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Social Thinkers, Social Actors in Winnipeg and Montreal at the Turn of the Century

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies six Canadians (Jules Helbronner, Herbert B. Ames, William D. Lighthall, Reverends J.B. Silcox, Hugh Pedley and Frederic B. Du Val) that were perceived as urban social reformers in Winnipeg and Montreal at the time, and analyses the nature of the strategies they proposed while evaluating the correlation between reformers' discourse and their actions. It also gauges the impact these men had.

The most striking feature of this study is the totally different nature of Montreal's and Winnipeg's social reformers. The profiles of the six social reformers, and the type of reforms they proposed clearly indicate that the nature of social reform movements was very much influenced by a particular social, political and economic context. Winnipeggers singled out men of the cloth as social reformers while Montrealers identified men involved in one way or another with municipal politics. The social gospellers focussed instead on social vices. Believing that the "industrial system" was flawed because it had lost its touch with Christianity, Silcox advocated the preaching of the gospel as the chief solution to the ills of the city. Pedley thought that the "unification" of the churches in Canada was the start of substantial social reforms. For his part, Du Val focussed on social vices and simply asked that laws be enforced. For the most part, although the Winnipeg social gospellers were able to reach many by their sermons, which were often printed in newspapers or in pamphlets, they accomplished very little of a concrete nature since their "kingdom of God on earth" did not materialize. They did, however, succeed in raising public consciousness.

Helbronner the newspaper editor, Ames the businessman, and Lighthall the lawyer, were more diversified in their professions. These Montreal social reformers channelled their energy into purifying municipal politics and into bringing about a better justice system. All three Montrealers not only advocated reforms but worked ardently to bring about those reforms. They succeeded in arousing public opinion to the social ills they earmarked for change, in forcing municipal governments to be more accountable (at least for a time), and in modifying unjust laws -- in sum in implementing lasting social changes. They, however, differed in their approach. Helbronner's attitude towards the less fortunate was distinctively different from that of his Montreal peers. His discourse rarely

took a patronizing turn. He mainly strove to develop a working-class consciousness so that all members of society could secure a better life. He wanted to reduce, even eliminate, workers' dependence on the elite of society. The reform strategies he proposed reveal a tremendous faith in the workers' potential and in their ability to rule their own lives.

Herbert B. Ames was above all a businessman, but one who happened to be also a philanthropist. He emphasised the need for political reforms. The nature of his reform strategies suggests that Ames profoundly respected the social order. As a man belonging to the monied elite, he not only had the resources necessary to devote himself to improving the social welfare, he also felt a responsibility to do so. He took charge of the less fortunate and decided for them what they needed. He chose not to reform the traditional social and political structures of Montreal, but rather to enforce the existing rules that regulated his society.

Finally, like Ames, William D. Lighthall believed that the poorest in society needed help as they were not always able to help themselves, nor to blame for their misfortunes. It was up to those like himself to change things, but not without first consulting the ones that were affected. Lighthall thought that greater government management of services, regulated growth and enforcement of laws would improve the living conditions of everyone, and especially of the less fortunate. Lighthall both reflected and directed the social reformers of his day who still mirrored the optimism of the Victorian age that the perfect society was within the grasp of humankind.

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I must admit that this exercise would not have been possible without the extremely professional and devoted Dr. Francis, who read and re-read the many drafts of chapters. He too has been a mentor, an excellent one. Thank you.

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à la mémoire de ma mère
Michelle Rousseau Méthot
et à mon père
André-Louis Méthot

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INTRODUCTION

I seen my opportunities and I took 'em
George Washington Plunkitt, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall. A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics.*

Born in an American shantytown, George Washington Plunkitt died a rich and renowned man in 1924 at the age of eighty-two. Like several men of his time, he made his fortune in politics. His philosophy and experiences were disclosed in a hilarious sidesplitting book, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall. A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics.*[1] In these "plain talks", in addition to describing how he gathered electoral support and wondering how many votes his "great generosity" (or simple practicality) brought him when he showed up on the site of a devastating fire, Plunkitt nonchalantly differentiated between honest and dishonest graft:

> My party's in power in the city, and it's goin' to undertake a lot of public improvements. Well. I'm tipped off, say, that they're going to lay out a new park at a certain place. I see my opportunity and I take it. I go to that place and I buy up all the land I can in the neighborhood. Then a board of this or that makes its plan public, and there is a rush to get my land, which nobody cared particular for before. Ain't it perfectly honest to charge a good price and make a profit of my investment and foresight? Of course it is. Well, that's honest graft.[2]

While no doubt an interesting character, Plunkitt would nevertheless have no place on today's Canadian political stage. What he depicted as "honest graft" is now punishable by law. What has happened since Plunkitt's days? No one now candidly reveals their electoral manoeuvring, nor readily admits using privileged information for their own benefit.

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[1]William L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall. A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics.* (New York, Dutton Paper Back:1963).

[2] Ibid., p.3.

Students of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century history know that as the Plunkitts of the United States or Canada made names for themselves, another brand of men and women appeared on the public scene. In fact, it was in part because of men like Plunkitt that urban social reformers emerged in North American cities during the last decades of the nineteenth century. They were fighting the political machines and their concomitant corruption, abuses of power, as well as patronage. Others were concerned with the city itself. They thought urban life precipitated the dissolution of morals. Social reformers responded as well to the injustices brought about by massive industrialisation and rapid urbanisation and in so doing transformed Canadian society.

But what exactly did these reformers advocate? What was the rationale behind the reform strategies they proposed? What motivated them? Who shared their concerns? How were their ideas received in society? And finally, what kind of impact did they really have?

Canadian social reform movements, be they temperance or prohibition, educational reforms, women's suffrage, social gospel, urban planning, public ownership, social policies or conservation and wilderness protection, have generated many studies. Scholars have focussed mainly on Central Canada, or more precisely on the province of Ontario. Douglas Francis notes that Prairie social reform movements have not captured the interest of historians of ideas.[3] Yvan Lamonde remarks that the same lamentable state of affairs exists for reform

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[3]Douglas Francis believes that "a study of the intellectual roots and underlying assumptions of social reform is a useful way of illuminating attitudes, beliefs and cultural values of a region." "In Search of a Prairie Myth: A Survey of the Intellectual and Cultural Historiography of Prairie Canada", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.24, no3, Fall 1989, p.45.

movements in Quebec.[4] And unfortunately, the Maritime region has fared no better in terms of the number of "intellectual history" research projects available on social reform. It is a different story, however, for studies on Ontario where works dealing with the period of social reform movements flourish.[5]

A brief survey of the literature on social reform:

Richard Allen was one of the first to study aspects of Canadian social reform in *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928.* He focussed on the social gospel, a movement led by Protestant Church leaders who responded to the challenges that Darwinism and the new philosophy of "higher criticism"[6] posed to religious beliefs.[7] He

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[4]Yvan Lamonde, "L'histoire culturelle et intellectuelle du Québec, tendances et aspects méthodologiques", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.24, no3, Fall 1989, p.84.

[5] Brian McKillop in "Culture, Intellect, and Context", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.24, no3, Fall 1989, p.7-31, mentions: Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada,* (Toronto, UTP:1985) Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928.* (Toronto, UTP:1971). A.B McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era.* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press:1979). Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathaniel Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918.* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press:1989). Phyllis Airhart, "The Eclipse of Revivalist Spirituality. The Transformation of Methodist Piety 1884-1925". PhD. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1985. Michael Gauvreau, "The Taming of History: Reflections on the Canadian Methodist Encounter with Biblical Criticism 1830-1900", *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.65, 1984, p.315-346. William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario.* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press:1989). John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario.* (Toronto, UTP: 1988).

[6] For a good account of this philosophy consult: A.B McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era.*

[7] The American Social Gospel movement has received significant attention from scholars over the years. A fair number of dissertations were produced in the last ten years. They tend to focus on specific pastors's contributions. See Christopher Hodge Evans, "A

pointed out that many religious leaders decided to direct their attention away from theological issues to social questions, taking as their mission to Christianize the political economy of urban industrial capitalism. Allen contends that in the first decades of the twentieth century, religion in Canada moved away from a focus on the doctrinal and theological to an emphasis on social reform. He adds that Christianity did not lose its appeal during this period of intense philosophical challenge; on the contrary, it became more widespread.[8]

In *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada,* Ramsay

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Theology for the Middle Class: Social Gospel Liberalism and the Ministry of Ernest Fremont Tittle" Ph. D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1993. Manuel Scott Shanaberger, "The Reverend Dr. Edward McGlynn: An Early Advocate of the Social Gospel in the American Catholic Church: An Intellectual History", Ph. D. thesis (history), University of Virginia, 1993. These dissertations are indicative of the direction of the most recent scholarship. Many articles and books deal with individuals or specific churches. Studies take a much more regional approach. See: Richard P. Poethig, "Charles Stelzle and the Roots of Presbetherian Industrial Mission", *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol.77, no1, 1999, p.29-43. Robert C. Cottrell, *The Social Gospel of E. Nicolas Comfort: Founder of the Oklahoma School of Religion*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press: 1999). Timothy A. Beech-Verhey, "The Social Gospel and Reconciliation: Henry Sloane Coffin at Nadison Avenue Presbyterian Church", *American Presbyterians*, Vol.74, no3, 1996, p.205-237. John Pafford, "A Critique of Walter Rauschenbusch and the 'Social Gospel'", *Continuity*, Vol.21, 1997, p.77-81. Also of interest lately has been study of social gospel and race. See: Paul Harvey, "Southern Baptists and the Social Gospel: White Religious Progressivism in the South, 1900-1925", *Fides et Historia*, Vol.27, no.2, 1995, p.59-77. Aldorigo Joseph Scopino, "The Social Gospel in Connecticut: Protestants, Catholics, Jews and Social Reform, 1893-1929", Ph. D. thesis , University of Connecticut, 1994. Ralph E. Luker *The Social Gospel in Black and White* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press: 1991). There are also the more general studies such as: Paul T. Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity, 1880-1940*, (University Park, Pensylvania State University Press: 1996). Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Baltimore, JHUP: 1991) Donald K. Gorrell, *The Age of Social Responsibility: The Social Gospel in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920*, (Macon, Mercer University Press"1988).

[8]Richard Allen, p.352-354.

Cook disagrees with Allen's conclusion.[9] Examining the tie between the theological and intellectual spheres of the social reform movement, Cook demonstrates how religion was associated with social order.[10] Gauging the effects of science on religion, he finds that it ultimately led to the growth of theological liberalism. He concludes that the "regenerators," in attempting to maintain religion's centrality by emphasizing its close relationship to social issues, did not invigorate Christianity, as Allen had indicated, but unwittingly encouraged its decline.[11] In sum, by examining the response to free thought of such men as Goldwin Smith, Richard Maurice Burke, William Lyon Mackenzie King, and others, Cook concludes that efforts to bring God closer to the people led to secularization. Cook's analysis is confined to the theological and intellectual spheres of social reform.

In Quebec, Catholic social reformers also believed that religion constituted the remedy to social ills. The Church abandoned its "territorial temporalism" and opted for a " social temporalism."[12] *L'Action sociale catholique*, founded at the end of the nineteenth century, was the main agent of reform within the Catholic Church. The idea was that the family and the Church, rather than the State, were to undertake the reformation of individuals.[13] Priests and

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[9] See also Ramsay Cook, "Ambiguous Heritage: Wesley College and the Social Gospel Re-Considered", *Manitoba History*, Vol.19, 1990, p.2-11.

[10] Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*, p.29.

[11] Ibid., p.228-229.

[12] Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois *** Le XXe siècle* (Nive Voisine ed), (Montreal, Boréal Express: 1984), p.7.

[13] Ibid., p.17-18.

disciples would work together to reconquer the losses in the moral territory by spreading the Christian truth, exercising Christian virtues and providing charity work.[14] The development of secular unionism forced the Catholic Church to react. Fearing the loss of its influence on workers, unionism took a religious flavour in Quebec in the first decades of the twentieth century as priests and churches sponsored more and more unions.[15] More conservative than revolutionary, these unions promoted *bonne entente* between employers and employees.

The social gospel and, to a lesser degree, *L'Action sociale catholique*, though important parts of the reform movements, were only two of the many initiatives undertaken by reformers in an attempt to reshape Canadian society and to prepare it for the new challenges brought by rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. In *Children in English-Canadian Society,* Neil Sutherland traces the development of some English-Canadian charitable institutions, and in doing so demonstrates that a broad concern about the welfare and comfort of children helped shape the Canadian welfare state.[16] Taking a biographical approach, Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman illustrate *In the Children's Aid. J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* that Toronto social reformer J.J. Kelso's contribution to the reform causes "was not as an original thinker on social issues but rather as a popularizer and promoter within Ontario of policies and programmes already developed elsewhere."[17] Joseph Levitt also approaches the subject of

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[14] Ibid., p.187.

[15] Ibid., p.215.

[16] Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society. Framing the Twntieth Century Consensus*, (Toronto, UTP: 1976), p.228.

[17] Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid. J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario*, (Toronto, UTP: 1981), p.179.

social reform through an individual in *Henri Bourassa and the Golden Calf: The Social Program of the Nationalists of Quebec, 1900-1914*. He contends that Bourassa's reform strategies for the amelioration of the problems of an industrial and urban society were those of a utopian corporatist.[18]

In an innovative study, Mariana Valverde explores the "social purity" thread of the English-Canadian moral reform movement.[19] Drawing on post-structuralist concepts, she analyses the images, myths and allegories that reformers used to get across their message, and concludes that the purpose of the social purity movement "was not so much to suppress as to re-create and re-moralize not only deviants from its norms but, increasingly, the population of Canada as a whole."[20] Valverde's interest in the aims of reformers revives the late debate on reformers' motives.

Interestingly, all the studies mentioned deal with social reformers acting primarily outside municipal politics. Also noteworthy is that none systematically considers the ideas of reformers in relation to their actions, nor simultaneously analyses the reception of the proposed reform strategies. In the United States, scholarly discussions have focussed on the motives and intentions of reformers. There is a particularly rich scholarship on the Progressive era, the

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[18] Joseph Levitt, *Henri Bourassa and the Golden Calf: The Social Program of the Nationalists of Quebec, 1900-1914*, (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press: 1969).

[19] Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water.Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart: 1991) distinguishes between social purity and social gospel by specifying that: "while the focus of social gospel activity was the economy and the social relations arising from production, social purity focused on the sexual and moral aspects of social life.", p.18.

[20] Ibid, p.32.

American counterpart of the Canadian reform period. The first generation of historians studying Progressivism were contemporaries of these events. Both Charles Beard and Vernon Parrington put a Marxist twist on their interpretation when they argued that progressivism was the outcome of the enduring exploitation of workers by big business.[21] Finding progressivism a much less radical movement than the earlier generation of historians had suggested, Richard Hofstadter argued in the 1950's that American social reformers were seeking nothing less than a status revolution; their reform impulse was an effort to preserve the position of middle-class leadership against the growing power of large, impersonal organisations such as trusts, urban political machines, and organised labour.[22] Hofstadter stressed that the passionate rhetoric and energy of reformers produced few reforms, and even fewer that challenged the existing power relationships.[23]

In the 1960's Robert Wiebe rejected Hofstadter's thesis that the reformers were a displaced elite. Wiebe presented them as members of a dynamic and optimistic new middle class deliberately attempting to replace outmoded, traditional values with an entirely new set of values based on, and within the context of, urban and industrial society. In his view, progressivism was not rooted in the nostalgic dreams of an old middle class who resisted organisation, but instead was driven by a new middle class of professionals tied to the emerging national economy. Scientific administration, continuous management and

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[21] Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians. Turner, Beard, Parrington*, (New York, Alfred A. Knopf: 1968), p.179 and 389.

[22]Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform From Bryan to F.D. R.*, (New York, Random House:1955), p.135.

[23] Ibid., p.131-135.

centralisation were outgrowths of the "revolution in values". Clearly Wiebe's assessment of progressive successes was more positive than Hofstadter's.[24]

The 1960's also produced James Weinstein and Gabriel Kolko, representatives of the "New Left History." Although studying a different group of men (the business community), they came up with an interpretation similar to Hofstadter's in the sense that they contended that businessmen proposed progressive reforms to better their own futures.[25] Kolko maintained that "big business" turned to the federal government for "supplemental [public] authority" to rationalise the economy. From Kolko's perspective, the mastery of big business over government in the progressive era meant that the era was actually one of conservatism.[26]

Peter Filene's "An Obituary for the 'Progressive Movement'" presaged the end of the debate as it was known. Arguing that reform blended so thoroughly with larger issues of social change, Filene found the very labels "progressives" and "progressive movement" misleading. He stressed the nonexistence of a coherent progressive program, ideology, membership and electorate.[27] Daniel Rodgers's 1982 review essay confirmed the shift in the "traditional" debate as he noted that much of the best writing that appeared in the wake of Filene's "obituary" ignored disagreement on the characteristics of the progressives themselves and inquired

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[24] Robert H.Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1921*. (New York, Hill and Wang:1990).

[25] Gabriel Kolko: *The Triumph of Conservatism. A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916*, (New York, The Free Press: 1963), p.284. James Weinstein: *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State: 1900-1918*, (Boston, Beacon Press: 1968), p.x.

[26] Kolko, p.284-287.

[27] Peter G. Filene, "An Obituary for 'The Progressive Movement'", *American Quarterly*, Vol.22, no1, 1970, p.27.

instead about their environment.[28] An increasingly complex, pluralistic reading of progressive politics emerged on the tail of Filene's critiques, as historians tried to answer the question of why so many issue-oriented groups emerged concurrently during the so-called "progressive era." The "Progressive revival" in American history departments over the last fifteen years has been marked by a bewildering array of "bottom-up" histories rather than overarching syntheses.[29] Bryant Simon observed that the historiographical trend began to shift towards specialised or regional explanations and away from a holistic interpretation of the period.[30]

Scholars of Canadian history agree that Canada was not marked by the existence of one comprehensive and cohesive movement of social reform but rather by a collection of reform movements all aiming at creating a better society in this age of urbanisation and industrialisation.[31] Paul Rutherford rightly points out that "urban reform was less a single creed and more a common approach to a wide variety of urban problems."[32] There has thus been no need for a "Canadian Filene."

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[28] Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism", *Reviews in American History*, 10, 1982, p.114.

[29] Bryant Simon, "One Side of Main Street", *Reviews in American History*, Vol.22, no3, 1994, p.462.

[30] I would like to thank Whitney Lackenbauer for the numerous enlighenting discussions we had on American scholarship.

[31] In Europe, social reformers appeared much earlier as they can be traced back to the 1780's with the emergence during that decade of a belief among a wide section of propertied society that commercial, industrial and urban growth were overwhealming the traditional institution of law and order.

[32] Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920", *Historical Papers*, 1971, p.205.

Canadian scholarship on social reform movements has included a discussion on reformers' motives, but it has never reached the extent of the American debate. Canadian historians have never really adopted Hofstader's interpretation, and few pursued Weinstein's and Kolko's path. Indeed, most are more generous in their account of urban social reformers. For instance, Ernest Forbes, studying the prohibition movement in Nova Scotia, contends that: "prohibitionists were motivated primarily by a desire to eliminate the roots of human unhappiness." He adds that: "They wanted to create a new society in which crime, disease, and social injustice would virtually be eliminated."[33] Forbes illustrates that many Maritime churches, identifying intemperance as a prime source of social problems, supported prohibition as the key to solving Canadian society's ills.

Paul Rutherford agrees with Forbes when he suggests that reformers were "imbued with a reforming zeal and a singular sense of mission."[34] Rutherford specifies, however, that reformers' motives were not all altruistic:

> They [urban reformers] were all motivated by a generalized sense of crisis, founded on a variety of fears, such as the spread of moral decay, the threat of class hatred, and the growth of vested interests. They were inspired by the possibilities of improvement, by a belief in their ability to create a humane, rational society.[35]

Although Rutherford mentions the "variety of fears" that prompted men and women to advocate reforms, the emphasis, nonetheless, remains on the reformers' desire to do good.

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[33]Ernest Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia", *Acadiensis*, Vol.1, no1, 1971, p11.

[34]Paul Rutherford, *Saving the Canadian City: The First Phase, 1880-1920*, (Toronto, UTP: 1974), p.xi.

[35]Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920", p.217.

Analysing their discourse, he reveals their idealism and establishes how "[t]hey slowly moved towards a new conception of the public interest, founded upon the pre-eminence of the community, a commitment to social order and social justice, and a firm belief in the twin ideals of economy and efficiency."[36]

Trying to draw a national picture of urban reform, and relying exclusively on the writings of prominent reformers, Rutherford not only disregards the possible incongruence between their words and their action, but he ignores local reformers who might have had other motives than a commitment to social order and social justice. In a revisionist approach, John Weaver claims that:

> A critical assessment of urban reform, if it is to go beyond an examination of reform rhetoric, must deal with local perspective rather than national or international ones, it must examine motive (other than idealism) and consider continuity instead of change.[37]

He also maintains that municipal and social reform would be better understood if "the actual practices and achievements of the economic and political groups engaged in campaigns for better civic government across Canada"[38] were closely analysed. Hence, considering the reforms themselves instead of reformers' rhetoric, Weaver rejects Rutherford's claim that the

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[36]Paul Rutherford, "An Introduction", *The City Below the Hill* (H.B. Ames), (Toronto, UTP: 1972), p.vii.

[37]John C. Weaver, "'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1890-1920". G.A. Stelter and A.J. Artibise, *The Canadian City. Essays in Urban History* (Ottawa, University of Carleton Press:1984), p.457.

[38]John C. Weaver, *Shaping the Canadian City. Essays on Urban Politics and Policy 1890-1920.* (Toronto, Institute of Public Administration of Canada:1977), p55-56.

reformers' main goal was to regulate the city for the benefit of all.[39] Weaver argues instead that the municipalisation of public utilities, one of the leading strategies of urban reform, served business rather than public ends. "Actual implementation of reform" he writes, "disclosed manipulation of growth for the benefit of the 'better classes'."[40] He also documents that when the building of affordable and sanitary tenement houses was suggested, the cost and the feeling that the poor did not deserve this level of public assistance discouraged businessmen from investing in the project.[41]

Weaver's *leit motiv*, like that of his American colleagues Kolko and Weinstein , is that urban reforms responded to private sector aspirations and served the interest of businessmen.[42] He finds the urban boom that Canadian cities experienced was "conducive to a business and real estate ethos, but not to social reform values."[43] In sum, he believes that reformers were usually inspired by a conservative view of society and promoted by "the self interest of the civic establishment."[44] Paul-André Linteau's *Maisonneuve: Comment des promoteurs*

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[39]John C. Weaver, "'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1890-1920", p.470.

[40] Ibid., p.474.

[41]Ibid., p.468.

[42] John C. Weaver, "Elitism and the Corporate Ideal in Canadian Municipal Reform. Businessmen and Boosters:". *Cities in the West* eds: R. McCormick and I Macpharson. (Ottawa, Museum of Man: 1975).

[43]John C. Weaver, *Shaping the Canadian City: Essays on Urban Politics and Policy, 1890-1920*, p.39.

[44] Ibid., p.40.

fabriquent une ville in many ways corroborates Weaver's interpretation.[45] Linteau reveals that real estate agents in Maisonneuve, with the support of the local *petite bourgeoisie*, were able to control the municipal council and to manipulate the development of the city for their own interests. Both Linteau and Weaver specifically study social reformers working within the structures of municipal government.

If Rutherford limited his study to the rhetoric of reformers, Weaver, by focussing on implemented reforms, ignored that there was sometimes a gap between what reformers wanted to do and what they actually accomplished. It is only by linking reformers' words to their actions that one can fully grasp their true motives, since intentions, especially political ones, are not always attainable nor do they invariably reflect real aims. Furthermore, to evaluate the success of reformers in achieving their objectives, to measure their impact on society, one has first to know their ideals, their motives.

Weaver's approach, while bringing a new dimension to the debate, also raises some pressing questions. First, who should we regard as urban social reformers? Should we consider both the real estate promoter and the health officer pushing for municipalisation, regardless of the fact that they might not share the same motives? Should only the "implementers" be considered as social reformers or can the legions of journalists, essayists, social workers, and preachers also be labelled social reformers? Is there a distinction to be made between political reformers (the men working within the structure of municipal government, interested mainly in reforming the institution) and social reformers who dealt

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[45] Paul-André Linteau, *Maisonneuve: comment des promoteurs fabriquent une ville.* (Montréal, Les Éditions du Boréal Express:1981).

particularly with issues touching the life of citizens directly, such as public health, working class welfare and public morals? Finally, how do the experiences of reformers differ from one group to the other, or even from one city to the next? It is perhaps time to follow the footsteps of American scholars and to present a regional explanation and a "bottom-up" history of social reform.

Field and Methodology

To answer these questions is to sharpen our understanding of Canadian social reform movements and the ideas conveyed. Existing research indicates that the reform movements, which proliferated in the last decades of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, were products of a particular era and social milieu. The study of the ideas behind the reform movements certainly belong to the field of intellectual history. A relatively new field,[46] Canadian intellectual history has earned a place of its own over the years. As with other fields, however, it has yet to develop a specific approach or methodology.

Sydney Wise gave historians good advice when he suggested that historians of Canadian thought must be concerned primarily with "the interrelationship between ideas and actions, and therefore the intellectual commonplaces of an age, its root notions, assumptions, and images, will be of more significance to him [or her] than the study of coherent bodies of abstract thought."[47] Others have subsequently offered practical methodological elements.

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[46]Owram argues that the field was really born only in the 1960's. "Writing about Ideas" in *Writing About Canada. A Handbook for Modern Canadian History* John Schultz (ed), (Scareborough, Prentice Hall: 1990), p.56.

[47]Syd Wise, "Sermon Litterature and Canadian Intellectual History" in *God's Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth Century Canada* A.B. McKillop and Paul Romney (eds), (Ottawa, Carleton University Press: 1973) p.3.

Brian McKillop, J.M. Bumsted, Clarence Karr, and Doug Owram all believe that the value of ideas is derived from the social context from which they emerge.[48] On the methodological front this means that historians should conscientiously situate the ideas of the urban reformers in the social, cultural, economic and political context of turn-of-the-century-Canada.

When approaching the issue of methodology, the historian of ideas should also take into account that the field is sometimes described as too elitist in nature.[49] R.D. Woolf colourfully notes that "'intellectual history' still tends, unfortunately, to evoke charges of cocktail party scholasticism, of stuffy seminars on what just exactly Hegel meant, or on the scientific vocabulary of Galileo or Newton and their debt to earlier scientific writers."[50] Fortunately the emergence of cultural history and *histoire des mentalités* present an opportunity to revamp the history of Canadian thought. Studies do not need to be restricted to the ideas of great men or women; indeed, following the lead of social historians in making history more inclusive, historians of Canadian thought can gauge how ideas put forth by the elite were received in society. Yvan Lamonde talks about the "consummation of ideas."[51] Who share the thought of the elite? How do ideas affect society?

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[48]A.B. McKillop, "Nationalism, Identity, and Canadian Intellectual History" in *Contours of Canadian Thought*, (Toronto, UTP: 1987) p.4. J.M. Bumsted, "Canadian Intellectual History and the *Buzzing Factuality*" in *Acadiensis*, Vol.17, no1, Fall 1977, p.116. Clarence Karr, "What is Intellectual History?" in *Dalhousie Review*, Vol.55, Fall 1975, p.432.

[49]Clarence Karr, "What Happened to Canadian Intellectual History?", *Acadiensis*, Vol.18, No2, Spring 1989, p.160.

[50]D.R. Woolf, "Non-Canadian Intellectual And Cultural History in Canada: A Survey, 1960-1987", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.24, no3, Fall 1989, p.94.

[51]Yvan Lamonde, p.90.

The period under study, the 1880's to the beginning of the Great War, lends itself to Lamonde's concept of consummation of ideas. Popular newspapers were starting to flourish in the 1800's. The emergence of the popular press broadened the horizons of the average citizen, creating a major precondition for the emergence of modern public opinion.[52] Newspapers thus provide a good tool to measure the reception of social reform strategies in society.

In "So Little on the Mind", Brian McKillop proposes a tangible method to study ideas. He suggests widening the Canadian intellectual research to encompass three goals: "First to affirm the inherent value-what, for short we might call the integrity of ideas, second to discern patterns of structure, third to search for coherence." [53] While his proposed methodology is certainly a step in the right direction, Pierre Grégoire's analytical framework *Histoire-événement* is more complete. It includes McKillop's three aims in its anthropological level (it calls for an analysis of the thought for itself, an appreciation of its impact on action, and taking into account the social context in which it emerges), and it contains two other important levels for the historian of Canadian thought: "La médiatisation" and "l'histoire-mémoire."[54] *Médiatisation* refers to the desire to know how a particular event, or here an idea, was received in society; and *histoire-mémoire* pertains to historiography. It examines how scholars have interpreted over the years the ideas of the social reform movements.

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[52] Paul Rutherford, "The People's Press: The Emergence of New Journalism in Canada, 1869-99", *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.56, no2, 1975, p.169.

[53]Brian McKillop, "So Little on the Mind" in *Contours of Canadian Thought*, p.25.

[54]Pierre Grégoire, "L'événement-référence" in *Événement, Identité et Histoire*, Claire Dolan (ed), (Quebec, Septentrion:1993), p.167-186.

More concretely, the approach of *histoire-événement* is to recognize the originality of what happened and to reconstruct the facts to understand better the sense and the value of the event.[55] It is important to note that the event is above all a "fact"; it takes the nature of event only when it is "mediatized", be it by direct witnesses or remote, such as by historians. Thus, according to this definition, as soon as reform strategies are discussed in newspapers, or later examined by historians, they become an event. Grégoire's levels of analysis, the anthropological and the *médiatisation,* allow us to evaluate the "real" value of an event in relation to its historical construction. *Histoire-événement* thus provides the historian of ideas with a methodological framework that seeks to overcome the identified limits of the field and simultaneously command a revision of the literature. The application of a French methodology to a Canadian topic can rejuvenate the field of Canadian intellectual history.[56]

Topic, Sources and Thesis

The intentions of this study are first to identify those who were perceived as urban social reformers at the time; second to discover and describe the nature of the strategies they proposed; third to evaluate the correlation between reformers' discourse and their actions; fourth to gauge the reception of the solutions they proposed to solve the ills of urban life; and finally to re-evaluate the historiography on social reform and urban reformers. The

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[55] Jean Molino writes: "Il y a d'un côté un terme du language-objet (l'événement)qui renvoie au monde, et de l'autre un terme de métalanguage (le fait) qui désigne l'objet d'une affirmation et le résultat description-interprétation."(p.260). For a scientific distinction between facts and event, see Jean Molino, "L'énement: de la logique à la sémiologie"*L'événement. Actes du colloque*, (Aix-en-Provence, Jeanne La fille: 1986), p.252-269.

[56]Yvan Lamonde, "L'histoire culturelle comme domaine historiographique au Quebec", *RHAF*, Vol.51, no2, 1997, p.299.

connotations of urban social reformers' ideas can only be deciphered correctly by reconstructing something of their original settings. Ultimately, it is hoped that it will be shown that a contextual approach to the history of ideas is imperative.

A comparative study between reformers from two cities seems best suited to evaluate how local experiences affected reformers. The rapid growth of large wholesalers, real estate companies and industries, massive urban immigration, and a well established press, made Montreal and Winnipeg ripe for the rise of social reformers, thus making them two cities natural choices for this study. Comparing a "central" city to a Western one can only shed some light on regional differences and similarities. The other idea which guided the choice of the cities is that the French population was a significant element of both cities, although it turned out that no French Canadians were identified as social reformers in Winnipeg. Lastly, both regions have been under-studied for the period in question.

Faithful to the spirit of the methodology, the respective major city newspapers[57] were perused in order to identify whom Montrealers and Winnipeggers considered at the time to be social reformers. Even though many historians of social reform have documented the substantial involvement of women in a variety of reform movements,[58] women were usually

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[57] *The Montreal Star*, *The Montreal* Herald, *The Pen*, La *Presse*, *Le Devoir*, *La Patrie*, *The Daily Norwester*, *The Winnipeg Free Press*, *The People's Voice*, *The Winnipeg Tribune*.

[58] To name a few: Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Suffragists, 1877-1918*, (Toronto, UTP: 1983). Catharine Cleverdon, *The Women Suffrage Movement in Canada: The Start of Liberation, 1900-1920*, (Toronto, UTP:1974) Mary E. Hallet and Marilyn Davis, *Firing the Heather: The Life and Times of Nellie McClung*, (Saskatoon, Fifth House:1993) Linda Kealey, *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880-1920*, (Toronto, Canadian Women's Educational Press: 1979) and *Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920*,

not singled out as urban social reformers.[59] When they were, they tended to be American women such as Jane Addams and Frances Willard, but most of the time they were mentioned in relation to an organisational structure such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Since this study is interested mainly in reformers' ideas and the "inherent value-what" of those ideas, it was essential that the reformers' discourse be obtainable independently of the "mediatization." The availability of reformers' ideas thus became a determining factor in the selection of the reformers identified by observers of social reform at the turn of the century. This is why Hormisdas Laporte, although seen by his Montreal compatriots as a social reformer, is not part of this study. Also, it would have been interesting to see the similarities and difference between French-Canadian and English-Canadian reformers but even though there was an important French community in Winnipeg, no Francophone-Manitoban was associated with social reform.

Jules Helbronner, Herbert B. Ames, William D. Lighthall, Reverends J.B. Silcox, Hugh Pedley and Frederic B. Du Val might not be familiar names to our contemporary ears, but to turn-of-the-century Montrealers or Winnipeggers, they were local, and in some cases, national celebrities. These names all appeared in Canadian newspapers and they qualified for entry in at least one version of the celebrated *Who's Who in Canada*. The epithet "social reformer"

(Toronto, UTP: 1998) Le Collectif Clio, *L'histoire des femmes au Québec*, 2nd edition, (Montreal, Le Jour: 1992). Janice Newton, *The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 1900-1918*, (Montreal/Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press: 1995). Helène Pelletier-Baillargeon, *Marie Gérin Lajoie*, (Montréal, Boréal Express: 1985). Alison Prentice et al., "The Women Movement" in *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd edition, (Toronto, Harcourt: 1996).

[59] Dr. Amelia Yeomans was actually mentioned numerous time in Winnipeg' newspapers, however, I have not found personal papers, nor any form of discourse for her.

linked together these men of different professions. Journalists, politicians, lawyers, novelists or pastors, they were all identified by their peers as men devoted to social justice. Their efforts to alleviate the plight of the less fortunate were recognized by most and fortunately their ideas have been preserved in letters, pamphlets, books, sermons and novels.

The Jewish Congress of Montreal holds the Helbronner Papers, which are more a gathering of newspaper clippings and published works rather than personal papers per se. The Ames papers, which contain his city council diaries, some letters and scrapbooks, provide a good corpus for identifying some of Ames' concerns. The papers can be found at the Rare Books and Special Collections Division of McGill University Libraries. The Lighthall papers, spread over the National Library and the Rare Books and Special Collections Division of McGill University Libraries, are more voluminous than the two previous collections put together. The papers constitute a rich source for social, political and intellectual history, and, to date, they have been largely unexplored.[60]

If the names of the Montreal reformers are not completely unfamiliar to students of Canadian history, it is another story for Winnipeg's reformers. In the case of Reverend J.B. Silcox, his papers have only recently been discovered and put into the care of the United Church of Canada Archives- Conference of Manitoba Northwest and Ontario. For Reverends Pedley and Du Val, there are no personal papers. Both of them, however, published sermons. As well, Du Val authored a pamphlet on "social vices" and Pedley an utopia novel. Their ideas are thus still available to be analysed.

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[60] Richard Virr, "Son of the Great Dominion: W.D. Lighthall and the Lighthall Family Papers", *Fontanus*, Vol.II, 1989, p.103.

The most striking feature of this study is the totally different nature of Montreal's and Winnipeg's social reformers. The profiles of the six social reformers, and the type of reforms they proposed clearly indicate that the nature of social reform movements was very much influenced by a particular social, political and economic context. Winnipeggers singled out men of the cloth as social reformers while Montrealers identified men involved in one way or another with municipal politics. For most of the period, Winnipeg's municipal administration enjoyed a reputation of efficiency and honesty, but Montreal's earned one of corruption and waste. Since the urgency to deal with civic administration questions was not felt in Winnipeg, the social gospellers focussed instead on social vices such as alcoholism, prostitution and gambling, although they did condemn civic corruption and addressed issues such as working class welfare and social justice. Believing that the "industrial system" was flawed because it had lost its touch with Christianity, Silcox advocated the preaching of the gospel as the chief solution to the ills of the city. Pedley thought that the "unification" of the churches in Canada was the start of substantial social reforms. For his part, Du Val focussed on social vices and simply asked that laws be enforced. For the most part, although the Winnipeg social gospellers were able to reach many by their sermons, which were often printed in newspapers or in pamphlets, they accomplished very little of a concrete nature since their "kingdom of God on earth" did not materialize. They did, however, succeed in raising public consciousness.

Helbronner the newspaper editor, Ames the businessman, and Lighthall the lawyer, were more diversified in their professions. These Montreal social reformers channelled their energy into purifying municipal politics and into bringing about a better justice system. All three Montrealers not only advocated reforms but worked ardently to bring about those

reforms. They succeeded in arousing public opinion to the social ills they earmarked for change, in forcing municipal governments to be more accountable (at least for a time), and in modifying unjust laws -- in sum in implementing lasting social changes. They, however, differed in their approach. Helbronner's attitude towards the less fortunate was distinctively different from that of his Montreal peers. His discourse rarely took a patronizing turn. He mainly strove to develop a working-class consciousness so that all members of society could secure a better life. He wanted to reduce, even eliminate, workers' dependence on the elite of society. The reform strategies he proposed reveal a tremendous faith in the workers' potential and in their ability to rule their own lives.

Herbert B. Ames was above all a businessman, but one who happened to be also a philanthropist. He emphasised the need for political reforms. The nature of his reform strategies suggests that Ames profoundly respected the social order. As a man belonging to the monied elite, he not only had the resources necessary to devote himself to improving the social welfare, he also felt a responsibility to do so. He took charge of the less fortunate and decided for them what they needed. He chose not to reform the traditional social and political structures of Montreal, but rather to enforce the existing rules that regulated his society.

Finally, like Ames, William D. Lighthall believed that the poorest in society needed help as they were not always able to help themselves, nor to blame for their misfortunes. It was up to those like himself to change things, but not without first consulting the ones that were affected. Lighthall thought that greater government management of services, regulated growth and enforcement of laws would improve the living conditions of everyone, and especially of the less fortunate. Lighthall both reflected and directed the social reformers of his day who still

mirrored the optimism of the Victorian age that the perfect society was within the grasp of humankind.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part one deals with Montreal and part two with Winnipeg. Chapter one provides the social, economic and political nature of industrialized Montreal at the turn of the century. Jules Helbronner's contribution to the social reform movements is analysed in the second chapter. Chapter three deals with H.B. Ames and his reform strategies. Concluding the first part is W.D. Lighthall's approach to the ills of urban society in Chapter four. Chapter five portrays Winnipeg society at the turn of the century. Chapters six, seven and eight consider the social reform ideas of J.B. Silcox, Hugh Pedley and F.B. Du Val respectively. The concluding chapter draws some parallels and differences between the social reform movements in the two cities and puts them into the broader context.

While the core chapters are each devoted to one reformer and his ideas, this study does not take a "great man" approach to the history of social reform movements. To the contrary, in order to be able to dissect the conjuncture of lines of influence in which each specific view stands, we need a focal point, a time and a place, a reform strategy and a thinker. The idea is not that these men were "lonely heroes" who developed their ideas "out of the blue", but that their work is embedded in a steady stream of related approaches, undercurrents that exerted both social and intellectual influences.

PART I
MONTREAL

CHAPTER 1

Corrupted to the Core: Montreal

To a great many people Montreal has always represented the *big city* with everything that those two words entail. It is easy to imagine how it must have been for sons and daughters of farmers, families who left their little villages in rural Quebec, or immigrants coming from abroad, to see, smell,[1] hear and feel Montreal in the last decades of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. Arriving by boat, train, carriage or on foot, they could not avoid the sight of the city's majestic buildings: the splendid Gare Bonaventure, the aesthetic Notre-Dame Church, the divine Montreal Cathedral or Sainte-Catherine street's gleaming department stores. Neither could they ignore the buzzing activities in the streets and markets, nor escape from the smoke steaming out of the numerous factory chimneys.

Montreal was indeed **the** Canadian metropolis. "Its magnificent situation, its historic riches, its commercial activity, the cosmopolitan charm of its division of languages and population," commented W.D. Lighthall in 1892, earned Montreal the title of the "Alexandria of the West."[2] The image of Montreal as a major cultural centre might be disputed. Although

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[1] Michael Bliss, describing how some Montrealers associated sordid smells with contagion, quotes in passing a reporter in charge of investigating the city's sanitary conditions: "The lanes and alleys are ... filled with garbage and refuse of every kind, which ... throw off their foul, typhoid-breeding exhalations into the atmosphere to poison those who are so unfortunate as to be compelled to breathe it." in "The Odour of Contagion, Montreal 1885. 'Something Terrible'", *The Beaver*, Vol.71, no6, 1991-1992, p.6.

[2] W.D. Lighthall, *Montreal after 250 years*, (Montreal, F.E. Grafton & Sons:1892), p.11.

there were theatres,[3] cafés-concerts, museums and a variety of cultural clubs, some might rightly point out that it was not before 1917 that a truly public library saw the light of day.[4] The comparison to Alexandria was more suited to the commercial front. Montreal was certainly experiencing an effervescent economy. Between 1881 and 1891, the value of raw material jumped from thirty-one to forty millions dollars, while manufactured goods increased by fifteen million dollars and the number of workers doubled.[5] Montreal's population increased by nearly forty percent during the same decade. In 1891, the island counted 216,650 souls, about half of Quebec's urban population.[6] The number swelled to more than half a million by 1911.

The massive construction of houses, commercial and industrial buildings transformed Montreal's landscape.[7] Satirist Stephen Leacock (1869-1944), a direct witness to the city's physical metamorphosis, years later depicted the city's rapid, raw and unbridled growth:

> Indeed a new town arose as an addition to the old one. What had been the flatlands and meadows and broken, straggling woods, along the valley of Little River, the

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[3] For more about theatrical activity in Montreal consult Jean-Marc Larrue, "L'activité théâtrale à Montréal 1880-1914", Ph.D thesis (études françaises) Université de Montréal, 1987.

[4] For a description of the steps leading to the creation of Montreal municipal library see Michèle Dagenais, "Political Dimensions to Leisure and Cultural Activities in Canadian Cities, 1880-1940", *Urban History (Great Britain)* Vol.26, no1, 1999, p.55-70 and "Vie culturelle et pouvoirs publics locaux. La fondation de le Bibliothèque municipale de Montréal", *Urban History Review*, Vol.24, no2, 1996, p.40-56.

[5] Canadian Census 1880-81 and 1890-91, vol.3, p.501 and p.387.

[6] Canadian Census, 1890-91, Vol.1, p.370.

[7] Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, (Montreal, Boréal:1992), p.187.

> ground which had offered the natural terrain for the Lachine Canal, now with each succeeding decade reared its clumsy factories and shabby plants, its lifting cranes and iron runaways, obliterating and disfiguring nature but offering a new beauty to the eye of the shareholder. [Leacock also mentioned]- red-litten windows all aglow at night, long streamers of lurid smoke and flame pouring into the darkness, or even in the daylight, the beating of the hammer, the whistles of the boats in the canal [...].[8]

Incorporated in 1832, Montreal's municipal structures, conceived for a relatively small and semi-rural community, were no longer adequate at the end of the nineteenth century.[9] Most of the city by-laws of 1833 dealt with hygiene or sanitation. Understandably, after the 1832 cholera epidemic that had killed so many, city fathers were concerned with people "throwing dirty water, ashes, soot, or any dirt or filth whatever, or snow or ice from yards, into any public squares, streets or lanes."[10] Another by-law dealt with unwholesome privies; they had to be regularly cleaned, and, where none existed, built. However, as "the out-of-door-pit-in-the-ground-privy"[11] constituted a real health hazard in the densely populated city of the post-1880's, there was no longer talk of building new privies, but rather discussion on how to eradicate them.[12] As well, the first city charter, not surprisingly, had no provisions for public

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[8]Stephen Leacock, *Montreal*, (New York, Doubleday Doran Company Inc: 1943), p.198.

[9]René Durocher, Paul-André Linteau and Jean-Claude Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporain. De la Confédération à la crise (1867-1929)*, (Québec, Les Éditions Boréal: 1989), p.208.

[10] Quoted in Kathleen Jenkins, *Montreal Island City of the St-Lawrence*, (New York, Doubleday & Company Inc.: 1966), p.290.

[11] Expression used by H.B. Ames, *The City Below the Hill. A Sociological Essay of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada*, (Toronto, UTP:1972, first published in Montreal, 1897) p.45.

[12] The construction of privy pits within municipal boundaries was outlawed in 1887, except for Saint-Denis (annexed in 1893) since there were no public sewers. Louis Laberge,

transport, electric lighting or telephone lines. Even in 1842, when a whole new series of by-laws were passed,[13] civic fathers could not envision the coming of the new technological age, nor the unprecedented population growth of subsequent eras.

Leaving the "pure" but increasingly crowded countryside, and attracted by the hope of a better life, men, women and children streamed into Montreal. They constituted a growing pool of cheap labour. If industry owners rejoiced to see them arriving in their city, they did not rescue workers from job insecurity or subsistence wages.[14] The typical working day for unskilled labourers was excessively long at an average of ten hours, but it could easily reach fifteen hours in certain sectors.[15] The factory environment was unsafe, "presses, métiers, scies fonctionnent à nu, happant une main, un bras"[16] writes Jean De Bonville. Factories were not the most hygienic nor the safest, and often there were no fire escapes. Many workers joined the ranks of specialised labour organisations,[17] or more general ones such as the Montreal

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Rapport de l'état sanitaire de la Cité de Montréal et sur les opérations de la Commission d'hygiène avec la statistique mortuaire pour l'année 1899, (Montreal, The Montreal Printing and Publishing Company: 1900), p.10.

[13] Jenkins, p.316.

[14] Jean De Bonville, *Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit. Les travailleurs montréalais à la fin du XIXe siècle*, (Montreal, Les Éditions de l'Aurore: 1975), p.68-112. Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart:1974), p.44

[15] Jean Hamelin (ed), *Les travailleurs québécois 1851-1896*, (Montreal, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec: 1973), p.32.

[16] De Bonville, p.76.

[17] There were nearly two hundred specialised unions in Montreal and area between 1829 and 1900. Regroupement des chercheurs en histoire des travailleurs québécois, "Appendice", Fernand Harvey, *Le Mouvement ouvrier du Québec*, (Montreal, Boréal Express: 1980), p.200-221.

Trade Union, the Knights of Labor, La Ligue ouvrière de Montréal and the Montreal Central Trades Council(MCTC), to protest against deplorable working conditions and to suggest solutions.[18] Unions pressed claims for an eight-hour work-day, minimum wages, compulsory primary schooling[19] and demanded the eradication of the sweating system, but were largely unsuccessful.[20]

Despite the economic prosperity experienced by many North American cities, lurking beneath was an urban crisis. Mariana Valverde argues that beyond the typical problems found in the literature of the time, there was a macro problem: the city itself. People saw the city as a locale of moral and social disintegration, and they feared its influence on society as a whole.[21] For many, alcoholism was above all an urban problem because it was associated with industrialisation. The Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital noted in 1889 that "so many drinking-houses exist on the routes followed by workingmen in

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[18] Fernand Harvey, "Les Chevaliers du Travail, les États-Unis et la société québécoise, 1882-1902", *Le Mouvement ouvrier du Québec*, (Montreal, Boréal Express: 1980), p.108-109.

[19] Compulsory schooling was a way to limit the child labour which depreciated labourers' wages. Lorna Hurl, "Restricting Child Factory Labour in Late Nineteenth Century Ontario", *Labour*, spring 1988, p.93-94. The debate surrounding child labour at the end of the nineteenth century centred on the fact that child labour negatively affected wages, but on the other hand many working class families needed the revenue generated by their children. John Bullen, "Hidden Workers", *Labour*, Fall 1986, p.174.

[20] Harvey, p.108-109.

[21] Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water. Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart: 1991), p.370.

going to and from their work."[22] Mr. Létourneau, an active member of a temperance league, portrayed this perception in a paper he gave at a meeting of the *Association des instituteurs catholiques de Montréal* :

> La tâche que l'industrie moderne impose à l'ouvrier réclame une vigueur qu'il n'a pas toujours. Il lui semble qu'un petit verre rétablira la proportion entre le travail et la force. C'est le matin: il se lève fatigué du labeur de la veille, effrayé peut-être de celui que le jour lui offre en perspective. Il faut marcher pourtant vers cette usine ou ce chantier sans lesquels on n'aurait pas de pain. S'il n'est pas profondément chrétien, à ses souffrances physiques, l'ouvrier ajoute le tableau de ses douleurs morales, de ses joies perdues, de son avenir incertain. Tandis que ces images désolantes flottent dans sa pensée, le cabaret s'offre à lui sur le chemin qui mène à l'atelier.[23]

Contemporary newspaper articles and letters reveal that many people were troubled by the moral dangers present in the city. Gambling, alcohol consumption, lotteries and prostitution were issues thoroughly discussed.[24] A pastoral letter titled: "L'affaiblissement de l'esprit chrétien et le goût des plaisirs du monde" illustrates well the spirit of the time. The letter denounced:

> la morale païenne qui pétrit la vie urbaine et dont les principaux traits sont la recherche effrénée des biens de la terre qui absorbe l'intelligence et le coeur, les mondanités qui détournent les parents des charmes sereins et purs du sanctuaire de la famille, les appâts de la vie urbaine qui corrompent la jeunesse.[25]

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[22] James Armstrong and A.T. Freed, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada,* (Ottawa, Queen's Printer: 1889), p.19

[23] A. Létourneau, *L'alcoolisme et l'école*, (Montreal, imprimerie Lemieux: 1908), p.19.

[24] For instance, a whole series of articles on gambling houses was published in the *Montreal Star* on March 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18, 1899.

[25] Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois *** Le Xxe siècle* (Nive Voisine ed),(Montreal, Boréal Express: 1984), p.177.

Although the Catholic Church was divided on the question of prohibition,[26] in Montreal, following the failure of the referendum on prohibition in 1897, Mgr Bruchési started a temperance crusade. He incited each parish to establish its own temperance society. Their mandate was to educate the people on the danger of alcohol, and to exert pressure on government officials to apply the law to the letter.[27] The campaign against intoxicating liquors seemed at the time to be naturally in the realm of the Church as alcoholism was perceived as a moral disease, as was prostitution. In the case of prostitution, historian Andrée Lévesque shows that for many the preoccupations were as much physical as moral.[28] Regardless of the objections of religious groups, the "scarlet sin" was not only tolerated but also regulated between 1907 and 1908 as a means to control the spread of venereal diseases.[29]

The "moral vices" associated with the city were only part of the problem of turn-of-the-century-Montreal. The new urban economy accentuated disparity. In their studies of Montreal in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historians Paul-André Linteau and Terry Copp stress that labourers greatly contributed to the city's economic prosperity, but did not benefit from it.[30] Paul Rutherford writes about the "new Canadian dilemma of material

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[26] Ibid., p.198.

[27] Ibid., p.202.

