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MAXIMUM RELIEF FOR MINIMUM COST?:
COPING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT AND
RELIEF IN OTTAWA DURING THE
DEPRESSION, 1929 TO 1939

by

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Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies and Research of the
University of Ottawa in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The prosperity of the late 1920s which characterized the Canadian and American economies began to slide in 1929 and symbolically ended in October when the stock market crashed. The subsequent economic recession turned into a serious, world-wide depression that lasted for more than ten years. The Depression era in Canada conjures up visions of the "dust bowl" on the prairies, "breadlines" in the cities and homeless men "riding the rails" looking for elusive jobs. The "dirty thirties" were also the "hungry thirties" for many Canadians. Chronic unemployment and destitution, often associated with large industrial areas such as Toronto and Montreal, also affected non-industrial centres. The effects of the Depression eventually filtered to most municipalities whether large or small, industrial or non-industrial. The City of Ottawa encountered the problems of joblessness which persisted over the decade and of deprivation which severely affected a surprisingly large number of people especially during the six year period from 1932 to 1938. The economic crisis in Ottawa particularly afflicted the service industry, upon which most Ottawans depended for their livelihood, the building trades and the manufacturing sector.

Unemployment and subsequent poverty posed serious problems for Ottawa, but the response by government and private charities never matched the depth of deprivation. Forced to exist on minimum food and shelter allowances; grudgingly given by the private agency or the City, the relief recipient was obliged to earn his meagre rations by performing various tasks devised by civic officials. Relief presented a bleak, drab future for its recipients. Both government and charitable groups shortsightedly viewed unemployment as an emergency requiring temporary measures to alleviate the distress of the moment. Such an attitude prevented the implementation of long range schemes

to eliminate the worst effects of the economic crisis. On the other hand, professional social workers and agencies such as the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare believed that the creation of permanent welfare systems employing qualified personnel and enforcing social welfare principles would offset much of the distress caused by unemployment. Their social service viewpoint dictated that personal counselling must always accompany the giving of adequate material aid in order that families may quickly become independent and self-sufficient.¹ The civic government in Ottawa was more interested in controlling direct relief expenditures and keeping public debt within manageable proportion than in establishing a permanent relief system. Ottawa, like many other Canadian municipalities, also came to believe that unemployment and its alleviation through direct relief should be the responsibility of the two senior levels of government who possessed more tax powers and revenue sources than did the municipalities.

Subsequent chapters of this thesis will develop these points in more detail by investigating the nature of unemployment in Ottawa, the problems confronting those out of work and on relief, plus the response by private organizations, by professional social workers and by the municipality to those problems. Where possible the different attitudes and motives behind their actions will be indicated. Before examining the problems and the responses, this thesis will outline briefly the sources for this thesis, the city's economic background, the background of the poor relief system, the responsibilities of the three levels of government for social welfare and the existing institutions which ministered to needy people.

Sources for this topic include manuscript collections, printed primary material as well as secondary books and articles. The papers of the Canadian Council on Social Development (known as the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare until 1935 when the organization became the Canadian Welfare Council) yielded the most useful information in the form of reports, correspondence, statistical surveys, memoranda and newspaper clippings. The Council, headed by Charlotte Whitton, provided advice to private welfare agencies and government departments, issued publications on welfare topics, and promoted the professionalization of social work. The papers contain much material on Ottawa and on most Canadian cities and towns. The Whitton papers supplement these findings. The Bronson family papers shed light on the Ottawa Emergency

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Relief Campaign run by concerned citizens during the fall of 1932 and provide information on the plight of homeless men and women. The collections of the Ottawa Local Council of Women (O.L.C.W.), la Fédération des Femmes Canadiennes-Françaises (F.F.C.F.) and St. Andrew's Church produced data on the efforts to assist the needy by several local volunteer groups. A few volumes in the Department of National Defence records and the papers of General Andrew McNaughton documented the activities of the Rockcliffe Relief Camp and its inmates. These form the most useful of the manuscript collections.

Contemporary sources furnish further material on the Depression era in Ottawa. The minutes of City Council together with the annual reports of the municipal departments and boards outline the activities of elected and non-elected civic officials and provide statistical information on unemployment, public works, direct relief and, especially, the financial position of the municipality. Several volumes of the 1931 Census of Canada yielded statistics on population, occupations and economic sectors within the City. To gauge public opinion and to obtain further details on certain questions, local newspapers were consulted. Since the researching of all three papers for a ten year period would be too time consuming, a brief survey of the Ottawa Citizen and Le Droit was carried out. This survey scrutinized one day in a different week and month once a year from 1929 to 1939. Of the two newspapers examined, the Citizen (which had the largest circulation) contained more information on relief and unemployment. On that basis, this newspaper was consulted for further details on such subjects as the Find-a-Job Campaign in 1933 and the deplorable housing conditions endured by relief recipients. It should be noted that many clippings from the Ottawa Journal, the Ottawa Citizen and Le Droit on such topics as the relief system, its "abuses," and the residency regulation appeared throughout the papers of the C.C.S.D. The Depression produced several noteworthy studies of unemployment, relief, health and occupational class: Harry Cassidy's Unemployment and Relief in Ontario, 1929-32 which appeared in 1932; Leonard Marsh's Health and Unemployment which appeared in 1938; and Marsh's pioneering study of occupations and social class, Canadians In and Out of Work, published in 1940. These provided good general information on unemployment and its consequences as well as some relevant material on Ottawa.

Secondary sources on Ottawa during the Depression are practically non-existent. Works on general Ottawa history are scarce. The best of a poor selection is Lucien Brault's Ottawa, Capitale du Canada, de son origine à nos jours (1942) and Ottawa, Old and New (1946). Other books tend to concentrate on the federal government's contribution to the capital through the provision of parks, scenic drives and interesting buildings (Wilfred Eggleston's The Queen's Choice) or lament the effects of the Depression on Ottawa because it slowed the development of the capital city (Robert Haig's Ottawa, City of the Big Ears).

Fortunately the literature on the Depression is of better quality. Most works concentrated on the political activities of the thirties: the rise of alternative political parties such as the C.C.F. and Social Credit or the endless quarrels of the provincial governments with the federal government over constitutional interpretation. There is a growing body of material on other themes. A.E. Safarian's The Canadian Economy in the Great Depression (1959) provides insight on why the economic stagnation appeared to last so long. Social conditions can be gauged through James Gray's The Winter Years (1966) in which he describes with biting humour his relief experiences and those of the Winnipeg unemployed. Several fictional accounts convey what it was like to be unemployed: Cabbagetown (1968) by Hugh Garner and Waste Heritage (1939) by Irene Baird. Recent articles in the Journal of Canadian Studies (Spring 1979) reveal more scholarly treatment of dependency in Toronto, the municipal relief burden and R.B. Bennett's reasons for advocating unemployment insurance and less direct relief.

As mentioned earlier, Ottawa's economic livelihood did not depend on heavy industry and manufacturing. Instead, the service industry provided the major source of jobs for the 45,378 male and female wage earners.² Table 1 (see page 5) illustrates the number of wage earners in each economic sector. Forty-six percent of wage earners worked for some area of the service industry.³ Within that sector, the federal government employed 7,988 permanent and 2,689 temporary civil servants in Ottawa.⁴ The Dominion government was the largest single source of jobs in the city. As long as the government continued to function and expand, Ottawa's economy retained a solid base upon which to attract other activities. The personal service industry, especially private households staffed by servants plus the hotels, restaurants and taverns, was also an

TABLE 1

ECONOMIC SECTORS SHOWING THE NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE WAGE EARNERS
IN OTTAWA, 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, PLUS THE NUMBER OF
WAGE EARNERS IN THE MOST IMPORTANT SUB-SECTORS, 1931

Economic Sector	Total Wage Earners	Male Wage Earners	Female Wage Earners
SERVICE	21,082	11,321	9,761
Public Administration	11,779	7,934	3,845
Personal	4,692	4,692	3,417
Professional	3,358	1,173	2,185
TRADE	6,565	4,650	1,915
Retail	5,618	3,863	1,755
MANUFACTURING	6,033	5,055	978
Printing and Publishing	1,440	1,153	287
Pulp, Paper and Paper Products	768	635	54
Wood Products	655	637	18
Lithographing and Engraving	476	232	244
Iron Products	1,011	956	55
TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS	4,071	3,398	693
Steam Railways	1,548	1,502	46
Telephone System	853	278	575
CONSTRUCTION	2,801	2,754	47
FINANCE AND INSURANCE	2,148	1,365	783
Insurance	1,253	699	554
Banking	509	385	124
ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER	433	371	62
AGRICULTURE	264	259	5
FORESTRY, FISHING, LOGGING	153	152	1
MINING, QUARRYING	68	67	1
TOTAL WAGE EARNERS IN ALL SECTORS	45,378	31,011	14,367

SOURCE: Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Census of Canada, 1931 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1935), 6: 528-35.

important source of employment as was professional service in the health and education fields.⁵

The second most important source of jobs was the trade sector, especially the retail stores which employed over 5,600 people. Manufacturing came third. The once thriving sawmilling, lumber and paper products industry that dominated Ottawa's economic life in the nineteenth century had declined in importance. Pulp and paper production employed only 768 people. The newsprint industry fell upon hard times during the late twenties and thirties as a result of over-production, insufficient sales and high merger costs.⁶ Printing, publishing and bookbinding provided over 1,400 jobs. The transportation and communications sector generated over 4,000 jobs with the railroads employing over 1,500 men. The construction industry engaged 2,800 people while the finance and insurance sector utilized 2,100 individuals. Of lesser importance were the sectors of electric light and power, agriculture, forestry, mining and quarrying which together employed about 900. By no means were heavy industry and manufacturing vital economic forces in Ottawa during the 1930s.

The Ottawa labour force included 14,367 women who constituted 32 percent of all the wage earners. The women were heavily concentrated in the service industry where 3,845 worked for the three levels of government, 3,800 worked for the personal service industry, especially domestic service, and 2,185 worked in the professional fields, particularly health and education. It should be noted that the federal government had excluded most married women from positions since the early 1920s.⁷ The retail and wholesale trade sector provided employment for over 1,900 women. The manufacturing sector employed 978 female workers, especially in the fields of lithographing, printing and publishing.

The service industry also generated the largest number of jobs for male wage earners. Manufacturing, however, assumed far more importance for the men than for the women as a source of employment. Over 5,000 men worked in this area, especially in printing, publishing and the production of iron, wood pulp and paper products. Trade came third where 4,650 men found positions. Transportation, communications, construction, finance and insurance also

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furnished important sources of employment for 7,517 men.

