

1993

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Citation of this paper:

Neary, Peter, Shaun Brown. "The Veterans Charter and Canadian Women Veterans of World War II." Political Economy Research Group. Papers in Political Economy, 35. London, ON: Department of Economics, University of Western Ontario (1993).

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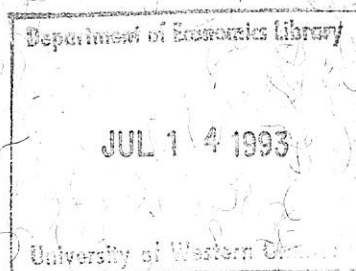
Peter Neary and Shaun Brown

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ISSN: 1181-7151
ISBN: 0-7714-1531-1

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The Veterans Charter and Canadian Women Veterans of World War II*

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Writing about Canada's deep involvement in World War II has to date dealt mainly with military matters, diplomacy, the problem of national unity, and the mobilizing of the resources of the country for the war effort. Two books on the history of the period stand out: C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939-1945* (Ottawa, 1970) and J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Policies of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto, 1975). These masterly surveys cover a broad range of topics but clearly much work remains to be done on the social history of the country during the war. Robert Bothwell, Marjorie Cohen, Terry Copp, Ruth Roach Pierson and others have, however, made notable contributions in this regard. Part of that social history concerns the planning for demobilization that went on between 1939 and 1945 and the carrying-out of the plans that were made. This complex topic manifestly invites further research. Of necessity, mobilization and demobilization were simultaneous concerns of Ottawa throughout the war. The relative importance of each, however, obviously changed as the conflict progressed. Soldiers were accidentally injured on the first day Canada was in the war and soon afterwards a soldier was killed. And so, even as the armed forces were beginning to be mobilized to defend the country and serve overseas, the first members of a new generation of veterans was appearing. By definition, how the Dominion government responded to them and how it planned for the re-establishment in civil society of the thousands upon thousands of Canadians who were demobilized after the war form a major chapter in the social history of Canada in the twentieth century. The record of the country in relation to women veterans is embedded in this larger story and can be understood only with respect to the scheme of benefits devised by Ottawa for the

veteran population as a whole. It is with this general scheme, therefore, that this discussion must start.

* * * *

After a tumultuous beginning, the administration of veterans' affairs in Canada was by 1939 settled into well-established routines.¹ The benefit rules were well known, the bureaucracy administering programs was firmly entrenched, and the lobbyists who sought to represent the veterans' point of view were well integrated into a system that had become a familiar and established part of Canada's institutional framework. The administration of benefits to veterans was the responsibility of the Department of Pensions and National Health, and the main organization lobbying for veterans was the Canadian Legion. The administration of pensions was the responsibility of the Canadian Pension Commission.² Unemployable and destitute veterans with service in a "theatre of war" could be awarded the veteran's allowance, which was administered by the War Veterans' Allowance Board.³ This allowance was popularly known as the "Burnt-Out Pension."⁴

The first actions of the government in relation to veterans of World War II were taken under the War Measures Act, beginning with extending them the benefits of the Pension Act.⁵ On 8 December 1939, order in council PC 4068½ created a cabinet committee to consider and report upon the problems that would be posed by demobilizing and discharging members of the forces and rehabilitating them to civilian life, both during and after the war.⁶ This committee in turn appointed a General Advisory Committee, which over time established fourteen subcommittees. Basically, the General Advisory Committee and its subcommittees addressed the question of what the state owed "to those whose lives were interrupted by their service to their Country."⁷

The answer given to this question involved the acceptance of sixteen principles. These constituted "the minimum the State should do for the veterans of World War II" and added up to a fundamentally different approach from the one the country had followed after the 1914-18 war.⁸ Whereas rehabilitation benefits for veterans of World War I had been limited to those who had been disabled, the General Advisory Committee recommended that they be offered to every veteran of World War II. On 1 October 1941, acting on this and other advice from its demobilization planners, the government issued PC 7633, one of the major social documents of the war period and therefore of modern Canadian history.⁹ Entitled "The Post-Discharge Re-establishment Order," it set the agenda for subsequent policy and planning for demobilization. It promised veterans financial support while they were unemployed, pursuing vocational training or higher education, temporarily incapacitated, or awaiting returns from farming or other private enterprise. PC 7633 also laid down that service in the armed forces would count as insurable employment under the terms of the Unemployment Insurance Act of June 1940.

To meet the commitments made in and the promise of PC 7633 was a major bureaucratic and legislative task in Ottawa for the rest of the war, and a steady stream of related orders in council, regulations and statutes followed. Ultimately, the program Ottawa devised for veterans became known as "The Veterans Charter." This was the title of a Canadian Government publication of 1946 that brought together in one volume all the legislation and regulations in the government's plan of action. The benefits awaiting members of the armed forces on demobilization were, in layman's language, explained to them in the pamphlet Back to Civil Life.

In 1944 the Department of Pensions and National Health was dissolved and two new departments created in its stead: the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and the Department of National Health and Welfare. Ian Mackenzie became the first Minister of Veterans Affairs and

Walter S. Woods the first deputy minister. This continued their mutually beneficial partnership, which had begun at Pensions and National Health, and gave full scope to the planning and administrative talents of the highly creative and experienced Woods, who was very much a mandarin's mandarin.

Sainsbury-Woods, as he was originally called, was born at Frome in Somerset and came to Canada from England in 1905 at the age of twenty-one, apparently attracted by a "gaudily colored" railway poster that advertised "the virginal sparsely-populated land of the Canadian West."¹⁰ In Canada he became plain Walter Woods because Canadians "didn't have hyphenated names." His first job in the Dominion was on an Ontario farm in harvest season. In the spring of 1906 he went to Manitoba and in 1914 went overseas with the first Canadian contingent. He arrived in France in February 1915 and was subsequently wounded. In 1919 he served as president of the Calgary branch of the Great War Veterans' Association and from 1919 to 1930 worked for the Soldier Settlement Board, which administered the Dominion Government's land settlement program for veterans of the Great War. In 1930 Woods became chairman of the newly created War Veterans' Allowance Board and in April 1941 was appointed Associate Deputy Minister of the Department of Pensions and National Health, with responsibility for administering the rehabilitation program for the country's veterans that was now being developed. As Associate Deputy Minister he set up shop in the Daly Building in Ottawa, which thereby became the nerve centre for the massive undertaking he would soon shape and direct.¹¹

Woods took pride in being a self-made man and an official who could relate to the needs and aspirations of the rank and file of the armed forces because he had once been one of them himself. In October 1944 the Canadian Veteran described Woods as "one of those many 'Other Ranks' who, without pull and by sheer merit" had "risen to the top."¹² Woods, this sketch continued, was

knowledgeable, experienced, and a man of broad "commonsense." He had an "outstanding" administrative record, was known for his "all embracing" humanity and was "in every sense a good citizen and a good comrade." That was very much how Woods saw himself and liked to be seen and in this he exemplified the tradition of remembrance, comradeship and mutual aid that defined the veteran ideal.

His approach to veterans' benefits was straightforward and easily understood. The minority who could not look after themselves - the sick, the disabled and the dependants of those who had died or been incapacitated - must be provided with the best care and service Canada could afford. Decency and honour required nothing less. To able-bodied veterans the country had a quite different responsibility: they were entitled to the means to re-establish themselves in civil life with gainful and rewarding jobs. Veterans did not want handouts or to become long-term dependants of the state. What a veteran needed was a helping hand on the road to sturdy independence and recognition of the service given, the opportunities lost and the vicissitudes of interrupted life. Given a fresh start, veterans would be leaders in promoting the well-being and development of the country. Hence, more than personal entitlement was at stake: veterans' benefits were an investment not only in individual happiness but in Canada's collective future prosperity and success. It followed from all of this that the most successful rehabilitation program was one that would have a limited lifespan. If Canada planned well, the government's role would be reduced not long after the war was over to looking after those who could not look after themselves. The able-bodied, having benefited from the rehabilitation program, would be back to work in short order, paying taxes, raising families, and generally building up through their own initiative the country they had so ably defended. To Woods it was a "basic truth...that the great majority of veterans would much rather work than receive relief in any form from the State."¹³ The purpose of veterans' benefits,

therefore, should be to provide "OPPORTUNITY WITH SECURITY."¹⁴ This was what the country had to be ready to deliver en masse at the end of the war, and by 1944 Woods believed that the government had the situation well under control. In September of that year he told his minister that Canada had ready "the most comprehensive programme in the world for rehabilitation of her service men," and that they only wanted "one thing," namely, "a job and security."¹⁵

The scheme of benefits Woods and his associates had devised by 1945 to meet this expectation was complex and involved choice on the part of the individual veteran.¹⁶ And, in keeping with Woods' philosophy of veterans' benefits, it made a clear distinction between an immediate post-war period of rehabilitation and the long-term future. Needless to say, all benefits were available only to honourably discharged individuals. On leaving the forces the World War II veteran became eligible for a clothing allowance and transportation either to the place of enlistment or, provided no more than equivalent cost was involved, to an alternative destination in the country. Veterans with six months' service were also automatically eligible for a cash rehabilitation grant. Beyond this, entitlement became more conditional.

