity and often misapplied Mendelian laws of inheritance.¹⁶ At this point, scientists were aware that the majority of those deemed “feeble-minded” had “normal” parents. Therefore, eugenic measures would not lead to an improvement of the race and society.¹⁷ By the end of the Second World War and once the Nazi atrocities came to light, the public face of eugenics declined.¹⁸ Yet, eugenic practices continued despite this development primarily in institutions.¹⁹ While more work still needs to be done on the years before the repeal of the Sexual Sterilization Act in Alberta, Sociologist Jana Grekul provides some reasons for the longevity of the program: prosperity and economic growth, lack of strong opposition, and a strong populist government ensured that Alberta’s eugenics program continued until 1972. The program ended only after the election of a Progressive Conservative government.²⁰

¹⁴ Kennedy G. McWhirter & Jan Weijer, “The Alberta Sterilization Act: A Genetic Critique,” *University of Toronto Law Journal* 19 (1969): 424-431.

¹⁵ See McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 146-157.

¹⁶ Garland E. Allen, “Eugenics and Modern Biology: Critiques of Eugenics, 1910–1945,” *Annals of Human Genetics* 75 (2011): 317.

¹⁷ See for example, McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*; Carolyn Strange and Jennifer Stephen, “Eugenics in Canada: A Checkered History, 1850s-1990s,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 523-538.

¹⁸ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 168; Strange and Stephen, “Eugenics in Canada,” 533.

¹⁹ See Malacrida, *A Special Hell*;

²⁰ Jana Grekul, Harvey Krahan, and Dave Odynak, “Sterilizing the “Feeble-minded”: Eugenics in Alberta, Canada, 1929–1972,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 17, no.3 (2004): 358-384.

Around the time that McWhirter and Weijer were working on their article, Alberta's government set up a commission under Psychologist Dr. William R.N. Blair (1929-2006) to study mental health in the province. While the report, released in 1969, had many recommendations for improvement of Alberta's mental health system, it had little to say about the province's eugenics program. Blair had been a member of the Alberta Eugenics Board in 1967, and this might explain his reluctance to criticize the sexual sterilization policy.²¹ McWhirter and Weijer's article then was a timely critique when there was little public discussion of Alberta's eugenics program.

The publication of McWhirter and Weijer's study influenced the Progressive Conservative party in Alberta to adopt the repeal as a part of their platform. The party attacked the *Sexual Sterilization Act* on legal and scientific grounds, and concluded that the Act needed to be repealed as it violated human rights.²² Following the election of the Progressive Conservative government under Peter Lougheed (1928-2012) in 1971, the Act was repealed a year later. Due to this development, a number of studies emerged dealing with eugenics in Alberta. In his 1974 Honour's thesis, Timothy Christian provides a legal perspective on Alberta's eugenic legislation. He examines the provincial Eugenics Board's case files and shows that the majority of the cases presented to the Board were vulnerable and marginalized groups, including Eastern European immigrants, Indigenous people, women, and the poor. Christian also discusses the 1937 and

²¹ Claudia Malacrida, *A Special Place in Hell: Institutional Life in Alberta Eugenic Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 226.

²² Jana Grekul, "The Social Construction of the Feeble-minded Threat: Implementation of the Sexual Sterilization Act in Alberta, 1929-1972" (PhD Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2002), 239.

1942 amendments²³ to the Act and suggests that these amendments faced little opposition because Albertans were primarily occupied with events unfolding in Europe.²⁴ Legal scholar, Bernard M. Dickens analyzes the legality of eugenics and criticizes the Alberta legislation, arguing that “it was permeated with biological and social fallacies, and was more a product of anti-science than of science.”²⁵ The work of legal scholars laid the foundation for historians constructing the history of eugenics in Alberta. Building on Christian’s work, historian Terry Chapman traces the developments leading up to the implementation of the *Sexual Sterilization Act* and argues that increased immigration to Western Canada played a role in the passing of the Act.²⁶ As noted above, the increase in population led to the emergence of nativist sentiments among many middle class reformers in Canada’s west who were eager to keep Canada white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant.²⁷

Historians did not approach the topic of eugenics again until 1990 when social historian Angus McLaren published *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885-1945*. McLaren’s study provides an overview of eugenics on the national scale and explores the motives behind the “race betterment” campaign of many Canadian social and medical eugenicists, and shows that many prominent Canadians (famous feminists, politicians, social reformers, and medical professionals) were fascinated by eugenic ideas.²⁸ The 1990s also represent a period when

²³ The 1937 amendment allowed the Alberta Eugenics Board to sterilize patients without consent. The 1942 amendment allowed for the sterilization of a broader category of mentally ill patients including those with syphilis, epilepsy, and Huntington’s chorea.

²⁴ Timothy Christian, “The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta: A Study of the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act” (Honour’s Thesis, University of Alberta, 1974).

²⁵ Bernard M Dickens, “Eugenic Recognition in Canadian Law,” *Osgood Hall Law Journal* 13, no. 4 (1975): 547-577.

²⁶ Terry Chapman, “The Early Eugenics Movement in Western Canada,” *Alberta History* 25, no. 1 (1977): 9-17.

²⁷ See for example, Erika Dyck, *Facing Eugenics: Reproduction, Sterilization and the Politics of Choice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

²⁸ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*.

sterilization survivors first publicized their experience and mistreatment under Alberta's eugenic program. In 1995, an Alberta woman, Leilani Muir (1944-2016) sued the Alberta government for wrongful sterilization. In *Muir v. The Queen*, Madam Justice Joanne B. Veit ruled in favour of the plaintiff.²⁹ Following Muir's trial, hundreds of other sterilization survivors filed suits against the province.³⁰ This politically charged context prompted historians to delve deeper into Alberta's eugenic past.

Since the mid-1990s, Canadian historians have focused on the history of sexual sterilization legislation prior to 1945. Legal scholars Timothy Caulfield and Gerald Robertson have built upon Timothy Christian's 1974 work. They examine the Alberta *Sexual Sterilization Act* and discuss the social forces which influenced its implementation in 1928.³¹ Sociologists Jana Grekul, Harvey Krahn, and David Odynak also build on Christian's study through a statistical analysis of Alberta Eugenics Board's case files to determine which targeted groups were overrepresented as victims of involuntary sterilization. They concluded that women, the young, and Indigenous people were particularly targeted by Alberta's eugenics program but challenged Christian's argument that the program discriminated against Eastern European immigrants.³² Historian Mikkel Dack focuses on the 1937 amendment to the Act and challenges previous scholarly interpretations regarding the lack of public opposition to it. Dack suggests

²⁹ See Douglas Wahlsten, "Leilani Muir versus the Philosopher King: Eugenics on trial in Alberta," *Genetica* 99, no.2 (1997): 185-198.

³⁰ Strange and Stephens, "Eugenics in Canada," 533.

³¹ Timothy Caulfield and Gerald Robertson, "Eugenics Policies in Alberta: From the Systematic to the Systemic?" *Alberta Law Review* 35, no.1 (1996): 59-79.

³² Jana Grekul, Harvey Krahan, Dave Odynak, "Sterilizing the "Feeble-Minded," 375.

that the 1937 amendment must be understood within the social, political, and cultural context of the 1930s rather than just as an extension of the 1920s eugenics movement.³³

In particular, the *Sterilization Act* in Alberta has been meticulously analyzed by scholars who have placed the eugenics movement in the province within the larger context of social reform movements. In his work, Angus McLaren has demonstrated that many of Canada's well-known social reformers and feminists were also ardent eugenicists who played a significant role in lobbying provincial governments for eugenic legislation.³⁴ Psychologists Erin Moss, Hank Stam, and Diane Kattevilder examine the relationship between first wave feminism and eugenics by focusing on Alberta as a case study. Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder argue that the supposed threat of feeble-mindedness led to the marriage of feminism with the eugenics movement. Many women reformers had overlapping memberships in various organizations that had similar goals as the eugenics movement: to prevent social degeneration and to slow down the pace of social change. In this sense, eugenics fell into the "woman's sphere" since Anglo-Saxon women were seen as "mothers of the race," and it was their duty to preserve that race.³⁵ In the same vein, historian Sheila Gibbons provides an analysis of agrarian feminism and eugenics in Alberta and shows how "the agrarian identity and feminism linked together more broadly in the province through their desire to create a better nation through the physical and the mental improvement of the individual,"³⁶ Working within an agrarian society, women's agrarian organizations such as

³³ See W. Mikkell Dack, "The Alberta Eugenics Movement and the 1937 Amendment to the Sexual Sterilization Act," *Past Imperfect* 17, no. 1 (2011): 90-113.

³⁴ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 100.

³⁵ Erin Moss, Hank Stam, and Diane Kattevilder, "From Suffrage to Sterilization: Eugenics and the Women's Movement in 20th century Alberta," *Canadian Psychology* 54, no.1 (2013): 105-114.

³⁶ Sheila Gibbons, "'Our Power to Remodel Civilization': The Development of Eugenic Feminism in Alberta, 1909-1921," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 31, no.1 (2014): 125.

the United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA) were able to exert significant influence on the provincial government and push for a greater role in the provincial health care system.³⁷

Scholars have also drawn attention on eugenics in the second half of the twentieth century focusing on Alberta's long eugenic history, as well as connecting the early movement in Canada with the current discussions about reproductive rights and choice. Examining the relationship between eugenics and gender, Sociologist Jana Grekul has shown that the majority of the cases presented to the Alberta Eugenics Board were women, and their sexual behaviour was much more scrutinized than that of men. Often "mentally normal" women were presented to the Eugenics Board because, as Grekul suspects, they were viewed as sexually deviant and as posing a challenge to the established gender norms. In this way, women and men were sterilized for different reasons, but women were overrepresented among those sterilized.³⁸ Continuing with a focus on gender, historian Amy Samson discusses the often overlooked relationship between eugenics and the female-dominated professions such as social work, education, and public health nursing. Samson shows that these professional women used their access to families and schools to present themselves as "experts" in this field and thus as important players in the eugenics movement. Similar to the male dominated medical profession, these women also used the eugenics movement to enhance the status of their respective professions. Furthermore, through these professions the Alberta's eugenics program extended its reach into the community.³⁹ Bridging eugenics, gender, and sexuality, social historian Erika Dyck's work

³⁷ Gibbons, "Our Power to Remodel Civilization".

³⁸ Jana Grekul, "Sterilization in Alberta, 1928-1972: Gender Matters," *Canadian Review of Sociology* 45, no.3 (2008): 247-266.

³⁹ Amy Samson, "Eugenics in the Community: Gendered Professions and Eugenic Sterilization in Alberta, 1928-1972," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 31, no.2 (2014): 143-163.

Facing Eugenics: Reproduction, Sterilization, and the Politics of Choice traces, through case studies, ideas about masculinity, femininity, consent, and reproductive choices that impacted individuals who either voluntarily or coercively underwent sexual sterilization in Alberta. While sterilization was often tied to the eugenics program, Dyck shows that many women sought sterilization as birth control and thus took control over their own reproduction.⁴⁰ Dyck's work not only contributes to an understanding of eugenics in Alberta in the post-1945 period, but it also gives a voice to those most affected by sterilization programs, and connects eugenics to twentieth century debates about reproductive rights and choice, genetic research, and autonomy.

While these scholars have offered important insight into the history of eugenics in Alberta, and Canada in general, there still remains a strong historiographical need to further address the unique local conditions (demographics, politics, social and cultural conditions) that contributed to the adoption or rejection of eugenics programs in other parts of Canada. Recently, historians have also started to unearth the eugenic past of other Canadian regions, although there is still more work to be done. Historian Leslie Baker's work traces the link between public health initiatives and eugenics through the lens of the Halifax Explosion of 1917. Baker argues that while reformers in Halifax did not promote eugenic sterilization, their public health reforms targeted marginalized groups for institutionalization and surveillance, particularly following the Halifax Explosion.⁴¹ Continuing with public health, historian Erna Kurbegović's case study on the province of Manitoba analyzes the public health initiatives of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene after the First World War. Kurbegović argues that through the

⁴⁰ See Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*.

⁴¹ Leslie Baker, "A Visitation of Providence: Public Health and Eugenic Reform in the Wake of the Halifax Disaster," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 31, no.1 (2014): 99-122.

employment of mental hygiene surveys and its disease prevention campaign, the committee not only influenced institutional reform but also spread eugenic ideology across provincial boundaries.⁴² Similarly, historian C. Elizabeth Koester explores the role played by the 1917 Ontario Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Mentally Defective and Feeble-Minded in understanding eugenics in Ontario. She suggests that the Commission did have an impact on eugenics in Ontario by focusing on social reform issues of interest to eugenicists but at the same time, by limiting the discussion of eugenic sterilization, the commission kept it out of the public discourse at that time.⁴³ What these works show is the overlap between eugenics and public health in different Canadian regions. As American historian Martin Pernick has suggested “public health agencies and eugenics organizations often overlapped in goals and methods, programs, and personnel. Many public health institutions included eugenics in their official duties.”⁴⁴ By analyzing the connections between eugenics and public health, and moving beyond the focus of involuntary sterilization legislation, historians of medicine in Canada can explore other angles to the history of eugenics, and also show how eugenics continued even in the second half of the 20th century through welfare policies and reproductive technologies.

One of those angles that is worth exploring further is the impact of eugenic policies on Indigenous people in Canada. As Timothy Christian and Jana Grekul show in their studies, Indigenous people were overrepresented among sterilization cases in Alberta and this fact cannot

⁴² Erna Kurbegović, “The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” *Western Humanities Review* 69, no.3 (2015): 298-323.

⁴³ C. Elizabeth Koester, “An Evil Hitherto Unchecked: Eugenics and the 1917 Ontario Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Mentally Defective and Feeble-minded,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 33, no.1 (2016): 59-81.

⁴⁴ Martin Pernick, “Eugenics and Public Health in American History,” *American Journal of Public Health* 87, no.12 (1997): 1767.

be divorced from Canada's discriminatory colonial policies. Historians Carolyn Strange and Jennifer Stephen demonstrate that through this colonial lens, eugenicists "linked 'Indian blood' to low intelligence [and] were predisposed to diagnose indigenous people as 'mentally defective' and incompetent: consequently they were judged unfit to make their own reproductive decisions."⁴⁵ Historian Karen Stote has shown that Indigenous women "were the most prominent victims of the board's attention." While not dealing exclusively with Alberta's eugenics program, Stote has also linked the forced sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada to colonial policies that sought to dispossess Indigenous people and lower their numbers.⁴⁶ Recently, in their study of reproductive politics in the Canadian North during the 1970s, Erika Dyck and Maureen Lux argue that the federal government became increasingly interested in the reproductive lives of Indigenous women and sought to offer reproductive services in the region. They show that Indigenous women made reproductive choices within the context of colonialism and assimilation, and that these choices were made under coercion but they also acknowledge that some women sought access to reproductive technologies.⁴⁷ The recent stories of Indigenous women being coerced to undergo tubal ligation at the Saskatoon Health Region hospital suggests that further research is needed into practices and policies that affect the reproductive lives of Indigenous women.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Strange and Stephens, "Eugenics in Canada," 534.

⁴⁶ Karen Stote, "An Act of Genocide: Eugenics, Indian Policy and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women in Canada" (PhD Dissertation, University of New Brunswick, 2012); *An Act of Genocide: Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2015).

⁴⁷ Erika Dyck and Maureen Lux, "Population Control in the 'Global North'? Canada's Response to Indigenous Reproductive Rights and Neo-Eugenics," *The Canadian Historical Review* 97, no.4 (2016): 481-512.

⁴⁸ Yvonne Boyer and Judith Bartlett, "External Review: Tubal Ligation in the Saskatoon Health Region: The Lived Experience of Aboriginal Women," (2017): Accessed online, December 2017 https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/DocumentsInternal/Tubal_Ligation_intheSaskatoonHealthRegion_the_Lived_Experience_of_Aboriginal_Women_BoyerandBartlett_July_22_2017.pdf

After reviewing the literature on eugenics in Canada, it is clear that the scholarship was often shaped by larger political contexts including the increasing challenges to eugenics on scientific and legal grounds following the Second World War, the coming forward of sterilization survivors in the mid-1990s that uncovered details of Alberta's eugenic program unknown to many, lastly, the literature is also shaped by current discussions about reproductive choices and rights, medical ethics, and genetic screenings and research. All of these contexts prompted historians to further investigate Canada's eugenics history.

Contribution

Due to Alberta's long and aggressive eugenics program, much of the scholarship has focused on that province, and Alberta has hence become the "face" of Canadian eugenics. This is problematic as it does not fully explain the development of eugenic ideas across the country that were impacted by local and regional contexts, and shaped by a variety of factors including religion, class, race/ethnicity, and social and political circumstances. Eugenics was hardly monolithic and by focusing attention only on provinces with formal eugenics programs, historians miss how eugenic ideas manifested themselves in provinces without sterilization legislation, for example in mental institutions, in educational programs, and in child welfare policies. In addition by concentrating on provinces with sexual sterilization measures, it confines the discussion of eugenics to legislation. As historians Diane B. Paul, John Stenhouse, and Hamish G. Spencer point out regarding eugenic legislation, "a few votes or even a single

official's decision to veto a proposed bill could determine whether a bill would become law.”⁴⁹

What this suggests is that lack of legislation does not necessarily mean that there was a lack of enthusiasm for eugenic measures. Analyzing eugenics in comparative perspective, shows that the conditions were ripe for the passage of a sterilization bill in Manitoba as well. Similar concerns about fitness, “mental deficiency,” race degeneration, and immigration existed in Manitoba as in Alberta, and similar arguments about the need to control the reproduction of the “mentally deficient” and “feeble-minded” were voiced in both provinces. As I demonstrate in this dissertation, however, the differing political landscapes and dynamics of these two provinces served to empower eugenics supporters in Alberta, and the anti-eugenics groups in Manitoba. In particular, politically active Roman Catholics in Manitoba found themselves in a position to influence the vote on the eugenic legislation. This dissertation not only explains why the two provinces diverged on eugenic policy but also identifies the eugenic undercurrents that influenced the introduction of sterilization measures. It speaks to the development of proposed and implemented eugenic practices at the provincial level and how this was shaped by local leaderships and local socio-political structures.

Approach and Sources

In his ground-breaking work, *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, Mark Adams has stressed the importance of a comparative approach in

⁴⁹ Diane B. Paul, John Stenhouse, and Hamish G. Spencer, “Introduction: Eugenics as a Transnational Subject: The British Dominions,” in *Eugenics at the Edges of Empire: New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and South Africa*, eds. Diane B. Paul, Hamish G. Spencer, and John Stenhouse (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 7.

understanding the history of eugenics. While it is important to study eugenics in the local, regional or national contexts, a comparative approach allows for broader patterns to emerge that might not be evident in a single case study.⁵⁰ Since the publication of Adams' edited collection, a number of scholars have shown the value of a comparative approach to the history of eugenics.⁵¹ They have demonstrated that even though eugenic practices were diverse internationally and were shaped by different historical, political, and cultural contexts, eugenics, nevertheless, became a common language in regions across the globe.⁵² In other words, eugenics was a transnational phenomenon where exchanges of ideas took place among different societies through international congresses and publications.⁵³ These scholars have shown that eugenics encompassed a variety of methods including immigration and marriage restrictions, segregation, sterilization, but also pro-natalist methods including marriage counselling, baby clinics, motherhood training, among others.⁵⁴ Through a comparative perspective historians have

⁵⁰ Mark Adams, *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 6.

⁵¹ See for example, Peter Weingart, "Science and Political Culture: Eugenics in Comparative Perspective," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 24, no.2 (1999): 163-177; Gunnar Broberg and Nils Rolls-Hansen, eds. *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2005); Marius Turda and Paul Weindling, eds. *'Blood and Homeland': Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006); Christian Promitzer, Sevasti Trubeta, and Marius Turda, eds. *Health, Hygiene and Eugenics in South-Eastern Europe to 1945* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010); Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Bjorn M. Felder and Paul Weindling, eds. *Baltic Eugenics: Bio-Politics, Race, and Nation in Interwar Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania 1918-1940* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013); Marius Turda and Aaron Gillette, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Diane B. Paul, John Stenhouse, and Hamish G. Spencer, eds. *Eugenics at Edges of Empire: New Zealand, Australia, Canada and South Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁵² Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford, "Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

⁵³ See for example, Daniel Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Heredity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁵⁴ See for example, Stephen Garton, "Eugenics in Australia and New Zealand: Laboratories of Racial Science," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 243-257.

established that there was enthusiasm for eugenics across the political spectrum. Even though eugenics is most often associated with right-wing policies, support for eugenic ideas was also found among those on the left, including socialists and communists.⁵⁵ Lastly, comparative analyses have revealed that support for eugenic ideas did not disappear after 1945, as earlier scholars believed, instead eugenics continued in the background often in the form of genetic counselling, in institutional research, and in pro-natalist strategies, among others.⁵⁶ A comparative perspective is valuable in understanding the history of eugenics in Canada especially because of regional differences but more importantly because each province has its own historical, social, and political traditions that help illuminate their distinct approaches to eugenics. In this dissertation, I trace the role of medical professionals, particularly psychiatrists, grassroots organizations such as the United Farmers and United Farm Women, political parties, and religious groups, such as the Roman Catholics in shaping the outcome of legislative debates over sterilization in Alberta and Manitoba. The value of a comparative perspective to the history of eugenics in Manitoba and Alberta is that it gives us insight into the political and cultural debates that occurred during the interwar period in order to better understand the forces at play and discussions regarding eugenics. Single case studies may lead to an overemphasis of certain factors, but with a comparative approach a broader picture emerges.

⁵⁵ See for example, Veronique Mottier and Natalia Gerodetti, "Eugenics and Social-democracy: Or, How the Left Tried to Eliminate the 'Weeds' from its National Gardens," *New Formations* 60, no.1 (2006/2007): 35-49; Paul Weindling, *Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics*.

⁵⁶ See for example, Marius Turda and Aaron Gillette, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014): 242-249; Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds. *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2005); Alison Bashford, "Epilogue: Where did Eugenics go?" in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 542-543; Wendy Kline, "Eugenics in the United States," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 518.

This dissertation also draws on the scholarly work of philosopher and historian Michel Foucault (1926-1984), particularly his notion of “bio-politics”—the use of state power to shape and control the individual body.⁵⁷ In his lecture at the Collège de France in March of 1976, Foucault conceptualized biopower in two mutually intertwined ways: first the “seizure of power over the body in an individualizing mode” and second as “not individualizing but, if you like, massifying, that is directed not at man-as-body but at man-as-species.”⁵⁸ Specifically, the first approach took the form of disciplining the individual body through techniques such as surveillance which features prominently in Foucault’s study of prisons⁵⁹ and his work on the rise of modern medicine.⁶⁰ By the end of the eighteenth century, a second approach had emerged that emphasized regulation of populations through greater knowledge of biological processes—rates of reproduction, general health, and birth and death rates—that Foucault termed “bio-politics of the population.”⁶¹

While this dissertation is not a Foucauldian analysis of eugenics, Foucault’s ideas about power are nevertheless useful in understanding the topic of eugenics and forced sterilization in Canada. Proposed and implemented eugenics programs were not only concerned with the improvement of the human race, the programs also sought to control the reproduction of those deemed to be “mentally deficient” and “feeble-minded,” in order to achieve a “fitter” society.

⁵⁷ Michel Foucault, “*Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976*,” eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), 242-243.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 243.

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995).

⁶⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1994).

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume One, An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 139.

This exercise of bio-power required specialized knowledge that only medical professionals, specifically psychiatrists, purported to have. Their expertise was not only confined to psychiatric institutions but rather, during the early twentieth century, it expanded into the wider community. They used their position and knowledge to exercise power by distinguishing between “normal” and “abnormal” behaviour, and by medicalizing social problems such as poverty, criminality, and alcoholism. In doing so, they linked these social issues with “feeble-mindedness” and “mental deficiency.” Medical experts, themselves as members of the middle class, had the power to conflate “feeble-mindedness” and “mental deficiency” with individuals of lower socio-economic class, especially if they did not conform to the moral and behavioural standards of the middle class. By identifying certain individuals as problematic, medical experts presented them as a threat that needed to be controlled and regulated. Institutionalization of those diagnosed as “feeble-minded” and “mentally deficient,” where they were under constant surveillance, was one way to exert control. Confinement in an institution not only controlled their behaviour but also prevented them from reproducing and passing on their “defective” traits to future generations. Yet, for eugenicists, institutionalization did not go far enough, further control of reproduction, through sexual sterilization policies, was required to ensure human “betterment.” The case studies in this dissertation show how bio-power was exercised in Manitoba and Alberta through, proposed and actual, eugenic regulations of reproduction, and how this battle was waged in the unique political landscapes of these two provinces.

This historical study of eugenics in Alberta and Manitoba relies on sources from several different areas. In order to obtain a general sense of the eugenic discussions and debates in both provinces, I utilized several local newspapers primarily *The Winnipeg Free Press*, *the Winnipeg Tribune*, *The Edmonton Journal*, *The Edmonton Bulletin*. These sources revealed the names of

some of medical professionals, primarily psychiatrists, who were involved in lobbying for eugenic legislation. This approach turned out to be more useful in Manitoba than in Alberta, as the movement there was primarily led by an emerging professional class. I consulted the Faculty of Medicine Archives at the University of Manitoba and looked at the private papers, publications, and correspondences of psychiatrists including Alvin Trotter Mathers (1888-1960), Charles Baragar (1885-1936), and physician Fredrick Wilbur Jackson (1888-1958). I also accessed the annual reports of the Health Department (later the Department of Health and Public Welfare) in Manitoba from 1890 until 1950. During the period of this study, these reports were primarily written by Mathers, Baragar, Jackson, and psychiatrist Thomas Alexander Pincock (1894-1978). These reports provided insight into the state of mental institutions, general patient information, and details regarding the general health in the province. Interestingly, none of these reports explicitly mentioned eugenics or the need for a sexual sterilization clause. The Premier's Office files at the Manitoba Archives also included material related to health in the interwar period which revealed that the provincial government had an interest in the state of mental health in Manitoba. I consulted the *Canadian Journal of Mental Hygiene* in order to obtain the mental hygiene surveys that were conducted in both Manitoba and Alberta, in 1918 and 1921 respectively. These surveys were extremely influential, particularly in Alberta, as their findings influenced the grassroots organizations to lobby the provincial government for a sterilization bill. Lastly, I consulted the "sterilization" records at the Provincial Archives of Ontario which revealed exchanges between psychiatrist in Ontario and those in Manitoba and Alberta.

This study also examines the historical role of politically affiliated organizations, such as the United Farm Women of Alberta and the United Farm Women of Manitoba. For Chapter Two, I compare the role of women's groups in lobbying their respective governments for

eugenic legislation. I consulted the Glenbow Archives and the Provincial Archives of Alberta for records of the United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, and visited the Manitoba Archives to view United Farmers and Farm Women of Manitoba collections. I also consulted Manitoba's newspapers as they covered activities at local branches of the United Farm Women of Manitoba.

In my dissertation, I further address the hidden eugenic influences in the immigration debates. For Chapter Three, the Parliamentary debates were particularly valuable in showing how immigration policy changed and became laced with eugenic language. These have been digitized and are available through the Library of Parliament. The Premier's Office Files at the Provincial Archives in Edmonton proved valuable in bringing in the provincial perspective on the immigration debate. These records contained information from the Department of Public Health regarding "mentally defective" immigrants, and also the annual resolutions and speeches on immigration from the United Farm Women of Alberta. In Manitoba, I consulted the work of Woodsworth. I reviewed immigration related content in the Premier's Office files during the 1920s and 1930s. I also consulted newspapers to gain a better understanding of general perspectives on immigration in the province.

This research also relied on records from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton Archives, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg Archives. These archives proved valuable in providing information on the Catholic response to sterilization bill in the two provinces. I also consulted the Premier's Office Files in search of correspondences between the government and the Catholic community in both provinces. The records in Manitoba provided plethora of information on Catholic views regarding eugenic legislation but information in Alberta was limited.

This dissertation also focuses on the political climate in the two provinces and the debates over sterilization legislation. I accessed the records of the United Farmers of Alberta which are held at the Glenbow Archives, and the United Farmers of Manitoba which are stored at the Archives of Manitoba. To gain a better understanding of debates over sterilization I consulted newspapers such as *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Edmonton Journal*, which extensively covered legislative activities. This is because detailed accounts of legislative debates were not recorded until the 1950s.

Overview of the Chapters

This dissertation is organized into five thematic chapters, and the period it covers spans from the 1910s to the 1930s. Chapter One provides an overview of eugenics in English speaking Canada. It provides an introduction to the scientific theories of heritability and their influence in Canada. Then it focuses on the connection between the eugenics movement and the public health and mental hygiene movements in Canada, with a particularly focus on Manitoba and Alberta.

Chapter Two explores the involvement of women's organizations, primarily the United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA) and the United Farm Women of Manitoba (UFWM), with eugenics. I show that for a variety of reasons, the United Farm Women of Alberta were much more effective in lobbying the provincial government for eugenic legislation than their counterparts in Manitoba. While the UFWA and UFWM were not on their own a determining factor in the rejection or implementation of sexual sterilization legislation, their involvement was

almost certainly a factor given the broad participation of women in the eugenics debate and wider social reform movements of the time.

Chapter Three focuses on the link between eugenics and immigration and shows that while the anti-immigrant sentiment was indeed present in both provinces, immigration was more of a factor in the discussions about eugenics in Alberta than in Manitoba. The anxieties over influx of immigrants into Alberta during the interwar period, was used by eugenicist to fuel support for eugenics. Whereas by the time Manitoba introduced its sexual sterilization legislation, immigration had decreased significantly, and thus played no role in the eugenics debates there.

Chapter Four considers the opposition to sexual sterilization legislation focusing on Roman Catholics as they were the most vocal in their resistance to this measure. I demonstrate that while Catholics in both provinces were divided along linguistic lines, in Manitoba they were more active in their opposition and were actually able to influence the political votes of their legislative representatives on this issue. In Alberta, on the other hand, the provincial eugenics policy did not appear to be a priority for the Roman Catholic community. I surmise that due to bitter divisions between Anglophone and Francophone Catholics in Alberta, they were not only unable to present a unified resistance but it is also possible that Anglo-Catholics did not want to appear confrontational in a province dominated by Anglo-Protestants.

The last chapter explores the political situation in Alberta and Manitoba with a focus on the legislative debates and sterilization bills. This chapter illustrates that the ways in which different political contexts in the two provinces contributed to the implementation or defeat of sexual sterilization legislation. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates how an emerging professional class, grassroots organizations, and religious groups influenced the political

arguments on eugenics. The monolithic politics of Alberta ensured that there would not be much resistance to the sterilization bill, while in Manitoba the coalition government of Premier John Bracken was more open to debate on the eugenic legislation. Thus, the political conditions in the two provinces served to weaken or strengthen minority opposition to eugenic legislation.

Chapter One: Background to Eugenics in English-Speaking Canada

In 1912, the Eugenics Education Society⁶² in Great Britain organized the First International Eugenics Congress at the University of London, University College. The Congress was an ideal setting for an in-depth international discussion of eugenics and its application for the improvement of the human race. According to the keynote speaker, Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) (the former British Prime Minister) the goal of the Congress was to:

Convince the public ... that the study of eugenics is one of the greatest and most pressing necessities of our age ... It has to awaken public interest, to make the ordinary man think of the problems which are exercising the scientific mind ... It has also got to persuade him that the task which science has set itself in dealing with the eugenic problem is one of the most difficult and complex which it has ever undertaken.⁶³

Addressing the central eugenic problem as such, the meeting included delegates from Canada, United States, and Germany among others, who, according to contemporary American biologist, Raymond Pearl (1879-1940) jumped at the opportunity “to meet not only one another but also many of the most distinguished persons in English scientific, social, literary and public life.”⁶⁴

⁶² In 1907, the Eugenics Educational Society (after 1926 it became the Eugenics Society) was founded in Britain on the initiative of Francis Galton (1822-1911) and social reformer Sybil Gotto (1885-1955?). The goal of the society was one of “furthering eugenic teaching and understanding in the home, in the school and elsewhere.” In other words, it focused on education and popularization of eugenics. It was a small organization and its membership was made up of middle-class professionals including physicians, scientists, writers, and politicians. See, Clyde Chitty, *Eugenics, Race and Intelligence in Education* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 2.

⁶³ Eugenics Society, *Report of proceedings of the First International Eugenics Congress held at the University of London* (London: Eugenics Education Society: London, 1913), 7.

⁶⁴ Raymond Pearl, “The First International Eugenics Congress,” *Science* 36, no. 926 (1912): 396.

This Congress represented the internationalization and in some way, the codification of the eugenics ideology from what had been a largely a fragmented set of ideas. In his work, *For the Betterment of the Race*, historian Stefan Kuehl has pointed to the importance of international cooperation, particularly for the Eugenics Education Society, as this was a way for the Society to strengthen its political influence in Great Britain by showing the international appeal of eugenics.⁶⁵

Kuehl's argument could also be extended to Canada, as Canadian eugenicists often discussed international developments and their connection to eugenics in order to provide support for their own ideas. Canadian eugenicists kept abreast of developments in Great Britain as evidence by their participation at the Congress.⁶⁶ They also followed eugenics literature and policy being produced in neighbouring United States. For instance, physician and Ontario's public health reformer, Helen MacMurchy (1862-1953) often cited Richard Louis Dugdale's study on the Jukes family⁶⁷ in New York State in order to push forward her message that Canada needed to implement measures to prevent "mental defectives" from having children.⁶⁸ This suggests that the eugenic ideas in the English speaking world, while developing in response to local conditions, flowed freely between Canada, United States, and Britain. Eugenic ideas found a receptive audience in Canada among medical professionals, particularly psychiatrists. In this

⁶⁵ Stefan Kuehl, *For the Betterment of the Race: The Rise and Fall of the International Movement for Eugenics and Racial Hygiene* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 17.

⁶⁶ For instance, influential individuals such as Sir William Osler, Dr. J.G. Adami (McGill), Alexander Graham Bell, and Professor Ramsay Wright (University of Toronto) all attended the First Eugenics Congress. See Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990), 23.

⁶⁷ Dugdale's study followed the Jukes family over a 75-year period and claimed that this family produced a number of feeble-minded individuals, criminals, and paupers. It was often cited by eugenicists as an example of heritability of undesirable traits. See Richard Louis Dugdale, *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity*. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1877).

⁶⁸ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 41.

chapter, I provide an overview of eugenics in English-speaking Canada. I focus on the emergence of theories of heritability and their influence in Canada. I show that the early 20th century represented an increase interest of the state in the private lives of Canadians, and how this coincided with the eugenics movement. I then focus on the rise of the mental hygiene movement, its impact on mental health care and eugenics policy in Alberta and Manitoba.

Eugenics and Theories of Heritability

“Eugenics,” a term coined by British statistician Francis Galton (1822-1911) in 1883 to describe:

The science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognizance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had.⁶⁹

It is important to note that the idea of improving a society’s strength through the selective breeding of its population (“improving stock”) was not a new one, and it can be traced to a period before Francis Galton’s work on eugenics became widespread.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Galton’s

⁶⁹ Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 17.

⁷⁰ See for example, Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995).

ideas gained popularity in many Anglo-Saxon countries including the United States and Canada, and contributed to the development of eugenics movements there.

Galton was influenced by his cousin, Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) work *On the Origin of Species* (1859). In this work, Darwin put forward his theory of biological evolution by natural selection, which stated that individuals with favourable variation that allows them to adapt to the demands of the environment will survive and reproduce.⁷¹ Darwin's work influenced his cousin Galton, who recalled that *Origins* inspired him to pursue his long-time interest in heredity and the betterment of the human race.⁷² This interest led him to publish "Hereditary Talent and Character," in 1865 where he argued that physical and mental characteristics were inherited from both parents, and that improvement was possible through selective breeding.⁷³ Galton was interested in showing that mental abilities were inherited, and conducted a study of biographical backgrounds of prominent scientists, politicians, and writers suggesting that high achievement was hereditary.⁷⁴ Furthermore, in a chapter on the "Marks for Family Merit," Galton suggested that both personal and ancestral factors needed to be taken into account in considering who qualifies as a superior individual. According to Galton,

We need not trouble ourselves about the personal part, because full weight is already given to it in the competitive careers; energy, brain, morale, and health being recognised factors of success, while there can hardly be a better evidence of a person being adapted

⁷¹ See Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1876).

⁷² Diane B. Paul and James Moore, "The Darwinian Context: Evolution and Inheritance," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 28.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

to his circumstances than that afforded by success. It is the ancestral part that is neglected

...⁷⁵

From the above statement, it is evident that the fitness of an individual was based on their success in society, and on whether or not, they contributed to that society. Even if an individual could better themselves, their “ancestral background” might still be questioned. Galton’s ideas about fitness and human improvement were very much shaped by his own class and race: white, middle class, Anglo-Saxon (WASP).⁷⁶ In his work, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Law and Consequences* (1869)—while Galton admitted that laws of inheritance were still a mystery—he nevertheless concluded that traits for success were hereditary, and provided individuals with the ability to succeed, and those who failed, did not possess that ability.⁷⁷ Through the use of pedigree charts, Galton sought to explain the inheritance of ability, and illustrate that the only way to guarantee human improvement was to limit the breeding of those who did not possess the favourable traits.⁷⁸ In this same work, he wrote:

I have no patience with the ... tales written to teach children to be good, that babies are born pretty much alike, and that the sole agencies in creating differences between boy and boy, and man and man are steady application and moral effort. It is in the most

⁷⁵ Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, 211.

⁷⁶ Leslie Baker, “Institutionalizing Eugenics: Custody, Class, Gender, and Education in Nova Scotia’s Response to the “Feeble-minded,” 1890-1931” (PhD Dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2015), 44.

⁷⁷ Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869), 6-7, <http://galton.org/books/hereditary-genius/text/pdf/galton-1869-genius-v3.pdf> (Accessed: 5 May, 2016); Paul and Moore, “The Darwinian Context,” 30.

⁷⁸ Peter Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 247.

qualified manner that I object to pretensions of natural equality. The experience of the nursery, the school, the university, and of professional careers, are a chain of proofs to the contrary.⁷⁹

Strictly speaking, Galton believed that an individual's mental and moral characteristics were inherited, and attempts to reform their environment to improve those characteristics would make no difference. For Galton, biological inheritance determined an individual's strengths and weaknesses. In order to ensure that only those with superior heredity passed on their favourable traits, Galton advocated that they should have more children (positive eugenics), while those with flawed heredity should be restricted from reproducing (negative eugenics).⁸⁰

During the time that Galton was writing there were still several theories of heritability that were disseminated in the scientific circles. French Biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's (1744-1829) theory of heritability was based on two laws: the first law suggested that the use or disuse of a certain body part determined whether that body part would develop or not; the second law suggested that these bodily changes could be inherited. This became known as the theory of acquired characteristics.⁸¹ Lamarck's theory was resurrected by Neo-Lamarckians in the late 19th century and employed by eugenicists who suggested that acquired cultural and physical characteristics could be passed on to the next generation. In other words, the eugenicists believed that any sort of vices and social ills that parents engaged in, could be passed on to their

⁷⁹ Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, 14.

⁸⁰ Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford, "Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.

⁸¹ Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 92-93.

children.⁸² Yet, some Neo-Lamarckians understood that human betterment could also be achieved through social reform by improving the living conditions of poor and working class individuals.⁸³

Galton was one of the first to reject Neo-Lamarckian principle of inheritance of acquired characteristics.⁸⁴ This view received support from German cytologist August Weismann (1834-1914) who suggested that the hereditary units of the germ plasm could not be affected by the environment.⁸⁵ In other words, these units would be transmitted from one generation to the next unchanged. For Weismann, the most guaranteed way to ensure the betterment of the human race was through selective breeding.⁸⁶ It was not until the re-discovery of the Augustinian monk Gregor Mendel's (1822-1884) work on inheritance of discrete characteristics of peas in 1900, that the laws of inheritance were understood and led to the creation of Mendelian genetics.⁸⁷ Mendelian genetics seemed to lend support to eugenic theory, as Leslie Baker suggests, "because it meant that detrimental change could affect the human species within a matter of a generation and that it could also be reversed or the species even improved through careful action of a few generations, most often through the prevention of reproduction by those carrying the mutated or undesirable characteristics."⁸⁸ Eugenicists misunderstood Mendel's laws and believed that

⁸² Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 40-41.

⁸³ Staffan Mueller-Wille and Hans-Joerg Rheinberger, *A Cultural History of Heredity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 100. The Neo-Lamarckian perspective was particularly popular in Latin American countries and in France. See for example, William Schneider, "The Eugenics Movement in France, 1890-1940," in *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 69-109; Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Marius Turda and Aaron Gillette, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

⁸⁴ Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 41.

⁸⁵ Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health From Ancient to Modern Times* (London: Routledge, 1999), 166.

⁸⁶ Paul and Moore, "The Darwinian Context," 37.

⁸⁷ Bowler, *Evolution*, 261.

⁸⁸ Baker, *Institutionalizing Eugenics*, 48-49.

“feeble-mindedness” and “mental deficiency” were the result of a Mendelian recessive gene.⁸⁹

Yet, as historian Diane B. Paul demonstrates, if in fact “feeble-mindedness” had been attributed to the recessive gene, eugenic measures would be ineffective, as carriers of the gene would not necessarily exhibit the characteristics of “feeble-mindedness.”⁹⁰

The influence of Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection expanded beyond the scientific circles and was taken up by social theorists and adapted to fit their own paradigm. Social theorists saw in Darwin’s theory the explanation for a society’s development and its social problems. This became known as “Social Darwinism.” The term Social Darwinism is often associated with Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), an English biologist, who coined the phrase “the survival of the fittest” after reading Darwin’s *Origins*. Social Darwinists believed that many societal problems, such as poverty and criminality could be explained by biology because, in a Darwinian sense, these were unfavourable traits that would be weeded out but society’s humanitarian measures protected the vulnerable who would otherwise have died off. Through humanitarian assistance, the “unfit” survived and reproduced.⁹¹ While Social Darwinists misapplied the idea of natural selection against the undeserving poor, Galton added hereditary to the argument by suggesting that it was a waste of taxpayer money to fund social programs for the biologically inferior, who were nothing but a burden to society.⁹² Social Darwinists tried to explain inequality between individuals and groups by misapplying Darwinian principles. For them, those who were successful were seen as superior to those who were not. This type of

⁸⁹ Garland E. Allen, “Eugenics and Modern Biology: Critiques of Eugenics, 1910–1945,” *Annals of Human Genetics* 75 (2011): 316.

⁹⁰ Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 68.

⁹¹ Bowler, *Evolution*, 298-301.

⁹² Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 6.

thinking helped set the stage for eugenic movements to emerge. Eugenacists believed that individuals with beneficial traits (white, upper middle class) should be encouraged to have large families, while the reproduction among the “unfit” should be restricted.

Towards Eugenics in Canada

The early years of the 20th century witnessed the rise of state intervention in the private lives of citizens through public health campaigns, in an attempt to ensure the health and well-being of the population. Of particular interest was the health of infants and children, as they were seen as a valuable national resources and the future of the nation.⁹³ As historian Cynthia Comacchio points out, during this period “the state came to be seen as the most effective instrument for the protection of children and the regulation of family life.”⁹⁴ This concern for the health of children was connected to the issue of infant mortality. In fact, at the beginning of the 20th century, 1 out of 7 infants in Canada died before their first birthday.⁹⁵ Infant mortality was widely believed to be one of the most tragic consequences of the modern industrial age.⁹⁶ Many volunteer organizations usually run by upper middle class women established baby clinics and milk depots, campaigned for tuberculosis control, and housing improvements. During the early decades of the 20th century, the medical profession stepped into this movement in Canada in an attempt to save infants and promote “scientific motherhood,” a belief that mothers required

⁹³ Anna Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,” *History Workshop* 5 (Spring 1978): 9.

⁹⁴ Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 4.

⁹⁵ Russell Wilkins, Christian Houle, Jean-Marie Berthelot, and Nancy Ross, “The Changing Health Status of Canada’s Children,” *ISUMA: Canadian Journal of Policy Research* (Autumn 2000): 58.