[28] Andrée Levesque, "Éteindre le Red Light: Les réformateurs et la prostitution à Montréal entre 1865 et 1925", *Urban History Review*, Vol.17, no3, 1989, p.191-192.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Paul-André Linteau, "Montreal, 1850-1914", *Urban History Review*, Vol.75, no1, 1975, p.35. Terry Copp, p.13.

prosperity and social misery."[31] Misery was indeed a reality for many. Tenement houses were not well ventilated and many still had privy pits instead of interior toilets. Working-class homes typically had small courtyards that lacked proper lighting and therefore prevented families from growing quality food at minimum cost. Consequently, keeping a productive garden became the privilege of the rich.[32] If before the 1880's, urban families could complement their meagre wages by keeping pigs, sheep or cows, after that decade, it became more and more difficult to do so as stricter legislation sought to restrict animals on the streets.[33] Some working class families opted to take a boarder or two when they could spare a room or afford to pay for beds and linen.[34]

Montreal's development was unsupervised and without direction. Factories, businesses and houses simply went up where land was available. Low municipal taxation meant that municipal governments could not develop much of an infrastructure. Densely populated areas,[35] overcrowded tenements and small apartments,[36] lack of proper ventilation,

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[31] Paul Rutherford, "An Introduction", H.B. Ames' *The City Below the Hill. A Sociological Essay of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada.*(Toronto, UTP: 1972), p.vii.

[32] Ibid., p.164.

[33] Bettina Bradbury, "Pigs, Cows and Boarders: Non-Wage Forms of Survival Among Montreal Families, 1861-1891", *Labour*, Vol.14, 1984, p.9-46.

[34] For a more detailed discussion see Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families. Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart: 1993), p.175-179.

[35]From small samples of the Montreal population, Sherry Olson and Jason Gilliland found that between 1861 and 1901 there was substantial improvement in the average dwelling space available per person, but an extreme and persistant inequity in the distribution among households. The housing market remained polarized in terms of class

inefficient sewers, filthy courtyards and putrid alleys contributed to Montreal's notoriously high mortality rate. In the working class districts of St-Jean- Baptiste, it reached fifty-three per thousand in 1890, and in Saint-Gabriel it was in the neighbourhood of forty per thousand, but in wards where the concentrations of working class people were lower, the rate varied between fourteen and sixteen per thousand.[37] Insalubrious rear tenements and unwholesome privy pits were the primary causes of the high mortality rates.[38]

Even more disturbing were infant morality rates - among the highest in the world at 212.7 per thousand in 1891. The rate peaked at 274.9 per thousand between 1900 and 1904.[39] Unpasteurized milk was a major source of intestinal infections and of tuberculosis. Alarmed by the effect of impure milk, doctors encouraged women who did not breastfeed their children to visit the *gouttes de lait*, milk distribution centres created at the beginning of the twentieth century. Historian Denyse Baillargeon has shown, however, that mothers were reluctant to

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and cultural identity. "Claims on Housing Space in Nineteenth century Montreal", *Urban History Review*, Vol.26, no2, 1998, p.3-16.

[36] Gilles Lauzon challenges this notion of "overcrowding", in a revisionist article where he argues that cohabitation was rare in working-class districts, that it was generally transitory, and that it almost always occured within families. "Cohabitaion et déménagements en milieu ouvrier montréalais. Essai de réinterprétation à partir du cas du Village Saint-Augustin (1871-1881), *RHAF*, Vol.46, no1, 1992, p.115-142.

[37] Martin Tétrault, "Les maladies de la misère. Aspects de la santé publique à Montréal, 1880-1914", *RHAF*, Vol.36, no4, 1983, p.510.

[38] Martin Tétrault, , "L"état de santé des Montréalais, 1880-1914", M.A. thesis (history), Université de Montréal, 1991, p.121.

[39] Durocher, Linteau and Robert, p.33.

patronize them until the 1930's.[40]

Montreal's elite citizens naturally worried about public health conditions since the city possessed no real emergency powers, nor proper health structures. During the winter of 1885-86, the city was struck by a smallpox epidemic that took three thousand lives. The following year, Dr. Israël Desroches produced a highly critical pamphlet on the sanitary state of the city, opening with a crystal-clear statement: "Notre ville est malsaine, c'est incontestable; les chiffres de mortalité nous en donnent une preuve irréfutable." He then outlined what he believed to be the causes of this shameful state:

> Les causes de son insalubrité sont nombreuses; mentionnons les plus puissantes. L'état de malpropreté des cabinets d'aisance des classes pauvres, et le maintien du système de vidange par fosses fixes constituent des causes de danger permanents pour la santé publique. Notre ville possède une canalisation d'égouts qui méritent de nombreux reproches. Dans un grand nombre de rues, les égouts au lieu d'être des agents d'assainissement, sont des fosses immondes de forme allongée, constituant un danger éminent pour la santé comme le démontrent les odeurs[41] qui soulèvent le coeur près des bouches d'égouts. Nos plombiers, pour la plupart, ignorent les préceptes de l'hygiène et ne connaissent même pas l'importance de cette science [...] [42]

Others blamed the filthy streets. In 1897, there were only 26.5 miles of paved street

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[40] Denyse Baillargeon, "Fréquenter les gouttes de lait: L'expérience des mères montréalaises, 1910-1965", *RHAF*, Vol.50, no1, 1996, p.29-68. In another article, Baillargeon illustrates that this particular "child saving project" is a reflection of the discord which separated those who were concerned about the future of the nation and those with ambitions for their personal advancement. "Gouttes de lait et soif de pouvoir: Les dessous de la lutte contre la mortalité infantile à Montréal, 1910-1953", *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, Vol.15, no1, 1998, p.27-57.

[41] This comment validates Bliss' thesis that many associated bad odours with diseases.

[42] Dr. Israël Desroches, *Quelques Réflexions sur le Bureau de santé et sur l'assainissement de Montréal*. (Montréal, imprimerie W.F. Daniel: 1887), Canadian Pamphlets, p.6-8.

compared to one hundred fifty miles of unpaved street.[43] Durocher, Linteau and Robert specify that they were "poussièreuses par beau temps et boueuses par temps de pluie."[44] Waste collection was not always guaranteed as the service depended on how much money the Council had at its immediate disposal.[45] Each spring thaw unleashed the smell of rotten rubbish. The editor of the *Star* expressed the sentiment of the day: "Every hour of delay is an hour of danger to every man, woman and child who lives within breathing distances of our poison laden streets."[46]

Social and economic conditions had indeed changed tremendously since the incorporation of the city. New problems emerged and old ones were exacerbated. How did this translate onto the political front? Demographic growth forced the municipality to adapt and expand the services it offered. Outdated sewer systems had to be modernised, streets needed to be built and paved, tramway lines to be installed, telephone poles erected. The municipal officials were thus very busy awarding contracts. The era was marked by the emergence of monopolies that were making huge profits at the expense of citizens. Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles report that: "Montreal came to symbolize

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[43] Cléophas Lamothe, *Histoire de la Corporation de la Cité de Montréal depuis son origine à nos jours*, (Montreal, Montreal Printing and Publishing Company: 1903), p.179.

[44] Durocher, Linteau and Robert, p.217.

[45] For instance, in October 1898 Ames , Chair of the Health Committee, refused to allocate money for the garbage collection as he insisted that it was not part of the municipal budget. H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries, October 17 1898,* **Ames Papers, MS644, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, MCGill University Libraries.**

[46] "Practical Sanitation", *Montreal Star*, May 16, 1898.

monopoly."[47]

The great sums of money circulating at City Hall often excited the covetousness of certain elected representatives.[48] Corruption and bribes played a major role in decision-making. Indeed, Montreal was known for its less-than-incorruptible civic administration. Winnipeg and Toronto newspapers often focussed on the latest Montreal civic scandal.[49] In Montreal, the *Star* and the *Daily Herald* were vociferous in their attacks against the municipal corruption.[50] Jules Helbronner, reporter and later editor in chief of *La Presse,* frequently complained about the blatant corruption reigning at Montreal's City Hall. Journalists delighted in exposing any form of corruption. [51] Glancing through the newspapers of the era,

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[47] Christopher Armstong and H.V. Nelles, *Monopoly's Moment. The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1930*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press: 1986), p.100.

[48] H.B. Ames stressed this fact in one of his lectures on municipal government, *Abstract of a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal. Delivered in Connexion with the Young's Men Christian Association of Montreal*, (Kingston, Queen's University: 1896), p.6. John Weaver discusses how positions on certain committees were coveted "because of their frequent negotiations with private corporations connecting contracts and franchises, offered rewards for the unscrupulous." "Businessmen and Boosters: Elitism and the Corporate Ideal in Canadian Municipal Reform". *Cities in the West* eds: R. McCormick and I. Macpherson. (Ottawa: Museum of Man: 1975), p.49-50.

[49] Paul Rutherford argues that the Canadian penny press "were most formidable in denouncing municipal management, business exploitation or national corruption." "The People's Press: The Emergence of New Journalism in Canada, 1869-99", *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.56, no2, 1975, p.185.

[50] Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Refrom Movement in Canada, 1880-1920", *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers*, 1971, p.204. Michael Gauvin, "The Municipal Reform Movement in Montreal, 1886-1914", M.A. thesis (history), University of Ottawa, 1971, p.33.

[51] Canada followed the American movement. In the United States, President Theodore Roosevelt had nicknamed reformist journalists "Muckrakers".

one finds reports of men paying to get on the police force or for positions at City Hall, of boodling charges and of corrupt distribution of patronage.[52]

Furthermore, the municipal elections were often less than pure. The *Montreal Star* reported that in the election of 1893, for example, no less than 120 per cent of the population of Ste-Anne electoral district marked a ballot.[53] Electoral lists were loaded with errors thus facilitating the task of eventual "telegraphers"; worse, agents guilty of electoral fraud were rarely prosecuted. The names of minors and deceased were frequently found on electoral lists.[54] A certain Mr. Turner, dead since 1873, kept his right to vote until 1896![55] Paul-André Linteau comments that under Mayor Préfontaine's mandate (1898-1902):

> Les ressources de la municipalité sont alors utilisées massivement pour développer les infrastructures urbaines dans l'est de la ville, où habitent les francophones, ainsi que pour procurer des contrats lucratifs aux constructeurs et des emplois aux ouvriers-électeurs. La hausse des dépenses publiques s'accompagne d'une bonne dose de corruption.[56]

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[52] These titles give an idea of the phenomenon: "The Source of Corruption", *Montreal Star*, March 1892, "A Boodle Charge", *Montreal Star*, January 25, 1893, "25 ans de boodlage", *La Presse*, January 24, 1893. "More Scandalous Revelation- Stones that cost Eight Times the Price They Should", *Montreal Star*, June 19, 1893, "Paid to Get on the Police Force", *Montreal Star*, February 15,1896. "Les questions de patronage", *La Patrie*, March 28, 1896. Ant. Bissonnette, "Le traffic des positions à l'Hôtel de Ville", *La Patrie*, June 2, 1898. "Les pots de vin", *La Presse*, April 1900.

[53] *Montreal Star*, February 2, 1893.

[54] H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", *Canadian Magazine*, Vol.III, no2, January 1894, p.104-105.

[55] *Montreal Star*, January 8, 1896.

[56] Paul-André Linteau, "Rapports de pouvoir et émergence d'une nouvelle élite canadienne-française à Montréal, 1880-1914", *Études Canadiennes (France)*, Vol.12, 1986, p.164.

Ethnic issues were a constant fact of Montreal municipal politics. Although Francophones were already more numerous than Anglophones in the middle of the 1860's, they had to wait until 1882 to secure the majority of seats in the municipal Council.[57] From the 1870's on, there was always discussion as to how many Francophones were to be chairmen (women could not be candidates to civic honours). Did they have their "fair" share of patronage? Was it the turn for an Anglophone or Francophone mayor?

Ethnicity was only a part of Montreal's municipal politics. Misappropriation of funds, secret deals between aldermen and presidents of companies, municipal expenses unexplained, or more often unexplainable, were equally contentious, and more questionable practices. The situation culminated in the appointment of a Royal Commission on the (mal)Administration of the City of Montreal. In his Report of December 1909, Mr. Justice Cannon concluded: "The majority of the aldermen have administered the committees and Council in such a manner as to favour the private interests of the relatives and friends, to whom contracts and positions were distributed to the detriment of the general interests of the city and of the tax payers." He specified that "25% of the annual revenue of 5,000,000 had been spent in bribes and malversation of all kinds"[58] The public got the impression that Montreal was corrupt to the core.

Montreal could not escape its reputation. Corruption at all levels of the municipal government threatened the well-being of society. Something had to be done. For many social

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[57] Paul-André Linteau, "Le personnel politique de Montréal 1880-1914: évolution d'une élite municipale", *RHAF*, Vol.52, no2, 1998, p.195

[58] Quoted in Jenkins, p.434.

reformers, a corrupt municipal administration translated into deplorable living conditions for the masses. It was no coincidence that when Jules Helbronner started writing his labour column, he was also covering City Hall. He and H.B. Ames, the rich philanthropic entrepreneur, were probably the most outspoken in their fight against corrupt municipal administration; or at least, the public associated them most with the cause. W.D. Lighthall, as Mayor of Westmount, but particularly as founder of the Union of Municipalities and Honorary Secretary, also stood out as a champion of honest and efficient government. Although Helbronner, unlike Ames and Lighthall, did not seek municipal office, he chose municipal politics as the stage for his mission.

Helbronner, Ames and Lighthall were unequivocally identified by their fellow citizens of Montreal as genuine urban social reformers. Their concerns ranged from living and working conditions, public health, child welfare, social justice to pure government. They all engaged in legal battles. Interested in social order and justice, they proposed various reform strategies and worked to have them implemented. Clearly, the success of their efforts in arousing public awareness to the issues they addressed made these three urban social reformers recognized agents of social change in their day. Their ideas, their methods of implementing those ideas, and their success will be analysed in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER 2

The Shaper of Labour Class Consciousness in Montreal: Jules Helbronner, A Committed Intellectual

> Mr. Helbronner was born a labor reformer, and was always found on the side of the working classes when their cause was reasonable and just. William Keys, *Capital and Labor.*

On November 26, 1921, Montreal newspapers reported the death of Jules Helbronner, one of Canada's oldest journalists.[1] Practically every obituary highlighted the same great accomplishments he achieved in his life. He had served in the French Army during the Franco-Prussian War and had been decorated with the *Légion d'Honneur*. Appointed commissioner to the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in 1886, he was chosen three years later to serve as Canadian delegate to the social economy section at the Paris Universal Exposition. For many years he was a deputy of the *Société des auteurs français*. He founded the *Union Nationale Française,*[2] later became its Honorary President, and enjoyed a long and

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[1] "Feu Jules Helbronner", *La Patrie*, November 26, 1921.

[2] Association regrouping men of French origins promoting greater commercial ties between Canada and France.

distinguished career in journalism.[3]

If a funeral procession is an indication of the impact a man has had on his times, Helbronner's contribution to Montreal society was surely a considerable one. Among the approximately seventy-five men identified as part of the cortege[4] were the French Consul in Canada, the Presidents of the *Union Nationale Française* and the *Chambre de commerce française de Montréal*, Edouard Montpetit, the Honorable E. Lemieux, Eugène and L.J. Tarte (Israël Tarte's sons), Doctors W.A Huguenin and de Martigny, Charlemagne Rodier (son of labour advocate J.A. Rodier), and numerous others who belonged to Montreal's intellectual elite.

Born into a "respectable Paris family,"[5] Helbronner immigrated to Canada in 1874 at the age of thirty. He first tried his luck in business but soon embraced journalism. He started his journalistic life as one of the editors of the weekly *Le Journal d'Arthabasca*. He joined the staff of *Le Moniteur du Commerce* in 1882, and then finally settled into a long career as editor of *La Presse* in 1884. After twenty-five years at Montreal's leading newspaper, Helbronner suddenly left *La Presse* in November 1908 to the surprise of many.[6] After a brief

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[3] M. J. Helbronner meurt à Ottawa agé de 77 ans", "Mort de M. Jules Helbronner", "Un Doyen du journalisme est mort" and "Feu Jules Helbronner" respectively in *La Presse*, *Le Devoir* and *La Patrie*, November 26, 1921. "Jules Helbronner Dead", *Montreal Gazette*, November 26, 1921. Both the *Star* and the *Herald* did not mention Helbronner's death.

[4] "Les obsèques de M. Jules Helbronner", *La Presse*, November 29, 1921.

[5] *La Presse*, October 5, 1886.

[6] It is not clear if he resigned or if he was fired. In *Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit, Les Travailleurs Montréalais à la fin du XIXe siècle*, Jean De Bonville writes that he was fired because of his vociferous denunciation of civic corruption that displeased his new employer. (Montreal: L'aurora, 1975), p.16. De Bonville's credibility is tarnished by the fact that he dates

sojourn at Olivar Asselin's *Le Nationalist*, he joined the editorial staff of *La Patrie* where he remained until he moved to Ottawa. Over the years, Helbronner was also affiliated with, or contributed articles to, *Le Prix Courant* (1887), *Le Soir* (1896), *Les Débats* (1900-1904), the *Gazette du Canada* (1918) and *La Revue Moderne* (1919-1921).

From October 20, 1884 to September 1, 1894, Jules Helbronner wrote an impressive three hundred and twenty three labour columns in *La Presse,*[7] some under his own name, but most frequently under the pseudonym of Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit.[8] When this French daily newspaper began its first run in October of 1884, its editorial policy paid lip service to the moderate Tory ideology of the former Premier of Quebec, Adolphe Chapleau.[9] Soon, however, the newspaper became devoted primarily to news and stories holding more popular appeal. Helbronner's column is said to have played a prominent role in the paper's rapid circulation growth.[10] These articles, along with the well known 1889 *Report of the Royal*

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the event in 1909. David Rome does not shed any new light on this issue as he uses "rudely dismissed" in one paragraph and "resignation" in the next one. *On Jules Helbronner*, (Montreal, Canadian Jewish Archives:1978), p.37. Despite the confusion about Helbronner's departure from *La Presse*, it is clear that once he left the daily, the coverage of municipal affairs became much less critical.

[7] It is interesting to note that he recycled some of his columns, often quoting whole passages on a certain topic, or simply reproducing earlier columns without mentioning that they had been published years before. He also borrowed heavily from his official reports without acknowledging the sources.

[8] David Rome notes that the name is "a concentrate of French Canadian populism, labor, folklore and poverty" p.3, I would add of "religion" too.

[9] Pierre Godin, *L'information-opium. Une histoire politique de* ***La Presse***, (Montreal, éditions Parti Pris: 1973), p.27.

[10] William Keys, *Capital and Labor. Containing the Views of Eminent Men of the United States and Canada on The Labor Question, Social Reform and Other Economic*

Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada,[11] which included five appendices signed by Helbronner,[12] and the exhaustive *Report on the Social Economy Section of the Universal International Exposition of 1889 at Paris*[13] make up an important part of Helbronner's discourse. Various other articles and editorials complete the already impressive corpus.[14]

Fernand Harvey (while admitting that Helbronner's social thinking demands a deeper analysis) enshrines Helbronner as "un défenseur sincère de la classe ouvrière de l'époque," and concludes: "sa philosophie sociale, elle se fonde sur l'équilibre des forces plutôt que sur le

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Subjects. Illustrated (Montreal, Dominion Assembly Knights of Labor: 1904), p.166.

[11] James Armstrong and A.T. Freed, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada* (Ottawa, Queen's Printer: 1889). Also used in this chapter is Greg Kealey, *Canada Investigates Industrialism. The Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital, 1889*, (Toronto, UTP:1973).

[12] Jules Helbronner, "Appendix C. Savings of the Working Classes and their Investment", p.20-34. "Appendix H. Unjust Laws", p.51-56. "Appendix I. Strikes and Arbitration", p.57-60. "Appendix L. Payment and Non-Payment of Wages", p.63-64. Appendix O. Sweating Process", p.72-75. In James Armstrong and A.T. Freed.

[13] Jules Helbronner, *Report on the Social Economy Section of the Universal International Exposition of 1889 at Paris.* And *Rapport sur la Section d'Économie Sociale de L'Exposition Universelle internationale de 1889, à Paris*, (Ottawa, Brown Chamberlin Printer to the Queen most Excellent Majesty: 1890). It was necessary to analyse both simultaneously as it was discovered that the English translation did not always render the French version accurately.

[14] Although *La Presse* editorials were not signed, many can be attributed to him not only because of the topic, the style and the ideas discussed, but also because some contain integral part of his other signed work. It is safe to assume also that if they were not directly from him, as editor in chief he abided by them. Although we know that Helbronner contributed articles to *Les Débats* under the name of Julien Verronneau, other men also did thus making it nearly impossible to identify which Verronneaus are his.

conflit et la lutte des classes."[15] It seems, however, that only through a thorough analysis of Helbronner's discourse and social involvement can such a definitive conclusion about his philosophy be made. A dissection of his writings paired with an analysis of his social action reveal that his concerns place him in the mainstream of late-nineteenth-century social reform with regard to the social conditions addressed, but set him apart as more of a champion of the working class of Montreal than other middle-class reformers. Helbronner was indeed deeply concerned with the plight of the working class. He raised his voice against the harsh working and living conditions experienced by the majority of Montreal's population. He also attacked the municipal administration and the justice system in their inept handling of, or lack of concern for, issues associated with the working class. The vigour with which Helbronner attacked the civic administration was commensurate with the degree of corruption he perceived occurring at City Hall, corruption that Helbronner attributed directly to the ills of the city. He also discussed public health and temperance issues. Finally, he thought that not only were civic laws outdated,[16] but worse, a double-standard justice system existed that favoured the rich over the poor.

The solutions he championed can be classified into six categories: "Association", "Suffrage", "School/Education", "Conciliation", "Consultation/Representation" and "Promotion of Canadian Industries." At first sight these solutions situate him within

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[15] Fernand Harvey, *Révolution industrielle et travailleurs. Une enquête sur les rapports entre le capital et le travail au Québec à la fin du 19e siècle* (Montreal, Boréal Express: 1978), p.54-55.

[16] "Devenu grande ville, Montréal est encore régi par des lois ne convenant qu'à l'administration de villages." Editorial, "L'égalité des charges", *La Presse*, August18, 1906.

mainstream social reform movements. He did not condemn capitalism, nor advocate a radical change of the social order. Always informed, most of the time rational, sometimes original, he never posed as a revolutionary. Taken as a whole, however, the reform strategies he proposed distinguished him from other men of his time. His attitude towards the less fortunate was distinctively different from that of his peers. His words rarely took a patronizing turn.[17] Though he belonged to the privileged class, he was not a mere philanthropist content to alleviate the plight of some. Nor did he seek quick fixes. He was very aware of the complexity of the problems. He mainly strove to develop a working-class consciousness. He wanted to reduce, even eliminate, workers' dependency. The reform strategies he proposed reveal a tremendous faith in the workers' potential and in their intelligence. Throughout his life, he actively campaigned for, and succeeded in improving, the moral and physical conditions of Montreal's citizens. Jules Helbronner, the thinker and the man of action, definitively left his mark on his times.

Workers as victims

Helbronner exposed the deplorable living and working conditions of wage-earners. Most lived in poverty, barely providing for their families, and forced to live in desperate

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[17] Interestingly, Helbronner portrayed himself in his Labour Column as a worker. He used formulas such as "mais nous les travailleurs qui souffrons de cet état des choses" JBG, "La lutte", *La Presse*, January 16, 1886. He readily sympathised with their predicament, probably because it was once his own. He shared: "Comme des milliers et des milliers de salariés, j'ai passé par toutes les phases que je viens de décrire et j'en parle en connaissance de cause, je connais pour les avoir éprouvé tous les malheurs qui peuvent frapper l'ouvrier qui doit et à qui on doit et qui se voit ruiné, dépouillé, persécuté au nom de la loi."JBG, "Dettes et créances", *La Presse*, October 24, 1884.

hovels.[18] Work-related questions were at the forefront of his thought.[19] He dealt with child labour, women's work, the sweating system, prison work, "truck practices" (wages paid in company scripts), and such specific topics as hazardous work environments, length of the work day, low wages and limited benefits.

Deeply influenced by the development of the social sciences, he constantly expanded his knowledge on social economy and referred many times to the French father of sociology Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882).[20] In 1829, Le Play was already studying the conditions of the labouring classes in Europe.[21] The work of the "social scientist" stimulated French-Canadian intellectuals from 1855 on. They introduced the social sciences to Quebec but their achievement was a slow process.[22] In 1888, the historian Rameau de Saint-Père and two other Quebec residents founded *La Société canadienne d'économie sociale de Montréal.* The *Société* was moderately successful in popularizing the thought of Le Play.[23] Although it is not

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[18]For a picture of Montreal living conditions consult H.B. Ames, *A City Below the Hill: A Sociological Essay of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada* (Montreal,1897). Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart: 1974).

[19] He addressed these issues 124 times alone in his *La Presse* labour column.

[20] Jules Helbronner, *Report on the Social Economy Section*, p.xxii, JBG, "L'enfant-ouvrier", *La Presse*, April 6, 1906.

[21] Bernard Kalaora & Antoine Savoye, *Les inventeurs oubliés: Le Play et ses continuateurs aux origines des science sociales*, (Seyssel, France, Champ Vallon: 1989), p.93.

[22] Pierre Trépanier, "Les influences Leplaysiennes au Canada français, 1855-1888", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.22, no1, p.66-83.

[23] Pierre Trépanier, "La Société canadienne d'économie sociale de Montréal (1888-1911): ses membres, ses critiques et sa survie", *Social History*, Vol.19, no38, 1986, p.299-322.

known if Helbronner was a member of the society, nevertheless he was well connected to Europe, and was clearly an admirer of Le Play's work. Helbronner acquired an excellent grasp of working-class issues which he displayed in his ongoing battles. When crusading for early Saturday closing, for example, he argued that it was only when workers received their pay on Friday rather than on Saturday, that their wives could go without Saturday shopping.[24] He campaigned for weekly and bi-weekly pay, as an alternative to monthly pay, using the same logical reasoning.[25] Helbronner explained that the modest wages labourers earned prevented them from economizing. Since they were paid only once a month, they had to borrow to feed and clothe their family which meant that they always had to pay considerably more for life's necessities. In this, as in many other issues, Helbronner was acutely aware of the many subtleties of the labourers' life.

His fight against child labour also demonstrated his clear understanding of the workers' situation. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, children joined the work force in large numbers as the mechanization of industries eliminated the need for as many skilled adult labourers.[26] The extremely long work days that children spent in poorly ventilated and dirty factories greatly concerned factory inspectors and social reformists.[27] Helbronner was one of

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[24]JBG, "La fermeture du samedi", *La Presse*, June 27, 1885.

[25]JBG, "Les longues paies", *La Presse*, August 13, 1887. Jules Helbronner in *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.17-18 and "Appendix L", p.63-64.

[26]Bryan D. Palmer, *Working -Class Experience. The Rise and Reconstruction of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980*, (Toronto, Butterworth & Co: 1893), p.82-84

[27] Terry Copp, p.50-51. Michael Piva, *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto- 1900-1921*, (Ottawa, UOP: 1979), p.105

these social reformers.[28] Child labour must disappear, he argued, because it not only drove down workers' wages, but also deformed the child physically and morally and denied him or her an education.[29] While he was unequivocal in his objections to the practice of hiring children,[30] he also realised that the question was not clear cut: he understood, for example, that in some cases a family's survival depended on the wages, meagre as they were, that these children could bring home.[31] So the elimination of child labour had to go hand in hand with increased wages for working-class men. As late as 1907, he declared that even though laws had been passed, inspections enforced, and hygienic and moral conditions of child labour improved, the position of the working child had not changed much in the past twenty years. Children were still being exploited.[32]

Helbronner also frowned on women working outside the home.[33] Women in the labour force brought down men's wages;[34] worse, he wrote, working women were a great source of

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[28]JBG, "L'enfant-ouvrier", *La Presse*, December 13, 1884, recycled on April 23, 1887. Jules Helbronner, *Report of the Social Economy Section*, p.xx., *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.13.

[29]JBG, "L'enfant-ouvrier", *La Presse*, December 13, 1884. Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.13.

[30]JBG, "Le travail des enfants", *La Presse*, February 21, 1885.

[31] JBG, "L'école manuelle", *La Presse*, December 27 1884. Editorial, "Le travail des enfants" *La Presse*, August 25, 1906.

[32] "L'enfant-ouvrier", *La Presse*, April 6, 1907.

[33] JBG, "Le travail des femmes", *La Presse*, August 8, 1891.

[34] Jules Helbronner, *Report of the Social Economy Section*, p.xxiii. Editorial, "Le travail des femmes", *La Presse*, May 27, 1907.

demoralisation.[35] Like many other men and women of the Victorian age, Helbronner believed that a woman's place was in the home. Although he disapproved of female wage-earners, especially of mothers who had to leave children behind, he realised that in certain cases, it was a necessary evil. He proposed as a temporary solution the creation of daycare centres.[36] His positions on child labour and women in the work force is not surprising when one considers that he constantly denounced the victimization of workers, and there were no greater victims of ruthless employers, he believed, than young children and poor women.

In regards to workers' complaints,[37] Helbronner denounced unfair practices such as the fine system implemented in many factories. He mentioned the example of children less than ten years of age working ten hours a day, six days a week and earning a mere $1.25 or $1.50 in total, only to find out on pay day that they owed the foreman 50 or 75 cents because of the fines that had been assessed against them through the week for having caused a slow down or produced less than perfect articles.[38] The very stringent tone of his discourse indicates how repulsive he found the practice: "Il y a encore le système de l'amende, système honteux, procédé de voleur et qui pourtant a été légitimisé par une certaine cour de justice à Montréal."[39]

The "truck" way was another form of slavery in his estimation. He strenuously

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[35]JBG, "Le rôle des sociétés ouvrières", *La Presse*, May 1, 1886.

[36]JBG, "Forces perdues", *La Presse*, October 22, 1892.

[37]Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.14, *Report of the Social Economy Section*, p.xv-xvi.

[38]JBG, "Le mauvais contre-maître", *La Presse*, August 20, 1887.

[39] Ibid.

condemned the demands made on workers under this system: when paid in company's scripts, they had to buy their life necessities in the company's stores which charged hefty prices.[40] They were also forced to live in barracks built by the company and could expect few services. With the same zeal that he accused companies of enslaving workers, he opposed the seemingly pro-labour law which forced the municipal administration to employ only city residents. An alderman had argued that employees paid with public money should spend their earnings in the city and pay city taxes. Gagnepetit retorted that if the city accepted this principle it would resemble the company which compelled its employees to live in company housing and spend their wages in the company store.[41]

What his concerns with child labour, women in the labour force, the "truck" system and conditions of work illustrate is that in addition to revealing his mastery of working class issues, Helbronner was opposed to practices that victimized labourers and further increased their dependence on the capitalists. In fact, be it work, city hall, life or legal questions, Helbronner was ultimately fighting against the institutionalization of workers' dependency.

City Hall issues also greatly preoccupied him. He established a direct link between the mismanaged municipal administration and the deplorable working and living conditions of the bulk of the population.[42] Transforming himself into an able accountant or a meticulous lawyer and armed with budget sheets and charter articles, he unremittingly attacked the municipal corporation. He frequently complained about the blatant corruption reigning in Montreal's

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[40]JBG, "Un Exemple", *La Presse*, July 31, 1887.

[41]JBG, "Mauvais patrons", *La Presse*, June 6, 1891.

[42]JBG, "Les élections municipales", *La Presse*, February 6, 1886.

City Hall. In 1909, when questioned by the Cannon Commission investigating Montreal's municipal government, he maintained that municipal corruption was already ubiquitous in 1884.[43]

The *Corvée*, a remnant of the old seigneurial system, became his first target. Originally an obligation to perform feudal service, it was amended at the beginning of the nineteenth century to allow those who so desired to pay a dollar in lieu of a day of community labour. The one dollar tax, Helbronner argued, became over the years a way to disfranchise tenants who did not pay the sum[44] since in order to be able to vote in municipal elections, electors had first to pay all their taxes.[45] Upon dissecting the Montreal charter, Helbronner discovered that every one who lived in a house -be they tenants or owners- had to pay the *corvée*, yet the non payment of the tax had been used to disfranchise tenants only. The practice effectively silenced a specific part of Montreal electorate -the working class- leaving them at the mercy of a self-interested clique.

At first, workers did not show much interest in the *corvée* campaign when he raised it in his column. Gagnepetit grumbled that ironically those most adversely affected by the tax remained apathetic.[46] The reaction was extremely disheartening as he believed that a better quality of life for the less fortunate started with an awareness of the need for honest and well

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[43]Commission royale sur l'administration de Montréal, *Enquête Cannon, Administration 1909. Procès verbaux. Vol.IX.* 1909, **P39, Ville de Montréal, Gestion de documents et archives.**

[44]JBG, "La journée de corvée", *La Presse*, January 31, 1885.

[45]JBG, "La journée de corvée", *La Presse*, February 7, 1885.

[46] JBG, "Un sens nouveau", *Le Presse*, June 20, 1885.

managed municipal government and exercising their right to vote. Drawing from European experience, he noted that it was by affirming their rights firmly, wisely and reasonably that English workers became a force at elections after not having had the vote for the previous twenty-five years.[47] The extension of the suffrage to all Montreal labourers would liberate them too, he believed. Many labour organisations finally joined Gagnepetit's *corvée* crusade and amassed the necessary funds to sue the corporation. After revealing the unabashed dishonesty of municipal lawyers, workers' associations won the battle. The *corvée* was abolished in 1886. The journalist had won his case, and made a direct impact on social reform.

Helbronner then launched a war against the water tax on the same grounds: that those who did not pay their water tax were being penalized by being denied the right to vote. There was more, however, than a suffrage issue behind the water tax; clearly, he could not accept the principle of the tax itself:

> Baser le prix d'un objet de consommation de première nécessité sur la valeur des immeubles; demander aux locataires, pour de l'eau, sous les peines les plus sévères, un prix suivant la hausse de la valeur foncière est un procédé économique dont Montréal, heureusement pour les autres villes, a le monopole absolu.[48]

Property and water taxes affected every tenant in an adverse way; to increase any of them was, according to the journalist, adding further weight to the already too heavy fiscal burden of the wage earners.[49] Worse, the city usually cut off the water supply to the homes of those who could not pay. This uncivil measure prompted Helbronner to step up his investigation. In the

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[47]JBG, "La journée de corvée", *La Presse*, January 31, 1885.

[48]Editorial, "La taxe de l'eau", *La Presse*, September 9, 1907.

[49] Editorial, "L'égalité des charges", *La Presse*, August18, 1906.

process he discovered "innovative accounting", especially in the aqueduct budget.[50] He also found out that water rates were randomly set, that city evaluators did not follow any particular formula nor criteria in establishing how much one owed.[51] Helbronner generated enough interest for the Montreal Central Trades Council (*MCTC*) to ask for an official investigation. Unfortunately, the Finance committee promptly turned down the request. This did not detour Gagnepetit, however; on the contrary, the Committee's total disregard of the rights and welfare of the citizens simply fuelled his opposition. Over the ten years his column was published, he dealt with the issue no less than fifty-one times, an amazing twenty-two times in 1891 alone.

Perhaps what the two campaigns against outdated and unfair taxes really convey is Helbronner's unrelenting faith in democracy. Both taxes were use to disenfranchise part of the electorate, particularly the less fortunate, and this he could simply not accept. When boasting that the 10 000 electors who were able to cast their vote since the *corvée* has been abolished would put an end to the corruption that reigned in the municipal government,[52] he expressed his confidence in the democratic system and in the intelligence of the masses. The once disenfranchised workers, he believed, would naturally used their votes to elect honest men to civic positions.

Helbronner was convinced that Montreal would be a much better place once workers

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[50] He wrote: "Au lieu d'emprunter pour réparer leurs machines et avoir la simplicité coupable de considérer ces réparations comme un avoir, ils auraient non seulement pris les coûts de ces travaux sur les recettes annuelles, mais ils auraient encore déduit tous les ans un certain pourcentage du prix coûtant pour la dépréciation et l'usure du matériel." JBG, "Notre enquête sur l'eau", *La Presse*, February 5, 1887.

[51] JGB, "La taxe de l'eau en 1886", *La Presse*, August 28, 1886.

[52] JBG, "Les électeurs municipaux", *La Presse*, November 20, 1886.

could exercise their political rights. Unfortunately, as he pointed out, a few unscrupulous men were intentionally keeping electoral rights from workers. These men, he thought, represented the real threat to capitalism:

> Ce qui est effrayant, au contraire, pour la tranquillité publique, pour la sécurité du capital c'est l'aveuglement de certains parvenus, qui montés sur leurs sacs d'argent plus ou moins purs, nient à tous ceux qui ne font pas partie de l'aristocratie d'argent, tout droit civique ou politique. Ce sont ces esprits étroits qui de tous temps ont amené et précipité les cataclysmes politiques qui ont ensanglanté le monde, et ce sont eux qui aujourd'hui favorisent le développement des socialistes et des anarchistes au détriment de l'accroissement du travail honnête, honnêtement organisé, honnêtement conduit et poursuivant un but honnête.[53]

While he criticized capitalism for allowing petty people to exercise power, he also denounced socialism and anarchism for disturbing the social order. What concerned him most of all was not political ideology but good government at City Hall. It concerned him that a few men motivated by the scent of filthy money, or aldermen engaged in favouritism, had made a mockery of good government. These men had first to be removed from office before a constructive dialogue between citizens and government could be established. Why, for example, did such civic officials relentlessly collect the few paltry dollars owed by poor tenants for their water, yet generously give extensions to the rich citizens? He complained: "Il est vrai qu'elle [the municipal corporation] n'est dure qu'aux petits, et que si elle supprime l'eau au malheureux qui doit $2.50, elle donne généreusement à crédit aux riches clients et les laisse s'endetter jusqu'à des milliers de piastres sans leur couper ni crédit, ni eau."[54]

Helbronner maintained that Montreal was as bad as New York, a city known for its

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[53]JBG, "Listes électorales", *La Presse*, March 13, 1886.

[54]JBG, "La taxe de l'eau", *La Presse*, October 3, 1891.

corrupt municipal administration where unscrupulous men got themselves elected to municipal office only to fill their pockets with gold.[55] Montreal aldermen, he argued, evidently did not have the interests of the city nor of its citizen at heart.[56] By referring to New York, Helbronner indicated that he was not only influenced by what was happening in Europe but that he was equally aware of the conditions south of the border. Concerns about municipal administrations and malpractices were as much an American phenomena as an European or Canadian one.

While corrupt municipal administration was one of his favourite targets, Helbronner was probably fiercest in his attacks against the injustices that resulted from the seizure law (Seizure laws were applied when a debtor could no longer pay his debt to his creditor. The creditor was then allowed to "seize" furniture or even part of the debtor "unearned wages"),[57] or any other laws directed towards Labour. He believed they victimized workers. He found it his "duty" to redress these injustices.[58] Thirty five of his labour columns exposed the unfair seizure laws and twenty-seven criticized work-related bills that offered no protection to workers. Helbronner argued that municipal, provincial and federal lawyers displayed no understanding of working-class issues. Lawyers never took into account that only the rich

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[55]JBG, "Une victime", *La Presse*, January 9, 1886.

[56]JBG, "Les dessous de la corvée", *La Presse*, February 20, 1886.

[57] M.M. James Kirby and Pierre Basile Mignault, "Procédure-Saisie" in *Table générale des rapports judiciaires de Québec. General Index 1892-1898* (Montreal, Gazette Printing Company: 1900), p. 560-571.

[58] Jules Helbronner, "Appendix H" in James Armstrong and A.T. Freed, p.51.

could afford justice.[59] Worse than being unfamiliar with working class conditions, he charged, lawyers chose to ignore the view point of the labouring class. He wryly noted that labour representatives were not consulted when legislators drafted the 1885 factory bill:

> Lorsque nos législateurs touchent à un sujet quelconque intéressant les avocats, les médecins, les notaires, les propriétaires, les commerçants, les banques, etc, ils ont soin de consulter, ne serait-ce que pour la forme, les institutions ou les sociétés représentant les intérêts de ces différentes parties de notre société. Lorsqu'ils touchent à la question ouvrière, lorsqu'ils se mêlent de faire une loi sur le travail, ils se croient assez intelligents pour négliger tout conseil et ils bâclent une loi qui est complètement dépourvue de bon sens et qui nous reporte par ses rigueurs au temps où le travailleur n'était que fort peu au-dessus de l'esclave.[60]

In his more cynical moments, he also implied that most lawyers adhered to a double-standard system of justice. Expressing his repulsion towards this attitude, he wrote: "Il y a dans cet abandon du faible une injustice d'autant plus criante qu'il paie comme tout autre sa quote-part du salaire de ceux qui ont mission de le protéger."[61] Many times he illustrated how the Masters and Servants Act (Act establishing the terms of an apprenticeship)[62] as well as seizure laws, were utterly unfair. Eloquently, yet simply, he expressed his frustrations with the law:

> Je me refuse à comprendre pourquoi le négociant, qui doit des milliers de piastres, peut se débarrasser de ce fardeau qui l'écrase alors que l'ouvrier est, pour quelques piastres, traqué comme un malfaiteur, condamné à la misère perpétuelle et forcé de

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[59]JBG, "Dettes et créances", *La Presse*, October 24, 1884. Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.18

[60] JBG, "Acte pour protéger les industriels qui compromettent la vie et la santé des personnes employées dans les manufactures", *La Presse*, June 6, 1885.

[61]JBG, "Les prêts sur gages", *La Presse*, January 10, 1885.

[62] Jules Helbronner, "Appendix H" in James Armstrong and A.T. Freed, p.54.

quitter son pays pour vivre en paix de son salaire.[63]

For him, too many laws simply relegated labourers to the status of second-class citizens. When discussing the Quebec factory law, for example, he protested against the language that profited industries and harmed workers. Why allow a "reasonable delay" to deal with hazardous machinery as it was worded in the bill, he asked, when the health of workers was at risk? Manufacturers should be forced to deal with a dangerous machinery right away.[64] The employer should be responsible for assuring the security of all his employees, he thought, and he insisted that in case of a worker's death, "the compensation should be recoverable even in cases where negligence on the part of the employer or his agents, or defects in machinery, has not caused the accident."[65] For him, employers had the "absolute" responsibility for the safety of their employees.[66] Helbronner asked for more sensible laws and for a justice system that did not condemn the labourer simply because of his financial status.[67] He believed that justice should be justice: it should absolve or condemn the poor and the rich with the same impartiality;[68] moreover, it should not institutionalize dependency, while at the same time, it should recognize responsibility.

In comparison to the concerns already discussed, the last two issues he dealt with seem

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[63] JBG, "La faillite de l'ouvrier", *La Presse*, March 14, 1885.

[64] JBG, "Acte pour protéger les industriels qui compromettent la vie et la santé des personnes employées dans les manufactures", *La Presse*, June 6, 1885.

[65] Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.17.

[66] Editorial, "Les victimes du travail et du devoir", *La Presse*, April 19, 1907.

[67] JBG, "Le Parti National", *La Presse*, November 21, 1885.

[68] JBG, "La faillite de l'ouvrier", *La Presse*, March 14, 1885.

fairly irrelevant. Throughout the ten years that his labour column ran, public health was addressed only twelve times and sobriety nine. The Report of the Royal Commission made no specific mention of health and the paragraph on "drinking habits" was one of the last ones mentioned. The few times that these subjects were mentioned leave one with the impression that they were not significant matters. It is true that Montreal set up organised public health services in 1876. The services as well as a number of other factors such as medical discoveries accounted for the decline in death rates between 1877 and 1884.[69] Despite the decreasing death rate, when Helbronner started his labour column in 1884, the sanitary conditions in the city were still less than healthy. In 1886, Montreal still had 10,666 privy pits or outdoor toilets. From his own account, most of Montreal's small houses were poorly constructed and crammed against each other; even worse, they had virtually no ventilation, improper drainage, and were difficult to heat.[70]

Following the Royal Commission on the Relations between Capital and Labor, Helbronner did recommend that the law should forbid landlords from renting houses in poor sanitary conditions. He called for frequent inspections by "competent authority" so that alterations or repairs be executed when necessary to health.[71] Still, he later maintained that Montreal's hygienic state was not as deplorable as that of American or European cities.[72] This

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[69]Terry Copp, p.88-89.

[70]JBG, "Les logements des ouvriers", *La Presse*, August 27, 1887.

[71] Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.10

[72] JBG, "Montréal-Centre" and "La question ouvrière aux États-Unis", *La Presse*, February 13 and August 6, 1892.

relatively favourable view partly explains why he did not address Montreal's poor hygienic state as stringently as other issues.

Although temperance issues preoccupied many social reformers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth,[73] they did not excite Helbronner's imagination. It took him more than two years to dedicate a whole column to the issue.[74] He simply did not believe that prohibition was, strictly speaking, a working-class question.[75] He differed from the official voice of the Catholic clergy who advocated temperance in a circular letter because: "Avec la tempérance le paupérisme n'existerait plus qu'à l'état de souvenir, l'épargne deviendrait à l'honneur, la vieillesse aurait un abri, des vêtements et du pain. Le chômage serait inconnu. Il n'y aurait plus guère de grèves."[76] The letter distinctly indicates that for the clergy, slums, unemployment and poverty were the effects of alcoholism, rather than their causes,[77] whereas for Helbronner the opposite was the case. Seen in the light of his continuous fight against the victimization of workers, one realises that public health and

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[73] "The New War against Intemperance", *The Gazette*, June 28 1901, A. Létourneau, *L'alcoolisme et l'école*, (Montreal, Imprimerie Lemieux: 1908), J. Camille Pouliot, *L'Alcoolisme. Voilà l'ennemi!*, (Quebec, La Cie de Publication "Le Soleil": 1908), R.F. Hugolin, *If Woman Knew! If Woman Cared! Woman against Intemperance*, (Montreal: 1909), La Ligue antialcoolique de Montréal, *Contre l'alcoolisme*, (Montreal, Imprimerie du Messager: 1913).

[74] JBG, "L'ennemi", *La Presse*, May 14, 1887.

[75] JBG, "La prohibition" *La Presse*, June 27, 1891.

[76] Mgr Paul Bruchési, "Lettre pastorale. 20 décembre 1905", *Semaine Religieuse de Montréal*, December 26, 1905, p.403-404.

[77] Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois *** Le Xxe siècle* (Nive Voisine ed), Montreal, Boréal Express: 1984), p.199.

temperance did not affect workers' dignity to the same extent as other issues that concerned him.

It is interesting to note that the few times Helbronner did tackle the issue of temperance in his labour column, it was done to bolster arguments for his other battles. For instance, he suggested that early closing of stores would help reduce intemperance asserting: "Le public a senti que ces heures de travail absurdes et inutiles étaient en partie responsables des progrès que l'intempérance fait parmi nous."[78] As well, he used the sobriety argument to promote education stating that workers go to taverns and saloons because they have nothing better to do; society does not offer to them an alternative.[79]

When analysing what Helbronner perceived as the daily problems faced by labourers, one cannot help to note that the concerns he addressed were ones that he believed reduced the independence of workers by making them victims of individuals who could wield power over them. He believed workers were victims of unscrupulous employers, corrupted municipal administrations and unfair institutions. What needed to be ardently fought against were working conditions that reduced men to slaves, a civic administration that only considered the interests of a select few, and a legal system that always favoured the rich. Helbronner heartily denounced social structures and institutions that increased workers' dependency. An analysis of the solution he put forth opens another window into Helbronner's mind: if he saw workers as victims, he believed that they were not and should not be defenceless.

Aide toi et le ciel t'aidera

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[78]JBG, "Fermeture des magasins", *La Presse*, July 18, 1885.

[79]JBG, "L'apprentissage", *La Presse*, December 6, 1884.

To alleviate labourers' woes, Helbronner, above all else, advocated some kind of working-class association. Social reforms could only be achieved once workers united. For example, in describing the abuses of the sweating system, Helbronner argued that: "It was only when these men were no longer united, and consequently powerless, that these exactions were imposed."[80] He specified, though, that remedies could only be secured with the help of both employees and employers. He strongly recommended conciliation and championed consultation and representation. "Accord of capital and labor was no Utopian scheme nor an impossibility,"[81] he declared. No one, he thought, knew better than workers themselves what they needed. In the same spirit, he ardently fought for the enfranchisement of the lower classes and he urged workers to take night courses. Finally he thought that promoting Canadian industries would improve workers' opportunities. Apart from his tremendous faith in workers' potential, his other "solutions" owned a lot to Le Play's own conception of society which included, as Bernard Kalaora and Antoine Savoye put it:

> (1) permanence des engagements réciproques du patron et de l'ouvrier, (2) entente complète touchant la fixation du salaire, (3) alliance des travaux de l'atelier et des industries domestiques, rurales et manufacturières, (4) habitudes d'épargne assurant la dignité de la famille et l'établissement de ses rejetons, (5)l'union indissoluble entre la famille et son foyer, (6) respect et protection accordés à la femme.[82]

Helbronner's message was crystal clear: workers had to unite and organise to fight the abuses of capitalism. The main thrust of his argument was not novel. The Knights of Labor had formed in 1869 for the same reasons, and Samuel Gompers founded the American

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[80] Jules Helbronner, "Appendice O",in James Armstrong and A.T. Freed, p.72.

[81] Jules Helbronner, *Report of the Social Economy Section*, p.vii.

[82] Bernard Kalaora, p.110

Federation of Labor in 1886 on the same grounds: workers had to learn the benefits of consolidation. Helbronner himself joined the Ville Marie Assembly of the Knights of Labor in 1885 and was a member of the Central Trades and Labor Council at its inception. Unions were necessary, he believed, to enable workers to deal on equal terms with their employers.[83] He urged workers to get organised, stressing that in isolation and alone they could not accomplish much, but united they could resist any opponent.[84]

The most promising way to improve the daily life of workers was also by association, more precisely in the form of cooperatives. While the mildly enthusiastic comments of the Royal Commission Report on this issue reflected Helbronner's interest in the subject,[85] these comments did not reveal the stronger views that Gagnepetit would lend to co-op initiatives in his columns. He described how English public kitchens functioned and reported that they offered workers nutritional meals for fifty per cent less than the cost of groceries.[86] Although the Knights of Labor had pioneered commodity co-operatives in the United States, Helbronner tended to draw his examples mostly from Europe. In addition to co-op stores and pensions plans, he felt that vocational schools could and should be set up by workers' societies.[87] Helbronner strongly encouraged these initiatives as he believed that they taught workers to take

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[83] Ibid. JBG, "La fermeture de bonne heure", *La Presse*, December 5, 1891.

[84]JBG, "Merci", *La Presse*, September 5, 1885.

[85] Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.12

[86]JBG, "Les cuisines publiques", *La Presse*, July 4, 1885.

[87]JBG, "L'école manuelle", *La Presse*, December 27, 1884.

care of their own business.[88] That he readily served on boards of mutual societies confirmed his whole-hearted commitment to the concept of the cooperative.[89] To him, such initiatives empowered workers. He alerted citizens, however, against "false mutual aids" such as the Union franco-canadienne [UFC]. His economic background (contributor to *Le Moniteur du Commerce* and to *Le Prix courant,* as well as his service as the Canadian delegate for the economy section at the Paris universal exposition) put him in a good position to judge the UFC's pension plan. From his economist point of view, the plan was simply not viable.

To solve problems with unfair laws, Helbronner again advocated collective action among workers. He claimed: "Si l'ouvrier ne peut rien individuellement, il peut tout collectivement."[90] In particular, he hoped that workers' clout would be felt at election day for it was by the vote that Canadians would modify their institutions.[91] Needed reforms could be achieved through peaceful means when workers could (and would) exercise their right to vote. Gagnepetit claimed in 1885: "C'est par le vote seul que nous pourrons arriver à faire modifier les réglements actuels de l'eau."[92] Although Helbronner worked hard to encourage working

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[88]JBG, "Les Prévoyants", *La Presse*, November 12, 1887.