If the service industry and trade were the prime centres of economic activity, what type of occupations did Ottawans hold? Table 2 (see page 8) illustrates the main occupations in Ottawa. Office clerks, labourers, stenographers and salespeople formed the most popular occupations. The largest group thus consisted mainly of "white collar" workers. The second largest group, labourers, servants and charworkers, were unskilled. These people were often the most vulnerable during periods of economic uncertainty because their incomes were usually very low and their positions were often the first to go during any business slump. Their lack of skills limited their range of jobs. The third largest group, managers and teachers could be termed professional and middle class. Carpenters in the skilled worker category rounded out the top occupations in the city.

Table 2 also illustrates the top ten occupations for male and female wage earners in Ottawa. About twenty-three percent of the men worked as clerks and bookkeepers in offices or as salesmen in stores. By contrast thirty-seven percent of women worked in "white collar" occupations, particularly as stenographers and typists. Another seven percent worked as saleswomen. The second occupational category for men was that of labourer or unskilled worker who often found jobs on construction projects. Almost a quarter of the women in the labour force worked in skilled or limited skilled occupations as servants, charworkers and housekeepers. The next group of male wage earners consisted of skilled workers such as mechanics and compositors. There were, however, few skilled female workers. For women the third most important occupational groups, constituting approximately 8 percent of all female wage earners, lay within the professions as teachers and nurses. About four percent of the men worked as managers or public service officials. These rough statistics indicate that most jobs in the city tended to be either clerical or unskilled in nature.

Ottawa possessed several attractions which contributed to its growth. The presence of the federal government lured many job seekers from the Ottawa Valley and the Outaouais regions into the city.⁷ Ottawa, as the largest urban

TABLE 2

PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS OF OTTAWA WAGE EARNERS AND PERCENTAGE
OF WAGE EARNERS ENGAGED IN EACH OCCUPATION BY SEX, 1931

Wage Earners (Total: 45,378 Male and Female)			Male Wage Earners (Total: 31,011)			
Occupation	No.	%	Occupation	No.	%	Occup.
Office Clerks	6,751	15	Office Clerks	4,426	15	Stenographers
Labourers, Unskilled Workers	4,255	9	Labourers, Unskilled Workers	4,165	13	Domestic Se
Stenographers, Typists	3,117	7	Salespeople	2,052	7	Office Cler
Salespeople	3,115	7	Carpenters	742	2	Saleswomen
Domestic Servants	2,746	6	Managers	749	2	Charworkers
Bookkeepers, Cashiers	1,109	2	Bookkeepers, Cashiers	696	2	School Teac
School Teachers	911	2	Mechanics	658	2	Bookkeepers
Managers	773	2	Truck Drivers	648	2	Nurses-in-T
Carpenters	742	2	Public Service Officials	533	2	Graduate Nu
Charworkers, Cleaners	675	1	Compositors, Printers	477	2	Housekeeper

SOURCE: Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Census, 1931, 6: 744-55.

TABLE 2

ALL OCCUPATIONS OF OTTAWA WAGE EARNERS AND PERCENTAGE
WAGE EARNERS ENGAGED IN EACH OCCUPATION BY SEX, 1931

Male Wage Earners (Total: 31,011)			Female Wage Earners (Total: 14,367)		
Occupation	No.	%	Occupation	No.	%
Office Clerks	4,426	15	Stenographers, Typists	3,012	21
Labourers, Unskilled Workers	4,165	13	Domestic Servants	2,634	18
Salespeople	2,052	7	Office Clerks	2,325	16
Carpenters	742	2	Saleswomen	1,063	7
Managers	749	2	Charworkers, Cleaners	616	4
Bookkeepers, Cashiers	696	2	School Teachers	596	4
Mechanics	658	2	Bookkeepers, Cashiers	413	3
Truck Drivers	648	2	Nurses-in-Training	335	2
Public Service Officials	533	2	Graduate Nurses	317	2
Compositors, Printers	477	2	Housekeepers, Matrons	278	2

Statistics. Census, 1931, 6: 744-55.

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centre in eastern Ontario and western Québec, was an important commercial centre for the marketing of goods and services. As a result, the population of the city grew by over 14,800 between 1921 and 1929.⁸ The population stood at 126,872 by 1930-31.⁹ During the first four years of the Depression, the population rapidly increased by 10,759. Of that number, 4,917 had moved into the city from outside.¹⁰ At the end of the decade, 144,202 people lived in Ottawa, an increase of 21,471 since 1929.¹¹ The population increase was accompanied by increased social problems, aggravated by prolonged unemployment which necessitated the giving of direct relief.

The term "direct relief" referred to material aid given to destitute people in their own homes instead of in an institution such as an orphanage or house of refuge.¹² "Outdoor relief" or "poor relief" described the same type of aid as did "unemployment relief." The latter referred to material sustenance given to unemployed wage earners and their dependents. The term "welfare" was not commonly used. More customary words such as "public assistance" or "public aid" referred to relief given by a civic department or private agency wholly or partially supported by government funds.¹³ In colloquial terms relief became known as "the dole," an accurate reflection of one prevailing attitude during the thirties that relief was merely a "hand-out."

Constitutional confusion over the responsibility for relief clouded the Depression years and inevitably increased conflicts among the municipalities, the provinces and the Dominion. According to section 92 of the British North America Act, the provinces possessed the responsibility for charitable endeavours.¹⁴ In practice the provinces left outdoor relief for the poor to the local authorities.¹⁵ The municipality generally helped only the most desperate cases of need. Church benevolent societies cared for those of their own faith and non-sectarian charities looked after many poor people to prevent them from becoming public dependents. Apart from limited measures to protect and assist neglected or orphaned children, widows and the elderly, the state assumed little responsibility for the welfare of all its citizens.¹⁶

The problems of unemployment and destitution existed prior to the Depression but tended to be thought of as temporary aberrations of the economy. In an industrialized, capitalist economy unemployment occasionally

resulted during the "down periods" of the business cycle as industrialization progressed and urban centres grew. That it could become widespread and lasting was not generally perceived by the senior levels of government. Until the 1930s government did not have to deal with massive, enduring joblessness. Short-lived economic recessions caused increased unemployment prior to the First World war, and during the early postwar years.¹⁷ Many Canadian municipalities appealed to the Dominion government for financial assistance to help them alleviate unemployment in the early 1920s. The Meighen administration responded by providing limited money for public works schemes over the winter months, expanded the Employment Service of Canada (E.S.C.) to encompass a network of offices across the country and considered the introduction of unemployment insurance.¹⁸ Meighen justified federal action by pointing to the "extraordinary circumstances" brought about by the war. Dominion officials also feared an outbreak of civil disorder, but a change of government and the gradual return of prosperity made unemployment and its alleviation recede into the background.

Unemployment still persisted in the mid-twenties. In Ottawa, for example, the Ottawa Welfare Bureau cared for 1,458 families during 1925.¹⁹ One thousand and thirty-two families reported unemployment of the chief wage earner as the reason for their desperate plight. Most required relief over the winter months. During that same year, the Ontario government distributed over \$100,000 for relief public works and direct relief to various municipalities.²⁰ Ontario still maintained that relief was a local responsibility although it is difficult to see how the province could not be drawn into providing further monetary aid. The experiences of the twenties illustrated that the need for relief measures went beyond the financial ability of municipal government. The responses of that period also strengthened the view that unemployment was seasonal in character. A pattern of federal and provincial grants to municipalities for unemployment relief over the winter, nevertheless, had been established during the twenties.

The Bennett government continued this method when it announced a \$20 million unemployment relief programme in September 1930. To circumvent

constitutional obstructions, the federal government engaged in a series of financial transfers from the Dominion to the province to the municipality. The federal government contributed to the cost of relief an amount equal to 25 percent of labour costs for public works and 33 percent of material aid costs.²¹ The province matched the Dominion contribution.²¹ The difference in cost fell upon the municipality. The federal government, moreover, made grants on a year-to-year basis and created no permanent system of financial help to the province and municipality during the 1930s.

Before embarking on relief work projects, the municipality submitted the proposals to the Ontario government for approval. In 1930 a committee composed of representatives from several provincial departments including Public Works and Labour as well as the Bureau of Municipal Affairs (B.M.A.) administered the requests for relief grants towards public works.²² Before issuing municipal debentures (securities) to finance such programmes, the local government needed the approval of the ratepayers or the Ontario Municipal Board (O.M.B.).²³ This Board, established in 1906, and the Bureau of Municipal Affairs, established in 1917, exercised control over civic by-laws concerning debt, sinking funds and public utilities.²⁴ Thus civic schemes such as water works, sewer construction or road building which involved a certain degree of debt came under their watchful eyes. Permission from the Board was required for the issuing of any civic debentures after 1934.²⁵ Provincial authorities attempted to control local expenditure to prevent bankruptcies or extravagant undertakings.

Provincial machinery for awarding direct relief grants did not exist at the onset of the Depression. The new Department of Public Welfare administered welfare legislation covering children's aid, mothers' allowances, old age pensions, orphanages, houses of refuge and industrial training schools.²⁶ It was not until 1934 that the Department assumed responsibility for unemployment relief. Until that time the Department of Labour dispensed aid through its Unemployment Relief Branch established on a temporary basis in 1930.²⁷ Through this branch the province granted money for direct relief to local authorities. The grants of 1930-31 amounted to one-third of the excess cost of material aid over the winter months.²⁸ Provincial officials changed the condi-

in 1931 to one-third of the total expenditure by the civic government for direct relief. Beginning in 1934 each municipality received a lump sum (roughly one-third of the total cost) for material aid. The provincial welfare department in 1936 set maximum figures that each city and town could spend on unemployment relief in order to curb expenditure and control municipal indebtedness.²⁹ The City of Ottawa then assumed over forty percent of the total cost of public aid.³⁰ A sum for medical care was set aside during 1935 and selected items that were neither food or clothing, i.e. iodine, gauze, baby powder, could be budgetted for by civic relief officials.³¹ Several times during the decade the province sent relief inspectors to look into Ottawa's accounting methods and relief administration.³² The municipality thus operated within certain constraints on spending money for public works and for public assistance.