⁹⁶ Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies*, 3.

expert guidance to properly raise their children.⁹⁷ While medical professionals were concerned about high infant and maternal mortality, they were also motivated by professional interests. There was a belief among the general public that science and medicine could solve many of the problems plaguing Canadians at the turn of the century, and this context allowed the medical profession to increase its authority in society.⁹⁸

The early 20th century then witnessed the increased power of the medical profession, and in the years that followed, individuals such as the prominent public health activist, social reformer, and eugenicists, Dr. Helen MacMurchy (1862-1953) greatly influenced public health reforms, and eugenic policy in Canada. While MacMurchy played a significant role in bringing attention to the high infant and maternal mortality in Canada during the early decades of the 20th century, she was also a passionate eugenicist who advocated for the segregation and eventually sterilization of the “feeble-minded.”⁹⁹ In the 1920s, MacMurchy became chief of the Division of Maternal and Child Welfare in the newly established federal Department of Health. The poor health of Canadian soldiers during the war, high wartime casualties, along with low birth rates in Canada, and concerns over infant and maternal mortality, all contributed to the founding of the Department of Health in 1919.¹⁰⁰ In her position at the Division of Child Welfare, MacMurchy promoted education as a tool in reducing infant and maternal mortality. As historian Dianne Dodd points out, MacMurchy played a prominent role in writing much of the federal health advice literature (Blue Books) available to new mothers, and this initiative represented the first

⁹⁷ Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies*, 4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁹ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ Dianne Dodd, “Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-34,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 8 (1991): 205.

example of the federal government's interest in the health of Canadians.¹⁰¹ MacMurchy, like many of her medical contemporaries, believed that Canadian mothers were too ignorant to raise healthy children, and often blamed them for the high infant mortality rates.¹⁰² Historian Cynthia Comacchio has demonstrated that during the early 20th century, medical professionals believed that "Canadian mothers were handicapped in their childrearing duties by an ignorance that could be remedied only through expert tutoring and supervision."¹⁰³ That is, in order for mothers to raise healthy children and be "good" mothers, they required expert guidance through health literature, visits to baby clinics, and even visiting nursing services.¹⁰⁴ Whether new mothers could actually afford any of these services was never questioned, and it was assumed by public health officials and medical professionals that new mothers all had access. MacMurchy and her contemporaries expressed concerns about the future of the "race," and often blamed individuals for the poor health of nation because they refused to follow expert advice.¹⁰⁵ While some mothers resisted the intervention of public health official in their private lives, many welcomed the assistance provided by health professionals. Many accepted the intervention because by consulting experts and reading health advice literature, women wanted to prove that they were good mothers.¹⁰⁶ It is important to note, however, that these public health initiatives together with the campaigns against infant and maternal mortality helped reduce the mortality rates.¹⁰⁷ Public health concerns about child and maternal health not only placed pressure on mothers to

¹⁰¹ Dodd, "Advice to Parents," 205.

¹⁰² McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 32.

¹⁰³ Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies*, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 31.

¹⁰⁶ Samson, "Eugenics in the Community," 77.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 75.

produce and nurture healthy children but it also justified the medical intervention in the lives of Canadian families. This intervention was seen as particularly necessary for those who resisted expert guidance and therefore threatened the health and well-being of the nation.¹⁰⁸ This concern over the future of the nation and the “race” was shared by eugenicists who also believed that mothers needed to be educated in proper childrearing practices in order to prevent “feeble-mindedness” and “mental deficiency” in their children.¹⁰⁹ The preventative strategies against these conditions would eventually take various forms, including eugenic sterilization and institutionalization.

Historians trace the origin of eugenic thought to the British naturalist and polymath Charles Darwin’s ideas and his major work *The Origin of Species*.¹¹⁰ Although scientists discussed heredity and evolutionary thought before 1859, Darwin’s theory of natural selection set the foundation for eugenic ideas to emerge later in the 19th century.¹¹¹ Galtonian eugenics was fueled by the fear of national degeneration in Britain, brought on by problems of urbanization, poverty, declining health, etc. The “science” of eugenics aimed at solving some of these problems through positive and negative eugenics measures. While the British Educational Society (after 1926, it became the Eugenics Society) focused on class conflict and populations control, eugenicists in the United States focused on race and immigration. In Canada, as historian Erika Dyck has stated, “immigration posed eugenic questions in the early part of the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁹ Dodd, “Advice to Parents,” 209.

¹¹⁰ For further reading see, Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).

¹¹¹ Levine and Bashford, “Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World,” 4.

century in a manner that fused elements of class, race, and intelligence, using ‘foreigner’ as convenient shorthand for undesirable.”¹¹²

The widespread appeal of Social Darwinian political philosophies and the hereditary sciences in biology led some regional governments in Canada to inaugurate eugenic measures, with two provinces, Alberta and British Columbia implementing sexual sterilization legislation.¹¹³ In the early decades of the 20th century, due to increased immigration, the effects of the First World War, and the economic depression, many middle class Canadians became concerned about national degeneration and the rise of “mental deficiency” and “feeble-mindedness.”¹¹⁴ These concerns prompted social reformers, medical professionals, and politicians to find solutions to the problems of modernity. Medical professionals, particularly psychiatrists played a prominent role in presenting themselves as experts who could help solve society’s problems, including poverty, crime, and prostitution, all of which they connected to the increase in “feeble-mindedness.” Within this context the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene was established under the co-leadership of Clarence Hincks and C.K. Clarke. The rise of the mental hygiene movement in Canada during the early twentieth-century was similar to that of other Western countries, and was tied to the rise of the public health movement. During the late nineteenth century, many governments spent a significant amount of money in order to reduce infant and maternal mortality, prevent infectious diseases, and improve the

¹¹² Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 6-7.

¹¹³ Strange and Stephen, “Eugenics in Canada,” 524.

¹¹⁴ See Karolina Kowalewski and Yasmin Mayne, “The Translation of Eugenic Ideology into Public Health Policy: The Case of Alberta and Saskatchewan,” in *The Proceedings of the 18th Annual History of Medicine Days Conference 2009*, eds. Lisa Peterman *et al.* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012).

overall health of their citizens.¹¹⁵ By 1914, the quest for better health also included mental well-being. The goals of the mental hygiene movement were to reform mental institutions and move psychiatry away from the asylum and towards hospitals and university clinics, to prevent mental and nervous disorders, and to achieve mental health.¹¹⁶

During its first meeting, the Committee set five elements of its agenda: first, to do “war work” by providing care for soldiers suffering from mental disabilities; second, to perform mental examinations on new immigrants; third, to improve the conditions in mental institutions and develop centers for the diagnosis and treatment of cases of mental disease; fourth, to improve the care of those suffering from mental disease; and fifth, to campaign for the prevention of mental disease and “deficiency”.¹¹⁷ The Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene also campaigned against prostitution, criminality, and poverty, and in the process ensured many Canadians that all of these issues were linked to mental deficiency.¹¹⁸ From 1918 to 1922, the committee conducted mental hygiene surveys across Canada, and in the process presented themselves as “experts” on various social issues. Sociologist David MacLennan has suggested that the Committee “was able to convince state officials that their services were invaluable to the proper functioning of the modern state.”¹¹⁹ In this way, the activities of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene were also connected to the problem of professionalization of psychiatry during the first decades of the 20th century and help explain

¹¹⁵ Dowbiggin, *The Quest for Mental Health: A Tale of Science, Medicine, Scandal, Sorrow, and Mass Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 92; David MacLennan, “Beyond the Asylum: Professionalization and the Mental Hygiene Movement in Canada, 1914-1928,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 4 (1987): 7.

¹¹⁶ Dowbiggin, *The Quest for Mental Health*, 94.

¹¹⁷ Kurbegović, “The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey,” 298.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ MacLennan, *Beyond the Asylum*, 14.

their eagerness to gain state support for their cause. Their mental hygiene surveys revealed that many of the provincial institutions were inadequate for the care of those suffering from mental disorders. The surveys also suggested that the rate of “mental deficiency” across the country was high and recommended eugenic measures such as segregation in institutions or farms as well as sterilization.¹²⁰ As will be evident throughout this dissertation, the findings of these surveys were particularly powerful in convincing social reformers and provincial governments that “feeble-mindedness” and “mental deficiency” were legitimate issues that required immediate attention.

Early Mental Health Care in Manitoba and Alberta

Psychiatric care on the Prairies during the late nineteenth century was primarily custodial care in the Manitoba Penitentiary which opened in 1871—the year after Manitoba joined the newly Confederated Canada. The mentally ill were housed with criminals until 1877 when they were transferred to a separate ward in the newly built Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Stony Mountain, Manitoba. It was not until 1884 that the provincial government authorized the building of an asylum dedicated to those with mental disorders. The Selkirk Lunatic Asylum in Selkirk, Manitoba opened in 1886 under Superintendent Dr. David Young (1847-1931). The Manitoba Government soon realized that one institution was inadequate to house the patients from the entire province and the Northwest Territories. Additionally, Western Canada was

¹²⁰ The Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Manitoba Survey” (1918).

opened for settlement and the need for more space in institutions increased.¹²¹ In 1890, the Manitoba government funded the building of a Provincial Reformatory for boys. Unfortunately, for the provincial government, this institution was underutilized. This was an embarrassment since they had spent \$30,000 to build the institution.¹²² By 1891, the government searched for an alternative and decided to convert the building into an institution for the patients diagnosed with mental disorders. The renamed Brandon Asylum for the Insane (Figure 1.1) opened in spring of 1891 under Superintendent Dr. Gordon Bell (1863-1923).¹²³



Figure 1.1. The Brandon Asylum (1912), Source: Archives of Manitoba, Brandon - Buildings - Provincial - Brandon Mental Health Centre #14, N14778 (Accessed: <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/brandonmentalhealthcentre.shtml>).

¹²¹ Ian Carr and Robert E. Beamish, *Manitoba Medicine* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 46-47.

¹²² Kurt Refvik, *A Centennial History of the Brandon Asylum, Brandon Hospital for Mental Diseases, Brandon Mental Health Centre* (Brandon, MB: Brandon Mental Health Centre, 1991), 2.

¹²³ Ibid.

The new institution helped alleviate the problem of overcrowding at the Selkirk institution by accepting some of its patients, but the Brandon Asylum soon found itself in a similar situation. This was primarily because both institutions were still housing patients from the West along with local patients. In response, several new structural additions were added to the Brandon facility to ease overcrowding. By 1910, the institution housed over 600 patients. The quality of care at these institutions was fairly poor, as the facilities were not well-organized and were often understaffed, with only a superintendent and an assistant constituting the medical staff.¹²⁴ Therefore, it was difficult to provide adequate care and treatment for the patients.

In Alberta, the provincial government implemented the *Insanity Act* in 1907 which outlined the management of those deemed to be “insane.” Under this Act, the Lieutenant Governor in Alberta was given the authority to establish a facility for the care of those with mental conditions.¹²⁵ In 1911, Alberta opened its first institution for the insane at Ponoka which was known as the Alberta Hospital for the Insane (Figure 1.2) under Superintendent Dr. D.T. Dawson.¹²⁶ Prior to this, patients were either accommodated in existing facilities primarily located in Manitoba or they were held in jails in Calgary and Regina. This soon proved to be inadequate as the number of patients continued to increase and the institutions in Manitoba were already overcrowded. These conditions convinced the Alberta government to establish its own institution for the care of the “insane.”¹²⁷ The institution at Ponoka was designed to house 150

¹²⁴ Kurt Refvik, “The Brandon Asylum Fire of 1910,” *Manitoba History* 21 (1991): available online, accessed March 10, 2018: http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/21/brandonasylumfire.shtm

¹²⁵ Fort Ostell Museum, Alberta Hospital Ponoka 75th Anniversary, “A History of Care and Dedication,” (1985), 1.

¹²⁶ Robert Lampard, *Alberta’s Medical History: Young, Lusty, and Full of Life* (Red Deer: Friesens Corporation, 2008), 345.

¹²⁷ Geertje Boschma, “A Family Point of View: Negotiating Asylum Care in Alberta, 1905-1930,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 25, no. 2 (2008): 370.

patients, yet once it opened its doors it housed 164, and by the end of that year it was housing just under 200 patients.¹²⁸ Changes in psychiatric care during the interwar period, along with overcrowding at Ponoka, prompted the Alberta government to establish another institution for those with mental conditions at Oliver, near Edmonton. The Oliver Mental Hospital opened its doors in 1923 and was designed to accommodate “chronic long term” patients.¹²⁹ That same year



Figure 1.2. Alberta Hospital for the Insane, 1915. Source: Glenbow Archives, PA-3907-9

the provincial government also established the Provincial Training School which was the main institution for the accommodation, training, and care of “mentally defective” children.¹³⁰ As Sociologist Claudia Malacrida points out, even though the Training School was designed for training, education, and eventual return to community living for the patients, it also reflected the

¹²⁸ Lampard, *Alberta's Medical History*, 345.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 346.

¹³⁰ Malacrida, *A Special Hell*, 3.

eugenic concerns of Alberta's policy makers.¹³¹ Segregation of those deemed "feeble-minded" or "mentally deficient" was a form of eugenics because it removed the individual from society and placed them into sex segregated wards in institutions, where they would have had little chance of transmitting their "defect" to the next generation.¹³² Furthermore, this facility played a prominent role once Alberta implemented its *Sexual Sterilization Act* because it acted as one of the main "feeder" institutions for the provincial eugenics program.¹³³ That is, many of the patients who were recommended for sterilization by the Alberta Eugenics Board were trainees at the Provincial Training School.

The Mental Hygiene Movement

Following the horrors of the First World War, many Canadian provinces sought to reform their mental institutions. In 1918, recognizing that its mental health services were inadequate, the Manitoba government requested that the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene conduct a survey of its institutions and provide recommendations for improvement. The provincial government was particularly concerned with institutional overcrowding of its mental institutions and psychiatric wards, and it was publicly pressurized by physicians who managed the institutions and asylums and were concerned with the chronic understaffing of patient wards, therapeutic units, and ambulatory care places. In 1918, Hincks, Clarke and Nurse Marjorie Keyes conducted the mental hygiene survey in Manitoba, starting with two main provincial

¹³¹ Malacrida, *A Special Hell*, 4.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Grekul, Krahn, and Odynak, "Sterilizing the 'feeble-minded,'" 369-370.

institutions at Selkirk and Brandon, as well as schools, jails, and general hospital.¹³⁴ A year later, the Committee surveyed Alberta's institutions and published its survey in 1921.¹³⁵

It is important to note that the findings of these survey contributed to the anxieties over the rise in "mental deficiency." The results of the surveys were primarily negative, and they concluded that the existing resources for treating mental conditions were inadequate. Not only were the institutions overcrowded, underfunded, and understaffed, but they also lacked qualified personnel, and adequate treatments. The commissioners' first impressions were that the mental institutions in Manitoba were dark, lonely places, without much activity for the patients. For instance, when visiting the Brandon Asylum, the commission noted,

The large number of patients sitting about the wards idle, and unemployed, made a most unpleasant impression on us. We felt that the true function of the hospital was being overlooked and that the inmates were not being induced to make the best of their lives.¹³⁶

While all the institutions faced similar problems, the Portage la Prairie Home for Incurables received the most criticism. The Home was built in 1889 by architect Charles Wheeler (1838-1917), following request from the provincial government. The institution housed individuals suffering from various mental and physical ailments, who could no longer receive hospital care.¹³⁷ Upon their visit to the institution, the commissioners noted:

¹³⁴ See Canadian National Committee For Mental Hygiene, "Manitoba Survey," (1918).

¹³⁵ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene "Mental Hygiene Survey of the Province of Alberta," (1921).

¹³⁶ CNCMH, "Manitoba Survey," (1918): 16.

¹³⁷ Giles Bugailiskis, "The Architectural Legacy of Charles Wheeler," *Manitoba History* 54 (2007); accessed on march 10, 2018: available online: http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/54/wheelerlegacy.shtml.

The most painful and distressing survey undertaken while we were in Manitoba was at the so-called Home for Incurables. ... The name Home for Incurables is misleading and the institution has become a recuperation house for every kind of ailment. Apparently any family in Manitoba which had a troublesome member, either old or young, simply passed it on to the Home for Incurables, until this institution possessed an unhappy conglomeration of idiots, imbeciles, epileptics, insane, senile, and mentally normal people suffering from incurable diseases. ... That insane people should be housed in this institution is astonishing, as it is devoid of any equipment for caring for cases of insanity...¹³⁸

In his work on the survey, medical historian Charles Roland has suggested that one of the reasons for the “unhappy conglomeration” was due to the stigma of having a relative placed in an asylum whereas there was less stigma associated with the Home for Incurables.¹³⁹ It is very likely that this was the case, but I would also suggest that patients who were viewed as “incurable” by asylum superintendents were often transferred to the Home for Incurables¹⁴⁰ and this also led to a diverse patient population. Overcrowding was a concern in all institutions, but it was a particular concern at the Portage la Prairie facility. This institution was designed to house approximately two hundred patients but was actually housing over three hundred. It was

¹³⁸ CNCMH, “Manitoba Survey,” 63; also quoted in Charles Roland, “Clarence Hincks in Manitoba, 1918.” *The Manitoba Medical Review* 46, no. 2 (1966): 109.

¹³⁹ Roland, “Clarence Hincks in Manitoba,” 109.

¹⁴⁰ Archives of Manitoba, Sessional Papers, Premier’s Office Files, G8238, “Public Works Report,” (1904-1905): 15.

these types of institutional conditions that Hincks and Clarke sought to document and eventually improve. The commission recommended immediate re-organization of the institution to ease overcrowding, and further recommended that those suffering from "insanity" be transferred to the Brandon Asylum.¹⁴¹

The Commissioners also commented on the lack of staff in the institutions at Selkirk, Brandon, and Portage la Prairie. More often than not the institutions were run by a superintendent and a nurse. The staff tended to be primarily custodial, as many did not have proper training in psychiatry or mental-health nursing.¹⁴² When the commission visited the Brandon Asylum, Medical Superintendent Dr. Joseph B. Chambers (1856-1939) was in charge of administration and caring for 700 patients. This tended to be the situation in all three institutions. Contemporaries explained the staff shortages in mental institutions by suggesting that there was low interest among medical and nursing students to work in the psychiatric field due to the low pay. Moreover, the First World War also had an impact on medical service in Manitoba as many medical students and physicians were deployed overseas.¹⁴³ While this context cannot be ignored, it is also important to note that at the time of the survey, Manitoba lacked specialized training programs in psychiatry and mental-health nursing.¹⁴⁴ It was only in 1921 that, the renamed Brandon Hospital for Mental Diseases opened a training school for mental-health nurses.¹⁴⁵ The impact of the First World War and the added pressure from the

¹⁴¹ CNCMH, "Manitoba Survey," 64-65.

¹⁴² Beverly Clare Hicks, "From Barnyards to Bedsides to Book and Beyond: The Evolution and Professionalization of Psychiatric Nursing in Manitoba, 1955-1980," (PhD Dissertation, University of Manitoba, 2008), 5.

¹⁴³ Canadian National Committee on Mental Hygiene, "Manitoba Survey," 64.

¹⁴⁴ See Hicks, "From Barnyard to Bedsides."

¹⁴⁵ Chris Dooley, "'They Gave Their Care, but We Gave Loving Care': Defining and Defending Boundaries of Skill and Craft in the Nursing Service of a Manitoba Mental Hospital during the Great Depression," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 21, no. 2 (2004): 229.

mental hygiene movement led to shifts in mental-health care in Manitoba as well as in other Canadian provinces. In their work *Manitoba Medicine*, medical doctors Ian Carr and Robert E. Beamish attributed the change in mental-health care to the First World War.¹⁴⁶ The war changed how many psychiatrists thought about mental illness. Their experiences in treating shell-shocked soldiers overseas taught them that some mental conditions were treatable. It further encouraged them to use their wartime experiences in helping improve mental-health care for returning soldiers and civilians back home.¹⁴⁷

The findings of the Committee contributed to a shift in mental health care in Manitoba from 1919 onward. But it must also be pointed out that Manitoba had begun to make small changes even before the Committee conducted its survey. Nevertheless, the Manitoba government was pleased with the Commission's survey and sought to implement many of its recommendations including hiring trained psychiatrists.¹⁴⁸ This changing attitude led to the appointment of three psychiatrists to key positions in province's mental-health care system: Alvin T. Mathers (1880-1960), Charles Baragar (1885-1936), and Edgar C. Barnes (1878-1945). Mathers was an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. In 1919, he became medical director of the Winnipeg Psychopathic Hospital and was soon also appointed Provincial Psychiatrist; Baragar received his MD in 1914, and then enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, eventually transferring to the Canadian Army Medical Corps. Following the war, he received training in psychiatry in the United Kingdom and the United States. In 1920,

¹⁴⁶ Carr and Beamish, 116.

¹⁴⁷ Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane*, 111; Ben Shephard, *War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 161-162.

¹⁴⁸ Charles Roland, *Clarence Hincks: Mental Health Crusader* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990), 55.

he became medical superintendent at the Brandon institution.¹⁴⁹ Like Baragar, Barnes had a military background. In 1920, he was appointed medical superintendent at the Selkirk Hospital for Mental Diseases.¹⁵⁰ All three were influenced by the war in their understanding of diagnosis and treatment of mental diseases, since all treated shell-shocked soldiers. They had all completed post-graduate training in psychiatry outside of Canada and they were all ardent mental hygienists, and with them they brought “new psychiatry” to Manitoba, including a move towards a stricter community care paradigm and transcending traditional custodial care models. Lastly, the changes that occurred after the First World War also led Manitoba to the implementation of the Mental Diseases Act of 1919. Following the recommendations of Committee, the Act provided that mentally ill patients be admitted voluntarily to mental hospitals rather than involuntarily committed.¹⁵¹

While the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene recommended improvements in psychiatric care, as I’ll show in this dissertation the Committee also argued that Manitoba had not dealt adequately with “mental defectives” and hinted at eugenic measures as a solution.¹⁵² What is also evident is that the Committee’s criticisms of the institutions in Manitoba contrasted asylum care with the ideas of a new psychiatry promoted by mental hygienists such as Hincks and Clarke. They believed that if mental diseases and disorders were treated in the early stages then they could be cured. In order to do so, mental hygienists promoted improvements in psychiatric care, modernizations of treatments, better diagnosis, and the building of psychopathic hospitals

¹⁴⁹ Dooley, “‘They Gave Their Care, but We Gave Loving Care,’ 232.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Carr and Beamish, *Manitoba Medicine*, 117.

¹⁵² Kurbegović, *The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey*, 312.

where scientific psychiatry could flourish.¹⁵³ The committee would come to the same conclusion following its survey in Alberta, and implied that sterilization would be a viable option in controlling the numbers of “mental defectives.”¹⁵⁴ As will be evident throughout this dissertation, the Committee’s findings regarding the extent of “mental deficiency” in Canadian provinces were particularly influential in Alberta, which at the time of the survey had one main mental institution. The Committee’s conclusions about the threat of “mental deficiency” justified the views of Alberta’s social reformers, particularly the United Farm Women of Alberta, who, as I illustrate in Chapter Two, played a significant role in lobbying the provincial government for eugenic legislation.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in Canada, particularly the rural province of Alberta stood out, with its legal inauguration of the “Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act” of 1928. Such eugenics legislation had been rare in Canada during the 1920s, while a number of state governments in the United States had passed similar laws.¹⁵⁵ Alberta’s eugenic legislation was paradigmatic not only for the political and social discussions in other Canadian provinces, such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan at the time, but also for the exchanges with international experts (from Britain, the United States,

¹⁵³ Elizabeth Lunbeck, *Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 152; Dowbiggin, “‘Keeping this Young Country Sane’: C. K. Clarke, Immigration Restriction, and Canadian Psychiatry, 1890- 1925,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (1995): 599.

¹⁵⁴ Cited in A. Naomi Nind, “Solving an ‘Appalling’ Problem: Social Reformers and the Campaign for the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act, 1928,” *Alberta Law Review* 38, no.2 (2000): 545.

¹⁵⁵ Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane*, 100. The first American state to inaugurate a sterilization law was Indiana (1907), subsequently followed by California (1909), Washington (1909), and Connecticut (1909).

and Germany) along with its long-lasting legacy. The legislation only became revoked in 1972 by the provincial government headed by Premier Peter Lougheed (1928-2012),¹⁵⁶ following wider political, social, and legal protest that questioned the juridical and moral high ground of the drastic laws. In the time of its existence, the *Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act* had given rise to the forced sterilization of at least 2,822 Albertans, who were deemed “mentally defective” or “unfit.”¹⁵⁷ Within the Alberta eugenics program, the men, women, and children who were subjected to such negative eugenics methods stemmed widely from socially vulnerable populations, such as psychiatric patients, asylum inmates, Indigenous people, and young people. It is striking to notice that among these groups more women than men were sterilized. From the vast dimension of the eugenics program it becomes obvious that the *Sexual Sterilization Act* in the province of Alberta had changed the lives of many and that it impacted the social and psychological situation of high numbers of victims even beyond its repeal in the early 1970s.

During a time when the great majority of provincial and state governments were either decommissioning or disregarding their sterilization laws—due to insufficient public finances, an increase in public scrutiny, and the discrediting of eugenic ideas—, Alberta’s expanding legislation appeared to be largely unchallenged.¹⁵⁸ Historians and scholars of eugenics have given several reasons as to why the forced eugenic measures were mostly given up in North American after 1945: First, eugenics policies became increasingly discredited in the postwar period because of their association with the euthanasia programs that targeted psychiatric

¹⁵⁶ For information on the abolishment of the Act, and the Leilani Muir Trial (1995-1996) that followed, see Douglas Wahlsten, “Leilani Muir versus the Philosopher King: Eugenics on Trial in Alberta,” *Genetica* 99 (1997): 185–198.

¹⁵⁷ See for example, Karolina Kowalewski and Yasmin Mayne, “The Translation of Eugenic Ideology into Public Health Policy: 53-74.

¹⁵⁸ Grekul, *Sterilization in Alberta*, 247-266.

patients, handicapped individuals, and other “racially inferior” populations in Nazi Germany.¹⁵⁹ Second, while Alberta needed much longer to repeal its eugenic legislation, the support for eugenic ideas had already declined in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the early 1940s. Many Canadian psychiatrists, mental health activists, and administrators stopped calling themselves eugenicists, though as Philosopher Rob Wilson suggests eugenic ideas did not disappear, instead they were repackaged.¹⁶⁰ Some of these developments will be followed by the succeeding chapters of this thesis. Third, the Eugenics Society of Canada lost much of its financial support in the early 1940s, and began to decline shortly thereafter. Lastly, the year 1945 witnessed the implementation of family allowances and the emergence of the welfare state in Canada. The main purpose of such social welfare programs was to help families and prevent the return of another economic depression.¹⁶¹ Despite these developments, Alberta’s eugenics program continued until 1972. Sociologists Jana Grekul, Harvey Krahn, and Dave Odynak suggests that several factors played a role in the longevity of the program, including charismatic provincial leaders, monolithic politics, weakness of the Roman Catholic Church, post-World War II economic boom, and the fact that the eugenic program operated in the background without much opposition.¹⁶²

While the later developments of the eugenic movement in Canada during the mid of the 20th century pose a quite an enigma in the context of the international developments and decline of eugenics within many Western countries, it is imperative to examine and understand the early

¹⁵⁹ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 168.

¹⁶⁰ Robert A. Wilson, *The Eugenic Mind Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018), 141-143.

¹⁶¹ See for example, Dominique Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State Quebec Families, Compulsory Education, and Family Allowances, 1940-1955* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006).

¹⁶² Grekul, Krahn, and Odynak, “Sterilizing the ‘feeble-minded,’” 379-380.

beginnings of the popular eugenics movement in Western Canada. Therefore, the next chapter addresses the role of women in the Canadian eugenics movement, by emphasizing the lobbying of government structures through popular and grassroots organizations, such as the United Farm Women of Alberta, who played a central role in the overall movement of eugenics in Western Canada after the First World War.

Chapter Two: Farm Women and Eugenics in Alberta and Manitoba

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the maturation of organized women's movements that sought political and legal enfranchisement for women and advocated assorted social reform. Women, usually of white, middle-class, Protestant backgrounds, worked to extend their influence from the private into the public sphere. These women were most interested in areas that were perceived to be in the "women's sphere," such as child welfare, health reform, and education.¹⁶³ Within the wider context of increasing state intervention in the life of the family and in societal interest in child rearing, many Canadian social reformers and suffragists such as Nellie McClung (1873-1951) used the concept of motherhood to position themselves as a political force with a public role in social debates.¹⁶⁴ By doing this, women made the argument that they, in their role as mothers, were particularly well suited to the bettering of society through social reform.¹⁶⁵ Their interest in the societal improvement ultimately linked many social reformers to the eugenics movement that shared similar goals. Specifically, women's organizations and eugenics were intertwined and complemented one another's beliefs in race betterment, social reform, and in biological solutions to social problems. Women and eugenics further intersected as many eugenics policies centred on women and their

¹⁶³ See Amy Samson, "Eugenics in the Community: Gendered Professions and Eugenic Sterilization in Alberta, 1928-1972," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 31, no. 1 (2014): 143-164.

¹⁶⁴ Janice Fiamengo, "A Legacy of Ambivalence: Responses to Nellie McClung," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 4 (1999/2000): 76.

¹⁶⁵ Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, "From Suffrage to Sterilization," 105.

ability to reproduce.¹⁶⁶ Since reproduction involved the transmission of hereditary material from parent to offspring, the control of reproduction was essential for eugenicists.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, as historian Cecily Devereux points out, the control of reproduction was also important to women, such as McClung, who viewed it as vital to “liberating women, improving social conditions, protecting what seemed to her to be weaker or needier members of society, and maintaining national economic strength in what was imagined, if never actually realized, as a community organized around the principles of “common good.””¹⁶⁸ By the early 20th century most women’s organizations were ideologically predisposed towards supporting eugenics, in this way, women were not only the targets of eugenic policies, they also served as co-authors.¹⁶⁹

In writing about the connections between the early women’s movement and eugenics, historians have rejected the view that women only engaged with eugenics to further their political agenda of achieving women’s emancipation.¹⁷⁰ Instead, historians suggest that women were actively involved with the eugenics movement and that eugenic ideology was in line with their beliefs.¹⁷¹ For instance, social reformers such as British Mary Stopes (1880-1958) while promoting birth control also supported the sterilization of “hopelessly rotten and racially

¹⁶⁶ Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 103-104; Angela C. Wanhalla, “Gender, Race and Colonial Identity: Women and Eugenics in New Zealand, 1918-1939,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2001), 13.

¹⁶⁷ Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*, 103.

¹⁶⁸ Cecily Devereux, *Growing a Race: Nellie L. McClung and the Fiction of Eugenic Feminism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 12.

¹⁶⁹ Wanhalla, “Gender, Race and Colonial Identity,” 15.

¹⁷⁰ See Susanne Klausen and Alison Bashford, “Fertility Control: Eugenics, Neo-Malthusianism, and Feminism,” In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 109; Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003). Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex, and Morality* (London, UK: Tauris Parke, 2001).

¹⁷¹ See for example, Janice Fiamengo, “A Legacy of Ambivalence”; Mariana Valverde, “‘When the Mother of the Race is Free’: Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism,” In *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women’s History*, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

diseased” elements of society.¹⁷² Similarly, American birth control advocate, Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) believed that certain individuals should not be permitted to have children.¹⁷³ In the Canadian context, historians such as Cecily Devereux, Sheila Gibbons, Erin Moss, and Hank Stam illustrate that women’s groups adopted eugenic ideas as part of their campaign to strengthen the family and the nation.¹⁷⁴

The early social reformers were devoted to the traditional family structure. The family represented social order and progress of society, race and nation, and while women’s groups fought for social reform, for them motherhood was central.¹⁷⁵ For women’s rights advocates such as McClung and magistrate Emily Murphy (1868-1933) womanhood was synonymous with motherhood, and they believed that a woman’s duty was to ensure the success of future generations.¹⁷⁶ Women were the “mothers of the race,” whose duty was to have children and in turn ensure the survival of the Anglo-Saxon race.¹⁷⁷ Yet, the title of the “mother of the race” was only reserved for particular women, mainly those of British backgrounds who were perceived to be of “superior stock.”¹⁷⁸ Women deemed to be “unfit” were viewed as not suitable for motherhood and for the care of future generations.¹⁷⁹ The support of eugenics by women social reformers fits within this context that focused on motherhood and on preserving the nation.

¹⁷² Klausen and Bashford, “Fertility Control,” 110.

¹⁷³ See for example, Angela Franks, *Margaret Sanger’s Eugenic Legacy: The Control of Female Fertility* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005), 7.

¹⁷⁴ See for example, Devereux, *Growing a Race*; Gibbons, “Our Power to Remodel Civilization;” Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, “From Suffrage to Sterilization;” Fiamengo, “A Legacy of Ambivalence;” Mary Ziegler, “Eugenic Feminism: Mental Hygiene, The Women’s Movement, and the Campaign for Eugenic Legal Reform, 1900-1935,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender* 31 (2008): 211-235.

¹⁷⁵ Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 11-12.

¹⁷⁶ Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, “From Suffrage to Sterilization,” 109; Devereux, *Growing a Race*, 20-21.

¹⁷⁷ Devereux, *Growing a Race*, 30-31.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁷⁹ Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, “From Suffrage to Sterilization,” 109.

This chapter focuses on women's involvement with eugenics in Alberta and Manitoba during the interwar period. While I recognize that a number of women's groups¹⁸⁰ were involved in promoting eugenic ideology in Alberta, this chapter specifically focuses on the United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA). The UFWA were a cohesive and active lobby group with a direct line to the government - a government that operated as an insular majority. As an adjunct to the party apparatus, the United Farm Women were well positioned to exert political influence. Evidence indicates that, indeed, the UFWA was highly active in pushing for eugenics measures in Alberta.¹⁸¹ In Manitoba, conversely, although superficially similar, the situation was not ripe for any particular group to exert anywhere near the same degree of influence. Premier John Bracken's administration - which was a coalition moored in a broad, consensus driven philosophy of governing - did not give any particular interest group the ear of the government to the same degree as the United Farmers administration in Alberta. Furthermore, and perhaps as a result of this, women's organizations, such as the United Farm Women of Manitoba (UFWM) did not appear to have been as active as their Alberta counterparts in lobbying for eugenics legislation despite their ideological affinity for it. What is more, the UFWM did not fully discuss sexual sterilization of "mental defectives" until late 1933, long after the eugenic legislation had been defeated in the province. This could be explained by the fact that by the mid-1920s the

¹⁸⁰ Women's groups who campaigned for and endorsed eugenic measures in Alberta included the provincial chapter of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Local Council of Women, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. For more information on groups and individuals who supposed the implementation of eugenic legislation see "Sterilization Act Has Much Backing," *Edmonton Journal*, 9 March, 1928.

¹⁸¹ See for example, Erika Dyck, *Facing Eugenics: Reproduction, Sterilization and the Politics of Choice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013; Amy Samson, "Eugenics in the community : the United Farm Women of Alberta, public health nursing, teaching, social work, and sexual sterilization in Alberta, 1928-1972" (PhD Dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2014) ; Sheila Gibbons, "'The True [Political] Mothers of Today': Farm Women and the Organization of Eugenics Feminism in Alberta" (M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2012).

United Farmers organization in Manitoba had become apolitical, and tended to turn their attention to local issues directly affecting farmers. While the influence exerted by women's groups cannot be seen as being, on its own, decisive to the passing of sexual sterilization legislation, it was almost certainly a factor given the broad participation of women in the eugenics debate and wider social reform movements of the time. The vocal lobbying of the United Farm Women of Alberta, and their close relationship with the government and ruling party, added one more weight toward the passing of eugenics legislation in Alberta. Conversely, the political situation in Manitoba precluded the coalescing of eugenics lobbying around any one women's group, and while the UFWM was interested in eugenics, it was neither vigorous nor effective in their eugenics advocacy.

Background to the United Farm Women in Alberta and Manitoba

The period following the First World War in Canada witnessed a fundamental change in prairie politics.¹⁸² Socio-political stresses and regional estrangement led to the rise of farm movements and the establishment of third parties. Farmers organized in response to the perceived political and economic inequalities that existed between eastern and western Canada, and that contributed to discrimination against farmers.¹⁸³ The Manitoba Grain Growers (later the United Farmers of Manitoba) and the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) were primarily interested

¹⁸² Chapter Five of this dissertation provides an in-depth discussion of politics in Alberta and Manitoba during the interwar period, including the rise of farm movements.

¹⁸³ Bradford J. Rennie, "A Far Green Country Unto a Swift Sunrise": The Utopianism of the Alberta Farm Movement, 1909-1923," in *The Prairie West as Promised Land*, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzan (Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2007), 244.

in the economic issues affecting farmers but they also voiced their views on a number of social questions, including women's suffrage.¹⁸⁴

Women played a significant role in building the farm movement and in providing support for farm organization on the prairies. In the 1910s, farm organization opened their membership to farm women with the establishment of women's organizations.¹⁸⁵ For example, in 1913 the United Farmers of Alberta welcomed women as equal members in the organization suggesting that women "possessed a maternal ideology that would balance the destructive male influence by mothering the war-torn nation and promoting a strong moral and social ethic."¹⁸⁶ Similarly, at their annual convention in 1914, the Manitoba Grain Growers offered full membership in the organization to women.¹⁸⁷ While men and women were depicted as equals in the farm movement, they did not share equal political influence. In order for the farm movement to flourish, women required political power.¹⁸⁸ The vote was not only beneficial in helping women exert moral influence on society, but more importantly, farmers believed it would allow women to "clean-up" politics and at the same time strengthen the political power of the farm movement.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, women shared the stresses and hardships of prairie life, and it was only just that they should have a political voice.¹⁹⁰ For women

¹⁸⁴ Gail Allan, "Prairie Farm Women Organizing: A Faithful Commitment," *Canadian Society of Church History, Historical Papers* (2001): 25.

¹⁸⁵ Amy Elizabeth Nugent, "Feminism and Populism on the Canadian Prairies," (M.A. Thesis, University of Calgary, 2002), 25.

¹⁸⁶ Sheila Gibbons, "'The True [Political] Mothers of Today': Farm Women and the Organization of Eugenic Feminism in Alberta," (M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2012), 24.

¹⁸⁷ Roderick McKenzie, "Convention Call," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 15 December, 1915, Peel's Prairie Provinces Online Database, University of Alberta, Item Ar01300.
<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/GGG/1915/12/15/13/Ar01300.html?query=newspapers%7Cunited+farm+women+of+manitoba+AND+membership%7C%28pubyear%3A%5B1911+TO+1915%5D%29+AND+%28publication%3AGGG%29%7Cscore> (Accessed: 20 August, 2018).

¹⁸⁸ Gibbons, "The True [Political] Mothers of Today," 36.

¹⁸⁹ Bradford James Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 114.

¹⁹⁰ Gibbons, "The True [Political] Mothers of Today," 37. Rennie, "The Rise of Agrarian Democracy," 114.

themselves, the vote represented an opportunity to focus on political issues that were of interest to them, namely health and education.¹⁹¹ The Manitoba Grain Growers adopted a resolution in favour of suffrage in 1911.¹⁹² The United Farmers in Alberta followed by voicing their support for women's vote in 1914, and it was granted in both provinces in 1916.¹⁹³ The United Farmers demanded that both provincial and federal governments "extend the franchise to women, on the same basis as men," as this would "place Canada amongst the most progressive countries in the world."¹⁹⁴ Therefore, enfranchisement of women was important to the farm movement not only to increase its numbers but so that it could accurately claim to represent the broad interests of farmers.¹⁹⁵

While farm women in both Alberta and Manitoba were active participants in the agricultural organizations that predated the establishment of the women's sections, it was nevertheless important for them to have a united voice on issues affecting farm women.¹⁹⁶ The Women's Auxiliary of the United Farmers of Alberta was formed in 1915 (see Figure 2.1), and changed its name to the United Farm Women of Alberta a year later to reflect its integration into the larger farm movement.¹⁹⁷ The organization's first President was Irene Parlby (1868-1965), a women's rights

¹⁹¹ Gibbons, "The True [Political] Mothers of Today," 39.

¹⁹² Harry Gutkin and Mildred Gutkin, "'Give Us Our Due!': How Manitoba Women Won the Vote," *Manitoba History* 32 (1996): http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/32/womenwonthevote.shtml (Accessed: 15 September, 2018).

¹⁹³ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, "Official minutes and reports of the UFA annual conventions" (1914), micro/ufa, 48; Mallory Alison Richard, "Exploring the 'Thirteenth' Reason for Suffrage: Enfranchising 'Mothers of the British Race' on the Canadian Prairies," in *Findings Directions West: Readings That Locate and Dislocate Western Canada's Past*, eds. George Colpitts and Heather Devine (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017), 113-114.

¹⁹⁴ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, "Official minutes and reports of the UFA annual conventions" (1914), micro/ufa, 48-49.

¹⁹⁵ Gibbons, "The True [Political] Mothers of Today," 39.

¹⁹⁶ Gail Allan, "Prairie Farm Women Organizing: A Faithful Commitment," *Canadian Society of Church History, Historical Papers* (2001): 25; "Women to Take Large Part in Farm Movement," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 January, 1920.

¹⁹⁷ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 8.

advocate, agrarian social reformer, and later the first female Cabinet Minister in Alberta.¹⁹⁸

According to historian Brad Rennie, the “women did not find equality in the organization” but the UFA did endorse UFWA’s agenda, and once in government in 1921, the UFA supported many of the ideas on public health, education, and welfare proposed by the UFWA.¹⁹⁹ The women never challenged this inequality because they wanted to maintain class solidarity.²⁰⁰

Women were integral to the movement because “by their unpaid work in the home and field, women made the rural economy, and hence the movement viable; by joining UFWA and voting UFA, they built and politicized the movement.”²⁰¹ The movement was built upon an agrarian ideology but it was also influenced by American radical agrarian politics and liberal thought.

The radical members of UFA/UFWA promoted civil and women’s rights more than the liberal bloc, and with their radical ideology influenced the entire movement. The liberal membership saw benefits in competitive capitalism but at the same time, supported state intervention and ownership in order to ensure equality of opportunity. Once women joined the movement in 1915, like the men, they espoused the radical or liberal ideology while concentrating on issues in the “women’s sphere” including health, education, women’s rights, and various social issues.²⁰² Yet, due to influence from American radical agrarian politics, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) tended to favour a much more radical approach to politics, and this became evident once they were elected as the provincial government in 1921.²⁰³ As will be established in Chapter Five,

¹⁹⁸ For more information on Parlby see, Catherine A. Cavanaugh, “Irene Marryat Parlby: An ‘Imperial Daughter’ in the Canadian West, 1896-1934,” in *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women's History*, eds. Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 100-122.

¹⁹⁹ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 116; Amy Samson, “Eugenics in the Community,” 70.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 8.

²⁰² Ibid., 10-11.

²⁰³ Ibid., 52.

during the 1920s, party politics in Alberta was essentially monolithic with the United Farmers under Premier John Brownlee ruling with an impressive mandate.²⁰⁴ Farm women were a powerful influence on the provincial government, and as Parbly stressed to the UFWA membership:

The discussions and actions of this Association have always been regarded with very special interest by whatever government has been in power, and many suggestions with regard to such matters as education or Public Health which have emanated from your Conventions have found their way into legislation or into policies of the Government.²⁰⁵

Prior to 1921, their affiliation with the UFA, allowed UFWA to exert pressure on the Liberal government to implement education and health reforms. The Liberal government responded to many of their demands because they were eager to keep the support of the rural electorate.²⁰⁶ Once the United Farmers formed a government in 1921, UFWA continued to influence government policy.

²⁰⁴ Canadian Elections Datatbase, "1926 Alberta Election," <http://canadianelectionsdatabase.ca/PHASE5/?p=0&type=election&ID=621> (Accessed: 29 September, 2018).

²⁰⁵ Cited in A. Naomi Nind, "Solving an 'Appalling' Problem: Social Reformers and the Campaign for the Alberta *Sexual Sterilization Act*, 1928," *Alberta Law Review* 38, no.2 (2000): 542.

²⁰⁶ Nind, "Solving an 'Appalling' Problem," 542; Sharon Richardson, "Frontier Healthcare: Alberta's District & Municipal Nursing Services, 1919-1976," *Alberta History* (Winter 1998): 3.



Figure 2.1: United Farm Women of Alberta, 1919 (L-R back row: Mrs. J. W. Field; Mrs. J. Dowler; Marion L. Sears; Mrs. O. S. Welch; Mrs. Macquire; Mrs. Charles Henderson. L-R front row: Mrs. A. M. Postans; Mrs. J. F. Ross; Mrs. W. H. [Irene] Parby; Mrs. Paul Carr; Miss Mary W. Spiller. Source: Glenbow Archives, United Farm Women of Alberta, Board of Directors, Alberta, NA-402-1.

Like the UFWA, the women's section of the United Farmers in Manitoba was not a separate organization, rather it was a part of the broader farm movement. The women's chapter, which became the United Farm Women of Manitoba (UFWM), formed in 1918.²⁰⁷ Unlike their Alberta counterpart, the United Farmers in Manitoba (UFM) and the UFWM were more moderate in their politics.²⁰⁸ The greater complexities of the economic and political situation in Manitoba precluded radical policies from gaining traction there.²⁰⁹ Additionally, the

²⁰⁷ Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, Manitoba Grain Growers Association annual convention programs and minutes, P7579/3, *United Farmers of Manitoba: 25th Anniversary Year Book* (1928), 17.

²⁰⁸ Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 168.

²⁰⁹ Gerald E. Panting, "A Study of United Farmers of Manitoba to 1928: An Agricultural Association During a Period of Transition," (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1954), 136.

UFM/UFWM were never as cohesive as the UFA/UFWA, which emphasized a “‘class’ based political strategy.”²¹⁰ Instead, the UFM/UFWM avoided painting themselves as a class movement, primarily because “class” politics found little support among their membership.²¹¹ In Alberta, the farmers kept a close association with “their” government and influenced its policy, while in Manitoba, on the other hand, farmers succeeded in bringing about a United Farmers government in 1922 under Premier John Bracken, yet by the mid-1920s the organization became disassociated from the government. For a number of complicated reasons, the United Farmers in Manitoba had contemplated a withdrawal from politics since 1923, and by the mid-1920s, they essentially ceased to be politically active.²¹² As I show in later chapters, the lack of pressure from farmers and other interest groups allowed Bracken to follow his own governing philosophy of consensus building and efficient government.