[89] "J'ai souvent fait partie de bureaux de société de prévoyance; je sers actuelement [sic] en qualité de président et de trésorier dans deux de ces sociétés; je sers gratuitement comme le font les officiers des sociétés mutuelles vraiment mutuelles. Il n'y a rien de méritoire à cela, nous faisons seulement notre devoir envers nos semblables et payons d'un peu de travail l'honneur que nos co-sociétaires nous font en nous mettant pour quelque temps à leur tête", Jules Helbronner, "La mutualité payante", *La Presse*, February 10, 1902.

[90]JBG, "Dettes et créances", *La Presse*, October 25, 1884. Recycled September 18, 1886.

[91]JBG, "La question sociale et les Chevaliers du Travail", *La Presse*, April 10, 1886.

[92]JBG, "Notre enquête sur l'eau", *La Presse*, February 7, 1885.

class conciousness, he never adhered to any form of syndicalism. He did not attack the state like Blanqui or George Sorel. Helbronner laboured instead in extending suffrage. He believed workers had a right to be part of government. Voting was an essential step on the road to reform. He even thought that those who refused to take part in the process forfeited their right to complain about their conditions.[93] He declared:

> L'ouvrier à Montréal n'a que lui a blâmer s'il n'a pas dans le gouvernement municipal la part qui lui revient. L'abolition de la corvée lui a rendu ses droits électoraux; il est le maître, s'il veut s'en donner la peine, de se faire représenter au conseil de ville par des échevins ouvriers.[94]

Involvement in municipal politics was one logical way for workers to improve their lot. Labourers were indeed expected to participate in the formation of government, at least through the ballot. The extension of suffrage and its exercise were indeed another of his favourite means to improve the life of workers. Their involvement, however, was not to be limited to marking a ballot. Helbronner believed that workers should also be consulted directly. He did not understand why the municipal council refused to form an investigative committee on the poll tax. Moreover, he was troubled that Council found it strange to include tenants on the proposed committee.[95] As far as he was concerned, all citizens, tenants and owners, employers and employees, rich and poor, had something to contribute to the city. This belief in the participation of the working class in the political process clearly dissociates Helbronner from

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[93] JBG, "Les faiseurs de tours", *La Presse*, June 13, 1891

[94] Jules Helbronner, "Les ouvriers et l'administration municipale", *La revue de Montréal*, July 1893, p.3-4.

[95] JBG, "Les deux conseils", *La Presse*, August 21, 1886.

the majority of social reformers.

He realised, however, that it would be very hard for workers to be a part of government. Not only did it require great administrative aptitude but also a certain financial independence which most workers did not have.[96] In helping workers achieve municipal office, he did not join labour representatives in their fight against property qualifications;[97] the obstacle to workers' representation was not $2,000 of real estate, but the very nature of civic office, which was then voluntary. He proposed instead that aldermen and councillors receive an appropriate salary,[98] and therefore the working man could afford to take office. Helbronner was thus indicating that he believed workers had a place in decision making and that involvement in municipal government should no longer be a "philanthropic" agency.

In the same vein, he stressed that workers should be represented and/or consulted in decisions that affected them. Citizens should be part of the special commission responsible for studying taxation, he wrote, even if aldermen did not want them to be part of it.[99] He implied that building contractors should meet with labour representatives to discuss a proposed construction bill.[100] He deplored the fact that labourers were not consulted when the 1885

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[96]JBG, "Les électeurs municipaux", *La Presse*, November 20, 1886.

[97]JGB, "La qualification foncière", *La Presse*, July 23, 1892.

[98] Ibid. Jules Helbronner, "Les ouvriers et l'administration municipale", *La revue de Montréal*, July 1893, p.3-4.

[99] Editorial, "Nouvelles Taxes", *La Presse*, August 23, 1906.

[100] JBG, "L'union fait la force", *La Presse*, December 31, 1886.

Quebec factory bill was drafted.[101] Inspired by the French model, he also suggested the creation of *work tribunals*[102] (a kind of formal arbitration process), specifying that judges and juries would be composed of representatives of both Capital and Labour.[103] These work tribunals exemplified on the one hand Helbronner's confidence in consultation, and on the other hand his commitment to conciliation. Strikes served no one's interests, he often argued,[104] preaching that: "Patrons et ouvriers s'entendraient presque toujours, surtout lorsque les demandes sont justes; leurs intérêts sont communs."[105]

For Helbronner, education was a great way for workers to improve their lives.[106] It was often at the forefront of his thought. He emphasized that 2 ½ per cent of all the profit cooperatives make should be invested in a fund for education instead of being redistributed among members.[107] His main concern with child labour was that the children were deprived of an education, of their right to better their lives. He stated that what needed to be fought against constantly was the hiring of children who could not read or write. To perpetuate

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[101]JBG, "Acte pour protéger les industriels qui compromettent la vie et la santé des personnes employées dans les manufactures", *La Presse*, June 6, 1885.

[102] Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.15.

[103]JGB, "De l'arbitrage", *La Presse*, April 23, 1892.

[104]JBG, "Grève et participation", "L'histoire d'une grève", *La Presse*, May 28 and September 17, 1887, Jules Helbronner, "Profit Sharing" in William Keys, *Capital and Labor. Containing the Views of Eminent Men of the United States and Canada on The Labor Question. Social Reform and Other Economic Subjects, Illustrated* (Montreal, Dominion Assembly Knights of Labor: 1904), p.140.

[105]JBG, "Le mauvais contre-maître", *La Presse*, August 20, 1887.

[106] Jules Helbronner, *Report of the Social Economy Section*, p.xi.

[107] JBG, "Les sociétés de coopération", *La Presse*, November 27, 1886.

illiteracy was to deny children the opportunity to become free.

School was so dear to him that he allowed himself to be paternalistic. Once he won the battle for early closing, he displayed a hint of paternalism telling clerks they should use their newly found free time to take courses.[108] He observed:

> La fermeture des magasins a donné à un grand nombre de commis-marchands la liberté de leur soirée. Ce n'est pas seulement du temps gagné pour le repos et pour la part du divertissement qui est un besoin de la nature humaine. Nous comptons bien qu'une partie de ces heures de loisirs sera consacrée à l'étude et qu'elle permettra aux commis d'acquérir les connaissances qui leur sont nécessaires pour s'élever à une situation meilleure.[109]

Education/training was indeed one of Helbronner's preferred answers. He established a direct correlation between education and workers' autonomy. "L'ouvrier doit être instruit", he once wrote, "mais son instruction il doit la devoir qu'à lui-même, qu'à son amour du travail et au désir plus ou moins grand qu'il peut éprouver d'élever son niveau d'intelligence et d'améliorer sa position."[110] Here, his thought reminds one of Samuel Smiles' (1812-1904) *Self Help* or the famous Horatio Alger's (1834-1899) novels, the match boy becoming with luck, economy, perseverance, industry and a strong desire to learn, a rich industrialist. To Helbronner, in the end, each worker must be individually responsible for his own success.

Helbronner's philosophy combined elements of socialism, capitalism and individualism. He often proposed that companies share profits with workers, and gave

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[108]JBG, "La fermeture des magasins", *La Presse*, October 20, 1885.

[109]Ibid.

[110]JBG, "L'instruction de l'ouvrier", *La Presse*, November 22, 1884.

examples of successful businessmen who had applied the principle.[111] To those who were afraid of the new found strength of labour, he declared: "Il n'y a rien d'effrayant dans le fait d'un ouvrier demandant légalement, calmement une juste part des bénéfices qu'il procure au capital, ou tout au moins une part qui lui permette de vivre en homme et non en paria ou en bête de somme."[112] His support for profit sharing prompts one to think of Helbronner as a socialist. He was, after all, calling for each member of society to receive an equitable share of benefits. His specification, however, of just how much profit should be shared - *a part which allows one to live decently, to be more than a social outcast*- serves to distance him from the socialistic aspect of sweeping profit sharing. He was not proposing that profits be redistributed equally among workers; he was not advocating a revolutionary change of the capitalist system; and he stressed that after all, "profit-sharing apart from other advantages, was a source of profit to the manufacturer who adopted it."[113]

Nevertheless, when pushing for greater autonomy for workers, Helbronner was trying to modify how society functioned. The system of sharing profits, he specified: "should admit no forfeiture, and should leave the artisan the free disposal of his share of profits."[114] He thought that instead of always being at the mercy of unscrupulous powerful men, labourers should take their destiny into their own hands. He clearly stated: "On ne peut admettre cette

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[111]JBG, "Participation aux bénéfices", "La participation aux bénéfices aux États-Unis", "L'État et la participation aux bénéfices", January 3 and May 30, 1891, January 16, 1892.

[112]JBG, "Listes électorales", *La Presse*, March 13, 1886.

[113] Jules Helbronner, *Report of the Social Economy Section*, p.xxvii.

[114] Ibid., p.xxv.

mise en tutelle de l'ouvrier."[115] Extended suffrage, association, and night courses would liberate him Helbronner also repeated that workers should participate, or at least be consulted, in decisions that affected them; this way, control would to be shared by Capital and Labour, by rich and poor alike. He asserted:

> The man who sells labor should, in selling it, be on an equality with the man who buys it; and each party to a labor contract should be subject to the same penalty for the violation of it. No greater or different punishment should be imposed upon the workman, or even upon the apprentice, who quits his employment without notice than upon employer who summarily dismisses an employee.[116]

Helbronner strongly believed in the freedom and rights of the individual.[117] He deemed, however, that personal liberty could be infringed upon in extraordinary circumstances. During the 1885-86 smallpox epidemic which was claiming the lives of many Montrealers, for example, Gagnepetit heartily encouraged vaccination. The employer, he thought, was within his rights to dismiss an employee who refused vaccination. In no uncertain terms he wrote: "Le patron n'exige pas que son ouvrier se fasse vacciner, il le met simplement en demeure de se faire vacciner ou de quitter sa fabrique. En agissant ainsi le patron reste dans les limites de ses droits."[118] Since he had repeatedly pointed out that the labourer's situation was precarious -he could not even leave work to defend himself in court- he was in fact acquiescing to compulsory vaccination; a worker could simply not afford to refuse vaccination

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[115] Jules Helbronner, *Rapport sur la Section d'économie*, p.xxx.

[116] Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.11.

[117] JBG, "Mauvais patrons", *La Presse*, June 6, 1891.

[118] JBG, "La vaccine", *La Presse*, October 3, 1885.

and lose his job. Thus, while brandishing that a worker still had the right to decide, he nonetheless was tacitly approving an infringement on what could be perceived as a personal liberty. Public health was in such danger in 1885 that Helbronner could justify a bit of "principle bending".

Helbronner protested against extreme socialist measures, because he believed that such measures killed any form of initiative. He declared: "Rien ne rend plus imprévoyant que la prévoyance gratuite et obligatoire préconisée par une certaine école."[119] For him, a forced "providence society" (welfare state) would reduce worker independence. He differentiated between *state's protection* and *welfare state*. Society had a duty towards those who could not help themselves, but not towards those who could fend for themselves. Children, for instance, needed to be protected. The high infant mortality rate alarmed him. "On écrit beaucoup sur le sujet, on s'indigne, on gémit devant cette hécatombe; on nomme des commissions qui font ce qu'elles peuvent, ce qu'elles doivent et cependant le nombre de petits morts ne diminue pas,"[120] he exclaimed. He felt the municipal authorities, not the Church nor any other philanthropic agency, had a duty to save these defenceless children.[121] For Helbronner, a father who had to stay at home to take care of his sick family should receive a weekly allocation from the State to ensure his family's survival.[122] The State protecting a destitute family in times of need was desirable, but perpetual state providence unacceptable. Just like Le Play, he argued that

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[119] Ibid.

[120] "La mortalité infantile", *Le Presse*, July 16, 1907.

[121] Editorial, "Les bébés et la municipalisation", *La Presse*, July 31, 1906.

[122] JBG, "Soyons Calme!", *La Presse*, November 7, 1885.

defenceless women and children working in wretched conditions in factories or on dangerous city streets also required government assistance, at least in the form of protective legislation.[123] Other helpless individuals required guidance. Helbronner maintained:

> Si on abandonnait les incapables à leur sort ils naîtraient, vivraient et mourraient dans la misère qu'elle que fût l'élévation du taux de leur salaire. À ceux-là, il faut un guide; si le patron s'abstient, d'autres plus ou moins bien intentionnés prendront sa place, s'empareront de l'esprit de ces travailleurs simples mais honnêtes et les transformeront en gens prêts à faire ce qu'ils ont fait en Belgique, en 1886: la jacquerie.[124]

Yet, most workers did not need a paternalistic government; most were able men who could organise, take night courses, and take their destiny into their own hands.

Helbronner sometimes displayed a pro-capitalist perspective.[125] He encouraged private initiatives. He thought that *La Société d'encouragement des Industries domestiques* could develop family businesses and in so doing make use of the numerous aptitudes of the Canadian labour force towards practical ends.[126] He also believed that a contract was a sacred agreement between workers and employers; the government should have no role to play in its

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[123]Jules Helbronner, "À L'Étendard", *La Presse*, January 28, 1888.

[124] Jules Helbronner, *Report of the Social Economy Section*, p.xxxix, JBG, "Institutions patronales", August 29, 1891, recycled July 28, 1894.

[125] This has nothing to do with him signing the so-called pro-capitalist report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital. Fernand Harvey, *Revolution industrielle et travailleurs*, p.51. For a good study on the similarities and differences of the two reports emerging from the Royal Commission consult Gaétan Vallières, "La Commission Royale sur les Relations du Travail avec le Capital au Canada (1886-1889)" M.A. thesis (history), Université d'Ottawa, 1973. Vallières argues that the Helbronner report was more radical than the Freed one, p.4.

[126]JBG, "La Société d'encouragement des industries domestiques", *La Presse*, August 20, 1892.

elaboration.[127]

Helbronner was not looking to destroy the social pyramid; workers remained bound by contract to their employer, but so were employers bound to their employees.[128] As well, his support for the eight-hour work day, which was conditional on agreement between workers and companies and without government intervention, was based less on theories of socialism and more on a belief in capitalism.[129] The means of production were not going to change hands, but the relationship between Capital and Labour was also not to remain asymmetrical.

Nevertheless, while far from promoting true socialist measures, he did not approve of pure capitalism either. The law of supply and demand had its limits,[130] especially when during the winter months, wages were often lowered. Helbronner affirmed that this practice was

> d'autant plus irritante pour l'ouvrier lorsqu'elle n'est justifiée que par une surabondance de main-d'oeuvre due aux chômages réguliers d'industries absolument étrangères à celle qui l'occupe, et qu'elle n'est pas causée par une diminution de la valeur des produits manufacturiers. C'est l'application de la théorie de l'offre et de la demande dans ce qu'elle a de plus injuste et de plus cruelle.[131]

In the final analysis, what becomes clear about his social program is that workers

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[127]JBG, "Mauvais patrons", *La Presse*, June 6, 1891.

[128] Jules Helbronner, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, p.11.

[129]JBG, "Une transaction étrange", *La Presse*, April 17, 1894.

[130] "Il existe une école d'économistes qui traite le travail humain comme une marchandise et qui veut que la question du salaire soit rigoureusement soumise aux fluctuations de l'offre et de la demande. [...] C'est pour réagir contre cette tendance économique que les ouvriers se sont organisés; et les abus de pouvoir ou de force que ces derniers ont commis ne sont souvent que les conséquences des abus commis au nom de la théorie de l'offre et de la demande"JBG, 'L'offre et la demande", *La Presse*, May 9, 1891.

[131] Here it was necessary to quote in French as the English version did not convey the same sense. Jules Helbronner, *Rapport sur la section d'économie sociale*, p.xiv.

needed to organise to fight the abuses of capitalism. Organisation was a way for workers to fight exploitation and to better their lot. Never did Helbronner encourage workers to overthrow the government. And, what does appear to be consistent in his philosophy is his faith in the individual. All the solutions he proposed rested on the idea that each person was responsible for his/her life. Workers might be victims of unfair laws and corruptible institutions but they could escape. They, in fact, had a responsibility to become organised, to vote for men that would represent their interests, to take night courses, and to participate in the decisions that affected their lives.

All they could think about was Helbronner, the Jew.

Definitely an important figure in the history of Quebec and Canada, Helbronner has not found the place he deserves in Canadian historiography. Although scholars mention him in different contexts,[132] and even if a monograph bears his pen-name, historians have not devoted much attention to his philosophy nor to how his ideas were received. Hated in Quebec's ultramontane circles for being a "French Jew suspected of socialism," he was constantly attacked by his foes on the basis of his religion first, rather than on the merit of his ideas. When appointed to the Commission on Labor and Capital, *L'Étandard*, the journal of the

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[132]Abraham Rhinewine, *Der Yid in Canada (fun der franzoizisher Periode biz der moderner Zeit..*(Toronto: Farlag,1925). David Rome, *The Early Jewish Presence in Canada, a Book Lover's Ramble Through Jewish Canadiana*, (Montreal: Bronfman Collection of Jewish Canadiana, 1971). Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de la Province de Québec*, (Montreal: Fides, 1972). Greg Kealley, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, (Toronto: UTP,1973), Fernand Harvey, "Les Travailleurs québécois et la Commission de travail, 1886-89", Ph.D. thesis (history), Université Laval, 1976. Cyrille Felteau, *Histoire de La Presse. Le livre du peuple 1884-1916.* (Montreal: Les éditions la presse, 1983). Marcel Pleau, *Almanach du Courrier Français. La présence française* (Montreal, Union Nationale Française; 1983). Jean De Bonville, *La Presse Québécoise de 1884 à 1914*, (Ste-Foy: PUL, 1988).

ultramontane Trudel complained that the "pseudo-conservatives" named a Jew.[133] Joseph Béard, contributor to *La Croix*, accused *La Presse* of "désoeuvrée politique, sociale et religieuse" and underlined that it was under the editorialship of a Jew.[134] First referring to his Jewish faith, Jean Canada then proceeded to accuse Helbronner of being a "false protector" of the less fortunate:

> Les pseudo défenseurs de l'ouvrier, de la veuve et de l'orphelin, qui sans jamais avoir aidé d'un centime ceux qu'ils prétendent protéger, ne s'en estiment pas moins les conducteurs nés, dans la route de la moralité et du bien-être à espérer, des masses dont ils se f... comme de leur première chaussette (avaient-ils seulement des chaussettes les doux sémites, lorsqu'ils débarquèrent ici?) [...] Depuis vingt ans qu'ils jonglent avec les questions sociales, ils n'ont, dans leurs cervelles infécondes, pour le bien- rien trouvé à suggérer; qu'ils ont, au contraire, aigri par leurs suggestions révolutionnaires,- quand elles n'étaient pas idiotes, - sur les rapports devant exister entre ouvriers et patrons, - employeurs et employés, pour parler le jargon de ces gens là. Mais ont-ils jamais apporté, indiqué, étudié seulement la moindre solution pratique à employer pour arriver, sans secousses pour l'industrie et le capital, sans souffrance pour le travail, à une répartition plus équitable de la richesse publique?[135]

By 1902, Helbronner's record certainly did not justify such accusations. He had already proposed concrete measures, among them the abolition of the *corvée*, a better water tax, work tribunals, mutual societies and municipalisation of public utilities, and he had fervently worked to institutionalize these measures. He was successful as well in warning innocent victims who believed in the soundness of the pension plan of Union franco-canadienne (UFC). He demonstrated how the plan was simply not viable. Many were joining the UFC, however,

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[133] "Une indignité", *L'étandard*, December 10, 1886.

[134] Joseph Béard, "Le rôle de *La Presse*", *La Croix*, November 1904. **Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, series ZB:Box: Helbronner, Jules.**

[135] Jean Canada, "Le Canada aux Canadiens", *Le Monde Illustré*, February 1, 1902. **Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, series ZB: Box: Helbronner, Jules.**

because it was approved by the higher clergy and local *curés*. The president of the UFC, L. G. Robillard, tried to deflect the issue by claiming that Helbronner's attacks were unjustified and prejudicial because he was "a Jew".[136] The position of Robillard and his allies strictly revolved around Helbronner's faith. Even Olivar Asselin, while defending Helbronner, had to mention the man's religion and in the process revealed his own anti-Semitism:

> Ils ont entrepris leur campagne anti-cosmopolite pour nuire, si possible, à un brave homme qu'ils n'avaient pas le coeur d'attaquer en face, et sur lequel ils espéraient faire tomber un peu de cette boue dont ils aspergeaient toute la colonie française [...] ils ont entrepris leur campagne anti-sémitique pour nuire à Helbronner qu'ils n'osaient pas plus que l'autre attaquer en face, et parce que ce dernier dévoilait dans les Débats leurs turpitudes. Je n'aime pas plus que vous les Juifs, mais je me flatte de les haïr plus intelligemment: je n'en dis pas de mal si je n'ai contre eux aucun grief que je puisse établir devant les tribunaus [sic] . D'ailleurs le plus juif dans le cas qui nous occupe, est-ce Helbronner, qui dénonce les fraudes bénies et indulgenciées de l'Union franco Canadienne, ou Robillard, qui s'enfuit avec l'argent extorqué au peuple grâce aux bénédictions des évêques?[137]

Unfortunately, the province of Quebec did not escape the anti-Semitism that reigned over the world. Arthur Saint Pierre in his *Vers l'action* typified the anti-Semite sentiment in Quebec:

> Les Juifs, alliés naturels, ou plutôt inspirateurs et maîtres de la franc-maçonnerie, ont envahi Montréal [...] , non contents de corrompre notre jeunesse par les mauvais théâtres et la mauvaise littérature à bon marché; non contents de ruiner nos marchands par une concurrence très souvent déloyale, [...] aspirent encore à l'autorité et réclament ce qu'ils appellent leur part de l'administration de notre ville.[138]

Despite the attacks on his faith, Helbronner was successful in his campaign. Not only did Church authorities feel compelled to specify that: "L'approbation donnée par un évêque

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Olivar Asselin, *Lettre à M. J.-E. Fortin, Québec, 28 février, 1902*, **BM55 (2,9) Ville de Montréal, Gestion de documents et archives.**

[138] Arthur Saint Pierre, *Vers l'action*, (Montreal, Imprimerie du Messager: 1911), p.21-22.

à une société quelconque de bienfaisance porte exclusivement sur le caractère moral et religieux de cette société, et pas du tout sur la valeur de ses promesses ou de ses opérations au point de vue matériel et financier;"[139] but a Judge ordered Robillard to open the books of the society and provide documents establishing the regularity and legality of the constitution of his society and of his administrative doings.[140] In the end, the UFC declared bankruptcy.

Olivar Asselin, although he had defended Helbronner in the Robillard /UFC affair, attacked him a few years later on his municipal outlook. He lashed out that: "depuis vingt ans vous prostituez votre plume à la besogne de préparer et d'excuser, en matière municipale, les volte-face du journal le plus vénal du pays."[141] Asselin could not resist to throw in the "anti-Semitic argument", writing: "avec cette philosophie pratique qui est l'apanage de votre race", adding that he had hesitated to denounce Helbronner, but soon remembered:

> cette voix fausse, ce sourire jaune, ce regard louche que vous aviez quand vivante image de la trahison, vous vous agitiez nerveusement sous les regards narquois de quelques honnêtes gens, j'ai réfléchi que peut-être un certain Juif que vous connaissiez, n'aurait pas osé livrer son meilleur ami, s'il s'était trouvé un homme pour le démasquer à temps.[142]

In a predominantly Catholic society, Helbronner's faith visibly bothered many. If his adversaries made an issue of his faith, Helbronner, without denying he was Jewish, never

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[139] "L'épiscopat et les sociétés de bienfaisance", *La Semaine religieuse de Montréal*, February 9, 1901, Vol.37, no6, p.113.

[140] "Fiasco Complet", *La Presse*, February 12, 1902.

[141] Olivar Asselin, "À M. Jules Helbronner", *Le Nationaliste*, January 14, 1906, **Canadian Jewish Congress Collection, series ZB:Box: Helbronner, Jules.**

[142] Ibid.

brought his religion to the forefront of his writings.[143] In fact, he never mentioned his faith. In his labour column, he even seemed to want to be considered simply as a French Canadian. He used expressions such as "Nous les Canadiens-français, nous sommes de cette race là."[144] He referred here and there to the Gospel and quoted priests, bishops and the pope.[145] When contemporaries made an issue of his creed, Helbronner did not let it faze him. He once wrote: "Je suis peu sensible aux arguments agressifs que l'on tire de ma religion."[146] Moreover, he often wrote under the pseudonym of a traditional French-Canadian name. In the final analysis, Saul Hayes, former President of the Canadian Jewish Congress, rightly observed: "We do not know what meaning or implications this [his Jewishness] had for him. Nor do we know whether he held any religious convictions or shared any of the attitudes common to many in the Jewish group."[147]

Despite the anti-Semite current of Quebec society, Helbronner commanded the esteem and admiration of Montrealers in his day from at least three francophone constituencies: the ordinary folks (his readers), the business community (his employers and all those who attended

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[143] *La Presse* once published an editorial appealing for tolerance towards Montreal Jewish community, "Prions et laissons prier", September 21, 1906, yet, Helbronner did not usually follow this path.

[144] JBG, "Le programme ouvrier", *La Presse*, December 12, 1885.

[145] JBG, "Qualifications des électeurs municipaux. L'eau", "Finances civiques","Un devoir", "La foire de Montréal", "Le Congrès ouvrier" "Trop de liberté", respectively in *La Presse*, December 26, 1885, January 17 and December 6, 1891, August 27, September 12, and December 24, 1892.

[146] Jules Helbronner, "La Commission de Travail", *La Presse*, January 7, 1888.

[147] "Introduction", *On Jules Helbronner*, (compiled by David Rome)

his funerals) and the labor movement. The honorary positions he occupied over the years testify to his popularity, and his nomination to the Royal Commission on Labour and Capital, which he owed to the Montreal Central Trades Council (MCTC), attests to the fact that workers trusted him. The MCTC unanimously approved his action in relation to the work of the commission, his position, and the report he wrote.[148]

Helbronner was resolutely identified as a champion of the labour cause. In a commemorative volume on the history of French Canadian business, Helbronner was praised for his efforts to better the working and living conditions of the labouring class:

> Il n'y a pas d'homme qui a plus contribué dans ces dernières années à répandre le goût des études sociales en ce pays et il a été l'un des champions les plus utiles des revendications légitimes de la classe ouvrière. Il a été l'inspirateur, le stratégiste des associations ouvrières dans leurs luttes avec le conseil de ville de Montréal, et sa parole fait aujourd'hui autorité sur toutes les questions municipales. [...] Il est doué d'une énergie et d'une persévérance peu communes.[149]

The fact that Helbronner remained editor in chief of the most popular French-Canadian newspaper for such a long period and that many prominent French-Canadians attended his funeral illustrates that Quebec society was not totally anti-Semite. Perhaps no other text than Madeleine's[150] eulogy best conveyed the respect Helbronner enjoyed in Quebec:

> Il écrivit des articles rigoureux, des notes bien saisies, animés d'un esprit public sûr et net. [...] La question sociale arrêta surtout son observation, et il s'attacha à

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[148] "Commission du travail", *La Presse*, May 17 1889.

[149] *Histoire du commerce canadien-français de Montréal. 1535-1893: un souvenir*, (Montreal, Sabiston Lithographing and Publishing Co.: 1894).

[150] Contributor to different French newspapers, Mrs Huguenin was one of the forty women who embarked on a journalistic career at the turn of the twentieth century. Le Collectif Clio, *L'histoire des femmes au Québec*, 2nd edition, (Montreal, Le Jour: 1992), p.225.

> l'étudier, à la scruter et à en traduire l'orientation. [...] Il avait pour l'ouvrier un souci touchant, son sens de la justice, très éveillé et très actif le portait naturellement vers les humbles et les petits, et il prêchait avec une rigueur d'apôtre le redressement des griefs du Travail contre le Capital. Sa discussion ne l'amenait jamais à préconiser des mesures extrêmes et fatales. [...] nous avons admiré l'homme d'action [...].[151]

His social action was certainly recognized by many of his peers, and the numerous battles he won for labourers substantiate that he had a real impact on Montreal's society at the turn of the century.

Conclusion

The problems Helbronner identified reveal that not only did he have a clear understanding of working-class issues but that he disapproved of any form of exploitation. He denounced the institutionalization of dependency of the working-class. The solutions he proposed for the ills of the labouring classes prove that the journalist believed in the intelligence of everyone, rich or poor. Given the opportunity, workers could and would improve their own lot. They did not have to remain victims, nor dependent on others to impose solutions on them. Through association, night courses, the extension of suffrage, workers could increase their chances of a better life for them and their family. Helbronner spoke to both capitalists and labourers, but he did not address workers who were wanting others to find solutions for them or to fight their battles. Instead Helbronner spoke to those who were ready to take their destiny into their own hands. More importantly, not only did he theorize on ways to improve society, he also acted. Therefore as a social reformer, Helbronner greatly affected in a positive way the life of Montreal's working class.

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[151] Madeleine, "Notre meilleur ami", *La Revue Moderne*, January 15, 1922.

CHAPTER 3
Herbert Brown Ames: Political Reformer and Enforcer

Ames, Herbert Brown, municipal reformer. *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 1898

Ames, Herbert Brown, merchant; legislator. *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 1912

Histoire-mémoire

Of the three Montreal social reformers "under the microscope", Herbert Brown Ames is the one that has penetrated the *histoire-mémoire* the most. Many Canadian and Quebec history textbooks[1] as well as monographs mention him, or at least refer to his pioneering sociological survey, *The City Below the Hill. A Sociological Essay of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada.*[2]

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[1] It in interesting to include textbooks in the analysis as they serve to inculcate notions to students who become the bearers of the collective memory. Pierre Ansart, "Manuels d'histoire et inculcation du rapport affectif au passé" in *Enseigner l'histoire: des manuels à la mémoire* (Henri Moniot, ed), (Berne, Peter Lang: 1984), p.57.

[2] Robert C. Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921. A Nation Transformed*, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart: 1978), p.128.René Durocher, Paul-André Linteau and Jean

In fact, this 1896 detailed survey of one of the older industrial quarters of Montreal has been mainly used as a primary source, especially by labour historians.[3]

Some historians have ventured an interpretation of his social philosophy. They classify him either as someone who simply had an organic conception of society which translated into a need to address the problems that touched the lives of all, such as public health, or, as a man who questioned the existing social order. Kathleen Jenkins argues that *The City Below the Hill* "was a strangely

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Claude Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporain. De la Confédération à la crise (1867-1929)*, (Québec, Les Éditions Boréal: 1979), p.187, 188. Fernand Harvey, "L'histoire des travailleurs québécois: les variations de la conjoncture et de l'historiographie", *Le Mouvement Ouvrier au Québec*, (Montreal, Boréal Express: 1980), p.16. David Jay Bercuson and Jack Granatstein, *The Collins Dictionary of Canadian History. 1867 to the Present.* (Toronto, Collins: 1988), p.6. Desmond Morton *A Short History of Canada*, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart:1994 third edition), p.152. John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, *Brève histoire socio-économique du Québec*, (Quebec, Septentrion: 1995), p.279. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones and Donald Smith, *Destinies. Canadian History Since Confederation* (Toronto, Harcourt: 2000, fourth edition), p.179.

[3] Terry Copp based his first chapter on Ames's *The City Below the Hill. The Anatomy of Poverty*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart: 1974), p.15-29. Jean de Bonville also used Ames' study profusely. *Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit Les travailleurs montréalais à la fin du XIXe siècle*, (Montreal, Les Éditions de l'Aurore: 1975), p.40, 55, 98, 108, 115, 120, 121, 125, 130, 131, 137, 147, 215, 216 and so did Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, (Montreal, Boréal: 1992), p.47, 78, 98, 102, 103, 116, 211, 215. Others have used, to a lesser extent, the 1896 survey to document their study: Leslie Roberts, *Montreal. From Mission Colony to World City.* (Toronto, Macmillian of Canada: 1969), p.254, 255, 256. Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921. A Nation Transformed*, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart: 1978, first published in 1974), p.128. Fernand Harvey, *Révolution industrielle et travailleurs. Une enquête sur les rapports entre le capital et le travail au Québec à la fin du 19e siècle* (Montreal, Boréal Express: 1978), p.32, 239, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families. Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart: 1993), p.71, 108, 131. Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water.Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart: 1991), p.131, 133.

modern document, too advanced in its thinking, in fact, to achieve any great results."[4] She suggests that Ames' *avant garde* conception of society, and the solutions he put forth to alleviate the ills of city life, simply could not receive the attention they deserved. In *Montreal: From Mission Colony to World City*, Leslie Roberts also perceives in Ames' discourse "the sense of the need for changes."[5] He adds that: "Ames' sociological study was regarded by labour as an effort to get the real facts regarding the lives of working people and to induce capitalists to erect better dwellings for workers."[6] He, too, implies that Ames doubted the values of his society. Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English assert that Ames "introduced practical reforms which significantly enhanced public health conditions."[7] Mariana Valverde points out that Ames understood that "drinking was generally a symptom or effect, not a cause of poverty."[8] Paul Rutherford has gone further than his colleagues when he indicates that Ames foresaw that the industrial proletariat was to become the back bone of the new Canada.[9]

On the other hand, Ramsay Cook, referring to an expression Ames liked to use

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[4] Kathleen Jenkins, *Montreal Island City of the St-Lawrence*, (New York, Doubleday & Company Inc.. 1966), p.435.

[5] Leslie Roberts, *Montreal. From Mission Colony to World City*. (Toronto, Macmillian of Canada: 1969), p.263.

[6] Ibid.p, 264.

[7] Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English, *Canada 1900-1945*, Toronto, UTP: 1990), p.101.

[8] Mariana Valverde, p.133.

[9] Paul Rutherford, "An Introduction" in *The City Below the Hill. A Sociological Essay of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada.*(Toronto: UTP, 1972), p.xvi.

("philanthropy and 5%"), contends that Ames advocated reforms for "ambivalent reasons."[10] John Dickinson and Brian Young report that his reform strategies for a better municipal government did not find an echo in the popular classes, mainly because of his social and ethnic origins.[11] Paul-André Linteau, though he states that Ames played a determinant role among the reformist group at city hall,[12] adds that Ames did not propose great solutions to solve the urban problems.[13] Linteau emphasizes that Ames underlined that it was the health of all, the rich as well as the poor, that was in danger.[14] This historian stresses that the interests of Ames's own social class were at the forefront of his thinking rather than the exercise of pure philanthropy.

Two master's theses have dealt specifically with Ames as a municipal reformer. Daniel Russell argues that Ames's reformist discourse was not a plea for a reform of society,[15] but more an invitation for the rich to come to the aid of the less fortunate. According to Russell, Ames's philosophy was that of a paternalistic bourgeoisie.[16] He concludes that Ames, although recognizing the precarious position of most of the city's working class, "was unable, or unwilling, to conclude that

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[10] Ramsey Cook, "Triomphe et revers du matérialisme" in *Histoire générale du Canada* (P-A Linteau, ed.), (Québec: Boréal: 1990), p.476.

[11] John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, p.278.

[12] Paul-André Linteau, p.127.

[13] Ibid., p.215.

[14] Ibid., p.106 and 213.

[15] Daniel Russell, "H.B. Ames as Municipal Reformer", M.A. thesis (history), McGill Universiy, 1972, p.47, 60.

[16] Ibid., p.128.

basic social and economic reform was necessary to substantially improve the condition he so roundly condemned."[17] Although Russell's interpretation is not fundamentally wrong, he overlooks in his study the important contribution of Ames' municipal diaries and he fails to evaluate the reception of Ames's reform strategies.

My master's thesis, "L'événement- revu: Les stratégies de reforme socio-politique proposées par Herbert Brown Ames à Montréal au tournant du XXe siècle, 1892-1903" illustrates that Ames oriented his efforts towards political reforms rather than social ones. His discourse paired with an analysis of his actions, confirm that he profoundly respected the existing social order. I conclude that Ames "ne remet pas en cause ni son système politique: la démocratie, ni son système économique: le capitalisme. Son discours et ses actions reflètent plutôt une résolution d'améliorer les conditions de vie de toute la société par une élévation de la pyramide sociale."[18] The present chapter is an extension of "L'événement-revu".

Born to Be Philanthropist

Born in 1863 in Montreal to American parents, Caroline Brown of New York City and Evan Fisher of Massachusetts, Herbert Brown Ames enjoyed a long and rich life, dying at the age of 90. His father was educated in the rural town of Amherst where he learned the mercantile business. For many years he was a merchant in Conway, and represented the town at the

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[17] Ibid., p.135.

[18] Mélanie Méthot, "L'événement- revu: Les stratégies de réforme socio-politique proposées pas Herbert Brown Ames à Montréal au tournant du XXe siècle, 1892-1903", M.A. thesis (history), Université de Moncton, 1995, p.125.

legislature for two years.[19] In 1855 he moved to Montreal where he built the very successful Ames-Holden Co, a wholesale manufacturer of boots and shoes.[20]

Young Herbert, following in his father footsteps, received a B.A. from Amherst College in 1885. Afterwards, he went to France to learn French and study French literature. Back in Montreal, he joined his father's firm, where he remained until December 1893.[21] One biographer wrote at the time that Ames "deliberately withdrew from all commercial pursuits to devote himself, through good or ill fortune, to public affairs."[22] Involved in countless charity organisations, Ames was definitively a philanthropist. He was as generous with his time as he was with his money.[23]

Ames officially started his municipal career in 1892 when he participated in the creation of the Volunteer Electoral League (VEL),[24] an organisation mandated to insure that municipal elections

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[19] *The Canadian Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Eminent and Self Made Men. Quebec and the Maritime Provinces Volume* (New York, American Publishing Co:1881), p.120-121. Hector Charlesworth, "Ames, Sir Herbert B."in *A Cyclopædia of Canadian Biography* (Toronto, The Hunter Press Company: 1919), p.4.

[20] "Death of Mr. E.F. Ames", *Montreal Star*, June 13, 1895.

[21] He was still associated with the firm after 1893 but he was not an active member. William Atherton, *Montreal From 1535 to 1914. Biographical*, Vol.III, (Montreal, S.J. Clarke Publishing Company: 1914), p.618.

[22] Albert R. Carman, "Canadian Celebrities: Herbert Brown Ames", *Canadian Magazine*, Vol.23, 1904, p.308.

[23] "Les élections municipales et le fanatisme", *La Presse*, January 26, 1898.

[24] W.D. Lighthall stated: "The C.N. League was projected in 1889 and I spoke of it to Ames (H.B.), who however wanted a different kind of Association, so I postponed mine and formed with him the French-and-English Club ("La Miquane") out of which Ames afterwards launched the Volunteer Electectoral League". "Letter to J. Castell Hopkins. December 16, 1907", **W.D. Lighthall Papers (WDLP), MG29D93, Vol.1, Correspondence 1907,**

were honestly and openly conducted. The year 1894 was a particularly fruitful one for Ames as he contributed many articles to newspapers and magazines, and was invited to give lectures on municipal government[25] and Canadian political history.[26] He was appointed a member of the Protestant section of the Council of Public Instruction in 1895 although Ames did not have children, and elected President of the Montreal Young Men's Christian Association in 1896. The same year, he financed his well-known sociological survey on the living conditions of the working-class district of west-end Montreal. Both positions, and this important survey which he paid for entirely from his own pocket, add weight to his philanthropic inclination. He was elected to the municipal council in 1898 and occupied the position of alderman until 1906. Ames ran in the constituency of Montréal-St-Antoine and won his seat to the House of Commons as a Conservative in 1904. He served in federal politics until 1920. Late in 1919 he was appointed a financial director to the Secretariat of the League of Nations in Geneva. It could be argued that from 1904 onward, his energy shifted from the municipal field to the national and international scenes.[27]

National Archives of Canada.

[25] He also gave a formal course on municipal administration in 1901. *The Montreal Gazette*, October 31, 1901, "Municipal finance- Ald. Ames' Lecture", *Montreal Star*, October 30, 1901.

[26] "Mr Ames' Lecture", *Montreal Star*, November 29, 1894.

[27] The modification of his biographical notice between 1898 and 1912 reinforces the argument. If Henry Morgan's 1898 *Canadian Men and Women of the Time* described Ames, first, as a "municipal reformer" Henry James Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time. A Handbook of Canadian Biography*, first edition, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1898), p.20; the 1912 edition started the notice with two other epithets: "merchant; legislator". Henry James Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time. A Handbook of Canadian Biography*, second edition, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1912), p.22 Stephen Leacock, a direct

A Rich Discourse and an Original Primary Source

Businessman, philanthropist and municipal politician, Ames witnessed the social and economic problems that marked the turn of the century. He offered his own solutions to alleviate social ills, concentrating his efforts in two spheres: the municipal administration and social welfare. Although his municipal career was relatively short (1892-1904), especially when compared to Helbronner's (1884-1921), he wrote copiously on issues that preoccupied him. The Constitution of the VEL and the subsequent reports of the association[28] can be considered Ames's first texts which dealt directly with municipal reform. Although he did not sign the documents, as the VEL president and chief spokesman, he certainly abided by them. Articles, courses, lectures and conferences also form parts of his discourse.[29] His *magnus opus*, *The City Below the Hill*, completes the discourse under

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witness of Ames' career, wrote that Ames began in Montreal "the career that later carried him to a well-deserved eminence at Ottawa and Geneva." *Montreal*, (New York, Doubleday Doran Company Inc: 1943), p.223.

[28]Volunteer Electoral League, *Constitution of the Volunteer Electoral League*, (Montreal: 1892). *Election Frauds. How Can They Be Prevented? Preliminary Constitution of the Montreal Electoral Purity Association*, (Montreal: 1892). *Constitution of the Volunteer Electoral League of Montreal*, (Montreal: 1893). *Annual Report of the Volunteer Electoral League*, (Montreal: 1893).

[29]Ames, Herbert Brown, "Christians in Politics", *Montreal Star*, February 20, 1892. "The Machine in Honest Hands", *Canadian Magazine*, Vol.III, no2, January 1894, p.101-109. "The Advantages of Good Municipal Government", *Montreal Star*, October 1, 1894. "Political Parties", *Montreal Star*, November 30, 1894. *Abstract of a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal. Delivered in Connection with the Young's Men Christian Association of Montreal*, (Kingston, Queen's University: 1896). "The Duties and Limitations of the Municipal Board of Health" (reprinted from the *Montreal Medical Journal, June 1900*, **Ames Papers, MS644, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Libraries**. "La Santé Publique. Le nouveau Président expose son programme", *La Presse*, February 23, 1900. "Sur la question sanitaire à Paris", *La Presse*, August 13, 1900. "La lutte contre les maladies contagieuses à Paris", *La Presse*, September 1, 1900. "Some Problems

study.

If we accept that "a critical assessment of urban reform has to go beyond an examination of reform rhetoric,"[30] then in Ames's case, the researcher is fortunate. It is possible to measure the coherence between his action and his words via his *City Council Diaries*. Between the months of February 1898 and January 1903, Ames reported every motion he presented and position he held at Council meetings and committee meetings he attended. A thorough review of his municipal career allows for the construction of a table of analysis which includes seven themes, four lying in the scope of political reform (electoral fraud, public office candidate, meritocracy, and scientific management); and three dealing with social reform (public health, working class welfare, and social ethic).

The persistent historical association of Ames with social reform is surprising when one considers that his municipal action centred foremost on political reform. Nearly seventy two per cent of his interventions as an alderman and chairman of different municipal committees were oriented towards political reforms, while only twenty eight per cent towards the cause of social reform.

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of Municipal Government", *Proceedings of the Canadian Club, Toronto*, Vol.1, 1903-1904, p.89-91. "A Canadian in Australia", *Proceedings of the Canadian Club, Toronto*, 1911, p.218-226.

[30] John Weaver, "'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1890-1920". G.A. Stelter and A.J. Artibise, *The Canadian City. Essays in Urban History* (Carleton, Macmillan of Canada Limited: 1979), p.374.

TABLE 1

Total and Percentage of Ames' Interventions at the Municipal Council and in Different Municipal Committees According to the Type of Reform, 1898-1903[31]

	Total	%
Political Reform	320	71,7
Social Reform	126	28,3
Total	446	100

The "Ames-social reform" link is even more surprising when one realises that his contemporaries predominantly identified him with political reforms.[32] Suffice it to say that *Histoire-mémoire* at times has strange ways.

Ames was above all a businessman, but one who happened also to be a philanthropist. He emphasised political reform. The nature of his reform strategies and the limitation of his action suggest that Ames had a profound respect for the existing social order. As a man belonging to the monied elite, he not only had the resources necessary to devote himself to improving the social welfare, he also seems to have felt a responsibility to do so. But he chose not to reform the

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[31] This table is the result of a quantitative analysis of Ames interventions reported in his *Cities Council Diaries*. **Ames Papers, MS644.**

[32] Henry James Morgan, *Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography*, first and second Edition, p.20 et p.21. John Kennedy, *Who's Who and Why in Canada and New Foundland*, (Vancouver, Canadian Press Association Limited: 1912), (John Kennedy was his father in law) p.150, C.W. Parker, *Who's Who and Why*, (Vancouver, International Press Limited:1914), p.18. W.H. Atherton, *Montreal From 1535 to 1914. Biographical*, Vol.III, (Montreal, S.J. Clarke Publishing Company: 1914), p.619.

traditional social and political structures of Montreal, but rather to enforce the existing rules that regulated society. Greatly influenced by American middle-class municipal reformers, Ames never questioned the capitalist system, nor democracy.

A Profound Respect for Traditional Structures

Ames focussed his energy on ameliorating the components of the democratic system: the electoral mechanism for one, and the quality of candidates to municipal office, for another. He also worked ardently on the operational level of municipal government. His aim was to introduce principles of meritocracy and scientific management into the municipal administration.

Ames attacked the way electoral lists were compiled, to ensure more honest elections, and to see that the electoral law was applied more strictly. He asserted that corrupt practices, even if used to elect an honest man, were simply unjustifiable.[33] Ames denounced all types of electoral corruption, from "list stuffing"[34] and "telegraphing" (act of voting for someone else)[35] to electoral bribes.[36] For him, "corruption and a plentiful fund for election expenses were synonymous terms."[37]

His written work announces a resolute and sustained action. The quantitative analysis of his *City Council Diaries* reveals, however, that only 2.5 per cent of his four hundred and forty six

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[33] H.B. Ames, "Christians in Politics".

[34] VEL, *Election Frauds. How Can They Be Prevented?*.

[35] VEL, *Annual Report of the Volunteer Electoral League*, p.10-11.

[36] H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.102.

[37] Ibid.

interventions dealt with electoral fraud. One should not automatically conclude that his discourse and action were not one, since some of the measures to eradicate electoral fraud that he advocated were ratified a few years before he was elected alderman.[38] In fact, Ames' first involvement in municipal politics was through the VEL, and it was in this context that he worked zealously to eliminate electoral corruption. To counter telegraphing, the VEL initiated an identification card system. Men surveying electoral districts wrote a physical description of each eligible voter on a card which was then used on election day.[39] In 1897, Ames proposed an amendment to the city charter which would allow the city to sue telegraphers and the men that employed them.[40] He also asked that the legal department be consulted as to the legality of aldermen paying the water tax of their electors.[41] For Ames, democracy would work best if rules were followed such as making sure that only qualified voters voted. By qualified voters Ames meant those who had paid their taxes themselves, not those who had been bought by unscrupulous aldermen. It becomes evident that Ames never questioned the value of the electoral system itself; what he challenged was fraudulent practices. He was consistent with his rhetoric: he denounced electoral corruption, conceived of ways to purify elections and tried to apply these ways.

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[38] "Electoral League Charter Changes", *Montreal Star*, December 26, 1894.

[39] The description of each voter, obtained by personal visitation, included: name, registered residence, qualification, occupation, height, build, complexion, whiskers, color of eyes, age and peculiarities. H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.103.

[40] "Election Act. Police Court Given no Power to Act", *Montreal Star*, May 19, 1897.

[41] "Conseil Municipal", *La Patrie*, December 19, 1899.

For the most part, his electoral reform strategies were well received. Many prominent men showed their support by contributing substantial sums to the VEL's fund.[43] The *Montreal Star* showered the new organisation and its president with praise.[44] Others commented favourably on his achievements.[45] W.D. Lighthall wrote to a Mr. Paine of Boston that:

> Party machines live by the spoils, and the spoils inevitably introduce corruption, so that any means of exposing and putting down corruption is doubtless important, and a very perfect system which worked effectively here some years ago was the Volunteer Electoral League of Mr. H.B. Ames, M.P. of Montreal which eliminated that element for the time.[46]

When the VEL was created, there was a desperate need for electoral reform. *La Presse* observed: "La corruption électorale, la fraude, l'emploi de ce qu'on appelle vulgairement les *télégraphes* est devenu non seulement un scandale, mais a pris des proportions que l'expression de l'électorat en est faussé."[47] The editor of the French daily, like Ames, was asserting his faith in the democratic system by condemning electoral fraud. The newspaper suggested the use of an electoral card where the name, the age, the occupation and the residence of the voter would be identified.[48]

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[43] "Subscribers to the V.E.L. Fund 1895-96", **Ames Papers, MS644.**

[44] *Montreal Star*, February 1, 1894. "The Volunteer Electoral League", *Montreal Star*, " October 21, 1895,

[45] "Mr. G.A. Cross' Lecture Yesterday Evening" and "A Popular Testimonial for Ames" February 8, 1896, January 31, 1898.

[46] W.D. Lighthall, Letter to Robert Treat Paine", **WDLP, MG29D93, Vol.1, Correspondence 1908-1919**.

[47] "La Carte électorale", *La Presse*, February 4, 1893.

[48] "La Carte électorale", *La Presse*, February 9, 1893.

This system resembled the one Ames would later adopt but was not as extreme as Ames' identification scheme would be. It was reported in *La Patrie* that VEL men knocked at doors, took notes, but never mentioned why.[49] The paper portrayed the VEL as an elite organisation whih did not have to explain its actions.

The space that both the *Montreal Star* and *La Presse* devoted to the VEL testifies to the importance of the topic at the time. The reforms suggested, nonetheless, did not seem to surprise anyone. Ames's electoral reform strategies were not departing from the traditional framework of intervention. "There was law enough" he once said, "but no one seemed willing to undertake its enforcement."[50] Ames thus funnelled his energy towards the enforcement of the law. He never questioned the inherent value of electoral law, or of the democratic system; he only laboured to apply the law, so democracy could truly win the day.

When *La Presse* first mentioned the VEL, it offered mixed congratulations, stating it was an excellent institution which would have the newspaper's support if it remained loyal to its program and was content with insuring that elections were honest.[51] But in the same issue, the French daily reported:

> Les employés du département du greffier de la cité se plaignent plus que jamais de la peine que leur cause la Ligue des Volontaires municipaux. Il ne se passe pas de jours sans qu'une cinquantaine de gens s'adressent à eux pour faire corriger l'inscription de leur nom sur les listes électorales, et quarante-neuf fois sur cinquante on découvre que l'erreur

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[49] *La Patrie*, December 1895.

[50] H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.102.