Within the municipality of Ottawa were interested bodies composed of elected and non-elected officials. The elected figures included the Mayor, the Controllers and the Aldermen who together formed City Council which instituted and approved by-laws for the city.³³ The Board of Control, composed of the Mayor and the four Controllers, functioned as an executive committee to consider the finances of the municipality, the issuing of tenders, the awarding of contracts and the appointment of department heads and employees. Aldermen belonged to civic committees which studied certain questions; participated on City Council; and could overturn a Board of Control decision with a two-thirds vote of the entire Council. The non-elected officials consisted of the commissioners (heads) of civic departments and their employees. Such departments included the Social Service Department which dealt with poor relief; the Engineering and Works Department which undertook public works and maintained services such as the sewage system, streets and sidewalks at efficient and safe levels; and the City Treasury or finance department which kept track of municipal revenues, taxation and expenditures. Other departments included fire, police, playgrounds, health and assessment.

Also linked with the City were various public boards such as the Public School Board, the Separate School Board, the Collegiate Institute Board or the

Civic Hospital Board of Trustees. These public boards consisted of elected or appointed figures. The City in theory did not control their activities but merely collected the tax money which board officials felt was required to run their particular institution.³⁴ The Public Welfare Board created by the City in 1933 to distribute direct relief to the unemployed was composed of five people drawn from the community and three civic politicians.³⁵ The Board drew up policy and made recommendations on direct relief to City Council which approved or rejected their proposals. Unlike the school or hospital boards, money for the running of the Board and the Public Welfare Department came from general civic revenues and was not a separately taxed item. With three politicians on the Board, it was not likely to advance ideas on which Council would not agree.

Long before the Board's existence, indeed before the onset of the Depression, the Social Service Department of the municipality had distributed limited outdoor relief to poor people who could not provide adequately for themselves. These included widows, the aged, the unemployed, convicts' families, deserted families and the physically handicapped.³⁶ At the same time a private agency, the Ottawa Welfare Bureau, founded during the First World War, assisted families in distress by providing essential material goods and conducted social work among the disadvantaged. The Bureau's directors believed that advice and counselling must always accompany the giving of food and clothing in order that the family be restored to self-sufficiency as soon as possible. The Bureau criticized the civic department for being "too extravagant" and warned that the City was in danger of creating paupers or permanent dependents unless proper social casework was practised.³⁷ Through a series of meetings and conferences instigated by the Bureau in 1925, representatives from the City, the Bureau and interested charitable groups worked out an agreement which divided responsibility for relief between the municipal Social Service Department and the Ottawa Welfare Bureau.³⁸ The City cared for people whose destitution arose from widowhood, old age, the imprisonment of the male wage earner, permanent handicap or a chronic inability to cope.³⁹ The Bureau looked after people whose distress arose from desertion of a spouse, unemployment, non-residence, temporary disability or severe family tensions. With help from volunteers from church groups and local societies

the Bureau attempted to implement the practise of casework. The private organization depended upon private funds for its operation, but the City paid for the cost of food and fuel for the unemployed. When the Depression began, the responsibility for administering, investigating and distributing direct relief to the unemployed fell upon the Bureau whose limited resources faltered with so heavy a burden.

An array of private organizations, societies and clubs undertook charitable endeavours. Many groups stemmed from religious notions of helping the sick and the poor. The Union Mission for Men opened a large dormitory for skid-row derelicts, ex-convicts and "drifters" around the turn of the century.⁴⁰ The Salvation Army pursued its religious message through social programs aimed at prisoners and single mothers.⁴¹ The St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Hebrew Benevolent Society cared for poor people of their own faith. Other religious groups such as the Women's Guild of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church or the Catholic Women's League held bazaars to raise money for charitable work among church members.

Besides the religious groups many organizations engaged in community work also became relief-giving agencies during the Depression. The Ottawa Local Council of Women attempted to make known the views of women. They conducted campaigns for improved garbage collection, for a female representative on the school board and for improved public health.⁴² During the early thirties the women co-operated with the Red Cross by running a clothing distribution service.⁴³ The latter agency established a hostel and clinic for the unemployed single men.⁴⁴ The Canadian Legion opened a hostel for veterans applying for government pensions in 1930. Jobless ex-servicemen quickly transformed the hostel into a haven for the unemployed. La Fédération des Femmes Canadiennes-Françaises (F.F.C.F.) usually concentrated on raising money for French Canadian veterans and their families through the sale of poppies but distributed food and clothing to poor families residing in the Francophone parishes of Ottawa during the 1930s.⁴⁵

Until 1927 there was little co-ordination among the charitable organizations. The Ottawa Council of Social Agencies established that year

attempted to provide a forum for discussion, to eliminate duplication of services, to form social policy and to act as liaison with municipal and federal government departments.⁴⁶ The Council initially concentrated on fund-raising. In 1930 the Ottawa Council turned to the director of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare for advice.⁴⁷ The Whitton Report of 1932 recommended the formation of a community chest to conduct an annual financial appeal and suggested methods of streamlining Ottawa's private charities to bring order into the tangled network of organizations who espoused social welfare principles and those who practised soup kitchen philanthropy.⁴⁸ The thirties, however, were not conducive to sweeping change and only a few steps were taken to modernize the private social services.

The Depression re-inforced conservative attitudes towards the need for social and economic change in Ottawa. Most people shared a belief that one must earn one's own living. Work enabled one to provide for oneself and one's family. Work entitled one to the respect of the community. Hard work brought reward in the end. The enduring and extensive unemployment of the 1930s shook these traditional attitudes but did not fundamentally alter them. Some people came to realize that poverty was not necessarily caused by personal lack of initiative or ambition but by economic conditions beyond the individual's control. Others clung to the view that somehow the poor were responsible for their own predicament and society could not change their position.

The governments of the 1930s displayed very conservative financial views. They believed that "belt-tightening" was the only response to severe economic crisis. Balanced budgets had to be maintained. Above all governments feared heavy deficits that would require many years to pay off. The Keynesian idea that governments should "prime the pump" by increasing public expenditures during a depression ran counter to traditional "hold the line" views held by politicians, businessmen and much of the general public. Ottawa was no exception to this view. In early 1930 a Citizen editorial questioned the "unwelcome tendency" of increased public spending on charity, however necessary.⁴⁹ Mayor Allen cautioned in 1931 that Ottawa's fiscal policy for the coming year

would be one of "retrenchment and economy" with minimal tax increases.⁵⁰ One year later the Mayor pledged to practise "every possible economy compatible with efficiency" and to restrict "expenditure to keep down the tax rate and the funded debt of the city."⁵¹ Such attitudes ensured that financial restraint would govern the response to the problems of unemployment and destitution in Ottawa during the Depression.

CHAPTER II

DOWN AND OUT IN OTTAWA, 1929-39

The economic depression of the 1930s inflicted hardship and deprivation on many Ottawa citizens. Hardship took the form of wage reductions which meant a loss of purchasing power and endless frustration over meeting financial obligations. Hardship for a significant proportion of the population took the form of dismissals from work or lay-offs which affected not only the unskilled worker but also the skilled, "white collar" and professional worker. Hardship thus meant unemployment as many could not secure permanent work.

The unemployed by attempting to provide themselves and their families with the necessities of living merely depleted their savings and accumulated debts until they became penniless. Faced by destitution many had no choice but to seek relief from private organizations or the municipal government. Relief may have prevented the unemployed from starving. Relief also reduced their standard of living to a level which endangered their physical and mental well-being. This chapter will examine these aspects of the Depression in Ottawa to illustrate its serious impact on many people.

Most Ottawa employees probably felt the impact of the recession on their wages and salaries which declined 10 to 15 percent during the early thirties. The Dominion government, the largest single employer in the city, reduced the salaries of civil servants by ten percent in early 1932. The City Council unsuccessfully protested that such action would adversely affect those in the lower income bracket with dependents. The politicians also feared that lowered purchasing power would harm local business as well as endanger civic revenue.¹ Ironically one year later Board of Control imposed wage cuts ranging from 10 to 15 percent on all civic employees. Civic officials applied the savings on salaries toward the cost of direct relief.² Private sector employees also experienced wage reductions. The pulp and paper

workers at the J.R. Booth mill, for example, underwent a 10 percent wage slash in 1932. Two years later the pulp workers' union conducted a successful strike which restored wages to the 1932 level.³ Freiman's, Ottawa's largest department store, also dismissed some staff and reduced employee salaries when the store's bank decreased its line of credit.⁴ Wage reductions for the employers represented one method of counteracting falling revenues and diminishing money values. Such action did not ease the situation of the workers, particularly the low income earner who barely managed to survive on the existing wage level.

Shrinking job opportunities over the decade formed a major problem for a significant number of Ottawans who found themselves out of work. Table 3 illustrates the sharp decline in the number of people employed in the city.

TABLE 3

AVERAGE YEARLY INDEX NUMBERS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THE
CITY OF OTTAWA, 1928-39

Base Year: 1926 = 100

Year	Index Number	Year	Index Number
1928	115.8	1934	99.5
1929	120.7	1935	102.5
1930	123.1	1936	106.3
1931	119.5	1937	107.9
1932	99.3	1938	105.0
1933	90.2	1939	108.4

SOURCE: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics,
The Canada Year Book, 1930-40 (Ottawa: King's Printer,
1930-40).

The table is in the form of an index based on statistics gathered by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics which preferred to express employment patterns for urban centres as an index instead of revealing exact figures. The index

number of people employed in Ottawa fell sharply by 32.90 points from 1930 to 1933. This decrease was the third highest of the eight largest cities in Canada.⁵ The rate for Windsor, for example, dropped dramatically by 52.70 points while Hamilton's rate decreased 39.90 points. Ottawa's employment rate improved during 1934 to 1937 only to fall slightly in 1938. The employment rate never returned to the high of 1930. Ottawa like other urban centres in Canada witnessed a rapid decline in job opportunities resulting in high unemployment which persisted throughout the decade.

The actual number of unemployed in Ottawa can be partially traced through census data for 1931. Out of a total 45,378 wage earners, 7,543 or 16.62 percent experienced unemployment from 1 June 1930 to 1 June 1931.⁶ Since the average number of weeks each lost was 26, this suggests that unemployment was no longer a seasonal hazard but a more lasting problem.⁷ Shorter lay-offs of 13 weeks affected only 1,635 or 3.2 percent of all wage earners.

Jobs disappeared as both business and government curtailed activity. As Table 4 (see page 20) illustrates, the economic crisis severely affected the service industry where 1,995 wage earners were out of work. The public administration and personal service sectors of the service industry accounted for most of the unemployment. Four hundred and sixty-five people who worked for the federal and provincial governments lost their jobs as did 402 civic employees.⁹ The construction industry reported 1,512 jobless wage earners; most had worked in the building sector.¹⁰ Manufacturing came third where 941 wage earners were out of work. Many had held jobs in the wood and iron products sectors. Over 900 employees in the trade sector, especially those in retail stores, experienced unemployment. These industries had the greatest numbers of wage earners losing jobs during a one year period from June 1930 to June 1931. Other economic areas such as transportation, communications, finance and insurance also suffered the effects of the economic slump but to a lesser extent.