For women within the farm movement, their maternal ideology together with their Protestant religious beliefs, contributed to their focus on reform and state action in dealing with various issues that arose following the First World War, particularly issues surrounding health. The enormous casualties during the war emphasized the need to preserve health and life.²¹³ The UFWA and the UFWM both wanted to protect the health and well-being of citizens in their respective provinces, particularly women and children. Public health services were one of the

²¹⁰ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 9.

²¹¹ Panting, “A Study of United Farmers of Manitoba to 1928,” 206.

²¹² Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, Manitoba Grain Growers Association annual convention programs and minutes, P7579/3, “United Farmers of Manitoba: Minutes of 1926 Annual Convention” (1926), 7; Panting, “A Study of United Farmers of Manitoba to 1928,” 119-120;

²¹³ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 119.

major areas the farm women were interested in, and they sought to provide access to health and welfare services to those living in rural areas.²¹⁴

As historian Amy Samson suggests, the farm women's concerns about the health and welfare of women and children was connected to their maternalist ideology that emphasized women's role as mothers, and children as the future. The focus on the health of women and children was also a response to the high infant and maternal mortality rates on the prairies, particularly in Alberta, which the farm women attributed to lack of medical amenities in rural areas.²¹⁵ A study conducted by public health advocate and Chief of the Division of Maternal and Child Welfare for the federal Department of Health, Dr. Helen MacMurchy (1862-1953), revealed that Alberta had the highest maternal mortality rate in Canada during the early 1920s.²¹⁶ Her findings showed that "the need of better medical and nursing care, pre-natal, obstetrical and post-natal, the difficulty, often the impossibility, of getting any help in the house, even during the first ten days after the birth of the baby is a cause for maternal morbidity and mortality in Canada."²¹⁷ MacMurchy's conclusions about the causes of maternal mortality was supported by the fact that during the early decades of the 20th century, families in rural areas faced obstacles accessing health care services due to a number of reasons including geographic isolation, a lack of trained physicians and nurses, and absence of adequate hospitals. Accessing these services often required long distance travel, and financial resources to pay for the doctors' fees.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Samson, "Eugenics in the community," 72; Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, United Farmers of Manitoba Platforms 1913-1928, P7582/6, "Plan for Provincial Political Campaign," (1922), 7.

²¹⁵ Samson, "Eugenics in the Community," 72; Richardson, "Frontier Healthcare," 2.

²¹⁶ Helen MacMurchy, "On Maternal Mortality in Canada," *The Public Health Journal* 16, no. 9 (September 1925): 411.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 415.

²¹⁸ Nanci Langford, "Childbirth on the Prairies, 1880-1930," In *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women's History*, eds. Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 147.

MacMurchy and other social reformers such as the UFWA helped politicize the need of medical services in areas of infant and maternal health.²¹⁹ In bringing greater attention to maternal and infant mortality, medical professionals such as MacMurchy were motivated by professional interests, fears of national degeneration, and also their genuine worry over the health of women and children.²²⁰ Farm women in Alberta shared MacMurchy's concerns and helped "elevate the needs of the mother in securing the health of children and by extension the nation."²²¹ They were interested in educating mothers on all matters of health because they believed that intelligent mothers raised strong and productive families. If less fortunate women or those living in isolated locations were not taught about "proper" child rearing methods, then they would contribute to the degeneration of the nation.²²²

The UFWA's anxieties over the welfare of rural populations in Alberta, particularly mother and children motivated them to develop plans for rural districts to establish and operate hospitals, and they called on the provincial government to establish public health nursing and midwifery services in rural areas.²²³ For example, in 1918, the UFA and the UFWA passed a resolution requesting that "registered nurses be permitted to qualify as midwives and be licensed to practice as such, and that the Government undertake to supply both medical practitioners and service nurses prepared to act as midwives wherever needed in all those districts..."²²⁴ Under

²¹⁹ See for example, Dianne Dood, "Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-34," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 8 (1991): 204.

²²⁰ Samson, "Eugenics in the Community," 74.

²²¹ Ibid., 75.

²²² Gibbons, "The True [Political] Mothers of Today," 52.

²²³ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 119; Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, "Minutes of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1915-1922" micro/ufwa, (1918), 24.

²²⁴ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, "Minutes of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1915-1922" micro/ufwa, (1918): 24.

Irene Parlby's leadership, the UFWA successfully lobbied the provincial government for a number of health related policies including training for nurses, school medical inspections, higher hospital grants, and state funded doctors in rural areas. Most importantly, the farm women were instrumental in encouraging the Liberal government to establish the provincial Department of Public Health in 1919.²²⁵ By 1920, the government had responded by increasing the number of public health nurses who would inspect schools and provide assistance regarding general health matters, particularly in rural districts.²²⁶

Farm women in Manitoba, like their Alberta counterparts, shared similar concerns about the health and welfare of Manitoba families. During the 1920s, the majority of their discussions at local meetings and annual conventions dealt with charity, child welfare, and public health reform. For example, the annual reports for 1922 from local branches reported that a public health nurse visited their community, that health courses were offered in home nursing, and that a physician addressed their membership.²²⁷ These reports were not very detailed, however, and it is unclear what exactly was being discussed during the health professionals' visits to the local branches or what information was imparted in the health courses offered in the community. Nevertheless, farm women in Manitoba had a great interest in bringing health services to rural areas, even during the economic downturn of the early 1920s. In 1923, they passed a resolution in support of public health nursing stating:

²²⁵ Richardson, "Frontier Healthcare," 3.

²²⁶ Samson, "Eugenics in the Community," 72; Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 191.

²²⁷ Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, United Farm Women of Manitoba Annual Reports, P7577/6, "Annual Report of Arden Women's Section," "Annual Report of Little Souris Women's Section," (1922).

Whereas preservation of health is the first essential to the welfare of Canada from an economic, as well as social standpoint;

And whereas it is generally recognized that that prevention of disease is of lower cost to the human race than care;

And whereas the Public Health Nurses, through their widespread work, are teaching prevention, and at the same time discovering defects that are readily cured in their early stages at a comparatively small cost;

Therefore be it resolved that we, the United Farm Women of Manitoba, ... again place ourselves on record as giving our support to the Public Health Nursing system, and the maintenance of the Public Health Nurses during the present economic crisis.²²⁸

In this resolution, the UFWM highlighted the importance of preventative care to ensure the well-being of all Manitobans. Yet, medical services continued to be inadequate in much of rural Manitoba throughout the 1920s, primarily because municipal and provincial finances would not allow for such expenditures.²²⁹

The UFWA and UFWM understood the hardships of life on the prairies, and how that life would impact the reproductive health of women. During the early decades of the 20th century, farm women were at a greater risk of complications and even death as a result of childbirth due to the harsh living and working conditions of prairie life.²³⁰ Preserving the health of mothers and children was central to the early work of social reformers all over Canada. The better access to

²²⁸ Cited in Elizabeth Russell, "Public Health Nursing in Manitoba," *The Public Health Journal* 17, no. 1 (January, 1926): 34.

²²⁹ Russell, "Public Health Nursing in Manitoba," 36.

²³⁰ Richardson, "Frontier Healthcare, 3"; Langford, "Childbirth on the Prairies," 148-149.

health care in rural areas as a result of public health nursing services, for example, greatly improved the health of residents in rural districts.²³¹ Yet, the increased medical presence also allowed for intervention in the lives of women and their families, particularly for those who did not conform to the standards set by the medical experts. Throughout the 1920s, farm women in both provinces continued to concern themselves with improving the lives of farm families and encouraging them to raise fit and healthy children, while at the same time they advocated policies that would limit reproduction among those who threatened the health and well-being of populations in their respective provinces.

Farm Women, Eugenics, and Sexual Sterilization in Alberta and Manitoba

Farm women's interests in public health matters ultimately allowed them to cross paths with eugenic ideas. In his work on the history of public health in the United States, historian Martin Pernick, has demonstrated the complex relationship between eugenics and public health. He suggests that while eugenicists sometimes criticized public health measures that safeguarded the lives of those who they deemed "unfit," at the same time, the goals, agendas, and personnel of the eugenics and the public health movements frequently overlapped.²³² In Canada for example, MacMurchy was a public health pioneer who brought much needed attention to the crucial issue of maternal and infant mortality but she was also an ardent eugenicist, who supported the segregation and eventual sterilization of those deemed "subnormal."²³³ Those who

²³¹ Samson, "Eugenics in the Community," 75.

²³² Pernick, "Eugenics and Public Health in American History," 1767-1768.

²³³ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 30-37.

considered public health issues more broadly and fundamentally, frequently turned to eugenics to find solutions to seemingly intractable problems, including poverty, criminality, and “mental deficiency” and “feeble-mindedness.” Concerns over public health were a key incubator in which eugenic ideas could grow.

The UFWA and the UFWM both shared anxieties about the rise of “mental deficiency,” and both would eventually call for sexual sterilization legislation to be implemented in their respective provinces. Yet, the UFWA would prove both willing and able to translate these concerns into political action, and ultimately legislation. They not only had a direct connection to the provincial government, but one of its key members, Irene Parlby, served as a Minister without Portfolio, in all three United Farmers administrations, from 1921 to 1935. In this position, Parlby primarily focused on matters relating to women and children. While the UFWM, despite similar interests, was not cohesive enough and influential enough to ensure the implementation of sterilization legislation.

As early as 1917, the UFWA voiced its concerns about “feeble-mindedness” and “mental deficiency,” and at its annual convention called on the government to segregate these groups, stating:

Whereas, the greatest freedom of action allowed to persons who are feeble minded, or mentally deficient, is not only productive of much crime and immorality, but is a grave menace to future generations;

Therefore, be it resolved: That the Government be asked to introduce legislation for the compulsory segregation of this class of person, both juvenile and adult.²³⁴

In this statement, the UFWA identified those deemed “feeble-minded” as a threat to the future of the province, a threat that needed to be controlled by being segregated in an institution. By 1919, the provincial government would oblige, introducing the Mental Defectives Act, which allowed for the compulsory institutionalization of those thought to be “mentally deficient.”²³⁵

While the organization’s interest in the “feeble-minded” continued over the next few years, it would not be until 1921, following the influential mental hygiene survey conducted by the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, that the UFWA seriously took up the issue of “mental deficiency” in the province. The mental hygiene survey concluded that Alberta’s institutions were overrun with “mental defectives,”²³⁶ and the UFWA resolved in 1922 to study the problem of “mental deficiency” and entrusted three of its members, Mrs. R. Price, Mrs. Margaret Gunn, and Mrs. Jean Field to work out the method of “handling the question of the increase of mental defectives.”²³⁷ That same year, the United Farmers passed a resolution supporting the women’s efforts regarding “mental deficiency.” They urged the provincial government to take up this issue and come up with a plan “whereby the adult mental defective of both sexes may be kept under custodial care during the entire period of production. In this connection we would recommend that our women make a careful study of eugenics with special

²³⁴ Cited in A. Naomi Nind, “Solving an ‘Appalling’ Problem,” 544.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Mental Hygiene Survey of the Province of Alberta, October-November 1921.”

²³⁷ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, “Minutes of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1915-1922” micro/ufwa, (1922), 78.

reference to sterilization.”²³⁸ Essentially, both farm men and women identified “mental deficiency” as a problem that required immediate action from the provincial United Farmers government.

The UFA/UFWA’s resolutions regarding “mental deficiency” were forwarded to the Minister of Health, Richard G. Reid (1879-1980), who led the discussion in the Legislature in 1923 on the sterilization matter. Citing evidence from the United States that suggested a steady increase in “mental deficiency” around the world, Reid believed that Alberta was grappling with a similar situation. He suggested that there were “only two ways in which the problem can be handled, either by segregation or by sterilization.”²³⁹ Despite this, Reid believed that if the government were to introduce eugenic legislation, it needed to build support for it first.²⁴⁰ It basically became the role of the UFWA to build that support. From 1924 onward, the campaign to deal with the “feeble-minded” in Alberta intensified, and Parlby played a prominent role in educating the public about the “dangers” posed by “defectives.” During an address to the UFWA membership, Parlby emphasized the connection between “feeble-mindedness” and a host of social ills, including criminality, prostitution, and alcoholism. Parlby stressed that there were three options to solving these issues: segregation of those deemed “mentally defective,” health certificates before marriage, and sterilization, the latter of which she believed was the “great and only solution to the problem.” The address was printed in pamphlet form and circulated to the

²³⁸ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, “Minutes of the United Farmers of Alberta,” micro/ufa, (1922), 100.

²³⁹ “Hon. R.G. Reid,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 27 March, 1933.

²⁴⁰ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 100.

public by the provincial Department of Public Health, and was also published in the *The UFA* newspaper.²⁴¹

By 1925, the UFWA passed a resolution at its annual convention confirming its position on sterilization:

Resolved that in the view of the alarming increase in the mentally deficient the danger thereof to the population and the cost to the state, that sterilization be compulsory by law, as a means of stopping the mentally deficient from reproducing their kind.”²⁴²

Similarly, the presidential address of Margaret Gunn at the same convention touched upon similar issues as stated in the 1925 resolution. Gunn’s address, which was forwarded to Premier Brownlee along with UFWA’s resolutions, focused on quality of citizens in Alberta. Speaking to UFWA membership, she asked:

Shall we continue our present system of merely taking charge of the very lowest physical and mental types—those, in fact, who constitute no menace to the state? And take no heed of the increasing number of feeble-minded who in large measure fill our jails and penitentiaries, and make the great sub-stratum of humanity—social derelicts, doomed because of congenital inferiority to lead lives that are dark and unlovely, and to lower the

²⁴¹ A. Naomi Nind, “Solving an ‘Appalling’ Problem,” 547-548

²⁴² Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, “Minutes of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1923-1925” micro/ufwa (1925), 132; See also Provincial Archives of Alberta, United Farmers of Alberta, Premier’s Office Files GR1969.0289/0168, Box 16, Microfilm roll 19, “Provincial Government: For attention of Minister of Health,” (1925).

vitality of our civilization. Shall we not, rather, adopt an attitude of definite racial regeneration? ... Shall we not, as one step towards improvement, undertake to supervise and protect those obviously feeble-minded, and thus ensure not only the utmost kindness to the individual, but, secure racial betterment through the weeding out of undesirable strains?²⁴³

Here Gunn advocated for a much broader conceptualization of eugenics. For her, it was not only the physically and mentally disabled who required the state's attention and needed to be controlled, it was anyone, whose behaviour was viewed as somehow "abnormal." It was all of those individuals whose questionable behaviours and poor heredity placed them in jails and penitentiaries who needed to be regulated in order to prevent the decline of society. For Gunn, the only way to avoid social degeneration was to prevent these individuals from transmitting their undesirable traits to future generations. Even for the time, the UFWA had a particular interest and focus on eugenics in a broadly applicable sense. They made their appeal not just narrowly to the concerns of farm women but at a wider socio-political level. Finally, the UFWA advocated its views forcefully, and directly to the United Farmers government itself.

In January of 1927, following its annual convention, the UFWA forwarded its most detailed resolution yet on "feeble-mindedness" and sexual sterilization to the provincial government. They stated:

²⁴³ Provincial Archives of Alberta, United Farmers of Alberta, Premier's Office Files GR1969.0289/0168, Box 16, Microfilm roll 19, "UFWA Presidential Address," (1925), 70.

We respectfully ask the government of the province of Alberta to pass an act by which it shall be compulsory for each and every institution in the province, intrusted with the care of the insane and feeble-minded, to appoint upon its staff, in addition to the regular institutional physician, two (2) skilled surgeons of recognized ability, whose duty it shall be, in conjunction with the chief physician of the institution, to examine the mental and the physical condition of such inmates, as are recommended by the institutional physician, and properly constituted board of managers. If in the judgement of this committee of experts and the board of managers, procreation is inadvisable, it shall be lawful for the surgeons to perform such operations for the prevention of procreation as shall by them be decided safest and most effective.²⁴⁴

This resolution by the UFWA bore remarkable similarities to the sterilization bill introduced by the Minister of Health, George Hoadley (1867-1955) in the Legislature two months later, and what would eventually become the *Sexual Sterilization Act* in 1928.²⁴⁵ The UFWA's resolution suggested that the superintendent of an institution along with a board of experts could determine whether a patient was a suitable candidate for sterilization. If so, the surgeon would have the legal right to perform surgery on the patient to prevent them from reproducing. This was basically the wording of the province's *Sexual Sterilization Act*, which allowed for the sterilization of "mental defectives" in institutions. It gave the authority to the superintendent of an institution to "present" cases to the Eugenics Board, which would decide whether or not to

²⁴⁴ Provincial Archives of Alberta, United Farmers of Alberta, Premier's Office Files GR1969.0289/0169B, Box 16, Microfilm roll 19, "Resolution on Feeble-minded," (1927).

²⁴⁵ "Sterilization of Defectives Before the House," *Edmonton Bulletin*, (26 March, 1927).

discharge the patient from an institution “if the danger of procreation with its attendant risk of multiplication of the evil by transmission of the disability to the progeny were eliminated.”²⁴⁶ This whole episode serves to demonstrate the crucial influence of the UFWA in the evolution of the *Sexual Sterilization Act*. The UFWA’s resolutions served almost as drafts for future policies adopted by the United Farmers government, whose final products closely mirrored the resolutions of the UFWA even using much of the same language. Throughout the 1920s, UFWA continued to apply pressure to the Government on the issue of eugenics, and in 1927 / 1928 it was taken up for debate in the legislature – a process that would eventually lead to the implementation of the sterilization legislation. This illustrates the influence of the UFWA in provincial politics and its organizational success in helping to promulgate public policy. The UFWA took the lead in bringing the issue of eugenics to the attention of the UFA organization and the UFA government, who not only supported their efforts, but deferred to their perceived expertise in formulating a solution on behalf of the Party. The success of this lobbying effort was thus also representative, in turn, of the effectiveness and clout of UFA/UFWA – working up the power structure of the United Farmers – in influencing public policy.

The situation in Manitoba, however, presents a very different picture of the role and influence of the United Farm Women in the eugenics debate. Despite the fact that United Farm Women of Manitoba shared similar interests in controlling the reproduction of those deemed “mentally deficient,” they were not, for a variety of reasons, able to significantly impact government policy in this area.

²⁴⁶ Sexual Sterilization Act,” Statutes of the Province of Alberta, Chapter 37, Section 5 (21 March, 1928), 117.

The background and composition of the UFWM mirrored that of the UFWA, and the two shared mostly the same public health agenda. The early records of the UFWM do not give detailed summaries of the discussions, but the subject listing do provide a window into the interests and activities of the women's chapter. During its first meeting in 1918, for example, the UFWM discussed a number of issues, including the segregation of "mental defectives."²⁴⁷ By the end of 1921, as they prepared for their annual meeting in early 1922, a UFWM member prepared a report on the "care of feeble-minded" in the province.²⁴⁸ While details of the report are unclear, it is very likely, given the time period, that the UFWM would have commented on the lack of adequate institutions for the so-called "feeble-minded," and likely requested that the provincial government allocate resources to establish such an institution. In fact, after 1918, Manitoba sought to reform mental health care in the province as many of its services and institutions were inadequate.²⁴⁹ From 1919-1922, the province spent over two million dollars on improving its institutions,²⁵⁰ but it did not establish an institution for those deemed "feeble-minded" and "mentally deficient" until the early 1930s, despite calls from medical professionals and social reformers to do so earlier. The government did not build a new institution, however, instead it converted the Home for Incurables in Portage la Prairie into the Provincial Training School for Mental Defectives.²⁵¹ While there was a common ideological pedigree between the United Farmer movements in Alberta and Manitoba, and between the party apparatus and government in

²⁴⁷ Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, Manitoba Grain Growers Association annual convention programs and minutes, P7579/3, *United Farmers of Manitoba: 25th Anniversary Year Book* (1928), 17.

²⁴⁸ "Farm Women to Hear Report on Domestics," *Winnipeg Tribune* (15 December, 1921).

²⁴⁹ Kurbegović, "The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918," 310.

²⁵⁰ Theresa Richardson, *The Century of a Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 219 n.54.

²⁵¹ See for example, Kurbegović, "The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918."

Manitoba, it appears that the Bracken Government did not take cues directly from the party grassroots and lobbying groups the way that the government in Alberta did. Furthermore, Bracken's administration was much more moderate than their Alberta counterparts, and once in power sought to curtail provincial spending. As historian John Kendle points out, during the 1920s, Bracken's approach could best be described as "a remorselessly frugal husbanding of the province's revenues."²⁵² Essentially, Bracken sought to reduce government spending wherever possible, even on programs that directly impacted farmers.²⁵³ While Bracken was sensitive to the farmers' needs, he was not indebted to them or to any other interest group. Instead, he focused on running his government in a business-like, efficient manner that he believed would satisfy the majority of Manitobans.²⁵⁴

Two early cases in particular illustrate the UFWM lack of influence over the provincial government, the first deals with the *Child Welfare Act* and the second with the *Marriage Act*. In 1921, the Liberal government under T.C. Norris (1861-1936) introduced the *Child Welfare Act*²⁵⁵ which was designed to "establish government responsibility for the care and well-being of all neglected, dependent and defective children."²⁵⁶ As soon as the legislation was introduced it was subjected to serious opposition from a number of interest groups who argued that they were not consulted in the drafting of the bill. The bill was then re-introduced in the 1922 session, but this time under a United Farmers government. Between 1922 and 1924, the *Child Welfare Act* was

²⁵² John Kendle, *John Bracken: A Political Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 39.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 40-41.

²⁵⁵ Archives of Manitoba, Minnie Julia Beatrice Campbell fonds, Child Welfare, P2502/3, (1918-1922), "An Act Respecting the Welfare of Children," (1921).

²⁵⁶ Lorna Hurl, "The Politics of Child Welfare in Manitoba, 1922-1924," *Manitoba History* 7 (Spring 1984): http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/07/childwelfare.shtml#11 (accessed 3 October, 2018).

subjected to debate and a number of amendments.²⁵⁷ In 1923, the United Farm Women passed a resolution requesting that the provincial government deal with section 72 of the *Child Welfare Act*, which addressed paternity and child support.²⁵⁸ In the legislature, however, the discussions regarding the Act dealt with the inclusion of Mother's Allowance legislation, as well as increased penalties for cruelty toward children, among others.²⁵⁹ The issue of clause 72 did not appear to have been taken up in the Legislature despite the fact that UFWM continued to call for its inclusion in the Act.²⁶⁰ By autumn of 1924, the Bracken administration implemented the *Child Welfare Act* but without amendments regarding section 72. The president of the UFWM, Mrs. S.E. Gee of Virden, Manitoba expressed her disappointment with the government stating, "it was most regrettable that the *Child Welfare Act* was proclaimed ... without the inclusion of Clause 72," and urged the UFWM membership to continue requesting that the government make further amendments.²⁶¹ Clearly, the legislature had little interest, or felt little pressure, to take up the specific requests of party organs. This stood in contrast to the situation in Alberta, where Parbly's presence as a Cabinet Minister likely had much impact on the type of policies the UFA government adopted.

The UFWM's requests for amendments to the Marriage Act were also unsuccessful. At its annual convention in 1924, the women's group passed a resolution asking for "stricter regulations" of marriage by requesting that applicants present health certificates indicating "a

²⁵⁷ Hurl, "The Politics of Child Welfare in Manitoba, 1922-1924."

²⁵⁸ "Vital Subjects Before Women During Tuesday," *Brandon Daily Sun* (10 January, 1923).

²⁵⁹ Hurl, "The Politics of Child Welfare in Manitoba, 1922-1924;" See also "Craig Reviews Work of House: Attorney General Tells Young Men's Board of Trade of New Laws Passed," *Winnipeg Tribune* (15 April, 1924).

²⁶⁰ "U.F.W.M. Plan for Sessions," *Winnipeg Tribune* (19 December, 1924).

²⁶¹ "Annual Report Upon Legislation," *Brandon Daily Sun* (6 January, 1925).

clean bill of health.”²⁶² The broad anxieties that existed during this period regarding the future well-being of Canadians, meant that there were a number of groups calling for similar legislation. For example, the UFA/UFWA supported restricting marriage for the “feeble-minded” as one option of controlling their reproduction.²⁶³ It is unclear if the UFWM shared a similar motivation regarding marriage restrictions. In order to press the government for changes to the marriage legislation, the UFWM along with a few other social reformers, were reduced to physically cornering Bracken outside the Legislature just to be heard.²⁶⁴ Once more, and in stark contrast to the UFWA – which could put resolutions directly on the Premier’s desk and impact policy – the UFWM appears to have been largely shut out from the policy making process.

Even within their own organization and with issues generally perceived as within their sphere, the UFWM failed to push their resolutions through the organization, let alone see them become policy in the legislature. In 1928, in a joint convention with the UFM, the UFWM brought up the issue of health certificates to ensure fitness before marriage. Interestingly, however, the motion was defeated, as “the resolution was not practicable.”²⁶⁵ By the end of the convention the motion on the “clean bill of health” was withdrawn.²⁶⁶ Here it would appear that the UFWM did not even have the support of their own organization on this particular resolution, so it is not surprising that they also did not receive the backing of the government. The

²⁶² “Farm Women Rap Cadet Movement as Militaristic,” *Winnipeg Tribune* (11 January, 1924).

²⁶³ Amy Kaler, *Baby Trouble in the Last Best West: Making New People in Alberta, 1905-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 87.

²⁶⁴ “Marriage Law Asked: Delegation of United Farm Women Waits on Premier Bracken,” *Winnipeg Tribune* (14 March, 1924).

²⁶⁵ Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, Manitoba Grain Growers Association annual convention and program minutes, P7579/3, “United Farmers of Manitoba: Minutes of the Annual Convention,” (1928), 11.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

Government, however, was open to amendments, just not the ones the UFWM wanted. In 1929, there were calls for amendments to the Marriage Act regarding civil marriage but these were primarily led by the United Church of Canada.²⁶⁷ The United Church members were able to bring their resolutions to the attention of government MLA, Adalbert J.M. Poole (1881-1970) who brought up the matter in the Legislature in 1931.²⁶⁸ While the calls to legalize civil marriage were met with intense debates in the Legislature, by March of 1931, the changes had been implemented and the province permitted civil marriage.²⁶⁹ Perhaps, for the provincial government the resolutions passed by the United Church were much more practical than the ones requested by the UFWM. Nevertheless, the UFWM's ineffectiveness as a lobby group and lack of influence on the government was also evident during the sterilization debates of the early 1930s.

The UFWM was clearly supportive of eugenic ideology, and this is evident from their calls for the segregation of the "feeble-minded" and for their requests for health certificates before marriage. Just like the UFWA, the UFWM expressed interest in bringing about sexual sterilization legislation to control the reproduction of "mental defectives." Yet, even here, their ineffectiveness as a lobby group was evident. At their annual convention in 1929, the UFWM invited Nurse Elizabeth Russell (b.1890) to speak about public health. During her address, Russell stressed the need for sexual sterilization of the "feeble-minded," and urged the province to follow in the footsteps of Alberta.²⁷⁰ Despite this, there were no resolutions passed regarding the sterilization of mental defectives during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

²⁶⁷ "Conference May Ask for Marriage Act Amendment," *Winnipeg Tribune* (8 June, 1929).

²⁶⁸ "Civil Marriage Legislation Asked for by United Church," *Winnipeg Tribune* (6 February, 1931).

²⁶⁹ "Civil Marriage is Legalized by Legislature," *Winnipeg Tribune* (6 March, 1931).

²⁷⁰ "Farm Women Had Well Attended Separate Session," *Brandon Daily Sun* (10 January, 1929).

During these years, the UFWM discussed the sterilization of “mental defectives,” and one of their members even presented a paper on the topic,²⁷¹ but no resolutions were made at this time and no serious effort was undertaken to pressure the government to adopt any particular policy. This was probably because the United Farmers at large had pulled out of politics by the mid-1920s, but could also be a reflection of the lack of success that they, and the women’s group, had in affecting policy in previous years. In February of 1933, legislation for the sterilization of “mental defectives” was finally brought before the assembly, as a result of aggressive lobbying by medical professional, particularly psychiatrist.²⁷² As will be clear in Chapter Five, the legislation was narrowly defeated a few months later.²⁷³ It was only in June of 1933, that the UFWM executive instructed their Secretary to “procure material on the sterilization of mental defectives ...”²⁷⁴ Yet, during the UFWM’s annual convention later that year, there were no recorded discussions of sterilization of “defectives.”²⁷⁵ Tellingly, the UFWM decided to adopt a resolution on the subject months after the sterilization bill was defeated and when their stance was likely to have even less impact. The resolution stated:

²⁷¹ Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, Manitoba Grain Growers Association annual convention and program minutes, P7579/8, “Minutes of the UFWM Annual Convention,” (1931), 25.

²⁷² See for example, Kurbegović, “The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918; Also “Legislation to Control Mental Defectives Asked,” *Winnipeg Free Press* (17 February, 1933); “New Defectives Bill Passes Law Amendments Body: Proposed Sterilization of Feeble Minded Persons Explained by Doctors,” *Winnipeg Free Press* (25 February, 1933); “Sterilization Issue to be Doctor’s Topic,” *Winnipeg Free Press* (11 March, 1933).

²⁷³ “Sterilization Proposals are Killed by House,” *Winnipeg Tribune* (4 May, 1933).

²⁷⁴ Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba Fonds, United Farm women of Manitoba Minute Book (1927-1937), P7584/3, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Provincial Board of United Farm Women of Manitoba, June 1st, 1933,” 2.

²⁷⁵ See Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, United Farm Women of Manitoba annual convention program and minutes, P7579/10, “Minutes of the UFWM Annual Convention,” (1933), 1-2.

We, the Convention of the United Farmers of Manitoba, go on record as being strongly in favour of Supervised Sterilization and do urge the government to continue their efforts sponsoring this bill.²⁷⁶

Yet, by 1934, the sterilization bill had been rejected in the provincial legislature, and as I suggest in Chapter Five, given how controversial the legislation was for Bracken's new coalition government, the Liberal-Progressives, it was unlikely that such legislation would be brought before the house again. The belated activity of the UFWM on this issue occurred at a time when there was widespread disagreement about the sterilization bill, and therefore any of the UFWM's calls for the sterilization of "mental defectives" would have been particularly ineffective.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to understand the role of farm women in the divergence on eugenics policy in the provinces of Alberta and Manitoba. Eugenic views of early twentieth century women's groups were connected to their political agenda which sought to draw attention to issues surrounding social welfare, health reform, and the family. Employing the concept of motherhood, early women's organizations presented women with an opportunity to participate in the public sphere. Their focus on strengthening the family through controlled reproduction

²⁷⁶ See Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba fonds, United Farm Women of Manitoba annual convention program and minutes, P7579/11, "Minutes of the UFM Annual Convention," (1934), 13.

inevitably drew them to eugenics. Many of the eugenicists' views about national fitness, race betterment, and social improvement complemented the views of early women social reformers.

The United Farm Women of Alberta and their Manitoba counterparts, the United Farm Women of Manitoba shared a similar public health agenda. We see this in their actions to bring health and welfare services into rural areas, their concerns over the maternal and infant health in their respective provinces, and even in their anxieties about the "feeble-mindedness" and "mental deficiency." However, where the UFWA was able to influence governmental policy making, the UFWM was not always as effective. Since the formation of the UFWA in 1915, they had played an instrumental role in bringing health and education matters to the attention of the provincial government whether the Liberals were in power or the UFA. This was because, the farm movement was much stronger in Alberta than it was in Manitoba, plus the UFA/UFWA were a cohesive organization. Regardless of the government in power, they needed the support of the farmers to keep governing. This explains why before 1921, the UFWA was so effective in convincing the Liberals to improve health services in rural areas. When the United Farmers formed a government, many of the UFWA resolutions ended up on the desk of the Premier. As illustrated above, the resolutions passed by the women's section regarding the sterilization of "mental defectives" were brought up for debate in the Legislature by the Minister of Health in 1923. Similarly, its extensive 1927 resolution calling on the government to pass sexual sterilization legislation basically served as a blueprint for the *Sexual Sterilization Act*. This illustrates that the UFA/UFWA had a close relationship with "their" government.

In Manitoba, on the other hand, while the United Farmers (later Liberal-Progressives) under Premier Bracken were attuned to the needs of rural populations, they did not allow any particular groups to exert much pressure on the government. This was primarily because of

Bracken's governing philosophy of consensus building and his aim to represent everyone in the province. While UFWM, lobbied the Bracken government for changes to the *Child Welfare Act*, the *Marriage Act*, and even sexual sterilization legislation, these efforts proved unsuccessful. With regard to eugenic legislation, as evident above, the UFWM were clearly interested in controlling the reproduction of "mental defectives" but they did not start to fully lobby for it until late 1933. Manitoba's sterilization bill had been defeated in the Legislature earlier that year. The United Farmers in Manitoba lacked the cohesion and strength of the UFA, and by becoming apolitical in the mid-1920s they further weakened the farm movement during that period. What all of this suggests is that local conditions can have a significant impact on the relative effectiveness of similar lobby groups. Differences in the local constellations of political power and influence determined whether women's groups—an important element pushing for eugenic measures—were able to have their voices heard.

Chapter Three: Immigration and Eugenics

On 9 March, 1914, during a House of Commons debate on immigration, physician and Conservative MP, Eugene Paquet (1867-1951) made a case for more thorough medical inspections of potential immigrants by arguing that:

Deficients [*sic*] and feebleminded persons are too frequently admitted into our country. Oftentimes they become criminals, patrons of our jails and hospitals. Should they remain at large, then their descendants will bear the imprint of degeneracy, and may become a burden to the State.²⁷⁷

Although Paquet was from Quebec, his concerns were widespread throughout Canada. Similar sentiments were expressed by Alberta's Department of Public Health where the Deputy Health Minister W.C. Laidlaw wrote to Premier John Brownlee objecting to the "cursory" examination of immigrants, by suggesting that "under this system only the most obvious cases would be detected."²⁷⁸ In other words, the Minister wanted more effective procedures in place that would prevent "defective" immigrants (including those with mental and physical disabilities, those with criminal tendencies, and those who were likely to become a public charge) from entering Canada. Citing the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Laidlaw further pointed out that "foreign-born" made up a significant portion of the insane in Alberta's mental

²⁷⁷ House of Commons Debates, 12th Parliament, 3rd Session: Volume 2 (1914), 1440.

²⁷⁸ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Premier's Office Files, 69.289, roll 433, memorandum from Dr. Laidlaw to Premier Brownlee, 6 November, 1924.

hospitals.²⁷⁹ As historian Angus McLaren suggests medical professionals were at the forefront of the immigration debate and often employed eugenic arguments to justify exclusion.²⁸⁰ For Laidlaw and Stewart, for example, Canada's immigration policy and medical inspections were inadequate because "deficient" immigrants were permitted entry too easily. Not only would these immigrants pass on their "degeneracy" and "feeble-mindedness" to their offspring but these conditions made them prone to poverty and criminality. These characteristics were further interpreted as a threat to the well-being of Canadian society because they would only worsen over time. The claims made by prominent health care experts and politicians such as Paquet and Laidlaw contributed to the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in Canada during the first decades of the 20th century. This led to calls for tougher immigration restrictions, and in some provinces, such as Alberta, to the introduction of sexual sterilization legislation to curtail the supposed rise in "feeble-mindedness" and "mental deficiency."

A number of scholars have explored the connection between eugenics and immigration during the early 20th century. They have shown that an influx of immigrants from central, southern, and Eastern Europe led to increasing anxiety about "national degeneration" and contributed to the increased popular support for eugenics programs. Further, these scholars have demonstrated that the fear of the "degenerate" immigrant also impacted immigration policy.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Premier's Office Files, 69.289, roll 433, memorandum from Dr. Laidlaw to Premier Brownlee, 6 November, 1924.

²⁸⁰ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 50.

²⁸¹ See for example, McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*; Ian Dowbiggin, "'Keeping This Young Country Sane': C.K. Clarke, Immigration Restriction, and Canadian Psychiatry, 1890-1925," *The Canadian Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (1995), 598-627; Jana Grekul, Harvey Krahn and Dave Odynak, "Sterilizing the 'Feeble-minded'"; Ena Chadha, "'Mentally Defectives' Not Welcome: Mental Disability In Canadian Immigration Law, 1859-1927," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2008): <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/67/67> (Accessed: 10 October, 2018); Robert Menzies, "Governing Mentalities," *The Deportation of Insane and Feeble-minded Immigrants out of British Columbia from Confederation to World War II*, *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 13, no. 2 (1998): 135-173.

This chapter examines the connection between immigration and eugenics. While anti-immigrant sentiment was common in both Manitoba and Alberta, the explosion of immigration that Alberta experienced at the height of the eugenics movement made it a powerful rhetorical weapon for eugenicists. Manitoba, however, had experienced its surge in immigration earlier and, by the 1920s, immigrant communities were better entrenched in the province's socio-political landscape. Both provinces experienced an economic contraction in the 1920s but only in Alberta was this coupled with a boom in immigration. Manitoba experienced a population surge from about 1900 to 1914 while Alberta experienced a similar boom about a decade later, from around 1910 to 1930 – a period that coincided with all of the post-war anxieties associated with the eugenics movement. Thus, the influx of immigrants to Alberta was used by eugenicists to fuel support for eugenic measures including immigration restrictions, while in Manitoba immigration played little role in the eugenics debate.

Canadian Immigration Policy, 1896-1930

The views expressed above by Paquet and Laidlaw on immigration ran counter to the economic and political concerns of a federal government that was eager to settle the West during the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century. The settlement of the West was not only important for economic prosperity, it was also a way of preventing Canada's southern neighbour, the United States, from expanding into the region.²⁸² The Immigration Act of 1869

²⁸² Valeri Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 68.

contained very few restrictions regarding entry into Canada and there were no medical inspections of immigrants. The restrictions that were in place, although they were rarely enforced, sought to exclude those with a criminal background, individuals with physical disabilities, and those without financial resources.²⁸³ The federal Department of Agriculture, in charge of immigration, wanted to attract farmers, farm labourers, and domestic workers to settle the West. Through immigration agents, the department promoted Canada as an attractive country in the United States and overseas, and also offered land grants and transportation assistance to prospective immigrants.²⁸⁴ The goal was to entice as many immigrants as possible to come to Western Canada, particularly from Britain, the United States, and Northern Europe as the inhabitants of these regions were seen as racially superior and likely to assimilate into Canadian society. While there were technically no immigration restrictions based on ethnic origin until 1885,²⁸⁵ the fact that immigration agents primarily targeted individuals from Anglo-Saxon countries suggests that the Canadian government did have hidden preferences regarding the new arrivals.²⁸⁶ The federal government's endeavours in attracting immigrants to settle the West, however, were not as successful as the government had hoped due to a number of reasons, including an economic downturn from the 1870s until early 1890s.²⁸⁷

By the mid-1890s economic conditions had improved and Canada experienced technological and economic growth in agriculture and other industries. From the 1890s to the

²⁸³ Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 63.

²⁸⁴ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 62.

²⁸⁵ The federal government implemented the Chinese Immigration Act which drastically restricted the influx of Chinese people and imposed a head tax on Chinese immigrants, Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 71.

²⁸⁶ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 107.

²⁸⁷ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 63; Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 81.

early years of the twentieth century, the Canadian government under Wilfrid Laurier (1841-1919) implemented an aggressive immigration promotion policy to help with the settlement of the Canadian west. Due to the growth in the Canadian economy, there were increasing demands for labour in industries such as agriculture, railway construction, and lumbering. Between 1896 and 1914, Canada welcomed approximately three million new immigrants.²⁸⁸ The new arrivals passed through the western gateway city of Winnipeg which served as the “western headquarters for Canadian immigration activities”²⁸⁹ (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 New immigrants at the Dominion Government Immigration Hall, Winnipeg (1909), Ridsdale, G.F., Library and Archives Canada, PA-122676, MIKAN 3366061.

²⁸⁸ Donald H. Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Inc., 1995), 20.

²⁸⁹ Robert Vineberg, “Welcoming Immigrants at the Gateway to Canada’s West: Immigration Halls in Winnipeg, 1872-1975,” *Manitoba History* 65 (Winter 2011). Accessed 29 January, 2018
http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/65/immigrationhalls.shtml

The goal of Canada's immigration policy during this period remained unchanged, and the government was still interested in attracting immigrants from Britain and the United States to settle the West. Yet, the ethnic composition of Canada and particularly the Prairie Provinces was transformed during the early decades of the 20th century as more immigrants from non-Anglo Saxon countries arrived. By 1914, twenty-five percent of admissions to Canada arrived from central, southern, and eastern European countries.²⁹⁰ This was primarily due to the promotional campaign launched under the Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton (1861-1929). Sifton increased the number of immigration agents stationed in the preferred countries but also extended the advertising campaign across Europe to attract experienced farmers. Sifton was more realistic and attuned to the economic needs of the country, and recognized that it was unlikely that Canada would attract enough immigrants from Britain and the United States.²⁹¹ His goal was to attract as many immigrants as possible, regardless of country of origin, who could work the land and could adapt to the harsh conditions in Western Canada.²⁹² For Sifton, agriculturalists from Central and Eastern Europe were ideal candidates to settle on the prairies.²⁹³

The influx of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe into Western Canada brought out nativism and xenophobia among Anglo-Canadians, and led to hostility toward the newcomers.²⁹⁴ The majority of those who settled in Alberta were born outside the province, but the newcomers from Eastern Canada, Britain, and the United States saw the West "as a colonial

²⁹⁰ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 113.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

²⁹² Avery, *Reluctant Host*, 23-24.

²⁹³ Avery, *Reluctant Host*, 24; Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 120; Knowles, *Strangers at our Gates*, 91-92.

²⁹⁴ See for example, Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982).

extension of the societies they had left” and believed this gave them a unique status in the province, and the right to determine whether or not the immigrants from continental Europe would be accepted into society.²⁹⁵ In Manitoba, the majority of the population was of British background, but there were minority groups including Indigenous people, French Canadians, Mennonites, and Icelanders.²⁹⁶ The response of the dominant Anglo-Canadian to new immigrants was to either force them to assimilate to the Canadian way of life or to lobby the federal government to shut Canada’s borders to those foreign groups who they viewed as “undesirables.”²⁹⁷ Many Anglo-Canadians were determined to keep Canada white and Protestant, and to only accept immigrants from “desirable” countries such as Britain and the United States. This was because English Canadians assumed that white Anglo-Saxons were a superior race, with superior traditions and customs that those with non-Anglo Saxon background would have a difficulty adjusting to. But even this “acceptance” is complex as Canadian officials and middle-class reformers wanted immigrants who were physically and mentally fit, and were less keen to accept poor and working class individuals arriving from Britain or the United States, who they believed might be a drain on the economic system.²⁹⁸ These concerns led to calls for a more selective immigration policy that would keep out “undesirable” individuals and groups.

In 1905, Sifton resigned as Minister of the Interior and was replaced by Frank Oliver (1853-1933), an Albertan who was pro-British and a supporter of selective and restrictive

²⁹⁵ Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 14.

²⁹⁶ See for example, Ken Coates and Fred McGuinness, *Manitoba: The Province & The People* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1987).

²⁹⁷ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 48.

²⁹⁸ Myra Rutherdale, “Canada is no dumping ground’: Public Discourse and Salvation Army Immigrant Women and Children, 1900-1930,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 40, no. 79 (2007): 117; Baker, *Institutionalizing Eugenics*, 56.

immigration policy.²⁹⁹ Whereas Sifton was interested in attracting experienced agriculturalist to the prairies regardless of national origin, for Oliver the occupation of immigrants came second to their cultural and ethnic backgrounds.³⁰⁰ Under Oliver, the Immigration Act would undergo revisions in 1906 and 1910. Laced with eugenic language, the amendments to the Act prohibited entry to Canada to anyone deemed to be “medically unfit,” “mentally and physically disabled,” “destitute,” and anyone who committed acts of “moral turpitude,” among others.³⁰¹ As evidenced above by statements from Paquet and Laidlaw, even though restrictions were in place as to who could enter Canada, for many Canadian officials, social reformers, and eugenicists this was not enough. They wanted Canada to follow the American example and conduct medical inspections of immigrants in the country of origin rather than at the port of entry.³⁰² By the First World War and into the interwar period, Canada’s immigration policy became even stricter but by 1925 a second wave of immigrants arrived in Canada.³⁰³ This would continue until 1929, when following the economic downturn, Canada shut its borders to immigration.³⁰⁴

Despite immigration restrictions, Canadian eugenicists consistently criticized the federal government for its immigration policy. As historian Angus McLaren has shown, eugenicists did not view themselves as nativists, instead they argued that restrictions on immigration to keep the eugenically unfit out “would not be based on prejudice, personal bias, or old-fashioned notions

²⁹⁹ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, 246.

³⁰⁰ Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 106.

³⁰¹ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 136.

³⁰² McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 57; For more information on American immigration policy see Amy Fairchild, *Science at the Borders: Immigrant Medical Inspections and the Shaping of the Modern Industrial Labor Force* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

³⁰³ This second wave was a result of a “Railway Agreement,” where the federal government granted railway companies permission to recruit farmers from central and Eastern Europe, so that they could farm the land in Western Canada. Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 247.