Under the terms of the War Service Grants Act of 1944 a gratuity was payable but only to general service volunteers and to those men conscripted under the terms of the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA) of 1940 who had served overseas. The basic gratuity amounted to \$7.50 for each 30-day period served in the Western Hemisphere and \$15 for each 30-day period served overseas. A supplementary gratuity was payable for each six months of service overseas. Those eligible for the gratuity were also eligible for a re-establishment credit. This was equal in amount to the basic gratuity and was an alternative to training under the Veterans Rehabilitation Act (1945) or land settlement under the Veterans' Land Act (1942), which were themselves mutually exclusive benefits. As its name indicated, the re-establishment credit, which expired on 15 January 1955 or

at ten years from discharge, whichever came later, was a sum of money against which multiple claims could be made rather than a direct cash payment. As finally developed, the credit could be used for various housing and furniture expenses, for obtaining tools or purchasing a business, for paying premiums on government insurance, or for the purchase of a government annuity. An individual veteran could make more than one application until the amount of the credit was used up.

Unlike the amounts payable under the War Service Grants Act, the benefits of the Veterans Rehabilitation Act were theoretically available to all veterans and monthly allowances were payable to those who were actually accepted for vocational training or university education. These were paid on a graduated scale according to marital status and number of dependants. Under this same legislation a veteran who went into business or took up farming could qualify for an "awaiting returns" allowance. Allowances were also payable to veterans who found themselves temporarily incapacitated or unemployed and ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. By the terms of the Veterans' Business and Professional Loans Act of 1946, veterans who had qualified for the gratuity issued under the War Service Grants Act were given an additional advantage. Other opportunities offered veterans, based on various criteria, included the right to reinstatement in previous employment, first claim on jobs listed with the National Employment Service, and, for those with service in a theatre of war, preference in civil service appointments. The insurance scheme run by DVA offered coverage on preferential terms. Subject to a means test, all veterans were eligible for free medical treatment for a year after discharge and payment of an allowance while receiving such treatment. Disabled pensioners and those needing medical care at time of discharge constituted special categories for treatment and were recognized accordingly. Then, of

course, there were the benefits of the Pension Act and the War Veterans' Allowance Act. These applied to veterans of both world wars and offered eligible individuals long-term income support.

The whole interlocking scheme of benefits involved coordinating efforts of several departments of government and getting cooperation from many outside groups. Hence Woods' description of the process by which the promise of the Veterans Charter was realized as "a combined operation."¹⁷ Gratuities were administered by the Department of National Defence, loans made under the Veterans' Business and Professional Loans Act by the Department of Finance, civil service preference by the Civil Service Commission, and the right of veterans to reinstatement in former employment by the National Employment Service of the Department of Labour, which also certified veterans to DVA for out-of-work benefits. The Department of Labour, moreover, was responsible for the Canadian Vocational Training scheme, to which veterans were referred by DVA for vocational training. To facilitate the post-secondary education of veterans, DVA in 1945 formed an advisory committee that brought together departmental officials and leading university administrators.

As originally organized, DVA itself had separate units for Treatment, Prosthetic and Rehabilitation services, and Veterans Insurance, as well as a Veterans' Bureau, which included the office of Chief Pension Advocate. Pension Advocates had to help veterans prepare and present appeal cases to the Canadian Pension Commission. That agency and the War Veterans' Allowance Board were administered separately as was the Veterans' Land Act. Within DVA a strong emphasis was given to counselling on which, it was believed, the success of the rehabilitation program for demobilization would hinge. Veterans did not have an automatic right to training and further education. They had the right to be considered for such benefits and, if appropriate, recommended

for them by a counsellor. The veteran had to be received with dignity, patience and understanding and then be fully informed and intelligently directed.

To cope with the growing numbers in need of its services DVA hired rapidly in its first years. The upper ranks of the Department consisted entirely of men who were themselves veterans, and the belief was deeply ingrained that veterans could best administer veterans' benefits. Every effort was made to place veterans in the jobs that were opening up in the Department's expanding network of offices and to this end and in fairness to those serving out of the country Woods made a recruiting trip overseas in 1945.¹⁸ He found thirty-four men for senior executive positions in the Department and they returned to Ottawa forthwith to begin their new jobs. By February 1947, at the height of the rehabilitation activity, the staff of DVA had risen to 22,000 but it declined thereafter to a March 1951 total of approximately 15,500.¹⁹ These figures reflected the progress of demobilization itself. Some 250,000 of the approximately 1,082,000 Canadians who served in the armed forces in World War II had been discharged by VE day (8 May 1945) and tens of thousands more soon followed.²⁰ For 1945 and 1946, the peak years of demobilization, the discharge figures were 395,013 and 381,031 respectively. By such numbers the mettle of the Veterans Charter was tested. That charter, the product of a prodigious bureaucratic effort, met the requirements of rational planning while giving careful attention to the deep divisions that arose out of the conduct of the war. It made a clear distinction between service overseas and service in the western hemisphere. And it took into account the difference between general service volunteers, the NRMA conscripts who had remained in Canada and those who, beginning in 1944, had been sent overseas. Those differences were deeply felt in the armed forces and also among veterans. They had their roots in the divisive recruiting experience in the Great War. But the Veterans

Charter also addressed matters that were quite new in Canadian life. Of these the question of fairness as between male and female veterans was prominent.

* * * *

Women had entered the paid labour force in large numbers during the Great War to support the military effort and 2,854 women served with the Canadian Army Medical Corps as nursing sisters.²¹ However, the role of Canadian women in wartime took on an entirely different meaning during World War II when the women's auxiliary forces were formed. The first to be authorized, by PC 4798 of 2 July 1941,²² was the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force. On 13 August 1941 PC 6289 authorized the formation of the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) and on 31 July 1942 the Women's Royal Canadian Navy Service (WRCNS) was launched by PC 56-6775. From February 1942 the women's branch of the air force was known as the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division, to which the acronym RCAF (WD) was given. Enlistments during World War II by women, including some 5,000 nursing sisters, were as follows: Army, 25,562; Air Force, 16,182; and Navy, 7,131, for a total of 48,875.²³ Service overseas by women began in November 1942 and women served in a variety of non-combat roles in the United Kingdom, Italy and Northwest Europe.²⁴ The thinking behind the formation of the auxiliary forces was to free men from work that women could do and so make them available for heavier tasks.²⁵ Women would free men to fight.

The Pension Act had no provision for covering women on military service, so on 1 October 1941 the government acted to remedy this situation. By PC 4/7635 members of the women's forces became eligible for pensions for disabilities incurred while in the services.²⁶ These were payable according to the percentage disability and at rates that were roughly two-thirds of those payable to men. No pension was payable to a dependant because of disablement or death of a member of the

women's forces while in service. The two-thirds pension scale was justified on the grounds that it accorded with the existing pay difference between men and women.²⁷ Subsequently, other post-discharge benefits then available to men were also extended to women,²⁸ but the eligibility of CWAC members for the benefits of the key Post-Discharge Re-establishment Order ran into a snag. The difficulty lay in the terms of their enlistment. Whereas members of the Auxiliary Air Force were being enlisted "on the same basis as airmen," members of CWAC were not being signed up on the same basis as soldiers.²⁹ While it was true that CWAC was organized on "a military basis" and was "under military control and supervision," it specifically did not "form part of the Military Forces of Canada."³⁰ Accordingly, a discharged member of the Corps did not qualify as a "discharged person" under PC 7633 and was therefore ineligible for the benefits authorized by that order in council.³¹