Economic recessions traditionally reserved their harshest effects for those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. Table 5 (see page 21) illustrated the occupations most affected by unemployment. The labourer or

TABLE 4

ECONOMIC SECTORS AND MOST IMPORTANT SUB-SECTORS SHOWING THE NUMBER OF OTTAWA WAGE EARNERS, BY SEX, WHO EXPERIENCED UNEMPLOYMENT FROM JUNE 1930 TO JUNE 1931

Economic Sector	Wage Earners (Male and Female)	Male Wage Earners	Female Wage Earners
SERVICE	1,995	1,246	749
Public Administration	867	709	158
Personal	634	216	418
Professional	197	89	108
Custom and Repair	197	168	29
CONSTRUCTION	1,512	1,503	9
MANUFACTURING	941	843	98
Iron Products	195	188	7
Wood Products	178	175	3
Printing and Publishing	121	99	22
Pulp, Paper and Paper Products	100	94	6
TRADE	936	698	238
Retail	850	625	225
TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS	517	485	32
Steam Railways	129	127	2
Cartage, Trucking, Haulage	101	101	0
Automobile Garages	78	76	2
Taxicabs, livery, bus service	62	62	0
Telephone System	52	28	24
FINANCE AND INSURANCE	159	121	38
AGRICULTURE	80	80	0
FORESTRY, LOGGING	65	65	0
ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER	36	36	0
MINING, QUARRYING	34	33	1
MISC. INDUSTRIES (LESS THAN 10 PERSONS)	33	29	4
UNSPECIFIED	1,235	1,184	51
TOTAL UNEMPLOYED	7,543	6,323	1,220

SOURCE: Canada, Census 1931, 6:526-35.

TABLE 5

PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS AFFECTED BY
BETWEEN JUNE 1930 AND JUNE 19

Occupation	Unemployed Wage Earners (Male and Female)	Occupation	Unemplo
Labourers, Unskilled Workers	2,324	Labourers, Unskilled Workers	
Salespeople	489	Carpenters	
Office Clerks	393	Salesmen	
Carpenters	369	Office Clerks	
Domestic Servants	342	Painters, Glaziers, Decorators	
Stenographers, Typists	256	Truck Drivers	
Painters, Glaziers, Decorators	227	Mechanics	
Truck Drivers	147	Farm Labourers	
Mechanics	136	Brick and Stone Masons	
Bookkeepers, Cashiers	107	Plumbers, Steam and Gas Fitters	

SOURCE: Canada, Census 1931, 6: 744-55.

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TABLE 5

NS AFFECTED BY UNEMPLOYMENT IN OTTAWA
30 AND JUNE 1931 ACCORDING TO SEX

Unemployed Male Wage Earners		Occupation	Unemployed Female Wage Earners
rs	2,308	Domestic Servants	317
	369	Stenographers, Typists	230
	345	Saleswomen	144
	303	Office Clerks	90
itors	227	Charworkers, Cleaners	52
	147	Waitresses	45
	136	Bookkeepers, Cashiers	35
	97	Graduate Nurses	31
	96	Housekeepers, Matrons	25
itters	87	Telephone Operators	24

2 of 2

unskilled worker has usually borne the brunt of reduced industrial and business activity. It was not surprising that 2,324 out of 4,255 wage earners in that group became unemployed during 1930-31. For the first time a significant number of "white collar" workers, who rarely experienced extensive unemployment in the past, found themselves looking for other jobs. Over 1,200 salespeople, clerks, stenographers and bookkeepers joined the ranks of the unemployed which also included many skilled workers such as carpenters, painters and mechanics. In fact about half of the skilled workers in the building industry saw their jobs disappear.¹¹ A smattering of professionals in the engineering, accounting and nursing fields rounded out the occupational groups most affected by the Depression.¹² Unemployment no longer touched just the working class but included "white collar" and middle-income people, many of whom had never known unemployment or its consequences.

The unemployed cannot be described in monolithic terms. Unemployment struck men and women, whether young or old, married or single, English-speaking or French-speaking. Unemployment affected the male wage earners much more severely than the female work force. Twenty percent of the male wage earners experienced unemployment from June 1930 to June 1931.¹³ By contrast the jobless rate among female wage earners was approximately eight percent.¹⁴ Together the men and women who worked in the unskilled or low skilled occupations fared the worst of all the unemployed. Thirty-seven percent of the unemployed male work force came from the labouring or unskilled category.¹⁵ Over one-quarter of the women had previously worked as domestic servants.¹⁶ For the men, the second largest occupational group affected was the skilled worker including carpenters, painters, mechanics, masons and plumbers. While the unskilled worker dominated the unemployed male occupations, the female office worker and salesperson fared almost as badly as the domestic servant. The "white collar" and sales occupations accounted for 40 percent of unemployed women.¹⁷ On the other hand, only eleven percent of unemployed men had held office or sales positions.¹⁸ Unemployment in Ottawa was more likely to strike not only those who possessed few, if any, skills, but those in low paying jobs such as stenographer, bookkeeper or sales clerk.

The Depression particularly hit the young worker. The findings of Harry Cassidy, a Toronto social scientist who surveyed unemployment and relief in Ontario during 1929-32, revealed this pattern. Taking Toronto as an example, Cassidy found that 53 percent of the unemployed men were 35 years

of age or under in 1931.¹⁹ Cassidy pointed out that while 38.5 percent of the married unemployed were under 36, 70 percent of the single unemployed were in this age group. Corresponding figures for Ottawa during this period were unavailable. However, figures from a 1938 survey on unemployed youth in Ottawa, conducted by the Y.M.C.A., suggested that a similar situation existed in this city. Of the 9,369 persons contacted by the "Y", 10 percent were unemployed in November 1938.²⁰ Sixty percent of these unemployed were under 30 years of age. The high percentage of young unemployed constituted a problem which was never really solved during the Depression.

Jobs were very scarce for those leaving school during the thirties. Employers were not hiring many men or women during this time; they were laying off workers. Lack of education and occupational training ensured that a larger percentage of young people possessed few marketable skills. The "Y" survey uncovered the startling fact that 22 percent of the males had never completed elementary school.²¹ About 24 percent of the males and 37 percent of the females had only some high school education. Very few completed high school at all. Twenty to thirty percent had no occupational training whatsoever. Most had left school at age 16. The men had been out of work for 40 to 60 percent of their time since leaving school. The plight of the women was much more severe since most worked only 20 to 30 percent of their time since leaving school. The Depression took its toll on young adults who received little opportunity to put whatever skills they possessed into practice.

Jobs prospects for all unemployed remained uncertain and bleak even for those with specialized skills. The construction industry recovered very slowly despite incentives provided by the federal Housing Acts of 1935 and 1938 and the Home Improvement Plan.²² What few jobs that became available tended to be temporary or seasonal in nature.²³ This situation eased only after government commenced wartime planning measures and industry began production of war materials during the next decade.

Besides the lack of permanent work, the unemployed encountered other problems that impoverished many. To provide for themselves and their families, they dipped into whatever savings they had accumulated rather than apply for

"charity" which carried a humiliating stigma of helplessness.²⁴ With no imminent job prospects, the unemployed spent their savings on living necessities. Not only did these people incur debts, but many actually faced starvation and cold. In these desperate straits many had no choice but to seek help from the Ottawa Welfare Bureau or the municipal Public Welfare Department.

Here they encountered eligibility rules imposed by the municipality to ensure that only residents of Ottawa received help. Indigence, not unemployment, was the chief criterion for receiving public assistance. Besides being without any visible means of livelihood, the unemployed were required to have twelve consecutive months' residence in Ottawa to become eligible for employment on public works which were the favoured type of relief during 1930-31.²⁵ In addition, men with dependents received preference over everyone else. The rules then excluded two groups of people: the unmarried, usually young and frequently male, plus families recently settled in the city, whose main wage earner lost his/her job.

The movement of people into the city contributed to the increase of Ottawa's population. During the first four years of the thirties the population increased by 10,759; 4,917 were people who moved into the city in search of work.²⁶ Some unfortunately lost their jobs and became impoverished. Out of 5,266 families on relief in April 1936, 771 or 14.64 percent of all families had entered Ottawa since 1931; 377 or 7.16 percent had entered the city since the beginning of 1933.²⁷ Families sometimes encountered a sympathetic relief worker who would bend the rules slightly. In 1934 the City altered the residency rule for relief eligibility from 1 November 1931 to 1 April 1934.²⁸ A year later the City refused relief to families who moved into Ottawa unless they had been fully self-supporting for one year.²⁹

The residency regulations inflicted hardship in a number of instances. For example, the Tremblay family had received relief from the Hull civic government until that city could no longer afford to disburse assistance. The family moved to Ottawa where they received emergency aid from the Public Welfare Board for one week before they were asked to return to Hull. The Tremblays refused

to move again. After being evicted from their home, they spent the night on the Bronson Avenue dump. The City, refusing to assume any responsibility for their plight, explained that as non-residents who were not self-supporting for one year before coming to Ottawa, the Tremblays did not qualify for civic relief.³⁰

That family represented just one example of hardship brought about by the relief regulations. During 1938 one compassionate woman working in co-operation with a local newspaper uncovered almost 100 cases of destitution and misery, most stemming from the limits imposed by the residency clause.³¹ One family moved from Bellevue to Ottawa where the father had obtained work. Within three months the job folded. The family was ineligible for relief either from the City or from their original hometown. The family of eight children went hungry for hours, perhaps days, until the cries of the children brought to their doorstep the authorities who looked after the family's immediate needs. Their case illustrated the deficiency of a unfeeling relief system which demanded a set period of residency as an essential condition for assistance.

The group most severely affected by the residency rule were single people. The regulations barred the single unemployed with no dependents from participation on relief public works. Those who could prove residency might obtain casual snow removal work.³² They were expected to live with their parents or with a relative.³³ If this avenue was closed, the single men received food and lodging at several hostels in the city; namely, the Union Mission for Men, the Canadian Legion Shelter or the Salvation Army Hostel.

In despair many single unemployed left the city to seek work rather than take "hand-outs" from the shelters. They joined thousands of other job seekers who crisscrossed Canada in search of the elusive "sure job." No precise statistics kept track of all these young Canadians although some estimates placed their number at 71,000 in Ontario alone.³⁴ The majority were men although some women joined in the cross country search for jobs. In doing so these people lost their residency status in their community and became transients eligible only for temporary lodging and feeding in a hostel.