³⁰⁴ See Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1990*. (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992).

of patriotism but rather on progressive, sophisticated, and scientifically informed analyses of the worth of individual immigrants.”³⁰⁵ In reality, these types of arguments positioned new immigrants as targets of eugenic campaigns, and provided justification for the classist and racist views of many English Canadians during the interwar period.

Anti-Immigration Sentiment in Manitoba

Table 3.1 Population in Alberta and Manitoba³⁰⁶

	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Manitoba	255,000	461,000	610,000	700,000	730,000
Alberta	■	374,000	588,000	732,000	796,000

In the years prior to the First World War, many Western Canadians became concerned about the increase in immigration to the region. From 1901 to 1921, the population in the province of Manitoba saw a 42 percent increase, while in Alberta from 1911 to 1921, the population grew by almost 63 percent (Table 3.1).³⁰⁷ The apparent open door immigration policy of the federal government led many social reformers to conclude that Canada had become a dumping ground for other countries’ “undesirables,” particularly those suffering from mental and

³⁰⁵ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 49.

³⁰⁶ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 511.

³⁰⁷ Alberta became a province in 1905, and therefore was not counted in the 1901 census. Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 511.

physical defects.³⁰⁸ As the number of non-Anglo Saxon immigrants increased, the belief grew among Anglo-Canadians that these new immigrants were intellectually, morally, and culturally inferior, prone to crime, and were likely to become a public charge. All of these reasons plus the presumed high fertility rate among the “low quality” immigrants, exacerbated fears about national and race “degeneration.”³⁰⁹

The work of J.S. Woodsworth (1874-1942), a social reformer and later one of the founders of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)³¹⁰, provides a good example of the social anxieties associated with increased immigration and the changing cultural and ethnic composition of Western Canada. As a social gospeller, Woodsworth believed that a Kingdom of God could be achieved on earth through social reform. He viewed the Prairies as the “promised land,” where people could be transformed into ideal citizens who were intellectually and morally worthy.³¹¹ In his 1909 work, *Strangers within Our Gates*—an overview of the immigration issue in Canada—Woodsworth was skeptical as to whether or not a Kingdom of God could be achieved on the prairies due to an influx of “foreigners” who did not share Canadian values.³¹² In *Strangers within Our Gates*, Woodsworth categorized immigrants by nationality and inevitably presented some groups as more desirable than others. Those who were the most desirable immigrants were the ones who could easily assimilate into Canadian society, adopt the English language, and British-Canadian values and traditions. Immigrants from Britain, the

³⁰⁸ Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 41.

³⁰⁹ Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane*, 137.

³¹⁰ For information on the CCF see for example, James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

³¹¹ R. Douglas Francis, “The Kingdom of God on the Prairies: J.S. Woodsworth’s Vision of the Prairie West as Promised Land,” in *The Prairie West as Promised Land*, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Chis Kitzen (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007), 227.

³¹² Ibid.

United States, and the Scandinavian countries were welcome, although there were some exceptions. For instance, Woodsworth singled out certain groups, “the younger sons’ and remittance men, and ne’er-do-weels” who according to him were “useless at home, they are worse than useless here.”³¹³ Here Woodsworth was referring to British immigrants particularly those who were brought to Canada through charitable societies. Historian Myra Rutherdale has shown that during the early 20th century, while Canadians welcomed British immigrants due to their similar values and traditions, they were also afraid that Canada was becoming a “dumping ground” for Britain’s “undesirables,” particularly those of lower socio-economic class.³¹⁴ Woodsworth’s views of immigrants from continental Europe were much more complicated. For example, while Germans were described as “hardworking and successful farmer[s]” and were “among our best immigrants,”³¹⁵ and the Hungarians were seen as likely to become “prosperous settlers” and “good citizens.”³¹⁶ Conversely, the Slavs, particularly Ruthenians (Ukrainians), were depicted as “illiterate and ignorant” who had, over time, become “animalized” as a result of the harsh life circumstances of their homeland, and they were also seen to be prone to alcoholism and likely to end up imprisoned.³¹⁷ The characterization of Ruthenians as “animalized” suggests that Woodsworth viewed them as aggressive and perhaps even dangerous, and that he did not consider them to be as “civilized” as immigrants from the preferred countries. This suggests that desirability of immigrants from Europe increased as one moved north and west, and decreased as

³¹³ Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates*, 49.

³¹⁴ See Myra Rutherdale, “‘Canada is no dumping ground’: Public Discourse and Salvation Army Immigrant Women and Children, 1900-1930.”

³¹⁵ Woodsworth, *Strangers within our Gates*, 82-84.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 116-118.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 110-112.

one moved east and south.³¹⁸ Essentially, Woodsworth made distinctions among immigrants based on his perception of their behavioral characteristics and potential contribution to the “race.”

Woodsworth’s perception of the new immigrants was shaped by his work at the Methodist run All People’s Mission in Winnipeg.³¹⁹ Based on the values of the Social Gospel that sought to create a healthy and morally sound society, the Mission served as a charitable organization whose goal was to provide assistance to the poor and working classes of Winnipeg’s North End, and to assimilate new immigrants into Canadian society. Woodsworth believed that many of the social problems that engulfed Canada were connected to the high influx of immigrants, and the Mission’s solution was the establishment of a number of social programs to deal with these issues (See: Figure 3.2).³²⁰ Yet, by 1913 Woodsworth altered his views regarding new immigrants. Historian Douglas Francis argues that this shift occurred following Woodsworth’s resignation from the Methodist Church, as the Church’s beliefs were no longer compatible with his views.³²¹ When he wrote *Strangers Within our Gates* it was done with the support of the Methodist Church, reflecting its views about the newcomers during an immigration boom in Manitoba. After 1913, Woodsworth presented a more positive view of new immigrants viewing them as playing a part in achieving an ideal society on the Prairies.³²²

³¹⁸ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 134.

³¹⁹ The All People’s Mission was founded in 1892 as an agency of the Methodist General Board of Missions. Once J.S. Woodsworth took over as Superintendent in 1907, the work of the mission expanded and it became one of the most well-known social welfare agencies in Canada, see Alan F.J. Atibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1975), 192.

³²⁰ Atibise, *Winnipeg*, 192-193.

³²¹ Francis, “The Kingdom of God on the Prairies,” 228.

³²² *Ibid.*, 236-237.



Figure 3.2 Kindergarten at All People's Mission, Winnipeg (1904) Source: Archives of Manitoba, Still Images Collection. Winnipeg Collection--Churches-- All People's Mission--Maple Street Church. Item Number 3. Negative 13261. Accessed through the Manitoba Historical Society (mhs.mb.ca)

Woodsworth's arguments in *Strangers within Our Gates* reflected the larger social anxieties surrounding increased immigration in Manitoba, and Western Canada generally. During this period, the demographic and cultural composition of the West was changing. In the 19th century, the majority of the population on the prairies had been Canadian born and British by national origin, in several years the cultural composition of the region was transformed. By 1914, almost fifty percent of the population on the prairies had been born in another country.³²³ Canada was becoming less British and more diverse, which did not sit well with many Anglo-Canadians who viewed the newcomers as culturally and biologically inferior.

The fear of "inferior" immigrants was widespread during the interwar period, and was further exacerbated by the findings of the surveys conducted by the Canadian National

³²³ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 244.

Committee for Mental Hygiene. Those associated with the mental hygiene movement believed that Canada would be flooded with “defective” immigrant as a result of its “open-door” immigration policy.³²⁴ The mental hygiene movement, in general, sought to reform mental institutions and move psychiatry away from the asylum and toward hospitals and university clinics, to prevent mental and nervous diseases, and to achieve mental health.³²⁵ But the movement was also responsible for connecting “mental deficiency” and “feeble-mindedness” with criminality, prostitution, illegitimacy, and dependency.³²⁶ Historian Ian Dowbiggin has demonstrated that medical inspection of immigrants was one issue that the majority of psychiatrists in North America supported, primarily because it fit within the scope of the “new psychiatry” that they were advocating and it also furthered their professional interests at a time when psychiatry struggled to find a place for itself in the growing field of medicine.³²⁷ Into this context emerged the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene which was founded by psychiatrists C.K. Clarke and Clarence Hincks. Clarke and Hincks were both interested in prevention of mental diseases and argued that institutionalization was not enough to solve this problem, instead Canada needed to implement rigorous testing and medical inspections of all potential immigrants. As Angus McLaren has shown, the work of the committee, especially the conclusions reached in their mental hygiene surveys, contributed to the anti-immigrant sentiment and provided justification for claims that linked immigration with “deficiency,” criminality, and poverty.³²⁸

³²⁴ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 59.

³²⁵ See for example, Dowbiggin, *The Quest for Mental Health*; Lunebeck, *Psychiatric Persuasion*

³²⁶ Kurbegović, “The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey,” 298; Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 39.

³²⁷ Dowbiggin, “Keeping This Young Country Sane,” 599.

³²⁸ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 59.

Starting in 1918, the committee conducted mental hygiene surveys across Canada, and in the process presented themselves as “experts” on various social issues, including immigration. The Committee believed that “defective” immigrants posed a threat to the well-being of the Canadian society. In the summer of 1918, the Public Welfare Commission of Manitoba requested that the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene conduct a survey of the province’s mental-health facilities and other institutions. On 30 September of that year, the commission arrived in Winnipeg, Manitoba and visited several mental institutions. They were appalled by the conditions in these facilities. Shortly thereafter, the commission met with the provincial government and eventually submitted two reports of their findings, a confidential report for the Manitoba government, and a less critical report to be printed in the organization's publication, the *Canadian Journal of Mental Hygiene*.³²⁹

Following the survey of provincial institutions, the committee summarized its findings stating:

In looking over the nationalities of the insane in the Province of Manitoba it will be observed that immigration has not been responsible for as great a disproportion as is the case with the defectives.³³⁰

Here the committee suggests that immigrants are not overrepresented among those diagnosed with insanity, they are however present among those suffering from “mental deficiency.” There

³²⁹ Kurbegović, “The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” 299; Richardson, *The Century of the Child*, 219 n. 54.

³³⁰ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” 76.

is distinction made in the above passage between being insane and being “defective.” Insanity could strike anywhere just as it could potentially be cured with anyone. There was, however, no remedy for the “defective.” The commission also suggested that Manitoba needed to implement a policy in dealing with the high numbers of “mental defectives” in the province by stating:

We should never forget that defectives ordinarily select defectives for partners, and in this way, the proportion of this class in the country is always kept up...This can of course, be prevented in the future by intelligent action.³³¹

Here the commission is hinting at sterilization as a measure to control the population of “mental defectives.” In 1919, the committee published its annual report in the *Canadian Journal of Mental Hygiene*, and based on its survey in Manitoba linked “mental deficiency” and “feeble-mindedness” to the province’s immigrant population, stating:

It was discovered that the feeble-minded, the insane, and the psychopathic of that province were recruited out of all reasonable proportions from the immigrant class, and it was also found that these individuals were playing a major role in such conditions as crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, illegitimacy, spread of venereal disease, pauperism, certain phases of industrial unrest, and primary school inefficiency.³³²

³³¹ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” 108.

³³² *The Canadian Journal of Mental Hygiene* 1, no. 1 (April 1919): 74.

Essentially, the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene connected immigration to a number of social problems affecting Manitoba during the interwar period, and used these findings as justification for restrictive immigration. Historian Elizabeth Lunbeck has shown that during the early 20th century psychiatrists moved away from the asylum and focused on problems plaguing “normal” people and society in general. A number of everyday problems were brought under the medical purview.³³³ At a time when the medical profession, particularly psychiatry, was striving for legitimacy, they medicalized social problems and presented themselves as the only “experts” to solve them. Armed with scientific knowledge, they were in a position to define what was normal and what was not. As Sociologist David MacLennan points out, psychiatrists “urged the state to assume a greater role in the treatment of social problems and, by making a case for the value of their specialized knowledge, they were able to position themselves squarely between the state and the social problems.”³³⁴ Eugenics proved to be one of the ways in which their “expertise” could be utilized, and it provided them with the opportunity to assert, maintain, and extend their authority and advance their professional interests.³³⁵

The eugenic perspectives of the Committee regarding immigrations were also presented to the general public with two articles in the *Manitoba Free Press* in early 1919 following their overview of Manitoba’s institutions, although it is unclear how many readers they reached. Both articles, “The Defective Immigrants”³³⁶ and “About Immigration and Weak-Minded”³³⁷ stressed the need for immigration restrictions. But also argued that Manitoba was overrun with “mentally

³³³ Lunbeck, *Psychiatric Persuasion*, 3; 46-47.

³³⁴ David MacLennan, “Beyond the Asylum: Professionalization and the Mental Hygiene Movement in Canada, 1914-1928,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 4 (1987), 19.

³³⁵ MacLennan, “Beyond the Asylum,” 19; Lunbeck, *Psychiatric Persuasion*, 63.

³³⁶ C.K. Clarke, “The Defective Immigrant,” *Manitoba Free Press* (3 March, 1919).

³³⁷ C.K. Clarke, “About Immigration and Weak-Minded,” *Manitoba Free Press* (11 April, 1919).

defective” immigrants particularly those of the “high grade imbecile” or “moron” class who engaged in crime, prostitution, and alcoholism, among others. This group was characterized as particularly problematic because they could blend in with the “normal” population.³³⁸ Sociologist Gerald V. O’Brien has shown the ways in which those involved in the eugenics and the mental hygiene movements employed the term “moron” in order to justify eugenic control over a particular group.³³⁹ The “moron” posed a danger to society not only because they reproduced and transmitted their “defective” genes to their offspring but also because they could pass as “normal.” The fact that only those with “expertise,” such as psychiatrists, could identify the “moron” through careful psychiatric methods allowed them reassert their authority in this area.³⁴⁰ By linking new immigrants with very broad terms such as “moron” or “high grade imbecile” or “defective,” it could be argued that this was meant to dehumanize the targeted group, blame them for the province’s social problems, and turn the public against them.³⁴¹

Yet, the committee’s eugenic arguments against new immigrants were not as influential in Manitoba as they would be in Alberta. This was likely because by the 1920s immigration in Manitoba only saw a steady increase instead of a boom which Alberta experienced during the same period, and which overlapped with the eugenics movement. As will be illustrated below, during a period when Alberta was calling for immigration restrictions, many Manitobans were favouring an open door immigration policy. For example, in 1923, the *Winnipeg Tribune* reported that some Manitoba businesses, farmers, and MLAs saw economic benefits in increased immigration. They argued that in order for the province to prosper, the vacant lands needed

³³⁸ Clarke, “The Defective Immigrant.”

³³⁹ O’Brien, *Framing the Moron*, 1.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

settlers who could farm. These Manitobans recognized that it was unlikely that Canada could attract farmers from the British Isles, and thus it was necessary to bring in farmers from continental Europe.³⁴² While Premier Bracken was unwilling to comment on the federal immigration policy in 1923, by 1924, his administration had taken the matter under “serious consideration,” promising to cooperate with the Winnipeg Board of Trade in establishing a plan to bring settlers into rural Manitoba.³⁴³ In 1925, the second wave of immigrants arrived in Western Canada as a result of the Railway Agreement and some settled in Winnipeg and in rural Manitoba. While there was widespread anti-immigrant sentiment throughout Western Canada in the unsettled aftermath of the First World War, the effect of this had varied depending on the local context. During the interwar period, Manitoba did not experience anywhere near as large an influx of immigrants as Alberta, in fact, as shown above, some Manitobans were eager to welcome more immigrants. Businesses in Winnipeg needed labour, and rural areas needed farmers to farm the land, so a number of interest groups in the province were supportive of a less restrictive immigration policy.³⁴⁴

Even among medical professionals who were at the forefront of the immigration debate, a eugenic argument was not explicitly employed when discussing immigration. For example, in his annual report to the Manitoba Department of Health and Public Welfare, Provincial Psychiatrist, Alvin T. Mathers (1888-1960) complained that:

³⁴² “Settler Policy Given Praise,” *Winnipeg Tribune* (17 November, 1923).

³⁴³ “Bracken Cabinet Making Plans to Get Immigrants,” *Winnipeg Tribune* (7 February, 1924).

³⁴⁴ See “Settler Policy Given Praise,” *Winnipeg Tribune* (17 November, 1923); “Peak of Agricultural Prosperity to be Reached Within Next Few Years,” *Winnipeg Tribune* (11 December, 1926).

... quite a number of patients are immigrants and deportable ... there are too many immigrants of undesirable quality being admitted [to mental hospitals]; there is too long delay effecting immigration; the expense of maintenance of such deportable immigrants should be borne by the Dominion Government.³⁴⁵

However, unlike the criticism levelled by Paquet and Laidlaw against Canada's immigration policy - as seen at the beginning of this chapter, Mathers did not codify his argument explicitly with eugenics principles. To Mathers, the Federal Government was failing to enforce long standing immigration policy in its vetting and its deportation responsibilities. Further, Mathers' statement was also likely shaped by the economic situation in Manitoba during the 1920s where the Bracken administration significantly reduced provincial expenditures. This impacted mental hospitals because no funds were allocated during the mid-1920s, and only limited funds were available by the end of the decade.³⁴⁶ Since funding was minimal, perhaps Mathers hoped to use the deportation option as a way to reduce overcrowding in the provincial institutions. Nor was Mathers alone, for in Manitoba concerns over immigration during this period rarely manifested themselves in explicit eugenics terms and, unlike in Alberta, were not deployed to support the formation and passing of the sexual sterilization bill. As a result, the Anglo-Canadian fear of the "defective" immigrant was less pronounced in Manitoba than in Alberta, and gained less traction as an argument for eugenics. However, the anti-immigrant rhetoric was effectively deployed in Alberta during its boom in immigration in the 1920s. This was because the increase in

³⁴⁵ Archives of Manitoba, Sessional Papers, G8321, Annual Report of the Department of Health and Public Welfare (1928), "The Annual Report of the Provincial Psychiatrist," 2.

³⁴⁶ Kendle, *John Bracken*, 39.

immigration threatened the WASP majority in the province, who felt that their society would be negatively impacted by newcomers who were presumed to be culturally and biologically inferior.

Immigration and Eugenics in Alberta

The eugenic arguments against immigration were employed by a number of individuals and organizations in Alberta during a period of increased immigration into the province in the 1920s. For instance, during a House of Commons Debate on immigration, Alberta MP, Charles Stewart (1868-1946) informed the parliament of the situation in Western Canada, particularly Alberta, arguing that if the Members of Parliament were aware of the conditions in Western provinces, “where a large percentage of immigration [sic] has settled,” then the parliament must know “that too large a percentage of people who are mentally unfitted to come to this country have been allowed to enter Canada ... I know whereof I am speaking,” Stewart continued, “because our mental hospital in Alberta has had too large a percentage of people allowed to come to Canada who were mentally unfit.”³⁴⁷ In other words, Stewart was implying that Canada’s immigration policy was problematic because it allowed “defective” immigrants to enter the country, settle in Alberta, and eventually become a public charge. His claim was similar to those made by the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, as will be illustrated below. Perhaps he was influenced by their findings during their Alberta Survey in 1921 and this contributed to his anti-immigrant views. It is also possible that Stewart was singling out Alberta because the province experienced a population boom between 1911 and 1921 (interruption

³⁴⁷ House of Commons Debates, 14th Parliament, 1st Session: Volume 3 (1922), 2145-2146.

during 1914-1918), and was unsure how to absorb such a large influx of newcomers.

Furthermore, Alberta was significantly impacted by the economic recession following the First World War as grain prices collapsed, unemployment increased, and the government struggled to transition from war to producing peace time goods.³⁴⁸

The concern over the quality of immigrants in Alberta was also evident in the 1921 report of the Alberta Department of Public Health, which described Ukrainian immigrants as having difficulties assimilating to the Canadian way of life. According to the report, their language, culture, and traditions increased the likelihood of “feeble-mindedness” in the family, and their “ignorance” of health and hygiene made them susceptible to the spread of diseases.³⁴⁹ The supposed inability to adapt to Canadian society, meant that the newcomers were often under constant surveillance by health officials and some later became targets of the eugenics campaign in the province. As Sociologists Jana Grekul, Harvey Krahn, and Dave Odynak have demonstrated, Eastern European immigrants and Western European immigrants constituted approximately 19 percent and 18 percent respectively of the cases presented to the Alberta Eugenics Boards during its years of operation from 1929 to 1972.³⁵⁰

The social anxieties in the province were further exacerbated by the findings of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene survey of the province of Alberta. Similar to Manitoba, the committee examined prisons, psychiatric institutions, and schools, among others and concluded that the “foreign-born” were overrepresented in these institutions and that they accounted for a disproportionate number of the province’s insane and “mentally defective.”

³⁴⁸ Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 62.

³⁴⁹ Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 44.

³⁵⁰ Jane Grekul, Harvey Krahn, Dave Odynak, “Sterilizing the ‘Feeble-minded,’” 374-375.

What is more, during their inspection of Alberta schools, the committee administered IQ tests to “difficult” students and found that they scored low.³⁵¹ Many of the students who they tested were likely immigrants or had immigrant parents. Their low test scores and their “problematic” behaviour was enough to conclude that their issues were connected to “mental deficiency.”³⁵² The conclusion of the Alberta survey was similar to that of Manitoba in that it concluded that “it is evident that some nationalities have contributed far more than their share to the defective and insane classes.”³⁵³ This conclusion led the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene to call for eugenic measures including immigration restrictions and sterilization in order to control the number of “mental defectives” and ease the supposed burden they posed on the province.³⁵⁴

The findings of Alberta’s mental hygiene survey and its anti-immigrant rhetoric resonated with the province’s politicians, physicians, and social reformers, and influenced mental health policy and eugenics policy in Alberta. Responding to the survey, in 1923 Alberta’s Health Minister R.G. Reid suggested that the province engage in a sterilization program rather than using segregation as a means in mental hospitals, which would have separated out the “defective” populations.³⁵⁵ The committee’s criticism of Canada’s “ineffective” immigrant medical inspections was adopted by the provincial government a few years later, who in 1927, called on the federal government to implement medical screenings at ports of departure rather than the port of entry. Minister of Health, George Hoadley introduced a motion in the Legislature

³⁵¹ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Mental Hygiene Survey of the Province of Alberta, October-November 1921.”

³⁵² Jana Grekul, “The Social Construction of the Feeble-minded threat: Implementation of the Sexual Sterilization Act in Alberta, 1929-1972,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2002), 25-26.

³⁵³ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Mental Hygiene Survey of the Province of Alberta; Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey.”

³⁵⁴ Amy Samson, “Eugenics in the Community,” 34.

³⁵⁵ Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane*, 180.

demanding “compulsory physical and mental examination by competent physicians of all immigrants at medical examination centres ... set up in the old country and on the continent: the present system not being compulsory nor as thorough as desirable.”³⁵⁶ Essentially, the UFA government viewed the federal immigration policy as flawed and its medical inspections as inadequate. It was also during this legislative session that Hoadley first introduced the sterilization bill.³⁵⁷

The Committee’s conclusions regarding immigration and “mental deficiency” were taken up by the provincial Department of Health. In a memorandum addressed to Premier Brownlee, Dr. Laidlaw at the Department of Public Health complained that the federal government was not doing enough to stop unhealthy immigrants from entering the country. As a result, Laidlaw argued that “the consequence to the province is that many unfitted persons slip through.”³⁵⁸ To illustrate his point, he presented the case of two “imbeciles” who were awaiting deportation but whose expenses the province covered as they waited for federal action.³⁵⁹ Similarly, Elizabeth Clark from the Nursing Branch of the department forwarded a list of “undesirable” immigrant families to Dr. Laidlaw and to the Premier arguing that they had passed through the inspection undetected. Clark believed that since immigrant families suffered from various issues, they were likely to become a burden to the state and should be deported. Clark described one mother as “irresponsible” because she could not take care of her family, and “had to be maintained with her children by this Department for six months before confinement ... The baby was a suspect

³⁵⁶ “Urge Examination of Immigrants Before They Leave the Old Land,” *Edmonton Journal* (25 March, 1927).

³⁵⁷ Amy Samson, “Eugenics in the Community,” 34.

³⁵⁸ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Premier’s Office Files, 69.289, roll 433, memorandum from Dr. Laidlaw to Premier Brownlee, 6 November, 1924.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

mental defective when born and died in the shelter.”³⁶⁰ This entire family was seen as a public charge and that was enough to have them deported to the country of origin. Historian Barbara Roberts has demonstrated that, according to the statistics provided by the Department of Immigration, deportations peaked during four periods in the first three decades of the 20th century: 1908-1909, 1913-1914, 1921-1924, and 1929-1930. All of these periods represent years of economic recession in Canada. Therefore, those immigrants who were hurt the most by the economic downturn, and who had become a public menace, were deported.³⁶¹ The anxiety over the health of the nation is also evident in Clark’s passage. Not only would immigrants threaten the future well-being of the province, but they were also seen as an economic burden. According to Sociologist Robert Menzies, the period from 1867 to 1939 represented the “golden age of deportation” in Canada. During this period, more than 5000 individuals were deported as a result of mental conditions.³⁶²

As Menzies suggests a number of groups, including psychiatrists, eugenicists, and federal and provincial authorities joined together and developed an effective strategy to rid Western Canada of those who did not fit into Canadian society. For psychiatrists, at a time when institutional funding was low, the deportation alternative provided them with an opportunity to reduce overcrowding in their mental hospitals.³⁶³ Furthermore, it could be argued, that psychiatrists favoured deportation because it removed some of their more “difficult” patients

³⁶⁰ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Premier’s Office Files, 69.289, roll 433, letter from Miss E. Clark to Dr. Laidlaw and Premier Brownlee, 10 September, 1924.

³⁶¹ Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 47-48.

³⁶² Robert Menzies, “Governing Mentalities,” *The Deportation of Insane and Feeble-minded Immigrants out of British Columbia from Confederation to World War II*, *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 13, no. 2 (1998): 138; 138n5.

³⁶³ Menzies, “Governing Mentalities,” 136-137.

from their care without having to admit that their psychiatric cures were not working. In this case, the patient would be blamed for not getting better rather than the lack of appropriate treatment. For eugenicists, deportations were a way to remove individuals who were deemed a threat to British-Canadian traditions and values, and also who, with their inferior inheritance, would “contaminate” the germ plasm. For provincial and federal authorities, this was a convenient route to rid the provinces of the poor and unemployed without having to offer them any assistance.

The concerns over the quality of immigrants was also expressed by a number of women’s organizations in Alberta—particularly the United Farm Women of Alberta. They were concerned that the health, mental fitness, and the overall well-being of Canadians was in jeopardy because of mentally and physically “inferior” immigrants.³⁶⁴ Women health advocates believed that in order for the country to thrive its citizens needed to be healthy, and if they were not, this would contribute to national degeneration.³⁶⁵ As a result of these concerns, they lobbied the provincial government for eugenic measures, including immigration restrictions and sexual sterilization legislation.³⁶⁶ In 1925, for example, during a United Farm Women of Alberta Presidential address, Mrs. R.B. Gunn commented on the importance of quality in immigration saying

Viewed from a racial standpoint is it not of prime importance that we subject to the scrutiny, our immigration regulations? Are we not admitting only those able to contribute to our national life? Do we exercise care that all those seeking admittance shall be

³⁶⁴ Samson, “Eugenics in the Community,” 9.

³⁶⁵ Gibbons, “Our Power to Remodel Civilization,” 133.

³⁶⁶ Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 11.

required to pass a rigid mental and physical examination? Do we insist that the public weal shall be served rather than the interests of steamships or transportation companies?³⁶⁷

In other words, Gunn questioned Canada's immigration policy that seemed to be favouring quantity rather than quality of immigrants. She implied that the medical examinations of the newcomers were inadequate, and questioned whether or not the inspections were thorough enough to detect a physical or a mental defect. Furthermore, it is evident that Gunn disapproved of the federal government's close relationship with the transportation businesses, who, through an agreement with Ottawa were permitted to recruit immigrants for labour in the West without supervision from the Department of Immigration.³⁶⁸ These criticism mattered because they resonated with a number of individuals in the province and provided fuel for their social anxieties over immigration, and justified their calls for implementation of eugenic measures. At this same convention, the United Farm Women of Alberta resolved to urge the Canadian Government to "discontinue" immigration to Alberta,³⁶⁹ and argued that in the interest of Canada, greater steps needed to be taken to "check the flow of the mentally weak and degenerate immigration from Europe."³⁷⁰ This was done not only because the Farm Women were concerned about "defective" immigrants but also because farmers did not want the federal government to

³⁶⁷ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Premier's Office Files, 69.289, roll 168C, United Farm Women of Alberta presidential address, 1925.

³⁶⁸ John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 117-118.

³⁶⁹ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Premier's Office Files, 69.289, roll 168B, United Farm Women of Alberta Resolutions, 1925.

³⁷⁰ Glebow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fond, "Minutes of the United Farm Women of Alberta" (1923-1925), micro/ufwa, 127.

use public funds to assist the newcomers as they settled in the province.³⁷¹ In 1927, the United Farm Women of Alberta lobbied the provincial government to push the federal government to have “competent” psychiatrists examine would be immigrants at the port of origin. The provincial government agreed but complained that they lacked proper jurisdiction.³⁷² Yet, as stated above, a couple of months following the farmers’ conventions, the Minister of Health introduced a motion in the Legislature mirroring the resolution of the United Farm Women in calling for more thorough medical inspections at the port of embarkation. The United Farm Women of Alberta shared similar anxieties about the new immigrants as many other Anglo-Canadians. They wanted to preserve the Britishness of Canada, and the Anglo-Saxon race, culture, and traditions. Furthermore, seeing that the provincial government had no power to change immigration policy, the United Farm Women of Alberta turned its attention to lobbying for other eugenic measures, including sexual sterilization, to control the number of “undesirables” in society.

Conclusion

The increase in immigration to Canada from the late 19th century to the first decades of the twentieth transformed the cultural and demographic composition of the country. It also created hostility toward the new immigrants which was tied to the social anxieties of many Anglo-Canadians. While social reformers, physicians, and government officials in both Alberta

³⁷¹ “Favour the Restriction of Immigration,” *The UFA* (15 September, 1927); Glebow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fond, “Official minutes and reports of the UFA annual conventions,” (1926), micro/ufa, 58.

³⁷² Provincial Archives of Alberta, Premier’s Office Files, 69.289, roll 168B, United Farm Women of Alberta Convention, 18-21 January, 1927.

and Manitoba shared similar concerns about the new immigrants, by the 1920s the fear of the “defective” immigrant gained much more traction in Alberta than it did in Manitoba. This was likely the result of different immigration contexts during the interwar years, where Alberta received disproportionately more newcomers than Manitoba. While the population of Manitoba climbed steadily from 1870 onward, that of Alberta exploded after 1900. Manitoba’s share of the prairie population fell from 62 percent in 1901 to 30 percent in 1931.³⁷³ This coincided with the eugenics movement, which began in earnest in the early twentieth century, reaching its peak in Canada in the 1920’s at a point when Alberta, in particular, was seeing a population boom while Manitoba experienced only modest increases. These population dynamics were due to policy changes under Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s government which decided in 1925, after much pressure from the railway companies to allow them to recruit farmers from central and Eastern Europe. During this period, approximately 370,000 of these new immigrants arrived in Canada. At the same time, a downturn in the economy exacerbated hostility to foreigners and led to further restrictions on immigration to the point where in 1930 the railway agreement was cancelled and Canadian borders were closed.³⁷⁴

When social reformers and physicians lobbied the Alberta Government for immigration restrictions and eugenics legislation it was at the height of this second wave immigration boom. Whereas, by the time Manitoba introduced its eugenics legislation in 1933, immigration to Canada significantly declined. What is more, by the 1930s the calls to deport immigrants tapered off among psychiatrists, immigration authorities, and the public in general, and the focus shifted

³⁷³ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 511

³⁷⁴ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 247; Avery, *Reluctant Host*, 105-107.

to other problems plaguing the country, particularly the Great Depression.³⁷⁵ It is clear that the heyday of Canadian eugenics was concurrent with largescale immigration to Alberta. Manitoba, by comparison, absorbed a steadier influx of population from the late nineteenth century to the first decade of the 20th century, and then saw only a fraction of the immigration that Alberta did in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, during the 1920s, the provincial government in Manitoba was open to bringing in more immigrants to the province, particularly those who would be willing to settle in rural areas. Whereas in Alberta, the supposed threat of the “defective” immigrant led the provincial government to demand thorough medical inspections of newcomers before their arrival into Canada.

In the early years of the 20th century, opposition to immigration was primarily drawn from nativists and those concerned about the changing cultural composition of Canada as was illustrated in *Strangers Within Our Gates*. Yet, in the interwar period the immigration debate was largely led by medical professionals such as the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene.³⁷⁶ They believed that the new immigrants were more predisposed to “mental deficiency” than the dominant Anglo-Canadians. As shown above, their concerns over the quality of new immigrants served their class and professional interests. For them, it was necessary to screen immigrants upon their arrival to Canada to determine fitness. The main individuals involved in the screening process would have been physicians who had the necessary “expertise” to determine hereditary flaws. Physicians had a significant amount to gain for their profession if the government granted them the authority to determine an individual’s fitness.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Menzies, “Governing Mentalities,” 170-171.

³⁷⁶ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 66.

³⁷⁷ McLaren, 49.

While their eugenic arguments regarding immigration found a receptive audience in Alberta, the same cannot be said for Manitoba. In Manitoba, the recommendations of the survey helped reform the province's mental hospitals and provided eugenicists in the province with justification in dealing with the high number of "mental defectives" in the institutions.³⁷⁸ While psychiatrists like Mathers had concerns over deportable immigrants and overcrowding in Manitoba's mental institutions, in his reports, he never explicitly made a biological argument that linked immigrants to "mental deficiency," poverty, and crime. Rather, his comments on immigration were likely shaped by the economic circumstances in Manitoba, and the lack of resources available in mental hospitals to house and treat patients.

In Alberta, however, the threat of the "defective" immigrant did gain more traction during the 1920s primarily because the province experienced an increase in its population. Physicians such as Laidlaw pressured the provincial government to push for thorough medical examinations of prospective newcomers and also restrictions for those deemed "undesirable." Laidlaw further reiterated the idea that the social problems that Alberta faced in the inter-war period were the result of an increase in immigration. The anti-immigrant arguments forwarded by medical professionals also influenced social reformers such as the United Farm Women of Alberta. It could be argued that the United Farm Women of Alberta opposed immigration because they wanted to preserve and protect the privileges and interests of their class which they deemed were under threat from the new arrivals. Their efforts to lobby the provincial government for immigration restrictions were unsuccessful since immigration fell under federal jurisdiction but they were successful in identifying the "defective" immigrant as a risk to the

³⁷⁸See Kurbegović, "The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene survey, 1918"

health and well-being of the province. The farm women's desire to limit the number of "defectives" in the province would eventually lead to the introduction and implementation of Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act. What this suggests is that the anti-immigrant sentiment laced with eugenic language played an important role in bringing about eugenic control in form of sexual sterilization in Alberta. The context in Manitoba—its earlier pattern of immigration together with economic needs in the 1920s—made it more difficult for eugenicists to use the fear of "defective" immigrants as an argument for eugenic measures. The concerns over immigration were similar in both provinces, but the different local contexts determined whether these concerns would be translated into eugenics policy.

Chapter Four: The Roman Catholic Responses to Eugenics in Manitoba and Alberta

On 9 March, 1933 the Archbishop of Winnipeg, Alfred Arthur Sinnott (1877-1954), wrote to Premier John Bracken in opposition to the sterilization clause in Manitoba's *Mental Deficiency Act*. Sinnott warned:

We Catholics are opposed to sterilization, especially on account of its moral effects. I do not think that either you or your Government would wish to do violence to the moral principle of the 189,000 Roman Catholics in the Province of Manitoba.³⁷⁹

Similar views were expressed by Reverend Antoine d'Éschambault (1896-1960), secretary to the Archbishop of Saint-Boniface, in his letter to the Premier. The Reverend was outraged that the government introduced the sterilization bill despite the fact that the Roman Catholics opposed it and argued that “for the sake of a few medical men who are over-anxious to prove their fresh knowledge you annul the laws of ethics and nature.”³⁸⁰ The remarks of Sinnott and d'Éschambault represent a sample of the Catholic opinion—although in this case very prominent and influential voices—regarding eugenics in Manitoba during the 1930s. Their statements capture the main lines of attack used by Catholics in the province and elsewhere in their campaigns against sterilization. Primarily, Catholics argued that sterilization was immoral

³⁷⁹ Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Letter from Archbishop Alfred A. Sinnott to Premier John Bracken, 9 March, 1933.

³⁸⁰ Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Letter from Rev. Antoine d'Éschambault to Premier John Bracken, 31 March, 1933.

because it took away an individual's dignity and bodily integrity; secondly, they attacked eugenics on scientific grounds, arguing that sterilization policies were based on faulty science; and lastly, they threatened lawmakers and politicians with political consequences if the sterilization policies were implemented.

The Catholic opposition to eugenics has been discussed by a number of scholars, including Angus McLaren, Erika Dyck, Sebastien Normandin, and recently Alex Deighton, although it is an area in Canadian historiography that still requires further study. We know from these scholars that Roman Catholics were the most active in opposing eugenic legislation, yet there has been little written about their activism in this respect. McLaren credits the Catholics opposition, among other factors, in averting the passage of sterilization bills in a number of Canadian provinces. He suggests that in areas where Catholics composed a significant portion of the population such negative eugenics measures could not flourish, and even in provinces with a strong Catholic minority, such as Manitoba and Ontario, sterilization bills were defeated.³⁸¹ McLaren writes for example,

Only in British Columbia and Alberta, with a large immigrant presence that raised hereditarian concerns and little effective Catholic opposition could eugenic measures be confidently advanced. In those regions of the country where Catholics predominated such measures would not be broached; in Ontario and Manitoba the Catholic minority was large enough to ensure that they would be beaten back.³⁸²

³⁸¹ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 104.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 104.

While this might have been the case in general, a closer examination of Catholic resistance at the local level is necessary in order to fully understand the extent of their involvement in debates over eugenic legislation. In his work on Quebec, historian Sebastien Normandin paints a more complex picture of Catholic resistance in that province by suggesting that while the Church doctrine opposed any measure that limited reproduction, it had little to say about positive eugenics. In addition, Normandin establishes that the resistance to eugenics primarily came from French-speaking Catholics who objected on cultural and religious grounds.³⁸³ Erika Dyck provides a sample of the Roman Catholic opinion on eugenics in the province of Saskatchewan through an analysis of a Catholic newspaper the *Prairie Messenger*. Dyck shows that the newspaper's approach to eugenics was sometimes softened particularly in their response to marriage of those deemed to be "mentally defective." At other times, it stuck strictly to the Catholic doctrine.³⁸⁴ Historians studying Catholicism and eugenics in the United States have demonstrated that opinions varied, even among Catholic clergy, regarding eugenics particularly before 1930. Their position ranged from strong opposition, to some accepting positive eugenics, to other joining eugenics organizations such as the American Eugenics Society.³⁸⁵ Prior to 1930, there was no official Catholic position on eugenics, that is, the Vatican did not officially

³⁸³ See Sebastien Normandin, "Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church in Montreal and Quebec: 1890-1942," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 15, no.1 (1998): 59-86.

³⁸⁴ Dyck, "Sterilization and Birth Control in the Shadow of Eugenics," 173-178.

³⁸⁵ See for example, Sharon M. Leon, *An Image of God: The Catholic Struggle with Eugenics* (Chicago, U.S.: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004); John M. Bozeman, "Eugenics and the Clergy in the Early Twentieth Century United States," *Journal of American Culture* 27, no.4 (2004): 422-431; Sharon M. Leon, "'Hopelessly Entangled in Nordic Pre-suppositions': Catholic Participation in the American Eugenics Society in the 1920s," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 59, no.1 (2004): 3-49.

comment on the issues until Pope Pius XI's (1857-1939) Encyclical, *Casti connubii* of December 1930. As historian Christine Rosen points out lack of official Catholic position allowed Catholic leaders to form their own arguments about eugenics. These were often carved with the Church doctrine in mind, namely that race improvement was a good thing but the means to achieve it must be legitimate.³⁸⁶ What all of this suggests is that Catholicism was not monolithic, Catholics had varied views on a number of social issues including eugenics that were often shaped by particular local circumstances. For instance, in many Canadian provinces the Catholic Church was divided along linguistic lines, and Anglophone and Francophone Catholics were hardly ever unified on key issues.³⁸⁷

In this chapter, I focus on the Catholic responses to eugenics as a factor in understanding the divergent eugenic policies in Alberta and Manitoba. Eugenic theory was challenged by academics, scientists, politicians, and even some religious organizations but generally no group was more vocal in their opposition than the Roman Catholics. As historian Sharon Leon points out, Catholics were more successful than other groups because the Catholic hierarchy represented many people and spoke on their behalf.³⁸⁸ This was the case in Manitoba where a number of Church leaders presented the viewpoints of their communities to the lawmakers during the sterilization debates in 1933. Roman Catholics in Manitoba played an important role in the discussions over the sterilization bill and eventually contributed to its defeat, while the Alberta Catholic Church refused to engage in provincial eugenics debate despite the fact that its own publication, *The Western Catholic*, commented on international eugenics issues. This must

³⁸⁶ Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, 139-140; 145.

³⁸⁷ Sean Springer, "Eugenics in Ontario: Reconsidering Catholicism, the Culture of Government, and Post War Eugenics in the Canadian Historiography," (MA Thesis, Trent University, 2012), 57.

³⁸⁸ Leon, *An Image of God*, 3.

have been deliberate. While there is no clear explanation, it is reasonable to surmise that the divisions within the Alberta Catholic Church, which fell along ethno-linguistic lines, not only prevented it from presenting a unified front but also would have incentivised the Anglo-Catholic section to align themselves with the dominant Anglo-Protestants.

The Catholic Church in Western Canada

A few years after the establishment of Red River colony (now Manitoba) in 1812, French speaking Catholic clergy arrived in the area in an attempt to evangelize the residents at Red River.³⁸⁹ The French speaking diocese of St. Boniface would be established in 1820. It would not be until the early 1840s, with the arrival of the Oblates that Catholic missions would spread beyond the colony into territories that would become Saskatchewan and Alberta.³⁹⁰ Essentially, French speaking bishops had been in control of churches in the West since the 1820s, but with the migration of English speaking Catholics and Protestants from Ontario and the Maritimes, and immigration from continental Europe at the end of the 19th century, the demographics shifted in the region.³⁹¹ During this period, the numbers of Anglo-Catholics, who arrived from Ontario or Nova Scotia, increased in the region, while Francophone Catholics from Quebec, for a number of complicated reasons, were less eager to settle in the West.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Robert Choquette, "English-French Relations in the Canadian Catholic Community," in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930*, eds. Terence Murphy and Gerald Stortz (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 15.

³⁹⁰ Terence J. Fay. *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism, and Canadianism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 163.

³⁹¹ Fay. *A History of Canadian Catholics*, 186.

³⁹² See for example, A.I. Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation, 1864-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 131-132.

The early decades of the twentieth century in the West represented a period of bitter confrontation between Francophone and Anglophone Catholics over the control of the Church.³⁹³ With the arrival of Catholic newcomers from Ukraine and Poland, Anglophone Catholics wanted to ensure that they would assimilate into the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture. In other words, that they would adopt the English language, and British-Canadian values.³⁹⁴ In fact, the majority of the new migrants adopted the English language once they settled in Western Canada, and this created greater tensions between English speaking Catholics and their French speaking clergy.³⁹⁵ This resulted in Anglophone Catholics insisting on their own bishops, clergy, and parishes because they did not want church services and instruction in French. Plus, they argued that French was no longer the dominant language in the region.³⁹⁶ These tensions were further exacerbated by Rome's appointment of an English-speaking bishop at Calgary in 1913, and then in 1915 with the establishment of an English Diocese in Winnipeg under Archbishop Sinnott. The appointment of an Anglo-Catholic in Winnipeg angered the French speaking Catholics who demanded from Rome that the next bishop in the region be a Francophone.³⁹⁷ A similar controversy occurred in Edmonton following the death of Archbishop Émile Legal (1849-1920), where both Francophone and Anglophone bishops petitioned Rome to appoint a successor from their respective group. The appointment of Henry J. O'Leary (1879-1938) in 1921 as the Archbishop of Edmonton represented a turning point in the influence of French Catholics in the

³⁹³ Terence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, "Introduction," in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930*, eds. Terence Murphy and Gerald Stortz (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), xxi.

³⁹⁴ Murphy and Stortz, "Introduction," xxiii.

³⁹⁵ Choquette, "English-French Relations in the Canadian Catholic Community," 16.

³⁹⁶ Murphy and Stortz, "Introduction," xxiii.

³⁹⁷ Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, 188.

region.³⁹⁸ During the 1920s, Catholics in Alberta were struggling for the control of the church, and this conflict coincided with the eugenics movement in that province. Whereas in Manitoba, the internal Church politics were essentially resolved by the time the provincial government introduced its eugenic legislation in 1933. It could be argued that this discouraged the Catholic Church in Alberta from involving itself in controversial political debates, whereas in Manitoba both French-speaking and English-speaking Catholics engaged with the eugenics discussions in that province.