[51] "La Volunteer League", *La Presse*, January 3, 1894.

n'existe que dans l'imagination des volontaires.[52]

A week later, publishing a letter from Ames concerning the aims of the VEL, the editor affixed next to it his reservation towards the League:

> La Ligue n'a raison d'être que si elle prend en main la défense des électeurs, qui faute de temps ou d'argent, ne peuvent se défendre eux-mêmes, et c'était certainement vouloir, au contraire, fausser les listes électorales que de mettre les ouvriers ayant travaillé et travaillant pour la corporation dans l'obligation de perdre une journée de travail pour comparaître devant les réviseurs ou de se voir rayer des rôles municipaux.[53]

Helbronner, always on the look out for any form of exploitation or injustices towards workers, revealed his fear that the VEL was just another elite organisation trying to impose its own conception of social order on the labouring classes, a conception that did not recognize that working men had a legitimate place in government and a role to play.

La Presse was not alone in its early denunciation of the VEL. Some thought that the systematic revision of electoral lists was an excessive expense and an overly arduous task for the reviewers.[54] A small group questioned the legality of Ames identification cards,[55] but on this issue, the *Star* quickly retorted that only the corrupted elements of society would refuse to conform to identification cards.[56]

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[52] "La Ligue des Volontaires Municipaux", *La Presse*, January 3, 1894.

[53] "La Volunteer League", *Le Presse*, January 10, 1894.

[54] "Electoral League Charter Changes", *Montreal Star*, December 28, 1894.

[55] "At the Polls To-Day", *Montreal Star*, February 1, 1896.

[56] Ibid.

The fight against electoral fraud illustrates how Ames and most of his contemporaries kept faith in a democratic system where citizens elected their representatives. Ames insisted that electors who tended to neglect their civic duty should be strongly encouraged to go to the polls, since if they vote, they will make the good choice.[57] He believed "the heart of the people [was] right."[58] The VEL stated that it would intervene only when a "bad" and a "good" candidate faced each other, implying that under normal circumstances, citizens would elect a just and honest man.[59] Ames was definitively convinced of the rightness of the established democratic electoral process.

A Completely Democratic Municipal Administration?

If on first impression it seems that Ames shared the same preoccupation as Helbronner in terms of efficient democracy, what distinguishes them in terms of their perception of the social order was Ames's conception of who belonged at city hall. As much as Ames was concerned with honest elections, he was consumed by the "quality" of candidates for public office as he thought that once elected, they became the best ramparts against corruption. "If I were forced to choose between permitting the angel Gabriel to frame the laws," he declared in a conference, "leaving it for Satan to enforce them, or the reverse, I should certainly say let Satan do its worst at legislation, provided Gabriel has the interpretation and the enforcement."[60] Ames attributed many virtues to the perfect

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[57] H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.106.

[58] H.B. Ames, "Some Problems of Municipal Government", p.91.

[59] Volunteer Electoral League, *Constitution of the Volunteer Electoral League*, (Montreal: May 1892).

[60] H.B. Ames, "Political Parties".

candidate. On different occasions, he mentioned honesty,[61] worth,[62] loyalty,[63] uprightness,[64] and honour.[65] The desirable candidate had already proven himself, his name was honourable,[66] his integrity unattackable,[67] and his reputation stainless.[68] It is clear that in this context of public recognition, a rich man had more chance to prove himself of worthy reputation than a labourer would.

Ames manifestly preferred businessmen as candidates for municipal honours. All the candidates supported by the VEL in the 1893 municipal elections belonged to the business world.[69] When Ames agreed to his nomination in 1898, he specified that it was because two businessmen promised they would be candidates at the next municipal elections.[70] Ames did not think that

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[61] H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.103 and "Christians in Politics".

[62] H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.108

[63] H.B. Ames, "Political Parties".

[64] *Ibid.*, and "Christians in Politics".

[65] VEL, *Electoral Frauds. How Can They Be Prevented?*, p.5

[66] H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.107

[67] VEL, *Constitution of the Volunteer Electoral League*, p.1.

[68] VEL, *Electoral Frauds. How Can They Be Prevented?*, p.8. and H..B. Ames "Christians in Politics".

[69] He also said that "a businessman of recognized ability and sterling integrity" received his support in 1894. H.B. Ames, "The Machine in Honest Hands", p.104.

[70] "Mr. Ames Is a Candidate", *Montreal Star*, January 17, 1898.

everyone was fit to become alderman or mayor. He firmly believed in property qualification.[71] Indeed, he took the initiative to propose an amendment to the charter which aimed at increasing those qualifications.[72]

Ames revealed that he believed that not only successful businessmen, such as himself, were better equipped to administer the city but they also had a duty to do so. He clearly championed a hierarchical society where the elite would handle the affairs of the working class. In his words: "The strong shall bear the burdens of the weak, for this joint stock company [the municipal government], unlike all others, should be run on the principle that the smaller the stockholder and the greater his hardships, the stronger his claim for consideration and help."[73]

Not all shared Ames's idea of who was best suited to administer the city and see that the interests of citizens were served. Not surprisingly, the ones who were welcomed to City Hall embraced his conception. For instance, the editor of *The Star* subscribed to the idea.[74] *The Pen*, a literary weekly, advised electors to get informed on the business credentials of candidates.[75] All the municipal candidatures that *La Patrie* sponsored were "indépendant [s] de fortune" or

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[71] In Montreal, for a man to be elected mayor or alderman he had to possess property worth $10 000 (mayor) or more than $2 000 for alderman.

[72] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, September 30,1898. **Ames Papers, MS644.**

[73] H.B. Ames, "The Advantages of Good Municipal Government".

[74] *Montreal Star*, October 18, 1892, October 26, 1892, January 17, 1894, January 10, 1896.

[75] "The Municipal Struggle", *The Pen*, January 14, 1898.

businessmen.[76] And although Helbronner had a different conception of who belonged to city hall, he still welcomed Ames's candidacy to public office, citing the very same attributes Ames found essential in a candidate:

> C'est avec plaisir que la Presse verrait siéger M. Ames au conseil de ville. Riche, instruit, intègre, connaissant à fond les questions municipales, pouvant consacrer aux fonctions d'échevin tout le temps qu'elles demandent, M. Ames a toutes les qualités nécessaires pour faire un bon échevin.[77]

But if a certain part of the population supported Ames's strategies, those who were excluded from the decision making process through Ames's criterion, objected to being relegated to the status of mere observers.[78] *La Patrie*, for one, attacked Ames for his elitism:

> Il a daigné descendre des hauteurs ou il trônait avec orgueil appuyé par le Star et les grands propriétaires qui ignorent la puissance du vote et qui croient que les ouvriers qui contribue pour une très large part au trésor civique, n'ont pas le droit de se protéger en envoyant au Conseil de Ville des échevins pour y défendre leurs intérêts."[79]

Some of his colleagues reproved him for being too dictatorial: "We don't want any dictators in our committee, like Ald. Ames with his high dignity," blurted Ald. Lamarche, while Ald. Ouimet "thought

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[76] "Candidatures municipales", *La Patrie*, January 29, 1898.

[77] "Élections municipales", *La Presse*, January 14, 1898. The editor reiterated his support on January 17, 1898.

[78] *Montreal Star*, January 13, 1893. "Aldermanic Qualifications", Central Trade and Labor Council, no title, "Another Assembly of Knights of Labor Decides to Fight for the Abolition of Property Qualification", "Would Have Large Labour Representation in Montreal Council", in *Montreal Star*, January 14, 1893. January 3, 1894, August 27, 1895, August 22, 1902.

[79] "Quartier St-Antoine", *La Patrie*, January 21, 1898.

the chairman had taken too much on his shoulders, and was inclined to go too fast. He had not called a meeting for three weeks and seemed to act without the aid of the committee."[80]

Ames's "elitist" views were not shared by the MCTC which presented to the city council a resolution requesting the abolition of property qualification.[81] "A Tenant" simply asked: "Why should it be an impossibility, as it is at present, for a tenant, who is not a proprietor, to be nominated as an alderman?"[82] Perhaps more to the point were W.D.'s comments:

> It is surprising that the young men composing the Electoral League are not more progressive. Surely they must have seen by this time that the fact that a man owning $2,000 worth of property did not make him more honest than a man who had nothing. Yet they have to support wealth instead of worth.[83]

Echoing W.D., Omer Héroux , journalist for *Le Devoir* wrote:

> Les circonstances peuvent être différentes ailleurs, mais à Montréal il ne semble pas que la qualification foncière ait jamais fermé la porte de l'Hôtel de Ville à un malhonnête homme ou à un farceur, tandis qu'elle a empêché d'arriver aux affaires, des hommes qui auraient été fort utiles à la ville.[84]

W.D. went even further, advocating nearly universal suffrage: "The laboring classes of Montreal want to throw the gates of the Council open, as they ought to be for every qualified men (and female too for that matter), voter of the city, for then and not until then, shall we have a truly representative

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[80] "The Civic Loan", *The Montreal Gazette*, February 26, 1901.

[81] "Conseil fédéré", *La Presse*, April 8, 1902.

[82] A Tenant, "Tenant's Rights", *Montreal Star*, January 15, 1898.

[83] W.D. "Electoral Reform League", *Montreal Star*, January 4, 1894.

[84] Omer Héroux, "La qualification foncière", *Le Devoir*, January 25, 1912.

council of the people."[85]

In sum, the "excluded" wished for, just like Helbronner championed, a restructuring of the electoral system which would institutionalize their presence on the municipal scene and give them a voice and a political role at the local level. Their requests clearly illustrated that they had a new conception of what the social order should be, a conception that Ames and his peers did not share.

A Meritocracy: The New Way.

Ames was not content just to "reform" electoral practices, he also advocated a reform of the municipal administration. He supported a meritocracy where patronage and its consequence, corruption, would disappear. He unambiguously stated that: "Public office is a public trust and to the victor does not belong the spoils."[86] This was, in a way, a departure from current practices.[87] In the United States, Tammany men had no shame in admitting that "Tammany is for the spoils system and when we go in we fire every anti-Tammany man from office that can be fired under the law."[88] They were, however, being challenged by reformers who advocated civil service reforms. As a result, the American Congress passed the Pendleton Act in 1883. For Ames patronage led to: "The distribution of public offices among 'heelers' and incapables whose only claim for recognition is that they brought

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[85] W.D., "The Electoral League and Property Qualification", *Montreal Star*, January 11, 1894.

[86] H.B. Ames, "Christians In Politics".

[87] "Spoils to the Victor" and "The Spoils System", *Montreal Star*, November 12, 1892 and February 24, 1893.

[88] William Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall. A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics.* (New York, Dutton Paper Back; 1963), p.12.

in so many votes at the last election."[89] He was distressed that positions were sought in the health committee "by aldermen more interested in the distribution of patronage than in the protection of public health."[90] In a course on municipal government, he told his students:

> If the public service is looked upon merely as an asylum for an alderman's poor relations and broken down friends, it is not surprising that the dignity of public office and the title such as Mayor and Alderman, or head of a civic department, once regarded as an honor, becomes a reproach.[91]

For Ames, it was time that the municipal administration recovered its honour and distinction, and this could be done by implementing a meritocracy. Over thirty per cent of his interventions in committee meetings and in the Council were directed towards the elimination of patronage and the eradication of corruption. His actions were multiple and diversified. He proposed two strategies to reduce "spoils practices": one, that civic contracts be tendered and awarded to the lowest bidder "responsible and trustworthy", and the other, that the civic administration promote the capable ones and fire the useless.[92] He also suggested the introduction of a committee in charge of studying job applications and recommending the best candidate for the position.[93] When there was the question of policemen purchasing their positions, he asked for an investigation of the registry of police

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[89] H.B. Ames, "Christian in Politics".

[90] H.B. Ames, "The Duties and Limitations of the Municipal Board of Health", p.3.

[91] H.B. Ames, *Abstract of a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal. Delivered in Connection with the Young's Men Christian Association of Montreal*, p.8.

[92] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, October 11, 1899. **Ames Papers, MS644**.

[93] Ibid., September 6,1898.

employees.[94]

Ames's constant interventions to counter the efforts of patronage "addicts" made him the watchdog of the Council. The Health Committee waited for a day when Ames was absent to adopt a resolution allowing them to award their friends coal contracts.[95] After exposing the difficulty in "purifying" the municipal administration because of the stubbornness of some of his colleagues, Ames urged people to "kindly remember the limitations under which reformers serve and be as charitable with us as you can".[96]

Even though not all aldermen agreed with Ames's meritocracy (for instance, Alderman Roy publicly complained of the lack of patronage in the Police committee[97] and in the Health committee[98]), most people heartily welcomed Ames's conception. The *Star* supported the principle of a meritocracy stating time and time again that public function positions should be awarded according to merit.[99] *La Presse* also took this position, backing a system of promotion based on merit,[100] while the Knights of Labor officially condemned patronage practices.[101]

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[94] Ibid., December 6, 1898.

[95] Ibid., September 21, 1900.

[96] H.B. Ames, "The Duties and Limitations of the Municipal Board of Health", p.15.

[97] "He Has No Patronage", *Montreal Star*, September 27, 1900.

[98] "L'hygiène de la ville", *La Patrie*, February 25, 1898.

[99] *Montreal Star*, February 11 1893, October 26, 1894, March 26, 1896, January 17,1899.

[100] "À l'Hôtel de Ville. La Promotion", *La Presse*, December 4, 1896.

[101] *Montreal Star*, August 1, 1898.

If most believed in a meritocracy, they did not necessarily think that Ames was the man to enforce the principle. *La Patrie*, accusing him of "practising intrigue" and of being zealous for the Tories, advised its readership to always be wary of him.[102] If *La Presse* did not hesitate to support Ames's candidature in 1898,[103] in 1901 the daily reported that: "L'échevin Ames n'a pas dit à ses auditeurs de Rochester, que le népotisme, le favoritisme règne à l'hôtel de ville depuis l'avènement de la Réforme, et que lui, l'échevin Ames est le plus ardent défenseur de ce système injuste."[104] But six months later, the editor specified:

> Il a surgi sous le nom de réforme un parti que la presse a fortement combattu. Nous avons dénoncé ses méthodes, que nous trouvions trop étroites, mesquines et trop lentes. Mais c'est déjà un bonheur pour la ville que de pouvoir dire que nos chefs n'ont jamais cessé, un instant de ce conduire en honnêtes gens [...] bien que nous n'approuvions pas la manière de gouverner, nous ne voudrions pas les faire sortir du Conseil. Leur présence y est nécessaire, parce qu'elle protège la cité contre les coups de main et qu'elle crée autour du Conseil de Ville une atmosphère de sincérité et de droiture qui valent bien d'autres qualités."[105]

The principle of a meritocracy was thus widely accepted, but Ames was not always perceived as its defender, despite the fact that he was one of the chief exponents of the concept at meetings and in Council where he argued for the elimination of patronage and corruption. Could he have been misunderstood or was he perceived as a perpetrator of patronage by advocating his own

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[102] "M. Ames", *La Patrie*, December 11, 1899.

[103] "Les Canadiens n'hésiteront pas à se prononcer pour M. Ames. dont la droiture bien connue nous promet un échevin honnête, conciliant et prêt à rendre justice à tous, sans distinction de race, religion.... ou de quartier" in "Les élection municipales", *La Presse*, January 29, 1898.

[104] "Un discours regrettable", *La Presse*, May 13, 1901.

[105] "Le futur conseil de ville", *La Presse*, January 17, 1902.

as the only worthy members of government? After all, it is true that his conception of what the municipal administration ought to be certainly called for the presence of experts at city hall, and where else than in business and professional circles (thus among his friends) could one recruit civil servants?

Scientific Management, or Just A Way to Secure a Job?

Closely linked with the concept of a meritocracy was the principle of scientific management.[106] Frederick Taylor's concern with efficiency permeated every branch of society. In municipal administration, there arose by the turn of the century, new accounting and inventory procedures, and planning departments. William Scott argues that scientific management created an elite aristocracy with powers vested in administrative technicians.[107] Ames certainly fitted the profile of American city planners who believed that their expertise and skills made them more qualified to plan urban development than the average citizen. They also believed that their "professionalism" would eliminate political conflict and inefficiency.[108] Ames believed that the city should be in the

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[106] H.B. Ames, *Abstract of a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal. Delivered in Connection with the Young's Men Christian Association of Montreal*, p.9.

[107] William Scott, "Organization Government: The Prospects of a Truly Participative System", *Public Administration Review*, Vol.29, no1, 1969, p.43-53.

[108] John D. Fairfield, "The Scientific Management of Urban Space: Professional City Planning and the Legacy of Progressive Reform", *Journal of Urban History*, Vol.2, no2, 1994, p.179-204.

hands of "men of expert training and high professional skill."[109] Reflecting on Paris' system of public health, he stressed that Paris was second to none because of its "executive emphasis" and the presence of experts in committees.[110] In other words he appreciated the commission of experts who enjoyed wide powers to have their recommendations implemented.[111]

Ames conceived the municipal government as a business which should observe the same sound financial principles that big companies followed. More precisely it should be seen as a "joint stock or cooperative enterprise" in which citizens were shareholders, and in this capacity had the responsibility to elect the best administrators.[112] In turn, aldermen had a duty to ensure that the municipal enterprise was not buried under the weight of a debt which it could not assume. The debt was indeed one of Ames's constant preoccupations. He deplored that the municipal government was in a position of "a householder who has mortgaged his property so that it demands half of the revenues to meet the annual interest charges."[113]

His discourse on scientific management indicates that he was not against municipalisation of public services. He contended that "municipal socialism" was advancing[114] and he praised the

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[109] H.B. Ames, "Some Problems of Municipal Government", p.90.

[110] H.B. Ames, "La santé publique", *La Presse*, September 1, 1900.

[111] H.B. Ames, "La santé publique", *La Presse*, August 13, 1900.

[112] H.B. Ames, "The Advantage of Good Municipal Government".

[113] H.B. Ames, "The Duties and Limitations of the Municipal Board of Health", p.14.

[114] H.B. Ames, "The Advantages of Good Municipal Government".

Australian system of state ownership and operation of public utilities.[115] The civic function filled with experts, like himself, could certainly take on those responsibilities, he believed, and it would offer the best services at a minimum cost.

His action matched his words. Nearly forty percent of his interventions at City Hall dealt with management questions.[116] His presence in the municipal council itself illustrates his commitment to secure a competent civic administration. Ames was after all an experienced businessman. He was for many years one of the directors of the successful Ames-Holden Co. Ltd. of Montreal, and he sat on the boards of other companies such as the Dominion Guaranteed Company, the Great West Life Insurance Company, and the Royal Victoria Life Insurance Company.[117]

In council, Ames focussed his energy on saving money.[118] He showed his expertise when he applied his vast administrative knowledge to the municipal budget. Looking to avoid budget catastrophes, he was concerned about each dollar spent.[119] He did not always advocate government control of public works per se, instead he favoured the lowest tender. But when the health committee considered asking for tenders to collect the garbage, Ames opposed the move.[120] In this case, he favoured municipalisation of services because it was cheaper and would lead to better

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[115] H. B. Ames, A Canadian in Australia", p.221-222.

[116] See *Table II* in Appendix A.

[117] William Henry Atherton, p.618.

[118] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, September 12, 1898. **Ames Papers, MS644**.

[119] Ibid.

[120] "No Scavenging By Contract", *Montreal Star*, February 11, 1899.

results than a private company.

Ames's conception of "municipal business" corresponded to the thinking of those who supported his aldermanic candidature. They specified that only professionals should be elected to office. His supporters described him as an honest men who knew the business of the city.[121] *La Presse*, though often criticising how Ames's Reform Party worked, still expressed faith in his administrative judgement.[122] The editor noted that Ames worked hard and achieved a lot. Civic finances were improved and municipal administration was better. Still, the editor argued that the Reform Party had not done enough; social reforms were still in waiting.[123]

The debate around aldermen's and mayor's pay which arose in the last decade of the 1900's, illustrates new ways of thinking about the civic administration. A seat at the Council was no longer automatically considered as leisure or an act of charity. It was considered by some as a full-time job. But for Ames, since his salary was never an important issue (he was ready to sacrifice his own if the need for money was urgent[124]) public office was still the work for an elite, with the exception that it should be an elite of experts. Buying into Taylorism, most social reformers and citizens in general agreed that the new reality of the city commanded the presence of experts at city hall, but these experts were not necessarily thought of as philanthropists; this was Ames's view alone.

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[121] "H.B. Ames. Citizens Want to Make Him a Candidate to the City Council", *Montreal Star*, January 13 and 14 1898.

[122] "La sortie de l'échevin Smith", *La Presse*, January 13, 1902.

[123] "La Réforme", *La Presse*, January 26, 1903.

[124] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, May 15, 1899, **Ames Papers, MS644**.

What can be said about Ames's political reforms? First, their relative importance should be noted; they were the basis of more than seventy per cent of his reform impulse. Also, his electoral reforms did not part from the past in the way the social order was conceived. For an honest government, citizens should vote freely; they should count on the presence of honest and righteous candidates who would be approved by the reformists; and finally, elections should be honestly conducted. These conditions ensured, according to Ames, the democratic nature of municipal elections. Ames, like John Stuart Mills, conceived that a good government was made of the elite, of those who alone could decide the goodness of a candidate and judge the honesty of electoral practices. Ames aimed less at a reform of social rules than in applying the existing ones.

Who did Ames believe would benefit from improved morality in civic affairs and of the professionalisation of the public function? Ultimately, he believed, everyone would. With a government of experts, the city finances and the services it offered could only improve. But more particularly it was those who were familiar with the administrative wheel, who had a business sense and had already proven they were capable that would find a career in the new bureaucracy. These men were to secure a job at city hall. It is doubtful that the motives of Ames to actuate a meritocracy was to assure himself and his peer a place in government. A rich and successful businessman, he did not need to carve out a position for himself in politics. His involvement in municipal politics was obviously motivated by his high sense of duty. He, as a member of the intellectual elite, had a responsibility towards his fellow men. Nevertheless, in the grand scheme, the "excluded" from the municipal government were to remain excluded. Ames's political reforms consecrated the hierarchy of social classes.

Social Reforms, Not the Focus of His Action.

It was in the particular social context of turn-of-the-century-Montreal, where a large part of the population experienced discomfort, unhealthiness and poverty, in other words, misery, that Ames conducted his 1896 sociological survey. In his report, he disclosed three inter-related concerns: public health, working class welfare and social ethics. He thought that public health and public morals would improve once the living and working conditions of the labouring classes were upgraded. It was indeed to the lack of knowledge of the poorest elements of society that he imputed the deterioration of public health.[125]

Public Health, Important but not at all Cost.

Ames directly associated high mortality rates with the presence of privy pits and rear tenements.[126] He thought it was necessary to pass housing legislation since it could have a positive impact on public health, wishing that workers could live in decent tenements with no risk to their health. [127] When he raised the issue of privy pits, his words took the form of a ferocious attack.[128] "That insanitary abomination, the out-of-door-pit-in-the-ground privy, is still to be found in the densely populated heart of our city [...] The privy is a danger to public health and to morals," he

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[125] H.B. Ames, "A History of Plumbing in Montreal" in *City Council Diaries*, March 7, 1898, **Ames Papers MS644.**

[126] H.B. Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, p.45.

[127] Ibid., p.22.

[128] H.B. Ames, "The Housing of the Working Classes", p.105.

wrote.[129]

His action outshone his words. When first elected alderman, he requested to be appointed to the health committee.[130] The quantitative analysis of his aldermanic diaries indicates that sixty eight of his one hundred and twenty-six interventions concerning social reform dealt with public health. So seriously he took his work, that he did not even cancel a meeting when Queen Victoria died since "there were questions of public health which could not be delayed."[131]

Ames proposed motions to abolish privy pits,[132] worked extremely hard on the civic hospital project,[133] and intervened in favour of compulsory vaccination.[134] He went to Paris to study services protecting public health.[135] As alderman-member, and later president of the Health Committee, Ames started a crusade against privy pits. He inspected whole areas, investigated their number and their state, consulted experts, and wrote letters to local newspapers.[136] He was responsible for the charter amendments aiming at the elimination of privy pits and rear tenements.

But his action did not bring great changes. The qualitative analysis of his action shows that

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[129] H.B. Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, p.45.

[130] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, 25 novembre 1898.

[131] "Two Little Bills", *The Montreal Gazette*, January 26, 1901.

[132] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, March 21, 1898, March 20, 1899, March 20 and April 6 1900.**Ames Papers, MS644**.

[133] Ibid., July 7 and October 20, 1902.

[134] Ibid., May 5, 1902.

[135] H.B. Ames, "La santé publique", *Le Presse*, August 13, 1900.

[136] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, March 16, 1898. **Ames Papers, MS644**.

he was not ready to go all the way to safeguard public health. He categorically refused that the municipality incur a debt. He often repeated that the health committee had to adhere to the budget already voted on. He was well aware of the extensive powers of this committee: "Entre tous les services municipaux", he asserted, "ce département est le seul qui puisse, en cas d'urgence comme une épidémie, par exemple, outrepasser les lois en prenant les mesures qu'il jugerait à propos, quelques soient les dépenses, et le Conseil doit fournir les fonds, bon gré, mal gré."[137] But Ames still acted within the limits of municipal appropriations. He preferred to suspend garbage collection than to spend money that the committee did not have at its disposal,[138] even if his expert, Dr. Laberge, pleaded that it needed to be done immediately.[139] Ames pointed out instead that money could not be taken from the reserve fund "since the new charter specifies that this is for *unforeseen expenses* and there is nothing unforeseen about the present exigency."[140] He added that the committee could also not borrow from the annual loan, commenting that "We have, I hope, put an end to borrowing for current maintenance."[141] He asserted that the department of health could perfectly collect garbage with the money that it received if there were no longer a distribution of

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[137] "La santé publique", *La Presse*, February 23, 1900.

[138] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, October 17, 1898. **Ames Papers, MS644.** "Train Milk Inspection", *Montreal Star*, October 7, 1898.

[139] Dr. Laberge, *Montreal Star*, October 7, 1898.

[140] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, May 15, 1899, **Ames Papers, MS644.**

[141] Ibid.

patronage.[142]

This attitude concurs with his efforts to implement scientific management. From the minute he was elected alderman, he fought to have the charter interpreted with less laxity. He believed the time when aldermen "created" emergencies so they could draw money from the public fund had to end. Ames was definitively an administrator before a social reformer. To him, it was more important to straighten how municipal affairs than to clean the streets and perhaps avoid the spread of diseases.

His efforts to improve public health were greatly publicised. *La Patrie*, although a fervent opponent of Ames, recognized that he suggested many ways to improve public health which should be of great use for the people.[143] The *Montreal Star* extensively covered his initiatives for the construction of the civic hospital.[144] Both the *Star* and the *Gazette* showered him with praise.[145] *La Presse* also applauded his initiatives in matters of public health.[146] "A Practical Plumber" wrote a letter to the *Star* to congratulate Ames for his efforts.[147] Another citizen thought that: "The public should be grateful for the courageous actions of Ald. Ames in introducing a by-law to abolish the

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[142] "Le service des vidanges", *La Patrie*, November 29, 1898.

[143] "L'hygiène public", *La Patrie*, November 24, 1897.

[144] "Determined to Have an Hospital", "Come Soon or Late Hospital Shall Be Built, Says Alderman Ames", "Ald Ames Again Appealed to the Finance Committee for Funds for Hospital", *Montreal Star*, September 8, July 8 and 12, 1902.

[145] "Workingmen for Ames", "Health and Fire" *Montreal Star*, January 31, 1898, and January 25, 1901. "The Civic Hospital", "Ames' Efforts Fail", *The Montreal Gazette*, February 16 and April 11, 1901.

[146] "Questions importantes" and "Affaires civiques", *La Presse*, May 3 and 7 1898.

[147] "A Practical Plumber's View", *Montreal Star*, December 22, 1900.

privy-pits from houses within the city."[148] The principal labour organisations also supported Ames' efforts to eradicate privy pits.[149] And the Municipal Association voted by a majority of eighty-eight percent in favour of the elimination of privy pits.[150]

Although he seemed to enjoy great support, nevertheless, of those who raised their voice to enhance public health conditions, many hoped for more radical and immediate interventions. Helbronner was especially sorry that nothing substantial was being done in the matter of the horridly high infant mortality rate.[151] He would have liked to have seen milk distribution municipalised.[152] The feeling amongst certain people was that the end justified the means, anything should be tried to improve public health. Already in 1894, one alderman stated that the dangers of contamination justified not only the cost associated with the construction of a civic hospital but the means to gather the revenue.[153] Money should simply not be an obstacle to achieve better public health: "La question de dépenses est celle qui préoccupe le moins les citoyens, l'excellence du service passe dans leur esprit avant toute autre considération," asserted *La Presse*.[154] Dr. Laberge, commenting on the difficulty of forcing "poor" owners to change their privy pits for water closets, suggested that the city

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[148] Citizen, *Montreal Star*, May 9, 1898.

[149] "The Sanitary Measure"and "Labor Answer", *Montreal Star*, June 28, 1898 and August 28, 1899.

[150] *Montreal Star*, 29 Octobre 29, 1897.

[151] "La mortalité infantile", *Le Presse*, July 16, 1907.

[152] Editorial, "Les bébés et la municipalisation", *La Presse*, July 31, 1906.

[153] "Diphteria, Scarlet Fever", *Montreal Star*, November 15, 1894.

[154] "La question des vidanges", *La Presse*, March 23, 1893.

pay for the modification.[155] There was thus a sentiment that whatever the cost, all possible means should be considered to improve Montreal's public health. To these people, Ames's strategies must have appeared quite moderate, as Ames, the skilled administrator, always preferred to work within the municipal budget and to remain conservative in the interpretation of the rules.

Working Class Welfare: A Definite Concern.

Ames's concern for public health was directly related to his preoccupation for the welfare of the labouring classes. He particularly aimed his reform strategies in the matter of public health towards workers, and he specified when he put forth his political reforms that he wanted to provide better social benefits to the workers.[156] In fact, the investigation that led to the publication of *The City Below the Hill* can be perceived as a strategy that was specifically aimed at improving the living conditions of workers. Ames was after all trying to convince businessmen to invest in model tenement houses for the labouring classes,[157] a scheme that had been proven successful in England and in some American cities.

Aside from his preoccupation with improving working class housing, Ames also concerned himself with the salaries and working conditions of wage-earners. He indicated that the perfect municipal system would be one where employees worked eight hours, a minimum wage was fixed, and there was a proper resting place for men off-duty. As well, the municipality should provide relief

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[155] La santé publique, *La Patrie*, August 8, 1899.

[156] H.B. Ames, *Abstract of a Course of Ten Lectures on Municipal Administration in Montreal*, p.10.

[157] H.B. Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, p.9 et 30.

works and labour bureaus in times of depression.[158] Deliberating on the Australian system, he stated: "le manufacturier qui bénéficie du tarif de la république doit charger un prix raisonnable au consommateur, payer des salaires raisonnables et ne faire faire son travail que dans des conditions raisonnables."[159]

If Ames addressed working class issues, he did not necessarily adopt a pro-workers' attitude. The term "reasonable" is after all quite elastic. In fact, his discourse reveals a tendency towards the *laissez-faire*. Ames thought that employers should be allowed to adjust salaries according to the market. He sympathised with the workers who received famine wages, but he indicated that he did not want to see the municipality, nor any other level of government, meddle with the laws of economics.

> We cannot interfere with the inscrutable law of supply and demand to raise the workingman's wages. We may feel, I know I do, that the pittance for which many toilers slave is far from sufficient or right. But wages will ever rest at the mark just above the requirements of absolute subsistence.[160]

He believed so much in the "invisible hand" of *laissez-faire* that he could not contemplate any interference to raise the standard of living of the working class above mere subsistence.

His career at city hall further substantiates his social philosophy. Around ten percent of his interventions as alderman dealt with the welfare of workers. One of the first motions he presented

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[158] H.B. Ames, "Municipal Government".

[159] "Employés et employeurs sont unis", *Le Devoir*, October 25, 1911.

[160] H.B. Ames, "The Housing of the Working Classes", p.114.

after he was elected alderman was the institution of a minimum wage for civic employees.[161] The same year he proposed that entrepreneurs who received contracts from the city pay workers a wage not less than twelve and a half cents, that they do not ask their employees to stay more than ten hours out of twenty-four, and that they pay them weekly.[162] Ames once again brought the question of the length of working day in front of the council by proposing that garbage collectors be at work no more than twelve hours, including an hour for lunch and rest.[163] Perhaps more progressive than any of these motions was the one where he proposed that "when permanent employees were injured or sick, when duly certificated by a medical man, they should be given half pay for a period not exceeding fifteen days."[164] It was an innovative social reform proposal.

Although he was trying to legislate working conditions, he was certainly not responding to the demands of labour. Despite all his motions dealing with working conditions, Ames's sphere of action was rather limited. He insisted that the municipality should have more freedom in firing employees.[165] When his colleagues suggested increasing the salary of the employees of the Health department, he vigorously protested, stating that the committee did not have the resources available. He opposed the municipal governments artificially setting salaries or wages, believing instead that of supply and

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[161] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, February 28, 1898.**Ames Papers MS644.**

[162] Ibid., December 9, 1898.

[163] "The Board of Health", *Montreal Star*, April 27, 1898.

[164] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, September 23, 1902.1898.**Ames Papers MS644**

[165] "Charter Committee Talks it Over" *Montreal Star*, November 20, 1902.

demand should rule. If it is true that Ames, the philanthropist, was concerned about the welfare of the working class, Ames, the administrator, always prevailed, concerned as he was with the limits of the municipal budget.

What did people at the time think of his initiatives? The *Star* underlined the importance of his sociological study by dedicating to it half a page of its sixteen pages, nearly every week for a period of three months. *La Presse* simply praised him for having undertaken this wonderful study.[166] This work alone, the reporter wrote, should draw the vote of workers.[167] The French daily supported Ames candidature because it thought Ames would bring to the table a number of projects aiming at improving the material and moral conditions of the labouring classes.[168] Ames's minimum wage and maximum hours motion was seen as a measure which would ensure that entrepreneurs did not exploit poor labourers.[169] But, compared to some reformers of his day, Ames's strategies in the realm of working conditions appeared very limited. Mr. Griffiths, for example, asked that the different levels of government create permanent jobs, and went on to advocate reducing the number of hours of each employee to better distribute work among the working-class population.[170]

Indeed, Ames' strategy to improve the working-class standard of living was rather

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[166] "Affaires civiques", *La Presse*, October 2, 1897.

[167] "Les élections municipales et le fanatisme", *La Presse*, January 26, 1898.

[168] Ibid. And "Elections municipales", *La Presse*, January 14, 1898

[169] "Affaires civiques", March 14, 1898 and "Notes de l'hôtel de ville", August 4, 1898, *La Presse*.

[170] Griffiths, "Poverty, Its Cause and Cure" dans *Montreal Star*, 9 avril 1894, p.2.

conservative. In more socialist circles, the solutions really departed from past attitudes. Already in 1890, Helbronner mentioned the concept of "worker's houses". He reported that in some countries the government cut taxes so workers can become owners.[171] A journalist of the *Star* suggested low income housing financed by the municipality,[172] and the *Montreal Gazette* applauded the London (U.K.) municipal government for having made "large purchases of land for the erection of workmen's dwellings."[173] They were promoting a kind of welfare state where the municipality came to the rescue of the less fortunate. Ames did not share this vision. According to himself, it was the responsibility of charity associations, or rich philanthropists like him, to save those who could not help themselves, rather than the municipal government.[174]

If Ames was associated with the labour cause, he was manifestly not an official representative of the working class. Workers did not raise formal objections towards Ames's strategies but it is clear that his initiatives did not correspond directly to their demands. The twelve-hours workday that Ames proposed was far from the eight-hours workday that labour organisations were demanding.[175] He did not address the problems of the sweating system, nor of compulsory primary education and child labour, all issues discussed by labour unions. What all this illustrates is that Ames conceived strategies from his own study of the conditions of the working class, and his own preoccupations

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[171] "Habitations ouvrières", *La Presse*, March 22, 1890.

[172] "Municipal Lodging Houses", *Montreal Star*, December 29, 1900.

[173] "Social Legislation", *The Montreal Gazette*, February 28, 1901.

[174] H.B. Ames, *The City Below the Hill*, p.78.

[175] "The Civic Charter", *Montreal Star*, November 12, 1898.

rather than from the claims of workers. Ames, privileged citizen, was very aware of his social responsibility towards the less fortunate and assumed that the best means to fulfill that responsibility was to take them under his charge.

Not A Major Preoccupation: Social Ethics

Ames addressed social ethics in his writings both on public health and on working class welfare. In the "Housing of the Working Classes", he specified that he was interested in the physical [health], material [living and working conditions] and moral welfare of workers.[176] He believed that honesty and morality were not possible without a minimum of comfort. Promiscuity and insalubrity brought vices that nourished depravation. To forget their misery, the unemployed sometimes fell into the abyss of alcoholism.

Ames's interventions at city hall reflect his lack of preoccupations with public moral issues. Only sixteen of his four hundred and forty six interventions dealt with alcohol or gambling houses.[177] He did draw attention to articles published in papers dealing with gambling houses and even asked that the police chief receive instructions to take immediately all possible measures to close these establishments.[178] He also favoured a rule of demoting police captains if saloons were open on Sundays in their districts.[179] But he never tried to ratify propositions forbidding the sale of alcohol

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[176] H.B Ames , "The Housing of the Working Classes", p.103.

[177] See *Table II* in appendix A.

[178] "Les maisons de jeux", *La Patrie*, April 13, 1899.

[179] "Reform to Follow", *The Montreal Gazette*, April 11, 1901.

beverages. However, as a good administrator, he taxed the liquor parlours.[180] If this move can be perceived as a measure to limit the number of saloons or liquor establishments, it can also be seen as a source of revenue for the municipality.

Among his social reform strategies, temperance or gambling houses were not a priority. For him, public morals would be better served when the living and working conditions of labourers were improved. It is true, though, that his lack of initiative could have been dictated by the fact that there was already a strong movement against prohibition in Montreal. *La Patrie* published many articles against prohibition: "La prohibition ne ferait pas disparaître l'alcoolisme et enlèverait à notre gouvernement 7 à 8 millions [sic] de revenues" it reported.[181]

The analysis of his social reforms indicates first that they count for only twenty-eight per cent of his intervention. They were definitively not the main focus of his reform plan. As *La Presse* concluded: "La Réforme a fait de très bonne besogne à l'hôtel de ville; mais uniquement dans la partie administrative."[182] Ames did not accomplish much for the welfare of workers. So respectful of the social order was he, and such an ardent believer in the virtues of the capitalist system, that as a successful businessman he could not conceive of the possibility of changing the economic system or even modifying it greatly. Capitalism was not fundamentally bad; what was bad was the abuse of those who in positions of power did not recognize, nor accept, their social responsibility to challenge the morality of the economic system.

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[180] H.B. Ames, *City Council Diaries*, 22 novembre 1898.

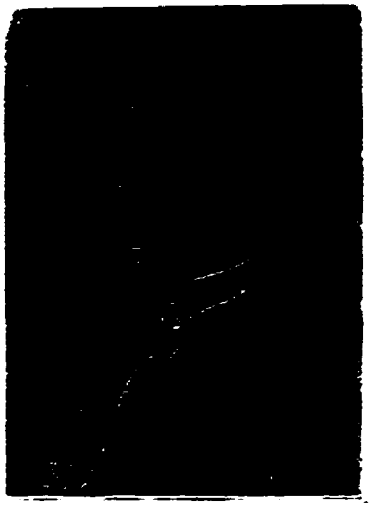
[181] "Ennemi de la prohibition", *La Patrie*, July 28, 1898.

[182] "La Réforme" , *La Presse*, January 26, 1903.

Conclusion

Rather than remembering Ames as a social reformer, the time has come to see him instead as a political reformer. He did not try to change Montreal's social structures. He still believed in the hierarchy of classes. He worked to improve the municipal government, to make it more accountable, professional and "scientific", but he never suggested major social changes. He was first and foremost an enforcer. There were laws and rules, and they needed to be enforced by politicians, and all else would fall into place.

CHAPTER 4
W.D. Lighthall: Practical Thinker.



Mr. W.D. Lighthall is well-known throughout the nation as an enthusiastic advocate of municipal reform. (*Montreal Herald*, April 1904)

Mr. Lighthall's place on the Commission is the natural sequel of a lifetime of devoted civic zeal. (August 29, 1912) **MG29D93, Metropolitan Parks Commission, Volume 4.**

The Limits of Historiography

Novelist, lawyer, philosopher, councillor, and later mayor of Westmount (1900-1903), William Douw Lighthall lived ninety-six years (1857-1954) during which he wrote copiously on a

myriad of topics. Author of three novels,[1] of a collection of poems[2] and of an anthology,[3] he published as well historical studies,[4] and philosophical essays.[5] One can also appreciate his vision and critique of turn-of-the-century-Canadian society through the numerous lectures, as well as articles and letters, he submitted to magazines and newspapers. To the list of his already impressive attributes, can thus easily be added social critic and social reformer. His life, stretching over a century, and distributed equally between the nineteenth and twentieth century, Lighthall should definitively be considered a privileged witness of the birth and development of North American cities, and in particular, of Montreal. Yet, few have seriously studied his philosophy and social outlook. Philosophers Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott provide a good insight into Lighthall's thinking by focussing on his philosophical treatises; they argue that Lighthall aspired to "a single vision in which reason leads to the importance of feeling, and feeling reveals our kinship to the universe as a whole

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[1] *The Young Seigneur* as Wilfrid Châteauclair (Montreal, Drysdale:1888), *The False Chevalier* (Montreal, Grayton:1898), *The Master of Life* (Toronto, Musson:1908).

[2] W.D. Lighthall, *Thoughts, Moods and Ideals*, (Montreal, Witness Printing House: 1887).

[3] W.D. Lighthall, *Songs of the Great Dominion*, (London, Walter Scott:1889).

[4] Among others: *An Account of the Battle of Chateauguay,* (Montreal, Drysdale: 1889), *Montreal after 250 Years*, (Montreal, Grafton: 1892) *Sights and Shrines of Montreal*, (Montréal, Grafton: 1907).

[5] W.D. Lighthall, *Sketch of a New Utilitarianism*, (Montreal, Witness Printing House: 1887). *Spiritualized Happiness Theory*, (Montreal, Witness Printing House: 1890). *Canada, A Modern Nation*, (Montreal, Witness Printing House: 1904). "The Hyperpsych: A New Theory Affecting Humanity", *Humanity the Positivist Review,* F.J. Gould ed. (London, Watts & Co: 1924), p.155-157. *Superpersonalism: The Outer Consciousness: A Biological Entity*, (Montreal, Witness Printing House: 1926).

and to what he calls the Superperson."[6] They conclude: "Lighthall's intuitions supply him with the belief that altruism is generally preferable, indeed with the notion that morality derives from the transcendence of self-interest. This implies that our intuitions suggest strongly a high degree of interdependence."[7] They rightly stress Lighthall's organic view of society (interdependence). If the two philosophers have the merit to have recognized Lighthall as an important Canadian thinker, their analysis of his philosophical outlook does not include Lighthall's other writings, thus their contribution to our understanding of Lighthall's social philosophy remains rather limited.

Not limiting herself to Lighthall's more philosophical work, Lin Buckland also includes in her analysis his novels and poetry. Using an interdisciplinary approach, she shows that Lighthall's social philosophy was consistent with a tradition in Canadian social thought. She contends that he was an idealist, that is, "he believed that mankind should aspire toward a better form of society" and that "his vision of change was of the evolutionary rather than revolutionary type."[8] Yet, she admits that "it is obvious from the number of letters, pamphlets, and clippings relating to municipal affairs in Lighthall's personal papers that this was the area of some of his most intense and sustained activity,"[9] and

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[6] Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott, "The Self-Transcendence of Reason, and Evolutionary Mysticism: Richard M. Bucke and William D. Lighthall", in *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada, 1850-1950*. (Toronto, Wilfrid Laurier University Press: 1981), p.379.

[7] Ibid., p.387.

[8] Lin Buckland, "The Social Philosophy of W.D. Lighthall: A Study of Evolutionary idealism in Canadian Thought, 1890-1930." (M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1979),p.8-9 and 11.

[9] Ibid., p.68 and 67.

concludes that "a more detailed analysis of Lighthall's own role in this municipal reform movement can be made once his personal papers are more accessible."[10]

More recently, Donald Wright describes Lighthall as "an enthusiastic imperialist and uncompromising idealist."[11] Wright also stresses that Lighthall was "not a particular effective reformer."[12] It seems, however, that Lighthall's contribution to the social reform cause should not be solely measured on the shortcomings of the reforms passed. Wright argues that the man never questioned society's values, and concludes that "Lighthall's assessment of society's needs and the solutions he advocated were essentially conservative and often repressive."[13] It will be shown, however, that Lighthall doubted the fairness of a capitalist system which favoured the concentration of wealth in a few hands. This is one of the reasons he supported the municipalisation or the nationalisation of natural monopolies. He was thus questioning the values of the world he lived in.

If Wright is correct with regards to Lighthall's imperial nature,[14] he provides insufficient evidence to draw such a definitive statement about Lighthall as a social reformer. The historian states that "Lighthall very much believed in an elite leadership, a leadership based on training, education and birth," supporting this affirmation by stating that: "Lighthall did not support organized labour's

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Donald A. Wright, "W.D. Lighthall: Sometimes Confederation Poet, Sometimes Urban Reformer". M.A. thesis (history), McGill University, 1991, p.4.

[12] Ibid., p.iii.

[13] Ibid., p.83-84.

[14] See: "W.D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English-Canadian Imperialism, 1880's-1918." *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.32, No.2, 1997, p.134-153.

demands for the end of property qualifications on the right to vote and on the right to run for office,"[15] a statement that he does not substantiate. Even if it was the case, the lack of support for the abolition of property qualification did not make him an elitist. Although Helbronner was very much in favour of Labour representation, neither did he work for the abolition of property qualifications. A thorough analysis of Lighthall's career as social reformer reveals that, like Helbronner, Lighthall made a special effort to consult the labouring classes and even to include them in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, Wright contends that Lighthall was an "uncompromising idealist". Yet he fails to take into account Lighthall's political moves, and the opinions of his contemporaries concerning his actions. For instance, R. S. Somerville, who wrote a short biographical sketch of Lighthall in 1906, labelled him "a practical idealist" and specified that "the dreamer of dreams can be a man of action too."[16] Wright's "uncompromising" does not go hand in hand with Somerville's "practical". It is more appropriate to see Lighthall as a man of action who preferred to compromise to achieve some reforms, rather than be as intransigent who accomplished nothing at all.

Finally, contrary to what Wright maintains, Lighthall did go against the Quebec established order by advocating and working for more state intervention instead of individual philanthropy, at least in relation to child welfare. As it was reported in the first chapter, the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec still thought that it was the Church's duty to take care of the less fortunate; but for Lighthall it was the business of the State.

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[15] Donald Wright, "W.D. Lighthall: Sometimes Confederation Poet, Sometimes Urban Reformer", p.94

[16] R.S. Somerville, "W.D. Lighthall", *The Canadian Magazine*, Vol.26, no.6, April 1906, p.554.

As a social reformer, Lighthall wrote extensively on political, legal and social issues, addressing both the roots of the problem facing the city and possible solutions. Like Ames and Helbronner, he was concerned about such issues as political corruption and the socio-economic conditions of "ordinary" men and women. He was also very interested in child welfare. He not only theorized about these issues but also invested his time, energy and money in attempting to alleviate them. He gathered statistics, drafted bills, lobbied for change, and founded the prominent Union of Canadian Municipalities (UCM), a group that waged war against the monopolistic utilities companies.[17] Lighthall thought that municipalisation of natural monopolies was one way to improve the life of citizens.

Lighthall had a genuine concern for the working class and for the poor. In this respect, he reflected the attitudes of many reformers of the middle class. He was imbued with the Victorian belief that those who are well off should look after the destitute, that they have a duty toward their fellow human beings. He was very much a man of his time buying into the idealism of the Social Gospel. He believed that public spirit was needed in politics, stating that: "Christian Endeaverers

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[17] Mayor O.A. Howland of Toronto is sometimes credited with the foundation of the Union, but Lighthall indicates at many instances that he was the one who came up with the idea of the Union. W.D. Lighthall, "Hiawatha the Great", *The Canadian Law Review*, Vol.23, p.26, "Westmount: A Municipal Illustration", *University of Toronto Studies. History and Economics*, Vol.2, no.1, 1902, p.4. "What the Provincial Unions of Municipalities Have Accomplished", *Canadian Municipal Journal, November 1913.* (No page) **Canadian Union of Municipalities Papers (CUMP), MS800, C.1, F34, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, MCGill University Libraries.** *Valedictory of W.D. Lighthall, K.C., on Retiring from the Honorary Secrataryship of the Union of Canadian Municipalities, August 1919.* Canadian Pamphlet Series, 1919, p.2.

should get into municipal politics."[18]

Noblesse Oblige

Like many of the social reformists of his time, Lighthall came from a well-to-do family. His mother, Margaret Wright, was the daughter of Captain Reverend Hy and the granddaughter of Major Jas Wright, commander of the British settlers of the Chateauguay district in the war of 1812.[19] His father, William Francis, descended from a Lancashire cavalry officer who came to the American colonies with the governor of New York in late seventeenth century. For many years Dean of the notaries of Montreal, William Francis Lighthall earned the respect and admiration of his fellow citizens. At many instances he was asked to run for public office, but he always declined as he preferred to "devote himself to his profession and charities in which he was interested."[20]

Directly descending from the leading families of the old gentry, W.D.'s future was assured. Although he was born in Hamilton, Ontario, Lighthall spent all of his life in Montreal. He went to the prestigious Montreal High School and graduated from McGill University in 1879 with honours degrees in English Literature and History. After travelling in Europe, he returned to his *alma mater* to complete a law degree. He became a successful lawyer and eventually headed the law firm of

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[18] "Good Citizenship", **W.D. Lighthall Papers (WDLP), MG29 Vol.14, Clippings Misc, n.d., National Archives of Canada.**

[19] Henry James Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1912), p.657.

[20] *The Gazette* and *The Montreal Star*, May 10, 1920.

Lighthall and Harwood.[21] A member of numerous clubs and societies, on the executive of countless others, and founder of the Society for Canadian Literature, the Canadian National League and the Westmount Library Club, it comes as no surprise that he was described in the London *Athenaeum* as "a man of wide culture, refined taste and exceptional literary faculty."[22] His life reflected his social outlook, that of an "aristocrat" who had a strong sense of *noblesse oblige.*

His ventures into literature, poetry, history and philosophy symbolize his devotion to the study of humanity. A practising Christian, Lighthall was concerned about his fellow human beings. Throughout his written work, he emphasized that his aim was to alleviate the hardship of the working man and the poor. In a letter to Olivar Asselin, then editor of *Le Devoir*, he claimed that his objective was to improve the life of the less fortunate:

> Unissons nos forces, celles de tous les hommes de bonne volonté- et nous créerons une métropole dans laquelle la vie du plus pauvre sera bonne et belle. Je pense toujours dans cette affaire aux pauvres. Aux hommes ordinaires, et non pas aux riches, qui peuvent toujours prendre soin d'eux-mêmes.[23]

Even if he was not the labour columnist Helbronner was, Lighthall nevertheless seized every opportunity in his public speeches to address working-class issues. As part of the Executive Committee for Emergencies, he moved, for example:

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[21] Henry James Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, first edition, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1898), p.581.

[22] Henry James Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1912), p.657.