Over seventy-five hundred men passed through the Union Mission, Ottawa's main hostel for the single unemployed, during the first ten months of 1932.³⁵ Not all were transients either. For example, of the 1,204 men registered in October, 616 were Ottawa residents. The hostels provided food and shelter for these men and sometimes obtained temporary jobs for them.

The single unemployed found themselves with time on their hands. They could check with the employment office, search for casual jobs on their own or read at the library.³⁶ Some congregated on street corners or in parks.³⁷ Others begged passersby for money or went from house to house in search of a meal.³⁸ Some homeless men lived on the city dump until the Red Cross opened a special shelter for them in 1932.³⁹ Their pathetic plight repeated itself in many Canadian cities and towns.

Throngs of "idle" men so alarmed civic politicians and citizens that a Citizens' Emergency Relief Committee was established to collect money for the needy unemployed. The Citizens' Committee provided more care for the young boy and young woman without jobs than for the transient. The younger unemployed were placed in private homes or in boarding houses away from the harmful influence of the older transient set in his ways.⁴⁰ The Citizens' Committee hoped to protect them from losing their desire to work and to prevent their possible involvement with crime.⁴¹ As for the older unemployed the Committee felt the new unemployment relief camps established by the Bennett government in late 1932 would solve the problems of Ottawa's remaining single unemployed.⁴²

No doubt some men welcomed the opening of a relief camp at the Rockcliffe Air Station. Here they received room and board and a small allowance of 20 cents a day. In exchange the men worked on projects ranging from primitive "earth moving," snow shovelling, quarrying, clearing bush and improving roads to the construction of buildings and storm sewers.⁴³ The Department of National Defence, which administered the camps, desired to utilize the skills of the men so they would not lose their trades. General Andrew McNaughton, Chief of the General Staff, articulated this view while adding that employing skilled workers on rudimentary work represented a waste of manpower and moreover

destroyed morale upon which "... we are depending to make a success of our undertaking."⁴⁴

Despite such good intentions the majority of the men worked on the labouring jobs. Four hundred and fifty men out of the 477 men employed at Rockcliffe between November 1933 and March 1934 worked as labourers while the remaining 27 were "supervisory personnel" consisting of clerks, foremen and cooks.⁴⁵ The labouring ranks contained unskilled and skilled people as well as several with university training in engineering and statistics.⁴⁶ Matching the men's skills to the work at hand did not always succeed. The Camp Commandant engaged a number of outside skilled workers in 1934 in order to complete the work schedule. Some camp inmates resented paid labour being brought in from the city.⁴⁷

Engaged in essentially monotonous tasks and having little recreation facilities, the men became bored and frustrated with the spartan camp life and military discipline. Unrest within the camp came to a head after the famous On-to-Ottawa Trek conducted by their western counterparts ended in bloody violence at Regina on July 1, 1935. The Rockcliffe relief workers struck on July 8 and demanded payment of \$1.00 per day, better food, more sanitary sleeping areas and a change in the administration of the camp to the Department of Labour.⁴⁸ The strike leader, J.S. Downham, charged that the Department of National Defence's methods "...smacked strongly of Naziism and fascism."⁴⁹ Wing Commander Godfrey, in charge of Rockcliffe Air Station, claimed that the Communist Party had sent Downham to disrupt camp life. He added that he knew those men who attended "Communitistic" meetings because the R.C.M.P. furnished descriptions of men attending such discussions.⁵⁰ Downham denied any connection with the Party but said he had led a similar strike in the Long Branch camp. This exchange illustrated one of the criticisms directed towards the single unemployed who protested their situation: the protestors were quickly lumped together as "Communists" and "troublemakers." This name-calling obscured the cause of their discontent -- no jobs, no security, no future!

National Defence headquarters ordered the ejection of the strike leaders whom the department termed "agitators."⁵¹ Eleven men left the camp under the

vigilant eyes of twenty R.C.M.P., armed with guns and riot sticks. One hundred and thirty-eight camp inmates followed a few days later.⁵² The rest returned to work when W/C Godfrey promised to improve their sleeping quarters.

Behind the rhetoric of both sides, very real problems existed. Several huts were cramped and infested with rats; inferior food had been served on occasion.⁵³ Limited recreation facilities fostered the boredom and resentment displayed by the men. In addition, the men resented outside labour receiving the prevailing wage while they worked at labouring jobs for an allowance (not a wage) of 20 cents per day. Improvements to living quarters did take place, but the boredom with camp life and the feeling of insecurity did not go away. The Rockcliffe relief camp along with all the camps across Canada was disbanded during 1936 in fulfilment of an election promise made by Mackenzie King.⁵⁴ The work camp idea might have met with more success had the military not administered the scheme, if the projects were more varied, or if the camp offered the men a good chance to improve their education and training. Not all could become accustomed to the barrack style of living. The relief camps, moreover, did not offer the men a chance to earn a decent living: The camps could only represent a temporary answer to the more lasting problem of unemployment.

From 400 to 600 men received food, shelter and clothing every year during the camp's existence. But now where were they to go? Some lucky ones obtained work on a wage basis at the air base. Some were transferred to another camp for a short period.⁵⁵ Others, no doubt, "hopped the rails" to seek work elsewhere as they had in the early thirties. Most probably sought aid from private organizations such as the Union Mission and the Canadian Legion. Once more the brunt of caring for the single unemployed was shoved onto the city's charitable agencies.

Unemployed men from the Ottawa Valley lumber camps, mining centres near Cobalt and from other Canadian areas continued to pour into Ottawa during the late thirties.⁵⁶ Six thousand passed through the Legion Shelter from 1937 to 1938.⁵⁷ Some no doubt stayed, sick of always being on the move. Others hoped that something would turn up. Not all sought help from the shelters. Some survived on their own by panhandling, by sleeping in the

Union Station or by staying at inexpensive boarding houses.⁵⁸ In 1939 the Canadian Welfare Council estimated that Ottawa had anywhere from 450 to 700 single unemployed, resident or migrant, in the city on any given day.⁵⁹ By the spring provincial government regulations forbade the dispensing of relief to employable single people. The Mission turfed out 150 to 200 men who then crowded into the Ukrainian Labor Temple on Arlington Street.⁶⁰ The single unemployed became the forgotten people of that period. No one, it seems, wanted to care for them permanently. One can understand how some must have greeted the outbreak of war with a sense of hope, for at least in the army they would have food, shelter, work and their self-respect.

The overwhelming majority of those who qualified for public relief were, not surprisingly, unemployed heads of families and their dependents. Table 6 (see page 30) and Table 7 (see page 31) illustrate the number of families and individuals receiving relief during the early thirties. Statistics on relief for this period are incomplete and misleading because social agencies and municipalities kept only rough figures which sometimes conflicted.⁶¹ They seldom differentiated relief because of unemployment and relief resulting from desertion, the death of a spouse or physical handicap. General trends, however, can be discerned from available sources. In the summer of 1930, 122 families comprising 1,079 individuals received relief from the Welfare Bureau. They represented less than one percent of the population. During the winter, traditionally a time of higher unemployment and need, 1,100 to 1,456 families comprising three to five percent of the population obtained public assistance. During the summer of 1931 the percentage of those receiving aid decreased slightly, only to rise in the autumn months. By January 1932 over six percent of the population was on relief. The relief rolls declined slightly over May and June only to grow in July and increase sharply for the rest of the year. In October 1932 the Welfare Bureau counted 2,813 families or 12,993 individuals as relief recipients. They formed almost ten percent of the population. The overall pattern from 1930 to 1932 formed a steady growth of penniless people who turned to the private agency for help.

TABLE 6

NO. OF FAMILIES RECEIVING RELIEF IN OTTAWA, 1929-32

	1929	1930	1931	1932
January			1,397	2,196
February			1,110	2,425
March			1,238	2,489
April			1,184	2,439
May			881	1,980
June	52*	122*	467*	1,917
July	66*	104*	780	2,086
August		186	780	2,267
September		187	965	2,564**
October		348	1,047	2,813
November		711	1,825	2,600
December	1,258*	2,001	1,881	
Average per Month	458	522	1,130	2,337

* These families received general relief not necessarily as a result of unemployment.

** 2,049 families received unemployment relief.

SOURCE: "Progress Report on Unemployment and Relief," 31 August 1931, Canadian Council on Social Development Papers, (C.C.S.D.), P.A.C., MG 28 I 10, vol. 13, f. 65: Progress Report on Unemployment and Relief by the Canadian Welfare Council; "Ottawa Welfare Bureau Summary of Family Work," 1932, C.C.S.D., vol. 44, f. 215: Ottawa Welfare Bureau 1932; Charlotte Whitton, Executive Director, Canadian Welfare Council to Norman Rogers, Minister of Labour, 9 January 1936, C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief-Unemployment Relief - General, 1935-40; "Information re Welfare Bureau and Union Mission," 1932, Bronson Family Papers, P.A.C., MG 28 III 26, vol. 742: Ottawa Emergency Relief 1932-33.

TABLE 7
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ON RELIEF IN OTTAWA, 1929-32, AND
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION ON RELIEF

Month	1929 (Pop. - 122,551)		1930 (Pop. - 126,872)		1931 (Pop. - 126,872)		1932 (Pop. - 130,672)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
January *					5,590	4.41	8,206	6.28
February								
March								
April					4,740	3.74	9,554	7.31
May								
June	389*	0.32	1,079*	0.85	4,691	3.70		
July	390*	0.32	848*	0.67	2,800	2.21		
August								
September								
October			1,390	1.10	5,248	4.14	12,993	9.94
November								
December								
Average per Month	390	0.32	1,106	0.87	4,613	3.64	10,251	7.84

*These individuals received general relief not necessarily as a result of unemployment.

SOURCE: See Table 6.

As Tables 8 (see page 32) and 9 (see page 33) illustrate, their numbers increased steadily over the next few years. In August 1933, 20,028 individuals or 15.11 percent of the population required aid from the Public Welfare Department. The relief roll peaked in January 1934 when 22,395 people needed relief -- the worst month of the Depression. Nearly seventeen percent of Ottawans not only found themselves unemployed but impoverished.

What had happened to cause such a dramatic increase in the relief roll? At the onset of the Depression some unemployed needed assistance only for fuel during the winter. Others while requiring fuel and a partial food allowance, still had enough money to pay for rent, mortgage payments, taxes, groceries, lighting, clothing or small household articles. As months went by without permanent work, savings gradually depleted.⁶² More and more people came to depend on public assistance for the basic necessities. While unemployment reached its peak in 1933, the worst level of need did not appear until 1934 because most unemployed survived on their own resources until they were exhausted.