Table 4.1 Catholic Population and % of the total population in Manitoba and Alberta³⁹⁹

	1921	%	1931	%	1941	%
Manitoba	105,518	(17)	189,836	(27)	150,083	(20)
Alberta	97,628	(16)	168,643	(23)	134,229	(17)

³⁹⁸ See for example, Raymond Huel, "The Irish French Conflict in Catholic Episcopal Nominations: The Western Sees and the Struggle for Domination Within the Church," *CCHA Studies Session* 42 (1975): 51-70.

³⁹⁹ Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, Volume 1: Population (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1924): 568-569; Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, Bulletin XXI, Population of Canada, 1931, By Religious Denominations (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1932): 6-7; Eight Census of Canada, 1941, Volume 1: General Review and Summary Tables (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1950): 295.

Catholics and Eugenics

Roman Catholics had been engaged in debates about eugenics since the late 19th century but it was not until the 1920s and 1930s, at the peak of the eugenics movement, that they became vocal in resisting it.⁴⁰⁰ Eugenics challenged the Catholic doctrine because, as historian Nancy Stepan explains, eugenics “attacked the rights of individuals within marriage, deformed what it believed was the proper function of sexuality, and perverted the moral sense of the human species.”⁴⁰¹ In other words, eugenicists’ goals to limit reproduction through sterilization ran counter to the Catholic doctrine, plus Catholics opposed it because it violated an individual’s bodily integrity. Some Catholics were concerned about the scientific credibility of eugenics. In the 1920s, geneticists were already questioning the credibility of eugenics as a science since heredity is complex and is not as simple as the eugenicists claimed. The geneticists’ conclusions about heredity were also based on rigorous research and not on broad conclusions influenced by racial, ethnic, and class prejudices. With the growing critique of eugenics, many Catholics felt confident that they could successfully oppose eugenic policies, particularly in areas where they had enough political power.⁴⁰² Even those who joined the movement in the 1920s such as American Catholic priest Fr. John M. Cooper (1881-1949) did so in order to challenge the scientific arguments of the eugenicists, viewing their claims as “racial snobbery” that was “steeped in the doctrine of superior races.”⁴⁰³ In Canada, French-Canadian theologian Hervé

⁴⁰⁰ Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, 140.

⁴⁰¹ Nancy Stepan, *‘The Hour of Eugenics’: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 112.

⁴⁰² Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, 142; See also McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 154-157.

⁴⁰³ Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, 143.

Blais argued that “the conflict is born of a hasty and unjustified attempt to translate into practice theories still lacking in scientific proof.”⁴⁰⁴ Like Cooper, Blais also could not tolerate the racist ideas associated with eugenics as it ran contrary to the beliefs of the Church that in the eyes of God all men were equal.⁴⁰⁵ As Leon suggests the disagreements between the Catholic Church and the eugenics movement cannot be viewed through the lens of the age old story of conflict between science and religion. Instead, many Catholics challenged eugenics because of inadequate scientific evidence to support the movement’s claims.⁴⁰⁶

While Catholics engaged in a discussions about eugenics, there was one issue that created the largest division between them and the movement: sterilization. The Catholic disapproval of sterilization or any other contraceptives was not new, for instance in 1895, Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) condemned sterilization calling it immoral.⁴⁰⁷ The Church remained silent on the issue of sterilization and eugenics until 1930 when Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) issued a Papal Encyclical on Christian marriage, *Casti connubii*. The decree was issued in response to the changing social, cultural, and economic developments in the early decades of the 20th century. The Catholic Church regarded traditional gender roles and the sanctity of marriage under threatened from these changes. While the Encyclical covered a number of subject, the one that stood out for most Catholics dealt with eugenics. The section stated:

For there are some who, over solicitous of the cause of eugenics, not only give salutary counsel for more certainly procuring the strength and health of the future child-which,

⁴⁰⁴ Normandin, “Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church,” 75.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 76.

⁴⁰⁶ Leon, *An Image of God*, 5.

⁴⁰⁷ Springer, “Eugenics in Ontario,” 66.

indeed is not contrary to right reason- but put eugenics before the aim of a higher order, and by public authority wish to prevent from marrying all those who, even though naturally fit for marriage, they consider, according to the norms and conjectures of their investigations, would, through hereditary transmission, bring forth defective offspring and more, they wish to legislate to deprive these of that natural faculty by medical action despite their unwillingness Public magistrates have no direct power over the bodies of their subjects, therefore, where no crime has taken place and there is no cause present for grave punishment, they can never directly harm, or tamper with the integrity of the body, either for the reason of eugenics or for any other reason.⁴⁰⁸

The Encyclical essentially affirmed the Catholic position on sterilization, namely that the procedure conflicted with the Catholic doctrine because it interfered with reproduction, and secondly that it unnecessarily encroached upon an individual's God given rights. Interestingly, although *Casti connubii* condemned the power of the state to inflict injury and punishment on innocent individuals, namely those subjected to sterilization, it found no issue with bodily punishment of criminals. While the Encyclical objected to sterilization, it did not completely reject eugenics as is evident in the above passage "procuring the strength and health of the future child-which, indeed is not contrary to right reason."⁴⁰⁹ This suggests that while the Church agreed with improvements in health and well-being of future generations, it objected to eugenicists' measures to achieve those goals. As illustrated below, the issuing of the encyclical

⁴⁰⁸ Pope Pius XI, "Casti connubii, Encyclical on Christian Marriage," (The Vatican, 1930): accessed online March 2017: https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19301231_casti-connubii.html

⁴⁰⁹ Pope Pius XI, "Casti connubii, Encyclical on Christian Marriage," (The Vatican, 1930): accessed online March 2017: https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19301231_casti-connubii.html

was reported in the Catholic press in Canada, and it helped set the stage for Catholic response to eugenics. Yet, as historian Etienne Lepicard suggests the Encyclical did not necessarily create a uniform Catholic opinion, especially because the majority of the Papal decree did not deal with eugenics.⁴¹⁰ Similarly, historian Christine Rosen has demonstrated that for some Catholics the Encyclical represented a total condemnation of eugenics, while other interpreted the text as only objecting to sterilization. Nevertheless, the Papal statement gave Catholics a clear position on a number of issues including marriage, divorce, birth control, and eugenics; secondly, it questioned the role of the state in the eugenics movement and its power over the bodies of its citizens; third, as Leon points out “the far-reaching teaching raised questions of the proper relationship between the church and state with respect to marriage and reproduction.”⁴¹¹ Having the support of the church authority behind them, many Catholics were motivated to continue their fight against eugenics, and particularly against involuntary sexual sterilization.

Catholic Responses to Eugenics in Manitoba

In February of 1933, Robert A. Hoey (1883-1965), Manitoba’s Minister of Education, introduced the Mental Deficiency Act with a section on the sterilization of “mental defectives.”⁴¹² The introduction of the sterilization clause sparked debates not only in the Legislature but also within communities throughout the province. The Roman Catholics in

⁴¹⁰ Etienne Lepicard, “Eugenics and Roman Catholicism An Encyclical Letter in Context: *Casti connubii*, December 31, 1930,” *Science in Context* 11, no. 3-4 (1998): 534-539.

⁴¹¹ Leon, *An Image of God*, 89.

⁴¹² Manitoba Legislative Library, *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba: Nineteenth Legislative Assembly* (1933), 20.

Manitoba were particularly active in their opposition the sterilization bill. During the early months of 1933, the Members of the Legislative Assembly and Premier Bracken received letters and petitions from constituents in protest to the proposed legislation who urged their political representatives to vote against the bill. Catholics in the province presented their perspectives on eugenics theory and sterilization through letters, petitions, publications, letters to the editor in local newspapers, law amendments committee hearings, and within their communities. The majority of the documents sent to the provincial government were written by the Catholic officials on behalf of their parishioners and these primarily arrived from French-speaking communities (See Figure 4.1). Some of the letters were written as basic protests to the introduction of the sterilization clause while other were much more detailed. For example, a number of the writers opposed eugenic legislation because they believed it to be immoral as it violated an individual's integrity, others challenged the science behind the eugenics theory pointing to studies that disproved eugenicists' claims, and still others issued warnings to the provincial government that if the bill passed, the government would lose the support of Catholic voters.

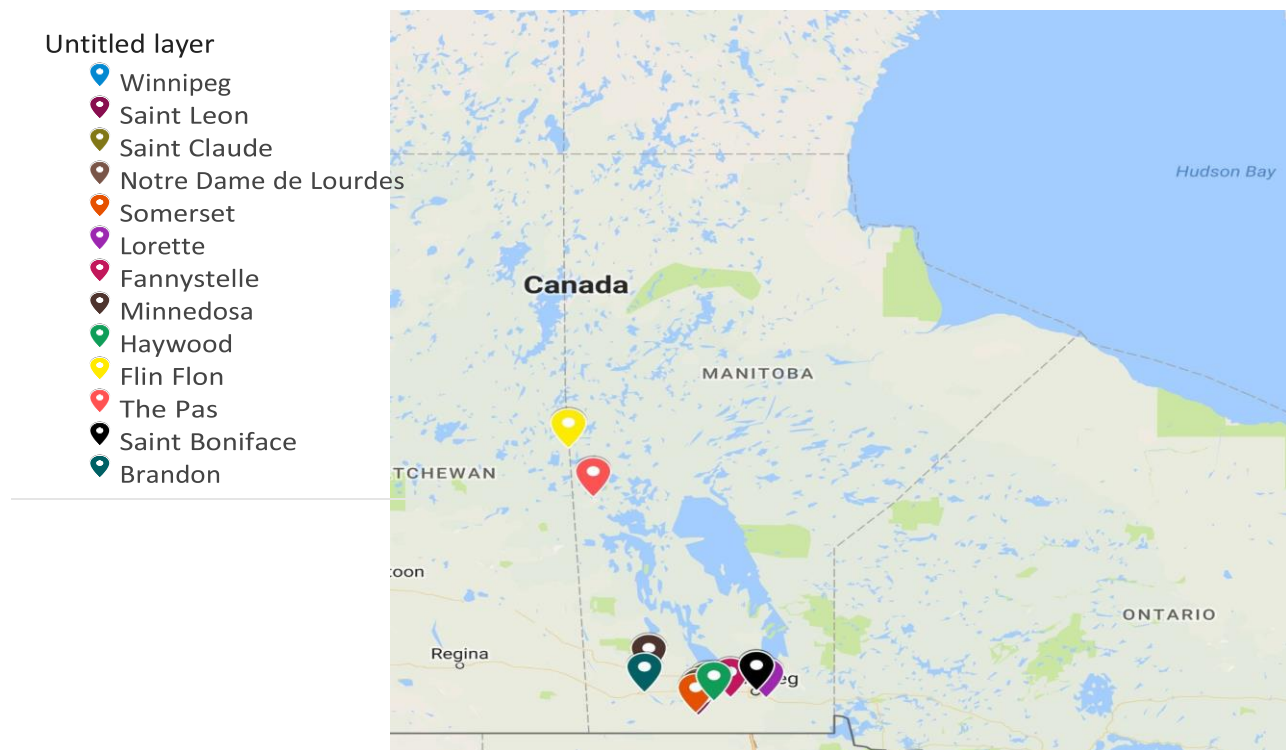


Figure 4.1 Communities in Manitoba that sent letters and petitions to the Provincial Government protesting the introduction of the sterilization bill.⁴¹³

Following Hoey’s introduction of the sterilization legislation, Catholic clergy circulated a pamphlet throughout the province titled “The Case Against Sterilization” (See: Appendix C) which summarized the main arguments, both theological and scientific, of the opposition. The pamphlet provided a criticism of the eugenicists’ oversimplification of heredity, essentially that “like produced like.” Eugenacists were particularly concerned with traits and conditions such as intelligence, alcoholism, mental disorders, and poverty, and believed that these could be biologically determined. Focusing primarily on the United States, historian Garland E. Allen has

⁴¹³ Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, “Sterilization,” G601 (1933).

illustrated that from the 1910s onward a number of scientists—among them high profile geneticists like Herman Joseph Muller and Raymond Pearl, and several biostatisticians—challenged the generalized interpretation of eugenicists by pointing out that many of the terms they employed had no actual clinical meaning. For instance, “feeble-mindedness” was such a broad and imprecise category that many scientists viewed it as meaningless.⁴¹⁴ Scientists also criticized the eugenicists’ misapplications of Mendelian laws of inheritance, arguing that the link between a Mendelian recessive gene and “feeble-mindedness” was unconvincing and too simplistic. In other words, many of the eugenicists’ claims that they could identify an ancestor through family studies who suffered from “feeble-mindedness” were based on weak research, poor data, and simplistic interpretations.⁴¹⁵

Heredity was complex and it was unlikely that “feeble-mindedness” could be wiped out in one generation, especially because scientific research could not locate a gene for such a condition.⁴¹⁶ Catholics in Manitoba offered similar skepticism to eugenicists’ claims, often citing scientific studies as evidence. The pamphlet “The Case Against Sterilization” cited the work of the British Medical Association, particularly physician Alfred Frank Tredgold (1870-1952) who was regarded as an “authority” on the topic of “mental deficiency.” Tredgold doubted the claim that “mental deficiency” could be inherited as a recessive gene, and that it could be prevented through segregation or sterilization. For Tredgold it was necessary to understand the causes of “mental deficiency” and to determine whether the cause was a “defect in the germ plasm” or environmental. The point was that these causes could be found in both “normal”

⁴¹⁴ Garland Allen, “Eugenics and Modern Biology: Critiques of Eugenics, 1910–1945” *Annals of Human Genetics* 75, no. 1 (2011): 316.

⁴¹⁵ Allen, “Eugenics and Modern Biology,” 316.

⁴¹⁶ Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, 142.

individuals and those deemed to be “defective.” While Tredgold viewed “mental deficiency” as an important problem that required medical attention, he also admitted that medical knowledge was still limited with respect to mental disorders.⁴¹⁷ The pamphlet circulated by Catholics in Manitoba summarized all of Tredgold’s main points on the flaws of eugenics theory and sterilization policies yet the pamphlet emphasized the importance of segregation of certain grades of “mental defectives.”⁴¹⁸ Normandin has shown that in Quebec, some Catholic theologians advocated for segregation over sterilization of the “unfit.” For example, French-Canadian theologian M.C. Forest argued that “segregation will do everything that sterilization would do ... without violating the inalienable rights of the individual.”⁴¹⁹ This is interesting because while Forest disagreed with the sterilization measure, he was still advocating for the removal of the “unfit” individual from the community, likely to an institution where they would not reproduce. This suggests that while Catholics did not agree with the methods employed by eugenicists, i.e. sterilization, they did agree with the eugenicists’ goal of improving the human race.

Aside from distributing “The Case Against Sterilization” pamphlet, Catholics in Manitoba also submitted letters to the government and the local newspapers. In a Letter to the Editor of the *Winnipeg Tribune*, F.W. Russell, chairman of the Council of Catholic Action objected to sterilization on scientific ground, stating “I see you declare that Mr. Hoey’s sterilization bill ‘embodies results of extensive study and observation.’ I wonder!” Russell

⁴¹⁷ N.A. “The British Medical Association and the Prevention of Mental Deficiency,” *Mental Welfare* 6, no. 1 (1925): 11-12.

⁴¹⁸ Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, “The Case Against Sterilization,” (n.d), 2-3.

⁴¹⁹ Quoted in Normandin, *Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church*, 78.

continued, “the British Medical Association ... declared that incidence of mental deficiency would not be decreased to any degree worth considering by sterilization.”⁴²⁰ In other words, Russell accused the provincial government of being ill-informed on the sterilization issue and by citing the British Medical Association he brought in “expert opinion” to refute the eugenicists claims. Similarly, Reverend Wilfrid L. Jubinville (1872-1946) from Saint Boniface wrote to Premier Bracken in protest to the sterilization bill stating:

“It is an acknowledged fact that mental deficiency proceeds ... from social plagues such as alcoholism, tuberculosis, syphilis ... That such vices do affect normal parents as well as abnormal ones, is obvious ... This being the case sterilization would be no cure.”⁴²¹

Jubinville also relied on the arguments made by the British Medical Association⁴²² that focused on environmental causes of “mental deficiency” and suggested that the majority of those diagnosed as “mentally defective” had “normal” parents. Therefore, sterilization would not lead to a human betterment. As Allen explains some scientists suggested that “even if genetic factors might be involved in leading to certain social or mental conditions, it would make far more sense to search out the social components involved, since those could be changed more readily.” In other words, rather than arguing that poverty, alcoholism, criminality, “mental deficiency” were the result of “defective” genes, it would be easier to bring in social reform in order to solve those

⁴²⁰ F.W. Russell, “Letter to the Editor,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 March, 1933.

⁴²¹ Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Letter from Reverend W.L. Jubinville to Premier Bracken, 24 February, 1933.

⁴²² N.A. “The British Medical Association and the Prevention of Mental Deficiency,” *Mental Welfare* 6, no. 1 (1925): 11-13.

problems.⁴²³ Historian Sharon Leon has pointed out that scientific objections presented by the Catholic clergy to a lay audience were much more successful in casting doubt on eugenicists' claims than those made by scientists and medical professionals. By making secular arguments against eugenics, Catholic officials could mobilize a large group of people, sometimes even non-Catholics, and speak on their behalf.⁴²⁴

A number of Catholic representatives wrote letters to Premier Bracken objecting to sterilization on moral grounds. For example, the Rector of St. Boniface College Reverend F. Faure objected on the following grounds:

1. The Government has no authority to impose mutilation against innocent persons nor have individuals any right to accept it...2. That part of the Bill will be the cause of many moral evils much more serious than those it is called to cure, not to speak of the social evils...⁴²⁵

Essentially, Faure argued that no law should give the government the power to violate the body of an individual, and that no individual should be forced to accept such an intrusion. Moreover, he argued that the sterilization clause would not be a solution to the social problems that eugenicists connected with "deficiency," namely prostitution, criminality, and poverty. A letter to the editor in the *Winnipeg Tribune* written by an anonymous "A Seeker of Truth" who argued that a right to one's integrity was at stake when a state introduces policies such as sterilization,

⁴²³ Allen, "Eugenics and Modern Biology," 322.

⁴²⁴ Leon, *An Image of God*, 76-77.

⁴²⁵ Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Letter from F. Faure to Premier Bracken, 27 February, 1933.

and that an individual's "rights and privileges are to be protected by the state instead of being sacrificed at random," or for the public good.⁴²⁶ Likewise, J.H. Daignault, Secretary of the Association d'Education des Canadiens –Français du Manitoba wrote on behalf of the Association that "in view of the important moral principles involved in this rather hurried move, we as a body, beg to protest very emphatically against it and we earnestly hope that the bill may not be urged further."⁴²⁷ Daignault was implying that the government's introduction of the sterilization bill was rushed and that they perhaps had not considered the moral side of the issue. Similar views were expressed by Reverend d'Éschambault who accused the government of not consulting Catholics on this issue even though they were aware that Catholics would object on moral grounds. What is more, d'Éschambault believed that the representatives in the legislature misled their Catholic voters, calling it a "true calumny," by suggesting that they had no intention of introducing a sterilization clause.⁴²⁸ For Catholics the sterilization procedure was immoral because it led to the "mutilation" of the body and interfered with procreation. Catholics only permitted such intervention for therapeutic reasons.⁴²⁹

Aside from writing letters to the Premier and newspapers, Catholics in Manitoba also presented petitions to the Legislature and issued warnings of political consequences if the legislation passed. For example, a petition sent from the town of Saint Claude to their representative Dr. John Alfred Munn (1882-1942) stated:

⁴²⁶ Anonymous, "Letter to the Editor," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 21 March, 1933.

⁴²⁷ Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Letter from J.H. Daignault to Premier Bracken, 25 February, 1933.

⁴²⁸ Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Letter from Rev. Antoine d'Eschambault to Premier John Bracken, 31 March, 1933.

⁴²⁹ Leon, *An Image of God*, 14.

The people of our district are absolutely opposed to this act and shall oppose at election time any member who has sponsored or back up such a measure. As Catholics there [*sic*] bound to oppose and resist such a thing to become law ... Let us give you a timely warning.⁴³⁰

Similar viewpoints were presented by J.S. Caron on behalf of the community of Fannystelle who argued:

I am very surprised to see Hon. Hoey to be the Godfather of such a measure! Please tell him that if he represents such a Bill, the consequence will not be in favor of the Actual Government at the next election. The opposition will certainly make with that Antichristian Bill a political question and the opposition will be right to do so.⁴³¹

Lastly, the residents of Notre Dame de Lourdes sent a petition (See: Appendix D) to their MLA, Frank Westbrook McIntosh (1879-1951) in protest to the sterilization clause stating that they were “firmly opposed to the bill” and urged McIntosh to use his “influence against that Bill in the House.”⁴³² All of these examples suggest that Catholics in Manitoba, even though they comprised only 27 percent of the population, knew that they had just enough power to inflict a

⁴³⁰ Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Petition from the residents of Saint Claude to J.A. Munn, 25 February, 1933.

⁴³¹ Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Letter from J.S. Caron to J.A Munn, 26 February, 1933.

⁴³² Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, Sterilization Bill, G601, Petition from the constituents of Notre Dame de Lourdes to Mr. McIntosh, 27 February, 1933.

political defeat to those who supported the sterilization measure. As will be evident in the next chapter, through their campaign Catholics in the province were able to influence the votes of some of the MLAs by urging them to vote against the legislation and represent the wishes of their constituents.

Catholics established an effective campaign during 1933 because they not only sent letters and petitions but also attended Law Amendments Committee Hearings and presented their views directly at the provincial legislature. This was also an opportunity to discredit some of the arguments made by those in support of the legislation, primarily medical professionals.⁴³³ The Catholic campaign was significant not only because they challenged eugenics theory with theological arguments but more importantly, they employed contemporary scientific studies to refute some of the eugenicists' claims regarding the inheritability of "mental deficiency." Plus the distribution of "The Case Against Sterilization" pamphlet was also an important element as it allowed the Catholic hierarchy to summarize the main theological and scientific view points for a lay audience. This was effective, because some of those arguments appealed not only appealed to Catholics but also those outside the faith who disagreed with the legislation. What is more, the Catholic hierarchy representing French-speaking and English-speaking Catholics in Manitoba made an effort to voice their disapproval of the sterilization clause as evidenced by the letters of Sinnott and d'Eschambault at the beginning of this chapter.

⁴³³ See for example, "Pros and Antis Air Views on Sterilization Proposal in Mental Defectives Bill," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 2 March, 1933.

Catholics and Eugenics in Alberta

In 1946, Clarence Hincks published an article, “Sterilize the Unfit,” in *Maclean’s Magazine*⁴³⁴ where he presented Alberta as a model program for eugenic sterilization. In the article, Hincks claimed:

Public health and welfare bodies are solidly behind the Alberta legislation. There have been no objections raised on the part of religious or any other groups. Public opinion is so overwhelmingly in favor of selective sterilization.⁴³⁵

Interestingly, Hincks was correct at least about the lack of religious opposition, particularly from Catholics in Alberta. Based on research in the Archdiocese of Edmonton, Diocese of Calgary, the Catholic Women’s League fonds at the Provincial Archives, Premier’s Office Files, and the information provided in the *Western Catholic*, there is very little evidence to suggest that Catholics in the province were active in protesting the implementation of the eugenic legislation in 1928 the way that their counterparts in Manitoba did in 1933. This suggests that because of the internal divisions among Catholics in Alberta, they were unlikely to engage in political lobbying on controversial topics. Hincks’ statement caught the eye of Reverend Henri Saint-Denis at the University of Ottawa. Saint-Denis wanted to write a response to Hincks’ article, and

⁴³⁴ By 1940 *Maclean’s Magazine* reach over 270,000 Canadians and its target audience were middle class men and women. See M. Susan Bland, “Henrietta the Homemaker, and ‘Rosie the Riveter’: Images of Women in Advertising in Maclean’s Magazine, 1939-50,” *Atlantis* 8, no.2 (Spring 1983): 65.

⁴³⁵ Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, Carroll, Bishop: Sterilization Act, 1946: Correspondence, 996032201-28.866, “Sterilize the Unfit,” *Maclean’s Magazine*, 15 February, 1946.

contacted Bishop Francis P. Carroll (1890-1967) in Calgary requesting information on Alberta's eugenics program.⁴³⁶ This exchange led to a series of correspondences between the Catholic clergy in Edmonton, Calgary, Daysland (AB), and Ottawa in an attempt to explain the lack of Catholic opposition to Alberta's *Sexual Sterilization Act* in 1927/1928.

In his reply to Saint-Denis' inquiry, Bishop Carroll responded "I never knew the act was in existence until ... some months ago." Furthermore, when he consulted the Vicar General of the Calgary Diocese, Carroll stated that "he [Vicar General] had no recollection of the passing of the Act. Its passing, therefore, could hardly have made much stir."⁴³⁷ Carroll likely did not know of the Act since he only arrived in Calgary in 1935, several years after the Act passed, however, he would have been aware of the 1937 amendment to the Act, which extended the powers of the Alberta Eugenics Board, and was widely reported on in the newspapers.⁴³⁸ Historian Mikkell Dack has argued that the "lack of knowledge" argument regarding Alberta's eugenic legislation is unconvincing, especially because the legislation was extensively covered in the local newspapers and in anti-eugenic literature of the 1930s.⁴³⁹ While the general public might not have been aware of the inner workings of the Alberta Eugenics Board, according to Dack, "they were well-informed of the eugenics legislation that had been passed in parliament, of the political and social ramifications that it entailed, and the amendment to the law in 1937."⁴⁴⁰ The

⁴³⁶ Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, Carroll, Bishop: Sterilization Act, 1946: Correspondence, 996032201-28.866, Letter from Henri Saint-Denis to Bishop Francis P. Carroll, 12 February 1946.

⁴³⁷ Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, Carroll, Bishop: Sterilization Act, 1946: Correspondence, 996032201-28.866, Letter from Bishop Francis P. Carroll to Henri Saint-Denis, 16 February 1946.

⁴³⁸ See for example, "Sterilization Amendment" *Edmonton Bulletin*, 1 April, 1937; "Alberta Minister of Health Makes Sweeping Statements Regarding Non-Recovery of Mental Defective," *Medicine Hat News*, 1 April, 1937; "Sterilization Board Given Broad Powers," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 1 April, 1937; "Protection Eugénique" *La Survivance*, 14 April, 1937.

⁴³⁹ Dack, "The Albert Eugenics Movement and the 1937 Amendment to the Sexual Sterilization Act," 102.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

same argument could also apply to the 1920s, as provincial papers published summaries of the legislative discussions and debates regarding the introduction of the *Sexual Sterilization Act*, and Albertans would have been aware of these developments.⁴⁴¹ Unfortunately for Carroll, the Church leaders who would have been stationed in Alberta during the 1920s were either deceased or moved to another post in another province by 1946. As a result, there were a few who could explain what reactions, if any, the passage of the legislation caused among Catholics.

Despite the wide coverage of Alberta's eugenics program in the local newspapers, interestingly there was almost no coverage in the province's main Catholic newspaper, *The Western Catholic*. The newspaper was based in Edmonton and was in print from 1919 until 1965 covering a variety of social, political, and economic issues both domestically and internationally.⁴⁴² The majority of its coverage of eugenics focused on international developments. For instance, in 1927, it reported on the defeat of sterilization bills in Colorado and Ohio, and also mentioned the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the *Buck v. Bell* case.⁴⁴³ In early 1928, there was only an editorial stating that the Alberta government was considering the sterilization bill at the next session, and that there was no official position from the Church on this issue.⁴⁴⁴ There were several articles that addressed eugenics and sterilization specifically but

⁴⁴¹ See for example, "Sterilization of Defectives Before the House," *Edmonton Bulletin*, 26 March, 1927; "First Reading for Drastic Bill," *Edmonton Journal*, 26 March, 1927; "Sterilization of the Mentally Unfit is Keenly Debated in the Legislature," *The Lethbridge Herald*, 24 February, 1928; "Sterilization Bill Defended by Hoadley," *Edmonton Bulletin*, 28 February, 1928; "Geo. Hoadley's Sterilization Bill Fought," *The Medicine Hat Daily News*, 8 March, 1928;

⁴⁴² Indre Cuplinskas, "Reporting the Revolution: The Western Catholic Reporter and Post-Vatican II Reform," in *Vatican II: Expériences canadiennes-Canadian Experiences*, eds. Michael Attridge, Catherine E. Clifford, and Gilles Routhier (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011), 22.

⁴⁴³ *Buck v. Bell* (1927) was a United States Supreme Court case that validated Virginia's law mandating sterilization for people who were deemed "socially inadequate" or "feebleminded." It resulted in the sterilization of Carrie Buck, first person to be sterilized under Virginia's Eugenical Sterilization Act (1924). See Paul A. Lombardo, *Three Generations, No Imbeciles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); *The Western Catholic*, May, 1927.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Western Catholic*, January, 1928.

these were primarily international in scope.⁴⁴⁵ In early 1931, the pages of the *Western Catholic* were filled with news about the Papal Encyclical, *Casti Connubi* issued by Pope Pius XI on 31 December, 1930. These stories primarily covered different sections of the Encyclical, particularly its position on birth control, and also its reception among Catholics worldwide.⁴⁴⁶ In early 1933, the only local story related to eugenics was the Church's opposition to the establishment of birth control clinics in the province.⁴⁴⁷ There was no mention of the proposed sterilization bill in Manitoba (1933) or the implementation of the *Sexual Sterilization Act* in British Columbia (1933). Any discussion of eugenics related topics in 1933 focused on Europe or the United States.⁴⁴⁸ This is not surprising since the Catholic Church in Alberta was bitterly divided during this period. The lack of attention in the Catholic press to local eugenics issues must have been a choice, reflecting either lack of consensus on this issue among Catholics or more importantly, that they did not want to stand out in a Protestant dominated province.

⁴⁴⁵ For example, "Protest Against introduction of legislation formally authorizing 'artificial limitations of the family,'" *The Western Catholic*, 11 August, 1927; "Doctors Disapprove of Sterilization," *The Western Catholic*, 27 October, 1927; "Study of Eugenics Prohibited by Spanish Edict," *The Western Catholic*, 3 May, 1928; "Sterilization Upheld as valid in Nebraska Supreme Court Ruling," *The Western Catholic*, 25 February, 1931; "Condemnation of 'Sex Education' and 'Eugenics' Theory by Holy Office," *The Western Catholic*, 18 March, 1931; "Sterilization Plan in Germany," *The Western Catholic*, 7 June, 1933.

⁴⁴⁶ "His Holiness Pope Pius Denounces Modern Evils Lengthy Encyclical Published in Rome January 8," *The Western Catholic*, 14 January, 1931; "Text Published of Momentous 16,000 word Encyclical," *The Western Catholic* 21 January, 1931; "Pope's Encyclical to be broadcast by Northwest Station," *The Western Catholic*, 28 January 1931; "Secular Press Gives Wide Publication to Encyclical," *The Western Catholic*, 28 January 1931; "Birth Control League Convention Discussion Dwells on Encyclical," *The Western Catholic*, 4 February, 1931; "Fr. Haas outlines two basis of Catholics' Birth Control Stand," *The Western Catholic*, 4 February, 1931; "Holiness Pope Pius XI speaks to the world," *The Western Catholic*, 18 February, 1931; "Comments by Hygienists on Pope Pius Encyclical," *The Western Catholic*, 18 February, 1931; "Birth Control or Race Suicide," *The Western Catholic*, 2 December, 1931.

⁴⁴⁷ "Opposition to Clinics in Alberta," *The Western Catholic*, 18 January, 1933.

⁴⁴⁸ "Sterilization Plan in Germany," *The Western Catholic*, 7 June, 1933; "Doctor Gives New Version on Birth Control Evil," *The Western Catholic*, 5 July 1933; "Sterilization Evils Cited by Writer in Secular Papers," 4 October, 1933.

The correspondences of Bishop Carroll provide some light as to the lack of opposition to Alberta's eugenic legislation. Carroll wrote to the editor of *The Western Catholic* who, after consulting with several Catholic officials, confirmed that opposition was minimal and that "there was doubt as to whether or not the bill would be put into force, the government seemed to imply that it wouldn't."⁴⁴⁹ Yet, the bill did pass in the last days of that legislative session and Catholics believed it was "railroaded" through by the Minister of Health, George Hoadley⁴⁵⁰ before any opposition could organize. While it is true that the bill received a third reading and passed late in the evening of 6 March, 1928,⁴⁵¹ the provincial newspapers had reported on the possible introduction of a sterilization bill since 1923 when then Minister of Health Richard G. Reid first considered this option.⁴⁵² Plus, both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Edmonton Bulletin* covered Hoadley's first introduction of the sterilization bill in 1927.⁴⁵³ It is unlikely that the Catholics in the province were unaware of these developments, but this does point to a series of complicated reasons for their lack of resistance to eugenics.

During the 1920s, the Catholic Church in Alberta not only had to deal with internal divisions between Anglo-Catholics and French-speaking Catholics, but was also dealing with other issues namely institutional appointments and immigration. The appointment of two Anglo-Catholics bishops, John T. McNally (1871-1952) in Calgary in 1913 and O'Leary in Edmonton

⁴⁴⁹ Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, Carroll, Bishop: Sterilization Act, 1946: Correspondence, 996032201-28.866, Letter from Reverend R. Britton to Bishop Francis P. Carroll, 18 February, 1946

⁴⁵⁰ Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, Carroll, Bishop: Sterilization Act, 1946: Correspondence, 996032201-28.866, Letter from Reverend R. Britton to Bishop Francis P. Carroll, 18 February, 1946.

⁴⁵¹ "Sterilization Bill Finally Adopted in the House," *Edmonton Journal*, 7 March, 1928.

⁴⁵² "Alberta's Financial Situation and How Government is Dealing with it" Hon. R.G. Reid had discussed the situation in Alberta's mental hospitals and suggested two ways of solving the "problems" posed by "mental defectives": segregation or sterilization, *Edmonton Bulletin*, 27 March 1923.

⁴⁵³ "Sterilization of Defectives Before House," *Edmonton Bulletin*, 26 March, 1928; "First Reading for Drastic Bill," *Edmonton Journal*, 26 March, 1927.

in 1920, escalated tensions between Catholics in Alberta. Both arrived from the Maritimes and brought with them an anti-French bias.⁴⁵⁴ Throughout the 1920s, O'Leary worked to expel much of the Francophone clergy from Edmonton.⁴⁵⁵ By 1931, the number of French speaking clergy dropped from sixty-four to sixteen, while the number of English speaking priests increased from three to sixty-four.⁴⁵⁶ As a result, the influence of the French-speaking clergy declined, and the control of the Catholic Church in the province fell into the hands of the Anglo-Catholic clergy.

With the arrival of Ukrainian immigrants into Alberta during the second wave of immigration in the 1920s, the divisions between English-speaking and French-speaking Catholics were even more apparent. Ukrainian immigrants settled near Edmonton, and O'Leary was primarily interested in them for religious reasons. He wanted to ensure that they did not align with the Francophone Catholics. More importantly, he wanted them to preserve their faith and to indicate that they were welcome among Anglo-Catholics in the province.⁴⁵⁷ As illustrated above, as new immigrants settled in Western Canada, they adopted the English language over French. During this period then, the French control over the Church weakened as the number of English-speaking Catholics increased. Victory in this battle for the Anglo-Catholics, however, came at the cost of the independence of the Church which, in no position to sacrifice political capital on controversial policy protests, tacitly aligned itself with the Anglo-Protestant majority in the eugenics debates.

⁴⁵⁴ Henry L. Wostenberg, "Exiled But Not Silent: The Factum Letter of Father Henri Voisin," *Alberta History* (Spring 2010): 17-18.

⁴⁵⁵ Peter McGuigan, "Archbishop Henry O'Leary and the Roaring Twenties," *Alberta History* 44, no. 4 (1996): 9.

⁴⁵⁶ McGuigan, "Archbishop Henry O'Leary," 10.

⁴⁵⁷ McGuigan, "Archbishop Henry O'Leary," 11.

The Church's complicated position was further captured in the correspondence between Bishop Carroll and J.J. Frawley, K.C. of the Alberta Attorney General's Department. In his letter to Bishop Carroll, Frawley recalled a conversation with George Hoadley, where the Minister stated that he "did not expect any particular opposition from Archbishop O'Leary" on the sterilization bill.⁴⁵⁸ While Frawley was unsure of O'Leary's position, he speculated that O'Leary either regarded the passing of the bill as inevitable or that "the manner in which the original Act provided for consent put as much safeguard into the legislation as he could expect."⁴⁵⁹ Perhaps O'Leary was demonstrating a self-awareness about the weak hand that Alberta Catholics held. They were a minority in the province—23 percent of the population—(See: Table 4.1), and, as discussed above, their internal conflict along linguistic lines made engagement on the eugenic issue unattractive. The latter issue also meant that eugenics may not have represented the same threat to Anglo-Catholics, aligned as they were with Anglo-Protestants, the way it did for others, for example, the French-speaking Catholic minority whose language and culture placed them in a position where they might be targets of eugenics policies. In his work on eugenics in Quebec, Normandin points out that Francophones often tried to divert attention away from themselves by blaming immigrants for the increase in social problems yet as Normandin states, the "social hierarchy placed French Canadians in a position where they were prone to be victims of the eugenics movement, with its Anglo-Saxon impetus, just as much as the immigrant."⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, Carroll, Bishop: Sterilization Act, 1946: Correspondence, 996032201-28.866, Letter from J.J. Frawley to Bishop Francis P. Carroll, 27 March, 1946.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Normandin, "Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church," 71.

While there is little evidence of a discussion about eugenics among Catholics in Alberta in the 1920s, there was some during the 1930s following the Papal Encyclical *Casti Connubii*. This discussion was placed within the context of the Catholic opposition to birth control and it was largely led by the Catholic Women's League of Canada, an organization of laywomen. The first chapter of the League was founded in Edmonton 1912 to assist new immigrants, such as Ukrainian Catholics, with settlement in the province and to ensure that they kept their faith and were not converted by other denominations.⁴⁶¹ While immigration was their "greatest and deepest concern" during the early years, the local units of the Catholic Women's League were also involved in public health, child welfare, in helping the poor, and in providing a variety of social services for Catholics.⁴⁶² In the 1930s, they became particularly interested in the rise of birth control clinics and in the introduction of sterilization bills across Canada. Prior to the 1930s, birth control had been viewed with suspicion by many Canadians who feared that it would contribute to the decline of the Anglo-Saxon race. Yet, as result of the Great Depression, birth control had become acceptable and received support of eugenically minded businessmen, women's groups, and clergy who embarked on a campaign to limit the fertility of the poor and working classes.⁴⁶³ In 1933, a number of women's organization in Alberta, including the United Farm Women of Alberta, began to lobby the provincial government for birth control clinics similar to those in Ontario founded by Alvin R. Kaufman (1885-1979) and Mary Elizabeth

⁴⁶¹ Sheila Ross, "'For God and Canada': The Early Years of the Catholic Women's League in Alberta," *CCHA Historical Studies* 62, no.1 (1996): 89.

⁴⁶² Provincial Archives of Alberta, Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Diocesan Council series, "Historical Notes, 1929-1932," PR1975.0576/0041 Box 4.

⁴⁶³ See for example, Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 13; Also Linda Revie, "More Than Just Boots! The Eugenic and Commercial Concerns behind A. R. Kaufman's Birth Controlling Activities," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 23, no. 1 (2006): 119-143.

Hawkins.⁴⁶⁴ The Catholic Women's League protested the establishment of the clinics in Alberta and withdrew their membership as an affiliate of the Local Council of Women⁴⁶⁵ due to the organization's support for birth control.⁴⁶⁶

From 1933 onward, the Catholic Women's League campaigned against birth control and sterilization in Alberta and across Canada. At their annual convention that year, the League passed a resolution regarding birth control, which stated:

Whereas, the Catholic Women's League of Canada believing in the Divine institution of marriage and its sacramental dignity views with alarm the rise of a false and utterly perverse morality of the advocacy of birth control, and

Believing that the spiritual welfare of the state as well as the temporal happiness of its citizens cannot remain safe and sound when the unit of society, the family, is threatened with destruction by the action of certain misguided organization who ask governments to establish clinics and to facilitate birth control;

⁴⁶⁴ Amy Samson, "Eugenics in the Community," 84 ; For information on Kaufman's birth control activities see Revie "More than Just Boots" and Dodd, "The Canadian Birth Control Movement"; For information on the Hawkins' Hamilton clinic see Dodd, "The Canadian Birth Control Movement: Two Approaches to the Dissemination of Contraceptive Technology," *Scientia Canadensis* 9, no.1 (1985): 53-66; Catherine Annau, "Eager Eugenists: A Reappraisal of the Birth Control Society of Hamilton," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 27, no. 53 (1994): 111-133.

⁴⁶⁵ This was the provincial branch of the National Council of Women of Canada which campaigned for enfranchisement of Canadian women, establishment of family planning clinics, and child welfare, among others. For more information on NCWC see N.E.S. Griffiths, *A Splendid Vision: Centennial History of the National Council of Women, 1893-1993* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997); Anne White, "The Calgary Local Council of Women: Traditional Female Christianity in Action (1895-1897 and 1912-1933)," *Canadian Society of Church History (CSC) Historical Papers* (1998): 67-87.

⁴⁶⁶ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Diocesan Council series, "Birth Control and Marriage, 1928-1933," CWL resolution on birth control clinics in Canada, PR1975.0576/0043 Box 4.

Resolved that we the Catholic Women's League of Canada in convention assembled go on record as being unalterably opposed to all forms of artificial birth control, and that we oppose the support of magazines whose pages are used to advertise contraceptives;

Be it resolved that sterilization being contrary to the principles laid down by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on Christian marriage and also as interfering with the God given rights of individuals;

We therefore openly protest against any legislation being enacted to permit such practices and be it further resolved that that the copy of those resolution s be forwarded to the Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada and the Premier of each province.⁴⁶⁷

The League opposed birth control on moral grounds and because it would destabilize traditional gender roles and pose a threat to the traditional family unit. For the League, birth control was particularly dangerous because it deprived women of their “natural” role as mothers. Therefore, the League and the Catholic Church in general condemned any measures that would interfere with reproduction. As Leon points out women who delayed motherhood or chose not to become mothers were viewed by Catholic clergy as selfish for failing to accept their reproductive duties.⁴⁶⁸ Furthermore, birth control intersected with eugenics and the groups who advocated for family planning clinics were also advocating for sterilization legislation during the 1920s and 1930s. This connection did not sit well with many Catholics who feared that they would become targets of the birth control and eugenics campaigns.⁴⁶⁹ Yet, the pronatalist views of Catholics

⁴⁶⁷ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Diocesan Council series, “Birth Control and Marriage, 1928-1933,” Resolution on Birth Control and Sterilization, PR1975.0576/0043 Box 4.

⁴⁶⁸ Leon, *An Image of God*, 55.

⁴⁶⁹ McLaren and Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 130-131.

tended to converge with goals of positive eugenics, particularly the reproduction of “fit” families. While Catholics condemned negative eugenics measures such as sterilization, they supported methods that touched on church teachings and emphasized the importance of a strong family unit.⁴⁷⁰ For the Catholic Women’s League the establishment of family limitation clinics not only “robbed” a woman “of her most noble mission, the transmitting of life,”⁴⁷¹ it also endangered Christian family values.

In their campaign against the clinics, the League presented Members of the Legislative Assembly in Alberta their arguments and resolutions on birth control. This campaign was of vital importance to the League who did not want a repeat of 1928 where they were reportedly caught off guard by the implementation of the *Sexual Sterilization Act*. In a letter to the President of the Local Council of Women, the League’s Secretary Eva Dillon wrote “We have a Minister of Health, who prides himself on being ‘advanced.’ A few years ago he succeeded in getting through his Sterilization Bill ... if the League had protested, it probably would have been blocked...” This time, she argued the League cannot be “caught napping.”⁴⁷² Dillon’s criticism of Hoadley (the Minister of Health) echoed some of the arguments made by Catholics in Manitoba regarding the scientific credibility of eugenicists’ arguments. In other words, eugenics policies, such as sexual sterilization, were based on flawed science. Dillon’s statement also confirmed that the League did not challenge the introduction of the sterilization bill in 1928, and as presented above, there were possible reasons for this, primarily the fact that the Catholics in

⁴⁷⁰ Leon, *An Image of God*, 38-39.

⁴⁷¹ Provincial Archives of Alberta, Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Diocesan Council series, “Birth Control and Marriage, 1928-1933,” CWL Resolution on birth control clinics in Canada, PR1975.0576/0043 Box 4.

⁴⁷² Provincial Archives of Alberta, Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Diocesan Council series, “Birth Control and Marriage, 1928-1933,” Letter from Ms. Eva Dillon to Mrs. Coughlin, 25 April, 1933. PR1975.0576/0043 Box 4

Alberta were split along linguistic lines and deliberately chose to not comment on such controversial topics.

Perhaps the issuing of the Papal Encyclical *Casti connubii*, prompted the League to become much more active in its opposition to birth control and sterilization. However, it is important to note that the Encyclical did not automatically lead Catholics to alter their views and become a united front against eugenics, as Leon and Rosen point out, there were mixed interpretations of the Encyclical and its perspective on eugenics, birth control, and sterilization.⁴⁷³ Lastly, Dillon's argument that the League was "caught napping" in 1928 mirrored the claim made by the editor of *The Western Catholic* that the bill was "railroaded" through the Legislature before Catholics could stage an effective opposition. As established above, due to the extensive media coverage of the sterilization bill, it is doubtful that Catholics were unaware of its introduction and implementation. It is more likely that due to internal conflicts coupled with their weak position in a Protestant majority province, that Catholics in Alberta were dis-incentivized from participating in the discussions pertaining to the sexual sterilization bill.