[23] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Olivar Asselin, February 16, 1910*, **W.D Lighthall Papers (WDLP), MS216, case 8, file 5, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Libraries.**

> that in view of several recent disputes and difficulties regarding civic salaries, wages and conditions, the civic authorities be respectfully requested to study the question of selecting and appointing a board of representative citizens, including both the city authorities and the civic employees, whose duties it should be to constantly examine into such questions and from whose members or through whose agency, a Board of Arbitration, might be drawn whenever needed.[24]

Note that he demanded that civic employees be active and full members of the suggested Board of Arbitration. Their voice was to be heard and they were to be part of decision making. Lighthall also suggested that a member of the labouring class should be named commissioner on the Parks and Playgrounds Commission,[25] and he made a point of emphasizing that his choice of expert for the same Commission was strongly endorsed by representatives of the Montreal working-class.[26] Furthermore, his insistence to create more parks and playgrounds within the city coincided with labour demands as did his fight for the municipalisation of public utilities.

It should perhaps also be noted that while labour representatives did campaign for more green spaces within the city or inexpensive ways to get to parks,[27] they did not go as far as advocating the "right to a beautiful environment." There is, for example, no sign in Helbronner's labour column of concern directly related with aesthetics. Clearly, in this case, Lighthall had his own

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[24] "Civic Committee for Emergencies", **Canadian Union of Municipalities Papers (CUMP), MG29D93, Vol.14, Clippings Misc n.d., National Archives of Canada**

[25] W. D. Lighthall, *Memorandum to Accompany Report of the Metropolitan Parks Commission of Montreal of December 12, 1912.* **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 6.**

[26] W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, 1911, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 7,** p.4.

[27] *La Presse* argued that urban street cars companies should invest into the creation of parks at the end of their lines and provide cheap transportation for the labouring classes to reach those destinations. "Questions ouvrières", *La Presse*, September 29, 1900.

vision of what would contribute to working-class happiness. It is interesting to note that the City Beautiful Movement has been portrayed as an attempt to eliminate environmental evils and to redress socioeconomic wrongs by remoulding municipal governance and refurbishing the urban landscape with better parks and other amenities.[28] It has been interpreted as a movement stemming from the middle class. These men and women were interested in the physical environment as a means of social control. William Wilson illustrates, however, that the movement was not only concerned with beauty, that it also stressed utility, functionalism and comprehensiveness.[29]

Nevertheless, Lighthall's efforts to include workers or "simple" citizens in decisions that affected them indicate that he was not deaf nor indifferent to working-class demands. Since Lighthall did try to include working-class representatives in the decision-making process, he differed from other Montreal social reformers such as Ames, who proposed reforms to assist the working class but was not willing to include them in deciding what those reforms should be.

It is in his dealings with the Montreal Parks Commission that Lighthall was the most vocal for the cause of the working man and the poor. The mandate of the Commission was certainly considerable: "To plan and carry out the establishment of public parks, squares, promenades, boulevards, thoroughfares, recreation grounds, playgrounds, streets, baths and gardens on the island of Montreal," and to "investigate housing conditions among the working classes and make

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[28] Edward Rafferty, "Orderly City, Orderly Lives: The City Beautiful Movement in St. Louis", *Gateway Heritage*, 1991, Vol11, no4, p.40-62.

[29] William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, (Baltimore, John Hopkins University: 1989).

recommendations they thought necessary to the Provincial Legislature."[30] Enjoying wide powers under the Act that established it, the Commission could, Lighthall believed, accomplish much for the poor and working man if each municipality voted the money necessary.

In all official correspondence, Lighthall outlined that the chief objective of the Commission was to improve the condition of the working population.[31] To Mayor Guérin he wrote:

> Its [the Parks Commission] chief object is to provide what is absolutely necessary for the life, health and happiness of the working population and not luxurious drives for the rich. [... it is to address] the protests published by the Board of Health, the lack of wholesome pleasures for the workman and his family, the deprivation of his rights to beauty and comfort and other elements of the present city.[32]

Lighthall recognized that the labouring classes were at the mercy of unscrupulous men.[33] He mistrusted certain business practices, especially of large companies. He pointed out in his address to the Canadian Club in 1904:

> The trouble with shareheld capital on the large scale is that the share holder usually does not investigate the morality of his officers- he exacts of them one thing only- dividends- and these under pain of decapitation. By this process the respectable shareholder unconsciously forces his agents into shark methods. But there is another class, certain large shareholders and directors who go further : they personally know and direct the bribery of politicians, the crooked schemes of law shysters and the theft of public streets and franchises [...] We

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[30] "To Plan comprehensive Park and Boulevards Scheme", *Montreal Daily Witness*, August 28, 1912.

[31] W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13, p.3**, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission 1911*, **case 8, file 7,** p.1 *Metropolitan Parks Commission*, **case 8, file 16a.**

[32] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Mayor Guérin*, July 2 1910, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13.**

[33] W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, 1911, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 7,** p.13.

> should brand such men as what they are. We should let them feel that they are beneath us- that we will not permit them to associate with men of honor, nor measure themselves as equals- we should make it understood that there is at least some society in which they are disgraced and into which they cannot enter.[34]

There is no doubt that he was questioning some of the values and practices of his society. He posed as a moralist, judging the good and bad qualities of those in position of authority. In his perfect society, there was no room for those who hungered for power nor for dishonest capitalists.

Lighthall reiterated his concern for the less fortunate in his first draft of the *Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*. He quoted Charles W. Eliot, the ex-president of Harvard University, on what the Commission's goal ought to be, thus revealing that he was influenced by American reform thought:

> To provide large breathing spaces and numerous recreation grounds is only a measure of reasonable precaution against the evils which results from density of population. The opportunity to enjoy fresh air and the various beauty of grass, trees and shrubs, and of lakes ponds and stream, is an incidental advantage of park creation; but the primary motive is the promotion of the peoples health and efficiency. If hundreds of thousands of workers are to be kept in health and strength for productive industries, they must be provided with the means of wholesome pleasures in the open air. The vice and disease which result from overcrowding and from the lacks of means of innocent wholesome pleasures are great drains on the vitality and economic productiveness of an urban population.[35]

It could be inferred from the above quotation that Lighthall's motives were essentially capitalistic, that Lighthall, and other urban reformers like him, had no genuine concern for the working man, but were

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[34] W.D. Lighthall, "Address before the Canadian Club, Toronto. October 17, 1904", **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.11**, p.5.

[35] Lighthall's own emphasis. Quoted in W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13**, p.3.

only interested in larger profits.[36] A sentence added by Lighthall, however, reveals that he was more concerned with the plight of the poor and the working man than with economic gains. He mentioned: "We go further perhaps than President Eliot: we attached to the people's happiness an importance equal, if not superior, to that he attached to their efficiency."[37]

Lighthall was certainly not a businessman concerned with the productivity of employees. His heartfelt concern for the less fortunate was very much in line with his acute sense of duty. The systematic analysis of his written work reveals a Christian man with a strong sense of duty. Addressing the Toronto Canadian Club, he said: "Our young are incessantly taught to prepare themselves for commercial life, but why should they not be also taught that they have a serious obligation to their fellow-members of society, and that public service is honorable service?"[38] His moral rule was: "*To each according to his need.*"[39] One can clearly detect his sense of duty when he applied this rule to child welfare. He affirmed: "The helplessness of the most helpless of beings, the infant, makes upon our conscience the most imperative demands. The duty to succour is not a

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[36] John Weaver argued that solutions put forth by some reformers, though they were conceived to address working class issues, were to serve the interests of the businessmen who proposed them. "Businessmen and Boosters: Elitism and the Corporate Ideal in Canadian Municipal Reform", *Cities in the West* .McCormick and Macpherson, National Museum of Man, Ottawa, 1975.

[37]Quoted in W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13,** p.3.

[38] W.D. Lighthall, "Address before the Canadian Club, Toronto. October 17, 1904",**UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.11,** p.5.

[39] W.D. Lighthall, "The Rights of Children", *The Educational Record of the Province of Quebec.* March 1900, Vol.20, no.3, p.61.

mere optional pity, but an obligation"[40]

Duty was an integral part of his philosophy. In 1903, he explained his perspective on the office of the mayor: "An office of service, and not one bearing the tribute to vanity, your satisfaction will lie in the achievement of public improvements and in a successful administration of business entrusted to you rather than in any honours or expressions"[41] He noted in another speech: "You will find a real reward in public service for itself."[42] Even as late as 1919, when he left his position as Honourable Secretary of the UCM, he repeated his conviction that public officers should only seek to "advance the ideal of a happy and free people."[43] As Trott and Armour stress, for him, the key to true happiness was selflessness.

His first novel, *The Young Seigneur*, is also a lesson in moral obligations. The father of Havilland, the hero, tells his son that as a people's friend and leader, he has a duty to: "discourage litigation and its misery. Offer mediation whenever you can. Keep drink out of the villages. Preserve the ancient form of courtesy. Grow timber and introduce improvements in farming."[44] The heroic sense of justice and duty is plainly revealed when Havilland renounces his election because of the

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[40] Ibid.

[41] W.D. Lighthall, *Valedictory of Mayor Lighthall, on Leaving the Mayoralty Chair of Westmount , Jan 22nd, 1*

[42] W.D. Lighthall, "What the Provincial Unions of Municipalities Have Accomplished", **CUMP, MS800, case.1, file 34.**

[43] W.D. Lighthall, *Valedictory of W.D. Lighthall, K.C., on Retiring from the Honorary Secretaryship of the Union of Canadian Municipalities, August 1919.* Canadian Pamphlet Series, 1919, p.8.

[44] Wilfird Châteauclair, *The Young Seigneur*, (Montreal, Drysdale: 1888), p.61.

corruption which underlay his campaign. *Contemporary Authors* underlines that his novels reveal that: "Canadians must be willing to compromise and even occasionally sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the nation's future."[45] Classified as an utopian novel because it included a plan for "The Ideal State", Lighthall's perfect society "was based on improved education that will produce better people, a fairer distribution of wealth, and the control of vice through censorship and the improvement of dress and manners."[46]

One can further penetrate Lighthall's mind through an analysis of his more philosophical essays. Clearly Lighthall wanted individuals to rise above their own egocentrism to discover that true fulfilment was achieved in the happiness of others. In *Spiritualised Happiness Theory*, a philosophical treatise on utilitarianism, he contended:

> Where the individual consciously prefers another's good to his own, instinctive as all the keenest psychologists, in one phrase or another, agree it to be, the quiet Power shifts the happiness sought from the man's own to that of others, and leads him mysteriously to a higher pinnacle.[47]

To attain this "higher pinnacle" was his ultimate goal. He believed that it could only be attained by forgetting oneself. Here can be seen both Christian values as well as utilitarian principles. Lighthall noted, for example:

> The happiness of one man will readily be presumed to be less of that of two, or ten, or of a city, class, nation, or mankind in general. When a man acts with an intention looking

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[45] "Lighthall., William Douw", *Contemporary Authors. Volume 181* (Detroit, Gale: 199?), p.270.

[46] Lyman Tower Sergent, "Utopian Literature in English Canada: An Annotated Chronological Bibliography., 1852-1999. *Utopian Studies*, Vol.10, no2, Spring 1999, p.7.

[47] W. D. Lighthall, *Spiritualized Happiness-Theory; or New Utilitarianism.* p.11.

> toward his own benefit, his object is not so noble (to use a non-committal word) as would be the benefit of others. But when he sets aside his own for theirs under a general intention or principle of self-devotion, we class him among the best of deeds. This kind of Act is called Altruistic- the Act for the benefit of others.[48]

Self devotion lay within the Christian scope, while the aspect of the greatest good for the greatest number came from utilitarianism.

Lighthall's actions were consistent with his words. He was indisputably a man with a strong sense of duty. For instance, he turned down the nomination to act as the local commissioner for the Canadian Defence League, though it was dear to his heart,[49] because, he claimed: "my present public duties are too heavy and permit not adding another which would require so much conscientious attention."[50] Another example of his altruism can be found in his dealings with the Parks and Playgrounds Commission. As Commissioner, he never hesitated to cover many expenses out of his own pocket: "I have cheerfully, as a citizen, supplied the law, and printing, typewriting, etc., so far, and paid my own travelling expenses," he wrote to Premier Lomer Gouin. [51]

The Practical Man

Lighthall certainly went beyond his rhetoric. He was also a "doer". In 1910, he personally visited Premier Gouin to gain his support for the bill that institutionalized the important Commission

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[48] W. D. Lighthall, *Sketch of a New Utilitarianism.* p.7.

[49]Lighthall is a self-defined imperialist. For his thought on Imperialism see: Donald A. Wright, "W.D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English-Canadian Imperialism, 1880's-1918."

[50] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Geo M. Elliot, July 28 1913.* **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13.**

[51] W. D. Lighthall, *Letter to the Honorable Premier Sir Lomer Gouin, March 26 1910.* **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 5,** p.2.

of Study on Parks.[52] He corresponded with many officials to present his reform plans, "fathered" the Union of Canadian Municipalities, served for eighteen years as its Honorary Secretary, organized its annual conference, wrote reports for each issue of the *Journal of Canadian Municipalities*, and gave public speeches. Through the Montreal Parks Commission, he studied the density problem, the absence of parks and playgrounds, the conditions of child-life, and the housing of the working classes.[53] He succeeded in securing parks and playgrounds for the different municipalities. All this indicates that he was actually working in concordance with his discourse toward better living conditions, in particular, for the working man and his family.

His proposals, however, did not always translate into concrete actions. He himself admitted that: "The proposals of the Commission were necessarily vague."[54] He added that they were deliberately so since it was easier for each of the Greater Montreal councils to object on certain specifics than on general principles.[55] The aim of his report was to gain Councils' approval promptly, so the Commission could carry out its "Greater Montreal Plan". This does not make him a "staunch conservative", as Wright argues, but a practical man.

Lighthall felt most comfortable dealing in practical terms; his was a "philosophy of

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[52]City Improvement League of Montreal, *First Annual Report of the City Improvement League of Montreal*, 1910. **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13,** p.15.

[53] W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13,** p.2.

[54]W. D. Lighthall, *Memorandum to Accompany Report of the Metropolitan Parks Commission of Montreal of December 12, 1912.* **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 6,** p.2.

[55]Ibid., p.1.

possibilities". "Being ever anxious for practical results" he wrote to the Dean of Law of McGill University, Professor Walton, "it at once struck me that the subject [law reform in property holdings of married women] is now ripe for legislation on some of the points, and I write to urge you to draw up laws on these points at least, and afterwards others which are more difficult."[56] Lighthall believed that it was better to compromise and achieve some objectives for reform than none at all. For instance, to Henri Bourassa, Lighthall stressed that "The present form of the Bill [Metropolitan Parks Commission] is so moderated, as we think, to be entirely unobjectionable."[57] More concretely, when he proposed the Bill for the regulation of farm lands subdivision, he confessed that:

> The width mentioned (80 to 100 feet) is not so large as I would like to see in some cases, the new avenues around Boston being about 150 feet- but the reluctance of our farmers to part with more is to be considered, and indeed anything wider ought to be expropriated.[58]

Even more to the point was Lighthall's suggestion to the UCM:

> A bill was again introduced into Parliament to prevent pollution of waterways by municipalities. It once more brought protests from Halifax and other maritime places, where its application would be objectionable. Would it not be wise to suggest that the opposing views be brought into harmony by exemption of certain regions or classes of localities?[59]

Compromises also meant skilled bargaining and astute political moves. In a letter to the Chairman

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[56] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Professor Walton, March 4 1913*, **CUMP, MG29D93, Vol.1, file 25, Correspondence, 1913**.

[57] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Henri Bourassa, February 22, 1911*, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 6**.

[58] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to F. G. Marchand, July 15 1899*. **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 3**, p.3.

[59] W.D. Lighthall, "Report of the Honorary Sec-Treasurer", *The Canadian Municipal Journal*, October 1913, Vol.9, no.10, p.391.

of the Parks Commission, Sir William Van Horne, he explained how he planned to gather support for the proposed bill:

> Larivière is perhaps the most difficult to get at and control. L.A. Lapointe, I think I can manage. He is the principal leader of the Council, and I have managed him in many things. If you were to send for him and say you wish to consult him as leader of the Council, I think the first cigar passed would about win him, followed by pacific and friendly assurance of our disposition to entirely respect the aldermen.[60]

Lighthall, who after all was a lawyer, was also very adept in bargaining. In a confidential memo to the Mayor of Toronto in regards to his strategy for streets legislation, he confessed:

> Concerning my suggestion for a clause permitting exclusive contracts, I only intend it as something we quietly keep in hand to offer or bargain with, if ever advisable, - something the Company has not at present- so that we can say if we so desire, 'if the Company will agree to our demand, we are willing to better its position by this valuable concession.[61]

If at first glance the above quotation seems to indicate that Lighthall was giving in to the demands of the monopolistic companies that he had vowed to fight, one has to consider that he also planned a section of the bill which would "specify rates, compensation for franchises, and period of franchises, as well as such other terms and conditions as may seem just to the board."[62]

A skilled politician, it is surprising to find him leaving politics in 1903 even though his popularity had not yet waned. He did not give any reasons in his personal or official

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[60] W.D. Lighthall, "Letter To Sir Van Horne. September 16, 1912" p.2., **CUMP, MG29D93, Vol.4, Metropolitan Parks Commission.**

[61] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Mayor Urquhart, February 1, 1905*, **CUMP, MS800, case 1, file 13.**

[62] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Mayor Urquhart, January 28, 1905*, **CUMP, MS800, case 1, file 13.**

correspondence, but one could infer that he thought he could accomplish more in terms of social reform as an active private citizen than as a politician. Citizens were freer to act because they did not have to adhere to a party line or be accountable for every action they took. Upon retiring from the position of Secretary of the Union of Canadian Municipalities, he claimed:

> I have taken some personal satisfaction at times in feeling that this union has enabled me to help at introducing far more beneficent legislation into Parliament, and to contribute far more to the establishment of beneficent institutions like- rural telephone system, hydro-electrics, parks, playgrounds and so forth, than at least nine-tenths of our Members of Parliament.[63]

He believed that municipal institutions in Canada were better than in the United States because:

> The freedom of municipal life from party politics in Canada enabled them to go to the legislative body ready to appeal to men of both sides, to unite them in voting, and perhaps even at times to play them a little against one another, emulating the harmless wisdom of the reptilian.[64]

Lighthall enjoyed the freedom of the nonpartisan citizen to shift support from one party to another should he find the opposition's stand on certain issues more appealing. Although he was a strong supporter of the Liberals, he personally informed Prime Minister Laurier that he was going to support Borden's view of the nationalisation of railways in the election of 1904.[65] He even wrote a letter to

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[63] W.D. Lighthall, *Valedictory of W.D. Lighthall, K.C., on Retiring from the Honorary Secretaryship of the Union of Canadian Municipalities, August 1919.* Canadian Pamphlet Series, 1919, p.7.

[64] W.D. Lighthall, "Address before the Canadian Club, Toronto. October 17, 1904", **CUMP, MG29D93, Vol.11,** p.3 .The Elimination of Political Parties in Canadian Cities. Address at the Springfield Meeting of the National Municipal League", **CUMP, MG29D93, Vol.11**.

[65] W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Premier Wilfred Laurier, January 30, 1905*, **CUMP, MS800, case 1, file 12.**, p.1.

the editor of the *Montreal Star:* "Mr. Borden and his friend have understood better both the trend of a national advance and the sound truth of national ownership itself."[66] In other words, Lighthall believed that issues took precedence over partisan positions.

State Interventionist

As mentioned in the first section, Lighthall was constantly preoccupied with the living conditions of the poor and labouring classes. As early as the first decade of the twentieth century, he championed State intervention in spheres that were traditionally out of its realm. Concerning the welfare of the child, Lighthall argued that private and charitable agencies such as the Children's Aid Societies were no longer fit to assume their role.[67] He declared:

> I fear that there is an irresponsibility and incompleteness about it which render it hopeless to expect it to perform the function the State ought to perform. These functions are too heavy for charitable sentiment alone to undertake. And why leave to charity what is a *right*?[68]

Identifying the principles of the UCM, he included as one of the nine canons: "The life of the poorest citizen must be made worth living, through his share of the best civic conditions and services."[69] He believed that the municipalisation of public utilities would bring those better

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[66] W.D. Lighthall, "The Railway of the People", *Montreal Star*, June 13, 1904.

[67] "The Rights of a Child. Mr. Lighthall's Lecture at the Montreal Women Club", **WDLP, MG29, Vol.14, Clippings Misc., n.d.**

[68] W.D. Lighthall, "The Rights of Children", *The Educational Record of the Province of Quebec*, April 1900, Vol.20, no.4, p.96.

[69] W.D. Lighthall, , *Union of Canadian Municipalities*, **CUMP, MS800, case 1, file 26.**

conditions.[70] In his *The History of our Natural Monopolies* he asserted: "Municipal ownership appears to be the ultimate destiny of all natural monopolies."[71] Lighthall advocated:

> [...] nothing short of general legislation, which will replace the people of towns and cities in possession of their own properties and franchises in full, and do away once for all with the jumbled condition into which craft and corruption has led our legislature, and the unfairness of imposing consent on one company and refusing another, will be a satisfactory conclusion.[72]

Before the Toronto Canadian Club he affirmed: "Public ownership, in fact, national and municipal, is the only refuge to which we can look from the evils of monopoly."[73] He supported the nationalisation of railways because: "Oppression of employes [sic] and others by private corporations would be far less feared."[74] Again, he questioned the practices of certain capitalists. He fought the Bell Telephone Company in Manitoba judging that the company was only interested in profits rather than in serving people:

> At the time the feeling we had was that the Bell Telephone Company found its profits in the cities: that there was a certain kind of business which it did not find profitable, but which was very essential to the comfort and well being of a great many more of the people. We thought it was absolutely essential in Manitoba to destroy the great drawback of the isolation of the farmer, the isolation of the farmer's wife and of the small villager. Therefore

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[70] "Mr. W. D. Lighthall Praises Course Taken by Herald", **WDLP, MG29. Vol.14, Clippings Misc n.d.**

[71] W.D. Lighthall, *The History of our Natural Monopolies*, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 12.**

[72] Ibid.

[73] Emphasis is Lighthall's. W.D. Lighthall, "Address before the Canadian Club, Toronto. October 17, 1904", **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.11**, p.5

[74] W.D. Lighthall, "The Railway of the People", *Montreal Star*, June 13, 1904

we felt we had to fight the Bell Telephone Company for the introduction of public ownership under very special circumstances.[75]

In terms of public housing, however, although he found the idea of model dwellings vital to the improvement of working class conditions,[76] he did not advocate government subsidized-housing as others did.[77] Both model tenements and the "modern garden city"were, in his mind, best developed by industrial establishments and special associations.[78] The only state intervention he endorsed fully in this area of reform, was better housing legislation, albeit in "every way" possible.[79] He strongly recommended the enforcement of the building and housing laws[80] to ensure proper and high standards. To take Buckland's word, there was nothing "revolutionary" about his stand on this issue.

It is interesting to note that he was not a mere idealistic thinker. His actions were clearly

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[75] Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada, "Telephone Rates Case. Argument by Mr. Lighthall K.C.", **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.11, Bell Telephone Rates Case**, p.3489

[76] W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, 1911, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 7**, pp.22-23.

[77] For instance, a journalist suggested municipal subsidized housing for the less fortunate. "Municipal Lodging Houses", *Montreal Star*, December 29, 1900, p.9. *La Presse* mentioned that in England, many municipalities have followed the example of particulars by constructing affordable tenement houses but sanitary as well. "Progrès social", *La Presse*, August 27, 1901.

[78] W.D. Lighthall, *Memo for Draft of Report of Metropolitan Parks Commission*, 1911, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 7**, pp.22-23.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., W.D. Lighthall, *Letter to Elgin R..L. Gould, March 3, 1911*, **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 6.**

consistent with his words; he was as energetic in his actions as he was outspoken in his convictions. While occupying the Mayoralty of Westmount, he pressed for the municipalisation of public services such as water and electricity.[81] In 1904 he wrote a letter addressed to "Ratepayers and Property Owners of Westmount" for their support to "establish a municipal system of electric lighting and incineration."[82] Furthermore, most of his work with the UCM was directed toward this goal. In 1904, in his role as lawyer, he represented the municipalities of Fort William and Port Arthur in their fight for the municipalisation of telephone services against the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Bell Telephone Company.[83] The various provincial government telephone systems that came into being in the first decades of the twentieth century owed a great deal to his efforts in this important area of social reform.[84] Lighthall was, therefore, through both his words and his deeds a strong advocate for social changes.

The municipalisation of utility monopolies was seen by many of Lighthall's contemporaries as a socialist measure, more precisely as an attack on capital. Lighthall apparently feared this association with socialism, just as Helbronner did, and he tried to dissociate himself from the trend.

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[81] W.D. Lighthall, *Valedictory of Mayor Lighthall, on Leaving the Mayoralty Chair of Westmount , January 22nd, 1903.* **WDLP, MS216,** p.3.

[82] W.D. Lighthall, *To the Ratepayers and Property Owners of Westmount. November 28, 1904,* **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.2, Town of Westmount 1903-1909.**

[83] W.D. Lighthall, *Reporters Digest. Case NO.6 In the Matter of an Application on Behalf of the Towns of Fort William and Port Arthur for an Order, under Section 193, Providing for the Installation of Municipal Telephones on Premises of the Canadian Pacific Railway.* **CUMP, MS800, case 1, file 9.**

[84] John Kennedy, "W.D. Lighthall" *Who's Who and Why in Canada and New Foundland*, (Vancouver, Canadian Press Association Limited: 1912).

In fact, he expressly asserted in 1901 that the UCM was not an enemy of capitalism.[85] It did not mean, however, that he was not challenging some of the practices found in a capitalistic society. Two decades later, he made his views clear on the subject. He believed that the era of the laws of supply and demands had passed away.[86] Two major events influenced his philosophy, the Great War and the Bolshevik Revolution. The realities of the war meant that the economy had to be regulated, while the Bolshevik Revolution served as a warning to the Western world. The abuses of capitalism could no longer go unchecked. In 1919, reminiscing on why the UCM came about, Lighthall stated that:

> [the triumph of corrupt money] was inaugurating an unlimited reign of plunder, taxes, high costs and 'gatemoney'. And it would with logical certainty lead to what is now called Bolshevism, unless the forces of right and order could meanwhile find a remedy.[87]

Lighthall believed state intervention in certain spheres such as child welfare would provide solutions to the quality of life. He championed municipalisation of public services, such as water, telephones, electricity, and street cars. If he did not advocate subsidized-housing, he certainly did not want this subject to be ignored. He promoted more government intervention, at least at a legislative and enforcement level. While not promoting revolutionary measures, he did nevertheless challenge the status quo.

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[85] W.D., Lighthall, , *Union of Canadian Municipalities*, **CUMP, MS800, case 1, file 26.**

[86] W.D. Lighthall, *Valedictory of W.D. Lighthall, K.C., on Retiring from the Honorary Secretaryship of the Union of Canadian Municipalities, August 1919.* Canadian Pamphlet Series, 1919, p.5.

[87] Ibid.

Lighthall's Impact

Wright notes that Lighthall was not a particularly effective reformer, basing his evaluation of Lighthall mainly on the fact that the UCM, which came into being primarily to fight the powerful Montreal Light Heat and Power Company (MLHPC), did not win the battle. Although Lighthall and the UCM lost the battle, nevertheless, together they made a difference in arousing public sentiment. The *Montreal Gazette* reported: "Mayor Lighthall sententiously said that such a piece of legislation [the incorporation of the MLHPC] was nothing more than organized theft," and concluded that: "This energetic way at looking at the matter was loudly applauded."[88] The *Herald* too congratulated the Westmount Mayor for voicing his indignation in "so outspoken and vigorous a fashion"and, in doing so, touched the "public mind."[89] Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles in their acclaimed *Monopoly's Moment. The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1930,* maintain that Lighthall's "*cri de coeur* heralded the beginning of a national movement that linked hundreds of urban activists and elected officials in a coordinated campaign against the utilities monopolies."[90] They specified that the UCM as a general rule "managed to have inserted in charters a clause requiring companies to submit to local regulation and seek municipal consent to use their public streets."[91] Perhaps not the most objective, Lighthall himself assessed that: "We [UCM] have

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[88] "Westmount's Kick", *The Montreal Gazette,* March 25, 1901.

[89] "Civic Reform Needed", *Montreal Herald*, March 28, 1901.

[90] Christopher Armstong and H.V. Nelles, *Monopoly's Moment. The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1930*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press: 1986), p.142.

[91] Ibid., p.145.

practically stopped the stream of bad municipal legislation in the Dominion House and the legislatures."[92]

Even if Lighthall did not defeat the MLHPC, he certainly was successful in influencing public opinion, and for the eighteen years he was on the executive of the UCM, he definitively had an impact on utilities' legislation. Somerville, author of a biographical note, had already observed in 1906:

> A man out of Parliament, he exercises a great influence on legislation through his connection with the Union of Canadian Municipalities; occupying no professor's chair, he is guide, philosopher and friend to a large number of students, to whom his library and his information are at all times accessible. His views on all important municipal questions affecting Montreal are received with respect.[93]

Lighthall was certainly perceived as a practical man who accomplished what he set out to do. When elected Mayor of Westmount, the next day newspapers reported: "It is in great measure due to Mr. Lighthall's efforts that Westmount is what it is to-day. Besides having been one of the most energetic councillors, he has in his private capacity performed innumerable acts for the public good."[94] "He has been successful in every branch of his work, and almost every goal is within his reach[95]," reported the *Western Municipal News*.[96] The *Manitoba Free Press* spoke of him in

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[92] W.D. Lighthall, "Address before the Canadian Club, Toronto. October 17, 1904", **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.11**, p.2.

[93] R.S. Somerville, p.553.

[94] **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.14, Clippings-Misc, n.d.**.

[95] *The Western Municipal News*, **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.1, File 26, Correspondence 1914.**

[96] City Improvement League of Montreal, *First Annual Report of the City Improvement League of Montreal*, 1910. **WDLP, MS216, case 8, file 13**, p.17.

these words:

> He has always taken a keen interest in municipal affairs, and has written articles dealing with questions affecting them. They are regarded as authoritative. He is also a prominent figure in Ottawa whenever there is a chance of municipal rights being invaded. As secretary of the municipal union, he carries a great deal of work.[97]

Members of *The City Improvement League* officially recognized and acknowledged his achievements in their 1910 report:

> The Chairman of the City Planning Committee of the League, Mr. W.D. Lighthall, is to be congratulated on having secured this important commission for the future Montreal, for which he has diligently and disinterestedly worked during nearly fourteen years for the sake of the people. Palman qui meruit ferat.

But the best tribute to Lighthall's contribution as a social reformer came from the City of Toronto which offered him a commemorative plaque: "Mr. Lighthall has without fee or reward been both assiduous and successful in securing beneficial legislation for the municipalities throughout the Dominion. He has also rendered diligent and effective service in safeguarding municipal interests."[98]

Lighthall was thus perceived, across the country, as an efficient reformer. Indeed, to argue that Lighthall was "not a particularly effective reformer" is highly questionable. One may ask, according to whose standards? The same question may arise as to the so-called "conservative and repressive" nature of his reform strategies. Lighthall was certainly perceived by his peers as a successful social reformer. Not only was he instrumental in the municipalisation of public utilities across the country, he worked hard to establish parks and playgrounds, always in the interest of the

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[97] "Municipalities Convention to-day", *Manitoba Free Press*, July 28, 1905.

[98] "W.D. Lighthall Presented Address", **UCMP, MG29D93, Vol.3, Union of Canadian Municipalities (1914).**

less fortunate. Without a doubt, he influenced public opinion.

Conclusion

Like many reformers of the time, Lighthall believed the poorest needed help as they were not necessarily able to help themselves, nor to blame for their misfortunes. It was up to those like himself to change things, but not without consulting first the ones that were affected. Lighthall thought that greater government management of services, and regulated growth and enforcement of laws would improve the living conditions of everyone, and especially of the less fortunate. Not only did he advocate such reforms in his written work, he actively worked to achieve them. His action followed from his discourse. Together through words and actions, he became one of the great champions of social reform in Canada at the turn of the century. Lighthall both reflected and directed the social reformers of his day who as a group still mirrored the optimism of the Victorian age that the perfect society was within the grasp of humankind.

PART II
WINNIPEG

CHAPTER 5

Preachers versus Boosters: Urban Social Reform in Winnipeg

> The history of Winnipeg, with its wonderful growth and marvellous progress, reads like a chapter from some work of romance. *The City of Winnipeg-The Capital of Manitoba, and the Commercial, Railway and Financial Metropolis of the Northwest: Past and Present Developments and Future Prospects.* 1886

> They have the rottenest conditions of things in Winnipeg in connection with questions of social vice to be found in any city in Canada. *Rev. Dr. Shearer.* 1910

These two diametrically opposed views, one that stresses the ease with which Winnipeg matured into a Western metropolis, and the other, a blunt statement about the wretched social and moral conditions of the city, introduce the players in Winnipeg's early history. On the one hand, promoters praised the merits of the city, seeking more immigration, more growth, their minds always thinking in economic terms. On the other hand, there were those who criticised the city's social conditions in the hope of preserving or restoring the moral purity of its inhabitants. While this is a good caricature of the actors involved in this story, only a more detailed account of the economic, political and social environment of Winnipeg between 1880 and 1914 provides a fuller understanding of the concerns of the urban social reformers.

From a small number of wooden stores and residences in 1870, Winnipeg became the home to nearly eight thousand persons in 1881. Five years later, the census counted 20,238 Winnipeggers. For each five-year period between 1886 and 1916, population growth was never less than 23

percent, and reached 113 per cent in 1906.[1]

The city's economic growth was no less remarkable. The capitalization for Winnipeg's manufacturing-sector was $691,655 in 1881; in 1911 it reached nearly twenty-six million dollars. In 1881, manufactures employed 950 people; thirty years later, 11,565 men, women, and children worked in factories. In terms of net value of products, in 1881 it amounted to a bit less than two million dollars, only to skyrocket to thirty-five and a half million in 1911.[2]

What historian Alan Artibise labels the "commercial class", merchants and businessmen, real estate agents and financiers, contractors and manufacturers, monopolized municipal politics in Winnipeg. They held most elected municipal offices and they used their influence to protect and further their own interests.[3] They played a prominent role in the city's rapid industrialisation and the swift expansion of commerce, thrusting forward a promotional campaign which included the distribution of pamphlets praising their city's potential.[4] From this form of publication, one naturally expects overly flattering descriptions. In a 1886 paean of praise edited by W.T. Thompson and E.E. Boyer, readers were introduced to the nearly flawless city:

> The history of Winnipeg, with its wonderful growth and marvellous progress, reads like a chapter from some work of romance. It seems almost miraculous that in a short space of

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[1] Alan F. J. Artibise, "Patterns of Population Growth and Ethnic Relationships in Winnipeg, 1874-1974", *Social History*, Vol.9, no.18, 1976, p.299.

[2] Alan F. J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914*, (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press:1975), p.123.

[3] Ibid., p.25.

[4] Artibise devotes a whole chapter on this issue, "The Campaign for Immigrants and Industry", *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914*, p.102-125.

> fifteen years there has arisen here the city of to-day. Fifteen years ago no city, no railroad, no street, no church, no school-house, no home - nothing but a small post of the Hudson's Bay Co., where the native Indians gathered to dispose of their furs- To-day, the thirty thousand people, the twenty-five millions of business, massive mercantile blocks, railways connecting with the Atlantic and the Pacific and stretching to the great cities of the United States, church edifices of magnificent structures and proportions, elegant schoolhouses, miles of street railway, the mansion and residence, the electric light, the comforts and refinements of the highest type of civilized life. It is indeed one of the marvels of the age - a growth unprecedented, a progress unsurpassed in the history of the world.[5]

Throughout the hundred and fifty pages or so, factual material on Winnipeg's businesses and businessmen set an optimististic mood. Describing the 1882 boom, the authors stressed that "public and private works of great magnitude also changed the appearance, the comfort, and the healthfulness of the city infinitely for the better."[6] It seemed that nothing could jeopardize the great destiny of the *Chicago of the North*. "Notwithstanding the depression [of 1883]," the authors affirmed, the city "made material progress," and that, "while lying reports in eastern papers stated that 'the bottom had fallen out of Winnipeg' and that 'Manitoba was dead', our people were quietly, but surely, adding to the permanent solidity and growth of the city."[7]

There was, of course, no mention of infant mortality or of contagious diseases and, the few words devoted to housing certainly did not depict the living conditions of all. These factors were,

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[5]W.T. Thompson and E.E. Boyer (eds) *The City of Winnipeg-The Capital of Manitoba, and the Commercial, Railway and Financial Metropolis of the Northwest: Past and Present Developments and Future Prospects.* (Winnipeg, Thompson & Boyer: 1886) reproduced in Alan F.J. Artibisie.(ed). *Gateway City. Documents on the City of Winnipeg 1873-1913.* Volume V: The Manitoba Record Society Publications, (Winnipeg, The Manitoba record Society in Association with The University of Manitoba Press: 1979) p.46.

[6] Ibid., p.59.

[7]Ibid., p.61.

however, all barometers of a city's health. Publications of the kind just mentioned expose the tunnel vision of Winnipeg's promoters - a vision, it must be said, that was shared among prairie developers in general. Alan Artibise contends that "no prairie community was immune to boosterism."[8] This broad conception that for a city to become better it had to first be bigger[9] was a substantial part of the *mentalité* of the West,[10] and was largely responsible for the rapid and sustained growth that the prairies experienced in the prewar years. Douglas Francis claims that booster literature as well as the image of a western Canadian pastoral utopia encouraged western settlement. "The immigrants wanted to believe," he writes, "that here, in this isolated wilderness, the conditions were perhaps right for the creation of the perfect society."[11]

If people at large and city boosters in particular wanted to believe that a perfect society was within reach, their respective conceptions of this "perfect" society varied greatly. Anthony Rasporich notes that the pre-1914 Canadian Western mentality was shaped by "the ideals of social

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[8] Alan F.J. Artibise, "Boosterism and the Development of Prairie Cities, 1871-1913", *Town and City. Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*, (Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center University of Regina: 1981), p. 228.

[9] Ibid., p.211.

[10] Douglas Francis, *Images of the West. Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960*, (Saskatoon, Western Producer Prairie Books: 1989), p.123. Paul Voisy illustrates how small towns also adopted booster practices. "Boosting the Small Prairie Town, 1904-1931: An Example from Southern Alberta", *Town and City Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*, p.147-176.

[11] Ibid.

co-operation and of work as a creative act of self-fulfilment, and the concept of the garden city."[12] The Western promoters' conception of a perfect society was limited to reaching as quickly as possible the status of a big city. Success, in their minds, could only be measured by the size of the city, the number of industries, the value of the output. Francis points out: "Few boosters thought in terms of selling the cultural qualities of their towns and cities. Such 'extravagancies' were by-products of wealth that reflected a city's prosperity rather than led to its enrichment."[13] The only mission of civic boosters was rapid growth. They refused to open their eyes to see that urban social and moral conditions were often less than satisfactory.

Actions of civic leaders, such as designating land for parks, paired with their motive, the potential benefits of parks in enhancing land values, not the desire to improve the social environment, also serve to illustrate the primary economic focus of municipal politicians. Mary Ellen Cavett et al. argue that "the earliest of these parks disappeared during the frenetic real estate boom of the 1880's when the temptation to sell land must have been overwhelming."[14]

The disappearance of public parks, one-sided advertising literature, and the make-up of City Hall, all confirm what Artibise's extensive work on Winnipeg has demonstrated: the city's electrifying development was the result of elected city officials emphasizing economic growth "at the expense

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[12] A.W. Rasporich, "Utopian Ideals and Community Settlements in Western Canada, 1880-1914", *The Prairie West. Historical Readings* edited by R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, (Edmonton, UAP: 1995), p.372

[13] Francis, p.117.

[14]Mary Ellen Cavett, H. Jonh Selwood and John C. Lehr, "Social Philosophy and the Early Development of Winnipeg's Public Parks", *Urban History Review*, Vol.11, no.1, 1982, p.31.

of any and all other considerations."[15] Artibise illustrates that:

> Regarding Winnipeg as a community of private money-makers, they expressed little concern with the goal of creating a humane environment for all the city's citizens. Accordingly, habits of community life, an attention to the sharing of resources, and a willingness to care for all men, were not much in evidence in Winnipeg's struggle to become a 'great' city.[16]

Since the prominent economic actors in Winnipeg dominated municipal politics, the economic and political sectors are hard to distinguish. They are, in fact, inseparable. It is clear that social reformers in Montreal blamed corrupted municipal administrations for the deplorable living conditions in their city. A similar tendency did not exist in Winnipeg, at least not between 1885 and 1905. In 1884, a financial scandal forced the city to declare bankruptcy. W.A. Henderson and W.M. Powis, the two men who audited the city's books, reported: "The system of keeping the city accounts, or rather it should be said, the utter lack of system, which we found to exist, was astonishing for a city of this size, and with the duty imposed upon us to 'audit' the accounts for a long series of years, the task was truly appalling."[17] They described the utmost incompetence of civic officials throughout their report.

Winnipeg's newspapers unequivocally blamed the city council. The editor of *Siftings*, the

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[15]Alan F. J. Artibise, "Winnipeg, 1874-1914", *Urban History Review*, Vol.75, no.1, 1975, p.43, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914*, p.23, "Patterns of Population Growth and Ethnic Relationships in Winnipeg, 1874-1974", p.318, "An Urban Economy: Patterns of Economic Change in Winnipeg, 1873-1971", *Prairie Forum*, Vol.2, no.1, 1977, p.168. "Boosterism and the Development of Prairie cities, 1871-1913",p.209.

[16]Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914*, p.23.

[17]W.A. Henderson, and W.M. Powis, *Special Auditor's Report and Appendix for the City of Winnipeg for 1883*, (Winnipeg, The Bishop Engraving and Printing Company:1884), p.3.

weekly literary journal declared:

> The municipal council in this city has become an unmitigated nuisance [...] Just as a horse gives off some subtle, immoral emanation which debases the moral character of many men who are two [sic] much about him, so in like manner it appears that the atmosphere of the civic council chamber of this city exhales some invisible energy which pervades the person and destroys the mind. Today the city council of this city is such incarnate bad odor that every honest nose adverts itself. [...] The actions of some of our civic representatives for months past have made the name of this city infamous as far as men of such smallness can make the name of anything infamous.[18]

David Spector argues that the newly elected council of 1885 worked to establish a business-friendly government by policy changes, salary and wage rollbacks for municipal officials and cutbacks in general spending.[19] As a result, the Winnipeg press seemed pleased with post-1884 city councils. When headlines from Montreal's and Winnipeg's daily newspapers are compared, it becomes evident that the crises in public health, housing, labour unrest or municipal politics that filled Montreal newspapers were generally conspicuously absent in Winnipeg newspapers. The picture of a prosperous metropolis administered by honest businessmen painted in Boyers and Thompson was also cultivated in part by the local media. Although Winnipeg newspaper editorialists did not hesitate to print headlines and stories about rampant corruption in Toronto and Montreal,[20] they generally left Winnipeg's city officials untouched. The editor of the *Daily Nor Western* even sang the virtues of the

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[18] *Winnipeg Siftings*, September 13, 1884. Quoted in David Spector, "The 1884 Financial Scandals and the Establishment of Business Government in Winnipeg", *Prairie Forum*, Vol.2, no.2, 1977, p.171-172.

[19] Spector, p.167.

[20] "Montreal's Civic Rulers. A Rotten State of Affairs.", *WFP*, April 8, 1900, "Tammany Hall in Montreal", *WFP*, November 5, 1904, "Municipal Corruption (in Toronto), *WFP*, July 12, 1906, "Montreal Reeks with Corruption", *WFP*, December 14, 1909.

1895 city council: "From nearly every large city in Canada and the United States" he wrote, "comes a cry for reform of existing municipal institutions, caused in great measure by the unsavory revelations of aldermanic boodling which have occurred in modern history. Fortunately Winnipeg has had no such recent experiences."[21]

In the "Weekly Newspaper Published in the Interests of the Laboring Classes", *The People's Voice*, a certain J.O. complained about Winnipeg City Hall's lack of genius and progressive enterprise. "For if the past records of the Winnipeg city councils are examined", he vented, "it will be found that those august bodies have been by no means sinecures and that they have not been remiss in administrating the affairs of the city, at least according to the capacity of their administrative ability, if not according to the capacity of a progressive city's necessities."[22] Nevertheless, J.O. never mentioned mismanaged funds or corruption.

During the 1898 civic campaign, the *Free Press* informed its readership that all the delegates from the Trades and Labor Council supported a document stating: "the opponents of the present mayor and council have failed to adduce a single instance of extravagance or mismanagement worthy of being mentioned."[23] It should be pointed out, however, that the labour point of view did not have genuine representation at city hall. Only three creditable representatives of labour were elected to office between 1874 and 1914.[24] Artibise notes that: "organized labour remained throughout the

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[21] "Civic Reform", *DNW*, January 14,1895.

[22] J.O., "Wanted- A Progressive City Council", *The People's Voice*, August 29, 1896.

[23] "The Civic Campaign", *WFP*, December 15, 1898.

[24] Artibise, *Winnipeg. A Social History of Urban Growth*, p.27.

period unstable, heterogeneous, and vacillating."[25]

The honeymoon between municipal administrations and the press came to an end around 1904. Several contributors had voiced some concerns regarding the fitness of previous administrations,[26] but from 1904 on, the criticisms mounted and became more visceral, direct and acerbic. For instance, D.J. Kenway wrote in the *Winnipeg Free Press:* "Is it not high time that public opinion was thoroughly aroused regarding the hopless [sic] incompetence of our present civic authorities in every department of civic administration? From the mayor down to the meanest scavenger, the same utter disregard for the right of the public is plainly marked."[27] "Enquiry" asked: "What I should like to know is whether the city is going to the trouble and expense of getting expert opinion on our defective sanitation, and then utterly ignored the 'specific recommendations' giving [to] them by the experts?"[28] And "Citizen" seriously wondered about City Hall's priorities:

> What earthly use is there in shutting our eyes to the facts of the case? He who stops to think, who knows the inflammable nature of many of our buildings, the inadequacy of our water supply, and the terrific force of some of the winds that sweep these latitudes, may well dread the call that brings the fire brigades to the street. Yet in face of this ever-present danger and the danger to health and life of our present lamentable condition, we find the

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[25] Ibid., p.38.

[26]For instances, in "Municipal Elections" the editor of the *DNW* wrote: "There has been a lamentable lack of zeal and effort in the direction of educating the public sentiment to the need of a better municipal government and the necessity of selecting careful and capable men for municipal officers." December 14, 1896. A contributor to the *People's Voice* wrote: "Has the record of last year, with its secret star chamber legislation, been sufficiently satisfactory in its results to justify us in folding our hands and allowing things to go on as as they are [?]", "The Civic Election", October 2, 1897.

[27]D.J. Kemway, "Winnipeg Criticized", *WFP*, September 14, 1904.

[28] Enquiry, "The Sanitary Question", *WFP*, April 12, 1905.

> council practically shelving this vital and all-important question which should be, and must be, settled at any cost.[29]

Critics, however, declined to accuse the mayor or the aldermen of corruption. The idea of municipal reform never really grabbed their imagination. They pointed instead to the mixed-priorities of the council. There were thus some who criticized the municipal administration especially among citizens and working-class groups, but their denunciations were never cohesive nor strong enough to drown out the chorus of the boosters.

Nevertheless, faced with major problems such as the typhoid epidemic of 1905 and growing concern over the water supply, municipal representatives felt they had to respond quickly to the crisis and could only do so by instituting an executive body.[30] Municipal reforms which had not been seriously contemplated during the past twenty years became "sweeter to the ears" of elected officials. However, contrary to Ames's strategies for the Eastern metropolis, there was no talk of furnishing city hall with new men. Instead, reform meant a change in the structure of government.

Even if there was no real desire to reform the municipal government prior to 1905, not all Winnipeggers were content. Studying real property ownership during the 1881-82 real estate boom, David Burley contends that Winnipeg was, "at least in terms of the distribution of wealth, no frontier of open opportunity."[31] Daniel Hiebert also finds that opportunities differed sharply in his analysis

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[29]Citizen, "The Municipal Situation", *WFP*, September 29, 1906.

[30]Alan F. J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914*, p.58.

[31]David Burley, "The Keepers of the Gates: The Inequality of Property Ownership During Winnipeg Real Estate Boom of 1881-1882", *Urban History Review*, Vol.17, no.2, 1988, p.63.

of the social geography of Winnipeg between 1901 and 1921.[32] He recognises that: "Living conditions ranged from clean, spacious surrounding of the South end to the overcrowded, often unsanitary, housing characteristic of Ward four and five."[33] The social geography also reveals that the multiple tracks of the CPR yard hid the filthy conditions in which many unfortunate citizens lived.[34] Depicting early working class life on the Prairies, Joe Cherwinski wrote that:

> Workers' small houses were crowded together on narrow 7.6 metre-wide (25-foot-wide) lots measured out by rapacious land developers. Unable to afford cars, the majority of workers lived close to their jobs in the industrial part of town where land was cheaper and the sound of train whistles and shunting boxcars continued day and night. In these working-class neighbourhoods with their gravel streets and wooden sidewalks, it was pool rooms, hotel beer parlours, schools, churches, stores and playgrounds that became important meeting places.[35]

Since mostly single men were attracted to the city, Winnipeg was stricken by, as Joy Cooper puts it: "a socially unbalanced situation in which gambling, excessive consumption of alcohol, and prostitution thrived."[36] Vigorous campaigns were launched against city-hotel keepers, houses of ill-repute, saloons, and gambling dens. For the advocates of a "purer" Winnipeg, all these vices were in symbiosis.

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[32]Daniel Hiebert, "Class, Ethnicity and Residential Structure: The Social Geography of Winnipeg, 1901-1921" *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol.17, no.1, 1991, p.56.

[33] Ibid., p.74.

[34]Ibid., p.61.

[35] Joe Cherwinski, "Early Working-Class Life on the Prairies", *The Prairie West. Historical Readings*, p.553.

[36] Joy Cooper, "Red Lights of Winnipeg", *Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba*, Vol.3, no.27, 1970-71, p.61.

> Gambling from its very nature, [professed the Women Christian Temperance Union of Winnipeg (WTCU)] draws around it other and coarser vices. Its danger lies most of all in its debasing associations, the saloon is its inseparable attendant and when a man is down on his back, he is induced to try alcoholic stimulants until he throws prudence to the winds and stakes all at the gaming table.[37]

In Winnipeg just like in Montreal, urban social reformers were greatly concerned about the city itself. Winnipeg social gospeller, Reverend J.B. Silcox stressed that: "He [Jesus] carried His truth and grace into the very thick of busy life where He could get all nationalities and occupations [...] It is significant that Jesus selected His home, not the desert solitude, but the busy city. The city is the strategic point in Christian work today."[38] Every imaginable committee was set up to fight the "evils" that tended to concentrate in the city. The Law and Order League, the Dominum Alliance, the Social and Moral Reform Council League, the Citizens Committee for the Suppression of Vice, the WTCU, to name only the most prominent, spearheaded morality campaigns to "purify" the city.

It is not necessarily that vices were more prevalent in Winnipeg than in other industrial cities, but especially after headlines apposing Reverend Shearer's infamous comments,[39] Winnipeg received a reputation as the "rottenest." Appointed to investigate "social vices", Judge Robson reported in 1911 that: "A policy of toleration of the offence [prostitution] in a limited area, with regulations as to

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[37]W.C.T.U., "The Gambling Evil", *DNW*, May 2, 1894.

[38] Rev. J.B. Silcox, "The Devil in the Church", 1902, **Rev. J.B. Silcox Papers (JBSP), PP58, Box A, B4, United Church of Canada Archives- Conference of Manitoba North West and Ontario (UCA-MNO)**, p.2.