TABLE 8

NO. OF INDIVIDUALS AND PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION
UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF IN OTTAWA,

Month	1933 (Pop. - 132,551)		1934 (Pop. - 135,300)		1935 (Pop. - 140,316)		1936 (Pop. - 141,903)		(Pop. - 141,903)
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
January			22,395	16.55	20,392	14.53	21,594	15.22	19,000
February			21,646	16.00					19,000
March			21,732	16.06			21,854	15.40	19,000
April			21,321	15.76			21,068	14.85	19,000
May			19,434	14.36			20,218	14.25	17,000
June			17,883	13.22			18,262	12.86	15,000
July			16,887	12.48					14,000
August	20,028	15.11	16,449	12.16	17,991	12.82	15,998	11.27	13,000
September	19,073	14.39	16,392	12.12	18,903	13.47	15,778	11.12	13,000
October			16,721	12.35			16,855	11.88	13,000
November			18,361	13.57					13,000
December			19,902	14.71	21,128	15.06	18,431	12.99	15,000
Average Per Month	19,551	14.75	19,903	14.11	19,603	13.97	18,975	13.37	16,000

SOURCE: C.S. Ford to Charlotte Whitton, 25 March 1935, C.C.S.D., vol. 54, f. 471: Housing
 ment Relief Commission, 6 December 1935, Muriel Tucker to Mary Clarke, 12 June 1936, Harry F.
 C.S. Ford to Bessie Touzel, 20 May 1927, C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief - Unemployment R
 1936, "Relief Trends Covering January 1936," March 1936, "Relief Figures in Ottawa," 1937, C.C.S.
 Touzel, 12 November 1937, C.C.S.D., vol. 123, f. 1918: Relief Outlook 1937-38; C.S. Ford to C
 Outlook 1939-40; C.S. Ford to Charlotte Whitton, 1940, C.C.S.D., vol. 124, f. 1918: Relief Ou

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STAGE OF POPULATION RECEIVING
IN OTTAWA, 1933-40

1933	1937 (Pop. - 142,852)		1938 (Pop. - 144,202)		1939 (Pop. - 144,202)		1940 (Pop. - 144,202)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5.22	19,078	13.36	15,254	10.58	12,896	8.94		
	19,410	13.59	15,361	10.65	13,172	9.13		
5.40	19,367	13.56	15,251	10.58	13,210	9.16		
4.85	19,131	13.39	14,981	10.39	13,031	9.04		
4.25	17,116	11.98	13,494	9.36	12,279	8.52		
2.86	15,423	10.80	12,072	8.37	11,622	8.06		
	14,085	9.86	11,389	7.90	11,249	7.80		
1.27	13,510	9.46	11,081	7.68	11,221	7.78		
1.12	13,165	9.22	10,810	7.50	11,145	7.73		
1.88	13,210	9.41	11,009	7.63	10,525	7.30		
	13,952	9.77	11,499	7.97				
2.99	15,086	10.56	15,523	10.76				
3.37	16,044	11.23	13,144	9.11	11,394	7.90	7,867	5.46

471: Housing 1935-40; Charlotte Whitton to Gen. E. de B. Panet, Montreal Unemploy-
 36, Harry Hereford, Dominion Relief Commissioner to Bessie Touzel, 12 January 1937,
 employment Relief - General 1935-40; "Relief Trends Covering December 1935," February
 1937, C.C.S.D., vol. 123, f. 1918: Relief Outlook 1936-37; C.S. Ford to Bessie
 S. Ford to Charlotte Whitton, 16 November 1939, C.C.S.D., vol. 124, f. 1918: Relief
Relief Outlook 1940-41; Canada, Year Book, 1931-41; Ottawa Citizen, 24 March 1933.

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TABLE 9

NO. OF FAMILIES RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF IN OTTAWA, 1933-40

Month	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
January	4,625	5,082	4,671	4,993	4,279	3,277	2,703	
February	4,355	4,950			4,347	3,316	2,757	
March		4,929		5,083	4,267	3,270	2,795	
April		4,828		5,266	4,285	3,209	2,671	
May		4,559			3,804	2,934	2,582	
June		4,105			3,432	2,564	2,385	
July		3,899			3,137	2,411	2,323	
August		3,758			3,003	2,331	2,314	
September		3,800	4,148		2,946	2,245	2,330	
October		3,879		3,863	2,928	2,296	2,165	
November		4,142			3,041	2,390		
December		4,474	4,788	4,134	3,245	2,616		
Average Per Month	4,490	4,367	4,536	4,668	3,560	2,738	2,503	1,611

SOURCE: See Table 8.

Economic depression with its resulting unemployment sometimes tends to be associated with centres of heavy industrial and manufacturing activity. As Table D (below) indicates, in December 1934 Ottawa ranked fourth among the cities of Canada for the percent of its population on relief. Ahead were

TABLE 10
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS AND PERCENT OF POPULATION
RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

Selected Cities with Population of Over 100,000

City	December 1934	
	Number	Percent
Montreal	182,230	22.26
Toronto	109,868	17.40
Hamilton	26,784	17.30
Ottawa	19,902	14.71
Winnipeg	31,884	14.39
Vancouver	28,869	11.71
Quebec	16,733	11.69

City	December 1935	
	Number	Percent
Montreal	165,918	20.14
Ottawa	21,128	15.06
Toronto	93,259	14.80
Winnipeg	30,953	13.87
Hamilton	19,204	12.40
Quebec	16,084	11.24
Vancouver	28,461	11.13

SOURCE: "Relief Trends Covering December, 1935," February 1936, C.C.S.D., vol. 123, p. 1918; Relief Outlook 1936-37.

Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton; after Ottawa, came Vancouver and Winnipeg. In 1935 Ottawa climbed to second place with 15 percent of its population on relief. Montreal was ahead with 20.14 percent. Toronto had 14.8 percent, Winnipeg 13.8, Hamilton 12.4 and Vancouver 11.13. These latter cities had a much larger industrial base than Ottawa which depended chiefly on the service industry as the main source of employment. The Depression in Ottawa reached beyond the industrial, manufacturing sector to affect such areas as professional, personal, recreational and government services as well as the retail-wholesale business. It should therefore come as no surprise that Ottawa recorded such high levels of dependency. The Depression demolished the belief that economic recession seriously affected only manufacturing centres.

Approximately 10 to 17 percent of Ottawa's population endured severe destitution from the autumn of 1932 to the spring of 1938. The unemployed did not necessarily remain on relief throughout those six years. Many people were going off relief at the same time as many were applying for social aid.⁶³ Over eighty percent of those on relief in 1938 had been receiving assistance for more than thirteen weeks.⁶⁴ In 1937 only 371 families and 421 single unemployed, mostly older women, had obtained relief for three or more years and had not reported earnings during this time.⁶⁵ A small core of people who would require public assistance for some years to come emerged by the late thirties.⁶⁶

Over the summer of 1937 the percentage of individuals receiving relief fell to a little over nine percent of the population. This lower figure reflected the short-lived increase in economic activity. By the fall, recession again set in and the figures climbed over the winter of 1938. The relief situation remained relatively static from mid-1938 to fall 1939, varying from seven to nine percent with one slightly larger increase in December 1938. The numbers on relief were gradually decreasing, but not at a pace which civic and welfare officials would have liked. The average number requiring assistance fell to a little over 7,000 in 1940. Over half of these people were middle-aged.⁶⁷ Wartime construction and public works absorbed many former relief recipients, particularly the skilled worker. Young unskilled workers found jobs more easily than their older counterparts. The expansion

of the civil service also benefitted the unemployed "white collar" workers. Some men enlisted in the armed forces. By the end of 1940 relief stabilized to about five percent of the population.

The unemployed on public aid lived an unpleasant existence devoid of personal dignity. To be on relief meant that one was helpless and dependent on the goodwill of others. In order to collect public assistance, the unemployed personally applied to the Welfare Bureau on Bank Street or, after 1933, to the Public Welfare Department on Elgin Street. After being interviewed and investigated, the relief families received coupons for specific products: milk, butter, bread, meat and groceries. They redeemed their vouchers at certain stores in the city.⁶⁸ The act of "paying" for their food by tickets instead of cash set them apart from other customers and marked them as "dependents."

The choice of food was limited to staple goods such as flour, sugar, potatoes, macaroni and soap. Protests by relief families over the lack of choice resulted in the broadening of the list of articles that could be purchased.⁶⁹ By late 1934 relief recipients could obtain any type of food with the grocery voucher. The City continued to set prices for eleven staple foods.⁷⁰ The individual voucher system disappeared in late 1936. The unemployed henceforth received their relief, except their rent, in the form of "scrip" or a certificate.⁷¹ Scrip relief gave people an opportunity to make the limited allowance go further by taking advantage of quantity buying or special sales. The City felt that scrip removed some of the stigma attached to paying by coupon.⁷² The act of presenting such a certificate to a grocer still marked these people as being "on the dole."

Besides food, the relief recipient also received limited assistance for clothing and medical services. The unemployed on relief exchanged clothing orders at the Ottawa Neighborhood Services (O.N.S.) which gave them secondhand or new garments.⁷³ That some families found it difficult to clothe themselves properly was suggested by the fact that both the Local Council of Women and la Fédération des Femmes Canadiennes-Françaises conducted clothing drives to enable poor children to attend school adequately dressed.⁷⁴ Families on relief and the resident single unemployed received medical attention from one of 65 local doctors available to them. The City and later the province paid the small fee.⁷⁵

Only those on relief benefitted from these provisions.

All able-bodied unemployed had to "earn" their relief by performing some useful work. At first they cut wood at the civic woodyard in exchange for food and fuel.⁷⁶ The type of work expanded as the relief roll increased. The men levelled and covered municipal garbage dumps or graded "future" streets near the Civic Hospital in order to pay for their rent relief.⁷⁷ Others cleared snow, cut weeds, swept the streets, cleaned stables or carried out repairs.⁷⁸ The unemployed thus worked at some of the most menial and dirty tasks that the City had to offer.