On the initiative of the Department of National Defence a subcommittee of the General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation was formed in late 1941 to consider how to proceed, given this difference between the conditions of service of the two women's units formed to date.³² It recommended that for benefit purposes, members of CWAC should be treated as members of the armed forces even though they were not. This would ensure that "there would be no question in the public mind as to any implied discrimination."³³ To put its recommendation into effect the subcommittee proposed a list of executive actions, one of which would amend the definition of "discharged person" in PC 7633 so as to make specific reference to members of CWAC and the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force. PC 7633 would also have to be amended so as to set the out-of-work benefit for women at two-thirds the amount payable to men and to exempt "a married woman wholly or mainly dependent upon her husband."³⁴

The recommendation of the subcommittee was opposed by Woods on the grounds that granting the benefits of PC 7633 to persons who did not belong to the armed forces, the CWAC uniform notwithstanding, might lead to claims from "many other uniformed bodies," which might then be "hard to resist."³⁵ To proceed as the subcommittee recommended would set an awkward precedent and might require more general changes to be made in veterans' legislation. In the end Woods' cautionary advice to limit the meaning of "discharged person" to former members of the armed forces was heeded. On 1 April 1942 PC 7633 was amended as the subcommittee had recommended, but before this was done another order in council, PC 1965, was issued on 13 March. This constituted CWAC "as a Corps of the Active Militia on Active Service."³⁶ The procedure followed put the two women's auxiliary units on the same footing of service while maintaining a strict definition of exactly who was eligible for veterans' benefits. All ex-servicewomen qualified as veterans, but Woods won his bureaucratic point: that is to say, he kept the definition of veteran within established limits. In accordance with all this, when the formation of WRCNS was authorized in July 1942 it too was designated as being on "active service."³⁷ These developments gave Canadian servicewomen a clear advantage over their United States counterparts in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP).³⁸ WAAC was "attached" to the United States Army but was not "part" of it.³⁹ By the same token, WASP "was supposed to be militarized during the war, but never actually was."⁴⁰ Accordingly, members of WAAC and WASP "were not considered veterans for the purpose of receiving benefits administered by the V[eterans] A[dministration], even though they thought they were part of the military forces."⁴¹ These particular American ex-servicewomen had to fight a long post-war battle to achieve the status that was put beyond question for Canadian servicewomen by 1942.

In October 1943 Woods was asked by the National Secretary of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire for an explanation of the post-discharge benefits available to servicewomen. He wrote in reply that women were "discharged from the Service under the same conditions as men."⁴² They were equally eligible with men for the benefits of the Pension Act and for medical care under the treatment regulations of the Department of Pensions and National Health. Women, however, were paid "special rates of pension" and "special rates of hospital allowances." In both instances the rates paid were lower than those paid to men because women were paid less than men while serving in the forces. It was also the case, Woods noted, that the out-of-work benefit payable under PC 7633 to a woman could "not exceed the rate of pay of the discharged person at the date of discharge." But all the other benefits of this order were available to women "on exactly the same basis as that applying to men." Woods did not mention in this letter that since 1 July 1943 women in the armed forces had been paid at a basic rate that was four-fifths of the amount paid to men of the same rank instead of the previous two-thirds.⁴³ At the same time that this change had been made, it was announced that women would now be given the same trades and professional pay as men and that the allowance paid to the dependants of women in the services, husbands and children excepted, would henceforth be the same as those paid to the dependants of men. This covered "dependent parents and other close relatives." A servicewoman married to a serviceman would be able in future to receive a dependant's allowance from her husband to a maximum income of \$2,100. In 1944 women members of the forces made another gain when it was decided to make the out-of-work benefit payable under PC 7633 the same for women and men. In recommending this change, Woods noted that it had not been pushed previously lest it create a demand among women in the services for more pay.⁴⁴ Given the recent increase in women's pay, however, this

problem no longer existed and the change could be made without adverse effect on the armed forces.

This made good tactical sense but it involved Woods in a testy exchange of letters with A.W. Neill, the Independent member of Parliament for Comox-Alberni.⁴⁵ If a woman, Neill sarcastically asked, was worth the same as a man when they were idle, should they not be paid the same when they were both working?⁴⁶ This was certainly an intriguing question and indicated the extent to which fundamental matters were being raised by the war.

* * * *

In practice nothing came of Neill's intervention but the episode highlighted just how much the rhetoric of equality of opportunity between men and women had taken hold at DVA. In its pursuit of this goal DVA built on the work of yet another sub-committee of the General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation. This was the "Subcommittee on the Special Problems of Discharged Women." The formation of such a subcommittee, to be composed of women, was first recommended by Woods in January 1942.⁴⁷ A follow-up recommendation was next made by the Subcommittee on Post-Discharge Benefits and then accepted by the General Advisory Committee.⁴⁸ The job of the new subcommittee was "to consider and report to the General Advisory Committee on the special problems of civil re-establishment of women, as such, discharged from the Canadian armed forces."⁴⁹ The first meeting of the subcommittee was held at the Daly Building on 19 June 1942. Present were representatives of the women's branches of the armed forces and the nursing service, along with two civilian appointees, Laura Holland and Charlotte Whitton. On 23 June the subcommittee approved an interim report, which listed the major problems it had identified in its initial tour d'horizon.⁵⁰ The first of these concerned "Problems of social care arising from or related to discharge for reasons of conduct." The second

major category of concern for the subcommittee was employment. How would women fare in vocational training, professional education, and in the establishment of individual enterprises and agriculture? And how would the demand for women workers in Canada be coordinated with post-discharge benefits and the training available to and the work being done by women while in the forces? The subcommittee saw a need to concern itself also with pension provisions for women, the effect of their rates of pay and lack of dependants' allowances (these had not yet been granted) on their ability to save for their re-establishment, and the responsibilities for them of the Rehabilitation Branch of the Department of Pensions and National Health.

As only 239 members of CWAC had been discharged by 31 May 1942 and only 61 members of the RCAF (WD) by 24 June 1942, the subcommittee understandably gave priority to the problems of care it had identified. Moreover, its work on employment issues emphasized the collection of data. This was done under three headings: the occupational histories of women in the forces, their future training needs, and their likely job prospects once the war was over. The key assumption of the subcommittee was that most women in the armed forces would not need any retraining or employment assistance at all, because they would get married and become homemakers.

The most detailed attempt to predict what was in store for ex-servicewomen in the post-war job market was made by G.M. Weir in his 1943 "Survey of Rehabilitation (Interim Report)."⁵¹ Weir had been Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education in the Liberal government of Duff Pattullo in British Columbia and in 1943 was Acting Director of Training in the Rehabilitation Branch of the Department of Pensions and National Health. His report included chapters on "Post-War Employment Opportunities for Women" and "Courses of Training for Discharged Men and Women." Based on survey research, Weir predicted that after the war women workers would be

most in demand in services, a category that included nurses, teachers, dentists, doctors and other professionals. The next highest general categories of projected demand were "Vocational," which had more than a dozen sub-classes, and "Clerical." The category "Labourers," which included charwomen, cleaners and other unskilled workers, was rated eighth of nine.⁵² Weir also reported on a survey he had done in October 1943 on the educational and occupational preferences of women in the armed forces.⁵³ In all three services the leading occupational choice turned out to be stenography. In the army and air force this was followed by "Home-maker" and "Nurse" and in the Navy by "Teacher" and "Clerk." Weir found the number choosing stenography to be "disconcerting" and urged that women be encouraged to study nursing, social work and household economics, other careers for which there promised to be a big demand in the post-war world.⁵⁴ In keeping with the occupational preferences he recorded, he also found that the largest number of his respondents favoured business education. This was followed in order by university, technical, high school and normal school education. The occupational course most favoured in all three services was stenography. The other leading choices, though the rankings varied from service to service, were bookkeeping and accounting, home nursing, photography, arts and crafts and hairdressing.

* * * *

In January 1945 a new chapter in the government's program for ex-servicewomen opened. In anticipation of the big rush of demobilization, DVA appointed a female executive assistant to S.N.F. Chant, the Director General of Rehabilitation. The proposal for such an appointment had come from the subcommittee, and Woods was sympathetic to the view that the women's side of the rehabilitation program should be presided over by women and that female veterans should be

advised by female counsellors.⁵⁵ The person chosen for the position was Olive Ruth Russell, who thereafter played a pivotal role in the affairs of Canada's women veterans.