Conclusion

The response of the Catholics to sterilization measures in the two provinces captures the complexity of Catholic perspective on eugenics. Generally, Catholicism was not a monolithic unit and Catholic views on eugenics varied and were often shaped by particular local

⁴⁷³ See Leon, *An Image of God* and Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*.

circumstances before and after the Papal Encyclical of 1930. Some Catholics rejected eugenics outright, while others agreed with the eugenicists' goals of "race improvement," they opposed the methods that eugenicists employed such as sterilization. Furthermore, historians have revealed that Francophone Catholics were particularly active in opposing sterilization policies. This was likely due to the fact their culture and language was threatened by a movement organized by Protestant English Canadians, not so much because of eugenics itself but due to the historical tensions between the two groups.⁴⁷⁴ In Manitoba, the sterilization legislation was clearly a significant issue for Catholics who organized an effective resistance as soon as the sterilization bill was introduced by the Minister of Education, Hoey.

In Alberta, on the other hand, the situation was more complex. The eugenics movement in that province overlapped with the battle for the control of the church between English-speaking and French-speaking clergy. As a result of this conflict, Anglo-Catholics were incentivized to align themselves with the Protestant majority and discouraged from taking controversial political stands. In general, English-speaking Catholics felt that they could not win the fight over eugenics and opted not to engage with the eugenics issue locally. Catholics were a minority in a largely Anglo-Protestant Alberta and perhaps the Anglo-Catholic hierarchy did not want to appear adversarial toward the Protestants and instead wanted to integrate into the dominant society. It is also possible that Catholics in Alberta avoided the eugenics debate because there was no official condemnation from the Pope Pius XI. As Normandin points out, the Vatican adopted a "wait and see attitude" with respect to the eugenics movement did not state

⁴⁷⁴ See for example, Normandin, "Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church"; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*; Springer, "Eugenics in Ontario," 54-94.

its position on the subject until 1930, almost near the end of the eugenics movement.⁴⁷⁵ Once the Vatican released the official statements, it provided Catholics with support and encouragement to challenge eugenics theory and other measures that ran contrary to the Church Doctrine.

Even when Catholics challenged sterilization and birth control in Alberta during the 1930s, the majority of the campaigning was done by lay Catholics, particularly the Catholic Women's League. The Church hierarchy was not involved in the discussion and there is no evidence in the records of Archbishop O'Leary and Bishop Carroll that they participated in the campaign. In Manitoba, on the other hand, it was primarily the Catholic clergy who protested the implementation of the sterilization clause on behalf of their communities. Catholics in Manitoba were not as divided as their Alberta counterparts, as their battles were fought much earlier. As a result, Anglo-Catholics and French-speaking Catholics in Manitoba were much more effective in framing their arguments against sterilization, they not only opposed the procedure because it ran counter to Christian principles, they also questioned the science behind eugenics theory, and even threatened the lawmakers with the loss of the Catholic vote if the bill had been implemented. The approach of the Catholic clergy in Manitoba was much broader because they realized that Catholics were unlikely to be the only group to oppose the sterilization clause.⁴⁷⁶ The vocal resistance of Catholics in Manitoba mattered and as will be shown in Chapter Five, the political situation in that province served to empower them and allow them to influence lawmakers to defeat the sterilization bill.

⁴⁷⁵ Normandin, "Eugenics, McGill, and the Catholic Church, 73.

⁴⁷⁶ "Manitoba Legislature Condemns Sterilization of Mental Defectives," *The Catholic Register*, 20 March, 1933.

Chapter Five: Legislative Debates and the Sterilization Bills

On 24 February, 1928, the *Edmonton Journal* reported that a “Lengthy Discussion Ensues in House on Sterilization Bill,” as the United Farmers of Alberta government introduced the *Sexual Sterilization Act*.⁴⁷⁷ A few years later, in 1933, the *Winnipeg Free Press* informed the readers that “Legislation to Control Mental Defectives [was] Asked” by the Liberal-Progressive provincial government under John Bracken.⁴⁷⁸ The introduction of sterilization measures in both Alberta and Manitoba sparked serious debates about the bills. Focusing on the legislative debates is an effective way to examine how politicians and lawmakers were influenced by public opinion. It also highlights some of the ways in which political differences shaped the outcome of the debates over sterilization in the two provinces. This chapter examines the ways in which the arguments made by an emerging professional class of psychiatrists, grassroots organizations such as the United Farmers of Alberta and United Farm Women of Alberta, and religious groups such as the Roman Catholics, became a part of the debate over the forced sterilization of those deemed to be “mentally defective.” I suggest that the campaigns of these groups for or against sterilization mattered. Their arguments were important as they exerted pressure on politicians and lawmakers to adopt or reject eugenic measures such as sterilization. Furthermore, the political conditions in the two provinces served to either weaken or strengthen minority opposition to eugenic proposals. Alberta’s monolithic party politics during the 1920s minimized the opposition and allowed for the majority to exercise power unchecked, while in Manitoba

⁴⁷⁷ “Lengthy Discussion Ensues in House on Sterilization Bill,” *Edmonton Journal*, 24 February, 1928.

⁴⁷⁸ “Legislation to Control Mental Defectives Asked,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 February, 1933.

consensus seeking Liberal-Progressives were much more cautious of controversial policies that could contribute to divisions within the party.

Politics in Alberta and Manitoba

Since joining Confederation, in 1870 and 1905, respectively, the politics in Manitoba and Alberta were dominated by the Conservative and Liberal parties. The Conservative party governed Manitoba for the majority of the period between 1870 and 1914, and represented the primacy of provincial rights against a distrusted federal government. In Alberta, on the other hand, the ruling Liberal Party was closely aligned with Anglo-Canadian politics in central Canada and with the federal Liberal party.⁴⁷⁹

The years after 1918 represented a shift in Canadian politics, particularly on the Prairies. Regional tensions together with post-war socio-political anxieties contributed to the rise of farm movements and the establishment third parties. Even at the federal level, the new Progressive Party of Canada made significant gains during the 1921 election, becoming the second largest party in Parliament with 57 seats.⁴⁸⁰ In the Canadian West, the rise of third parties was particularly a response to the perceived high handed “imperialism” of central Canada and the apparent political and economic disparities that existed between provinces.⁴⁸¹ For Prairie farmers, as historian Bradford Rennie points out, this inequality was connected to

⁴⁷⁹ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 341-342.

⁴⁸⁰ Mark Bednorski, “Manitoba Populism and the Farmers’ Movement in the Provincial Elections of 1920 and 1922” (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1997), 12.

⁴⁸¹ Bradford J. Rennie, “‘A Far Green Country Unto a Swift Sunrise’: The Utopianism of the Alberta Farm Movement, 1909-1923,” in *The Prairie West as Promised Land*, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzan (Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2007), 244.

“discriminatory freight rates, tariff protectionism, high interest rates,” among others that tended to favour manufacturers and big business in Eastern Canada.⁴⁸² For example, farmers in the West objected to high tariffs which benefitted manufacturing in the central Canada but led to high costs for agricultural equipment and supplies for Western farmers. Connected to this was the rising distrust of “traditional” parties, namely the Liberals and the Conservatives.⁴⁸³ This distrust had been growing among organized farmers for years but it came to the fore after 1911 following the defeat of Wilfrid Laurier’s Liberals and the defeat of reciprocity.⁴⁸⁴ In 1911, Laurier had planned to renew the Reciprocity⁴⁸⁵ agreement which would have essentially allowed free entry of Canadian raw materials into the American market.⁴⁸⁶ While farmers in Alberta and Saskatchewan supported the agreement and the Liberal party, there was significant opposition voiced from the Conservative party, including the provincial branch in Manitoba. The Conservatives argued that the potential agreement with the United States threatened the Canadian economy as it weakened the interests of railways and industries if east-west trade declined in favour of north-south.⁴⁸⁷ When Laurier called the 1911 federal election, it was essentially a question about reciprocity. The Liberals were defeated and this meant the end of the reciprocity agreement with the United States. For farmers, this was a significant blow that contributed to their bitterness and anger toward central Canada, raised their class consciousness, and led to distrust of the two main political parties.⁴⁸⁸ Even in Manitoba, where the

⁴⁸² Rennie, “A Far Green Country Unto a Swift Sunrise,” 244.

⁴⁸³ William L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), 25.

⁴⁸⁴ Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 26.

⁴⁸⁵ In 1854, Britain and the United States signed a trade Treaty which allowed British colonies, in what would become Canada, free access to the American market. The Treaty was in effect until 1866.

⁴⁸⁶ Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 21.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁸⁸ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 42.

Conservatives had dominated provincial politics, support among farmers waned as the party largely became associated with representing the interests of Central Canada.⁴⁸⁹

The events of 1911 contributed to the so-called “agrarian revolt” of the interwar period which led farm organizations to seek political action.⁴⁹⁰ The farmers believed in a democratic and cooperative society, in state involvement to bring about social reform, welfare legislation, and progressive taxation, among others. As Rennie states farmers organized in order exert pressure on governments to implement these measures, and they became politically active in order to bring about this change themselves.⁴⁹¹ In 1903, Manitoba farmers formed the Manitoba Grain Growers Association and, by 1919, signalling a move towards an involvement in politics, the organization changed its name to the United Farmers of Manitoba (UFM).⁴⁹² In Alberta, there were several farm organizations at the turn of the twentieth century, but two of the most powerful were The Alberta Society of Equity and the Alberta Farmers’ Association. In 1909, the two organizations merged to form the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA).⁴⁹³ Many of local branches of these organizations formed to give practical aid to struggling farmers and to lobby the government on their behalf instead of taking direct political action. Due to the downturn in grain prices following the First World War, farm members in Alberta and Manitoba began

⁴⁸⁹ Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 25.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 26; Robert Wardhaugh and Jason Thistlewaite, “John Bracken, 1922-1943,” in *Manitoba Premiers of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Barry Ferguson and Robert Wardhaugh (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2010), 168.

⁴⁹¹ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 9; Rennie, “A Far Green Country Unto a Swift Sunrise,” 249.

⁴⁹² Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 97.

⁴⁹³ Rennie, “A Far Green Country Unto a Swift Sunrise,” 244-245.

agitating for direct political participation. During the interwar years, the Prairie Provinces elevated third parties, which represented the interests of labour and farmers, to power.⁴⁹⁴

Farmers in Manitoba and Alberta shared similar views about the need to reform society, and had similar concerns about the “traditional parties,” freight rates, and tariff protectionism. Yet, by the early 1920s, politics in the two provinces, both nationally and provincially, developed along different lines. Both provinces elected United Farmers governments, eschewing the traditional bifurcated framework of central Canada, but their bases were different. As historian William L. Morton illustrates, the Progressive movement was divided between the Manitoba chapter, which was moderate, primarily Liberal, and the Alberta group which was much more radical.⁴⁹⁵ The agrarian movement in Alberta was influenced by American radical agrarian politics that stressed direct democracy, was anti-party and anti-big business. Many of the supporters of the agrarian political movement in Alberta were American immigrants who settled in southern part of the province.⁴⁹⁶ In addition, many of the leadership roles in the UFA were occupied by individuals who had previously been active in the American farmers’ organizations.⁴⁹⁷ In terms of political leadership in the UFA and UFM, Historian David Laycock uses the term, “crypto-liberalism”⁴⁹⁸ to describe the provincial governments of the Prairie Provinces during the first half of the twentieth century. He argues that the commitment to “grain grower politics” of these administrations, including the United Farmers of Manitoba and the

⁴⁹⁴ Paul F. Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada: A Survey Showing American Parallels* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 1997), xx.

⁴⁹⁵ Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 168.

⁴⁹⁶ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 52.

⁴⁹⁷ Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 38-39.

⁴⁹⁸ This term was coined by historian William L. Morton in his work *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 200-201.

United Farmers of Alberta, was “questionable” given their close links to the Liberal Party.⁴⁹⁹ Specifically, Laycock suggests that the policies of these parties were not particularly radical and could be best described as “disguised Liberalism.”⁵⁰⁰ In Manitoba, as we will see, Premier John Bracken’s “Brackenism” approach to governing falls in line with Laycocks’ notion of “crypto-liberalism.” While leading the United Farmers of Manitoba / Progressives Bracken embraced a technocratic style of government over a radical approach emphasized by grassroots politics. Similarly, in Alberta, the UFA Premier John Brownlee, though heading a comparatively radical base, was also a crypto-liberal who valued expert advice in policymaking over popular interventions by the UFA rank and file.⁵⁰¹

By 1920, Manitoba’s Liberal Party under Premier Tobias C. Norris (1861-1936) had been in power for five years and faced a number of political and economic challenges, including the collapse of grain prices, and labour unrest culminating in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. In 1920, in hopes of increasing his party’s majority in the Legislature, Norris called an election, only to be shocked by the result. The Liberals did not make gains, but instead were reduced to 21 seats out of 55 without much power.⁵⁰² The newly organized United Farmers of Manitoba made impressive gains in their first provincial election winning twelve seats.⁵⁰³ Interestingly, UFM did not have a unified political platform, no party leader, and the candidates that were nominated for office each presented their own platforms in line with the needs of their

⁴⁹⁹ David Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910 to 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 23.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁰¹ Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought*, 55.

⁵⁰² John Kendle, *John Bracken: A Political Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 26

⁵⁰³ Bednorski, “Manitoba Populism,” 26.

constituency.⁵⁰⁴ The UFM were non-partisan and believed in efficient and effective government.⁵⁰⁵ The Norris administration held on for two more years, before losing a vote of no confidence and being forced to call another election. During the 1922 election, the Liberals were swept out of office by the United Farmers of Manitoba.⁵⁰⁶

By the 1922 election, the United Farmers of Manitoba were still leaderless, but they officially entered the election campaign and presented a unified party platform. The UFM platform sought to alleviate some of the stresses that Manitoba farmers experienced as a result of the economic recession following the First World War.⁵⁰⁷ The party put forward a progressive agrarian platform that empathised non-partisan, efficient, business-like government.⁵⁰⁸ It called for proportional representation, reforms in education, extension of farm loans programs, gender equality, and implementation of child welfare programs, among others.⁵⁰⁹ The UFM not only gained support from farmers but also from the Winnipeg business community. This alliance was key to their victory in the 1922 election, where the UFM won twenty-four seats, the Liberals dropped to seven, the Conservatives six, Labour won six, and Independents eight.⁵¹⁰ Having won an election without a leader, the UFM approached John Bracken, an agronomist with no political experience, to lead the party. Bracken's lack of political experience was not seen as a problem by the Farmers, in fact, they viewed it favourably. Bracken's background in

⁵⁰⁴ Bednorski, "Manitoba Populism, 86-87.

⁵⁰⁵ Wardhaugh and Thistlewaite, "John Bracken, 1922-1943," 169.

⁵⁰⁶ Kendle, *John Bracken*, 26-27.

⁵⁰⁷ "United Farmers to Enter the Provincial Political Arena," *Brandon Daily Sun*, 14 January, 1921; Bednorski, "Manitoba Populism," 88.

⁵⁰⁸ Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought*, 53.

⁵⁰⁹ Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba Fonds, United Farmers of Manitoba Platforms, 1913-1931, P7582/6, "Plan for Provincial Political Campaign for the United Farmers of Manitoba," (1922), 1-8; See also, Bednorski, "Manitoba Populism," 88.

⁵¹⁰ Wardhaugh and Thistlewaite, "John Bracken, 1922-1943," 169; Deferred elections were held in three districts—The Pas, Ethelbert, and Rupertsland—in autumn of 1922, Kendle, *John Bracken*, 28.

agricultural science, his emphasis on non-partisanship appealed to the Farmers, and in turn, the Farmers' political platform appealed to Bracken.⁵¹¹

At the opening of the new legislative session in 1922, Bracken declared:

We are not here to play politics or to represent a single class, but to get down to serious business of giving this province an efficient government, and in that task we will welcome all the co-operation offered to us from the opposite side of the House.⁵¹²

This declaration captured what would become known as “Brackenism,”—non-partisanship, business-like administration, and coalition governments—that would shape Manitoba politics into the 1940s. During the early years in office, the Bracken government—now re-named the Progressive Party of Manitoba—adopted the 1922 UFM platform but the administration was not controlled by the UFM or any other interest groups. By the mid-1920s the farmers had become detached from politics, and by the late 1920s, the UFM ceased to be politically active.⁵¹³

Following Brackenism, Bracken's focus on a sound and efficient government was no different from the policies of the Liberal party. In fact, much of the UFM's platform was borrowed from the earlier, more progressive platform of the Liberals. Plus, many Liberal supporters also flocked to Bracken's party during this period.⁵¹⁴ As Laycock suggests, the farm supporters of Progressives “also desired sound business administration, but not divorced from clearly defined

⁵¹¹ Kendle, *John Bracken*, 30-31.

⁵¹² Quoted in William L. Morton, *Manitoba: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 384.

⁵¹³ Kendle, *John Bracken*, 41-42; For an in-depth analysis of UFM withdrawal from politics see Gerald E. Panting, “A Study of United Farmers of Manitoba to 1928: An Agricultural Association During a Period of Transition,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1954), 113-137.

⁵¹⁴ Bednorski, “Manitoba Populism,” 170.

popular control of governments.”⁵¹⁵ For Bracken, the lack of pressure from UFM meant that he had the freedom to pursue technocratic over radical political experimentation in direct democracy, the latter being favoured by the UFM rank and file. Despite this difference, Bracken still had the support of the farmers.⁵¹⁶

Throughout the 1920s, Bracken’s administration was primarily concerned with stabilizing Manitoba’s economy and with developing the province’s natural resources.⁵¹⁷ In 1927, the Premier called an election and ran on his party’s record in the previous five years. The election result was not one that Bracken had hoped for but he was still satisfied. The Progressives won thirty-one seats, and there were twenty-four in opposition.⁵¹⁸ The majority of the party’s support came from farmers, voters in rural areas, and French-Canadians, but they failed to make many gains in urban areas, winning only two out of the ten seats in Winnipeg.⁵¹⁹ One of the reasons for the party’s lack of substantial gains can be explained by the resurgence of the Conservative party, who had spent the previous five years, rebuilding the party and regaining the trust of Manitoba’s voters.⁵²⁰

It was also during this period that a dialogue first began about a potential merger of the Liberals and the Progressives, but it would not be until the 1932 election that this would become a reality.⁵²¹ The impact of the Great Depression led the Progressives to seek assistance from other parties in dealing with the economic crisis. For Bracken, this meant a coalition

⁵¹⁵ Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought*, 53.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵¹⁷ Wardhaugh and Thistlewaite, “John Bracken, 1922-1943,” 171; 174.

⁵¹⁸ Canadian Elections Database, “1927 Manitoba Election,”

<http://canadianelectionsdatabase.ca/PHASE5/?p=0&type=election&ID=643> (Accessed: 30 June, 2018).

⁵¹⁹ Kendle, *John Bracken*, 66.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ Kendle, *John Bracken*, 63-65.

government. While some Liberals were hesitant to join with the Progressives in the 1920s, by the 1930s the mood had shifted in favour of it.⁵²² During the 1932 election, the Liberal-Progressives essentially ran on a platform promising to work through the economic challenges and to do “whatever is best for Manitoba, not just for farmers, not just for city people, but all people without respect of class or creed.”⁵²³ This passage and his coalition with the Liberals captures the essence of Brackenism—the belief in working across party lines to combat a crisis and in turn to provide the province with an effective government. His ability to negotiate with the Liberals further allowed Bracken to broaden his support and achieve a functioning coalition. On the night of the election, the voters gave the Liberal-Progressives a majority government with thirty-eight seats, followed by ten for the Conservatives, five for Labour, and two for Independents.⁵²⁴ The main focus of the coalition during the early 1930s was to combat the province’s financial problems and provide unemployment relief. The administration drastically reduced expenditures, and attempted to only leave essential services untouched.⁵²⁵

Brackenism in Manitoba produced a government that was technocratic in its outlook and was consensus-seeking in its politics. Seeking unity, it was adverse to controversial policies that might generate intense minority opposition. Eugenics was, at once, consistent with the technocratic and progressive mindset of the administration but, equally, was at odds with its consensus driven approach to governing.

In Alberta, on the other hand, the farmers’ movement had been building since the 1870s, and was founded on an agrarian ideology, and was influenced by both radical and liberal

⁵²² Wardhaugh and Thistlewaite, “John Bracken, 1922-1943,” 179.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Kendle, *John Bracken*, 126.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 127.

thought. In his study on the UFA, historian Bradford Rennie divides this movement into three distinct periods: “the forming of the movement”, which witnessed the establishment of farmers’ organizations that sought to challenge the existing political and economic conditions; the second phase involved “the building of the movement,” through an increase in membership and the founding of a women’s auxiliary; lastly, “the politicization of the movement” occurred in 1919 where the UFA became politically active, and in 1921 ran in the provincial election.⁵²⁶

During the 1921 campaign the UFA presented a twelve-point provincial platform that outlined their legislative program. They called for proportional representation, direct legislation and recall, abolition of patronage, improvements in education and public health, and the implementation of prohibition, among many others.⁵²⁷ When the votes came in, the United Farmers of Alberta won a majority government with thirty-eight seats, the Liberals were in second with fifteen, and Independents and Labour with four seats each.⁵²⁸ Like the UFM, the UFA were leaderless when they won the election. The UFA president, Henry Wise Wood (1860-1940) declined the nomination for Premier, instead, he nominated the UFA vice-president, Herbert W. Greenfield (1869-1949), who accepted the position.⁵²⁹ Greenfield not only inherited a province that was economically struggling as a result of repeated droughts and crop failures, but he also had to deal with labour unrest in the coal mining industry, bitter divisions over

⁵²⁶ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 6.

⁵²⁷ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, Series 2, UFA political platform and campaign literature for the 1921 elections, “United Farmers of Alberta Provincial Platform, Declaration of Principles,” M-1749-18.

⁵²⁸ Canadian Elections Database, “1921 Alberta Election,” <http://canadianelectionsdatabase.ca/PHASE5/?p=0&type=election&ID=620> (Accessed: 30 June, 2018).

⁵²⁹ Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, 217.

prohibition, and most significantly with quarrels within his own party.⁵³⁰ Farmers believed in cooperation and “group government,”⁵³¹ and their anti-caucus and anti-party stance created divisions for the UFA administration, so much so that despite their majority in the legislature, the government was in danger of collapsing.⁵³² Greenfield’s lack of control over the House coupled with various economic issues, contributed to his resignation in 1925.⁵³³

Following Greenfield’s resignation, the UFA members approached John Brownlee about becoming Premier. Brownlee was a lawyer, and served as the Attorney General in the Greenfield administration.⁵³⁴ During the mid-1920s, the UFA under Brownlee was primarily concerned with tackling the economic issues in the province, namely the issue of freight rates, railways, and the federal transfer of control of the lands and natural resources to Alberta.⁵³⁵ Addressing these issues was essential before the 1926 election. In that campaign, Brownlee ran on his party’s record in the previous five years. The UFA came out of the election with an increased majority, gaining forty-four seats, with Liberals winning five, Labour five, Conservatives four, and Independents one.⁵³⁶ With this election, Brownlee essentially strengthened his position in the party and gained mastery over the wider UFA organization. Like Bracken in Manitoba, Brownlee viewed government as a business-like administration and his style of governing was

⁵³⁰ For additional details about Greenfield’s Premiership see David C. Jones, “Herbert W. Greenfield, 1921-1925,” in *Alberta Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Bradford J. Rennie (Regina: Regina University Press, 2004), 59-76.

⁵³¹ The UFA president, Henry Wise Wood promoted the idea of “group government.” It involved moving away from a party system and towards electing “non-party occupational representatives according to each group’s numerical strength through a proportional representation system.” See Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 214.

⁵³² Jones, “Herbert W. Greenfield, 1921-1925,” 69-70.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵³⁴ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 410.

⁵³⁵ Franklin L. Foster, “John E. Brownlee, 1925-1934,” in *Alberta Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Bradford J. Rennie (Regina: Regina University Press, 2004), 84.

⁵³⁶ Canadian Elections Database, “1926 Alberta Election,” <http://canadianelectionsdatabase.ca/PHASE5/?p=0&type=election&ID=621> (Accessed: 29 August, 2018).

also technocratic.⁵³⁷ Unlike Bracken's government, however, there was tension between the UFA administration and the farmers' organization.⁵³⁸ Specifically, the UFA presented resolutions regarding policy to "their" government but often the Brownlee administration was not interested in popular intervention.⁵³⁹ According to Laycock, the UFA resolutions were viewed by the government as "unwelcome intrusions," and over time contributed to the decline of the organization's influence over "their" government, and the decline in membership. Instead, Brownlee preferred to consult experts in the realm of policymaking.⁵⁴⁰ Unlike in Manitoba, the UFA's electoral victory in Alberta in 1926 essentially created a single party government where there was little opposition. This meant that the UFA had enough strength to introduce and implement controversial policies that Bracken's coalition government in Manitoba could not do. The differences in the political mandates of the two governments played an important role in the debates over eugenics during the 1920s in Alberta and the 1930s in Manitoba. It is to this controversial topic that I turn to now.

Support for Sterilization in Alberta

In 1927, citing strong public pressure, the Minister of Health, George Hoadley of the United Farmers of Alberta introduced what would become the *Sexual Sterilization Act*. He admitted that the government had yet to print the bill and to decide whether or not to push it through during the 1927 session or wait until the next Legislative session. Nevertheless,

⁵³⁷ Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought*, 55.

⁵³⁸ Foster, "John E. Brownlee, 1925-1934," 86-87.

⁵³⁹ See for example, Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought*, 55; 93-96.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

Hoadley argued that a sterilization bill was necessary “owing to the appalling growth of the mental defectives in the various provincial institutions.”⁵⁴¹ He recognized that the legislation was not quite developed yet and that it might not pass in the 1927 session but argued that other jurisdictions were considering similar legislation as a result of increase in “mental deficiency.”⁵⁴² Hoadley was correct, the bill did not pass second reading. In March 1928, Hoadley re-introduced the bill and it passed with a vote of thirty-one to eleven, and Alberta became the first Canadian province to implement a eugenics program.⁵⁴³

As seen in previous chapters, the social and economic changes occurring in Canada during the first decades of the 20th century, concerned many social reformers and politicians that Canada was becoming less homogenous. As historian Erika Dyck suggests “eugenics offered an appealing solution to the growing problem of social and moral decay by promising to support stricter immigration policies, while focusing on the internal make-up of western Canadian society and even promoting invasive measures to ensure that the so called unfit members of society were not capable of reproduction.”⁵⁴⁴ The concerns over national degeneration as a result of increase in “mental deficiency” was intensified due to the findings of the Mental Hygiene Surveys conducted by psychiatrists C. K. Clarke and Clarence Hincks. Focusing on these surveys helps explain the larger context in which eugenic legislation was discussed in during the 1920s and 1930s.

Following the request of the provincial government, the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene under Clarence Hincks surveyed Alberta’s institutions in 1919 and published

⁵⁴¹ “Sterilization of Defectives Before the House,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 26 March, 1927.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ “Sterilization Bill Finally Adopted in the House,” *Edmonton Journal*, 7 March, 1928.

⁵⁴⁴ Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 9.

its findings in 1921.⁵⁴⁵ The survey revealed that Alberta's institutions were overcrowded and overrun with "mental defectives." Speaking of those deemed "mentally defective," the Committee suggested that:

They are rightly regarded as a social liability, and when neglected may contribute to criminality, vice, and pauperism. When adequate measures are taken by a province to prevent an increase of its abnormal population, and when suitable facilities are employed to control existing cases, there ensues a considerable diminution of social distress and human suffering.⁵⁴⁶

Specifically, the Committee viewed "mental deficiency" as the cause of various social problems. As historian Angus McLaren explains, for eugenicists it was much easier to blame the individual for the increase in social problems across the country than to actually implement social reform to solve those problems.⁵⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Committee also implied that eugenic measures must be employed by the provincial government to control the number of "mental defectives," through segregation in institutions and perhaps even through sterilization. For eugenicists both of these measures ensured that those deemed "mentally defective" would be prevented from reproducing.

The findings in the Alberta survey were taken up by social reformers in the province, particularly the United Farm Women of Alberta. For example, by 1917 United Farm Women of Alberta advocated reform and state action, particularly in the field of health and education, with

⁵⁴⁵ Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta," 3.

⁵⁴⁶ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, "Mental Hygiene Survey of the Province of Alberta" (1921): 4.

⁵⁴⁷ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 37.

a particular focus on maternal welfare and mental health. The United Farm Women of Alberta played a significant role in raising concerns about degeneration but also lobbied the government for reform to avoid this. The organization exerted significant influence on the provincial government, and the United Farmers of Alberta gladly endorsed all of United Farm Women of Alberta's resolutions and requests.⁵⁴⁸

In 1921, the United Farm Women of Alberta were pushing for government action on the problem of "mental defectives." In an article published in the *United Farmers of Alberta* newspaper, Mrs. M. L. Sears (n.d.), the then President of the United Farm Women of Alberta called on the men in the United Farmers of Alberta to support the causes of their sister organization stating:

A resolution regarding sterilization was passed two years ago by the Convention. It was recommended that this subject be discussed at your Local meeting. The menace of the mental defective is a grave one.⁵⁴⁹

Indeed, the United Farmers of Alberta had similar concerns about "mental defectives" and the "feeble-minded" as the women's organization. Influenced by the findings of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, the United Farm Women of Alberta were also worried about "mental deficiency" in the province, and as early as 1922, they formed a committee, led by Mrs. Margaret Gunn, to address this issue.⁵⁵⁰ Similarly, at their 1922, annual convention, the

⁵⁴⁸ Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, " 120; 251n32.

⁵⁴⁹ M.L. Sears, "High Time for the Men to Act," *United Farmers of Alberta*, 1 December, 1923.

⁵⁵⁰ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, Series 4, Minutes of the United Farm Women of Alberta, micro/ufwa (1922): 78.

United Farmers of Alberta supported the resolution passed by the farm women's organization to lobby the government for eugenic legislation. The resolution stated:

Whereas the problem of the feeble-minded is a continuous menace to society, and
Whereas the policy heretofore carried out in this province deals only with the worst cases of mentally defective children, and
Whereas the real danger is constituted by the mentally defective adult;
Therefore be it resolved that we urge upon the Government the necessity of putting into operation as speedily as possible a plan whereby the adult mental defective of both sexes may be kept under custodial care during the entire period of production. In this connection we would recommend that our women make a careful study of eugenics with special reference to sterilization.⁵⁵¹

Here, the United Farmers of Alberta and the United Farm Women of Alberta identified "feeble-mindedness" as a significant problem that required government intervention. They called for measures that would segregate "feeble-minded" adults in custodial care "during the entire period of reproduction," and further urged the government to study the sterilization option.⁵⁵²

The resolution was forwarded to the Minister of Health, Richard G. Reid, who stated that while the government was in favour of a sterilization measure, they had to ensure that there was enough public support to introduce it in the Legislature.⁵⁵³ The pressure placed on Reid by the

⁵⁵¹ Glenbow Museum and Archives, United Farmers of Alberta fonds, Series 2, Minutes of the United Farmers of Alberta, micro/ufa (1922): 100.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 100.

⁵⁵³ Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta, 8; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 100.

findings of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, along with anxieties over “mental deficiency” as espoused by the United Farmers and United Farm Women, led to a discussion of sterilization in the Alberta Legislature in 1923. Speaking to the Legislature, Reid asked:

Should we provide institutional care for all mental defectives, with all the cost which it entails, or should we not consider the possibility of dealing with the matter in a more drastic way? Sometimes it is necessary and just that we should sacrifice sentiment to the greatest interests of humanity...this is the thought I would like to leave with you.⁵⁵⁴

Strictly speaking, for Reid, a sterilization measure was seen as necessary for the greater good of society as it would not only “protect” provincial resources but also prevent “mental defectives” from “contaminating” the health of the society. As I have pointed out in previous chapters, the economic concerns in the 1920s coupled with increasing nativist sentiment created ripe conditions for a discussion of sterilization in Alberta. Additionally, Alberta’s mental health care system was not as developed as that of the longer settled Canadian provinces.⁵⁵⁵ Prior to the opening of the Ponoka Mental Hospital in 1911, many of the patients suffering from mental conditions found themselves confined in prisons or at the Brandon Insane Asylum in Manitoba. Even after the Ponoka institution opened its doors, it was flooded with patients.⁵⁵⁶ Alberta would not build another institution until the 1920s with the development of the Oliver Mental

⁵⁵⁴ Quoted in Christian “the Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta,” 8.

⁵⁵⁵ Strange and Stephen, “Eugenics in Canada,” 531.

⁵⁵⁶ Geertje Boschma, “A Family Point of View: Negotiating Asylum Care in Alberta, 1905-1930,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 25, no. 2 (2008): 370.

Hospital.⁵⁵⁷ This suggests that for the provincial government, sterilization was more economically viable than segregation at a time when the province was still developing its health care system. Moreover, Sociologist Jana Grekul has suggested that eugenicists in Alberta were influenced by the developments in the United States, particularly in California and Virginia, both of which enacted sterilization laws in 1909 and 1924, respectively. Once Alberta's program was implemented, the Eugenics Board kept a close eye on the developments in California and used the state's program as a model for Alberta's eugenic program.⁵⁵⁸ What is more, there was widespread political support for sterilization measures from the United Farmers of Alberta and the United Farm Women of Alberta. For all of these reasons, Alberta's politicians and lawmakers decided to take the route toward introducing and implementing a sterilization policy rather than just practicing segregation of those deemed "mentally defective."

In 1923, when Reid stated that it was necessary to build public backing for eugenic sterilization before any legislation can be introduced, this provided the United Farm Women of Alberta among others with the opportunity to gather that support for such legislation. While it is unclear what impact the campaign for eugenic measures had on the general public in the province, it is evident that they were aware of the campaign itself. This was because Alberta's newspapers published extensively on the problem of the "mental defective", particularly following the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene survey. For instance, in 1922, the *Wainwright Star* published an article on "the problem of the mentally defective" suggesting that this was "one of the greatest and the most perplexing of social problems."⁵⁵⁹ Similarly, an

⁵⁵⁷ Robert Lampard, *Alberta's Medical History: Young and Lusty, and Full of Life* (Red Deer: Robert Lampard, M.D., 2008), 347.

⁵⁵⁸ Grekul, "The Social Construction of the Feeble-minded Threat," 137; 247.

⁵⁵⁹ "The Problem of the Mentally Defective," *Wainwright Star*, 6 September, 1922.

article in the *Lethbridge Daily Herald* stated that “one of the greatest problems facing the government is the care of the mental defective.”⁵⁶⁰ Interestingly, even some of the local meetings of the United Farm Women of Alberta were covered in the newspapers including their resolutions regrading education, legislation, and public health. During its discussion on public health the farm women re-stated their views on the issue of mental deficiency and agreed to forward its resolutions to the provincial government.⁵⁶¹ The *Lethbridge Daily Herald* also reported on Magistrate Emily Murphy’s lecture tours across Alberta where she addressed a number of issues including the supposed increase of insanity and feeble-mindedness in the province.⁵⁶² In her work on the speaking tours of Emily Murphy and British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928), historian Sarah Carter has revealed that these lectures acted as vehicles to spread the eugenic message and garner support for eugenic measures across the Prairie Provinces. She argues that the views of these women on “racial betterment” of the British Empire intertwined and complemented each other, and ultimately made distinctions between those who belonged in the British Empire and those who did not, namely the “diseased,” the “feeble-minded,” and the “foreigner.”⁵⁶³ Similarly, Murphy disseminated her views by contributing articles to local newspapers. For example, in a newspaper article for the *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, Murphy wrote on sterilization that “The remedy is obvious. It is a matter of humanity. Insane people are not entitled to progeny.”⁵⁶⁴ Murphy in her work as a

⁵⁶⁰ “Province,” *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 5 April, 1923.

⁵⁶¹ “Raymond Women Tell of Meeting of Farm Women,” *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 26 January, 1922.

⁵⁶² “Magistrate Murphy Speaks to the Women’s Institute,” *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 31 May, 1926.

⁵⁶³ Sarah Carter, “Develop a Great Imperial Race:” Emmeline Pankhurst, Emily Murphy, and Their Promotion of “Race Betterment” in Western Canada in the 1920s,” in *Finding Directions West: Readings that Locate and Dislocate Western Canada’s Past*, eds. George Colpitts and Heather Devine (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017), 133-134.

⁵⁶⁴ Quoted in Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 53.

magistrate in Alberta reviewed insanity cases before these individuals were transferred to Ponoka Mental Hospital. Erin Moss, Hank Stam, and Diane Kattevilder have demonstrated,

She [Murphy] was by profession confronted with many social ills, including “lunacy.” From 1906 on, the magistrate had to be provided with the family history—this is the period when family trees were used by eugenicists to make their case—and a report on the physical condition of the insane person.⁵⁶⁵

As a result of this experience, Murphy campaigned (through publications and speeches) for eugenic measures as a means of controlling the number of insane and feeble-minded individuals. I suggested in Chapter Two that women demanded a role in politics, and were interested in political changes that were deemed to be in the “woman’s sphere,” for instance, child welfare, health reform, education, among others. Having a political voice also meant that women could shape the political debates with a view to domestic issues.⁵⁶⁶ As historian Amy Samson explains, “women brought motherhood and childhood under the lens of medicine, and science, elevating motherhood, the family, and the home, and carving a place for women in the public sphere, by connecting private experiences of mothering with politics.”⁵⁶⁷ Due to their concerns over the well-being of the family, many women viewed eugenics as a “progressive” method that would ensure the fitness of future generations. Through their eugenics campaigns, Murphy as

⁵⁶⁵ Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, “From Suffrage to Sterilization,” 109.

⁵⁶⁶ Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 51.

⁵⁶⁷ Samson, “Eugenics in the Community,” 8.

well as other members of the United Farm Women of Alberta helped garner support for Alberta's *Sexual Sterilization Act* which would be implemented in 1928.⁵⁶⁸

The point here is that the arguments made by an emerging professional class like psychiatrists, and grassroots organizations such as the United Farmers and the United Farm Women, were important in building support for eugenic legislation. The mental hygiene survey identified the “mental defective,” the “feeble-minded” and the new immigrant as a menace to society, and made recommendations as to how Albertans could deal with these issues, suggesting immigration restrictions and hinting at sterilization measures. The findings of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene were significant and were taken up by grassroots organizations as “scientific” evidence for their eugenic claims. Furthermore, the influx of immigrants to Alberta exacerbated the nativist sentiment in the province and led physicians, social reformers, and politicians to call for immigration restrictions. Since immigration was not under provincial jurisdiction, there was little that the provincial governments could do to limit immigration. Grassroots organizations such as United Farm Women of Alberta, searched for alternative routes to limit the number of “undesirables” in society, and began to lobby for sexual sterilization.

⁵⁶⁸ See for example, Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, “From Suffrage to Sterilization”; Gibbons, “Our Power to Remodel Civilization.”

Legislative Debates in Alberta

In February of 1928, the Health Minister of the United Farmers of Alberta government, George Hoadley (Okotoks), re-introduced the topic of sexual sterilization in the provincial legislature. *The Sexual Sterilization Act* (see: Appendix A), as proposed by the UFA government, would have created a four person Board that would examine patients in provincial mental hospitals prior to their release from the institution.⁵⁶⁹ Under *Section 5* of the Act, the Board would have had the authority to determine whether or not the patient should be discharged “if the danger of procreation with its attendant risk of multiplication of the evil by transmission of the disability to progeny were eliminated.”⁵⁷⁰ Specifically, if the Board was of the opinion that the patient would transmit their “defect” to their offspring, then the Board had the power to recommend sexual sterilization of the patient. Under *Section 6* of the proposed 1928 Act, the operation would not have been performed without the consent of the patient or, if the patient was unable to consent, then consent from a parent, guardian or provincial representative had to be obtained.⁵⁷¹

Unlike his attempt the previous year, this time Hoadley had enough public support to debate the notion of sterilization. In fact, an article published in the *Edmonton Journal* suggested that Hoadley had gathered support from a number of organizations and prominent individuals including United Farmers of Alberta, United Farm Women of Alberta, Louise McKinney, Emily Murphy, the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, and the

⁵⁶⁹ “Sexual Sterilization Act,” Statutes of the Province of Alberta, Chapter 37, Sections 3 & 4 (21 March, 1928), 117.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., Section 5, 117.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., Section 6, 118.

College of Physicians and Surgeons, among many others.⁵⁷² During the debate, according to the *Medicine Hat News*, Hoadley outlined the reasons for introducing the sterilization measure, and stated that if “it is quantity of production of the human race that is required, then we don’t need this bill ... But if we want quality, then it is a different matter.”⁵⁷³ Hoadley implied that eugenic sterilization was necessary in order to ensure the fitness of the province’s citizens. The measure would also “protect” society from the supposed social and economic threat posed by a rise in “mental deficiency.” His argument could also be extended to the immigration debate that occurred during the 1920s in Alberta. Eugenacists linked new immigrants with “mental deficiency” and justified these claims with “scientific” support from the mental hygiene surveys which claimed that the provincial asylums were overrun with “defective” immigrants.

For eugenacists, segregation in provincial asylums of those deemed “mentally defective” was no longer an option because this practice drained the province’s resources. This was evident from Hoadley’s further statements to the House, where he argued that “hundreds of thousands of dollars were being spent on this class of people that would be far better spent on the well. The province ... could do everything within its power to see that as few as possible feeble minded people come into the world.”⁵⁷⁴ Hoadley, favouring expert advice, echoed the arguments made by the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene regarding immigrants in mental institutions by stating that “seventy per cent of those in Canada’s mental hospitals are not born in the dominion while the total foreign born population of Canada is only 53 per cent.”⁵⁷⁵

Fundamentally, Hoadley implied that the majority of those who were institutionalized in the

⁵⁷² Quoted in Christian, “The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta,” 13.

⁵⁷³ “Hoadley’s Sterilization Bill Occupies Attention of the Legislature,” *Medicine Hat News*, 24 February, 1928.

⁵⁷⁴ “Lengthy Discussion Ensues in House on Sterilization Bill,” *Edmonton Journal*, 24 February, 1924.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

provincial mental hospitals were born outside of Canada. The anti-immigrant sentiment coupled with economic concerns, and strong public support for the measure, created a fertile ground for the introduction and eventual implementation of a sterilization policy in Alberta.

Hoadley's re-introduction of the sterilization bill led to significant debate in the Legislature on 23 February, 1928. Many of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) objected to the bill in its present form and asked for amendments to several sections. For example, Conservative leader and MLA for Calgary, A. A. McGillivray (1884-1940) suggested that the government should approach the legislation with caution, and perhaps rethink *Section 4* of the bill. While Hoadley argued that the sterilization measure would only apply to "mental defectives," McGillivray quickly pointed out that *Section 4* stated "any inmate" due to be discharged from a mental institution can be subjected to an examination by the Eugenics Board.⁵⁷⁶ Similarly, Joly (1887-1960), a French-Canadian MLA for St. Paul and a member of Hoadley's own party opposed the legislation on several grounds, namely that sterilization legislation would open the door to various abuses, that the legislation was unfair because it did not apply to all patients, the measure would not accomplish what Hoadley intends for it to achieve, and lastly, he questioned the magnitude of the Board's powers.⁵⁷⁷ Furthermore, while Joly viewed feeble-mindedness as "a menace," and called for "more thorough inspection of immigrants," he nevertheless argued that the sterilization procedure "will be offered to a patient at the price of his freedom."⁵⁷⁸ Essentially, in order to leave the mental institution the patient had to consent to sterilization, otherwise they would remain segregated.

⁵⁷⁶ "Sterilization Bill Meets Considerable Opposition in House," *Calgary Herald*, 24 February, 1928.

⁵⁷⁷ Joly Laudas, M.L.A. "Speech on the Sterilization Bill," Microfilm 78 (b), Alberta Legislative Library Scrapbook Hansard Collection, 23 February, 1928, 1-3.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

While other MLAs agreed that sterilization had some strength, they still challenged the science behind the measure. For instance, Liberal MLA for Grouard, Leonidas Alcidas Giroux (1885-1936) argued that “scientists have not definitely proved that a feeble-minded person can transmit mental characteristics.”⁵⁷⁹ Indeed, as I have illustrated in Chapter Four, there was much uncertainty and debate among the scientific community at this time regarding the heritability of “feeble-mindedness.”⁵⁸⁰ Interestingly, Premier John Brownlee admitted that scientific opinion was divided on the causes of “mental deficiency,” and its treatment, but believed that “the trend now was toward crystallization in favor of the action advocated in the bill.”⁵⁸¹ Despite differences of opinion on the issue of “mental deficiency” among the scientists, Brownlee nevertheless suggested that “Alberta was being faced with an acute situation that required immediate attention.”⁵⁸² What is more, Brownlee argued that there were only two options in dealing with the increasing number of “mental defectives”—segregation or sterilization.⁵⁸³ He personally favoured sterilization, and declared that “the argument of freedom or right of the individual can no longer hold good where the welfare of the state and society is concerned.”⁵⁸⁴ Basically, Brownlee believed that sterilization of the “mentally defective” was necessary for the greater good of society, as it would allegedly prevent the transmission of the “defect” to the next generation. It was also beneficial to the state, at a time, when the provincial government was seeking to cut costs. Brownlee’s exchange with Giroux shows that Brownlee was not

⁵⁷⁹ “Sterilization Bill Given Second Reading; Opposition is Strong,” *Edmonton Journal*, 25 February, 1928.