[39] "They have the rottenest conditions of things in Winnipeg in connection with question of social vice to be found in any city in Canada."

conduct, was adopted by the Police Commissioner."[40] This was not a phenomenon unique to Winnipeg, but it was probably more pronounced in the "booster city" of the Prairies since municipal administrators, mostly preoccupied with rapid and sustained growth, turned a blind eye to prostitution. It seems that they did not consider the eradication of social vices as part of their mandate. Pushed by prominent Protestant ministers, civic officials were, however, forced to take positions on prostitution in 1903, 1905, 1909 and 1910,[41] but not first without accusing the Ministerial Association of "having placed a nasty stigma on the fair name of Winnipeg."[42] F.S. Chapman wondered: "Why this city should be advertised as a hotbed of vice," adding that "men do not take their wives and daughters to church to hear filth from the pulpits."[43] The 1911 election also centred on issues of public morality, but Mayor Evans, a master of political strategy "succeeded in pushing the issue of segregation [toleration of prostitution in a restricted and controlled area] to the background and replacing it with the issue of Winnipeg's 'good name'."[44] Again, in Winnipeg, unlike Montreal, reforming the social and moral state of the city was not assumed to fall under the purview of the municipal government. The public image of the city was more important than the reality.

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[40] Judge Robson, *Segregation or Toleration of Vice. The Duty of the Police Authorities. The Enfocement of the Law* (Toronto, The Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada: 1911), p.5.

[41] Cooper, p.62.

[42] "Civic Candidates Define Policies", *WFP*, November 9, 1903.

[43] F. S. Chapman, "A Pointed Observation or Two", *WFP*, **(JBSP), MS353, File 3, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Librairies.**

[44] Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914*, p.261.

Boosterism transcended all other issues.

Hence, despite the fact that many Winnipeggers faced wretched living conditions throughout this period, city hall never devoted much attention to these conditions. The result was that typhoid fever, smallpox, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, scarlet fever and diphtheria often reached epidemic proportions.[45] Winnipeg's water supply remained a constant source of anxiety. In a self-serving pamphlet advocating a compulsory system of water distribution, a director of the Water Company contended that Winnipeg was behind every city of similar size in Canada in its provision of water for domestic use and for protection from fire.[46] The author argued that without a proper system of water supply, water closets could not be substituted for the "filthy and unwholesome system of privies and cesspools by which the whole soil of the city [was] being poisoned."[47] In 1893, the city engineer, H.N. Ruttan, reported that the city was far from providing a "first class fire service."[48] He also declared that "many places still exist where there is direct communication between cess pits and cellars by means of water-bearing strata of sand."[49] A year later, Mr. J.H. Ashdown, future mayor of Winnipeg (1907-1908), headed a large deputation of citizens concerned about public health. He

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[45] Ibid., p.223.

[46] *What Shall We Do about Our Water Supply? A Conversation between a Citizen and a Director of the Water Company*. (Winnipeg, The Manitoban Printing Co, 1887), p.1.

[47] Ibid.

[48] H. N. Ruttan, *Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the City of Winnipeg. With Reference to Water Supply, Sewer Ventilation, Sewer Gas and Sanitary Condition of Buildings, Mortuary Statistics, Etc.* (Winnipeg: The Stovel Co: 1893), p.1.

[49] Ibid. ,p.12.

stated that the sewers and wells were in bad condition and pleaded for immediate action.[50] Mr. J.H. Brock bluntly expressed that "if the committee refused to take action, contrary to the desires of the citizens, on the ground of economy they would be guilty of criminal negligence."[51]

In addition to deficient public services and inadequate public utilities, life in Winnipeg could be rather expensive. Peddlers found life particularly harsh. Pressures by merchants to drive out competition succeeded in increasing licensing fees. Peddlers regularly appeared before the courts because they neglected to buy licenses.[52] A 1894 petition described the critical position they faced:

> At the present hard time, we have no means, nor ways to earn anything, for the maintenance of ourselves, and our families, except by Peddling with some Small Stocks of Goods, through the city, but we are prevented from doing so, by the high License fee, imposed on us, which amount, we find impossible to pay. In most cases, the stock carried for sale, is not worth as much as the License fee, and quite a number of the undersigned, have been supported during the past winter, by your relieve [sic] Committee.[53]

J.S. Woodsworth reported in *Strangers Within Our Gates* that the life of newly arrived immigrants in Canadian cities was plagued with "high rents, low standards of living, incompetency, drunkenness and other evils."[54]

Newspapers' accounts, census, city reports and even promotional pamphlets provide a

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[50] "The City's Health", *DNW*, October 11, 1894.

[51] Ibid.

[52] City of Winnipeg Archives and Public Records Control, Council Communications 1894-95, no.2600, cited in Henry Trachtenberg, "Peddling, Politics, and Winnipeg's Jews, 1891-1895: The Political Acculturation of an Urban Immigrant Community", *Social History*, Vol.29, no.57, 1996, p.173-174.

[53] Ibid.

[54] J.S. Woodsworth, *Stangers Within Our Gates* (1909), (Toronto, UTP: 1972), p.217.

relatively good description of the political, economic and social aspects of life in Winnipeg, while letters from immigrants open another window into the life of Winnipeggers. Jacob Penner, a Russian Mennonite immigrant, wrote to his friend about how expensive life was in Winnipeg. His letter also tells how difficult it was for these immigrants to adapt to the culture and mores of their adoptive country.[55] Penner mentioned that for the past five weeks the mercury had not been above twenty "and a few times the thermometer felt far below 30."[56]

A city's pulse can also be taken by analysing its charitable agencies. In *Historical Sketch of the Charitable Institutions of Winnipeg*, Mrs. Bryce, wife of a prominent Winnipeg minister, listed diverse charitable institutions and provided a description of their respective work. She devoted a fair amount of space on the origins and development of the general hospital. The presence of a hospital in itself does not reveal much about the health of a city since hospitals are, after all, basic fixtures. She did mention, however, that "crowded boarding houses, its imperfect buildings, hastily erected to accommodate new arrivals, the absence of sanitary arrangements and the prevalence of typhoid fever"[57] required the immediate construction of a hospital.

The other charitable institutions Mrs. Bryce described offer an even greater commentary on the state of the city. She narrated the beginnings of the Christian Woman's Union (CWU). After

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[55]Jacob Penner, (translator Victor G. Doerksen) "A Letter from Winnipeg in 1907", *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, Vol. 15, 1997, p.195.

[56]Ibid., p.192.

[57] Mrs. George Bryce, *Historical Sketch of the Charitable Institutions of Winnipeg.* (Winnipeg, The Manitoba Free Press Company: 1899), p.4.

starting a home for young wage-earning women living in the city away from their own homes,[58] the CWU opened a Maternity Hospital meant to assist the "class usually styled unfortunate" and "poor married women who were destitute of comforts in their own miserable shanty homes at that time so common."[59] The necessity and popularity of such institutions testify that not all citizens enjoyed the fruits of Winnipeg's business prosperity. The CWU's next venture, the Children's Home, depicts a sadder story. As the number of needy children grew, the Children's Home had to change locations twice in two years.[60] In addition to the ten charitable agencies she described, Mrs Bryce mentioned many other organizations "which in their active charity or their bequeathment and other benefits do so much to relieve suffering."[61] The burgeoning of charitable institutions from the 1880's on, point-blankly illustrates how Winnipeg was not immune from the ills associated with massive industrialisation and rapid urbanisation which prompted urban social reformers to take a stand on social concerns.

In Winnipeg, just like in Montreal, deteriorating conditions faced by many citizens and the obvious toleration of social vice, prompted men and women to raise their voices against social deprivation, injustice and the loosening of morals. These reformers were not municipal politicians, however, unlike many urban social reformers in Montreal who were directly or implicitly involved in municipal politics. In Winnipeg, mostly men of the cloth became the leading urban social reformers. Even Winnipeg newspapers' advertisements linked pastors with social reform. For instance, Rev

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[58]Ibid., p.14.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., p.16

[61]Ibid., p.30.

C.J. Freeman, "a famous reformer"endorsed *Dr Williams' Pink Pills*[62], while Reverend Galbraith, "a careful student of social reform," vouched for Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder.[63] The choice of these men to endorse their products illustrates the importance companies attributed to preachers. They were, in truth, "the celebrities of the day." Also marking their importance in the social reform movement, *The People's Voice* printed a series of articles on "Labor and the Church" and on "Church and Social Questions." Preachers were also called upon to promote municipal reform.[64] The Church was clearly expected to lead social and moral reform movements in Winnipeg.

The strong commitment of the municipal elite to economic growth -in other words the booster mentality of the West - readily explains why social reform in Winnipeg was taken on by the pastors. As long as the city was steadily growing, the civic elite manifested no real concerns about the social well-being of citizens. After all, in the minds of boosters, comfort would come with growth.

This is why the three reformers under study for Winnipeg - J.B. Silcox, Hugh Pedley and F.B. Du Val - all belonged to the clergy. The very nature of these men dictated the crusades they chose to emphasize. Not surprisingly they were very concerned with "social vices": gambling, prostitution, intoxicating beverages. Their efforts were not, however, limited to the eradication of these vices. In fact, both Pedley and Silcox seriously questioned the economic system which permitted social injustices to thrive, and they addressed as well issues of health, education, slums,

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[62]"A Famous Reformer", *DNW*, November 23, 1895.

[63]"A Careful Student of Social Reform", *DNW*, April 8, 1895.

[64] In a column of the *DNW*, February 23, 1895 we learn that: "Some time ago, a civic federation was organised to promote purity in municipal politics, and to advance the cause pastors were asked to preach concurrently on the subject."

labour conditions and municipal corruption.

CHAPTER 6

Fame Does Not Necessarily Bring Immortality.
Reverend J. B. Silcox, a True Social Gospeller.

REV J. B. SILCOX, D.D.
Pastor
Jan. 1, 1881 to Jan. 31, 1888
July 1, 1906 to Apr. 30, 1914

To say the Collegiate assembly hall was crowded to the doors when Rev J.B. Silcox lectured on 'Pictures and How to enjoy them' is to tell only part of the truth. Every inch of space was packed and many turned away. *Manitoba Free Press*

[Rev. Silcox's]'Grip and Grit' has more power to divert the young from the error of their ways than a whole week of Sundays brimming over with orthodox sermons. *San Francisco Call*

There is no one better known in Winnipeg than the Rev. J.B. Silcox. *The Voice*

Rev. J.B. Silcox, One of Canada's Leading Reformers. *The Tribune*

Why Should We Study Silcox?

The first question that arises when studying Rev. J.B. Silcox's contribution to Winnipeg life is: How has this famous pastor, who needed "no introduction" as "his reputation was more than

Dominion-wide,"[1] evaded historians for so long? Richard Allen describes him as "a pioneer of the [social gospel] movement [...] who in pastorates in Toronto, Winnipeg and Montreal, spoke out against the depredations of the 'industrial pharaohs' of the time."[2] Although Allen confers on Silcox the status of pioneer of the social gospel movement, the historian never refers to him again. Clark Saunders mentions him in passing in his sketch on "Congregationalism in Manitoba" but does not offer anything on his thinking.[3] Apart from these two references, Silcox has been forgotten. There was a time, however, that Rev. J.B. Silcox was a Canadian (and probably American) household name, and even if he worked in many cities, "in the end he was remembered as Rev. J.B. Silcox from Winnipeg."[4] The introductory notes of nearly all articles reporting on his lectures or sermons pointed to his great ability to attract crowds. "The church was crowded to the doors and many hundreds were unable to gain admission," reported *The Winnipeg Tribune*.[5] His nephew remembered that

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[1] "Central Church Pulpit, Winnipeg", *The Canadian Congragationalist*, April 18, 1901. **Rev. J.B. Silcox Papers (JBSP), PP58, Box C, newspapers clippings, United Church of Canada Archives- Conference of Manitoba North West and Ontario (UCA-MNO).**

[2] Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928*, (Toronto, UTP:1971), p.15.

[3] Clark Saunders, "Congregationalism in Manitoba, 1879-1937", *Prairie Spirit. Perspective on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West.* Edited by Dennis Butcher et al. (Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press: 1985), p.122-146.

[4] "Hegira of Silcox", *Winnipeg Tribune*, May 1904. The *Free Press* noted that Silcox "had come to be regarded as one of the institutions of the city.", "Rev. J.B. Silcox", *WFP*, circa 1985-97, **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspapers clippings.**

[5] "The Possibilities of the Theatre", *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, March 17, 1903. In 1931, a journalist recalled that "for four years he crowded the building to capacity every Sunday", "Central to Hold 50th Anniversary", 1932, **(JBSP), PP58, Vertical File.** One of his obituaries stressed: "One of the most widely known members of the clergy in Canada, he never preached to

a survey made by the Winnipeg Young Men's Christian Association found that: "There were more young people in Central Church on a given Sunday than in all other Winnipeg churches put together."[6] Reverend Silcox was often invited to preach in churches other than his own, (and at least once in a synagogue) and to lecture in front of temperance societies, unions gatherings, or highschool and university graduates.[7] Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg newspapers many a time published his Sunday sermons as did the papers of other cities where he preached. His voice was evidently being heard and his message read by many.

But what was this message that so many needed or wanted to hear? Silcox was a true social gospeller. He believed that: "It is very well for theologians to talk about the 'Happy Land far Away', but what the toiling children on earth need most is a branch establishment right here and now in this world."[8] He stressed that "sociology must have a place in our colleges side by side with theology."[9]

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a vacant seat at a Sunday evening service" "Rev. J.B. Silcox Dies Suddenly in Toronto", **(JBSP), PP58, Vertical File** "Those who reached the Congregational tabernacle early yesterday morning obtained seats, but those who came late considered themselves fortunate on even gaining admittance and standing room to listen to the farewell sermon of the popular pastor J.B. Silcox who leaves this week", "Farewell Sermon", (San Diego), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspapers articles.**

[6] Claris Edwin Silcox, "A Preacher of Redemption", **(JBSP), PP58, Vertical File.**

[7] Donald M. Scott demonstrates how public lecture, "a form of instruction distinguished from the sermon, speech, and oration as well as from the treatise and the essay", developed in mid-nineteenth century. Lectures received an honorarium. Silcox certainly fit the description of Scott's American lecturers. "The Popular Lecture and the Creation of a Public in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America", *The Journal of American History*, Vol.66, no4, March 1980, p.791 and 793.

[8] J.B. Silcox, "Grip and Grit", (first time 1882), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H5,** p.6.

[9] J.B. Silcox, "Sociai Redemption (1901)", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.8.

More to the point, he preached:

> We have been hairsplitting on small ecclesiastical questions and have left untouched great social problems of life. We have not been concerned about getting God's will done on earth. We have not tried to bring work and wages into harmony with the Golden Rule of Christ. We have been more concerned about rites than righteousness. In many cases churchianity has chilled and killed Christianity.[10]

There is no doubt that Silcox's main goal was to "bring the kingdom of God on earth."[11] Although this social philosophy is by now very familiar to the Canadian historian,[12] Silcox should still be studied because he was the most famous social gospeller of his time. Few preachers, if any, attained his fame.[13] Silcox was more than a plain Sunday preacher. He was a revered entertainer. Identified as a social reformer by his contemporaries, it was through the "art" of preaching that he intended to touch his fellow citizens, to transform city life, to better the fate of his country. He also actively participated in temperance campaigns and crusades against prostitution. It is essential to analyse Silcox's message in itself to compare it with what we know about social gospel, but since the

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[10] J.B. Silcox, "The Humanity of Chrisitianity (1902)", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, Q2**, p.6.

[11] He used the same terminology in J.B. Silcox, "The Lord's Prayer" (1911), "Give Ye Them to Eat" (1917), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, X6** p.8 and **J4**, p.6. "Social Reconstruction", *The Voice*, September 5, 1901.

[12] See Richard Allen, Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*, (Toronto, UTP:1985). David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith. Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940*, (Toronto, UTP: 1992).

[13] One biographer wrote: "he has made himself a name familiar from Vancouver to Halifax and from San Francisco to Chicago", "Talbot Settlement Pionneers Who Lives Useful Lives", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspapers clippings.** See also "Rev. J.B. Silcox Dies Suddenly in Toronto" and "Rev.J.B. Silcox, Veteran Pastor Dies in Toronto", *WFP*, January 20, 1933. **(JBSP), PP58, Vertical File.**

preacher was so popular, it is interesting also to gauge the reception to his sermons. People braved rain, snow and extremely cold weather to listen to the "strong voice" characterised by its "tremolo of power."[14] Which sermons caught the attention of turn-of-the-century-Canadians? How were they interpreted? To what end were they used? These are all questions that can shed light on Silcox's impact on the social gospel, and on the movement in general.

A Revered Entertainer

One of twelve children born of William Silcox and Nancy Phillips, John B. Silcox became a renowned reverend. He grew up on his father's farm while attending Frome's Elementary public school. He entered the normal school in Toronto and pursued his theological studies in the Congregational College of Montreal at the time when Reverend Henry Wilkes was principal.[15] At McGill University he encountered the most eminent nineteenth century Canadian scientist, Sir William Dawson.[16] There is, however, no trace of Dawson's influence in his sermons. Silcox did not belong to the scientific community, nor show any interest in scientific research. He once declared: "It is not solid instruction that men and women are hankering after, or need most - in lectures at least. If I wanted statistics, facts, information, erudition and things of that kind, I would not go to a lecture. I would buy an encyclopaedia."[17] Perhaps influenced by one of his mentors, Reverend Wilkes, who

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[14] "Rev. J.B. Silcox", *WFP*, **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspapers clippings.**

[15] Reverend F. H. Marling, *Congregational College of British North America. The Story of the Fifty Years 1839 to 1889*, (Montreal, Witness Printing House: 1889), p.33.

[16] "Rev. J.B. Silcox", *WFP*, **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspaper clippings.**

[17] J.B. Silcox, "Grip and Grit", (first time 1882), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H5,** p.5. See poster in annexe.

gave literary lectures before "mechanic's institutes, mercantile library associations, colleges societies,"[18] Silcox was more attracted to poetry, literature and art, than to natural sciences. Some of his sermons even dealt extensively with the works of John Whittier[19] (four different sermons) or other "poets-preachers". He gave lectures on "famous paintings by the great artists."[20] Silcox did not try to reach people with facts, to appeal to reason or common sense as Heibronner, Ames and Lighthall did. He hoped to touch souls through sentiment.[21] There was nothing scientific about converting "lost sheep", making men and women see "the light," convincing them to apply the Golden Rule. The very nature of the Congregationalist faith favoured a non-doctrinal approach to theology. Organized on the principle that each congregation should be autonomous, each local church remained free to decide its own form of faith and free to practice its own form of worship.

Silcox's philosophy probably owed more to his parents' examples than to external influences such as Dawson. His mother and father valued education and provided their children with "good

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[18] *The Canadian Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Eminent and Self Made Men. Quebec and the Maritime Provinces Volume* (New York, American Publishing Co:1881, p.242.

[19] John Whittier (1807-1892) was an American poet and reformer.

[20] Poster: *"The World Beautiful" a Lecture by Rev. J.B. Silcox*, **(JBSP), PP58, Box C, newspapers clippings from a scrapbook**

[21] After giving a lecture on "The Outcasts of London", Silcox was attacked on the "false" facts he stated. In a letter to the Editor, one reader did not hide his indignation. "From beginning to end, these statements are false, and slanderous in the extreme. In the first place the English Church is preeminently the Church in and of England. Secondly, the Church of England is not supported by the State. [...]. The author of the letter went on refuting Silcox's other statements. "To the Editor", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspaper clippings**.

books, magazines and newspapers."[22] Silcox grew up in a "dry house". His father was a hard-working man and one of the best farmers in his community. A short biographical article described him as:

> [Being] most highly respected in the community. He had a great amount of good common sense - a great reader, always taking a lively interest in politics. [...] He had the confidence of everybody: he was strictly honest [...] He lived the Golden Rule and loved righteousness and hated inequity[23]

From his grandfather, Reverend Joseph Silcox, who was the first Congregational minister in Ontario, Silcox inherited his strong inclination for the ministry. He chose, however, not to copy his grandfather's preaching style. If the older Silcox's sermons were known to go on for "two hours in length" and the congregation "always knew when he was half way through his long prayer for at that point he always began praying for 'thy ancient people, the Jews'",[24] young Silcox was unpredictable and dynamic. Indeed, he took more after Henry Ward Beecher (1813–87), an energetic American Congregational preacher, orator, and lecturer.[25] *Harper's Weekly* reported that 'whenever and wherever he [Beecher] speaks, vast crowd assemble."[26] Beecher discussed every important issue

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[22] "Talbot Settlement.Pionneers Who Lived Useful Lives", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspaper clippings**.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] *Harper's Weekly*, July 17, 1858, p.449. Quoted in Clifford E. Clark Jr., "The Changing Nature of Protestantism in Mid-Nineteenth Century America. Henry Ward Beecher's *Seven Lectures to Young Men*", *The Journal of American History*, Vol.57, no4, 1971, p.832.

of the day in his sermons. Historian David Reynolds has demonstrated how in nineteenth-century America sermons tended to move from the doctrinal to the narrative.[27] "To combat pulpit boredom," Beecher used "rhetorical illustrations" which included, among others, the use of narration, explanation, proof, ornament, attention, memory, humour and imagination.[28] Silcox adroitly followed the American trend[29] and was obviously awarded for it.[30] He was well aware of the growing demand for "entertainment."[31] He even preached on the art of preaching, stressing that: "It is the preacher's business to get a hearing for the gospel."[32] He specified that: "To win the ear of the people, you must talk their language. The preacher must be a man of his time."[33] In this particular era, the Church had to compete not only with usual sources of entertainment found in the cities, but

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[27] Davis S. Reynolds, "From Doctrine to Narrative: The Rise of Pulpit Storytelling in America", *American Quarterly*, Vol.32, no.5, 1980, p.479-498.

[28] Ibid., p.494.

[29] For instance, the *Free Press* reported: "Instead of a text from the bible for his sermon, Rev. J.B. Silcox took several big advertisements lately put forth against prohibition by the London brewers and Personal Liberty League". February 14, 1916. The *Colusa Sun* described how "he found his way into the soberer chambers of the heart, where he was perfectly at home. The laugh was followed by the tear [...] **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, newspapers clippings.**

[30] A journalist wrote on his "wisdom of using every means that tends to make the pulpit influential and legitimately attractive", "Mr Silcox on Whittier", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, newspapers clippings.**

[31] Some commented on how his lectures were "entertainment of a high order of enjoyment", Poster: *"The World Beautiful" a Lecture by Rev. J.B. Silcox*, **(JBSP), PP58, Box C, newspapers clippings from a scrapbook**. His sermon "Grip and Grit" was favourably compared to a circus! Poster: *"Grip and Grit" by Rev. J.B. Silcox*, **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H5.**

[32] J.B. Silcox, "The Minister as a Preacher", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.13.

[33] Ibid., p,14.

more and more with theatres and organised sports. Morris Mott, historian of sports argues that many Winnipeggers felt that greater participation in "manly" sports was one solution to urban problems. The work of these citizens created an explosion of sporting activity between 1900 and 1914.[34] By 1903, Winnipeg was probably the world's curling capital.[35] Fierce competition made Silcox think that the pulpit had to use the same tools and strategies to keep the people interested in the Gospel than were used in other pursuits:

> No one likes to be told that they are dirty and need soap, yet this is the very thing soap-makers are continually telling us by their attractive, picturesque advertisements. We should be as ingenious in urging people to have clean hearts as they are urging people to have clean hands.[36]

Without a doubt, Silcox mastered the art of oratory. His "Grip and Grit" sermon was just as popular as an Oscar-winning film would be in our day,[37] so popular, indeed, that he delivered it more than two hundred times![38]

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[34] Morris Mott, "One solution to the Urban Crisis: Manly Sports and Winnipeggers 1900-1914", *Urban History Review*, 1983, Vol.12, no 2, p.57-70.

[35] John Allardyce and Morris Mott, "Curling's Capital: How Winnipeg Became the Roaring Game's Leading City", *Canadian Journal of History of Sports*, 1988, Vol.19, no1, p.1-14.

[36] J.B. Silcox, "Preaching to the People"(1907), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, F2**, p.5.

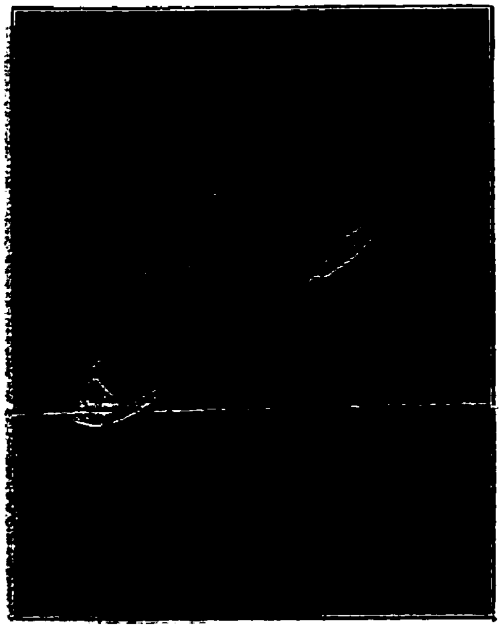
[37] Among his papers were found posters with his picture and "culled comments" about his sermon. Poster: *"Grip and Grit" by Rev. J.B. Silcox*, **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H5.**

[38] J.B. Silcox, "Grip and Grit", (first time 1882), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H5,** p.1

"GRIP AND GRIT"

By REV. J. B. SILCOX, D. D.

"There is more fun in it than in a circus, and more religion in it than in a sermon. The only thing absent is dullness."



ABLE AND INTELLECTUAL

"From first to last this lecture is bright, crisp, able and intellectual. The pulpit and platform need never grow less if stocked with men of Mr. Silcox's stamp."
Sacramento Record-Union.

CHAUTAUQUANS WELCOME IT

"Silcox is one of the wittiest and wisest speakers who has appeared on the Chautauqua platform this year. His name will always be a welcome one on the programme hereafter."
Los Angeles Times.

VANCOUVER SURPRISED

"Those who heard 'Grip and Grit' came away surprised that a lecture could put them in such good humor. No one could help being strengthened in purpose and renewed in determination."
Vancouver World.

ENGLAND LIKED IT

"Full of truisms, quaintly expressed, bubbling over with humor, and running through all an undercurrent of intense earnest sincerity. 'Grip and Grit' held his hearers, and ninety minutes was none too long. Mr. Silcox has the cheery optimism and breezy [illegible] and kindly spirit of Mark Guy Pearse."
—*Telegraph, Kettering, England.*

CHARMS AN AUDIENCE

"Mr. Silcox possesses in a high degree that rare faculty by which he unconsciously and without any apparent effort charms an audience. People call it magnetism, perhaps it is electricity, but whatever it is, Silcox has it."—*Regina Journal.*

DIVERTS THE YOUNG

"'Grip and Grit' has more power to divert the young from the error of their ways than a whole week of Sundays brimming over with orthodox sermons."—*San Francisco Call.*

CULLED COMMENTS.

"He draws the people wherever he goes."

"Wholesome humor, keen logic and wise sayings."

"Not without greater moods and moving pathos."

"Not once did the interest of the audience flag."

"A better pleased audience never left a lecture hall."

"He kept the audience in a continued good humor."

"Has established an enviable reputation as an orator."

"Audience gave frequent and hearty vent to their approval."

"Delighted, encouraged and uplifted, describe the feelings of the audience."

"Took the audience with him all the way through."

"An accomplished and polished lecturer."

"A rare treat to our people."

"Hear him and get cured of your blues and meanness."

"One of the most original and eloquent speakers."

"Always draws large audiences, entertains and inspires."

"'Grip and Grit' can be listened to again and again with renewed interest and profit as it abounds with wisdom and is full of fun."—*Montreal Gazette.*

The United Church Archives -Conference of Manitoba Northwest and Ontario houses about two hundred and twenty of Silcox's sermons. If these represent the whole (or even only half) of the sermons he gave over the course of his fifty-seven year career, one quickly figures out that the preacher delivered each sermon numerous times. Apart from "Grip and Grit" there were another ten or so sermons that reached great popularity, receiving praising press comments across North America. On some of his sermons, Silcox indicated where, when and how many times he delivered them.[39] If many are undated, they are, however, covered with corrections and additions, testifying that he readily used and reused the same sermons over and over. Why not? The press kept commenting on how memorable they were, how everyone should listen to his "remarkable sermons" which "were the talk of the multitude all over the city and far beyond."[40]

His fame and great success may explain why Silcox occupied so many different ministries: he was in great demand. Another explanation for his tendency to change pastorates often was provided by a Kansas' newspaper which stated: "The minister who believes in building up one place and beginning all over again in a new place with the same Christian work [...] tendered his resignation."[41] Indeed, Silcox seemed to have enjoyed a good challenge. The pulpits he occupied were not always in the best financial shape when he arrived, but once he left, the congregation often

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[39] The date figuring in the footnotes correspond to the first time the sermon was delivered.

[40] "Rev. J.B. Silcox Revisits Winnipeg", *WFP*, July 17 ,1909.

[41] "Rev. J.B. Silcox Tenders Resignation", *Kansas City Journal*, December 3, 1914.

commented on the improvements brought about during his term.[42]

It is striking that the preacher chose big cities to spread his message, cities that were trying to cope with massive immigration and rapid industrialisation. Silcox's first position between 1876 and 1883 was at the Western Congregational Church in Toronto. Then from 1883 to 1890 he occupied the pulpit of the Central Church of Winnipeg. Next he moved to the United States for two years and preached at the First Church of Sacramento (California). Then after three years at Emmanuel Church in Montreal, he returned to the United States for five years, three spent at Leavitt Street Church (Chicago) and two back at the First Church of Sacramento. He was called to preach once more in Winnipeg and remained there for four years. Added to his seven previous years at the church, this was the longest pastorate he served in one city. Leaving Winnipeg, he spent close to one year at Plymouth Church (Lansing Michigan) before returning to Toronto.[43] From 1908 to 1915, he preached at the Westminster Congregational Church in Kansas, and the next two years in a London (Canada) church. Then widowed and seventy years old, he did not occupy specific pulpits but, still in great demand, continued to preach across Canada and the United States until his death in 1933.

The "Industrial System" Is Flawed

An analysis of his sermons reveals a number of key points in his social reform philosophy. First of all, J.B. Silcox sincerely believed that the "industrial system" was flawed because it widened

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[42] "Local Church Circles", *DNW*, March 25, 1895. "Rev. J.B. Silcox", *DNW*, March 3, 1898.

[43] Henry James Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time. A Handbook of Canadian Biography*, Second edition, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1912), p.1023.

the gap between rich and poor, sanctioned "white slavery"[44], and fostered child labour. What made it flawed was the fact that it had lost its touch with Christianity. Men and women were physically and morally suffering because of the lack of ethics within the industrial order. It was inherently imperfect since it promoted materialistic values instead of Christian ones. Industrialisation was also responsible for the growth and expansion of cities which caused the rapid spread of "social vices", hence jeopardizing social purity. Silcox's sermons often addressed moral causes such as temperance, Sabbath observance, and the fight against prostitution. His denunciations of "social vices" reveal him to be a moralist. As a man of God, he believed that he had a duty to point out the rights and wrongs within society.

Silcox saw the solution to all the ills of modern life in the application of the Golden Rule. His strategy was to touch first the soul by spreading the gospel, and then to Christianize the "shop and the store, the factory and the bank."[45] His discourse thus takes the status of action. Sermons and actions become one and the same.

Although Silcox addressed issues other than prostitution, gambling and alcoholism, (he was, for instance, an earnest advocate of religious toleration) many Winnipeggers associated him, first and foremost, with the fight against these "social evils". The city's newspapers widely covered the crusades he led against the "demon drink," "segregation" (toleration of prostitution in a restricted area), and the gambling dens, and never hesitated to publish his sermons entitled "The Modern

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[44] Silcox did not use the term to refer to prostitution but to the men and women "who drudge from morn till night, hardly earning enough to keep soul and body together." J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.14.

[45] J.B. Silcox, "A Preacher of Rightenousness", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, E4,** p.15.

Devil," "The Possibilities of the Theatre" or "The Scarlet Sin". Labour representatives also employed Reverend Silcox's sermons to justify their quest for social justice. After all, Silcox used powerful rhetoric to denounce the abuses of industrialisation. He inferred that Capitalists, unchristian for the most part, exploited Labour. The reverend became one of the most valued spokesperson for the cause of the working-class.

Silcox continually came back to the belief that the industrial system had lost touch with Christianity; indeed, the very values underlying the industrial order were amoral, or worse "pagan".

> It sometimes seems that the laws which control the production and distribution of wealth are Pagan rather than Christian. That competition is the law and life of trade, that supply and demand should determinate the wages of those who do the world's hard work, that the employer is under no obligation to consider the physical or moral welfare of those he employs, that men and women are to be considered merely as 'hands' and not 'souls', that it is right to form monopolies by which a few men, for their own profit keep down production and keep up prices, these and many other practices of trade are a direct reversal of the teaching and spirit and example of Jesus. They are practical atheism.[46]

The phrase of "for their own profit" refers to the undue regard for the material rather than the spiritual or intellectual aspects of life. This delineates what was intrinsically wrong with the industrial system: it shifted the focus of life from the spiritual to the material realm.

Along with the problems of industrialisation were those of urbanisation. Silcox believed urban living "disjointed" people and yet forced them to live together. He felt that "no city and no part of a city can live into itself."[47] As he put it:

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[46] J.B. Silcox, "A Preacher of Rightenousness", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, E4,** p.17.

[47] J.B. Silcox, "The Duty a Man Owes to Others" (1921), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, Z5,** p.9.

> We need to see that we are bound together in one bundle of social life. We are so knot together that what harms the lowest will eventually disfigure the highest. If there is malaria in the cellar there will be fever in the parlor. If there is vice in the alley, there will be crime on the boulevard. Permit slums to seggregate [sic] in your city, and in time every avenue and district will be fouled and smirched by its noxious exhalations.[48]

Everything was interconnected in the city. In sum, it was in cities that "social vices" converged, that governments were most corrupted, that the gap between the rich and the poor was the widest, that workers slaved in factories and that children worked long hours for a living. But if the city was a place of damnation, it could also be one of salvation:

> The city is an open door to everything that is helpful, it is an open door to everything that is harmful. The extremes of life meet and over-lap each other in the great city. Purest culture and vilest ignorance meet on the city streets. The lowest dens of damnation, and the chastest temples of salvation are to be found in the city. The city will make you a better man or it will make you a worse man.[49]

If only the pulpit could reach the lost souls, he thought, the journey to substantial social reforms would start. Silcox felt it was the responsibility of the pulpit to raise social consciousness, especially since he believed that the press, the legislature and even some universities had already been conscripted by the capitalists.[50] The pulpit had not only a right but a duty to question the existing social order:

> The Church to-day by all its pulpits should say to society and to parliaments, 'your present industrial system, which fosters these enormous inequalities, which permits a few to heap up most of the gains of this advancing civilization, and leaves the many without any substantial share in them, is an inadequate and inequitable system, and needs important

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[48] Ibid.

[49] J. B. Silcox, "Absolom, A Fast Young Man", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, P5,** p.6.

[50] J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.24.

changes to make it the instrument of righteousness.'[51]

He trusted that with preachers like him in the pulpit, there would be no peace for those who accepted the unacceptable occurrences of the industrial order. They would be haunted by the words of determined pastors. Silcox was confident of the powers of the pulpit over the enemy forces: the liquor merchant, the madams, the big corporations and the corrupted politicians. These men and women should fear the wrath of God.[52] They could no longer foster a system which permitted so many injustices without being challenged by the pulpit.

In his sermon "The Lord's Prayer," Silcox enumerated nearly every issue he raised over the years:

> Is it God's will that His holy day shall be turned into a day of pleasure [Sabbath observance], and money-making? Is it God's will that men should make and sell strong drink, which impoverishes multitudes, creates paupers, breeds crime, leads to the committal of every sin in the calendar of crime? [Prohibition] Is it God's will that so many little children should grow up amid the defiling influences of life in the slum? [Poverty] Is it God's will that plutocrats should grow rich at the expense of the many who labor under the conditions that are not just and right. [Social injustices].[53]

Clearly establishing that it was the duty of municipal politicians to attend to the needs of citizens, but specifying that they were avoiding their responsibilities, Silcox declared that preachers had to speak up.[54] He never hesitated to discuss municipal corruption, nor to show his

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[51] Ibid.

[52] J.B. Silcox, "The Devil in the Church" (1902), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, B4**, p.9.

[53] J.B. Silcox, "The Lord's Prayer" (1911), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, X6** p.8.

[54] J. B. Silcox, "A Sermon of Warning" (San Diego), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, newspapers clippings.**

disenchantment with civic officials.[55] Yet, although he was aware of the corruption that reigned in many governments, just like Ames and Helbronner, Silcox refused to abandon the ideal of a Christian Democracy. He believed that men should exercise their right to vote, that it was their Christian duty.[56] In the midst of Winnipeg's prohibition campaign, he asserted that the ballot would eradicate the evil of the "drink traffic."[57] Silcox wished that municipal governments would be administered by knowledgeable Christian men.[58] If, like his Montreal compatriots, Silcox saw the need to address city hall questions, he did not, however, put noted emphasis on this particular issue. He approached the issue usually in relation to his other concerns. Silcox believed that:

> Government was ordained of God not for the benefit of the rulers but for the well-being of all the people. Patriotism does not mean the enrichment of a few at the top. It means the betterment of the whole mass of people. The nation lives not in the palace but in the cottage, and the light of our legislation must fall on the cottage, and have primary regard for its inmates if it is to serve the divine purpose of government.[59]

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[55] J.B. Silcox, "Balaam, The Bribed Young Man", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, N5,** p.18- 19. "Pastors in Praise of Visiting Divine", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, newspapers clippings.** "In the Central Church Last Night", *Winnipeg Tribune,* **(JBSP), MS353, File 3,Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Libraries.** "Municipal Salvation. Rev. J.B. Silcox Charges the Police Commissioners with not Enforcing the Law, Bribery Condemned.", *Winnipeg Tribune*, February 24, 1902. "Hegira of Silcox" ,*Winnipeg Tribune*, May 1904. He blatantly said: "When a mayor is imbecile enough to ask 'Where will you put these criminals if you drive them from their present quarters?' it is time that the people rose up and asserted the majesty of law." J.B. Silcox, "The Scarlet Sin", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, Z6,** p.18.

[56] J.B. Silcox, "Prayer and Politics", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, B2,** p.7-8.

[57] J.B. Silcox, "The Man Sent from God" , **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, V5,** p.20.

[58] J.B. Silcox, "The Lord's Prayer" (1911), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, X6** p.8.and "London" (1895), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, D3,** p.7.

[59] J.B. Silcox, "The Democracy of Religion",**(JBSP), PP58, Box A, R2,** p.9.

Industrial Cities are Plagued with Social Injustices

Silcox thought that governments were amoral since they allowed the gulf between rich and poor to deepen. On countless occasions he raised strong objection to a society that permitted such a gap to exist.[60] He lamented that:

> The boulevard is lined with the gorgeously furnished mansions of millionaires. Adjoining alleys, huddled together like hogs, are the gaunt children of poverty and toil. The rich are increasing in wealth, and the poor are increasing in poverty. The gulf between Dives and Lazarus widens day by day, deepens year by year.[61]

For him, the "dens of inequity" that existed between Labour and Capital were proof that some men exploited others and this was cause enough for a "revolution". He said:

> The world needs to be revolutionized, turned upside down, for at present its wrong side is up. Capital fattens on the cream, while labor grows lean on skim milk. Capital has the pie, labor the crust [...] I am glad that some men are wealthy. They deserve all they have. They, or their fathers before them, earned their wealth by honest labor, legitimate enterprise and careful economy. No people deserve better of the community than the industrious and frugal rich. But the wealth of many modern millionaires has been stolen from the people.[62]

There was nothing wrong with enjoying the fruits of your own hard labour and "careful economy", but to accumulate wealth on the back of poor labourers was appalling. As he went on to note:

> The enormous accumulation of the capital in the hand of the few is proof positive that a gigantic wrong has been done to the many. There surely is a screw lose somewhere when

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[60] J. B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3**, p.6, 13 & 27, "God and the People"(1893), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H4,** p.6."The Christianization of Industrial Relations"(1915), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, I5,** p.5-6."The Democracy of Religion",**(JBSP), PP58, Box A, R2**, p.9.

[61] J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.6.

[62] Ibid., p.13.

> we have plutocrats with countless millions at one end of society, and rank, riotous, pestiferous anarchist at the other end; men who only know that something is wrong and are ready to dynamite society thinking any change would be a change for the better.[63]

Silcox evidently believed Capital was wrong and that Labour was needlessly suffering injustices. Workers should, therefore, fight ardently until Capital recognize its sins and make amends.[64] In his much talked about sermon "Social Redemption", he stated:

> If I understand the temper and mind of the working man to-day it is not charity that he wants. It is justice, simple justice. He is not a mendicant with hat in hand, asking Capital to give him a penny. He is a free man demanding his rights. One of the rights that he claims, and I believe justly, is the right to a larger share in the products of his labor. Every industrial and commercial enterprise is a partnership, of which Capital and Labor are the partners. [...] So long as Capital takes precedence over Labor, so long will the war go on.[65]

Unhesitatingly, he explicitly justified labour's fight, proclaiming in metaphorical language that:

> The unrest of the people, the discontent of the masses, the volcanic eruptions in the form of labor strikes and wars are not to be deplored as evil. They are the lightening flashes, the thunder peals of a storm that will clear the social atmosphere and refresh the valleys of toil with fertilizing showers.[66]

Silcox was not calling for a socialist revolution, but for a metamorphosis of the practices current in the capitalist system, for a "return" to Christian values instead of the material ethos that permeated industrial society. Capital would not disappear, but the exploitation of Labour had to go.

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[63] Ibid., p.6.

[64] J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.7, "Jerobam. A Politic Young Man.", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, M5,** p.12-13.

[65] J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.27.

[66] J. B. Silcox, "God and the People"(1893), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H4,** p.12.

He did not condemn workers for using strikes, as he whole heartily felt they were justified. Less pragmatic or objective than labour columnist Jules Helbronner who repeated time after time that strikes were always disruptive to both parties, thus favouring a conciliation approach, Silcox succeeded in inflaming the passions of workers. While Helbronner tried to raise working-class consciousness by relying on facts, experience and reason, Silcox appealed to sentiments. His rhetoric was more moving, forceful and passionate: "Our industrial system has enriched a few to a limit beyond the dreams of avarice," he asserted, "at the same time it has allowed multitude to sink into a poverty that means dark, hopeless, helpless servitude."[67] Silcox compared workers to the slave of Antiquity: "To the hierarchical potentates, monarchial despots, political bosses and industrial Pharaohs of today, God is saying in plainest language, 'Let my people go'."[68] Silcox did not hesitate to use the slave analogy. He professed in a much publicised sermon that: "the fact is we have white slaves by the thousands, men and women, who drudge from morn till night, hardly earning enough to keep soul and body together."[69]

By depicting workers as slaves, Silcox was posing as a "nineteenth-century Moses" whose divine mission was to free workers from the chains that ruthless Capital tied around their necks in the form of long hours, bad conditions and meagre wages.[70] It was through repeated denunciations that

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[67] J.B. Silcox, "The Christianization of Industrial Relations"(1915), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, I5,** p.5-6.

[68] J. B. Silcox, "God and the People"(1893), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H4**, p.13.

[69] J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.14.

[70] "Manufactures and Corporations have reduced the wages of men and women to what political economists call the 'life limit'. The question asked is not 'how much can a man produce'

Silcox hoped to free workers.[71] Although he centred his criticisms on the industrial system which permitted inordinate accumulation of wealth by the sweat of poor labourers' brows, he also condemned any form of child labour. It was slavery at its lowest. He felt that it was time to enact laws against child labour "in shop and factory and farm."[72] Silcox was not only against children working in factories, but also in farm work, an old and accepted practice. It seems that at the turn of the century, a new conception of childhood was emerging. Theresa Richardson argues that Childhood came to be identified as "a thing in itself."[73]

All of the above reveal his moralist tendencies as does his position on debt. He thought that workers became slaves when they incurred debts. Silcox professed: "The most abject slavery is the slavery of debt. The borrower is servant to the lender"[74] Helbronner also dealt with this issue. Investigating the reasons that forced labourers to borrow, the journalist concluded that it was

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and pay him that, 'how little can he live on' and give him that. This is the iron law of wages. Capital reduces wages to life limit and pockets the profits" J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.13.

[71] J.B. Silcox, "The Scarlet Sin", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, Z6**, p.25, "Jerobam. A Politic Young Man.", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, M5,** p.12-13, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.6. "The Christianization of Industrial Relations"(1915), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, I5,** p.6.

[72] J.B. Silcox, "The Gadarenes and the Modern Imitators" (1916), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, U1**, p.7.

[73] Theresa Richardson, "Ambiguities in the Lives of Children: Postmodern Views on the History and Historiography of Childhood in English Canada", *Paedagogica Historica* (Belgium), Vol.32, no6, 1996, p.363-393. Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society. Framing the Twntieth Century Consensus*, (Toronto, UTP: 1976).

[74] J.B. Silcox, "An Honest Dollar"(1912), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, B1**, p.3.

Capital's "business practices" which condemned workers to borrow for life necessities. Helbronner thus suggested concrete reforms such as weekly payment of wages to solve the problem. Silcox's solution illustrated how he differed in attitude from that of the journalist. Silcox advised: "do not spend money before you have earned it."[75] He preached economy and restraint, associating debt with the materialistic instinct of the industrial society. In fact, materialistic values were the target of his resistence:

> The truth that needs to be taught at the fireside, emphasized in the school-room, preached from the pulpit, repeated by the press, is the truth that fondness for display, and consequent going into debt, are beggaring and bankrupting men and women today by the thousands. This ostentation display leads to moral ruin as well as to financial failure.[76]

Silcox never considered that it might have been the "life limit"[77] wages workers received that forced them to go into debt. Hence, if the preacher did side with labour, he did not necessarily completely understand their situation, nor did he listen to their claims. Though he recognised that the industrial system put them in a dependent position, he also thought that circumstances could not account for everything:

> The meanest, most brainless heresy I know of, is that which says "circumstances make the man". Circumstances make things, but not men. The most abject thing I know of, is that feeble, flabby, flaccid thing men call a "creature of circumstances" whose decalogue is condensed in the one idiotic sentence: "when you are in Rome, do as the Romans do."

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[75] Ibid., p.6.

[76] J.B. Silcox, "Absolom, A Fast Young Man", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, P5,** p.19.

[77] Silcox used the expression in a sermon: "The question asked is not "how much can a man produce" and pay him that, "how little can he live on" and give him that. This is the iron law of wages. Capital reduces wages to life limit and pockets the profits. J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.13.

Which being interpreted means, when you are among hogs do as hogs do."[78]

Men and women had a will, he recognized: "I do not minimize the secret, subtle power of heredity. I do not belittle the silent, insidious force of environment, but against them I assert the imperious human will, backed and energized by the Holy Ghost.[79] He reiterated the idea of "human will" in other sermons.

> 'Master speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.' The man who made this demand on Jesus has a good many relations in the world today. Hosts of people are yelling out the same unreasonable complaint. Men who are shiftless and thriftless want the industrious and economical to divide up with them. Men who are lazy and extravagant look with envy on the better homes and richer comforts of those who worked hard and practised economy. Much of the poverty and pain that men suffer, in this country, is due to their improvident habits. This world is made so that industry shall enjoy greater comforts than prodigality. The indolent and the spendthrift have neither right or reason on their side when they impudently demand that the inheritance of the industrious and economical be divided among them. The bitter pill that some people are swallowing to day is of their own making. This is a hard truth, but it is a truth.[80]

In his famous "Grip and Grit" sermon, Silcox revealed that he was not one-sided on the labour question, that rich men were not all evil. He specified that some men had risen on their own honest merit: "We criticize men who have risen. We attribute base motives to them. Their colossal wealth we say is the result of colossal wrong. The thing to fix our thought on is this, the men who have climbed to eminence have been tremendous workers. They have toiled from youth to old age."[81]

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[78] J.B. Silcox, "Daniel In Babylon, **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, W2**, p.17.

[79] J.B. Silcox, "Daniel In Babylon, **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, W2**, p.18.

[80] J.B. Silcox, "True Manhood", (1905), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, F4**, p.7.

[81] J.B. Silcox, "Grip and Grit", (first time 1882), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, H5**, p. 34.

It becomes clear that what was wrong with the industrial system was not necessarily that some men became rich, but that some men accumulated wealth at the expense of the hard labour of others. Silcox certainly displayed moralist attitude when he criticized the industrial system: his purpose was to eradicate the moral wrongs of society.

Sabbath Observance, Temperance and Social Purity

The moralist side of Silcox is even more apparent in his fight against "social evils". He was very much distressed by issues such as Sabbath observance, temperance, prostitution and gambling. His position on these issues was as categorical as his views on the industrial system. He declared: "There is no need that Theatres, Moving Picture shows, should be open on Sunday. It is against the cultivation of religion to have them open, and what works against religion works against the well-being of humanity and of the nation."[82] The Sabbath simply had to be observed. His argument, however, went beyond religious principles. He offered the concept of a "day of rest", and in some cases he even gave more importance to this argument.[83] He plainly stated: "The Sabbath was made for man. It was instituted for man's welfare. The Sabbath was not made for God. It was made for man."[84]

His position on temperance was as clear-cut as the one he held on the Sabbath. He affirmed: "I believe in total abstinence for the individual. I believe in total prohibition for the nation. I believe

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[82] J.B. Silcox, "The Humanity of Sunday" (1913), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, B1**, p.2.

[83] Ibid, p.11, and J.B. Silcox, "Prayer and Politics", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, B2**, p.4.

[84] J.B. Silcox, "The Democracy of Religion", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, R2**, p.3.

in moral suasion and I believe in legal suasion."[85] To Silcox, prohibition was Christ's will.[86] He refuted anti-prohibitionist arguments with assurance. For instance he stated: "There are men who say that prohibition does not prohibit. What is my answer to that? A Fire Brigade does not absolutely prohibit the outbreak of a fire in the city, but every city knows it is wise to have a first class fire brigade."[87] On this issue he went further than simply denouncing the anti-prohibitionists; he also charged Winnipeg's municipal government with a lack of morality[88]:

> The principle that persons are more sacred than property lies underneath the modern crusade against the liquor traffic. Men argue that the traffic brings revenue to the nation. They remind us that distillers and brewers have much property invested in the traffic and that property should be sacredly guarded. I answer where vested property conflicts with the welfare of the people, vested property must go.[89]

He was equally uncompromising when it came to prostitution. As Mariana Valverde pointed out: "for many Canadians prostitution was really *the* social evil, the most important of social problem ascribed to modern urban life."[90] Silcox delivered powerful sermons on the issue, telling his congregations that:

> We quarantine the house where scarlet fever rages. Why not quarantine the house where

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[85] J.B. Silcox, "The Modern Devil", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, W5,** p.6-7.

[86] J.B. Silcox, "The Man Sent from God" , **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, V5,** p.20.

[87] J.B. Silcox, "The Modern Devil", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, W5,** p.7.

[88] Ibid., p.13.

[89] J.B. Silcox, "The Democracy of Religion",**(JBSP), PP58, Box A, R2,** p. 9.

[90] Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water.Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*, (Toronto, McClelland & Stewart: 1991), p.77.