Russell was born in Delta (Leeds County), Ontario, in 1897. She was originally a teacher by profession and served as principal of the continuation school in her home town.⁵⁶ In 1928 she left this position and enrolled at the University of Toronto, where she obtained an Honours B.A. in Psychology. She next obtained a doctorate in psychology from the University of Edinburgh. Her education also included summer courses in Vienna in educational and vocational guidance and in counselling and personnel work at Columbia University in New York. But with all these qualifications Russell found herself earning less than she had before she had gone to university. She later attributed this in part to the effect of the Great Depression, but she also considered herself a victim "of the fact that Canada lagged so far behind in developing Psychology and Guidance."⁵⁷ For some time after completing her graduate studies, Russell was a research assistant at the Ontario College of Education. Her next job was at Moulton College, Toronto, where she was head of mathematics and director of educational and vocational guidance. She enlisted in CWAC in 1942 and after basic training was selected for the officers training course. She was thereafter one of the first two women appointed to the Personnel Selection Branch, where she worked as a counsellor. Commenting on a draft article about her career and work, she told the women's editor of Saturday Night in July 1945 that she did not want to leave the impression with the magazine's readers that she was a "feminist." "It is true," she wrote, "I try to be very on my toes all the time to protect and advance women's right to freedom of choice as an adult citizen in a democracy, and do all I can to see that the equality of opportunity and benefits provided by the legislation for ex-servicewomen may become a reality in practice, but I do try to be gracious about it all and try to avoid the antagonisms that so easily arise, especially in regard to the question of the married woman

working."⁵⁸ This was revealing, but there can be no doubt about the strength of Russell's convictions as an advocate of equal rights for women with men in Canadian society.

In March 1944 she explained her views on the effect of the war on Canadian women in an address to the University Women's Club of Dalhousie University.⁵⁹ Women, she observed, were "participating in the war effort to an extent that few would have dreamed possible even a decade ago." In Canada the number of women at work in industry had grown from 600,000 at the beginning of the war to 1,200,000, of whom approximately 27% were married women. At the end of the war about half of the latter group would return to domestic duties. This would leave about 500,000 women for whom jobs would have to be found when war-related work was no longer available. This situation made imperative the undertaking of research to determine the future work intentions of married women. "I have come across...married women," Russell commented, "who tell me they can scarcely remember what their husbands look like. They married in haste shortly before their husbands went overseas and they say they feel they do not know them and have little idea what their reaction will be if and when they meet again."

Another influence on the post-war work situation was the fact that in every field of employment they had entered, women had proved their competence and adaptability. Servicewomen were showing great versatility, like "Rosie the Riveter" and "Winnie the Welder," their counterparts in industry, who had abandoned their "pretty frocks and bridge teas" for "overalls, lunch pails and production charts." The result of their efforts was a growing trend in Canadian society towards greater equality among men and women. Evidence of this was to be found in the increase in pay of women in the forces from two-thirds to four-fifths of what men of the same rank were paid, in the fact that servicewomen were now being given the same trades pay as men, and that, though initially ineligible for dependants' allowances, they were now given them. Among

civilian workers pay differentials between men and women had in many instances likewise been eroded. Women had found a "financial freedom" in wartime that men would henceforth ignore at their peril. While it was true that many women would get married and leave the labour market at the end of the war, it was also the case that many who had taken jobs since 1939 would want to go on working. Hence it was crucial "to avoid having women looked upon as competing with men for jobs":

Some people are already beginning to discuss the demobilization of women as though the object were to take women out of employment regardless of their need to earn their living. Since woman's full right to work has been taken for granted in the war emergency and she has been able to prove her efficiency, is it not natural to assume that in the employment market after the war her claim to the right of employment should be based on her merits rather than her sex?

The war has broken down much of the traditional prejudice of employers against hiring women for many kinds of work and it seems highly desirable that in future we prevent the return of such prejudices. This must not mean that women are to prevent men from overseas and others from obtaining suitable employment, and it is hoped moreover that women will not become unfair competitors for jobs through the return of lower wage rates for women. The best way to prevent pre-war barriers to women regarding employment is to keep the demand for labour high enough so that every worker's help is needed somewhere. This can be done; and many of our Nation's statesmen have assured us that it will be done.

The right of women to work should be based on "merit" and there should be no "discrimination on sex grounds." But it would also have to be recognized that women were "vitaly important as home-makers and rearers of the Nation's children" and that many workers would be needed for "household duties." Survey data showed that women who had left housework and farm work were reluctant to return to those jobs and that married women who had gone out to work exhibited a range of opinion about becoming full time homemakers again. This situation posed "a special challenge": to transform housework and related jobs into "attractive and desirable occupations." The key to doing this was to introduce training and apprenticeship and to enforce pay and hours of work standards for domestic work.

Once established at DVA, Russell began working out plans with the newly created Department of National Health and Welfare and the National Film Board for a film project on home and family life. The aim of the project was to educate ex-service men and women in successful homemaking.⁶⁰ Involving both men and women was appropriate because homemaking was "a partnership for which both husband and wife must be prepared to share responsibility." Films would be produced in English and French and eventually Canadian Vocational Training would introduce a short course for ex-servicewomen about to become homemakers.

If education for home life was a pet project, Russell's main concern at DVA was, of necessity, how counselling of women should proceed. She explained her position on this in a lengthy statement she prepared for a counsellors' training course held on 19 February 1945.⁶¹ To the end of January 1945, she noted, more than 43,000 women had enlisted in the Canadian armed forces, of whom more than 3,000 were now serving overseas. Added to these were approximately 4,000 nurses and 58 women doctors of whom more than 2,000 were serving overseas. Altogether about 47,000 women had entered the forces of whom about 5,000 were still overseas. About 10,000 had already been discharged, which left about 34,000 in the women's forces plus the doctors and nurses. Of the 34,000 about 5,900 were in the navy, 14,400 in the army and 13,700 in the Air Force. Women who had already left the forces had for the most part been well counselled at DVA by men. Looking to the future, however, though the Department would not be setting up a separate women's division, it would be appointing women counsellors.

The government's information booklet Back to Civil Life, Russell continued, stated explicitly that the rehabilitation program for veterans applied "equally to ex-service men and women." The single exception to this was the provision that a married woman could not draw out-of-work benefits if her husband could support her and was legally obligated to do so. In practice,

however, it was "unlikely" that women would pursue "some of the training open to men." On this critical point Russell quoted approvingly from a report to the Training Branch of the Department of Labour by Mrs. Edgar Hardy, President of the Canadian National Council of Women: "Open all courses equally to men and women and you will find only very few women will enter what might be classed as courses typical for men." While she was still working out behind the scenes her proposal for films and the Canadian Vocational Training course, Russell told the counsellors that training for successful homemaking was also being considered. It was not possible to predict accurately how many ex-servicewomen would want to undertake training courses but the experience of the armed forces and war industry suggested that demand would be substantial. DVA had to be ready for all eventualities, and it had to be acknowledged that counselling was both an "art and a science" and required both "objective measures" and "subjective appraisals." From the requirements of counselling, Russell moved on to employment prospects for women, reiterating much of what she had said in her 1944 Halifax speech but adding a few refinements. The "special responsibility for family life" of women was undeniable, but the "hard fact" was that for many this way of life would no longer be possible. After the war there would "be a much higher proportion of unmarried women." In truth, "thousands of Canadian women" would have to "accept the permanent function of breadwinner because of the loss of husbands and prospective husbands in the war." Added to these were the many other women who would not want to give up a "hard-won economic independence" and many married women who would now want to combine wage work with home management. Unfortunately, "some people" were "already beginning to discuss the demobilization of women as though the object were to take women out of employment regardless of their skills and their need to earn a living." Kathleen Kent had summed this up in Maclean's when she had

written: "Well girls, it looks as though the old game of employment by sex, rather than merit, is on the books again." This attitude had to be fought at every turn and DVA could lead by example:

I trust you will not think I am a feminist thinking only of advantages for women if I discuss further the matter of sex discrimination in employment. I am assuming that I am speaking to friends who share the generous and fair attitudes towards women characteristic of the Department, and also that you, as veterans, are eager to see that ex-service women, as well as men from the services will have just treatment after their war service is over....The war has broken down much of the traditional prejudices of employers against hiring women, but there is danger of it returning....After the war is over, can we justify saying to ex-service women (or to those civilian women who have worked so faithfully and efficiently and who wish, or need, to go on working) that we can no longer use their services? Can we look on them merely as competitors for jobs and accept policies and practices which would drive them out of employment after having worked so well in wartime? Most would agree that this is wrong; nevertheless, there is danger of it happening unless the matter is faced squarely now and employers count women in on their post-war employment plans.