⁵⁸⁰ See for example, Diane B. Paul and Hamish G. Spencer, “The Failure of a Scientific Critique: David Heron, Karl Pearson and Mendelian eugenics,” *The British Journal for the History of Science* 31, no. 4 (December, 1998): 441-452; Garland Allen, “Eugenics and Modern Biology.”

⁵⁸¹ “Sterilization Bill Proceeds to Committee,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 25 February, 1928.

⁵⁸² “Sterilization Bill Strongly Opposed Went to Committee,” *Medicine Hat News*, 25 February, 1928.

⁵⁸³ “Sterilization Bill is Given Second Reading in Legislature,” *Lethbridge Herald*, 25 February, 1928.

⁵⁸⁴ “Sterilization Bill Given Second Reading; Opposition is Strong,” *Edmonton Journal*, 25 February, 1928.

incentivized to pay much attention to the views expressed on the opposite side of the House, after all his party had a significant political mandate during the debates over eugenic legislation.

While Brownlee presented his perspective on the sterilization bill, Conservative A. A. McGillivray was still uncertain that the government had done enough research and consulted enough experts before moving forward with the bill. Hoadley reassured him that “the government was of the opinion that it already had the definite knowledge of scientists before it on this question. The weight of opinion of the outstanding authorities of the world ... was in favor of treating mental cases in this way.”⁵⁸⁵ According to the *Lethbridge Herald* the majority of the information that the government obtained on the issue of sterilization arrived from “experts” located in twenty-one American states, including California.⁵⁸⁶ This reliance on expert opinion speaks to Brownlee’s technocratic approach to policymaking. Other MLAs such as Joseph T. Shaw (1883-1944), Liberal member for Bow Valley, stressed that the government should consult medical opinion on sterilization, while Conservative MLA representing Edmonton, Charles Yardley Weaver (1884-1930) objected that none of the proposed Eugenics Board members were mental health experts.⁵⁸⁷ The appointed members of the Eugenics Board were: Dr. Edgerton Pope (1874-1949) who was a physician; Dr. Edward G. Mason (1874-1947) neuropsychiatrist; Dr. John M. MacEachran (1877-1971) was a philosopher and a psychologist; and Jean H. Field (d. 1974?). As the debates continued, Liberal Leonidas Alcidas Giroux continued to call for amendments to the bills, including adding the word “incurable” before “inmate,” so that those who recovered were not subjected to sterilization. He further added that

⁵⁸⁵ “Members Urge Sterilization Bill Changes,” *Edmonton Journal*, 28 February, 1928.

⁵⁸⁶ “Sterilization Bill is Given Second Reading in Legislature, *Lethbridge Herald*, 25 February, 1928.

⁵⁸⁷ “Hoadley Sterilization Bill Given Rough Ride in Committee Yesterday,” *Medicine Hat News*, 6 March, 1928.

there needed to be a “unanimous” decision made by the Board when recommending a patient for sterilization.⁵⁸⁸ Giroux also requested that the government hold special committee hearings on the bill in order to gain a sense of public opinion on the issue. Hoadley disagreed stating that “there had been much delay in enacting the legislation” and that “opposition to this bill has been a revelation of ignorance ... Many have not the idea of what the operation is about and they are objecting without a real knowledge of the facts.”⁵⁸⁹ In fact, Hoadley knew that he had public support, particularly from women’s organizations such as the United Farm Women of Alberta, as this support had been building for years.⁵⁹⁰ Additionally, the UFA had a majority in the Legislature with forty-four seats, and therefore had enough votes for the passage of the Sterilization Act. So, it is not surprising that Hoadley did not want to postpone the implementation of the sterilization bill.

After much debate over the sterilization issue, the bill received its third reading late on 6 March, 1928. Giroux proposed an amendment to increase the Eugenics Board members from four to five, and that two of the five members should be women physicians. This motion was voted down.⁵⁹¹ Weaver also put forward an amendment to delay the third reading of the bill for six months, and this amendment was also defeated.⁵⁹² Despite some opposition to the sterilization legislation, the government prevailed with a vote of 31 to 11 (see: Figure 5.1).⁵⁹³ With this vote, Alberta became the first province in Canada to implement a *Sexual Sterilization Act*. The fact that the government implemented this legislation with almost no public opposition

⁵⁸⁸ “Sterilization Bill Defended By Hoadley,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 28 February, 1928.

⁵⁸⁹ “Fight to Last Ditch on Sterilization Bill; Is Through Committee,” *Edmonton Journal*, 6 March, 1928.

⁵⁹⁰ “Members Urge Sterilization Bill Changes,” *Edmonton Journal*, 28 February, 1928.

⁵⁹¹ “Hoadley’s Measure Carried in the House” *Calgary Herald*, 7 March, 1928.

⁵⁹² “Sterilization Bill Passes Third Reading,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 7 March, 1928.

⁵⁹³ “Sterilization Bill Finally Adopted in the House,” *Edmonton Journal*, 7 March, 1928.

exemplifies the strength of the UFA political machine in garnering support for the eugenic measure. It also establishes that the arguments made by psychiatrist and groups such as the United Farm Women of Alberta about the extent of “mental deficiency” in the province were effective in convincing politicians to introduce eugenic legislation. As presented above, during the Legislative debates, Hoadley employed similar arguments regarding “defective” immigrants as those espoused by the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene and the United Farm Women. This suggests that the opinions expressed by mental hygiene “experts” and the women’s auxiliary mattered to the provincial government. The result also illustrates that this was not a free vote as is evidenced by Figure 5.1. The United Farmers MLAs did not split with their party and vote according to their own beliefs, instead they were required to follow the party’s position on the sterilization issue and vote accordingly. The majority of the United Farmers of Alberta MLAs voted for the sterilization bill and there were no UFA members among the 11 who opposed the legislation. Of those 11 in opposition, six were Liberal (L.A. Giroux, Joseph T. Shaw, Lucien Boudreau (St. Albert), George Webster (Calgary), John Frame (Athabasca), Warren Prevey (Edmonton)), three were Conservative (Charles Weaver, David Duggan (Edmonton), John Irwin (Calgary)), and two were Labor (Charles Gibbs (Edmonton), Andrew Smeaton (Lethbridge)). Interestingly, Laudas Joly and Charles McKeen (Lac Ste. Anne), both UFA members abstained rather than vote against or support the measure. All of this suggests that party mattered in the discussions over the sterilization bill in Alberta. An analysis of the vote also shows French Canadian resistance to the legislation, with three MLAs in opposition representing French-Canadian constituencies of Grouard, Athabasca, and St. Albert. It could be argued that the French-Canadian opposition was also apparent at the provincial election of 1930 where Laudas Joly, a UFA member and a representative of a French-Canadian

district of St. Paul, lost his seat to Liberal J.M. Dechene (n.d).⁵⁹⁴ As explained above, while Joly was critical of the sexual sterilization bill, he nevertheless abstained during the vote rather than

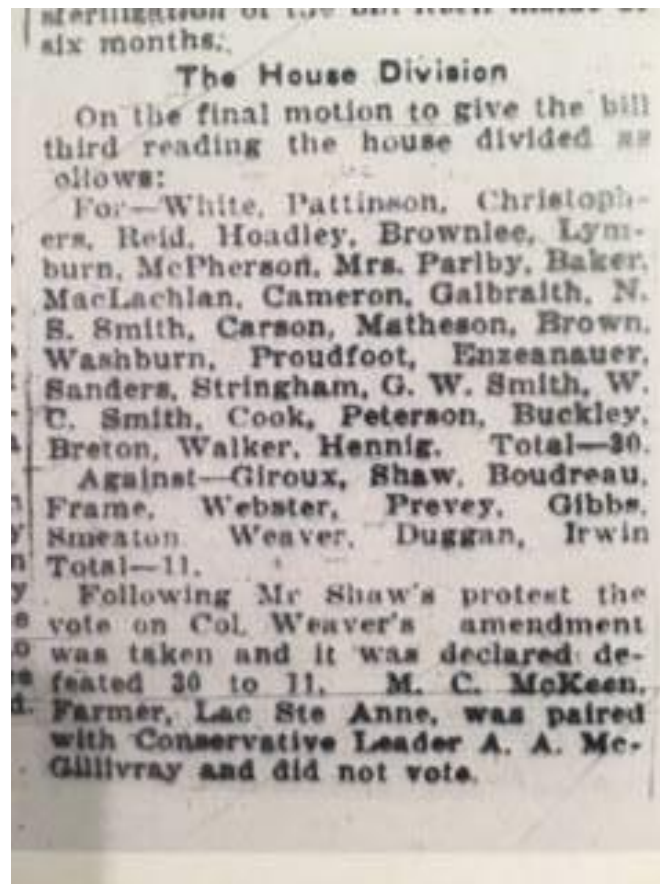


Figure 5.1 Final Vote on the *Sexual Sterilization Act*. Source: “Hoadley Measure Carried in House,” *Calgary Herald*, 7 March, 1928.

break with his own party. Interestingly, the rejection of eugenics by French-Canadians was also evident in Leonidas Giroux’s riding of Grouard during the 1930 election, where the Eugenics

⁵⁹⁴ Canadian Elections Database, “1930 Alberta Election,” St. Paul District, http://canadianelectionsdatabase.ca/PHASE5/?p=0&type=election&ID=624#page_1=constituency_2171 (Accessed: 30 June, 2018).

Board member Mrs. Jean Field was the UFA's candidate. Field lost that election to Giroux, who voted against the sterilization legislation.⁵⁹⁵

The legislative debates reveal the significance of the expert opinion in influencing the provincial government to introduce and implement the *Sexual Sterilization Act*. The primacy of the party was evident in the vote on the sterilization bill as no UFA members broke with their party to oppose the legislation. This also reflected the governing style of the Brownlee administration, who after obtaining expert advice appeared to have already made a decision on the eugenic bill and expected its MLAs to fall in line. The debates also illustrated the attempts by the Liberal and Conservative opposition to postpone the inevitable implementation of the legislation by calling for various amendments to the Act. Despite their attempts, both Brownlee and Hoadley were dismissive of their requests and perspectives. Lastly, it revealed the French-Canadian resistance to eugenics, as three MLAs who voted against the legislation represented French Canadian ridings.

Medical Professionals and Support for Sterilization in Manitoba

In February of 1933, Robert A. Hoey (1883-1965), Manitoba's Minister of Education, introduced the *Mental Deficiency Act* with a section on the sterilization of "mental defectives." *Section 30* of the Act (see: Figure 5.2) outlined the process for sterilization of those deemed "mentally defective." Specifically, it stated that the provincial psychiatrists had the authority to

⁵⁹⁵ Canadian Elections Database, "1930 Alberta Election," Grouard District, http://canadianelectionsdatabase.ca/PHASE5/?p=0&type=election&ID=624#page_1=constituency_2151 (Accessed: 30 June, 2018).

The Act was introduced following pressure from the medical community, particularly psychiatrists, who believed that Manitoba needed to improve the care of those suffering with mental conditions. At the same time, medical professionals viewed “mental defectives” as a serious threat to the future of society due to the supposed heritability of their condition.⁵⁹⁶ Psychiatrists called for sterilization measures in order to reduce the numbers of “mental defectives” in institutions.⁵⁹⁷ The problem of the “mentally defective” was exacerbated by the findings of the Mental Hygiene Survey conducted by psychiatrists Clarence Hincks and C. K. Clarke. The Manitoba Survey found that the provincial institutions were not only overcrowded, underfunded, and understaffed but they also lacked qualified personnel, and adequate treatments.⁵⁹⁸ What is more, the institutions were allegedly overrun with “defective classes.”⁵⁹⁹ For instance, the report stated:

Manitoba has not dealt satisfactorily with the defective classes, and has not made the best kind of provision for their care. (This criticism might fairly be applied to almost every province in Canada). Idiots are, in many cases, housed in the Home for Incurables at Portage La Prairie, but defectives of different grades are found in almost every institution examined, gaols, homes, schools, industrial schools, etc. No settled policy seems to

⁵⁹⁶ Byron M. Unkauf, “The Sterilization of the Mental Defective,” *University of Manitoba Medical Journal* 5 & 6, no.1 (1933-1935): 46.

⁵⁹⁷ Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, G541, Health Programme, 1925-1926, “Report on the Prevention of Mental Disorders” (1925), 8.

⁵⁹⁸ Kurbegović, “The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” 302-303.

⁵⁹⁹ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” 10.

exist in regard to them, and their presence in such institutions as the industrial schools simply negatives any attempts made to achieve results worth working for.⁶⁰⁰

In other words, there was no separate institution or training school for the “defective classes” in Manitoba, instead they were housed in the same institutions as everyone else diagnosed with a mental condition. The Committee implied that in order to deal with the “defective classes” effectively, Manitoba needed to devote greater attention to their care and perhaps even establish a separate institution. The survey’s findings were important because they prompted the provincial government to implement a number of changes to mental health care services, including expanding the existing mental institutions, and hiring psychiatrists who were passionate mental hygienists.⁶⁰¹

The provincial government was interested in the mental health situation in Manitoba, and in 1923 and 1925 respectively, requested that Provincial Psychiatrist Alvin T. Mathers, review the state of mental diseases and “mental deficiency” in the province. Mathers’s recommendations were similar to those of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, namely that “mental deficiency” and “feeble-mindedness” were significant issues that required prompt response from the province. For example, Mathers recommended that the government needed to implement legislation “establishing registration, care, training commitment, parole and discharge and community supervision of the feeble minded.”⁶⁰² The *Mental Deficiency Act* of 1933, was a response to Mathers’ recommendation.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁰¹ Kurbegović, “The Influence of the Manitoba Mental Hygiene Survey, 1918,” 309.

⁶⁰² Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, G541, Health Programme, 1925-1926, “Report on the Prevention of Mental Disorders” (1925), 11.

Furthermore, following the suggestions of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, the provincial government in Manitoba transformed the Home for Incurables into the Portage la Prairie School for Mental Defectives in the early 1930s, under Superintendent H. S. Atkinson. Those diagnosed with “mental deficiency” were removed from their previous institution and segregated at the School.⁶⁰³ The care of the patients at this institution also followed the recommendations of the Committee, primarily that “mental defectives” should be segregated and that there should be an establishment of a farm colony. Citing examples from the United States, the Committee noted that the farm colonies that been particularly effective there and patients engaged in both industrial and agricultural work.⁶⁰⁴ Furthermore, the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene suggested that “it would be prudent for the Manitoba government to develop the farm colony principle in connection with training schools established for the feeble-minded.”⁶⁰⁵ The Committee’s recommendation became a reality once Atkinson became Superintendent the School. In his annual report to the Provincial Psychiatrist, Atkinson wrote:

The boys have proven the worth of effort and patience in instruction remarkably well.

On the farm, gardens, grounds, root-houses, and chicken houses, they have accomplished outstanding things under the direction of the staff.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰³ Carr and Beamish, *Manitoba Medicine*, 202.

⁶⁰⁴ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Manitoba Survey,” 101.

⁶⁰⁵ Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, “Manitoba Survey,” 102.

⁶⁰⁶ Archives of Manitoba, Sessional Papers, G8231, Annual Report of the Department of Health and Public Welfare for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1931, Report from H.S. Atkinson to A.T. Mathers (1932), 125.

For Atkinson, engaging patients in agricultural labour proved to be a success, not only because the land around the School had been cultivated and would benefit the institution, but more importantly the work taught the boys to be hardworking and productive.⁶⁰⁷ As for the girls at the School, they primarily engaged in domestic labour including laundry work.⁶⁰⁸ This suggests that while this gendered division of labour was advantageous to the institution, it was also a way to supply patients with occupational skills if they were discharged from the School and sought employment. The concerns over “mental deficiency” aired by the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene influenced psychiatrists in Manitoba to push the provincial government to deal with this supposed issue. While those deemed to be “mentally defective” were segregated in institutions such as the Portage la Prairie School for Mental Defectives, the overcrowding in these institutions, together with the economic downturn in the late 1920s and early 1930s, led medical professionals to lobby the Manitoba government for radical eugenic measures such as sterilization.

In lobbying for sterilization, medical professionals framed their concerns within an economic context in order to enlist support of politicians, arguing that eugenic measures would save the province a significant amount of money.⁶⁰⁹ For instance, Psychiatrist T.G.B. Caunt (n.d.) argued that if the number of “mental defectives” continued to increase across the country more resources would need to be spent on mental institutions, stating requirements of “\$3,500,000 for buildings and equipment, and an annual maintenance charge of \$650,000. This

⁶⁰⁷ Barbara Arneil, *Domestic Colonies: The Turn Inward to Colony* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 141-148.

⁶⁰⁸ Archives of Manitoba, Sessional Papers, G8231, Annual Report of the Department of Health and Public Welfare for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1931, Report from H.S. Atkinson to A.T. Mathers (1932), 125.

⁶⁰⁹ T.G.B. Caunt, “Some Facts Concerning Mental Diseases,” *University of Manitoba Medical Journal* 3 & 4 (1931-1933): 119.

meant an additional expense of over \$4,000,000 in 1931.”⁶¹⁰ Focusing on the economy was a particularly effective strategy especially because the Bracken administration was known to be fiscally conservative, and during the years of the Great Depression it consistently sought ways to curtail spending. Similar to other prairie provinces, Manitoba was hit hard by the Depression as grain prices collapsed but due to its diverse economy and fiscally conservative government it managed to remain solvent during the economic recession.⁶¹¹

Hoey’s introduction of the sterilization bill must be understood within the context of the economic downturn during the 1930s and in particular the retrenchment of the Bracken government. Influenced by medical professionals, Hoey cited two main reasons for the introduction of the sterilization clause according to *The Winnipeg Free Press*, namely “that the cost to the province incurred by families of hereditary mental deficiency was tremendous” and that the procedure was necessary for humanitarian reasons as “nothing was more tragic and pitiful than the spectacle of an imbecile mother with her offspring.”⁶¹² In her study on eugenics in California, historian Alexandra Minna Stern has connected sterilization to the wider history of public health suggesting that eugenicists often presented sterilization as “protection” of both state resources and society. In other words, the state would save money because sterilization would ensure that fewer “mentally defective” individuals were born, and it would also allow patients to be discharged from mental institutions since their ability to reproduce would be removed.⁶¹³ Sterilization as “protection” could also be extended to the second part of Hoey’s argument

⁶¹⁰ Caunt, “Some Facts Concerning Mental Diseases,” 119.

⁶¹¹ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 403.

⁶¹² “Bill Sponsored by Hoey in Legislature Meeting Opposition,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 23 February, 1933.

⁶¹³ Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Fault & Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 83.

dealing with the humanitarian aspect of the procedure. Sterilization would allegedly “protect” “imbecile” women from pregnancy and from the burden of parenthood.⁶¹⁴ As historian Wendy Kline demonstrates from the 1910s onward, eugenicists became increasingly interested in female sexuality and behaviour especially because women were seen as the reproducers of the future. As a result, eugenicists differentiated between the women who would preserve the “race”, primarily those who were white middle class, and those who would destroy it, primarily women deemed “unfit.”⁶¹⁵ It is evident from Hoey’s humanitarian argument that he believed that some women should be prevented from having children.

Hoey’s introduction of the sterilization bill (see: Figure 5.2) in the Legislature sparked serious discussions about the morality of sterilization, the necessity of the procedure, and the credibility of the science behind eugenics. From February to May of 1933, the bill travelled back and forth between the House, the Law Amendments Committee, and the Committee of the Whole in an attempt to make a decision regarding the clause. After months of debate, by mid-1933, the *Mental Deficiency Act* passed but without the sterilizations section.⁶¹⁶ By this point then, it would seem that Manitoba would follow a similar path as Alberta toward implementing a eugenic program since there seemed to be enough support from medical professionals, the public was aware of campaigns, and the governments seemed to favour eugenic measures. Yet, the decision-making process is much more complex than that as is evident from the Legislative Debates. These debates offer us a window through which we can view the political discussion

⁶¹⁴ Philip R. Reilly, “Eugenics and Involuntary Sterilization: 1907–2015,” *Annual Review of Genomics and Human Genetics* 16, no. 1 (2015): 356.

⁶¹⁵ Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 31.

⁶¹⁶ “Sterilization Proposals are Killed by House,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 May, 1933.

surrounding sterilization policy and get a sense of the political motives behind some of the decisions made by Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Legislative Debates in Manitoba

Once Hoey introduced the *Mental Deficiency Act* in the Legislature, it was subjected to immediate opposition from several MLAs, including Liberal-Progressive member for Carillon, Albert Préfontaine (1861-1935) who called for the sterilization section to be removed from the Act. In response, Hoey argued that the province needed such a measure because of the rising costs of running the mental institutions and for humanitarian reasons. More importantly, Hoey believed that such a measure would be beneficial to the individual affected.⁶¹⁷ Other members of the House did not necessarily support or oppose the clause; instead many were unsure if the province needed such a measure, and wanted Hoey to provide additional information about the bill before they are required to vote on it.⁶¹⁸ It is unclear what other information the MLAs were asking from Hoey or whether he provided them with it.

Following the first debate, the bill was sent to the Law Amendments Committee where physician Frederick Wilbur Jackson (1888-1958) and psychiatrist H.S. Atkinson informed the Committee about the sterilization procedure. The *Northwest Review* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* summarized the arguments made by Jackson and Atkinson. Both doctors pointed out that sterilization was necessary because it would decrease the number of “feeble-minded” individuals

⁶¹⁷ “Bill Sponsored by Hoey in Legislature Meeting Opposition,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 23 February, 1933.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

within the province. While Atkinson pointed out that the procedure was not a “cure-all,” it would nevertheless “go a long way in reducing the number of hereditary cases.”⁶¹⁹ He further stated that sterilization would be voluntary and that no procedure was to be performed without the consent of the individual.⁶²⁰ It is unclear how the individual in question was to consent to such a procedure especially since many of the doctors believed them to be “feeble-minded.” It is also unclear, what constituted “medical consent.” Interestingly, the *Northwest Review* was skeptical of Atkinson’s consent claims and suggested that even if an individual could not consent, obtaining permission from the guardian “is itself a danger which must be watched.”⁶²¹ Specifically, one cannot always assume that a guardian has considered the best interest of the individual in question. Additionally, Atkinson and Jackson made arguments on humanitarian grounds suggesting that sterilization would be beneficial to the “feeble-minded” individual. For example, they claimed that the procedure would reduce the number of “feeble-minded” in institutions and would allow them to freely participate in society.⁶²² Angus McLaren has pointed out that many sterilization proponents across Canada believed that the procedure would benefit the “abnormal individual.” It would allow them to leave the mental institutions and have more freedom instead of being segregated from the rest of the society.⁶²³ The expert opinion mattered in the discussion over Manitoba’s sterilization clause, reflecting Bracken’s technocratic approach. Not only were medical professionals invited to inform the Committee of their position regarding sterilization, they were also instrumental in framing the *Mental Deficiency Act*.

⁶¹⁹ “New Defectives Bill Passes Law Amendments Body,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 23 February, 1933.

⁶²⁰ “Sterilization,” *Northwest Review*, 4 March, 1933.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² “Sterilization,” *Northwest Review*, 4 March, 1933.

⁶²³ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 98.

The Law Amendments Committee also held public hearings where sterilization proponents and opponents voiced their views. As I have suggested in Chapter Four, Roman Catholics in Manitoba were particularly vocal in their opposition to the proposed legislation. At the public hearing, representatives arrived from both the Archdiocese of Winnipeg and the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface. They not only opposed the procedure on religious grounds but also argued that the proponents' claims were based on weak science, and that the understanding among experts was still limited regarding heritability of "mental deficiency."⁶²⁴ Furthermore, Catholics warned that they would oppose any MLA at the next election if they supported the proposed sterilization bill. The proponents of the legislation were primarily physicians such as William Frederick Abbott (1890-1974) who argued:

... the dangerous class of defectives was the large class known as 'high grade morons,' who did not require to be kept in institution, but were free in the world. They were the misfits of society.⁶²⁵

In other words, the "high grade moron" was particularly dangerous because they could blend in with the "normal" population, yet they would transfer their "defects" to future generations.⁶²⁶ For Abbott, it was the "high grade moron" that required sterilization to prevent them from "contaminating" society.

⁶²⁴ "Sterilization in Mental Defective Cases is Opposed," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 27 February, 1933.

⁶²⁵ "Pros and Antis Air Views on Sterilization Proposal in Mental Defective Bill," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 2 March, 1933.

⁶²⁶ Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 3-4.

During the Law Amendments Hearings, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that some of the arguments voiced in favour of sterilization were more extreme than Hoey had expected. Many of those outside the medical profession who supported the bill, tended to see sterilization as in very radical terms. For example, they argued that “people at the top of the human tree were not breeding freely enough; and that the people at the bottom were breeding far too freely; and this was something that might be adjusted if those at the bottom were sterilized.”⁶²⁷ Apparently, Hoey was extremely uncomfortable and felt that these statements did not reflect the intention of his bill.⁶²⁸

In the 9 March, 1933 issue of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the newspaper reported on the strength of the opposition within the Legislature. It suggested that the opposition would kill the sterilization clause since at least twelve Members of the Legislative Assembly made it clear that they would not vote for the bill for reasons of conscience or religion. Three others would not support the measure unless certain changes were made. Unfortunately, it is unclear what they wanted changed. Also, at least one MLA would not vote for the bill due to lack of enthusiasm for the measure.⁶²⁹ By March 30, the sterilization bill was sent for consideration to the Law Amendments Committee.⁶³⁰ Maurice Dane MacCarthy (1878-1953), Liberal-Progressive MLA for Sainte Rose asked for the sterilization section to be removed from the bill, the committee denied his request and sent the bill back to the House for further debate toward a third reading.⁶³¹

⁶²⁷ “Under the Dome,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 3 March, 1933.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁹ “Opposition May Win Out in Bill on Sterilization,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 March, 1933.

⁶³⁰ *Journals of the Legislative Assembly*, 103.

⁶³¹ “Sterilization Clauses Passed by Committee,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 30 March, 1933.

During the debate on the third reading of the bill, Albert Préfontaine led the opposition in moving that the sterilization section be deleted. The MLAs who opposed the legislation did so due to religion, pressure from constituents, or uncertainty over the bill. Those who supported it, did so for economic and humanitarian reasons. Once the MLAs started their debate, John A. Munn (Liberal-Progressive, Dufferin) stated that if the sterilization section was not removed, he would “move an amendment that it will not apply to Roman Catholics.”⁶³² As I revealed in Chapter Four, Munn received letters and petitions from his Catholic constituents outlining their opposition to the proposed sterilization bill, and warning him of political consequences if he supported the clause. Similarly, Liberal-Progressive member for Fisher, Nicolas V. Bachynsky (1887-1969) stated that he not only objected on religious grounds, but also questioned the proponents’ claims that linked heredity and “mental deficiency.”⁶³³ Likewise, Harold F. Lawrence (1887-1953), Labour MLA for Saint Boniface, also opposed the bill on religious grounds. He pointed out that while he was not a Roman Catholic, the majority of his constituents were of Roman Catholic faith. They presented him with many petitions and letters urging him to vote against the clause, which he said he would. Lawrence also stated that the House must remember that Manitoba was home to 200,000 Roman Catholics and that their opinions needed to be considered.⁶³⁴ As we have seen in Chapter Four, Catholic clergy and lay Catholics in Saint Boniface were active members of the campaign against sterilization. Reverend d’Éschambault, in particular, voiced objection on behalf of Catholics in Saint Boniface through letters to Premier Bracken, by attending public hearings, and through letters to the editor

⁶³² “Fight Against Sterilization Is To Be Resumed,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 21 April, 1933.

⁶³³ “Sterilization Clause Passed by Committee,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 April, 1933.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

in local newspapers. In this case, there was significant pressure on Lawrence to oppose the legislation or face losing his seat at election time.

Other Members of the Legislative Assembly stated that they were divided between two opposing viewpoints. For example, Seymour James Farmer (1878-1951), Labour MLA for Winnipeg, told the House that while some arguments for sterilization had strength he was “suspicious” of the others. He believed that the sterilization measure was being used as a “short cut” to solve a “mental deficiency” rather than focusing on what caused the “problem” in the first place. Moreover, Farmer stated that he was “becoming more and more convinced that a great deal of mental deficiency was due to conditions of environment.”⁶³⁵ In other words, in order to understand the causes of “mental deficiency” it was necessary to focus on factors beyond heredity. As historian Garland Allen points out eugenicists faced criticism from the scientific community, including scientists Leonard Darwin (1850-1943) and Alexander Carr-Saunders (1886-1966), who argued that too much emphasis was placed on the heritability of “mental deficiency” without significant evidence.⁶³⁶ Similar to Farmer, Conservative MLA for Assiniboia, Ralph Humphreys Webb (1886-1945) told the House that he knew little about sterilization but after consulting with experts he did not think that sterilization would “provide the remedy its sponsors hoped for.” Additionally, he argued that “scientific information was not complete ... There was not enough authoritative information available ... to give intelligent consideration to the matter.”⁶³⁷ What this suggests is that the arguments presented by medical professionals were not convincing enough to sway Farmer and Webb to support the sterilization

⁶³⁵ “Sterilization Clause Passed by Committee,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 April, 1933.

⁶³⁶ Allen, “Eugenics and Modern Biology,” 317-318.

⁶³⁷ “Sterilization Clause Passed by Committee,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 April, 1933.

bill. There were still too many unanswered questions about the supposed benefits of sterilization, and for Webb and Farmer this was enough to oppose the clause.

The legislative representatives who were convinced by the medical opinion that “mental deficiency” was a significant problem in the province voiced their views in favour of the sterilization clause. For example, Liberal-Progressive MLA for Lakeside, Douglas Lloyd Campbell (1895-1995) cited economic and humanitarian reasons for his support of the bill. He argued that the sterilization procedure would ensure that the province did not have to build any more mental institutions, and it would save resources. More important, for Campbell, was the humanitarian reason. He had allegedly visited the provincial institutions and “had seen mentally defective children condemned to a life of misery: which this bill could eliminate.”⁶³⁸

Specifically, sterilization would allow those deemed “mentally defective” to be discharged from institutions, but more importantly, it was believed that it would prevent them from passing their “defect” to the next generation. Similarly, the Labour member for Winnipeg, Marcus Hyman (1883-1938) argued that while the religious opinion must be respected, he favoured sterilization. He suggested that the opposition had nothing to fear, especially because the procedure required the consent of the patient or their guardian. Instead, he suggested that the opposition needed to consider the benefits of the legislation.⁶³⁹ Lastly, Premier Bracken (Liberal-Progressive, The Pas), also voiced his view on this issue stating that while he supported the clause, he was aware that many objected to it on religious grounds. Further, he would not force members to vote for it or to force the bill through with so much opposition.⁶⁴⁰ Reflecting his strategy of consensus

⁶³⁸ “Sterilization Clause Passed by Committee,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 April, 1933.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

building and voting by conscience, Bracken allowed a free vote on the divisive eugenic legislation.

After serious debate in the legislature, the bill was defeated in a very close result 21 to 20 (see: Figure 5.3).⁶⁴¹ Out of those who voted against the legislation, seventeen were Liberal-Progressives, two were Labour (Seymour J. Farmer (Winnipeg), Harold F. Lawrence (St. Boniface)), two were Conservative (George Dinsdale (Brandon), Huntley D. Ketchen (Winnipeg)). For those supporting the sterilization section, eleven were Liberal-Progressives, five were Conservatives (William S. Evans (Winnipeg), James O. McLenaghan (Kildonan-St. Andrews), George P. Renouf (Swan River), Earl J. Rutledge (Minnedosa), Alexander Welch (Turtle Mountain)), two were Labour (Marcus Hyman (Winnipeg), John Queen (Winnipeg)), one (John T. Haig (Winnipeg) represented the Manitoba Social Credit Party, and one John W. Pratt (Birtle) was an Independent.⁶⁴² This vote revealed that Manitoba was very close to adopting a sterilization clause but in the end it did not. Yet, this does not mean that there was a lack of enthusiasm for a eugenic measure.

⁶⁴¹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 198-199; "Sterilization Proposals Are Killed By House," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 May, 1933.

⁶⁴² Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 198-199.

And a Debate arising,	
Mr. BACHYNSKY moved in amendment, Seconded by Mr. HRYHORCZUK That Bill (No. 7) An Act to Provide for Mentally Defective Persons, be not read a third time but be referred back to the Committee of the Whole with instructions to delete clauses 30 and 31.	
And a Debate arising on the amendment	
And the Question being put	
It was agreed to on the following division:	
	YEAS
	Messieurs:
BACHYNSKY	BOIVIN
BERRY	BREAKEY
CHRISTIE	
CLUBB	MAJOR
DINSDALE	MacCARTHY
FARMER	McINTOSH
HAWKINS	MOONEY
HRYPHORCZUK	MUNN
KETCHEN	PREFONTAINE
LAWRENCE	SIGFUSSON
MacKENZIE	WESTWOOD 21
	NAYS
	Messieurs:
CAMPBELL	McLEOD
EVANS	McPHERSON
FOSTER	POOLE
GRIFFITHS	PRATT
HAIG	QUEEN
HOEY	RENOUF
HYMAN	RUTLEDGE
JONASSON	SCHULTZ
McKINNELL	WELCH
McLENAGHEN	WIEBE 20
Then the Question being put on the main motion so amended it was agreed to.	

Figure 5.3 A vote on the removal of the sterilization clauses from the *Mental Deficiency Act*, 1933.

Source: Manitoba Legislative Library, Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba: *Nineteenth Legislative Assembly*, (1933): 198-199.

The outcome of the vote illustrated that, first, since Bracken was leading a Liberal-Progressive coalition government, he was clearly aware that there were various perspectives on the topic of eugenics within the party, and therefore could not risk pushing through controversial legislation. Instead, the subject of sterilization of “mental defectives” was debated in public and

MLAs were given a free vote on the bill. This is a clear example of “Brackenism” where working across party lines was a consistent strategy, where different perspectives were welcome, and where voting by conscience was common, in order to run an efficient government. Second, the legislative result also points to the importance of the different veins of influence, the medical professionals and the Roman Catholics. Their arguments likely swayed those legislative representatives who were “on the fence” about the issue such as Farmer and Webb. While some of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, such as Campbell and Hyman, supported the proposed sterilization legislation citing societal and economic benefits, others objected primarily on religious grounds, whether this was for their own religious reasons or on behalf of their constituents. The views expressed by Roman Catholics, that sterilization was not only morally wrong, but also supported by flawed science, mattered. Some of the Members of the Legislative Assembly who received various petitions and letters from their primarily Catholic constituents were pressured to vote against the sterilization clause. Lawrence was one of these. The constituency of St. Boniface was the most vocal against the sterilization clause and it is clear from the Legislative debates that they influenced Lawrence’s vote. Munn received letters and petitions from his constituents urging him to reject the sterilization clause. Munn also sided with Lawrence in voting against sterilization. McIntosh was also pressured to use his vote and kill the sterilization measure—which he did. Third, not all the Members of the Legislative Assembly voted against eugenic legislation because they were pressured by their constituents to do so. Others would not vote for it due to their own conscience or religious reasons. For example, Bachynsky opposed it on religious grounds, but also because he believed cause of “mental deficiency” was environmental rather than hereditary. Fourth, for members such as Farmer, the claims regarding the benefits of sterilization were unconvincing, and he did not think that

sterilization would solve the supposed problem of “mental deficiency.” He too voted against the clause.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have revealed the ways in which the different political landscapes in Manitoba and Alberta contributed to the implementation or defeat of eugenic legislation. During the debates over eugenics, superficially both provinces were controlled by technocratic leadership, with Bracken in Manitoba and Brownlee in Alberta. Both governments were receptive to the arguments of eugenic experts, and sought to implement eugenic measures. Yet, the Bracken and the Brownlee administrations had different governing philosophies. The United Farmers of Alberta under Brownlee had an impressive political mandate of forty-four seats and only fifteen in opposition. This was essentially a single party government. In the face of fairly weak opposition, Brownlee controlled the party apparatus and had a majority in the legislature. When the voting commenced on the sterilization bill, all of the UFA members supported their party’s position to implement the legislation. In Manitoba, on the other hand, Bracken’s Liberal-Progressives won thirty-seven seats with twenty in opposition. Following Brackenism, the Bracken administration consistently sought coalition governments and believed in consensus building. As a result, the vote on the eugenic legislation was not whipped, and Bracken allowed voting by conscience, as he could not risk divisions within his own party.

This chapter has also illustrated how the different veins of influence swayed the political arguments in favour or against sterilization policy. Lawmakers and politicians in both Manitoba and Alberta were influenced by the arguments made by mental health “experts” such as the

Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, who claimed that both provinces were overrun with “defectives” and hinted at sterilization procedures to control their numbers. In both provinces, the findings of the Committee were taken up by powerful groups. In Alberta, the United Farmers and United Farm Women had great interest in public health and in safeguarding the health of the province’s residents. When the Committee’s mental hygiene survey revealed that the health of the province was under threat from a rise of the “mentally defective,” the “feeble-minded,” and the “defective” immigrant, the United Farm Women of Alberta responded by lobbying the provincial government first for immigration restrictions and then for sterilization legislation. The issue of immigration was out of the hands of the provincial government as this fell under the jurisdiction of the federal government, but this realization pushed the United Farm Women to seek alternative routes to deal with the supposed increase of “undesirables” in the province. In Manitoba, on the other hand, the findings of the mental hygiene survey influenced the medical professionals, particularly psychiatrists to seek change in the mental health care in the province but also to look for solutions to the supposed increase in “mental deficiency.” Psychiatrists not only tried to convince the provincial government that “mental deficiency” was a problem, they also stressed the impact that this had on the province’s resources due to overcrowding in mental hospitals. At a time of the Great Depression, Manitoba’s government searched for ways to cut costs, and it saw benefits in reducing its spending to operate the provincial mental institutions.

The politicians in both provinces, such as Health Minister, George Hoadley in Alberta and Education Minister, Robert A. Hoey in Manitoba, made similar arguments as to the necessity of a sterilization bill as their supporters—the medical professionals in Manitoba and the grassroots organizations in Alberta. Hoadley focused on the overcrowding in mental institutions

and in the rise of “defective” immigrants to justify the need for a sterilization bill. Hoey in Manitoba, emphasized the economic and humanitarian reasons for his introduction of a sterilization clause. At this point, it would seem that both provinces would follow a similar path and adopt a sterilization policy, especially because there was much support for eugenic measures from medical professionals, and in the case of Alberta from powerful farm men and farm women. Yet, the legislative debates reveal the complexities associated with decision making over the sterilization issues, particularly in Manitoba.

While there was opposition to the proposed legislation in the Alberta Legislature, the fact that the United Farmers had a majority government ensured that the *Sexual Sterilization Act* would pass. Yet, it is evident from the legislative debates that Liberal and Conservative MLAs attempted to stall the implementation process by calling for amendments to several sections in the Act. For instance, both Liberal Leonidas A. Giroux and Conservative A.A. McGillivray called for amendments to *Section 4* of the bill regarding the language of “all inmates” in order to ensure that only those deemed “mentally defective” would be sterilized rather than anyone diagnosed with a mental condition. Clearly, MLAs such as Giroux knew that the UFA had the votes to pass the sterilization bill, perhaps in calling for various amendments he was attempting to make the best of an inevitable poor outcome. His rejected call for more appointed members of the eugenics board perhaps reflects this strategy of improving what he believed to be a flawed piece of legislation.

Additionally, while MLAs like Giroux made similar arguments as the Catholic officials in Manitoba, regarding the lack of scientific evidence behind eugenicists’ claims, his arguments were struck down by Premier Brownlee and Minister of Health Hoadley, who argued that the majority of expert opinion was in favour of the sterilization argument. In Manitoba, on the other

hand, Bracken allowed for the differing perspectives on eugenics to be heard in the House. As shown above some Members of the Legislative Assembly suggested that they did not have enough credible scientific information to make such an important decision. For instance, both Seymour James Farmer and Ralph Humphreys Webb questioned the supposed inheritance of “mental deficiency.” Other legislative members in Manitoba, such as the MLA for Saint Boniface, influenced by their Roman Catholic constituents, voted down the sterilization clause on behalf of these constituents.

This chapter has also provided insight into the open vs. the closed debate setting regarding the sterilization bill. In Manitoba, following Brackenism, Premier Bracken opened the eugenic issue to a public debate. The general public presented their perspectives on sterilization either through letters and petitions, but more importantly through the Law Amendments Committee’s public hearings. These hearings were an opportune moment for the Roman Catholic delegation to present secular arguments against sterilization and to appeal to a broader audience. It was also an appropriate setting for those in favour of the bill to air their views and try to convince lawmakers to support the sterilization clause. In Alberta, on the other hand, the debates over sterilization were very much closed to the public, reflecting the top-down governing style of the Brownlee administration. Even when Giroux suggested the formation of a special committee to consider the views of the general public on the bill, Hoadley rejected this, suggesting that the bill had already been delayed long enough. It was evident from the legislative debates that the government had already made a decision on the eugenics issue. It had moved up from the grassroots UFA chapters into the party’s platform, and the government’s sweeping mandate in 1926 gave it license to act on it unilaterally. The government was also indifferent to or completely objected to any requests for amendments from opposition parties.

More importantly, the UFA had an impressive political mandate at the time of the eugenic debate, and knew that they had enough votes to implement the legislation.

Political conditions in the two provinces help to explain the divergence on eugenic policy in Alberta and Manitoba. Alberta politics was monolithic during the 1920s, the UFA government had a huge majority and could exercise power essentially unchecked, while in Manitoba, despite a majority government, Bracken was leading a Liberal-Progressive coalition and was conscious of the varying perspectives on policy within his own party. In addition, the arguments presented by an emerging professional class, by grassroots organizations, and by religious groups mattered because they exerted influence on politicians and lawmakers, and in turn influenced the adoption or rejection of sterilization measures. The Alberta case illustrates that local conditions, including economic circumstances and anti-immigrant sentiments, together with widespread support from powerful United Farmers of Alberta and United Farm Women of Alberta created a favourable climate for adoption of eugenic measures. The Manitoba example shows the importance of Roman Catholics and medical professionals in swaying the opinions of some of the Members of the Legislative Assembly on the sterilization clause. In the absence of an official party position on sterilization, legislative members were vulnerable to public pressure and could become concerned about their own re-election chances. More importantly, the distinct approaches to governing from Bracken and Brownlee, led to various perspectives, including religious and medical, to be aired in Manitoba, while in Alberta, weak opposition coupled with strong grassroots organization and a powerful provincial government guaranteed that Alberta's *Sexual Sterilization Act* would be implemented.

Conclusion

The Aftermath

In May of 1933, the sterilization clause was deleted from Manitoba's *Mental Deficiency Act* following a vote in the Legislature of 21 to 20.⁶⁴³ Yet, eugenics and sterilization continued to be debated in the province throughout the 1930s. These discussions were sustained primarily because in December of 1933, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that the provincial government sought to re-introduce a sterilization bill at the next Legislative session in 1934.⁶⁴⁴ Shortly after this announcement, Premier Bracken received letters of protest again from Catholics in Manitoba. For example, in a letter from 5 December, 1933, the Archbishop of Saint Boniface, Emile Yelle (1893-1947) wrote:

We have, as you are well aware, very strong objections of conscience against this project. It seems unsound even from a medical point of view and it is highly condemnable from a social and especially moral view-point. We feel we cannot support your Government in measures that are destructive of higher principles.⁶⁴⁵

Yelle's statement essentially reiterated the arguments used by Catholics in their campaign against the initial sterilization clause, namely that sterilization was immoral and that eugenicists'

⁶⁴³ "Sterilization Proposals Are Killed By House," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 May, 1933.

⁶⁴⁴ "Legislation for Sterilization is to be Introduced," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 4 December, 1933.

⁶⁴⁵ Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files, "Sterilization," G601, Letter from Archbishop Emile Yelle to Premier John Bracken, 5 December, 1933.

claims about sterilization lacked scientific support. Furthermore, Yelle also implied the possibility of political consequences for the government if the legislation was re-introduced. Interestingly, in his reply to Yelle, Premier Bracken, refuted the *Winnipeg Free Press* story stating that “any reports you may have seen in the paper with respect to Government policy regarding this matter are entirely without foundation.”⁶⁴⁶ It would have been very unlikely for Bracken’s government to introduce such legislation again given how divisive it was for his Liberal-Progressive administration in 1933. Yet, by 1935 there was still support for eugenic legislation in the province, and the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported again that there were plans to introduce sterilization legislation, this time as a private member’s bill.⁶⁴⁷ The reports in the newspaper clearly suggest that the discussions about eugenics did not disappear following the defeat of the sterilization bill, in fact, as I show below, debates continued until the end of the 1930s.