> the scarlet sin is rampant? If we have the right to protect our families from physical contagion, why not from moral infection? For three years the ministerial association of this city have been trying, in quiet ways, to induce the police commissioners to enforce the laws of the land against this plague-spot of iniquity, this hell-hole of licentiousness, this cess-pool of damnable corruption that with cancerous persistency has fastened itself as an institution on our fair young city.[91]

Silcox went on the war path, blaming municipal politicians for having a blind spot on the issue of prostitution. When the mayor of Winnipeg accused the Ministerial Association, set up to deal with the problem, of placing "a nasty stigma on the fair name of Winnipeg,"[92] Silcox simply denounced the civic authorities in his sermon:

> The blame and the shame of this condition of things in our city must be fastened on the men who are responsible for it. The men who are responsible for it are the police commissioners. The few men who constitute this Czar-like tribunal, in their colossal conceit imagine that they know more than all the rest of the people of the Dominion together, and therefore they set aside the law of the land, and substitute an unwritten law of their own devising. Practically they have given police protection to this vice, so long as it is practice within the limits prescribed by these guardians of public morality.[93]

How could policemen dare to play the role of the moralist? It was not their function to judge of good and evil, theirs was simply to apply the law. It becomes clear that Silcox believed that decreeing what was right or wrong, good or evil, was the preserve of preachers like himself.

Silcox's view of Women

From his "Scarlet Sin" sermon, one gets a glimpse of what Silcox thought of women. In

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[91] J.B. Silcox, "The Scarlet Sin", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, Z6**, p.16.

[92] "Civic Candidates Define Policy", *WFP*, November 9, 1903.

[93] Ibid., p.17.

explaining why "the shame of the scarlet sin has fallen chiefly on the women", he specified that "in the first instance she herself was a victim of man's perfidy and lust."[94] He also maintained that the industrial system was responsible for driving young girls down the path of sin. The low wages they received for their hard labour left them with no alternatives but "sin or starve".[95] Obviously Silcox had conveniently forgotten that prostitution had been around since the beginning of time.

Silcox did not entirely blame women for the prevalence of prostitution in Winnipeg. Indeed, he did not believe that they were fundamentally wicked. Instead, he saw them as victims. Their victimization did not mean, however, that they were inferior beings. He cultivated a deep respect for women, preaching (probably once a year) on "Royal Womanhood".[96] He asserted that for too long:

> We went on the principle that woman was inferior to man, and took measure to keep her inferior, by refusing her the same opportunities of culture, that were open to man [...] As the years go by, more and more young women will graduate from universities. The higher education they receive will not make them less womanly, neither will it lessen in their minds the glory of wifehood or the duty of motherhood. The more intelligent the mothers are the higher will the race rise in intellect and morality.[97]

Although Silcox's views of women reflected the traditional perspectives of his day with his emphasis on "wifehood" and "motherhood" as the sole worthy occupations for women, he did, nevertheless, show enlightened views by stating that society had no right to circumscribe the sphere of women:

> We have no right to say she may do this, but shall not do that. We have no right to say of

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[94] Ibid., p.16.

[95] Ibid., p.25.

[96] J.B. Silcox, "Royal Womanhood", **(JBSP), PP58, Box C, G7**, p.1.

[97] J.B. Silcox, "A Pattern of Service", **(JBSP), PP58, Box a, G3**, p.7.

> this or that work, it is unwomanly. Some thought it was unwomanly for Florence Nightingale to go to the Crimea and care for wounded and dying men on the battle field and in the hospital. If God gives woman a talent for medicine, or a talent for art or a talent for literature, or a talent for music, she should be allowed unchecked to exercise her talent in the service of God and humanity. the young woman has as much right to study theology and preach the gospel than to sing the gospel.[98]

Silcox even looked forward to the day when: "The world will pay more attention to skill than to sex, and have more regards to genius than to gender."[99] Clearly Silcox held progressive views in terms of women's place in society although he never went so far as to advocate women's suffrage. [100]

Silcox's Master Plan: The Gospel.

If Silcox did not even consider women's suffrage as an effective social reform strategy, it was probably because he believed there was one, and only one, way to bring the kingdom of God on earth, to create a "perfect society". He claimed that "Converting men and women to Christian life is the surest and only permanent way of social reform."[101] For him, "Every industrial problem, every political problem [was] a religious problem. The principles of religion extends [sic] over the entire domain of human life [...] the great problem that confronts us today is the Christianizing of human

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[98] Ibid., p.10.

[99] Ibid., p.11.

[100] J.B. Silcox, "Religion Breathing Household Laws" (circa 1905), **(JBSP), PP58, Box C, C8,** p.3.

[101] J.B. Silcox, "A Man Concerned for Other Men" (1915), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, K3,** p.16

relationships."[102] It did not matter how he formulated it[103], he always came back to the same idea: "The salvation of men depends largely on the preaching of the gospel." [104]

Silcox believed that the gospel had the divine power to transform lives:

> Soul-facts, facts of spiritual experience, facts of moral transformation of character are as real and reliable as are material and physical facts. When a gambler is converted to honest citizenship, when a drunkard is converted into an apostle of temperance, when an ignorant Gypsy boy is converted into an eloquent evangelist; when an ambitious medical student is converted into an enthusiastic philanthropist whose only ambition is to lift children out of the degradation of slum-life into conditions of healthy, happy home life, you have facts as valuable and as important to society and human progress as any facts you can marshall in the material realm.[105]

He forcefully preached:

> I am not shame of the gospel for I have seen it inform, reform and transform men and women whose lives were desperately wicked. I have seen reprobate criminals converted into honorable citizens by the grace of the gospel. I have seen adulterous men made chaste, drinken men made sober, miserly men made generous, profane men made reverent, hot-tempered men made gentle, vindictive men made merciful, by the gospel.[106]

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[102] J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.2.

[103] J.B. Silcox, "The Indolent or Wayside Hearer"(1912), **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, W6,** p.4, "A Man Concerned for Other Men" (1915), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, K3,** p.14, J.B. Silcox, "The Purpose and the Glory of the Gospel", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, Y4,** p.15, "Social Redemption" (1901), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, S3,** p.2, "Loyalty to the Church", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, G4,** p.5.

[104] J.B. Silcox, "A Preacher of Rightenousness", **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, E4,** p.5.

[105] Rev. J.B. Silcox, *Christianity's Unanswerable Argument* (Westminster Congregational Church, Kansas City, October 3, 1909), **(JBSP), PP58, Box A, Y4,** p.7

[106] J.B. Silcox, "The Purpose and the Glory of the Gospel", **(JBSP), PP58, Box B, Y4,** p.16.

Idealist? Certainly. Silcox believed that the perfect society was within reach; the industrial order simply had to be Christianized.

Silcox's Impact

Given Silcox's apparent popularity, one may argue that his sermons really spoke to the people. Unfortunately, how they directly affected men and women is hard to measure. What can be gauged, however, is how newspapers portrayed him. Winnipeg's papers publicized his great efforts to "moralize" the city. In 1904, *The Tribune* reported that "To a remarkable degree he has commanded recognition as a public teacher, dealing with the concrete problems of practical affairs and his voice has been a potent factor in the making of the Canadian West."[107] After his death he was remembered as a "leader" and as someone who "took an uncompromising position for observance of the law."[108]

It seems that Winnipeg's newspapers, the *Tribune* leading the way, never missed a chance to report where the reverend stood on "morality" issues. They quoted him on prohibition: "I believed in total abstinence for the individual, and I believe in total prohibition for the State."[109] Other accounts noted that Silcox charged the police commissioners with not enforcing the law[110], and that the preacher succeeded in gaining the support of eight hundred and fifty men to force the

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[107] "Hegira of Silcox", *Winnipeg Tribune* , May, 1904

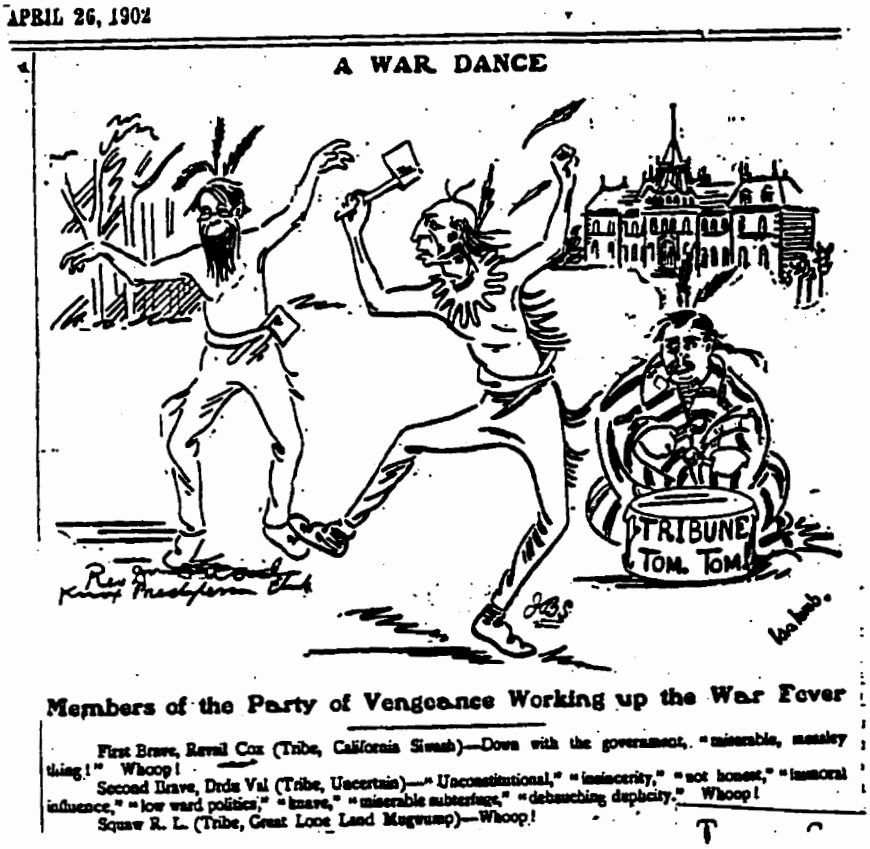
[108] "Rev. J.B. Silcox Dies Suddenly in Toronto", **(JBSP), PP58, Vertical File.**

[109] "Plea for Total Abstinence", *Winnipeg Tribune*, September 30, 1902.

[110] "Municipal Salvation", *Winnipeg Tribune*, February 24, 1902.

authorities to apply the law in regard to houses of ill fame.[111] The caricature below is an effective commentary on Silcox's campaign against "social vices" as well as the coverage *The Tribune* gave to the cause.

APRIL 26, 1902



Members of the Party of Vengeance Working up the War Fever

First Brave, Reval Cox (Tribe, California Siwash)—Down with the government, "miserable, measley thing!" Whoop!
Second Brave, Drds Val (Tribe, Uncertain)—"Unconstitutional," "insincerity," "not honest," "immoral influence," "low ward politics," "knave," "miserable subterfuge," "debauching duplicity." Whoop!
Squaw R. L. (Tribe, Great Lone Land Mugwump)—Whoop!

The *Free Press* also covered Silcox's "morality" campaigns. The paper printed the preacher's article on segregation where he explicitly blamed the civic authorities for the spread of social vices: "The most brainless and stupid policy ever followed by a municipality is the one that the mayor of this city and those associated with him in police control have adopted."[112] It also published his

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[111] "Pulpits Thunder Forth Their Denunciation", *Winnipeg Tribune*, November 16, 1903.

[112] J.B. Silcox, "Poets Who Sing of Ruined Womanhood", **(JBSP), MS353, File 3.**

"Scarlet Sin" sermon in which Silcox lashed out once more at the municipal authorities: "In our city the scarlet sin is rampant, allowed to thrive, to allure young men and old men and every home is in danger of the malaria of that foul pestilent mass of moral rottenness, because men appointed and paid to enforce the law, wink at it."[113] The editor appended to the sermon a note that after Silcox's closing appeal for a clean soul and a white life, the Reverend asked those who favoured his resolution to stand. Readers then learned that the whole congregation, some fourteen hundred people, stood.[114] This should not, however, be strictly interpreted as a sign of Silcox's influence; after all, what else could the congregation do!

Silcox's positions on prohibition and prostitution did not go unchallenged. The mayor and other aldermen criticized Silcox and the Ministerial Association for giving free publicity to bordellos. The *Free Press* printed at least two letters directly attacking Silcox's stand on prohibition.[115] A certain James Shillinglaw wrote:

> All I can say in regards to Mr. Silcox's sermon is that it is not in accord with the bible. But what can man expect when Shakespeare is placed alongside the bible and the text taken from it and preached to poor perishing sinners? Did the Rev gentlemen ever see any person who was brought to Christ through reading Shakespeare or hearing him preached? Now, Mr. Editor, I deny almost in toto what is in Mr. Silcox's sermon, as not being in accordance with the bible either old or new, and I defy him to prove that it is.[116]

His sermon on Sabbath Observance was met by bitter comments by workers. One irrate

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[113] "Ministerial Crusade for Moral Reform", *WFP*, November 16,1903.

[114] Ibid.

[115] A Man, "The Modern Devil", *WFP*, December 5, 1901 and James Shillinglaw, "Ministers and Prohibition", *WFP*, December 6, 1901.

[116] James Shillinglaw.

reader who signed himself as "A Lover of Freedom" accused a clique of men of imagining that they were:

> specially appointed by an all-wise providence to run the city and enact laws to suit their own peculiar (not to say objectionable) idiosyncrasies. Because they are virtuous, (in their own estimation) they do their utmost to prevent others to enjoy "cake and ale'... Sunday street cars have already been stopped by force of fanaticism; and now Sunday steamers and Sunday bicycling are threatened with the same faith.[117]

"St-Charles", writing also in the *Voice*, reported in a "Workshop View of Our Sunday":

> Of all our public conveyances the street car alone stands silent and empty in the barn, and the thousands whose means are too limited, or families too large for other means of transit, lounge around the streets, loll on a few square feet of green that they have saved from civilization, in front of what they call home, or with resignation in spirit and a slim 5 cents wend their way to church to render thanks for life, and the hope of a brighter future. Such is the fate of the poor, and such the effect of the laws enforced in our city on the Christian Sabbath. They make necessary and healthful pleasure dear, and shut off entirely the only means to it for those who need it most.[118]

Regardless of all his recurring attacks on Capital, no evidence has been found that capitalists were against him. He was in fact able to draw their support. Rich parishioners got together to publish some of his sermons in pamphlets.

Silcox's influence on implementing direct legislation to deal with social and moral issues, however, was limited. Aiming at the clergy in general rather than at Silcox specifically, the editor of one labour paper concluded that: "Not one of them has made a practical move towards relieving the

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[117] A Lover of Freedom, "Sabbath Slavery", *The Voice*, August 21, 1897.

[118] St-Charles, "A Workshop View of Our Sunday", *The Voice*, May 31, 1901.

oppressed, beyond a few empty, meaningless exhortations as to what should be."[119] Even with regards to specific campaigns that Silcox led, there was little impact. For example, prohibition did not come into effect in 1897, and authorities continued to favour a segregation policy throughout Silcox's terms in Winnipeg. Where Silcox did succeed, however, was in raising public awareness. He was clearly associated with the fight for a purer Winnipeg. He even received a personal letter from a certain "Purity" stating: "The fearless stand that you have taken on the question of social evil, is the reason of this letter."[120]

However, there was more to Silcox than his campaigns against social vices. The *Tribune* portrayed him as a labour sympathiser:

> He spoke strongly in favour of the efforts made by working men to better their condition. He said he believed in the reign of the common people. The strength of and sense of a nation were to be found not in those high up but rather in the intelligent working men and women of the land. His story shows that the great social and political reforms were begun and carried forward not by the few at the top of society but by the many below ... he took sides with the masses. The top of society did not always represent the cream. He believed the Knights of labor were working in the right direction. As things are, organization and unions are necessary.[121]

The *Voice* and the *Daily Nor Western* were even more committed to presenting him as a champion of labour. Publishing the main lines of his sermon on "Social Reconstruction", the *Voice* quoted him as saying: "The term socialism has been a term of reproach. It is becoming a term of honor and a

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[119] "Current Comment", *The Voice*, June 1, 1895.

[120] Purity, "Letter to Rev, J.B. Silcox, May 21, 1912.", **(JBSP), MS353, File 1.**

[121] J.B. Silcox, "Early Closing",**(JBSP), PP58, Box B, E7, newspaper articles.**

synonym for Christian."[122] The labour newspaper related that the preacher went on to say that "to be permanently prosperous a nation's wealth and culture needs [sic] to be well distributed."[123] His rhetoric definitely pleased labour representatives. How could it not delight them with statements like: "Canada has too much government of the people, by the corporations for the millionaire."[124]

The way the editor of the *Voice* interpreted a 1897 sermon reveals how Silcox's words could be used to fuel labour passion: "The discourse treated of the possibility of an immediate social revolution, and contained a scathing arraignment of corporations and a plea for the elevation of the lower classes of humanity."[125] It also quoted Silcox on revolution: "Men who study the social problems of our day speak of the impending revolution as an assured fact."[126] The editor concluded the piece with Silcox's uncompromising thoughts on the industrial system:

> The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few is not right, and should not be tolerated. It is against the clearly revealed will of God that a few should live in splendor while the many wallow in squalor [...] The huge monopolies and trusts of today are a colossal injustice to the people.[127]

Believing Silcox sympathetic to their cause, labour representatives asked him to address a meeting of Canadian Pacific Railway strikers. Silcox denounced the disposition of the corporations

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[122] "Social Reconstruction", *The Voice*, September 5, 1901.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid

[125] "Rev Silcox Speaks", *The Voice*, May 22, 1897.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

to crush labour organisations, stating that Capital was itself organized into combinations. In less inflammatory prose than usual, Silcox sided with labour but advocated amicable relations between employers and employees:

> He believed in the right and ability of the people to rule themselves. He thought there must be aggregations of wealth to do the world's work but labor and capital must work amicably together and neither demand more than a just share of results [...] he protested against the degrading doctrine of supply and demand as applied to human labor. He alluded to the good wage policy.[128]

It seems that when confronted by practical reality that Silcox, like Helbronner, proved more conciliatory, promoting *bonne entente*. In the pulpit there was, however, no mercy for the exploiting capitalist. It appears that for Silcox, his rhetoric often outdistances his reforms. Behind his rhetoric lay his Christian social vision of an ideal world where labourers and capitalists worked together to achieve the Kingdom of God on earth.

Conclusion

J. B. Silcox was a true social gospeller. He strove to bring the kingdom of God on earth, to create a humane society based on Christian principles of love, charity, humanity, brotherhood and democracy. The Church had to be concerned with social problems such as prostitution, alcoholism and intolerable living and working conditions. Silcox did not work to establish social missions, settlement houses or workers' unions, but laboured to alter people's attitude. His idea of direct assistance was to promulgate the teaching of the Bible. The industrial system which fostered greed, competition and materialism caused the ills of urban life. Through the gospel, however, citizens could

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[128] "Ministers on Strike", *The Voice*, August 24, 1900.

learn of Christian principles, and be metamorphosed to then learn to live according to the Golden Rule.

Since there is nothing original in his discourse, nothing to distinguish his message from that of other social gospellers of the time, one has to conclude that his popularity as the greatest social reformer of his day was due to the messenger rather than to the message.

CHAPTER 7
Reverend Hugh Pedley: The Perfect City Is Within Reach

> [Rev. Hugh Pedley made] a permanent impression on the lives of men and women with whom he came in contact, so they determined to go out in the great world and live noble lives and perform gracious deeds. *Central Church Chronicle*

The Limits of Historiography

Less famous than Reverend J. B. Silcox (who happened to be one of his close friends) but probably as important for Winnipeg's social reform cause, Congregationalist Reverend Hugh Pedley suffered the same fate as his good friend: historians have ignored him. Not mentioned in any general Canadian history textbook, Pedley has not penetrated the collective memory. In his award winning monograph, *The Regenerators*, Ramsay Cook refers to Pedley's 1880 article "Theological Students and the Time," but Cook fails to provide more information on the reverend. He recommends instead consulting Ross McCormack's *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919*.[1] Unfortunately, the four lines that McCormick allots to Pedley do

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[1] Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*, (Toronto, UTP:1985), p.40, 47,48, 106, 242 and 243.

not shed more light on the figure (especially since they are not substantiated and McCormick mistakes Pedley for a Methodist).[2] Robin Burns alludes to the reverend in his article on the Eastern Township's involvement in the Great War, but again, no relevant information on the pastor is provided.[3] Reverend Hugh Pedley thus remains an enigma for Canadian scholars.

Who Was Reverend Hugh Pedley (1852-1923)?

The question of Pedley's identity is hard to answer as no personal papers exist, and apart from the 1898 and 1912 notices in Morgan's collected biographies of famous men and women, no other biographical sketch of the man has been found. Born in England in 1852 of Charles Pedley and Sarah Stowell, daughter of Dr. Stowell principal of Chesnut College (England), Hugh Pedley graduated from McGill in 1876 and studied for the ministry at the Congregational College of Montreal. His father was a preacher, and he had at least one brother, James William, who also chose to join the ministry.[4] At thirty one, Hugh Pedley married Elizabeth Field, the oldest daughter of Corelli Collard Field, a merchant who in 1886 became mayor of Cobourg, Ontario, and was later elected to the House of Commons.[5]

Although they often occupied the same pulpits, Pedley's career path substantially differed

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[2] Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919*, (Toronto, UTP: 1977), p.78.

[3] Robin B. Burns, "Eastern Townships in the First World War: The First Hundred Days", *Journal of Eastern Township Studies*, Vol.13, 1998-1999, p.36.

[4] Henry James Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: a Handbook of Canadian Biography* W. Briggs Toronto, 1898, p.801-802.

[5] John Alexander Gemmill, *The Canadian Parliamentary Companion, 1897*, (Ottawa, J. Drurie: 1897), p.241.

from that of Silcox's. Pedley preferred to remain in one congregation rather than moving every third or fourth year. Henry Morgan reported that when asked to consider a position in Michigan in 1894 (a pulpit that Silcox would occupy for one year in 1905), Pedley declined the offer stating that after years in Winnipeg "he was disinclined to leave his work behind."[6]

Pedley first occupied the Congregational pulpit of Cobourg, where he laboured for ten years. It was during that ministry that he published his first article entitled "Theological Students and the Time" arguing that the ministry had a duty to solve the problems of the times.[7] He personally made his commitment to "deal bravely and skilfully with the actual world of to-day,"[8] thus indicating his sympathy with social gospel thinking.

In 1888, Reverend Pedley moved to Winnipeg to replace Silcox at the Central Congregational Church. For twelve years he contributed to the Western metropolis's intellectual life, exerting great influence on the life of Winnipeggers. He often gave speeches or sermons on social reform and labour issues.[9] Allan Maclean, author of a 1927 article on Central Church, argued that Pedley made "a permanent impression on the lives of men, women and young boys and girls in the

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[6] Henry James Morgan, p.801-802.

[7] Hugh Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times", *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, Vol. 18, July 1880, p.88.

[8] Ibid., p.91.

[9] C.A. Moor, "A Glimpse of Central Church", *The Canadian Congregationalist*, Vol.16, no13, April 1909, p.5-6. **Central Congregational Church Papers (CCCP), MG7G1, File E1, Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM)**

closing years of the 19th century."[10]

In 1900, Pedley accepted a call to preach at Emmanuel Congregational Church in Montreal where he worked for the next seventeen years (a pulpit that Silcox had occupied for three years in the 1890's). From 1900 on, he was elected to many honourable positions such as chair of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, moderator of the Congregational Association of Quebec and President of the Montreal Protestant Minister's Association. He was also a member of the joint committee on church union. In 1909 he was elected Chair of the Congregational Union of Canada and chosen as their delegate to the World's Congregational Congress in Chicago, and the World's International Congregational Councils in Boston and London.[11] These positions all confirm his dedication to church union. Unfortunately, Pedley died in 1923, two years before his long time dream came true in the formation of the United Church of Canada.

The Utopian Novel: An Open Window into Pedley's Social Reform Ideas.

Historians' disregard of the man does not change the fact that in his own time Pedley was a local celebrity. Many of his sermons were published or referred to in Winnipeg newspapers. This alone testifies to his influence and justifies an analysis of his thought. As well, Pedley was the author of a utopian novel, *Looking Forward. A Novel for the Times. The Strange Experience of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne*, published in 1913. Even though it never gained fame,[12] Pedley's utopian

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[10] Allan Maclean, "Central Church Stalwarts", *Central Church Chronicle*, Vol.1, no3, March 1927, **(CCCP), MG7G1, File E2, PAM.**

[11] Ibid. Henry Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: a Handbook of Canadian Biography* W. Briggs Toronto, 1912, p.893.

[12] No review piece or comment has been found.

novel does provide a key to understanding his social philosophy.

Utopian novels not only reveal an author's vision of the ideal society, but also his/her concerns with the present world. In addition, they often provide the author's solutions to the ills of the present society. Literary critic Jean Pfaelzer argues that:

> The narrative device that ushers in utopia is rather an image of current patterns: technological invention, monopolistic commercial practices, imperialism, and the extension of the common weal. In this sense, utopian fiction is a mimetic mode that reproduces familiar experiences, extrapolating them from current and past realities.[13]

Pfaelzer adds: "Utopian fiction is also, and unavoidably realistic. Its fictional rendering of political history derives from the author's analysis of the origins of the contemporary social malaise."[14]

Furthermore, the act of writing a utopian novel is an important commitment to social change. In his introduction to a reprint of John Galbraith's Canadian utopian novel, *The New Capital* (1897), historian Douglas Francis contends that the two major goals of John Galbraith's novel were to "entertain and to provide a blue print for social changes."[15] Pedley expressed the hope that his *Looking Forward* could directly affect society, stating that "a loss in dramatic completeness" in the novel might "be matched by a gain in immediate practicability."[16] His utopia should thus be

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[13] Jean Pfaelzer, *The Utopian Novel in America 1886-1896. The Politics of Form* (Pittsburgh: U. of Pittsburgh Press)1984, p.15.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Douglas Francis, "Introduction", *In the New Capital* (John Galbraith), (Toronto, Penumbra Press: 2000), p.11.

[16] Hugh Pedley, "Preface" *Looking Forward. A Novel for the Times. The Strange Experience of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne*, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1913), p.8.

considered more than a mere discourse. As he indicated in his preface, it was a "step forward"[17] to social action. Pedley clearly believed that sermons too, were more than words, stressing they too could change lives. The hero of *Looking Forward,* Reverend Fergus McCheyne, impacts the lives of many in the best possible way through the power of his sermons.

Pedley's sermons and his utopian novel contain a wealth of information on his social philosophy. Hence, it is possible to open a window into his mind and to paint a portrait of Reverend Hugh Pedley as a social reformer.

Pedley Influenced by Edward Bellamy and by Canadian Thinkers of his Time.

Even if only few details on his personal life are available, making it especially difficult to measure the degree of influence his family had on him, some of his ideas can nonetheless be traced to their sources. Pedley's novel was modelled after the most famous and influential of American utopian novels of the nineteenth century, Edward Bellamy's (1850-98) *Looking Backward 2000-1887*(1888). Bellamy's novel presents an ideal State by contrasting it to the old order. Through the eyes of fictional Julian West, a rich Bostonian about to get married, but who falls into an hypnotic sleep of a hundred and thirteen years, Bellamy depicts a society where the social and cultural divisions of the nineteenth century have disappeared. The author addressed the tensions between individual freedom and society's needs.[18] Opposed to the individualism of the marketplace, he

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[17] Ibid., p.5.

[18]W.H. Halewood, "Catching Up with Edward Bellamy" *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol.63, no3, 1994, p.451-461.

suggested a collectivist social order that would fulfill man's spiritual as well as material needs.[19] As Michael J. Turner demonstrates, Bellamy counted on man's inherent goodness to transform society.[20]

Pedley's own utopian novel constitutes the tangible proof of Bellamy's influence. Pedley borrowed many elements from the successful American utopian novel, starting with the romance between Julian West and Edith, the descendent of West's former fiancee. Reverend McCheyne, Pedley's own hero, also falls for the daughter of the woman he loved in his former life. The similarities between the novels are, however, much more substantial than the romance. In Pedley's story, the protagonist is a scientific-minded Presbyterian minister who questions from a young age the division among the Protestant churches. For the love of science (and for the plot of the novel), McCheyne puts himself in a coma which is supposed to last only two weeks, but fate leaves him in that state for twenty-five years. In contrast to the one hundred and thirteen years of Bellamy, Pedley needs only twenty-five years to bring about "The New Order."[21] This speaks volumes about the idealism and optimism of Pedley. Borrowing the tactic of Bellamy, it is through the eyes of McCheyne that the reader discovers the changes that took place in the last quarter of century, how the old order was transformed into a new state. Remembering the horrid urban conditions of 1902, McCheyne is happily surprised to see that conditions have improved tenfold in Winnipeg and in

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[19] Richard A.S. Hall, "The Religious Ethics of Edward Bellamy and Jonathan Edwards", *Utopian Studies*, Vol.8, no2, 1997, p.13-31.

[20] Michael J. Turner, "For God and America: The Religious and Moral Premises of Edward Bellamy's Socialism", *Journal of Religious History*, Vol.20, no2, 1996, p.185-209.

[21] This is how Pedley titled the second book of his novel, p.65.

Montreal. In both utopias, universal education and moral enlightenment become commonplace. Just like Bellamy, Pedley did not seek to overthrow industrialism, but to purify it. The reverend's concerns were spiritual rather than political or economical.

Although they promoted a similar type of society, Pedley and Bellamy proposed a different path to reach it. For Bellamy the catalyst is the replacement of private capitalism by public capitalism, the result being collectivist ideas superseding the competition ethos; for Pedley, the unification of the Church serves as the turning point for men's and women's purification. In his perfect society, the new unified Church brings "a catholicity of feeling, a consciousness of responsibility for the national welfare, a sensitiveness to real-world problems."[22] To convince the incredulous, Pedley specified that: "It was to McCheyne a thing well-nigh incredible that a change of church order should have had such an effect upon men's character and outlook."[23] A mentor later explains to the young reverend: "You know, some of our best men never had joined the church, but in some way, not easy to explain, the unifying of the churches made Christ more real to them."[24]

Pedley also took Bellamy's *Equality* as the "foundation of his words" for a published Labour Day sermon.[25] Much less popular than *Looking Backward*, probably because of the lack of dramatic interest, but more revealing in terms of Bellamy's social philosophy, *Equality*'s goal was

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[22] Pedley, *Looking Forward*, p.114.

[23] Ibid., p.187.

[24] Ibid., p.252.

[25] The sermon was printed in two papers."Labor Day Semons", *The Voice*, September 11, 1897. "Labor", *DNW*, September 6, 1897.

to fill in the empty spaces left by *Looking Backwards*. In Bellamy's words, "what was left out of it [*Looking Backward*] has loomed up as so much more important than what it contained that I have been constrained to write another book."[26] According to Sylvia Bowman, *Equality*'s purpose was to show the route to the ideal State, to modify some elements of the *new order* depicted in *Looking Backward*, and to respond to critics.[27]

Pedley readily conceded that of the two novels, the sequel was better. He admired the vivid descriptions of the "modern social conditions"[28] found in *Equality*. "There are certain great anomalies and injustices that stand out like great open sores to shame all our boast of progress," he said.[29] Pedley mentioned the vivid portrayal of the economic waste of competition and the unequal distribution of the world's wealth.[30] But, what Pedley probably found the most enticing was the novel's "recognition of great Christian principles." Pedley stated that *Equality* "denounces sectarianism and rebukes the hatred of nation against nation."[31] Indeed, in the novel, Julian West learns that:

> [religious classification] received a fatal shock at the time of the Great Revolution, when

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[26] Edward Bellamy, "Preface" in *Equality*, (New York, D. Appleton and Company: 1928), p.vii.

[27] Sylvia Bowman, *The Year 2000. A Critical Biography of Edward Bellamy* (New-York, Octagon Books: 1979), p.142.

[28] Hugh Pedley quoted in "Labor Day Semons", *The Voice*, September 11, 1897 and "Labor", *DNW*, September 6, 1897.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

> sectarian demarcations and doctrinal differences, already fallen into a great deal of disregard, were completely swept away and forgotten in the passionate impulse of brotherly love which brought men together for the founding of a nobler social order.[32]

Bellamy made clear that although there were no more churches and specially trained preachers in his new order, religion had not faded away.[33]

Amidst the praises Pedley showered on Bellamy, he injected one criticism. For the American author, economic changes were imperative for the soul to progress, the revolution had to start with the system rather than with individuals.[34] This is where Pedley differed, stating that the "defect [of the novel] is the virtual refusal to take into account the factor of human sinfulness."[35] He believed the revolution had to be spiritual first.

While Bellamy's work clearly had a great influence on Pedley, the reverend also acknowledged that he owed much to George M. Grant (principal of Queen's University), Samuel S. Nelles (Principal of Victoria University), William Caven (Principal of Knox College), and John F. Stevenson (principal of the Congregational College of Montreal).[36] Their commitment to church unification inspired him, he noted, to "take the forward step,"[37] to suggest a solution to the afflictions

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[32] Edward Bellamy, *Equality*, p.259.

[33] Ibid., p.264.

[34] Ibid., p.266-267.

[35] Hugh Pedley, quoted in "Labor Day Sermons", *The Voice*, September 11, 1897. "Labor", *DNW*, September 6, 1897.

[36] Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward*, p.5.

[37] Ibid.

of urban and industrial society.

While J.F. Stevenson is not very a familiar figure in Canadian history, the other three men, especially Grant, have been widely studied. Carl Berger writes that Reverend George Monro Grant (1835-1902) was a "precursor" of the social gospel movement.[38] A.B. McKillop confirms the interpretation when he reports that Grant once told an international congress of Presbyterians:

> The relation of religion to the secular is the relation of a law of life to all the work of life. This law of life is not a catechism, not a dogma, but a spiritual power of influence. Its relation to the secular is not arbitrary, but natural; not statical, but dynamical; not mechanical, but spiritual. Freedom is the condition of its healthful action.[39]

Hubert Krygsman documents that already in 1870, Grant "developed a system of ideas that consciously departed from Presbyterian orthodoxy and imitated the liberal theology of the social gospel."[40] Krygsman further argues that "the efforts to unite God's people into a tolerant Christian society that recognized all of life as the arena of religious practice was the central impulse of Grant's

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[38] Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power. Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914*, (Toronto, UTP:1970), p.183.

[39] George Monro Grant, "The Relation of Religion to Secular Life" *Rose-Belfrod's Canadian Monthly and National Review*, December 1890, p.619; quoted in A. B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence. Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era*, (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press:1979), p.218.

[40] Hubert Krygsman, "Practical Preaching" The Liberal Theology of George M. Grant", M.A. thesis (history), University of Calgary, 1986, p.6.

life."[41] Grant was expressly recognized by his peers for his progressive views towards other faiths.[42] John Dent wrote in 1881 that the gentleman was "a zealous advocate of [church] union."[43] Also of interest to Pedley must have been Grant's dedication to "scientific research."[44] The technological advances he described in the novel, the inquisitive mind of his hero, and the detailed explanation of McCheyne's scientific experience, all illustrate Pedley's own inclination for sciences.

This untainted curiosity in modern science was something that Pedley, Grant and Reverend Samuel Nelles (1823-1887) all shared. When Nelles became Principal of Victoria University, there were only two faculties: arts and theology. He devoted time and energy to add the Faculties of Medicine and of Law.[45] His biographer, G.S. French, writes that Nelles actively encouraged the study of sciences.[46] As McKillop demonstrates, the destructive impact of evolutionary ideas on orthodoxy prompted some religious men to welcome "critical inquiry." McKillop states that Reverend Nelles believed that "clear and independent thinking [...] guided by principles derived from religious inspiration"[47] was the solution to free thinking. This was exactly what Pedley advocated in

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[41] Ibid., p.9.

[42] John Charles Dent, "The very Rev. George Monro Grant, D.D.", *The Canadian Portrait Gallery* (Toronto, J.B. Magurn: 1881.), p.170.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p.173.

[45] John Charles Dent, "Rev. S.S. Nelles .....", *The Canadian Portrait Gallery*, p. 46.

[46] G.S. French, "Nelles, Samuel Sobieski", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XI, 1881-1890*, (Toronto, UTP: 1982), p.641.

[47] A. B. McKillop, p.6.

his piece on what a preacher's education ought to be: "He [the minister] should be qualified so to master this great flood of free-thinking that, instead of laying waste all that is fairest and best in our life, it shall be as a broad river which fertilizes and clothes with beauty all the land through which it sweeps in its stately course."[48]

In William Caven (1830-1904), the Principal of Knox College, Pedley must have admired the active role the man took in the amalgamation of the Canada Presbyterian Church of Canada.[49] Pedley probably also valued Caven's interest in education matters. Education was an important tool in reforming the souls. Pedley stressed that in the *new order* "intellectual life would have due honour," that "there would be no longer ignorance nor the brutality that has its roots in ignorance."[50] Also, the very fact that the four men he chose to dedicate his novel to were all principals of colleges or universities testifies to the value Pedley put on education.

Pedley's Social Philosophy

Civic corruption, the inequities that the industrial system engendered, the sweating system, the bad working conditions that the majority of labourers suffered, slums, drunkenness, prostitution, and gambling, in sum the social ills that tended to converge in the city, disturbed Pedley greatly. Like many other social reformers of his time, Hugh Pedley thought he should direct his energy towards the city. As he put it: "The history of humanity is largely a history of great cities, and it is in the city that

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[48] Hugh Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times", p.91.

[49] Jonh Charles Dent, "The Rev. William Caven, D.D.", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XI, 1881-1890*, p.

[50] Hugh Pedley, *War and the New Earth. Sermon Preached in Emmanuel Congregational Church, Montreal, Sunday Evening May 30th, 1915*, p.5.

the battle between good and evil reaches its climax"[51] For him, cities were prisons where immoral habits clustered, poverty was the norm, and civic officials were corrupted.[52]

Social vices concerned Reverend Pedley. He once asked: "Is it not axiomatic truth that the welfare of society depends upon the morality of society?"[53] Pedley strove to direct public opinion so society would declare, without reserve, gambling, prostitution, and intemperance as serious moral, physical and social threats that had to be dealt with promptly.[54] He found the question of prohibition pressing enough to postpone his sermon on the "Law of love in business life" in order to preach a series of three sermons on the prohibition plebiscite.[55] It is interesting to note that, like Jules Helbronner, Pedley did not believe that alcoholism was specifically a working- class problem. He stated: "The snake intemperance is not content with winding in and out the dirty dwellings, it glides through the door of the prosperous home and finds victims where the floor is richly carpeted and the walls decked with art."[56] It was specifically because intemperance was widespread that it had to be treated with urgency, he believed.

Like many of his fellow social gospellers, Reverend Pedley also participated in the debate on Sabbath observance. The *Daily Nor Western* reported his view:

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[51] Hugh Pedley, quoted in "Civic Evils, Their Cure" *DNW*, April 23, 1894.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Hugh Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times", p.88.

[54] "Social Reform", *DNW*, December 9, 1896.

[55] "Points of Agreement", *WFP*, September 19, 1898.

[56] Hugh Pedley quoted in "Social Reform", *DNW*, December 14, 1896.

> He considered the humanitarian reasons for preservation of a day of rest. He did not say what form of Sunday observance should be imposed on the individual, but there are many reasons why the State should fix a six-day week for work. [...] The operation of a Sunday service would entail additional labor on a number of motormen, conductors, office employees, men in the power house and at the parks, and though they might only required to work six days in the week, a Saturday, Monday or other day off would not be equivalent to Sunday to many. [57]

His stand on the issue was certainly not as uncompromising as Silcox's. For instance, he thought that there was no need for a Lord's Day Act.[58] Pedley expressed the opinion that:

> As to amusements, it seems to me that the less we depend on legislation and the more upon education and the pressure of public opinion to keep the day from degenerating into one of mere self-indulgence the better. It is putting Christianity in a false and ignoble position to even make it appear that her power, and indeed her very existence are involved in a law protected Sunday.[59]

Nonetheless, Pedley opted for Sunday observance when it came to street cars. He was even appointed to present resolutions to the municipal council opposing Sunday street cars,[60] and took part in the delegation to City Hall against them.[61] He thought that the common good would be secured only if citizens respected their fellow workers' right to a day of rest.

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[57] "Voice of the Pulpit. Ministers Discuss the Question of Sunday Street Cars", *DNW*, May 20, 1895.

[58] Reverend George Shearer, Secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance, was the main thinker behind the Lord's Day Act which aimed at restricting Sunday trade, labour and recreation. On the Sabbath observance forces, see Sharon Patricia Meen, "The Battle for the Sabbath: The Sabbatarian Lobby in Canada, 1896-1912", Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1979.

[59] Hugh Pedley quoted in "Citizens Protest", *DNW*, March 31, 1898.

[60] "Sunday Street Cars", *DNW*, May 28, 1895.

[61] "Against Sabbath Observance Bill", *DNW*, March 31, 1898.

The Municipal Government: an Important Body for the Welfare of Citizens

Although social vices certainly preoccupied him, Pedley did not dwell on these issues. On the other hand, civic corruption seems to have been a favourite target in both his sermons and in his utopian novel. He specifically stated in a sermon on social reform that "one of the most imminent perils threatening cities in new countries is that of municipal corruption."[62] He lost no time, however, in saying that "we [in Winnipeg] are thankful for our comparative immunity from the boodle cancer."[63] If at first sight it appears that Reverend Pedley was following the city council and media trend featuring "Winnipeg's fair name," he nevertheless quickly added that civic corruption was "a matter concerning which there needs to be exercised the closest vigilance."[64] Indeed, Pedley did not hesitate to raise the issue in the pulpit. As early as 1894, the reverend gave a powerful sermon on "Civil Evils, Their Cure."

> To prevent and cure these evils [poverty, over-crowdedness, congestion of vice, corruption in civic affairs], citizens must be aroused and cultivated to a consciousness of their civic duties. What we need to feel in our churches is that the election of aldermen is as sacred as the choice of a minister, that the appointment of committees is as truly religious as the singing of the anthems, and the passing of by-laws as important in the eyes of the Almighty as the services of the sanctuary.[65]

In 1896, he called for the end of insiders' privileges. "When public opinion becomes wise enough and positive enough to say that an official who uses a public position to serve private ends

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[62] Hugh Pedley quoted in "Social Reform", *DNW*, December 14, 1896.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Hugh Pedley, quoted in "Civic Evils, Their Cure" *DNW*, April 23, 1894.

shall be looked upon as an unclean person requiring many days of purification," he said, "we are likely to have incorruptible civic rules."[66] He pointed out that there was something very wrong when "candidates for the mayoralty of a great city shall be found in the position of the unfortunate who is hunting for a job."[67] Pedley advised Winnipeggers to choose their city representatives carefully.[68] What was important, he stressed, was to "have in our midst men of a high character who in office or out of it hold dear the welfare of the city."[69] In his novel, he had McCheyne exclaim: "What a city! In my days it was of course beautiful for situation [landscape], but hideous in its civic house-keeping. But now how different! The order, the symmetry, the extent, how marvellous!"[70] Pedley clearly believed that aldermen and the mayor should be imbued with what historians Richard Vetterly and Gary Bryner define as " Republican Virtue". By that term they mean the possession of "an amalgam of some elements of traditional civic virtue and of personal virtue, which was impregnated with biblical moral and theology."[71]

Although Pedley did not outrightly accuse Winnipeg's civic elite of corruption, it becomes evident that he disapproved of their boosterism. Size and wealth were not good indicators of a city's

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[66] Hugh Pedley quoted in "Social Reform", *DNW*, December 14, 1896.

[67] Ibid

[68] "Local Church Circles", *DNW*, December 7, 1894. "Social Reform", *DNW*, December 9, 1896.

[69] Hugh Pedley, quoted in "Social Reform", *DNW*, December 14, 1896.

[70] Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward*, p.127.

[71] Richard Vertterli and Gary Bryner, *In Search of the Republic* (New Jersey, Rownau & Littlefield: 1987), p.4

advancement, he believed. Through the eyes of McCheyne, Pedley criticised the unethical booster ethos of Winnipeg:

> He [McCheyne] saw a city whose greatness needed something more than size and money for the measuring of it. There was in it a wholesome intelligence, a striving for justice, a sympathy between the classes, an open-mindedness to new ideas that, more than its size and its wealth, gave Winnipeg the right to be called one of the great cities of the world.[72]

In Pedley's utopian city, the municipal administration was concerned with the well-being of citizens rather than only with growth.

> A new civic centre had been created; the harbour front extended far down the river; there was a new bridge across to the south side; there was a great central boulevard traversing the whole length of the city; and stretching to the very ends of the island. Looking south and west what McCheyne noticed was the vast extension of the residential part and the projection into it here and there of new business centres [...] In the space between 1902 and 1927 fully half a million people had found homes an what had been vacant lots, or land still furrowed by the farmer's plough. With amazement he looked upon the miles of paved street, the frequent square of park, the thousands of dwellings, the throngs of people that even at that hour were passing in and out of store market.[73]

McCheyne specifies that even a ride in the street-car could be enjoyable as the city authorities had finally understood that it could be "a phase of the aesthetic education of the people. They had come to the conclusion that the suggestion of beauty was better for the health of the people than the suggestion of disease as furnished by the advertisement of patent medicines."[74] This description contrasts to earlier accounts of city life. McCheyne reflects:

> In my day there were certain sections of the city that had come into the nondescript class.

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[72] Ibid., p.188.

[73] Ibid., p.126.

[74] Ibid., p.108.

> They were neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. They lay between the lower and the upper business sections, were in no demand for business purposes, and had lost their character as residential districts. The houses were pretty old, but in fair condition, and of a good size, yet not valuable for ordinary rental purposes. Only a poor class would come into the neighbourhood, and they could not afford to rent an eight or ten room house. The *only way to get a return* was to put anywhere from eight to ten tenants in one house, and you know what that means, - overcrowding, filth, disease, and vice.[75]

For Pedley, it was important to be aware of the sad conditions that prevailed in the city. Just like "the ancient prophets of Israel" who were not "blind to the sinister side of life or deaf to the cry of human wrong and suffering," seeing with "clear penetrating gaze the evil of the world,"[76] social reformers were to tell it the way it was.

The Old Order

Like Silcox, Pedley stressed that the industrial system tended to deepen the gap between rich and poor.[77] Commenting on Bellamy's *Equality*, he congratulated the author for illustrating truthfully the present glaring contrasts of the industrial city:

> We see the spectacle visible in every great city of a wealth that flaunts itself in an ecstasy and madness of luxury within a block or two of poverty that goes in rags and hunger. We see a mansion of a hundred rooms devoted to the service of a single family and not far away a hovel of three or four rooms where half a dozen families are living like rabbits in a warren.[...] We see one class of men and women who are using every device that pleasure affords to kill time; we see another class who seem forced to the dreadful task of killing themselves in order to make a living [...] Poverty is here in the presence of and in spite of

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[75] My italics, Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward*, p.137.

[76] Hugh Pedley, *War and the New Earth. Sermon Preached in Emmanuel Congregational Church, Montreal, Sunday Evening May 30th, 1915*, p.3.

[77] "Progress of the Working Classes", *The Voice*, December 15, 1894. "Rev. Mr. Pedley", *DNW*, October 23, 1896.

a vast increase in the aggregate wealth of the world.[78]

Pedley recognized that it was the labouring class which suffered the most in an industrial society that was unduly led by the concept of profits. He contended that: "The competition between these commercial monsters means the lowering of wages to the smallest possible figure."[79] The *Morning Telegram* summarized his message:

> He compared the position of the workers who were between buyers and sellers to those unfortunates in the death chamber of the inquisition, where the ceiling and the floor slowly come together and though the agony might be shorter or longer, according to circumstances, the final end was the same, and he reminded those present that the condition of the employees in Emerson & Hague's factory was the thin end of the wedge of the sweating system being introduced in Winnipeg. He said that the payment of inadequate wages has ever been the means of creating crime and immorality and of indirectly instituting the system from which such evils grow.[80]

Pedley apparently wanted to show that profit-oriented entrepreneurs endangered the physical, mental and moral health of citizens. The fundamental problem with turn-of-the-century Canadian society was that individualism (self-interest without regards to others) was winning the day at the expense of communitarianism ("political philosophy which emphasized the role of the community and tradition in defining interest and rights of persons."[81]) Pedley warned his congregation that:

> There are evils that spring out of our system, and with a change of the system the evils may pass. But there are other evils, that do not spring out of the system, that spring out of the

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[78] "Labor Day Semon", *The Voice*, September 11, 1897.

[79] Ibid.

[80] "The Church and Labor", *Morning Telegram*, February 20, 1899,

[81] H.B. McCullough, *Political Ideologies and Political Philosophies*, Second Edition, (Toronto, Thompson Education Publishing: 1995), p.306.

> perversity and selfishness of the human heart, and hearts must be changed as well as systems before these are abolished.[82]

God was certainly not to blame for the "dark and squalid places" found in some cities; men were.[83] Pedley preached that "there are at least three facts in human nature that stand in the way of the regeneration of society, and these are Ignorance, Sloth and Selfishness."[84] "Man should have an interest in the welfare of his fellow-creature and respect the rights of all," he said.[85] In other words, the community must have before all a sense of the common good. It was time to abandon individualism and adopt a more community-oriented approach. He inferred:

> There has been a tendency in religious teaching to press upon men the idea that personal salvation was the most important thing in the world, it is not strange, therefore that the same thing has to a certain extent crept into industrial life. The great need of a more public spirit so that no matter what we do we will consider our neighbour's welfare.[86]

An enlightened view of the common good would evoke devotion to the well-being of the whole society.

Reverend Pedley did not completely repudiate the industrial order. His hero is elated at the sight of "great banks, great warehouses, great office buildings, great departmental stores, a splendid

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[82] "Labor Day Sermons", *The Voice*, September 11, 1897.

[83] Hugh Pedley, *War and the New Earth. Sermon Preached in Emmanuel Congregational Church, Montreal, Sunday Evening May 30th, 1915*, p.6.

[84] Ibid., p.7.

[85] "The Ministers' Sympathy With Closing of Stores", *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, April 28, 1890.

[86] "Lessons of the Strike", *WFP*, May 29, 1899.

city hall, a magnificent city library, electric railways radiating out in every direction, and wide streets thronged with busy life."[87] These observations indicate that Pedley adhered to the "city beautiful" movement, that he advocated the creation of parks, the establishment of libraries, as well as the development of public transportation as ways of beautifying and enriching the city.[88] In fact, Pedley also supported municipal ownership of public utilities.[89] His portrait of a perfect society accepts that classes would not disappear, but that by 1927, the Church is aware of the different needs of each class. McCheyne's friend, the Bishop, tells him:

> There are many classes in the community and our services are so arranged that it is difficult for anyone to find an excuse for non-attendance. The nurse, the night-watchman, the men on night shifts, the servants, are all taken into account. From seven o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night on Sunday there is in this place opportunity for worship.[90]

Classes would remain in society, but the united Church would be able to reach everyone, implying that the Church would guide them into being better citizens. The Church would establish a politic of common good.

The Master Plan: The United Church

The best way to inculcate this politic of common good was indeed through the unification of

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[87] Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward*, p.180.