It does seem as though the position of women in regard to employment may need all possible support after the war. Is it not our responsibility to help create public opinion and machinery that will make it possible to put into effect the principle adopted by the Department of granting to women opportunities and pay according to abilities and services, regardless of sex?

"Fair play" required that women be treated equally. So too did the common good; women had skills that should and must be used in the national interest. No woman wanted to feel that because she had a job a man was denied work, and this need not be the case. The answer was to provide "suitable employment opportunities for all" and with the same determination that characterized the war effort this could be done. With this objective in view Russell appended to her printed remarks wide-ranging lists of vocations for women and a bibliography of books and pamphlets relating to the rehabilitation of women.

Russell's "running mate" at DVA in 1945 was Mary Salter, another former CWAC officer.⁶² As part of the gearing-up of the Department, she was appointed Superintendent of Women's Training. As promised, DVA also recruited women staff members to act as counsellors, interviewers and clerks in its rehabilitation centres across the country. In September 1945 the Department issued

a manual of instructions on women's rehabilitation and in February and March 1946, with demobilization in full swing, it held training conferences on women's rehabilitation in Ottawa (February 18-21), Saskatoon (February 27-March 1) and Vancouver (March 13-16).⁶³ A detailed record was kept of the proceedings of these conferences, and a summary of what was said at them was issued jointly by the Superintendent of Women's Rehabilitation and the Director of Staff Training. Discussion at the conference on "Occupational trends and training opportunities for women"⁶⁴ flowed along familiar lines, but the emphasis differed somewhat from that to be found in the analyses of Olive Russell. At the Ottawa conference, for example, Margaret Grier, Associate Director of National Selective Service, Department of Labour, pointed out that "the disorganization of women's normal occupations and pursuits during the war" had not been "as severe nor as widespread" as it superficially appeared.⁶⁵ The first wave of wartime women workers had been drawn from the ranks of the approximately "half a million girls and women" who normally lived at home, mainly in rural areas and small towns, because there were no jobs for them.⁶⁶ When this pool of labour had been exhausted, about 125,000 to 150,000 married women had been recruited. They had come "mainly from household service" or been drawn from the ranks of "young married women whose husbands were in the Services."⁶⁷ But married women had not been employed to the same extent in Canada as in other countries. The current expectation, Grier reported, was that "only 2 or 3 out of every 10" married women would want to remain in jobs outside the home and that three-quarters of the single women who had gone to work during the war would eventually get married and "leave gainful employment."⁶⁸

At the Saskatoon conference Moira O'Neil, Assistant to the Supervisor of Placement Operations - Veterans, Unemployment Insurance Commission, argued that though the war had "opened employment opportunities for women...[in] occupations previously considered male," the

fact had to be faced that when men were "available as garage mechanics, truck drivers and such, most employers...[would] prefer them."⁶⁹ Some ex-servicewomen might "enter unusual occupations," but the majority could be expected to "go into the kind of work their sisters did before them."⁷⁰ Indeed, the experience of service life may have increased "the tendency to 'run with the pack.'⁷¹ It was true that "scientific changes" were creating new employment opportunities for women, but DVA counsellors would be "well advised to concentrate on the types of employment" in which women were "normally employed."⁷² The Vancouver conference heard a similar message from Fraudena Eaton, Associate Director of National Selective Service, Department of Labour. In her remarks she traced the history of the employment of women and noted that the entry of so many into the work force during the war had from its inception produced fear that there would not be enough jobs for all at the end of the conflict. This view in turn was feeding prejudice in relation to the employment of women.⁷³ But in fact this fear was unjustified because many of the married women who had gone to work had made "an easy transition back to their homes or to domestic employment at the lower wage level they had left."⁷⁴ Nevertheless, economic considerations would ensure that there would be more married women in the work force after the war than before. Given the prejudice against them, married women "would be well advised to consider opportunities for self-found employment, - in agriculture, owning small manufacturing establishments, crafts and trades...or service occupations such as hairdressing." This would prevent them from "being at the mercy of the prejudice of an employer." Eaton also recommended caution in the counselling of ex-servicewomen:

She advised the counsellors to advise ex-service women generally to go into work accepted as women's work. She felt that although during the war many women performed jobs previously done by men relatively few will remain in those jobs. She felt that many jobs fell naturally into a division of men's work and women's work in terms of physical strength, attitudes and aptitudes. She stated that the fields ordinarily accepted as women's fields offered interesting and satisfactory

work and the reason that women have reached out to jobs usually done by men was not so much because of lack of satisfaction with women's work but because of the more favourable wage rate usually given to a man's job. She felt that if equitable wage rates could be arrived at there would still tend to be a natural division in the work most suitable to the two sexes, although there would obviously be considerable overlapping.

* * * *

This was sobering, but as the DVA program unfolded Olive Russell was optimistic that the goals she had in mind were being realized, and that the glad day of the post-war world she had envisaged was indeed dawning. Throughout 1946 she maintained a busy travel and public speaking schedule and, beginning in November 1945, she contributed four articles to a series on the rehabilitation of women that appeared in Veterans Affairs, the official publication of DVA.⁷⁵ In a 25 March 1946 interview on the CBC in Vancouver Russell was asked to react to the statement that because women did not "have to think quite as realistically as men in considering their re-establishment problems" some of them "were asking for unusual training courses - that is, courses a bit off the beaten track."⁷⁶ Russell shot back that she was glad to hear that this was happening. Those who thought that the only training available to women was for "hair-dressing and clerical work" were "entirely mistaken." All training opportunities applied equally to men and women. Any veteran wanting a particular course of training could have it provided he or she met the requisite qualifying and eligibility criteria, applied within the entitlement time limit, and was setting out to do something appropriate to his or her rehabilitation. Women were already in training for over eighty-five occupations. These ranged from "the highly skilled and professional occupations" requiring several years of training such as Law, Architecture, Medicine, Pharmacy and Social Work, to "those occupations requiring shorter periods of training such as Book Binding, Linotype

Operating, Photography, Egg Grading and even frog farming." This diversity was to be welcomed and did not conflict with the maintenance of good family life:

...don't make the mistake of thinking that all unusual training requested by women is necessarily unrealistic. On the whole I think it very encouraging to find that so many women are showing initiative in pursuing and preparing for occupations, which...are a bit off the beaten track. For instance, some women are in training as Watch and Clock makers and one is in training for an Embalmer. Could you suggest any occupations that are less likely to go out of business than these, or any reason why they are not suitable occupations for women? Lest you think I am forgetting the importance of Home-making as a career for women, I wish to state that in several centres in Canada a special course of training in Home-making and family living has been arranged for ex-service women. This course has been designed to meet the needs of those young women who will be establishing homes of their own and who recognize the importance of having training for that complex and important task. In this course, which is of at least four months duration, special emphasis is being put on both the practical household duties and general home management; budgeting, nutrition, child care and training, and the psychological aspects of family life. I am glad to be able to announce that in some centres evening classes in this subject are also being provided for those men who recognize that they too need training if they are to be successful partners in this responsible job of making happy homes.

Women had shown "their ability to perform all sorts of tasks hitherto not open to them" and "opportunities for them to use their talents to the full" should never be denied them again.

In July 1946 Russell told Betty Styran on radio station CKCO, Kitchener, Ontario, that when she had taken up her duties at DVA she had thought her main job would be to select and train counsellors. In practice, she had had to spend much of her time reminding "employers, Citizens' Committees and all who were planning to welcome veterans and assist them with their re-establishment that there were ex-servicewomen as well as ex-servicemen to be rehabilitated."⁷⁷ This effort had paid off and the rehabilitation of women veterans was "proceeding much more smoothly than might have been anticipated." In the same vein Russell wrote in the summer 1946 issue of Echoes, the magazine of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, that whereas a year before there had been "danger of employers forgetting that there would be women veterans as well as men," this problem had now been overcome.⁷⁸ Thanks to "the same adaptability, efficiency and

dependability" they had shown in uniform, ex-servicewomen were now receiving high marks from employers.