The fact that the dialogue about eugenics was present into the 1930s, is evident in the exchanges that took place over a period of three months in the *Winnipeg Free Press* between Reverend Antoine d’Éschambault and botanist Arthur Henry Reginald Buller (1874-1944). Buller gave a presentation to the University Women’s Club where he argued that sterilization would reduce the number of “feeble-minded” in the province. In a 31 January, 1935 article, the Reverend challenged Buller’s argument citing several scientific reports that outlined the complexities of heredity and pointed out that there was still much to learn regarding the

⁶⁴⁶ Archives of Manitoba, Premier’s Office Files, “Sterilization,” G601, Letter from Premier John Bracken to Archbishop Emile Yelle, 15 December, 1933.

⁶⁴⁷ “Sterilization Bill May Be Introduced in Legislature,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 February, 1935.

heritability of mental disorders.⁶⁴⁸ For example, d'Éschambault referenced the work of psychiatrists David K. Henderson (1884-1965) and R. D. Gillespie (d. 1946) who argued

Too much stress is actually laid on the role of heredity in mental disorders. The unvarnished truth is that very little of what is probable is known with regard to the inheritance of mental instability, and nothing is firmly established.⁶⁴⁹

In other words, psychiatrists were still uncertain about the link between heredity and mental disorders. The use of scientific studies to refute the eugenicists' claims was significant especially when those studies were written by psychiatrists, who were generally some of the most passionate supporters of sterilization. Buller responded to d'Éschambault suggesting that the Reverend was on the "losing side" of the sterilization battle citing the "success" of sterilization legislation in a number of places around the world, including Alberta, twenty-six American states, and Germany, among others.⁶⁵⁰ What this shows is that sterilization supporters continued their campaign for legislation throughout 1935. Yet, they were met with opposition from the Catholic hierarchy the entire time, who argued as they did in 1933, that sterilization was not only immoral because it took away an individual bodily integrity, it was also based on flawed science.⁶⁵¹ Interestingly, in his exchanges with Buller, d'Éschambault stressed the eugenicists'

⁶⁴⁸ Antoine d'Éschambault, "The Case Against Sterilization," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 31 January, 1935

⁶⁴⁹ Antoine d'Éschambault, "The Case Against Sterilization," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 31 January, 1935; d'Éschambault cited this passage from Henderson and Gillespie's work *Henderson and Gillespie's Textbook of Psychiatry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932).

⁶⁵⁰ A. H. Reginald Buller, "The Case for Sterilization," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 February, 1935.

⁶⁵¹ See for example, Antoine d'Éschambault, "Feeble-mindedness and Human Heredity," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 March, 1935; A. H. Reginald Buller, "Feeble-mindedness and Human Inheritance," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 23

weak interpretations of complex human inheritance rather than his opposition to sterilization on moral ground. By emphasizing secular arguments against sterilization, d'Éschambault likely sought to reach a wider audience.

The concerns over scientific credibility of eugenicists' arguments were also raised by psychiatrist H.S. Atkinson, the Superintendent of the Manitoba School for Mental Defectives. In a letter to the Superintendent of the Orillia Asylum (Ontario), S.J.W. Horne, Atkinson admitted that while he supported sterilization, the claims made by some of the eugenicists were hurting their cause. He wrote:

Certainly, the wild statements that they make are not true to fact or conducive in swaying public opinion in favour of sterilization. The question it seems to me will have to be built on pure scientific fact.⁶⁵²

Atkinson's statement demonstrates that the flawed science behind eugenics was contributing to the lack of public enthusiasm for a sterilization bill in the 1930s. It could be argued then that the scientific arguments put forward by the Catholic hierarchy were effective in informing Manitobans about the lack of scientific legitimacy behind eugenicists' arguments.

Even though there was some discussion in the *Winnipeg Free Press* about another attempt at introducing a sterilization bill in 1937, this never materialized, presumably due to

March, 1935; Antoine d'Éschambault, "Sterilization and Feeble-mindedness," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 April, 1935; A.H. Reginald Buller, "Sterilization and Feeble-mindedness," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 April, 1935.

⁶⁵² Archives of Ontario, "Sterilization," RG 29-24-1-18 Box 3, Letter from H.S. Atkinson to S.J.W. Horne, 20 February, 1935.

significant opposition.⁶⁵³ While Manitoba's 1933 sterilization clause was removed from the *Mental Deficiency Act*, the sterilization enthusiasts continued their fight for legislation. Although the campaign for sterilization of "mentally defectives" did not achieve its goal, those with developmental disabilities were nevertheless segregated in mental institutions and trainings schools. For example, throughout the 1930s and into the second half the 20th century, those with developmental disabilities were segregated in the Manitoba School for Mental Defectives (since 1984 the Manitoba Developmental Centre) and the St. Amant Centre (1959).⁶⁵⁴ Despite the fact that there was a general trend in many Western countries toward deinstitutionalization from the 1960s onward,⁶⁵⁵ in Manitoba both the Manitoba Developmental Centre and the St. Amant Centre remain in operation today. As a result, the provincial government has received significant criticism from disability activists who believe that these centres should be closed and that there should be a transition to community living.⁶⁵⁶

In Alberta, on the other hand, the campaign for sexual sterilization proved successful and Alberta's eugenic program officially began in 1928 with the implementation of the *Sexual Sterilization Act* by the United Farmers of Alberta government. The *Sexual Sterilization Act* allowed for the creation of an Alberta Eugenics Board to administer the sexual sterilization program. The original four members appointed to the board were: Dr. Edgerton Pope

⁶⁵³ "Sterilization War," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 20 March, 1937.

⁶⁵⁴ Christopher Adams, "Advocating for Manitoba Children with Mental Disabilities: Parent Associations in the 1950s and 1960s," *Manitoba History* 61 (Fall 2009): available online; accessed January, 2018: http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/61/parentassociations.shtml; Carr and Beamish, *Manitoba Medicine*, 202-203.

⁶⁵⁵ See for example, Gerald N. Grob, *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991); Patricia Sealy and Paul C. Whitehead, "Forty Years of Deinstitutionalization of Psychiatric Services in Canada: An Empirical Assessment," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*

⁶⁵⁶ See for example, Will Braun, "Development centre's time is past," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 1 October, 2013; Sid Rogers, "Severely disabled belong in community," *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 22 November, 2015.

(Edmonton) Dr. Edward G. Mason (Calgary) Dr. John M. MacEachran (Edmonton), and Mrs. Jean H. Field (Kinuso).⁶⁵⁷ Medical superintendents of Alberta's psychiatric institutions were granted permission by the Act to present patients to the Board who would then be considered for sterilization.⁶⁵⁸ The Board approved sterilization surgery when its members determined that a patient "might safely be discharged if the danger of procreation with its attendant risk of multiplication of the evil by transmission of the disability to progeny were eliminated."⁶⁵⁹ Not only was unanimous decision required, but consent, either from the patient, parent, or guardian, was essential for the surgical procedures to proceed.⁶⁶⁰ Obtaining consent from a patient, parent or guardian must have been difficult to do as is evident in the 1937 Amendment to the Sexual Sterilization Act. The Amendment allowed the Board to authorize sterilizations without consent, particularly for those diagnosed as "mentally defective."⁶⁶¹ The powers of the board would be further expanded by the 1942 amendment to the Act which allowed for sterilization, with consent, of those suffering from disorders such as Huntington's chorea.⁶⁶² While Alberta's eugenics program largely operated in institutions, the 1942 amendment broadened the program's reach into the community.⁶⁶³

In the early days, the Eugenics Board primarily received patients from the Ponoka Mental Hospital, but by the 1950s, most of those "presented" to the Board arrived from the Provincial Training School in Red Deer. The School housed children who were orphans, some who had

⁶⁵⁷ See The Sexual Sterilization Act, Chapter 37, section 3 (1928), 117.

⁶⁵⁸ The Sexual Sterilization Act, Chapter 37, section 4 (1928), 117.

⁶⁵⁹ The Sexual Sterilization Act, Chapter 37, section 5 (1928), 117.

⁶⁶⁰ Grekul, Krahn, Odynak, "Sterilizing the 'feeble-minded,'" 363; See also The Sexual Sterilization Act, Chapter 37, section 6 (1928), 118.

⁶⁶¹ Grekul, Krahn, Odynak, "Sterilizing the 'feeble-minded,'" 363.

⁶⁶² Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 184.

⁶⁶³ Samson, "Eugenics in the Community," 6.

been taken away from their parents at young age, and still others who were admitted voluntarily by their parents.⁶⁶⁴ Many of these children were diagnosed with “mental deficiency.”⁶⁶⁵ As Grekul, Krahn, and Odynak demonstrate from 1955 onward, the School required parents to consent to sterilization of their child upon admittance to the Training School. Yet, because the patients at the Training School were diagnosed as “mentally defective,” technically under the 1937 Amendment their consent or that of their parent or guardian was not required.⁶⁶⁶ Over Alberta’s long eugenic history from 1928 until the legislation was repealed in 1972, Alberta’s Eugenics Board recommended 4,725 individuals for sexual sterilization. Out of this number, 2,834 were actually sterilized.⁶⁶⁷ There was little resistance to this program and it continued to operate away from the public view. As late as 1969, the Edmonton Journal characterized the program in a flattering light, while reporting on the findings of the Blair Report, stating “the provincial eugenics board sailed through the scrutiny of the Blair committee and came out smelling like a rose.”⁶⁶⁸ While the program continued until 1972, it would not be until Leilani Muir’s (1944-2016) court case, *Muir v. The Queen* in 1996, that the dark chapter of Alberta’s past was revealed.⁶⁶⁹

Muir successfully sued the Alberta government for wrongful sterilization, and in the process encouraged other sterilization survivors to come forward and tell their stories.⁶⁷⁰ Muir’s

⁶⁶⁴ Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*, 69.

⁶⁶⁵ Grekul, Krahn, and Odynak, “Sterilizing the ‘feeble-minded,’” 369.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 370.

⁶⁶⁷ Grekul, “A Well-Oiled Machine,” 16.

⁶⁶⁸ *The Edmonton Journal*, 12 April, 1969.

⁶⁶⁹ See for example, *Muir v. The Queen in right of Alberta*, 132 D.L.R. (4th) 695, Court File No. 8903 20759 (1995).

⁶⁷⁰ See additional information about Muir’s legal case see Doug Wahlsten, “Leilani Muir Versus the Philosopher King: Eugenics on Trial in Alberta,” *Genetica* 99, no.2-3 (1997); Leilani Muir, *A Whisper Past: Childless after Eugenic Sterilization in Alberta* (Victoria, BC: Friesen Press, 2014).

story has demonstrated the importance of unearthing Alberta's eugenic past and understanding the impact of eugenic policies. From 1953 until 1965, Leilani Muir was a patient at the Red Deer Provincial Training School for Mental Defectives. There was no medical examination upon admittance to the Training School, and no evidence was provided by the physicians that Muir was in fact "mentally deficient."⁶⁷¹ Following an inaccurate IQ test, the Training School psychiatrist recommended Muir for sterilization, under Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act. At the age of 14, Leilani Muir was sterilized without her consent.⁶⁷² Within the context of Alberta's eugenics program, Muir's religious and ethnic background (Catholic, Polish) was widely perceived as less desirable than those of Anglo-Protestant heritage.⁶⁷³ Her family was also poor and therefore was seen by lawmakers as a burden on the state rather than a productive part of it. As a female, there were concerns about potential sexual deviances leading to illegitimate births.⁶⁷⁴ As a child, she was more a ward of the state than a citizen. Finally, Muir's supposed condition of "mental deficiency" was so broad and subjective as to render it medically meaningless but it was a "catch-all" term that covered a wide range of "deviant" behaviours.⁶⁷⁵ Individuals like Muir were singled out because in nearly every social category they were not what most of the elite elements in society considered "desirable" or "healthy." For them, those labelled as "mentally deficient" did not contribute to the betterment of Canadian society but rather detracted from it. Alberta's eugenics program was a good example of an idealized social construct being used to determine who belonged and who did not. Muir's case not only

⁶⁷¹ Wahlsten, "Leilani Muir versus the Philosopher King," 193-194.

⁶⁷² Ibid, 194-195.

⁶⁷³ Samson, "Eugenics in the community," 2.

⁶⁷⁴ Grekul, "Sterilization in Alberta, 1928-1972: Gender Matters," 259-260.

⁶⁷⁵ Kaler, *Baby Trouble in the West*, 86.

prompted historians to examine Alberta's eugenic past, but it also inspired other sterilization survivors to sue the Alberta government for wrongful confinement and coerced sterilization.⁶⁷⁶

Conclusion

The framework of bio-politics is essential to understanding the policies and practices of reproduction. Eugenics was one example of bio-political control that involved state intervention in reproduction through sexual sterilization policies to prevent those deemed "defective" from reproducing. The case studies presented in this dissertation speak to the implementation of bio-power through eugenic control of reproduction, and how that interfaced with the particular socio-political context of United Farmers governed Alberta in the 1920s and Liberal-Progressive led Manitoba in the 1930s.

During the early decades of the 20th century, eugenics emerged as a "progressive" and "scientific" solution to problems of modernity. Negative impacts of urbanization and industrialization prompted fears of biological degeneration, and led eugenicists to demand state intervention to ensure the health and well-being of future generations.⁶⁷⁷ By implementing eugenic legislation, lawmakers not only ensured the protection of the "healthy" segments of population but also regulated the reproduction of the "unfit" members of society.

⁶⁷⁶ "Klein Apologizes for Forced Sterilization," *CBC News*, 2 November, 1999 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/klein-apologizes-for-forced-sterilizations-1.172014> (Accessed, 30 August, 2018); "Alberta Apologizes for Forced Sterilization," *CBC News*, 9 November, 1999 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/alberta-apologizes-for-forced-sterilization-1.169579> (Accessed, 30 August, 2018).

⁶⁷⁷ Turda, "Modernism and Eugenics," 5-7.

The majority of the scholarly work on eugenics in Canada has explored different aspects of Alberta's eugenic past, including the relationship between first-wave feminism and eugenics⁶⁷⁸; it served to document the cases of the Alberta Eugenics Board and its targeting of vulnerable populations including women, Indigenous people, immigrants, and youth;⁶⁷⁹ scholars have also examined the experiences of patients in provincial institutions during Alberta's eugenic years,⁶⁸⁰ and lastly the stories of those who underwent voluntary or coercive sterilization under Alberta's eugenics program has received scholarly attention as well.⁶⁸¹ While historians, sociologists, and legal scholars have offered valuable insight into Alberta's eugenics program, they have not thoroughly examined all of the socio-political circumstances that contributed to the implementation of Alberta's *Sexual Sterilization Act*.

With such an emphasis on Alberta's eugenics program, scholars have often neglected jurisdictions where sexual sterilization policies were never enacted. Although, more recently there has been work published on other Canadian provinces.⁶⁸² Despite the fact that the eugenics movement in Manitoba shared many similarities with the movement in Alberta, and the province came within one vote of passing a sexual sterilization law, historians have overlooked its eugenic past. Scholars have also neglected to explain why eugenic legislation was overwhelmingly passed in Alberta but narrowly defeated in superficially similar Manitoba.

⁶⁷⁸ See for example, Devereux, *Growing a Race*; Fiamengo, "A Legacy of Ambivalence"; Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, "From Suffrage to Sterilization"; Gibbons, "Our Power to Remodel Civilization."

⁶⁷⁹ Christian, "Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta"; Grekul, "Sterilization in Alberta, 1928-1972: Gender Matters"; Greul, Krahn, and Odynak, "Sterilizing the 'Feeble-minded.'"

⁶⁸⁰ See Malacrida, *A Special Hell*.

⁶⁸¹ Walhsten, "Leilani Muir versus the Philosopher King"; Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*.

⁶⁸² See for example, Deighton, "The Nature of Eugenic Thought and Limits of Eugenic Practice in Interwar Saskatchewan"; Baker, "A Visitation of Providence: Public Health and Eugenic Reform in the Wake of the Halifax Disaster."

This dissertation has sought to understand why Alberta and Manitoba diverged on eugenics policy. What was different about these two provinces that led to different legislative outcomes? What does this tell us about how eugenic ideas were transformed into policy? Answering these questions reveals the impact that local conditions in each province, including the socio-political context, had on whether eugenic legislation was implemented. I argue that Manitoba and Alberta shared similar concerns about “race degeneration,” “defective” immigrants, and the economic costs of running institutions, but there were important subtle differences in the political contexts of the two provinces. These differences served to empower the opposition elements to sexual sterilization in Manitoba, while in Alberta it served to empower grassroots organizations that were adjacent to the government, and at the same time weaken any political critics.

The two provinces both elected populist United Farmers governments in the 1920s who were led by technocratic leaders, John Bracken in Manitoba and John Brownlee in Alberta. Both governments shared similar ideological roots and agendas, but their organization and governing philosophies differed in key ways. Brownlee’s party enjoyed an overwhelming majority in the legislature and a mandate to enact policies that percolated up from within its own agrarian ranks. Bracken’s government, on the other hand, was a coalition government and despite holding a majority of seats, Bracken had to be cautious about the various perspectives in his party. Bracken’s own governing philosophy sought consensus and unity (Brackenism), and lacked both the insularity of the Alberta government, as well as its well-developed grassroots political apparatus. On their own, these differences might not have led to diverging policies on eugenics, but when combined with a variety of other relatively small differences in the makeup of the provinces, they had decisive results.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the increase in immigration transformed the cultural and demographic composition of the Prairie Provinces. Manitoba received a steady number of immigrants from 1870s onward, while Alberta's population increased significantly after 1900. Alberta received disproportionately more immigrants than Manitoba from 1911 to 1931. Anxiety over immigration was a factor in the popularity of eugenic ideas, and in this regard it had more effect in Alberta than in Manitoba. Additionally, when Albertans were considering enacting eugenic legislation, it was during the second wave of immigration into the province after 1925, while by the time Manitoba introduced its sexual sterilization bill in 1933, immigration had declined significantly due to the economic downturn of the 1930s. The findings of the mental hygiene surveys, conducted by the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, made biological arguments that linked new immigrants to "feeble-mindedness," poverty, and crime. These arguments did not appear to gain much traction in Manitoba, while in Alberta the anti-immigrant sentiment of the Committee influenced social reformers, particularly the powerful grassroots organization, the United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA) to take action. The farm women's interest in public health which focused on both the physical and mental well-being of Alberta's families made them more receptive to eugenic ideas.

Eugenic views of early twentieth century women's organizations were connected to their political agenda which sought to draw attention to issues surrounding social welfare, health reform, and the family. Employing the concept of motherhood, early women's groups presented women with an opportunity to participate in the public sphere. Their focus on strengthening the family through controlled reproduction inevitably drew them to eugenics. The early women's organizations and eugenics were intertwined and complemented one another's beliefs in race betterment, social reform, and in biological solutions to social problems.

Women's groups, such as the United Farm Women of Manitoba (UFWM) and UFWA shared similar concerns about mental health, public health, maternal and infant health, and eugenics. Yet, the United Farm Women of Alberta were much more effective in lobbying for the eugenic control of reproduction for those deemed "defective." Farm women were able to carve out a space for themselves in the farm movement to address issues in the "woman's sphere," such as child welfare, health reform, and education. In doing so, they became politically active. The United Farm Women of Alberta were a centralized organization that had a strong relationship to the provincial government, and some of its members even served as ministers in the Brownlee administration. The resolutions that they carried at their annual conventions ended up on the desk of the Premier or the Minister of Health. It could be argued that their resolutions served almost as blueprints for future government policies related to public health. In Manitoba, on the other hand, the farm movement was weaker than in Alberta, and the United Farmers in Manitoba lacked the cohesion of their Alberta counterparts. The UFWM were unable to have much effect on government policy during the 1920s and early 1930s. This was because the UFWM did not have the same relationship with their provincial government, as the UFWA did with theirs. The Bracken administration was consensus driven and thus unlikely to be controlled by any particular interest group. The UFWM supported the segregation and sterilization of "mental defectives" but they did not fully lobby the provincial government for eugenic measures until late 1933, months after the defeat of the sterilization bill. The fact that there was no consensus on the sterilization issue in Manitoba, did not help the UFWM's cause in calling for eugenic legislation.

A similar dichotomy is seen in the relative opposition to sexual sterilization provided by the Roman Catholics in the two provinces. Catholicism was not monolithic, and Roman

Catholics presented a variety of perspectives on eugenics before and after *Casti Connubii*. In Manitoba, Roman Catholics organized an impressive campaign in opposition to the proposed sterilization bill in 1933. Catholic clergy were effective in framing their arguments against eugenics, they not only objected to it on moral grounds, they also questioned the science behind eugenics, and even cautioned their government representatives to oppose the legislation or face consequences at election time. Catholic clergy and lay Catholics voiced their views in letters and petitions that they sent to their MLAs, they regularly presented their perspectives in newspapers, and stated their objections at public hearings. In Alberta, on the other hand, Roman Catholics did not appear to be as politicized as their counterparts in Manitoba with respect to the eugenics issue. There is little evidence to suggest that they were active in opposing the proposed *Sexual Sterilization Act*.

Catholics in Manitoba were confident enough to step into contentious debates on eugenics, despite the fact that they were a minority in the province. There was no internal battle in the Church hierarchy between Anglo-Catholic and Franco-Catholics in the same way as there was in Alberta. These battles were fought in Manitoba much earlier, and by the time eugenic legislation was introduced in the 1930s both groups united in their resistance to the bill. Alberta was a much younger province and its society was still forming in the 1920s, where Catholics were politically weaker and less secure in an Anglo-Protestant dominated province. When this is combined with ethno-linguistic divides and internal church politics between Anglo-Catholics and French-speaking Catholics, they become locked in a battle for the control of the Church. This bitter feuding did not allow Catholics in the province to present a united front on issues such as sexual sterilization. Furthermore, Catholics were a minority in Anglo-Protestant Alberta, and

perhaps did not want to become involved in political disputes where they might appear adversarial toward the Protestant majority.

All of these factors, when combined with the local political differences, contributed to the divergence on eugenics policy in Alberta and Manitoba during the interwar period. Manitoba Catholics were in a slightly different position politically than their counterparts in Alberta, and Brackenism further empowered them as opposition voices politically. In Alberta, on the other hand, Brownlee's style of governing coupled with the United Farmers of Alberta administration's significant political mandate did not allow for public debates on eugenics. Brackenism also meant a weaker and less centralized party political apparatus that failed to develop the sort of grassroots organizations, especially women's groups – who were important promoters of eugenics in Alberta – into effective political lobbying entities. The United Farm Women of Manitoba shared the eugenic ideology of their Alberta counterparts but they appear not to have been as active in lobbying the government for the adoption of eugenic policy, perhaps in part because they had little connection to the government itself. All of this shows how the international eugenics agenda interacted with local conditions, and how the legislation of health policy reflected the subtle differences in the societies and political landscapes that considered it.

There are several areas related to eugenics in Alberta and Manitoba that require further academic investigation. First, while this study has focused primarily on the interwar-period, there is almost nothing written about eugenics in Manitoba from 1940 onward. As presented above, support for eugenics did not disappear and eugenic thought likely penetrated other areas including welfare policies. Secondly, while conducting research in Manitoba, it quickly became

apparent that scholars have yet to write a history of institutionalization in that province.⁶⁸³

Thirdly, while historians have started to look at eugenics in post-war Alberta, this is still an area that requires further attention from scholars. In particular, there needs to be an in depth analysis of the 1937 and the 1942 amendments.⁶⁸⁴ Fourth, the period from 1950s onward needs scholarly attention as this was when the majority of the Eugenics Board's cases arrived from the Provincial Training School in Red Deer. Christian and Grekul *et al* have identified that Indigenous people were overrepresented among cases presented to the Eugenics Board, but there needs to be an in-depth analysis of the impacts of the eugenics program on Indigenous people. Fifth, Philosopher and Director of the multi-centre research project "Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada" (2011-2015), Robert Wilson shows the importance of oral history in constructing Canada's eugenic past. The sterilization survivors' stories were central to that project and their accounts show that "there is much more to eugenics than sterilization and its aftermath for those who have survived it."⁶⁸⁵ Future studies should also analyze the political resistance to eugenics in Canadian provinces. As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, the Roman Catholics were the most active in opposing eugenic legislation, yet there has been little written about their activism regarding this issue. It would also be valuable to explore if there was resistance from immigrant and working class communities across Canada, and, how, and through what channels,

⁶⁸³ An exception here would be Mary Horodyski's M.A. Thesis on Archival records related to institutionalization, see "'Society seems like it doesn't even know...': Archival records regarding people labelled with intellectual disability who have been institutionalized in Manitoba," (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 2017).

⁶⁸⁴ An exception here would be Dack, "The Alberta Eugenics Movement and the 1937 Amendment to the Sexual Sterilization Act." Dyck, *Facing Eugenics*.

⁶⁸⁵ R.A. Wilson, "The Role of Oral History in Surviving a Eugenic Past," In *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence*, ed. Stephen High (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 119-138.

did they voice their opposition. This would be interesting to analyze as we know that these groups tended to be targets of eugenic campaigns.

So, where does this leave us? Is eugenics still with us? While the goal of eugenics was to achieve human betterment through controlled reproduction, as Philosopher Catherine Mills demonstrates “today the ‘quality control’ that attaches to reproduction in the biopolitical management of life extends throughout pregnancy” with the use of reproductive technologies and screenings.⁶⁸⁶ The various tests involved in prenatal screenings essentially provide a genetic picture of the fetus and help the prospective parents decide whether or not to bring the pregnancy to term. Mills applies Foucault’s ideas on the normalization of bio-power to prenatal technologies, particularly the ultrasound, and suggests that this type of technology “either provides reassurance of normality on the one hand, or identifies possible and actual malformations and shunts prospective parents into channels for further normalization and potential elimination of the foetus.”⁶⁸⁷ While the “old” eugenics has disappeared, its goal of strengthening the health of the population through genetics is still very much with us. In recent years, there has been talk of “newgenics,”—a term used to describe a number of reproductive and genetic technologies such as in-vitro fertilization and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), and to what extent it is similar and different from eugenics.⁶⁸⁸ With reproductive technologies there is no state involvement, as there was with eugenic laws, and these screenings are technically a choice. Although some scholars have questioned the voluntary nature of these

⁶⁸⁶ Catherine Mills, “Biopolitics and Reproduction,” In *The Routledge Handbook of Biopolitics*, eds. Sergei Prozorov and Simona Rentea (London, UK: Routledge, 2016), 289.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁶⁸⁸ Alison Bashford, “Epilogue: Where Did Eugenics Go?” In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 540-541.

screenings, as historian Mattias Tydén explains, prospective parents in “risk groups” are often advised by medical professionals to undergo the screenings and this pressure might affect their decision in favour of testing.⁶⁸⁹ With the rise of the new technologies, there has been a significant critique voiced by disability scholars about the language of “newgenics” and some find many similarities to the language used in the earlier eugenics movement. Disability scholars and disability activists are concerned about what this new technology means for people with disabilities, especially because there is a focus on having “healthy” children.⁶⁹⁰ Similarly, Philosopher Rob Wilson points out that “newgenics” is a problematic term for those who experienced the horrors of eugenic policies and practices. For sterilization survivors, eugenic ideas never disappeared, they were just rebranded and emerged again within the context of reproductive technologies. As Wilson explains, “instead of being characterized as unfit ... they were regarded as less healthy ... Instead of state-mandated practices of euthanasia and sterilization ... there were practices of prenatal screenings and selective abortion offered as matters of individual reproductive choice.”⁶⁹¹ What all of this suggests is that by studying the history of eugenics, we will have a better grasp of the contemporary debates over reproductive policies and practices. This will lead to a more profound understanding of the new biotechnological practices, especially those that are diagnostic and pre-selective such as pre-implantation diagnostics and in-vitro fertilization. The history of eugenics is important because it can provide insight into the current scientific research, medical ethics, and reproductive policies and practices.

⁶⁸⁹ Mattias Tydén, “The Scandinavian States: Reformed Eugenics Applied,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 372-373.

⁶⁹⁰ See for example, Troy Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics* (London: Routledge, 1990).

⁶⁹¹ Robert A. Wilson, *The Eugenic Mind Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 143.

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Appendix A: The Sexual Sterilization Act (Alberta, 1928)

Source: Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary Archives, Carroll, Bishop: Sterilization Act, 1946; Correspondences

996032201- 28.866.

1928

CHAPTER 37.

The Sexual Sterilization Act.

(Assented to March 21, 1928.)

HIS MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, enacts as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as "*The Sexual Sterilization Act*." Short title

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires— Interpretation

(a) "Mental Hospital" shall mean a hospital within the meaning of *The Mental Diseases Act*; Mental hospitals

(b) "Minister" shall mean the Minister of Health. Minister

3.—(1) For the purpose of this Act, a Board is hereby created, which shall consist of the following four persons: Appointment of Board

Dr. E. Pope, Edmonton.

Dr. E. G. Mason, Calgary.

Dr. J. M. McEachran, Edmonton.

Mrs. Jean H. Field, Kinuso.

(2) The successors of the said members of the Board shall from time to time, be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, but two of the said Board shall be medical practitioners nominated by the Senate of the University of Alberta and the Council of the College of Physicians respectively, and two shall be persons other than medical practitioners, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

4. When it is proposed to discharge any inmate of a mental hospital, the Medical Superintendent or other officer in charge thereof may cause such inmate to be examined by or in the presence of the board of examiners. Examination of inmate of mental hospital

5. If upon such examination, the board is unanimously of opinion that the patient might safely be discharged if the danger of procreation with its attendant risk of multiplication of the evil by transmission of the disability to progeny were eliminated, the board may direct in writing such surgical operation for sexual sterilization of the inmate as may be specified in the written direction and shall appoint some competent surgeon to perform the operation. Surgical operation

Consent of
inmate or
relation
necessary

6. Such operation shall not be performed unless the inmate, if in the opinion of the board, he is capable of giving consent, has consented thereto, or where the board is of opinion that the inmate is not capable of giving such consent, the husband or wife of the inmate or the parent or guardian of the inmate if he is unmarried has consented thereto, or where the inmate has no husband, wife, parent or guardian resident in the Province, the Minister has consented thereto.

Exemption
from action

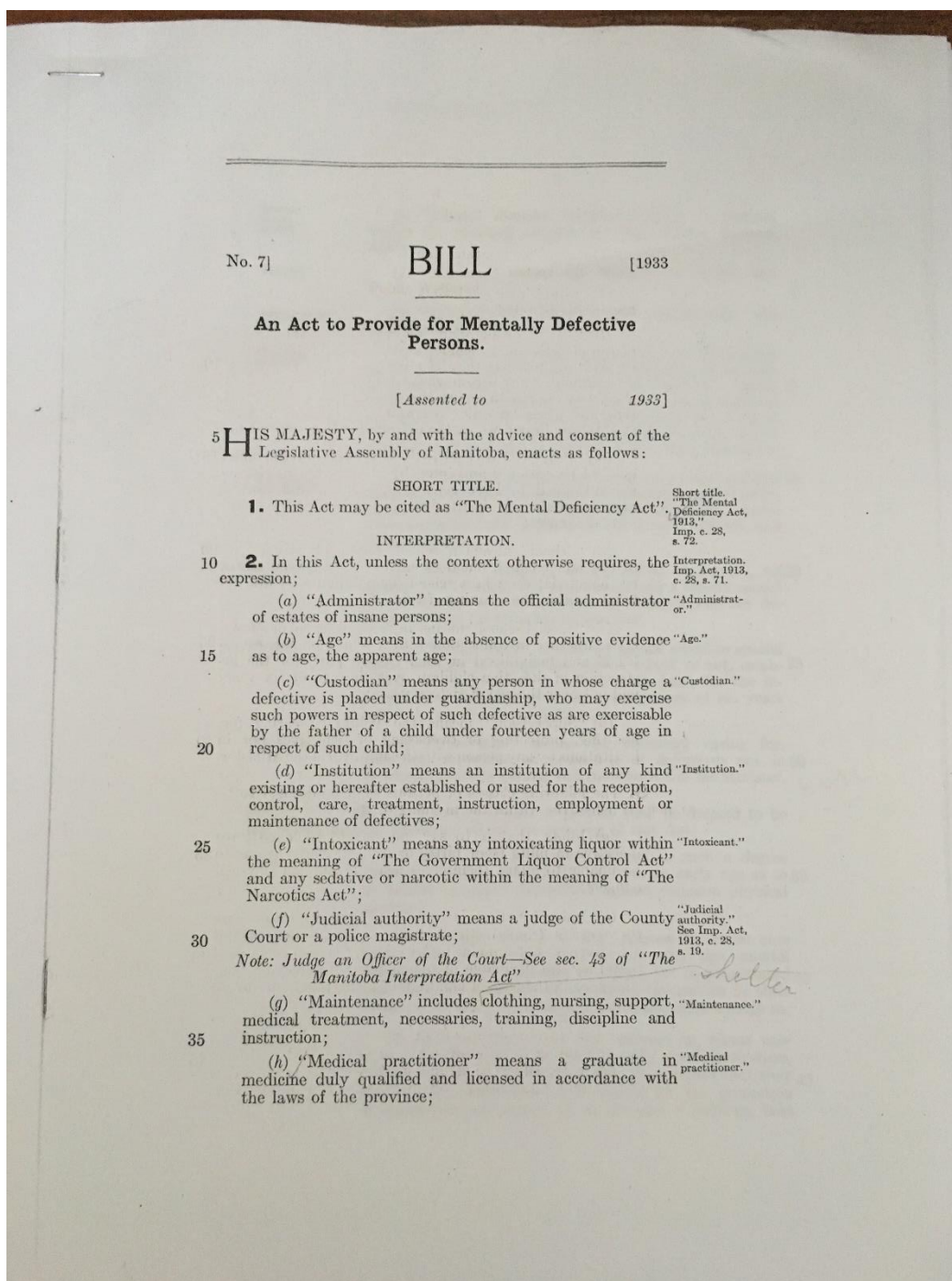
7. No surgeon duly directed to perform any such operation shall be liable to any civil action whatsoever by reason of the performance thereof.

Scope of
Act

8. This Act shall have effect only insofar as the legislative authority of the Province extends.

Appendix B: An Act to Provide for Mentally Defective Persons, or The Mental
Deficiency Act (Manitoba, 1933)

Source: Archives of Manitoba, Sessional Papers, Select Standing Committee on Law Amendments re: Mental
Deficiency, "The Mental Deficiency Act", G8250, Box 50, no. 7.



"Mental diseases hospital."

(i) "Mental diseases hospital" means a hospital within the meaning assigned in "The Mental Diseases Act";

"Minister."

(j) "Minister" means the Minister of Health and Public Welfare; 5

"Municipality"

(k) "Municipality" includes both municipality and municipal district;

"Parent or guardian."

(l) "Parent or guardian" means either of the parents of the defective and includes any person who undertakes or performs towards the defective the duty of a parent 10 or guardian, or any person who is by law liable to maintain a defective or with whom the defective in fact lives at the time when an order regarding him is made under this Act, and upon whom the defective is then dependent;

"Provincial psychiatrist."

(m) "Provincial psychiatrist" means the duly qualified 15 medical practitioner appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to have general supervision and control over hospitals and institutions for mental defects and mental diseases;

"School."

(n) "School" means a school, public or private, no 20 matter how created, but does not include a special school or the special class in a school for children who are defective within the meaning of this Act;

"Special school."

(o) "Special school" means any special school or special class, whether in connection with a school or not, estab- 25 lished and maintained in whole, or in part, for the instruction of defective children over the age of six years and not over the age of sixteen years;

"Supervision."

(p) "Supervision" means the voluntary caring for, assisting, protecting or overseeing of defectives not in 30 institutions by any person with the approval of the Minister. hope

Classes of defectives. Imp. Act, 1913, c. 28, s. 1.

Idiots.

3. The following classes of persons shall be deemed to be mental defectives within the meaning of this Act:

(a) Idiots, that is to say, persons to such a degree defective in mind from birth, or from an early age as to 35 be unable to guard themselves against common physical dangers;

Imbeciles.

(b) Imbeciles, that is to say, persons in whose case there exists from birth or from an early age, mental defectiveness not amounting to idiocy, yet so pronounced 40 that they are incapable of managing themselves or their affairs, or in the case of children, of being taught to do so;

Morons.

(c) Morons, that is to say, persons in whose case there exists from birth or from an early age defectiveness, not amounting to imbecility, yet so pronounced that they 45 require care, supervision and control for the protection of themselves and others, or, in the case of children, that

STERILIZATION OF DEFECTIVES.

30. (1) When the provincial psychiatrist is of opinion that any defective in an institution or under guardianship or supervision, or the public will be benefited by an operation for the sterilization of such defective, he may so recommend to the
10 Advisory Board, and if the Board, after such investigations as it deems necessary, be of the opinion that sterilization of the defective is desirable, it may so recommend to the Minister.

(2) The Minister may then contract with two medical practitioners to examine such defective and ascertain as to the
15 desirability of such an operation, and on the approval of the examining medical practitioners, the Minister may contract with an independent medical practitioner who is a surgeon, to perform such operation, and may cause such operation to be so performed.

(3) No such operation shall be performed unless permission for the purpose, in a form prescribed by the Minister, is given by the defective or his parent or guardian and a certified copy of such certificate be deposited with the hospital in which the operation is to take place and another with the surgeon who is
20 to perform such operation.

31. No surgeon duly directed to perform and performing such an operation and no medical practitioner nor member of the Advisory Board recommending the same, nor the Minister, nor psychiatrist nor any person acting under the direction of
30 any of them in connection with such operation, shall be liable to any civil action by reason of the performance thereof.

POLICE POWER OF OFFICIALS.

32. (1) For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act, the superintendent, officers and employees of an
35 institution shall possess all the powers and authority of peace officers and constables, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing and in addition thereto may summarily arrest any person within the institution or the grounds thereof, guilty of an offence or of a breach of the rules and regulations of the
40 institution, or any vagrant or idle person who refuses, on being requested to do so, to leave the premises, and may take any such persons before any justice to be dealt with according to law.

Note: Power of Officials in Mental Diseases Hospitals—See sec. 35 of "The Mental Diseases Act".

(2) The provincial psychiatrist shall possess the powers of a police magistrate and may exercise them for the purpose of
45 enforcing any of the provisions of this Act or of "The Mental Diseases Act" or of any regulations made under either of such Acts.

Appendix C: The Case Against Sterilization pamphlet

Source: Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files. *Sterilization Bill*. G601 (1933).

The Case Against Sterilization

The problem of mental defectives and mental deficiency is a very serious one. The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba is at present studying a Bill called "The Mental Deficiency Act". Amongst the means of curtailing future deficiency is included a Chapter entitled "Sterilization of defectives".

Our reasons against sterilization of mental defectives are the following:

1. Sterilization is a challenge to Divine Law.

The fifth Commandment of God: "Thou shalt not kill" includes the prohibition of self-destruction or self-mutilation.

The circumstances under which self-destruction or self-mutilation may be allowed (such as war, etc.), are unexisting in the present case.

2. Sterilization is an outrage to the human race.

It is an assumption of the grossest character to suppose that only the strongest and fittest have the right to live a human life or to go through it unmaimed. Why should a person be deprived of any of his natural rights to serve the purpose of others or their convenience? A nation who slaughters the weak and innocent commits a crime against her social duty.

3. Sterilization is the source of moral and social evils for the individual and the community.

It will not cure or improve the diseased mental state of the person concerned.

It does not affect the sensual feelings and will leave in the community defectives, known to be incapable of producing children who will become dangerous occasions for others and syphilis-centers. Imagine, for instance, what is going to happen to the sterilized girl-defective.

Why sacrifice innocent individuals to this pagan theory so uncertain in it's moral effect?



4. Sterilization is no cure to the evil or to mental deficiency.

Mental defect is a physical thing, the faulty development of the cortex of the brain. It proceeds from many causes.

From the point of view of causation there are two types of defectives:

The Primary, where the cause of the defect lies in the vitiation of the germ-plasm, or in other words, due to some inherent defect in the germ-cells of the stock. According to experts this vitiation is caused either by Alcoholism, Tuberculosis, Syphilis or Neurosis. Those vices may be passed along to children by parents mentally normal.

The Secondary, where the causes lies in post-conceptive influences. The causes subsequent to conception, which are considered such important factors in producing mental deficiency, are as follows:

- a) Drunkenness of the parents during the period of pregnancy.
- b) Immorality of the parents during the period of pregnancy.
- c) Serious illness or insufficient nutrition of mother during pregnancy.
- d) Injuries to child during process of birth.

Once again these causes may be found in mental defectives but are also found in normal persons. One should attack the causes of this deficiency, not the later effects. In fact, in 1929, in England, a Committee of medical and educational experts was formed, called "The Joint Committee of the Board of Education and the Board of Control". The Committee investigated all through England. Its Report is called "The Report of the Mental Deficiency Committee, being a joint Committee of the Board of Education and the Board of Control, England, 1929".

The Report says, amongst other things, "defective children, born of defective parents, do not form a large proportion of the total number of defectives", and Dr. Tredgold, the well-known authority on this subject, speaking in London stated that, in his opinion, not more than 5% of mental defectives, were the children of defective parents.

Add to this that very few defectives are social dangers in the sense of criminal or penal law.

5. A proposed solution to the problem:

The division of defectives in groups, as defined by the proposed Bill.

The first two groups, in which are idiots and imbeciles, are untrainable. Their mental state is beyond our helping.

They must be cared for during their lives, either in their homes or in colonies and institutions. It is a duty of Society.

The third group is composed of the feeble-minded. Specialists divide this group in two classes:

The Low-grade. This type of defective is not educable beyond the point of training him to contribute in terms of his labour to the cost of his maintenance in an institution.

The High-grade defective is educable if trained and treated by special methods. Experiences made, for instance in the Besford Court Mental Welfare Hospital (Worcestershire, England) have given very satisfactory results. The High-grade defective may be educated, under proper supervision, to a normal degree.

The fourth group of defectives is made up of the morally defectives; those who are mentally defective and of criminal or vicious tendencies. They form rather a small proportion of the defectives. Amongst this last type are many who are curable. Here again the Besford Mental Welfare Hospital has treated many cases with complete success. The influence of religion and moral Law is advocated particularly in these cases.

It is consequently the duty of every citizen to oppose this measure which is no solution to the evil and will not contribute to the welfare of the individuals concerned or the community at large; a measure, pagan in its principle, cruel in its application and probably disastrous in its moral and social effects.



Appendix D: Petition received by Manitoba MLA, Frank W. McIntosh (1879-1951) by residents
of Notre Dame de Lourdes in opposition to the sterilization clause

Source: Archives of Manitoba, Premier's Office Files. *Sterilization Bill*. G601 (1933).

Notre-Dame de Lourdes
February 27th 1933

To Mr. McIntosh, M. L. A.
Parliament Building, Winnipeg.

To the Honourable Member for Manitoba,

The undersigned petitioners are firmly
opposed to the Bill entitled "The Mental Deficiency
Act", especially to the Chapter under the
heading: "Sterilization of defective", and urge you
very strongly to use your influence against
that Bill in the House.

Ant. Champagne
L.R. Beauregard and
C. J. J. J.
Jean-Louis
Julie J. J.
Benoit Chabauty
Lucien J. J.
Gabrielle Baril
Eugene Constant
Alice Rock
Louis J. J.
Jules Rock
Charles August
Victor Deshayes
Marie Anna Baginets
J. B. Baginets
J. B. Baginets
Pierre Baginets
Francis Rock


Appendix E: Petition Presented to the Law Amendments Committee in Support of the Sterilization Clause

Source: Archives of Manitoba, Sessional Papers, Select Standing Committee on Law Amendments re: Mental Deficiency, "Petition," G8250, Box 50, no. 7.

Petition

TO

The Manitoba Government at Winnipeg

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TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE OF MANITOBA:

WHEREAS the number of inmates in our Mental Institutions and the Institutions for the Care of the Infirm are increasing year by year;

AND WHEREAS the cost to the taxpayer for these services is increasing at an alarming rate;—at least two per cent a year;

AND WHEREAS the present economic condition makes it imperative that every possible means at our disposal should be taken to limit or reduce these expenditures;

THEREFORE the following citizens of Manitoba earnestly beseech and request His Majesty's Government to retain, in the "Act to Provide for Mentally Defective Persons" now being considered by the Manitoba Legislature, those sections dealing with the voluntary sterilization of mentally defective persons;

AND we further request that earnest consideration be given to the advisability of widening the powers of this Section on "Sterilization" to include persons suffering from incurable physical conditions which might be transmitted from parents to children.

AND your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

NAME	ADDRESS (Street and Number and City).
Geo Willows	442 Boyd Ave
E. J. Willows	442 Boyd Ave.
W. C. Thompson	1014 Banning St
Chas McKenzie	527 Beverley St
R. G. Gordon	254 Balmoral St
W. G. Deegan	6-1000 Main St.
E. A. Wilson	535 Jessie Ave.
E. Schack	17 Egginton Apts.
A. H. Stanbridge	475 Carr St
L. H. Burgess	517 Beresford Ave
C. G. Clarke	200 Charles St.
J. W. McWhorter	520 Jubilee Ave
B. H. Shephard	438 Toronto St
R. H. Stewart	774 Simcoe St.
N. B. Andrew	286 Aubrey St.
E. A. Matheson	19 Noble Ave.
C. W. Bullock	153 Claremont Ave St. Boniface
Charles Ross	300 Kylemore
J. J. J. J.	654 Taveling
A. Wood	1631 Ross Ave.