The relief which the unemployed "earned" provided only the bare necessities. Beneath the sums allotted for food, fuel shelter and clothing lay inadequacies that re-inforced the impoverished status of the recipient. Although officials admitted that the relief was never intended to maintain previous lifestyles, many people found it hard to adjust to a limited selection of food or to find a suitable place to live where rent was within the allowance.⁷⁹

Harry Cassidy's study of relief in Ontario concluded that the relief food allowance for most cities and towns for a family of five would not sufficiently sustain the health and well-being of its recipients.⁸⁰ Cassidy's findings dealt with the early years of the Depression. Although not enough information was available for this early period in Ottawa, examination of statistics for the period 1934 to 1938, however, suggest the validity of his conclusion. Table 11 (see page 38) illustrates the relief allowance for a family of five drawn up by the civic Social Service Department in accordance with provincial regulations. The relief recipient lived on approximately \$500 to \$600 per year, far below the recommended minimum living income for Canadian families of approximately \$1,000 set by the Canadian Welfare Council in 1930 and again by the Montreal Council of Social Agencies in 1936.⁸¹

In 1933 the Ontario Medical Association devised a minimum food budget to maintain health.⁸² For a family of five the Association recommended the amount of \$22.92 to be spent per month if the three children were under six years, \$28.56 if the children were between the ages of six and 14 and \$30.64 if the children were between 13 and 18. Ottawa's food allowance for 1934 almost

TABLE 11

RELIEF ALLOWANCE FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE IN OTTAWA, 1934-38

	1934	1935	1936	1937*	1938
Food	\$ 22.75	22.75	23.19	-	23.90
Fuel	3.38	3.38	6.70	-	7.05
Shelter	13.00	13.00	13.00	-	13.00
	<u>\$ 39.13</u>	<u>39.13</u>	<u>42.89</u>		<u>43.95</u>
Light, gas	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	.95
Clothing (avg.)	1.82	3.80	4.43	-	3.75
Medical Care	.32	.49	1.25	-	1.75
	<u>\$ 42.27</u>	<u>44.42</u>	<u>49.57</u>		<u>50.40</u>
Total Per Month	\$ 42.27	44.42	49.57		50.40
Total Per Year	\$507.24	533.04	594.84		604.80

* No statistics available.

SOURCE: "Relief Scale - City of Ottawa," 1934, C.C.S.D., vol. 13, f. 65; Relief Schedules in Canada 1934; "Relief Scale - City of Ottawa," 1935, 1936, 1938, C.C.S.D., vol. 121, f. 1907; Relief Schedules - March 1935, 1936, 1936-48.

met the requirement for children under six. It never approached the recommended amount for children between six and 18 years even if one took into account price fluctuations from year to year. Different nutritional requirement for the different age groups were simply not taken into consideration.

Ottawa's food allowance only increased by about three percent from 1936 to 1938. According to the Department of Labour, the average cost of a food basket for a family of five was \$33.44 per month in 1936 and \$33.32 in 1938.⁸³ The relief family existed on much less -- \$23.19 in 1936 and \$23.90 in 1938. They were forced to buy smaller quantities, to do without some items

or to substitute cheaper foods like macaroni for meat. Families on relief in Ottawa for short periods, perhaps, would feel minimal effects of the relief diet. Those on relief for a longer period, however, ran the risk of lowered physical resistance.⁸⁴ It was likely that the relief food allowance in Ottawa did not sustain proper levels of nutrition and health for any extended period of time.

The most troublesome and glaring inadequacy in the relief allowance lay in the provision of shelter for the unemployed. Most lived in rented premises although there were a small number of people on relief who owned their own homes. The unemployment crisis generated a greater demand for cheap housing. Not only did the low wage earner require moderately priced accommodation but many people receiving unemployment aid simply could no longer afford to live in their previous residences. This led them to seek out places which charged no more than the shelter allowance which ranged from \$10.00 to \$15.00 per month. Such places were few and far between because Ottawa lacked sufficient inexpensive accommodation. This lack was attributed to the fact that Ottawa being a non-industrial city had no large areas of working class homes.⁸⁵ During the thirties very few homes were built. Instead apartments and rooms appeared over stores and older hotels; large residences were converted to flats.

Families on the average moved three times during the first five years of the Depression in pursuit of affordable housing.⁸⁶ The average rent paid by relief families in 1935 was \$22.57 per month for 5.6 rooms.⁸⁷ Thirty-seven percent of relief recipients overcame the higher rent by sharing a unit with another family. Overcrowding developed making possible the spread of communicable diseases. The rent allowance began to change in the late thirties when some families of more than four persons were allowed up to \$29.00 per month for rent.⁸⁸

Absence of sufficient low rental dwellings ensured that many families and individuals on relief lived in cheap, "down-at-the-heels" flats battling leaky roofs, rats, insects and cold. A survey sponsored by the Ottawa branch of the National Construction Association in 1935 branded nearly a third of the 3,539 dwellings as unfit because of inadequate health standards or lack of amenities.⁸⁹ While the average family consisted of 4.42 persons the average

dwelling housed 7.04 people. More overcrowding occurred in 14 percent of the sleeping rooms. Sixty-four percent of the units had wood stoves as the sole source of heat. Inadequate sanitary facilities affected more than a quarter of the dwellings. Rats, bedbugs and other pests infested about nineteen percent. Despite such disheartening conditions families made efforts to keep their places as clean as possible but it was difficult to do because of the limited relief allowance. Moreover, no matter how hard some tried, years of neglect could not erase deteriorated walls with damp spots, warped, rotting floors that refused to come clean or ceilings that leaked with every rainfall.⁹⁰ These conditions led one journalist to comment that relief tenants became "servants of their environment rather than its masters!"⁹¹

Apart from the inadequate relief allowance, the relief recipient faced other hazards to their health and well-being. The infant mortality rate in Ottawa was much higher than the national average. In 1930, 109.3 deaths per 1,000 live births as opposed to 89.3 deaths for the whole country were recorded.⁹²

In 1935, the infant mortality rate stood at 94 while the national average was 71.⁹³ There is a strong possibility that the inadequate food allowance plus the damp, overcrowded conditions of the relief housing contributed in part to the high infant mortality rate. Congested dwelling units also facilitated the spread of contagious diseases. Several epidemics hit the city during the decade. Diphtheria was particularly prevalent in the early thirties. About 545 cases in 1930 resulted in 27 deaths.⁹⁴ The following year 553 cases broke out. A subsequent educational campaign to combat the disease by immunization yielded good results when the number of cases dropped to 37 in 1935.⁹⁵ Polio epidemics occurred three times during the Depression.⁹⁶ Tuberculosis claimed over 80 lives in eight of the ten years during the thirties. Whooping cough and scarlet fever became prevalent during the last half of the decade. Unhealthy living conditions combined with poor nutrition made relief recipients more likely to contract disease. The psychological effect of these conditions took its toll on the few individuals who lost any hope of securing permanent work and resigned themselves to being public dependents.⁹⁷

People on relief possessed little, if any, actual cash. Those who managed to obtain casual work retained 25 percent of money earned during one

month.⁹⁸ The remainder was deducted from the relief allowance for that month. All earnings had to be reported to the relief office. In 1934 amounts of under \$5.00 earned over a month could be kept. The family retained 35 percent of earnings exceeding \$5.00.⁹⁹ An amount equal to one-third of the food allowance came into effect in the late thirties.¹⁰⁰ A family of five could therefore keep up to \$8.00 per month.

The limited relief allowance ignored the need to replace worn out household goods, to purchase small "luxuries" such as a newspaper or cigarettes, to supplement the range of food items or to pay for car fare. The amount of earnings allowed seemed paltry compared to the cost of replacing mattresses or stoves. The unemployed on relief depended on private charities to supply needed articles which they could not afford. A crisis developed in 1936 when the fire inspector condemned 230 stoves as defective and unsafe. Local women's groups raised money for repairs and replacement.¹⁰¹ Individuals on public assistance had no real opportunity to put by money for the future; every penny was needed for living expenses.

Along with a subsistence level of living, the unemployed endured criticism of their attitudes and behaviour. The men who frequented the Union Mission were judged by the Superintendent to be "impudent," "saucy" men who generally avoided seeking work and expected "everything for nothing."¹⁰² This unwillingness to work persistently hounded both the single unemployed and the head of family on relief throughout the Depression despite their protestations to the contrary. One entrepreneur, writing in Canadian Business, clearly believed that the work ethic was being eroded. He cited the attractiveness presented by relief when people refused to work for \$17.00 a week if they could obtain \$14.00 a week on public aid.¹⁰³ He did not understand that most of the jobs which opened up paid low wages and lasted for short periods of time.¹⁰⁴ Employment did not always present the sort of security that relief offered. As long as the family received public aid, creditors could not demand payment of back debts. As soon as one became employed, however, creditors usually insisted on being paid. Men would experience great difficulty in providing for their families and paying off debts under such circumstances.

Criticism of their behaviour sometimes focussed on relief recipients who took advantage of the system to obtain extra benefits. For example, over the winter of 1932 the Welfare Bureau allotted \$60,000 for clothing relief for five months. In less than two months the Bureau gave out \$48,000 worth of clothing. One former member of the Labour Reserve claimed that people had obtained clothing and footwear and then sold the items in Ottawa and Hull.¹⁰⁵ He also alleged that 100 to 200 cases of groceries found their way to Hull every week. Such accusations, whether exaggerated or not, only re-inforced the image of the unemployed as "chisellers" and "cheats." One welfare official implied that relief recipients were obtaining more than their fair share when she wrote to the Mayor that clothing relief had turned into "an orgy of competitive application among families in Ottawa."¹⁰³ This theme was picked up by the Journal which castigated those people for "biting the hand that feeds them" and condemned the "...relief profiteering racket by an unscrupulous few, too case-hardened to have decent gratitude...."¹⁰⁸ Although the newspaper carefully pointed out that it was wrong to associate all relief families with the actions of a "few dishonest men and women," such revelations aroused doubts about the honesty of the unemployed on relief.

Relief recipients became the target of several investigations which examined both the relief system and the "abuses" perpetrated by the unemployed. A report prepared at the request of City Council in 1934 uncovered numerous instances of "abuses" such as families obtaining extra allowances, the existence of a "vicious" rent racket and people receiving aid who were not entitled to relief.¹⁰⁸ As a result all families had to testify to their financial situation under oath. In the end only twenty families out of about 5,000 on relief were actually removed from the relief rolls.¹⁰⁹

In a sense the plight of the unemployed was exploited by politicians eager to straighten out the tangled relief system by reducing the number of dependents. Two years later a special police investigation instigated by City Council resulted in eight prosecutions of relief recipients for failing to report earnings.¹¹⁰ Stories appeared in the papers relating the case of one man found guilty of defrauding the city of \$27.00 over five months by failing to report his daughter's pay of \$16.00 per month.¹¹¹ Another report

quoted one controller as stating that many had asked that their relief be discontinued out of fear for what the investigation might find.¹¹² He added that some relief recipients had worked for several months without reporting their new jobs. Negative impressions of the relief recipients were furthered by one periodical's comments on the 200 "fakers" who had "disappeared overnight" from Ottawa's relief rolls as a result of "overdue application of the strong arm."¹¹³ Such reports distorted the situation because the movement of families off the relief rolls normally occurred every month and not out of fear of an investigation.