Russell and her female colleagues in the rehabilitation branch of DVA could also take comfort in the Department's attitude toward the employment of married women in the civil service. In 1944 the Civil Service Commission decided to drop five to seven thousand married women, many of who had entered government service through wartime expansion.⁷⁹ Henceforth, moreover, the regulation would also be strictly enforced that required a single woman civil servant to resign her position when she got married. In a 5 December 1945 memorandum to Woods, General E.L.M. Burns, S.N.F. Chant's successor as Director General of Rehabilitation, argued that instead of joining in the renewal of "policies of discrimination against married women" DVA should call for the end of such discrimination.⁸⁰ Canada had agreed in the charter of the United Nations to "the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion" and to bar married women from civil service jobs would violate that pledge. In support of his case Burns cited an April 1945 report of the Woman's Advisory Committee of the United States War Manpower Commission. This report had concluded that discrimination against married women in jobs was an injustice, an unwise limitation on the availability of workers with skills that were in demand, and a breeding ground for "practices of subterfuge and deception." The Government of Canada, Burns reminded Woods, was committed to full employment covering all who were "able and willing to work," and for the Civil Service to act otherwise would contradict that basic policy. It was also the case that married women who had served overseas were entitled to civil service preference as veterans. Furthermore, many male veterans with overseas service were counting on financial assistance from their wives while they were in rehabilitation training or re-establishing themselves in jobs and homes. If the civil service

set a bad example in relation to married women, the government could scarcely blame other employers for following suit. To make "economic necessity" rather than "suitability for the job" the test of civil service hiring would be to promote "a dangerous practice" that, logically, "would involve men as well as women." The simple truth was that "the fact of marriage should not be the basis for denying a woman the freedom of choice granted to all other citizens in a democracy." The question of whether or not a woman should take a paying job was a private matter, to be decided by her and her husband, and there was no need for legislation on the subject.

The general reform advocated by Burns was not in fact introduced into the Canadian civil service until 1955, but married women veterans with husbands in training were apparently treated as single persons immediately after the war.⁸¹ DVA, moreover, resisted the application of the civil service resignation rule to single female members of its own staff who got married.⁸² In the same spirit a \$30 deduction formerly made from the allowance paid to married women veterans in training was cancelled on 1 January 1947.⁸³ Thereafter married and single veterans were treated equally with respect to training allowances. In April 1947 Helen Hunt, Mary Salter's successor as Superintendent of Women's Training, recommended that a deduction of the same amount being made from the awaiting returns allowances of married women veterans who had gone into farming or business should likewise be cancelled.⁸⁴

The progress being made in the women's rehabilitation program was monitored at DVA headquarters in Ottawa by monthly reports from counsellors of women in the field. The operation and record of the program was also analyzed in two lengthy reports by the Superintendent of Women's Rehabilitation. The first, submitted by Mary Salter on 12 July 1946, covered the events of the previous year and the second, submitted by Helen Hunt on 25 November 1947, covered developments from August 1946 to November 1947. Salter noted that women's rehabilitation was

"proceeding most effectively" where it was "most separate."⁸⁵ The ideal arrangement kept the counselling of male and female veterans separate at the local level but within the same overall administrative framework. When she had come to DVA, Salter commented, no Supervisor of Women's Training had yet been appointed at Canadian Vocational Training and not much had been done to provide special training courses for women. Once Marion Graham had been appointed, however, matters had speeded up and steps had been taken to offer training in practical nursing in all provinces but Saskatchewan. The courses in progress were almost all filled to capacity. But this was not true of homemaking courses, which had been established in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec. These courses had been started too late and plans to introduce them in British Columbia and the Maritimes had been dropped because there were too few applicants. The courses most in demand were for commercial training, hairdressing and dressmaking. Ex-servicewomen were doing well in finding jobs across the country but there was "a growing discrimination on the part of employers against all married women."

In the report she submitted more than a year later Helen Hunt showed that the basic trends Mary Salter had observed had continued through 1947.⁸⁶ Encouraging ex-servicewomen to take training in practical nursing had been a priority in counselling while demand for homemaking courses had remained low. Only in Saskatoon indeed was there still such a course in operation. The training courses most favoured by women had continued to be "prematriculation, commercial, hairdressing and dressmaking." Hunt ascribed this "disappointing" result and the failure of many women to branch out "into new lines" to their pre-war experience. Having lived through the Great Depression, women had given priority to "security" (that is to say, to training for traditional women's occupations) when planning their future careers. The employment situation of ex-servicewomen had also remained satisfactory; the greatest difficulty was experienced in Nova Scotia

and British Columbia. But the problems experienced in these provinces were minor blemishes on an otherwise rosy picture:

Immediately following VJ day [14 August 1945] it was evident that employers, many of whom had also had service experience, were very ready to accept ex-servicewomen in their organization. This satisfactory condition has continued, even though at the present time the employer is requesting more often an employee with some experience following training. It has been very evident right across the country in conversations with representatives of the National Employment Service that placement of women veterans never became the problem that was anticipated. Nearly all state that they had expected some time would occur in which some of their offices would be flooded with ex-servicewomen seeking employment which was not readily available.

Happily, the expected crunch never came and the transition to peacetime conditions was smooth. This analysis, of course, ignored the large-scale return by women to domestic life, which DVA, through the re-establishment credit scheme, was clearly promoting.

Hunt included in her report detailed statistics on what had happened to women so far under the provisions of the Veterans Charter. To 30 September 1947, 11,507 had taken training. Of these 9,083 had taken vocational training and 2,424 had gone to university. The 11,507 figure represented 23% of the total enlistment and was higher than the equivalent figure for male veterans. To 31 October 1947, 264 women had received awaiting returns allowances and to the end of September 200 had received temporary incapacity allowances. To 30 September also 2,930 women had received out-of-work allowances. This was 5.8% of the total enlistment and "considerably lower" than the equivalent percentage for male veterans. To 31 October 131 women had received benefits under the Veterans' Land Act of whom 87 were established on small holdings and 44 in full-time farming. Also to October women had received \$3,804,488.70 in re-establishment credits. In order of expenditure this money had been used for furniture and other household goods, home buying, working capital, premiums on Dominion government insurance, and home repairs and modernization. This pattern of use was similar to that of male veterans.

A 1949 update of these figures showed that from the inception of the rehabilitation program to 31 December 1948 11,488 women had taken vocational courses and 3,320 had gone to university.⁸⁷ The vocational course trainees were subdivided into thirty specific and one "miscellaneous" occupational categories. The largest group, numbering 3,059, had trained themselves to be "Stenographers & Typists." After that came "Barbers and Beauticians," numbering 1,451; "Dressmakers and Tailors," numbering 1,021; and "Secretaries," numbering 964. Together these four groups constituted 56.7% of the total. Of the group that had gone to university, 915 were said to have done postgraduate studies, of whom the largest group, numbering 377, had studied nursing. Of the 2,405 who had registered for undergraduate courses, the largest group by far, some 1,179, had opted for "Arts and Science." Among undergraduates the next five leading choices were Health Nursing (190), Social Science (130), Education (97), Business Administration, Commerce and Finance (79), and Physiotherapy (68).

Despite the evident conservatism of the training choices being made by ex-servicewomen, Olive Russell left DVA in August 1947 pleased with her own accomplishments and convinced of the success of the rehabilitation program. Her own re-establishment was as an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Winthrop College, "the South Carolina College for Women," at Rock Hill, South Carolina. From there she wrote to Woods on 6 November 1947 expressing her appreciation of his "attitude towards individual human welfare, and the national interest" and his "courteous, optimistic manner."⁸⁸ These qualities, she wrote, had been an inspiration to her. So had Woods' attitude towards Canadian womanhood: "I especially appreciate the fair mindedness you showed in matters pertaining to the status of women. Even though reactionary forces seem to be at work in many Government Departments and elsewhere, and many unjustifiable discriminations still exist, you set an example in regard to status generally that is bound in the long run to benefit Canadian women."

These sentiments indicate a harmonious parting of the ways between these two makers of post-war Canada, but in truth Russell's dealings with DVA and the Dominion government generally were not always easy. In 1947 she was turned down by her superiors when she suggested visits first to Australia and then to England.⁸⁹ There is also evidence that Russell aspired to some other job with the government of Canada that she did not get. Following a conversation on 23 July 1947 with Arthur MacNamara, the Deputy Minister of Labour, she wrote to him that "the amount I quoted as 'the price of a meal ticket' was considerably less than the salary I am justified in expecting. The kind of position in which I am really interested in the government," she continued, "is one in which I would have a voice in policy making, and such a position would naturally be at a salary at least equal to my present one, if not greater."⁹⁰

Evidently the job or the salary or both were not forthcoming, hence her decision to go to the United States. Olive Russell and her female colleagues at DVA also failed in another regard. In report after report she, Mary Salter and Helen Hunt all recommended that a female voice should be maintained in the policymaking upper ranks of the Department, as well as in its general administration when DVA moved beyond the immediate post-war rehabilitation period and settled into its long-term role of caring for those who could not care for themselves.⁹¹ This did not happen. When Olive Russell left, she was not replaced and when Helen Hunt departed, the position of Superintendent of Women's Training was downgraded as part of a general scaling-down of DVA activities. By the 1950s, with its glory days of demobilization behind it, DVA had become a male veteran bastion though a portion of its clientele was, ipso facto, female.