[88] Walter Van Nus, "The Fate of City Beautiful Thought in Canada", Stelter & Artibise, *The Canadian City. Essays in Urban History* (Carleton, Macmillan of Canada: 1977), p.162-185

[89] "Rev. Hugh Pedley Supports Both Church Unity and Municipal Ownership." **W.D. Lighthall Papers (WDLP), MG29 Vol.14, Clippings Misc, n.d., National Archives of Canada.**

[90] Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward*, p.106-107

the Christian churches. If only the church could become the "social centre for the community,"[91] Pedley thought, people would be better Christians, hence less selfish. His hero reflects: "What we need is a parish system along free church lines, that will put a well-equipped church in every section of the city, and lay upon it special responsibility for the moral and social welfare of that section."[92] The church would be more than a place of worship, it would also be a place to socialize.[93]

Throughout his career, Pedley emphasized the role the unified church should play in social matters.[94] In his novel, he mentioned two others agencies, the government and the school. Indeed, three weapons were to be used to purify the hearts of Canadians: "Force, Education, Religion,- the baton, the school, the church,- the policeman, the teacher, the Christian worker."[95] The "Triple Alliance" would cleanse society:

> It is wonderful how much can be done by vigorous city government, wonderful what can be accomplished by an efficient school-system. But there is this to be said for the Church, that, in addition to the direct actual work it accomplishes, it has a tremendous influence in making the other agencies, especially the municipal effective. Why, the Church in that parish has created such an atmosphere that municipal corruption cannot live in it.[96]

In sum, a powerful unified church would lead towards the purification of industrial and urban society.

Pedley's Impact

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[91] Ibid., p.143.

[92] Ibid., p.35.

[93] Ibid., p.110.

[94] "Civic Evils, Their Cure" *DNW*, April 23, 1894. "City Pastors Speak", *DNW*, March 26, 1897.

[95] Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward*, p.138.

[96] Ibid., p.143.

How much Reverend Pedley's discourse and actions actually contributed to the formation of the United Church of Canada is hard to gauge. It is impossible to know how many copies of his *Looking Forward* were sold as a means of measuring how influential it was. Only two newspaper articles, referring specifically to his view on unification, have been found.[97]

It seems that in Winnipeg the reverend was mostly associated with the labour cause. *The Voice* published some of his sermons and announced his lectures. Pedley often accepted the invitation of labour organisations to "make his discourse bear on some phase of the labor problem of the time."[98] Newspapers reported that Pedley expressed his sympathy with workers in their movement for early closing of stores,[99] or that he "preached a sermon in sympathy with the movements looking to the improvement of the condition of the working classes."[100] "Gideon" wrote "if every minister of the Gospel spoke as he [Mr. Pedley] did, the gap between the working classes and the church would be closed almost as quickly."[101]

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[97] "Favors Church Union", *WFP*, April 19, 1912. "Rev. Hugh Pedley Supports Both Church Unity and Municipal Ownership." **W.D. Lighthall Papers (WDLP), MG29 Vol.14, Clippings Misc, n.d., National Archives of Canada.**

[98] "Labor Day Sermons", *The Voice*, September 9, 1898. See also: "The Ministers' Sympathy", *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, April 1890. "Progress of the Working Classes", *The Voice*, December 15, 1894. "Rev Mr. Pedley", *DNW*, October 23, 1896. "Labor", *DNW*, September 6, 1897. "The Church and Labor", *Morning Telegram*, February 20, 1899. "Lessons of the the Strike", *WFP*, May 29, 1899.

[99] "The Ministers' Sympathy With Closing of Stores", *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, April 28, 1890.

[100] "Labor Day Semon", *The Voice*, September 9, 1898.

[101] Gideon, "The Concert and Lecture", *The Voice*, Deccember 15, 1894.

His contribution can not be measured in terms of impact on direct legislation, but like Reverend J.B. Silcox, what counts is his success in raising public consciousness. *The Montreal Herald* described him as "A man who thinks, who faces vexing questions squarely, who does not avoid the sometimes unorthodox solution of these questions, and who expresses his opinions orthodox, or unorthodox, with a fearless tongue."[102]

Conclusion

Reverend Hugh Pedley was a social gospeller who believed a better society was within reach. *Looking Forward* is the best testimony that the Kingdom of God could be established right now on earth. The novel also indicates that the Reverend was more than a thinker, he took steps to change the society which he found amoral because of the prevalence of individualism. The Church, aided by the school and the State, could inculcate a politic of common good.

Reverend Pedley certainly displayed the same idealism that his friend Silcox did. He too believed he could change society by preaching the Gospel. He went one step further than Silcox, however, by focussing on a concrete reform: the unification of the church. It was only when the church was united that the Gospel could reach all classes in society.

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[102] Quoted in Henry Morgan, 1912, p.893.

CHAPTER 8

Reverend Frederic B. Du Val: A True Presbyterian Social Reformer

During his long residence in the city he has been a fearless leader of civic reforms, as well as serving his congregation faithfully and zealously. *WFP*, December 13, 1915.

[Dr. Du Val] has lived [in Winnipeg] for 40 years, not only as a minister of one of its leading churches, but also as a man who was profoundly interested in civic righteousness and who, again and again, braved the displeasure of officials by his actions on government and evil living. *WFP*, May 16, 1928

In the early days there was no more stalwart champion with everything that was good and right in the life of the city and a fearless antagonist of all the base elements. At times in his fight he ran great personal dangers, but that made him fight all the harder. Reverend Kerr, *WFP*, May 16, 1928.

The debt we owe to his clear moral leadership in the early days is enormous. Reverend David Christie, *WFP*, May 16, 1928.

A Presbyterian Reverend in Winnipeg

After nearly forty years spent in Winnipeg, twenty-seven as pastor of Knox Church, Reverend Dr. Frederic B. Du Val passed away at eighty-one, one morning in the spring of 1928. His popularity and long residency in the city certainly contributed to the fact that his funeral was one of the largest witnessed in Winnipeg.[1] During his years as pastor, Knox Church was often filled to capacity.[2] Indeed, forty years of preaching are bound to have an impact, or at least some influence on parishioners. In 1912, "Criticus" rightly remarked that "A preacher must be no ordinary man if he is to feed the flock of Christ in one charge for such a period [twenty-three years] with unwearied freshness, sustained power, and comforting grace."[3]

Winnipeg newspapers attest that Reverend Du Val earned the epithet social reformer. He also succeeded in gaining the affection and respect of his congregation. His parish found him irreplaceable. When he submitted a letter of resignation in early 1914 citing health reasons,[4] the congregation convinced him to postpone his retirement. This was the same congregation that had thrown a surprise party for his twentieth wedding anniversary, and offered the Du Val couple many lovely and expensive gifts such as "a fine china dinner and tea service, hand painted jardiniere, a beautiful salad bowl, a dozen plates in royal Worcester work, a solid silver salad knife and fork, a

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[1] "Many Attend Funeral of Rev. F.B. Du Val", *WFP*, May 18, 1928

[2] For instance, "Employer-Employee" ,*The Voice*, October 21, 1898, "Ignorance Great Foe of Humanity", *WFP*, March 25, 1912, "Dr. Du Val Occupied Knox Church Pulpit", *WFP*, April 20, 1914.

[3] Criticus, "The Man and His Message", *WFP*, October 19, 1912.

[4] "Confirms News of Retirement", *WFP*, May 11, 1914.

sterling silver soup and gravy ladle, a fine damask table cover and a set of table napkins," as well as a comfortable and handsome study chair for Reverend Du Val.[5] These luxury gifts indicate that within the Knox congregation there were many well-off parishioners, but equally, the celebrations showed that Du Val was, without a doubt, greatly respected and appreciated.

Born in the United States, of a Scottish mother and a father whose ancestors were Huguenots,[6] young Du Val grew up in Maryland. He studied at the Hightstown Classical Academy (New Jersey) and earned a Master of Arts from Princeton University in 1875. A year later, he married Caroline Kearfott. They had nine children. Du Val attended Princeton Theological Seminary, and in 1886 he received a Doctorate of theology from Wooster University in Ohio.[7] His Princeton education certainly contributed to his views towards science and religion. David Livingstone has shown how the Princeton theological professors worked to accommodate their theology with evolutionist theories.[8] Reverend Du Val was at ease establishing relations between medicine and religion.[9] "Both classes of men, the minister and the physician," he stated, "were necessary in dealing with the ills of humanity, and it was desirable that each should know something of the curative means

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[5] "Pastor and Wife", *DNW*, November 4, 1895.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Henry Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time. A Handbook of Canadian Biography*, (Toronto, William Briggs: 1912), p.358.

[8] David Livingstone, "Darwinism and Calvinism: The Belfast-Princeton Connection", *ISIS*, Vol.83, no2, 1992, p.408-428.

[9] "Ignorance Great Foe of Humanity", *WFP*, March 25, 1912.

used by the other."[10] His colleague and close friend, Reverend Kerr, noted that: "From his early manhood, he [Du Val] interpreted the relation between science and religion, so that none of his people were ever perturbed by the bugbear of evolution or biblical criticism."[11] But despite his "enlightened" views on science, Du Val's social philosophy tended to be narrow-minded.

Toledo Church (Ohio) was the first of Du Val's two pastorates. Following his two years in Ohio, he began in 1888 his long career as the leading minister of Winnipeg's Knox Church that would only end in 1916. He then received the title of pastor emeritus. Elected moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1908-1909, he occupied other important positions such as councillor of Manitoba University, member of the Board of Management, senator of the Manitoba College, and member of the Joint Committee on Church Union.[12] He was chair of the Citizen Committee and of the Ministerial Association, as well as one of the prominent and active member of Winnipeg's Moral and Social Reform League. All three organizations were created to lead the fight against "social evils".[13]

Saturday Night stressed that Du Val was "a highly educated man; a man of infinite tact."[14]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Reverend Kerr, quoted in "Many Attend Funeral of Rev. F.B. Du Val", *WFP*, May 18, 1928

[12] Henry Morgan, p.358.

[13] Alan Artibise comments that although the Citizens' Committee never exceeded more than hundred fifty members, "by virtue of some of the personalities included in the group, its size is illusory." *Winnipeg A Social History of Urban Growth*, (Montreal, McGill-Queen's: 1975), p. 251.

[14] Quoted in Henry Morgan, p.358.

It is hardly debatable that Dr. Du Val was "highly educated", his tactfulness, however, is another story. More than the other social reformers included in this study, it seems that Du Val made many enemies during his long life. Even his close friend, Reverend Kerr, stated that at times, in his fight against the "base elements", Reverend Du Val ran great personal dangers.[15] Never hesitating to engage in public debates, Du Val wrote to newspapers's editors, replied to letters, or visited government officials to voice his concerns. He had strong views on Sabbath's observance, the school question (and Roman Catholic power), church union, labour relations and political rings, but it was as an outspoken and fearless foe of prostitution that he left his mark on the boom city of the West.

As historian John Moir has noted, these were all crusades that the United Presbyterian Church of Canada embarked on.[16] Indeed, the Standing Committee on Temperance and other Moral and Social Reforms (SCTMSR), established in 1907 by the Presbyterian church, was to "study the moral and social problems confronting people in the different provinces, such as the relation of the Church to labor, political and commercial corruption, gambling, the social evil [prostitution], the liquor traffic."[17] Brian Fraser links these reforms with the Presbyterian Church's commitment to "the increasing burden of defending the values of Anglo-Saxon protestant culture."[18] Du Val certainly felt

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[15] Reverend Kerr, quoted in "Many Attend Funeral of Rev. F.B. Du Val", *WFP*, May 16, 1928.

[16] John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness. A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, (Hamilton, Presbyterian Church in Canada: 1974), p.144.

[17] Brian Fraser, *The Social Uplifters. Presbyterian Progressive and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915*, (Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press: 1988), p.70.

[18] Ibid., p.64.

he had to protect his Anglo-Saxon heritage and his Presbyterian faith. His view on women, his stance against the Catholic Church and his advocacies on social issues, all point to his strong religious roots and social heritage.

A Passionate Foe of Social Vices

Early in his career, Du Val established himself as a passionate foe of liquor consumption, gambling, and prostitution.. Those were "the three great moral reforms" that he fought and, according to him, won.[19]

Temperance was definitively for him, as it was for Reverends Pedley and Silcox, an important question.[20] As a member of the Manitoba branch of the Dominion Alliance, he visited the Manitoba legislature to raise his concerns.[21] The press acknowledged his commitment to the cause in a 1902 cartoon where he is depicted dancing with Rev Silcox in preparation for the battle.[22] But, much more than the other two ministers, Du Val was associated mostly with one cause, the eradication of the social evil. The *Free Press* reported: "Our city has seen no keener fighter against the vicious element and just because of his utter fearlessness these characters began to slink off to a safer climate."[23] Indeed, it is as a fervent enemy of prostitution that he made his name. "Prostitution is the

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[19] "Dr. Du Val Gives up his Pastorate", *WFP*, March 20, 1916.

[20] "Presbyterian Synod", *DNW*, November 10, 1893.

[21] "Temperance Advocates", *DNW*, February 21, 1896.

[22] See p.203.

[23] "Many attend funeral of Rev. F.B. Du Val", *WFP*, May 18, 1928

lowest, cruelest, filthiest and most injurious offsprings of perdition,"[24] he once said. He never minced his words when he spoke of the vice: "The propagation of the idea that such a monstrous, filthy evil is a necessity would soon render all law against vice a nullity, make vice itself institutional, and set up chastity as a farce."[25]

As Mariana Valverde points out, "prostitution was central in social purity thought and practice because it mobilized the powerful symbolism of the whore of Babylon in the campaign to clean and purify the city."[26] Du Val authored the pamphlet *The Problem of Social Vice in Winnipeg* "in the hope of rendering some humble service to the latest edition of our Christian Civilization, and insuring a purer nobler life to our posterity."[27] He argued that "where there is a letting down of the moral ideals and concessions made to the indulgence of vice, there is an increase in foul imaginations, filthy speech and obscene practices, that insure a rapid increase of moral degeneracy."[28] For him, physical degeneracy was intricately linked to the moral degradation of society. This is why prostitution had to be fought at all costs. The pamphlet was a passionate indictment of segregation. Reverend Du Val charged that:

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[24] F.B. Du Val, "Dr. DuVal on the Civic Issue", *WFP*, December 6, 1910.

[25] Frederic B. Du Val, "Dr. Du Val on the Social Evil", *WFP*, August 7, 1901.

[26] Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water. Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart: 1991), p. 78.

[27] Rev. Frederic B. Du Val, *The Problem of Social Vice in Winnipeg*, (Winnipeg, Moral and Social Reform Committee: 1910), p.4.

[28] Ibid., p.29.

> a minority who choose to degrade the sacred powers of generation, and by the use of aphrodisiacs, and the cultivation of filthy imaginations, bring themselves into a pathological debasement, that seems to themselves to demand a permanent institution of sexual vice, have no right, Divine or human, to maintain such an institution to the injury of the commonweal.[29]

In addition to his pamphlet, Du Val dedicated many sermons to the issue, wrote letters and articles in newspapers, organized mass meetings, and participated in the Royal Commission on the Suppression of Vice in Winnipeg.[30]

His crusade against prostitution can be divided into two stages. At first, Du Val was not against the idea of solving the prostitution issue "quietly and calmly". He was ready to follow the civic authorities "subtle" ways. He specified that when named chairman of the Ministerial Association's Committee,

> It was distinctively upon the platform laid down by myself that I would exhaust every means of getting the matter settled in private, that I deprecated going to the public; that I even charged members not to go to the public press with speech or letter on the subject; I endured the low inuendo [sic] in a low news column of secretly shielding the dereliction of officers, and the abuses of a reporter, who will deal more kindly some day, for trying in a gentlemanly way to keep our counsels on the subject out of the public mind. This matter has been under advisement for over two years- that does not look like rashness.[31]

The "commercial class's" deaf ear, however, forced him to revise his tactic, and to advocate a different approach. No longer hesitating to accuse the authorities of corruption, he denounced "the

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[29] Ibid., p.26.

[30] See, "Monster Mass Meeting in Moral Crusade", *WFP*, November 17, 1903."Letter from Dr. Du Val", *WFP*, February 20, 1908. "Rev Dr. Du Val Discusses Segregation Question", May 2, 1910. "Dr. Du Val's Reply", *WFP*, December 9, 1910.

[31] F.B. Du Val, "Rev Dr. Du Val to His Worship", *WFP*, November 20,1903.

'lowbred modern political rings' who let in their friends to get rich out of governmental moves and opportunities."[32] When he "formally closed his pastorate," Du Val chose to focus his final sermon on his early struggles "against social vice, against a threatened alliance of the police with the underworld, against political debauchery,"[33] indicating that this had been his most important mission in life. In 1914, referring to "the political immorality that has permeated the provincial department of justice," he asked: "Will the moral sense of the country ever be aroused?"[34]

For Du Val prostitution was far more than a local issue, it was a holy war to save the whole country and thus it had to be fought fiercely, even if it meant breaking old alliances. Indeed, his dealings with the mayor, councillors and civic employees disillusioned him. He could not accept the fact that the people in a position of power did not find the prostitution "curse" as serious as he did.

His campaign against prostitution also reveals some personality traits. It appears that Du Val did not see it as being below a minister to make personal attacks on his opponents. Taking on the Commission on the Suppression of Vice in Winnipeg, he zealously questioned Mr. Daly (police magistrate of the city). First, he "tactfully" specified that "no one has ever heard me say any word of disrespect against the police. I approach them in the position of one seeking for light."[35] He added:

> the chief and I have been friends for 23 years, but what I want to ask is this not the proper procedure when the force finds out that it is incompetent to execute the law, are

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[32] "Denounces Modern Political Rings", *WFP*, August 4, 1913.

[33] "Dr. Du Val Gives up his Pastorate", *WFP*, March 20, 1916.

[34] "Converts from Political Villainy", *WFP*, June 14, 1914.

[35] Judge Robson, *Report on the Commission on the Suppression of Vice in Winnipeg*, 1911, **Manitoba Legislative Library**, p.362.

> not one of two processes right; namely, either to resign the position or ask the authorities in Ottawa to make such amendments to the law as would enable the police to execute the law?[36]

Armed with medical knowledge and world statistics, Du Val proceeded in showing how detrimental the policy of toleration was.[37] But when Mr. Daly produced an article containing views contrary to his own, Du Val descended into personal attacks: "I knew General Bingham [the author of the mentioned article] personally for some time. He is an old solder [sic]; not a policeman. He is a disappointed man. I personally don't want that premise fixed."[38] So convinced was he of the shortcomings of segregation that when his "medico-moral"arguments were not automatically accepted,[39] Du Val flashed famous names from John Hopkins University who congratulated him on his "clear head and logical faculty."[40] Moreover, his pamphlet was nothing more than a pompous document where he made many pretentious observations such as: "After thirty-five years of meditation upon medico-moral subjects relating to the purifying of the springs of human well being - meditation originally started by converse with Professors A. Guyot and the elder Gross, I am compelled to conclude ..."[41]

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[36] Ibid., p.364.

[37] Ibid., p.363.

[38] Ibid., p.365.

[39] It was the case for Daly and a certain A. E. Potter who wrote a letter in the *Free Press*, December 8, 1910.

[40] F. B. Du Val, "Dr. Du Val's Reply", *WFP*, December 9, 1910.

[41] Rev. Frederic B. Du Val, *The Problem of Social Vice in Winnipeg*, p.4.

Du Val's self righteousness on this particular issue contributed to the souring of his relations with Winnipeg's commercial class.[42] Concurrently, the blind eye of the authorities to prostitution seems to have contributed to his changed social outlook. In fact, his views on Labour and Capital started to shift coincidentally at the same time that he clashed with the civic authorities in regards to the prostitution problem.

A Change of Heart

Like other social reformers, Du Val tackled the labour question, but never with the same commitment that Silcox or Pedley did, and certainly not from the same position. *The Voice* reported that Reverend Du Val "preached on the conditions under which the workman of today existed."[43] In that sermon, the Reverend pointed out that: "In Great Britain and the older countries laws were gradually being changed making it easier for the toiler, but it was only by hard and earnest agitation on the part of the workers that these changes were being made."[44] The labour newspaper reported that the minister described the relation between employer and employees as strained:

> There was a big gap, labor and capital were at war with one another, and yet the best interests of labor and capital depended on their working harmoniously together. Although there are many good employers, yet there are some who treat their men like tools. [... The worker] became a spoke in the business machine, but owing to the big competition in the labor market that spoke can be replaced. [...] Men are wisely coming to the conclusion that to better themselves in their station in life they must join a labor organization, thereby, all bargaining together, they make more headway than by individual effort.[45]

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[42] "Dr. Du Val Gives up his Pastorate", *WFP*, March 20, 1916.

[43] "Employer-Employee", *The Voice*, October 21, 1898.

[44] F. B. Du Val, quoted in Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

Although Du Val seemed to side with Labour and to advocate unionism in this particular speech, the Reverend was not always identified as a labour supporter; in fact, he often antagonized elements of the working class. The *Free Press* noted that he "indignantly protested against the world 'guild' [to be associated with the Christian Endeavour Society because]; it had a bad odor, its history was that of labor union."[46] A man who signed his letter to the editor of the *Free Press*, the "Jackdaw" vividly highlighted that Du Val was not Labour's best ally:

> The general tenor of his remarks [Du Val] would seem to seek to cast aspersions upon organizations of labor, and to lend the inference that they are at variance with what is right and just, so much so, that the very name 'guild' as having applied to a shoemakers' union forces it into such disrepute that it is rendered unworthy to be used in connection with the reverend gentleman's conception of a young people's society. Why should Dr. Du Val or any other man of intelligence seek to cast a slur upon an organization which never injured him, and to which respectable members of his congregation have allied themselves for mutual protection and benefit? Men who, while not rejoicing in their erudition, nevertheless are just as capable of discerning what is necessary and right in the affairs of everyday life, and men who have just as high ideals as Dr. Du Val, are members of the trade-unions, and feel very much less disgraced by that fact than surprised at his unseemly remarks.[47]

In another sermon on the "Labor Question", Du Val's *parti-pris* was evident:

> Capital and labor are, however, antagonistic, but naturally friends and mutually interdependent. Equal division would result in barbarism, for it is in supplying the luxuries and not the necessities that the working classes get their rewards. The progress of a nation can be best measured by its luxuries. Capital is also necessary for launching great industries and all great schemes must be under the management of accumulations of capital. As to the prices, they are not fixed by the factory, but by the purchaser, by the demand. Capital therefore should be protected, though it itself needs also to be governed. Strikes should be

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[46] "Presbyterian Century Fund", *WFP*, November 14, 1901.

[47] The Jackdaw, "Dr. Du Val and Trades Unionism", *WFP*, November 16, 1901.

declared unlawful. Labor and capital both must sacrifice something to the general cause.[48]

Du Val endorsed Capital's point of view by asking that strikes, the only weapon that Labour had, be declared illegal. Moreover, he even suggested that Capital be protected. Clearly, the business community found in the Reverend Doctor a true friend. The *Free Press* noted that: "Du Val was a peer among men, and this was the general feeling of business men in the city."[49] The Reverend emphatically congratulated businessmen for "beginning to think earnestly upon local affairs."[50] His endorsement of the "commercial class's" new plan to administer the city also reveals his allegiances.[51]

With time, however, Du Val's position shifted considerably. He became more critical towards Capital's practices and governments in general.[52] When saddlery workers were dismissed for refusing to sign conditions which were manifestly a strike at organized labour, Du Val supported them:

> [Du Val] felt the whole matter should be placed before the department of labor, and, if the laws of Canada did not meet the circumstances then they ought to alter the laws. Dr. Du Val continued that this was only the ancient fight of human rights against arbitrary powers, and they knew who would prevail in the end.[53]

In another published sermon, he confirmed his new position towards Labour:

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[48] F. B. Du Val, quoted in "Pulpit Views of Labor Question", *WFP*, September 7, 1903.

[49] "Resignation of Dr. Du Val Accepted", *WFP*, December 17, 1915.

[50] "Striking Need of Civic Reform", *WFP*, November 6, 1905.

[51] Ibid.

[52] "Dr. Frederic Du Val Observes Jubilee", *WFP*, May 3, 1913.

[53] "Ministers Assist Saddlery Workers", *WFP*, October 24, 1911.

> The age had it own ways of sinning against the spirit of humanity. Much of the animal in men works out its selfishness. Where it cannot work by force of arms and by chain, it often does by the higher faculties of the mind. It affects the great monopolies to draw exorbitant revenues from helpless people. The mischief it once did without law it now does by law. By skilful manipulation of legislation and parliaments it draws from the people, in an indirect way, fortunes a thousand-fold more fabulous than masters ever drew from the labor of slaves. [... Du Val] felt free to say that there are more white slaves in great cities than there were ever black ones in Southern fields, slaves of poverty, vice and hopeless degradation.[54]

His stand on Sabbath observance also reflects his change of heart. At first, he forcefully defended Sabbatarian legislation[55] thus opposing Labour since most workers clearly rejected the "act for the better observance of the Lord's Day."[56] "He made an impassioned appeal to the committee not to permit Sunday street cars. *Salus populi suprema lex* [For the good of the people, the law is supreme],"[57] reported the *Nor Western* in 1895. Reverend Du Val argued:

> Why should there be a depreciation of Christianity because it is Christian. There has not been a law passed which has not been the cause of years of controversy, consequently has been stated by an English writer, laws are the outcropping of the will of the people. The Duke of Argyle was right when he said 'the perfection of our law is the perfection of our liberty'. The highest law known is the moral good of the people. Since the civil war in the States, and since the Sabbath day became an open day, crime has increased 250 per cent in that country.[58]

By 1906, however, Du Val had completely changed his mind. He declared "Sunday cars are a

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[54] "Present Day Need for Wise Leaders", *WFP*, August 11, 1913.

[55] "Citizens Protest" , *DNW*, March 31, 1898.

[56] "Sunday Observance", *DNW*, April 16, 1898.

[57] "Sunday Street Cars", *DNW*, June 25, 1895.

[58] Ibid.

necessity in Winnipeg. They should be inaugurated in the interests of the citizens."[59] His new stand on labour issues corresponds with his clash with the civic authorities regarding the best way to deal with the prostitution problem.

Du Val on Women's Place in Society

Through his discussions on prostitution, Du Val revealed his view of women. Like Reverend Silcox, Du Val believed that "their [young women's] employment at less than a living wage," drove some "to sell the priceless pearl of their virtue to the brute of a man who is ready to purchase it."[60] Although he acknowledged that prostitution was one of the oldest vices, he nevertheless remarked that the nature of the economic system exacerbated the problem. What emerges from analysing his views on prostitution and women is his Presbyterianism.

The passive role that women were to play in society was very much a part of the perspective of the Presbyterian church. Reverend A. P. Dunn declared in 1936 that Presbyterianism had placed the highest value on its men, and had for a long time undervalued its women.[61] Using the case of Reverend See, who permitted women to speak from his pulpit in Newark (New Jersey), historian Lois Boyd illustrates how the Presbyterian church officially took a narrow view of women's place in society. In 1876, Reverend See was charged before the presbytery with disobedience and later

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[59] "Sunday Cars Are Now a Necessity", *WFP*, February 5, 1906.

[60] Rev. Frederic B. Du Val, *The Problem of Social Vice in Winnipeg*, p.19.

[61] John Moir, p.288

found guilty as Presbyterians believed that the pulpit was not a woman's place.[62] Presbyterian women were not expected to take an active role in the Church nor in social reform. As historian John Moir found, it was only in 1907 that "the Presbytery of Winnipeg petitioned the General Assembly to set apart deaconesses to 'serve the Church as nurses, parish visitors, dispensers of charity, and in other way that may prove desirable.'"[63] Brian Fraser argues that for Presbyterians: "it was the social responsibility of men to take the virtues of Christian character they had learned in the private sphere of the home into the public realms of business, politics, religion, and social reform."[64] In Du Val's circles, women were simply not expected to play the leading role in social reform.

Hence, Du Val continuously stressed that the prostitution problem should be solved by men.[65] Men, not women, were asked to attend his talk on segregation.[66] He plainly stated in his 1910 pamphlet on *The Problem of Social Vice in Winnipeg* that "[women] were courteously informed that their help was not needed, that no woman's name should be mentioned, it would be a man's battle."[67] He held this belief so firmly that he mentioned it in his last official sermon as pastor

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[62] Lois A. Boyd, "Shall Women Speak? Confrontation in the Church, 1876", *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol.56, no4, p.271-296.

[63] John Moir, p. 180.

[64] Brian Fraser, "James A. Macdonald and the Theology of the Regenerators", *Nation, Ideas, Identities. Essays in Honour of Ramsay Cook*, eds. Michael Behills and Marcel Martel, (Don Mills, Oxford University Press: 2000), p.11.

[65] Frederic Du Val quoted in "Rev. Dr. Du Val Discusses Segregation Question", *WFP*, May 2, 1910. And, "Monster Mass Meeting in Moral Crusade" *WFP*, November 17, 1913.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Rev. Frederic B. Du Val, *The Problem of Social Vice in Winnipeg*, p.14.

of Knox Church.[68]

It is clear that for Du Val, only men could solve the "social vice" problem. He reminded his readers that he had "placed in the public press, a card of readiness to relieve any of the unfortunate girls who wanted to be sent home, or who desired to follow a better life, with the assurance that their names would be kept secret," stressing that "noble men stood by him."[69] Du Val did, however, provide support to the Young Women's Christian Association [YWCA].[70] "In a few strong words", a reporter of the *Free Press* wrote, Du Val "expressed his conviction that there was a far greater need in modern cities for institutions like the Y.W.C.A., than for young men's association."[71] One should not, however, see in Du Val's endorsement of the YWCA a departure from his previous attitude. After all, he reiterated that women needed all the help they could get: "The world was a hard place for girls," he said, "who were handicapped all along the line, and had a few of the privileges granted to young men."[72] Furthermore, the YWCA was not a radical feminist organization. Diana Pedersen finds that although women reformers had their own distinct perception of the city and their own definition of urban reform, due to the lack of capital and political power, they were forced to depend on the support of male reformers and to address themselves to the men's concerns.[73]

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[68] F.B. Du Val, quoted in "Dr. Du Val Gives up his Pastorate", *WFP*, March 20, 1916.

[69] Ibid.

[70] "Annual Reports Show Progress", *WFP*, May 30, 1908.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Diana Pedersen, "'Building Today for the Womanhood of Tomorrow': Businessmen, Boosters, and the YWCA, 1890-1930.", *Urban History Review*, Vol.15, no3, 1987, p.225-

The School Question and the Defence against the Roman Catholic Church

That his social philosophy was rooted in Presbyterianism is even more apparent in his discussion of the School Question. Historian John Moir argues that Canadian Presbyterians advocated church union and a "free unsectarian system of schools" as a defence against militant Catholicism.[74] This was certainly true for Du Val. A *Free Press* journalist reported:

> Dr. Du Val expressed the warmest and kindest feeling for all Roman Catholic people and said there were countless thousands of good people in the communion. It was the system to which the most strenuous opposition must be manifested. This system, the individual members of the Church did not understand, and they did not appreciate the dangers.[75]

Although acknowledging that the Canadian constitution recognized the rights of Catholics, Du Val added that both the British North America (BNA) Act and the Quebec Act "had been the subjects of great controversy." Beyond the questions of these Acts, he specified, was "the question of elementary human justice and equity. An Act of parliament did not make a thing right."[76] Du Val identified a serious problem in the presence of what he saw as two contradictory forces in the BNA Act: "a free conscience on the one side, and religious absolutism on the other."[77] The British system favoured the development of a free conscience, but by recognizing the rights of Catholics, Du Val inferred, the constitution endorsed religious absolutism. For him, the separate school system allowed

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[74] John Moir, p.121.

[75] "Rev. Dr. Du Val on Separate Schools", *WFP*, April 1, 1912.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

"children [to be] trained to look at a foreign potentate. If there were conflict between king and pope, a good Catholic in Canada must look to the pope."[78]

His total rejection of the Catholic faith is even more apparent when he declared: "It was said that the demand of Roman Catholics for separate schools was a demand of the conscience. This was true but it was a demand of the conscience papally educated."[79] Du Val clearly believed that a "papally educated conscience" was simply not good.

In the same article, he went on to accuse Catholics of being unpatriotic and disloyal:

> The Roman Catholic was demanding at the present moment from the state, rights which would afterward be used against and to the detriment of the state. There were countless noble people under the sway of the Roman church, but that organization was no longer, and for centuries had not been, a simple religious association. It was a great world-wide political power.[80]

"World-wide political power" was a direct reference to the perceived threat of Roman Catholic power, something which Du Val thought had to be fought arduously.

To Du Val's inflammatory prose, A. Gerritsma, a Catholic priest, expeditiously replied: "Because Dr. Du Val with his 'protestantly' educated conscience does not believe in separate schools, is no reason why Catholics who with their 'papally educated conscience' do believe in them, should not have them."[81] Gerritsma directed the readers of the *Free Press* to Du Val's lack of tact:

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[78] F.B. Du Val quoted in Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] A. Gerritsma, "Dr. Du Val on Separate Schools", *WFP*, April 2, 1912.

> In one breath Dr. Du Val expresses 'the warmest and kindest feeling for all Roman Catholics,' and in the next breath brand them as rebels and anarchists, accusing them of allegiance to a foreign potentate. [...] Dr. Du Val made another brilliant remark when he said: 'It was the system to which most strenuous opposition must be manifested. This system the individual members of the church did not understand, and they did not appreciate the danger.' A splendid tribute to the 1,300 Catholic laymen, the best and most intelligent in this province, who assembled in meeting here a few weeks ago, publicly professed their allegiance to this system.[82]

Father Gerritsma obviously hit a nerve as Du Val immediately retaliated, and with even more verve than before, starting his letter with a personal attack: "Father Gerritsma, in his usual vein of language, loud and vulgar, has accused me of branding Roman Catholics as 'rebels, anarchists,' etc."[83] To defend himself against the perceived attack of Gerritsma, Du Val cited from his manuscript rather than from the *Free Press* article that the priest referred to. The Reverend concluded his letter to the editor with another insult to Catholics: "I only ask now that the children be not educated away from fellowship one with another, and that they be not so reverentially biased toward absolute obedience to a foreign potentate as to make it hard for them to render a ready loving loyalty to their country's laws."[84] Father Gerritsma rebuttled "I do not address myself directly to him, since, having descended to personalities, he deserves to be treated with silent contempt."[85] The priest simply asked Du Val to prove that Catholics were less loyal than Protestants or to apologize.

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Frederik Du Val, "Dr. DuVal's Reply to Father Gerritsma", *WFP*, April 4, 1912.

[84] Ibid.

[85] A. Gerritsma, "Letter from Father Gerritsma", *WFP*, April 9, 1912.

Unsatisfied with attacking Roman Catholics in Canada, as "papally educated" and unpatriotic, Du Val also accused the Catholic Church and its parochial schools of producing an inordinate number of "criminals".

> The statistics go to show that the Roman Catholic system and its parochial schools turn out a tremendous greater proportion of criminals than the public schools. The reason seems to be that the individual is not so fully cultivated in reasoning as to be an individual judge of right and wrong, but is left dependent on some arbitrary authority.[86]

He continued maligning Catholics as incapable of thinking for themselves:

> The idea of elevating the cry for separate schools into the realm of conscience, he [Du Val] could not but feel, was a Popally suggested and Papally trained conscience to build up out of innocent children a Papal system, whose unreasoning solidarity was equalled only by former inertia of China and fanatical stolidarity [sic] of Moslem world. It started in a falsely assumed right to control the thought of the world, and perpetuating its power by preventing as far as possible, the rise of any thought not subject to its will. Thus it handicapped the individual with intellectual slavery and endangered the state by its 'imperium in imperio.'[87]

Du Val's charged interjection testifies to the sensitivity of the topic, and reveals his strong conviction that the Catholic faith should be extinguished as it "handicapped the individual." Just like the six Presbyterian "social uplifters" that Brian Fraser studies, Du Val was evidently "convinced that the values and culture of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism were the key to moral and social progress in Canada."[88] Also, the exchange between the reverend and the priest clearly illustrates Du Val's obvious disdain towards Catholicism, and tells volumes about his so-called "tactfulness".

Moir specifies that church union was the other strategy Canadian Presbyterians put forth to

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[86] Du Val, quoted in "Declares Ground are not Tenable", *WFP*, August 18, 1913.

[87] "Declares Ground are not Tenable", *WFP*, August 18, 1913.

[88] Brian Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, p.x.

combat militant Catholicism. Du Val earnestly advocated the unification of the Protestant churches. He organized and managed the first Christian Endeavour Society ever formed in Manitoba.[89] Christian Endeavour associations were created in evangelical Protestant Churches to strengthen spiritual life and promote Christian activities among its members. Within a few years of its creation, the organization had become not only interdenominational but international. As a member of the Joint Committee for Church Union, Du Val was definitively perceived as a champion of the church union movement. The *Free Press* communicated that "Dr. Du Val spoke for union with his usual devotion and vigor."[90] His obituary highlighted that "he was from the first day a strong advocate of church union and did good service in advancing the movement."[91] The one article where Du Val discussed church union [92] does not constitute in itself a direct attack on Catholicism, yet paired with his discourse on separate school, his endorsement of protestant church union can be seen as a means to combat Catholic strength.

Conclusion

Du Val poses more as a moral reformer than as a social or political one. For him, it was the moral character on both a personal and a communal level, that would ensure the regeneration of social existence and the continuance of providential progress. This is why it was so important to deal forcefully and promptly with the social evil. "If the moral foundations of the State were removed

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[89] "Knox Church", *MTW*, December 19, 1898.

[90] "Too Much Time Given Up to Church Union", *WFP*, June 9, 1913

[91] "Rev. F.B. Du Val Dies from Sudden Attack", *WFP*, May 16, 1928.

[92] "Church Union Talks by Rev. Dr. Du Val", *WFP*, February 5, 1912.

collapse was imminent,"[93] he warned his parishioners. The fight against prostitution in Winnipeg was essential to insure not only the well-being of the city but also of the West and the country in general. As he put it: "As Winnipeg goes, so goes the coming West, and the springs from which future generations shall drink in their characters, will be purified or poisoned right here."[94] He concluded his last official sermon by stating that: "It is only as you keep the heart of the great centres pure and strong that the good red blood of a nobler life can flow out to the whole body politic."[95]

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[93] "Dr. Du Val Gives up his Pastorate", *WFP*, March 20, 1916.

[94] Rev. Frederic B. Du Val, *The Problem of Social Vice in Winnipeg*, p.29.

[95] "Dr. Du Val Gives up his Pastorate", *WFP*, March 20, 1916.

CONCLUSION
Six Social Reformers, Six Distinct Solutions

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, intense industrialisation and rapid urbanisation provoked radical changes in Canadian society. The prosperity and wealth of the country increased considerably, but that increase was not distributed proportionately. The expansion of business and industry brought into existence the large corporation, the monopoly and the trust as the characteristic forms of business organisation. As the size of factories and the work force grew, already rich industrialists got richer while rural migrants and newly arrived immigrants became the labourers working for poor wages in factories with dangerous and unhealthy conditions.

Canadian cities witnessed the appearance (or intensification) of a host of social problems such as extensive poverty, seasonal unemployment, labour unrest, "moral degeneration", crime, and vagrancy. Cities were simply not equipped to face the new and intensified social problems, or even to satisfy certain basic needs of the growing number of city dwellers. It was the plight of those who were barely eking out existence that compelled others to formulate strategies and advocate a variety of reforms to cope with what they saw and feared was a growing social crisis.

Interestingly, contrary to what John Weaver suggests, to earn the epithet of social reformer, one did not at the time necessarily have to be an implementor of reforms. He or she, did, however, have to denounce the intolerable conditions brought about by the urban industrial order. All six individuals examined in this study criticized the existing industrial society. Jules Helbronner criticized the industrial system for heightening worker's dependency; Herbert B. Ames condemned the poor living conditions that most Montrealers faced and reproved of heightened civic corruption; Lighthall

deplored the continuing lack of parks and playgrounds in the city and accused monopolies of usurping citizens' rights. In Winnipeg, Reverends Silcox and Pedley questioned the morality of an economic system that transformed workers into slaves, while Reverend Du Val condemned the new order for expediting the spread of prostitution.

Still, there was more to social reformers than expounding and pontificating; if they did not have to be implementors, they indisputably had to be social activists. All six men fulfilled this role. Helbronner led many campaigns meant to empower workers; Ames financed a model tenement house and entered municipal politics seeking to make a difference; Lighthall lobbied governments to pass reform legislation in addition to investing time, energy and money into the creation of playgrounds. Silcox, Pedley, and Du Val led crusades against alcohol, prostitution and gambling houses, and spent their life spreading the gospel of social reform.

Although social reformers all aspired to purifying the industrial city and its components, they were not part of any one coherent social reform movement or ideology. Indeed, the approaches of our six social reformers differed, as did the means they proposed to achieve their goals. Helbronner focussed on the rights of the working class. He believed that though they were the victims of unfair laws and corrupted municipal governments, workers did not have to remain powerless. His solution was to inculcate a culture of self-help by encouraging workers to better their lot through unions, education and suffrage. His down-to-earth approach, waging one battle at a time could have been even more effective if workers cared more. But, how could they think about night school when they were already working long days? Helbronner entertained idealist views on the abilities of people. On the whole, Helbronner did not propose revolutionary changes, but by insisting on improving the social

status of workers, he, nevertheless, advocated a significant change in the power structure of society. It would take many decades, however, before unions became important players in decision making.

Ames took a completely different approach. Far more paternalistic than Helbronner, he emphasized the importance of honest businessmen holding positions of potential authority. He stressed that the key to a better society resided in the establishment of a professional, accountable, and "scientific" municipal government made up of men like himself. In other words, he de-emphasized the involvement in politics of workers, the poor, and the less successful. Ames' reform strategies reveal that he did not support any reorganisation of society; instead, he asked those with means to assume what he believed should be their moral and financial responsibilities towards the less fortunate.

There are many problems with Ames solutions. First, his anti-democratic stances did not resonate well in an increasingly democratic-conscious society. Second, Ames counted too much on the existence of philanthropic and honest politicians, a very rare brand of men, to bring about changes. Indeed, if patronage and bribery were somewhat monitored when he was in office, once he was gone, old practices resumed. Thirdly, and most importantly, by concentrating his efforts on bringing about a more honest administration, few reforms actually transcended to the field where they were really needed.

Although Lighthall also championed a more accountable and professional municipal administration, and even spent a stint in municipal government, he chose to work outside of the institution to bring about needed reforms, feeling that a position in government restricted an individual's freedom. His actions centred on amending laws. With the help of the Union of Canadian

Municipalities, he attacked in particular legislation he perceived as unjustly robbing municipalities and their citizens of basic rights. Helbronner and Ames were also concerned with unfair laws, but Ames' main endeavour remained the professionalisation of the municipal administration, while Helbronner sought to inspire workers to accept a philosophy of self-help.

Lighthall was definitely an idealist and an optimist to think that amending laws would automatically brighten the existence of workers and the less fortunate. His parks and playgrounds solution also reflects his idealist nature and perhaps his lack of understanding of working-class issues. To be able to enjoy the goodness of the parks, workers and their family needed to work less.

Reverend Silcox preached a theology of individual regeneration. Ideally, he hoped to reach the soul of every citizen with his message. While his popularity as a minister did enable him to reach a wide audience, he did not have any overall vision nor an elaborate plan as to how to bring the Kingdom of God to earth.

Reverend Pedley also directed his efforts into regenerating people and their spirituality. He, however, had a tangible plan. It was only when religious denominations were erased, he reasoned, that the Christian Church would be strong enough to radiate its influence on the new industrial order. Church union became his main credo. The writing of his novel, which aimed at convincing readers of the necessity and desirability of Church union, constitutes his main action.

Also aiming at reforming human beings, Reverend Du Val did not target individuals, but attacked the social ills themselves. He believed that moral wrongs, especially prostitution, had to be dealt with first for Canadian society to be regenerated.

Despite the variations in social reformers' approaches, a distinct focus emerged for each

city. The leading rationale of the Winnipeg reformers in this study was to apply Christian principles to the modern world. They led morality crusades. As Richard Allen has noted, many social gospellers took on the mission of Christianizing the political economy of industrial capitalism. It was to be done by reforming fellow human beings. In Montreal, on the other hand, the main focus of reform was not the hearts of individuals, but, more pragmatically, the corruption of the civic administration. The three social reformers believed that city hall had to be purged in one way or another before Montrealers could enjoy a better life.

The different urban context of Montreal and Winnipeg certainly accounts for the differing reform impulses in the two cities. Montreal was at the time widely known for its corrupt civic administration. Helbronner, Ames, and Lighthall attributed the deplorable living conditions of the masses to the unscrupulous civic government and hence, strove to purify this "vital" political organ of reform. While they were concerned with moral issues, it was not with the same intensity as their Winnipeg counterparts. For Du Val, Pedley and Silcox, prostitution, temperance, and gambling houses had to be the primary focus of reform. They too mentioned the purification of municipal governments, but it was not their main concern. In general, Winnipeg's city council enjoyed a reputation of efficiency and effectiveness. In fact, the booster mentality of the city readily explains why social reform in Winnipeg was taken on mostly by men of the cloth; concomitantly the very nature of these men dictated their campaigns and the weapons they used. Since municipal administrators, mostly preoccupied with rapid and sustained growth, turned a blind eye to "social purity," the reverends believed that they had no choice but to speak out against these ills.

What the comparative and contextual approach used in this dissertation clearly illustrates,

then, is that social reform movements at the turn of the century varied according to place and circumstances. More research needs to be done of other cities to see how representative of the time Montreal and Winnipeg were, but more importantly, variables of gender, ethnicity and even religion need to be included to show to what extent the road to reform was as diverse as its proponents.

The other level of the analysis, the "mediatisation," is less conclusive. Once the ideas of social reformers are explored and explained, the challenge for the historian of thought is measuring how these ideas were received in society and gauging the impact they had. The main goal of social gospellers was to promote Christian reliance, but how can one concretely measure the faith of individuals? That Silcox, Pedley and Du Val filled their respective churches every Sunday indicate that they were certainly popular in their day, and that they had a following. Their influence is confirmed by the fact that their ideas were published in pamphlets and newspapers with readers even commenting on them. Few dared to criticise the reverends' "higher" purpose of purifying hearts. It was only on specific issues such as temperance, segregation, Sabbath legislation or school questions, that individuals challenged their views. If the three reverends were unsuccessful at defeating the "evil" forces of the industrial order, they were certainly successful in raising public consciousness to what they considered to be the ills of society.

Since the goals of social reformers in Montreal were more tangible and perhaps more pragmatic, their impact can be better gauged. Lighthall not only raised public awareness but also won legal battles for municipalities against utilities companies. For his part, Ames was very successful in publicizing the horrible conditions under which the working class lived. He was also responsible for formulating city by-laws against the privy pits. He should not, however, be remembered as a

health reformer since his focus was clearly on reforming the municipal apparatus and its workings. He was even less successful in his model tenements venture; no one followed his example. Although he worked relentlessly to inculcate a meritocratic culture at city hall, old practices of patronage, though temporarily reduced when he was in office, did not disappear. While his peers supported his vision of a professional municipal government, he encountered resistence from the old guard, and from workers' organisations that felt excluded.

As an editorialist, Helbronner had significant impact on Montreal, if only in raising public awareness. He won important battles for workers through his newspaper column, such as the abolition of the *corvée* and the revision of the water tax.. But he was less successful in cultivating a working-class consciousness. He often complained that those who were the most adversely affected by unfair laws remained the most apathetic. It was hard to gather the support of those he wanted to help. In addition, he encountered ready opposition from certain segments of society, not necessarily because of his reform strategies, but because of the fact he was a Jew. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the continued support from his readers, the business community and workers' organisations shows that turn-of-the-century-Quebec society was not as anti-Semite as it has often been portrayed.

The analysis of the careers of the six social reformers reveals that they did have an impact on society; at the very least, they succeeded in exposing what they saw as urban ills and at prompting action. This was the necessary first step to the road to reform. As for their reform strategies, they were far from revolutionary. None of these noted reformers of the day achieved any radical or major reforms that would ensure their place in history as important social reformers. Yet, in their own day,

they were centred out as the major reformers of their city, be it Montreal or Winnipeg. Although sometimes quite idealistic, their proposed reforms still sounded rational and sensible to the ears of turn-of-the-century Canadians. The optimism and idealism of the Victorian age that the perfect society was within the grasp of humankind is clearly evident in the reform impulse of these six men under study.

Lastly, this study sheds some light on *histoire-mémoire*, on how historians saw these social reformers. H.B. Ames is by far the most widely known of the six men under study. He has been portrayed either as someone who had an organic conception of society, or as a man who questioned the existing social order. The review of his career shows, however, that Ames did not envision reforms that would radically transform society. His "professionalisation" of the municipal government translated into applying the rules that already existed, but that had been ignored in practice. In fact, Ames should be seen more as an enforcer than a reformer.

Lighthall has also received his share of attention from scholars. No one, however, has studied in depth his involvement in the Union of Canadian Municipalities. This very important part of his life reveals that, contrary to what Donald Wright argues, Lighthall was not an "uncompromising idealist". Indeed, he was an activist who preferred to compromise to achieve some reforms, rather than be intransigent and accomplish nothing at all. Lighthall was also more successful in his venture than Wright is willing to admit. First, Lighthall certainly influenced public opinion, and he definitely had an impact on utilities' legislation. He was even perceived by his contemporaries as a practical man who accomplished what he set out to do. One may thus ask, according to whose standards, was Lighthall not a "particularly effective reformer?" My research reveals that he was part of the "Government

Generation." Lighthall belongs, as Doug Owram puts it, to "the community of intellectuals who were not only active in observing and assessing the changing nature of the state in Canada but were also the proponents of, and participants in, that change."[1]

Besides these two, however, the other four social reformers have received little or no attention. Jules Helbronner has not really penetrated the Canadian historical consciousness. No comprehensive analysis of his social philosophy exists even though, as editor-in-chief of the leading French-Canadian newspaper for twenty-five years, he is bound to have influenced a generation of Montrealers. Along the same lines, although they were certainly local celebrities in their day, Silcox, Pedley and Du Val have all been overlooked by historians of social reform. Clearly, they fit well into the description of social gospellers: They were idealists that focussed their action on improving the physical and material conditions on earth, thus moving away from the evangelical preoccupation with individual spiritual development of an earlier generation of ministers. They adhered to the saying *un esprit sain dans un corps sain*; that it was only when human beings enjoyed a minimum of comfort that the purification of their souls could start.

The historical fate of Lighthall, Helbronner and the three Winnipeg "famous" reverends alerts us to an important issue in Canadian historiography: the danger of using present measures of effectiveness and success to judge the past. All six of the social reformers examined here were known in their day as effective social reformers. Yet, by today's standards they have been dismissed as unimportant and ineffective, and hence they have been only tangentially studied. Historians need to

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[1] Doug Owram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State 1900-1945*, (Toronto, UTP: 1986), p. x.

take to heart Syd Wise's recommendation in the first attempt to discuss the nature of Canadian intellectual history, namely the need to root ideas in their social context.

If this is the strength of looking to the past for guidance as to who should be considered social reformers, the weakness is that the experiences of less popular agents of social reform were silenced. Also by using major newspapers but ignoring other sources like medical journals, important social reformers in these sectors are overlooked. Nevertheless, there is merit in understanding who were the "popular" social reformers in their day whose ideas clearly had a greater impact on their society thanks to that popularity.

Finally, intellectual historians need to have a clear methodology to ensure a consistent and justified approach to the past. Pierre Grégoire's analytical framework offers one effective methodological approach. Calling for an analysis of the idea as an entity, his methodology addresses the need for a study of the relationship between discourse and action. It also takes into account the context in which ideas emerge, and more importantly, it emphasizes the importance of understanding the reception of the idea in society and in history.

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