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The entry of so many women into the labour force during World War II and the formation of the women's branches of the armed forces constitute an extraordinary chapter in the social

history of Canada in the twentieth century. An important part of that story of necessity concerns the rights of ex-servicewomen under the Veterans Charter, one of the building blocks of the Canadian welfare state. Participation in war related work and service in the armed forces gave women a claim they had not had before. And given the wartime rhetoric of solidarity and sacrifice leading to a better tomorrow, this claim was hard to deny. Rosie the Riveter and her sister Jill Canuck were new players on the Canadian political stage who could not be ignored. Understandably, Olive Russell liked to play up her credentials as a veteran and play down the label of "feminist," but in reality the first role served the purposes of the second. Having advanced towards pay equity and made other gains while in the services, Canada's women veterans, unlike some ex-servicewomen in the United States, were equally eligible with men for almost all the benefits of the Veterans Charter and DVA prided itself that this was so. There had never been such a social program before in Canada and it produced impressive results. Above all, it helped to avoid a social and economic catastrophe of the sort that had overtaken the country at the end of the Great War. It is easy, however, to exaggerate the gains made by women under the Veterans Charter and to confuse the equality of opportunity proclaimed in Back to Civil Life with what actually happened under the Charter's provisions. Women constituted only about 4.6% of Canada's armed forces in World War II and the Veterans Charter was designed primarily with men, the other 95.4%, in mind.⁹² Women were equally eligible for benefits but within the framework of a program that first and foremost sought to meet the needs of men. As volunteers, women were eligible for gratuities and, by extension, for re-establishment credits or training (including post-secondary education). As a much smaller proportion (one in seven) of armed forces women had gone overseas compared with men, a correspondingly smaller proportion therefore qualified for the gratuity paid for overseas service. The veterans' preference in the civil service was likewise of limited advantage to women

as it was given for service in a theatre of war, which ruled most women out. To remedy this defect Mary Salter called in 1945 within DVA for a secondary preference. This was also being advocated publicly by the Canadian Legion. It would apply to all volunteers with a year or more of service and therefore to most women who had served. Because of contemporary societal expectations and norms, another benefit under the Charter that held little promise for women was the Veterans' Land Act. Woods understood this and in fact few women qualified under the Act. In June 1944 he told Colonel G.W. Beecroft, Overseas Rehabilitation Officer in London, England, that while under PC 7633 it was technically true that men and women were "entitled to the same benefits," in practice the order would "be administered in a common sense way and in the case of a married woman, with entire regard to the rehabilitation of the family."⁹³ Women, in other words, would not necessarily be considered for all benefits simply as individuals. Woods' comment said much about the underlying philosophy of the Veterans Charter, which emphasized eligibility criteria and equality of opportunity rather than equality of condition. If the Charter promoted greater equality between women and men this would be incidental to its main business, which was to promote property owning and sturdy self-reliance.

The training program too had its limitations for women. Given a choice between training and re-establishment credits, most women, like most men, opted for the latter. The emphasis in the re-establishment credit scheme on household formation facilitated the return to domesticity that Ruth Roach Pierson has characterized in *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto 1986) as the leitmotif of the history of Canadian women in the immediate post-war period. In effect the state provided tens of thousands of Canadians, men and women, with the means to settle down, and Walter Woods may well qualify for the title of father of the baby boom, the term used to describe the great increase in the birth rate that followed the

war. Those who opted for training, of course, had to work within the confines of available choice. Olive Russell wanted women to go where their talents led them, but even she was concerned about preserving the role of women as homemakers, though to be fair this was in the context of a new cooperation and sharing of duties between spouses. In practice DVA counsellors, who had the final say on who would be trained for what, stressed courses like practical nursing and only a minority of trainees found their way "off the beaten track" in the way favoured by Olive Russell. As Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjorie Cohen point out, "in February, 1946, Canadian Vocational Training was offering training in over 100 types of trades in vocational schools and over 300 types under training-on-the-job schemes, yet women were to be found in only thirty-five types of trades in vocational schools and in only ninety-two under training-on-the-job schemes."⁹⁴ Olive Russell nevertheless left DVA convinced that the rehabilitation program for women had been a great success. Conversely, she, Mary Salter and Helen Hunt, for all their professionalism and hard work, failed to leave a strong female presence behind them at DVA.

Yet it must also be acknowledged that the Veterans Charter constituted an important step forward towards full legal, social and economic equality for Canadian women. More than eleven thousand ex-servicewomen took vocational training and in addition more than three thousand went to university. These were substantial totals, and the subsequent contributions of these women to Canadian life cannot be gainsaid. Those who reaped the benefits of the Veterans Charter in all likelihood helped prepare the ground for the bigger gains women would make in the future. Within DVA, moreover, there was strong support for equality of opportunity in employment for married women. And thanks in part to DVA's efforts those ex-servicewomen who swam against the returning tide of domesticity also apparently did well in the job market immediately after the war. In 1946, 1947 and 1948, work, albeit gender-divided, was seemingly readily available for almost

all who wanted it. It was also widely recognized in government circles that the entry into the labour market of women, both married and single, was permanent and that there would be no absolute return to pre-war conditions. Finally, war and demobilization opened debates in Canada about pay equity and the appropriateness of employment by sex, which the children and grandchildren of those who had answered their country's call to service between 1939 and 1945 would not soon resolve.

ENDNOTES

*The authors acknowledge, with thanks, the assistance of Veterans Affairs Canada, especially Joyce Gaudet and Greg Kasycz. We thank A.P. Bates for editorial advice.

- 1 For the history of Canada's World War I veterans see Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life 1915-1930 (Toronto, 1987).
- 2 Ibid., 212.
- 3 Walter S. Woods, Rehabilitation (A Combined Operation) (Ottawa, 1953), 386.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid., 17.
- 6 Ibid., 463.
- 7 Ibid., 13.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 For the text of this order in council and its amendments see *ibid.*, 465-76.
- 10 This account of his life is based on the "Man of the Week" article in the 4 Nov. 1944 edition of the Montreal Standard. There is a copy of this article in file 32-3-2, vol. 2 of the records of the Department of Veterans Affairs [DVA], Veterans Affairs Canada, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.
- 11 DVA, file 65-8, Woods to Wodehouse, 13 March 1941.
- 12 Quoted in "Man of the Week" article in Montreal Standard, 4 Nov. 1944.
- 13 Woods, Rehabilitation, 5.
- 14 Ibid., 16.
- 15 DVA, file 32-3-3, Woods to Minister, 8 Sept. 1944.
- 16 The scheme is summarized in Woods, Rehabilitation, 23-30.
- 17 See his Rehabilitation (A Combined Operation).

- 18 Woods, Rehabilitation, 43.
- 19 Ibid., 42.
- 20 Ibid., 462.
- 21 See *ibid.*, Appendix A, 461.
- 22 Carolyn Gossage, Greatcoats and Glamour Boots: Canadian Women at War (1939-1945) (Toronto, 1991).
- 23 Woods, Rehabilitation, 255. In Appendix A Woods gives the following enlistment figures: Army, 25,251; Air Force, 17,033; Navy, 7,043 for a total of 49,327. A 1949 DVA tabulation gave approximate enlistments by District and the following totals: Army, 24,880; Air Force, 17,012; and Navy, 6,609 for a total of 48,501 (DVA, file 65-45, vol. 2, Rider to Director-General Veterans' Welfare Services, 21 Dec. 1949).
- 24 Woods, Rehabilitation, 255.
- 25 PC 56/6755 of 31 July 1942, which authorized the formation of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, began by citing a report to Treasury Board from the Minister of National Defence. According to this report there were "a number of duties now being performed by men" that were "capable of being performed by women." If women could be so employed, "the men in question would be available for duties of a heavier nature." There is a copy of PC 56/6755 in DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1.
- 26 There is a copy of PC 4/7635 in DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1.
- 27 See DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1, Wright to Woods, 27 Oct. 1941.
- 28 See, for example, PC 49/8817 of 11 Nov. 1941 dealing with reinstatement in civil employment and PC 8880 of 18 Nov. 1941 dealing with the payment of rehabilitation grants. There are copies of these orders in DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1.
- 29 DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1, England to Wright, 24 Oct. 1941.
- 30 See PC 1965. There is a copy of this order in council in DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1.
- 31 Under PC 7633 "discharged person" was defined as follows: "any person who, having been in receipt of either active service rates of pay or of Permanent Force rates of pay while serving in the Naval, Military or Air Forces of Canada during the present war, subsequent to July 1, 1941, is discharged or retired from, or ceases to serve on active service in, the said forces."
- 32 DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1, McDonald to Woods, 26 Nov. 1941.

- 33 DVA, file 5431-03-4, General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation, Subcommittee on Post-Discharge Benefits for Members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps and the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force, minutes of meeting of 29 Dec. 1941.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1, Woods to McDonald, 3 Jan. 1942.
- 36 Ibid., memorandum to Minister of Pensions and National Health, 25 March 1942, from chairman, Subcommittee on Post-Discharge Benefits for Members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps and the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force. There is a copy of PC 1965 in this file. The revised definition of "discharged person" in the amended PC 7633 was as follows: "any person who, subsequent to July 1st, 1941, has been discharged or retired from, or has ceased to serve on active service in any of the following Forces or Corps; (i) the Naval, Military or Air Forces of Canada, provided in respect to this class, that such person was in receipt of either active service rates of pay or of Permanent Force rates of pay while serving in the said Forces during the present war, or (ii) the Canadian Women's Army Corps, established by Order in Council, P.C. 6289, dated the 13th day of August, 1941, or (iii) the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division), established by Order in Council, P.C. 790, dated the 3rd day of February, 1942, or (iv) the Military, Naval or Air Forces of His Majesty other than His Majesty's Canadian Forces, provided in respect to this class, that such person was domiciled in Canada at the time of his enlistment therein in the present war" (Woods, Rehabilitation, 467).
- 37 By PC 56/6755. There is a copy of this order in council in DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 1.
- 38 For the history of women's units in the United States during World War II see chapter 1 of D'Ann Campbell, Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era (Cambridge, Mass., 1984).
- 39 June A. Willenz, Women Veterans: America's Forgotten Heroines (New York, 1983), 168. The formation of WAAC was authorized by Congress in 1942. In June 1943 it became the Women's Army Corps (WAC). WASP was formed in 1943 out of the Women's Auxiliary Flying Squadron (WAFS) and the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD).
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 DVA, file 5431-03-4, vol. 2, Woods to National Secretary, Imperial [Order] Daughters of the Empire, 27 Oct. 1943.
- 43 House of Commons, Debates, 24 July 1943, 5357-58.
- 44 DVA, 5431-03-4, vol. 3, Woods to Dixon, 13 Sept. 1944.
- 45 Ibid., Neill to Reid, 29 Nov. 1944; Woods to Neill, 1 Dec. 1944.

- 46 Ibid., Neill to Woods, 6 Dec. 1944.
- 47 Ibid., vol. 1, Woods to McDonald, 24 Jan. 1942.
- 48 Ibid., minutes of the meeting of the Subcommittee on Post Discharge Benefits for members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps and the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division), 24 March 1942.
- 49 Veterans Affairs Canada, Canadian Pension Commission Records, list 8167, box 80, bin 99, minutes of the Subcommittee on the Special Problems of Discharged Women, 19 June 1942.
- 50 The interim report is in the same box and is attached to the minutes of the meeting of 23 June 1942.
- 51 There is a copy of this survey in the library of Veterans Affairs Canada.
- 52 157.
- 53 See 212-26.
- 54 215.
- 55 Canadian Pension Commission Records, list 8167, box 80, bin 99, Subcommittee on the Special Problems of Discharged Women, minutes of the meeting of 23 June 1942; and Interim Report of the Subcommittee on the Special Problems of Discharged Women, 2-3.
- 56 The account of her career that follows is based on "Dr. Olive Ruth Russell Occupies Important Post," Ottawa Evening Citizen, 15 Aug. 1946 (copy in National Archives of Canada [NAC], MG 31 K13, Olive Ruth Russell Papers, vol. 1, file 1); "Dr. Russell - Rehabilitation," draft article for Saturday Night by F.E. Whyard (ibid., vol. 2, file 14); T.J. Rutherford letter, "To Whom It May Concern," 30 April 1947 (ibid., vol. 1, file 4).
- 57 Ibid., vol. 2, file 15, Russell to Whyard, 19 June 1946.
- 58 Ibid., vol. 2, file 15, Russell to Coffey, 24 July 1945.
- 59 Ibid., vol. 1, file 11, "Women To-Morrow (An address by Captain Olive Ruth Russell given at the University Women's Club, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S., 15 March 1944."
- 60 Ibid., Olive Ruth Russell report, "Proposed Film, Project and Training in Homemaking and Family Living," 1. This report is attached to Russell to Burns, 25 Sept. 1945.
- 61 Ibid., vol. 2, file 14, "Rehabilitation of Women of the Armed Forces."
- 62 Ibid., Salter to Russell, 28 Nov. 1944.

- 63 There is a copy of the 15 Sept. 1945 "Manual of Instructions Women's Rehabilitation" in DVA, file 65-45, vol. 1.
- 64 Ibid., "Proceedings Training Conferences on Women's Rehabilitation," 1.
- 65 Ibid., 47.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Ibid., 48.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Ibid., 49.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Ibid., 50.
- 75 These and related items were collected in "Rehabilitation of Women Veterans in Canada," Ottawa, Aug. 1946. There is a copy in NAC, MG 31 K13, vol. 1, file 9.
- 76 There is a transcript of this interview in *ibid.*, vol. 1, file 1.
- 77 There is a transcript of this interview in *ibid.*
- 78 7. Russell's article is entitled "Women Veterans and Their Rehabilitation."
- 79 J.E. Hodgetts, William McCloskey, Reginald Whitaker and V. Seymour Wilson, The Biography of an Institution: The Civil Service of Canada, 1908-1967 (Toronto, 1972) 487.
- 80 NAC, MG 31 K13, vol. 2, file 14, Burns to Woods, 5 Dec. 1945.
- 81 See DVA, file 65-45-WI, memorandum "Re: Report of Visit of Superintendent of Women's Rehabilitation to Vancouver District, 11-13 February 1947."
- 82 See *ibid.*, Russell to Rumball, 3 April 1946; DVA, file 65-45-CA, Salter to Sutton, 23 April 1946.
- 83 DVA, file 65-45, vol. 2, Rutherford to Woods, 4 Jan. 1947 and Rehabilitation Branch Instruction, 15 Jan. 1947.

- 84 Ibid., Hunt to Rutherford, 26 Aug. 1947.
- 85 Ibid., memorandum "Re: Final Report of Supt. of Women's Rehabilitation," Salter to Burns, 12 July 1946.
- 86 Ibid., memorandum "Re: Report of Superintendent of Women's Rehabilitation - August, 1946 to November, 1947," Hunt to Wright, 25 Nov. 1947.
- 87 Ibid., "Women's Rehabilitation as of December 31, 1948," Rider to Mann, 31 Jan. 1949.
- 88 Ibid., Russell to Woods, 6 Nov. 1947.
- 89 Ibid., Woods to Minister, 27 July 1946 and Woods to Russell, 30 Nov. 1946.
- 90 NAC, MG 31 K13, vol. 1, file 4, Russell to MacNamara, 23 July 1947.
- 91 See DVA, file 65-45, vol. 2, memorandum "Re: Final Report of Supt. of Women's Rehabilitation," Salter to Burns, 12 July 1946; Hunt to Rutherford, 23 Dec. 1946; Russell to Elliott, 14 April 1947; memorandum, "Re: Report of Superintendent of Women's Rehabilitation - August, 1946 to November, 1947," Hunt to Wright, 25 Nov. 1947.
- 92 Calculated from Woods, Rehabilitation, Appendix A, 461.
- 93 DVA, file 5431-07-4, vol. 3, Woods to Beecroft, 29 June 1944.
- 94 Ruth Roach Pierson, "They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto, 1986), 92.