The unemployed felt anger and resentment at their conditions but seldom mounted any large scale protests. A few unemployed men formed an association called the Labour Reserve during the early thirties. Although the Reserve adhered to no political philosophy, some members supported the Communist Party. The Labour Reserve attempted to better the lot of the poor and jobless by advocating housing schemes and public works projects but met with little success.¹¹⁴ Resentment surfaced as petty complaints about the choice of food or the non-delivery of fuel. Families were too wrapped up in surviving from day to day on meagre rations. Some perhaps thought of protesting only to be held back by a fear of retaliation or of relief being withdrawn. Others felt that their unemployed condition resulted from their own personal deficiency.¹¹⁵

The only ones to mount any sort of large scale protest were the single unemployed. The relief camp workers who left the Rockcliffe project during the 1935 strike joined other men and women from the Toronto area to protest both the lack of work and the insensitivity of governments towards their condition. Both groups camped in Flouffe Park, held hunger marches within the grounds and paraded to Parliament Hill.¹¹⁶ They tried unsuccessfully to meet with R.B. Bennett. The municipality refused to feed or shelter these people for fear disorder would eventually break out. The cause of the single unemployed attracted sympathy from many private citizens who supplied food and blankets to the protestors. Their fervour lagged when it became obvious that the Prime Minister had no intention of meeting with them and referred to them as "Reds."¹¹⁷ The protest then fizzled and the Toronto group marched out of the city under the watchful eyes of the police while the Ottawa men scattered about the city.

Ottawa's economy stagnated and recorded low levels of employment during the Depression. Workers, especially those in the service, construction, manufacturing and trade sectors, found themselves dismissed from their jobs as the economic crisis worsened. By 1931 the unemployment rate among wage earners was almost seventeen percent. The rate among the male wage earners was higher at twenty percent.¹¹⁸ For the first time the unemployed included a sizeable proportion of people in "white collar" occupations. Many had never experienced any lengthy periods of joblessness.

As the recession deepened so did the incidence of pauperization. Between the fall of 1932 and the spring of 1938 ten to sixteen percent of Ottawa's population required direct relief. By the late thirties the relief rolls contained a core of families and individuals who had been on relief for over three years and would likely require assistance for years to come. The twin problems of unemployment and destitution remained. Public assistance provided the basic necessities to families in dire straits while generally excluding many of the unmarried. Those on relief endured a poor standard of living. Perhaps a small minority who had worked only intermittently in the past and encountered frequent bouts of poverty were slightly better off on relief which at least provided food, shelter and later, medical care on a regular basis.¹¹⁹ The problems of unemployment and destitution initially elicited more response from the private charities in Ottawa. The tremendous upsurge of people seeking aid would make the task of the private agency impossible to carry out adequately.

CHAPTER III

THE PRIVATE CHARITIES MAKE DO

The private organizations shouldered the burden of caring for the Depression's first victims. These charities perceived the economic crisis as an emergency requiring only temporary measures to tide over the unemployed until prosperity returned. The limited understanding of the economic situation fostered a piecemeal approach to the problems of unemployment and poverty. Each organization thus tried to meet some particular need. As a result, new agencies sprang up to fill in the gaps. The Union Mission for Men, the Canadian Legion, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army cared for homeless men. The Mission gave them their meals; the Red Cross began a clinic to treat medical problems; the Mission and the Legion provided places to sleep. The Ottawa Welfare Bureau dispensed food vouchers to the unemployed head of family. The Bureau also issued special vouchers if the family could not pay for their rent. Church-oriented societies such as the Hebrew Benevolent Society, la Fédération des Femmes Canadiennes-Françaises and the St. Andrew's Women's Guild cared for the destitute in their parishes. Groups such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Salvation Army helped anyone in need from the alcoholic derelict to the homeless transient or newcomers unable to find work. The Local Council of Women, the Red Cross and the Ottawa Neighbourhood Services secured used garments and footwear to distribute among the needy unemployed. A tangled network of agencies ministering to the unemployed emerged during the early thirties.

The private charities generally comprised two types: the professional welfare agency, such as the Ottawa Welfare Bureau, employing trained social workers who emphasized individual treatment; and the private agency which provided material aid or rendered service to the needy but employed few, if any, trained workers. The latter organizations included agencies such as the Local Council of Women, Ottawa Neighbourhood Services, Red Cross and

Canadian Legion which normally did not distribute material assistance; religious-oriented societies, such as the Union Mission, the F.F.C.F., St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army and the St. Andrew's Women's Guild, which gave material assistance; and citizen's groups such as the Ottawa Emergency Relief Committee, the Find-a-Job Committee, the Committees on Homeless Men and Women, which collected money for relief or tried to unearth temporary jobs. The private organizations concentrated on the present situation by providing casual work or material aid which barely alleviated the distress felt by the unemployed. This chapter will examine the response of the private charities to the problems of unemployment and destitution. The response of the professional social welfare agency will be examined in more detail in chapter four.

The private charities never really grasped the problem of unemployment beyond the fact that it affected a significant number of Ottawans. They proposed only short term solutions which they felt would help the unemployed over the crisis period. Some temporary jobs generated by these organizations provided work for women who could not work on the public works projects established by the municipal government for the men. In the fall of 1931 the Local Council of Women formed an Emergency Relief Committee, headed by Lillian Freiman, and discussed with the Red Cross Society the possibility of opening a sewing room to employ needy women.¹ The Committee approached Mayor Allen to convince him of the need for assistance. Through the office of the Mayor, the Council and the Red Cross agreed to operate a sewing room assisted financially by the municipality and other societies.² Council volunteers staffed the clothing centre which provided temporary work for 630 unemployed women and wives of unemployed men from January to April 1932. The women received \$2.00 per week for each bundle of garments completed. The Committee reported that the depth of need was much greater than could be suggested by the number of registrations.³ This stereotyped approach to women's work neglected the whole body of female "white collar" workers who comprised forty percent of the unemployed women.

Several committees to alleviate distress evolved as unemployment worsened in 1932. The Homeless Women's Committee composed of representatives from the

Ontario Employment Bureau, the civic Social Service Department and numerous groups such as the Y.W.C.A. and l'Institut Jeanne d'Arc cared for 161 women from December 1932 to January 1933.⁴ The Committee managed to secure fairly steady employment for 58 women whose previous occupations ranged from domestic servant to seamstress to salesclerk.⁵ The male counterpart to this Committee was less successful in obtaining jobs. Nine men obtained positions while three young boys acted as caretakers at the "Y" camp.⁶ The Find-a-Job Committee, sponsored by various women's groups in 1933, appealed to Ottawans to let the unemployed carry out the spring cleaning chores, undertake house repairs or add an extra room to their homes at "reasonable wages."⁷ After several weeks over 660 jobs were unearthed.⁸ Since about 10,440 persons had registered as unemployed with the employment bureaus, the campaign had only a slight impact on the majority of those out of work. Moreover, the unemployed on relief kept only half of their earnings.

The "Renovize Ottawa" campaign workers deemed their job finding efforts successful.¹¹ The volunteers felt that despite the temporary nature of the jobs the psychological benefit of "real work" would pay off in improved mental outlook of the unemployed. It was generally perceived that any job no matter how small would prevent these people from losing their desire to work and from becoming burdens on the community. Both the women and the general public thought only of the "moral good" that such a campaign would have.¹² Most people did not realize that such job finding campaigns helped to "casualize" the labour market.¹³ Employers would engage people for short periods at low wages. The Find-a-Job Committee emphasized the existence of the best craftsmen "... who will work... for less than ever before."¹⁴ Such activity only ensured that the unemployed would remain in poverty whether they received relief or whether they worked on a series of short-lived jobs.

The Ottawa Neighbourhood Services represents one illustration of the casualization of the labour force. The organization evolved in 1932 to co-ordinate the distribution of relief clothing by assuming the functions of the Local Council of Women's sewing centre, the Red Cross clothing room and the Salvation Army. The O.N.S. provided fairly steady employment for about twenty men and women, most of whom had been on relief.¹⁵ Over a one year

period the agency provided part-time employment to over 800 individuals who renovated used garments and household articles. Only 183 people were paid on a wage basis; the rest worked in return for clothing or household furnishing. The agency on occasion was criticized for not paying its female employees the minimum wage.¹⁶ Job-finding efforts by organized committees or private agencies yielded the same results: temporary positions and low wages which the earner had to declare to the relief office. Employment, therefore, was much more difficult to provide than material aid.

The private charities had traditionally assisted the less fortunate members of society by supplying food and by bestowing spiritual advice or counselling. These organizations embraced the unemployed as being one more group requiring assistance. As the unemployment situation worsened and poverty became more prevalent, the unemployed became the prime target for many charitable groups. Some charities tackled the problems of the penniless single unemployed; some cared for destitute families; and others tried to help everyone in distress. These organizations seldom questioned the economic system which had caused such misery.

The Union Mission for Men on Daly Avenue initially plunged into the problem of caring for the single unemployed. The Mission originally dealt with "problem men" or ex-convicts, alcoholics, and "drifters" who worked for a few days in one place before moving on to another.¹⁷ The Mission assumed care of the single unemployed in 1930 because the City of Ottawa did not maintain a separate facility for these men. Instead, the municipality paid the cost of feeding and sheltering these men while leaving the distribution of relief to the agency.¹⁸ The Mission asked those who could pay for a nominal sum but supplied over half the beds and meals free of charge. The unemployed, resident of the city could receive permanent assistance in the form of meals and lodging. At the same time, the Mission cared for the jobless men who came to Ottawa to find work or who were just passing through. These were the transients who wandered across the country in search of work. They were also the ones called "lazy bums" or casualties of "industrial efficiency" depending on one's point of view.¹⁹ After a few days' aid, the men were expected to move on. The Mission concentrated on giving relief but sometimes secured

temporary jobs for some men or placed others on farms as labourers.²⁰

Another organization, the Canadian Legion, opened a shelter on Wellington Street for veterans in 1930.²¹ Originally intended to accommodate ex-servicemen applying for pensions or appealing court decisions affecting veterans' pensions, the hostel quickly became the stopping-over place for unemployed ex-servicemen "often of a difficult type."²² The Legion received partial assistance from the city for feeding 60 men per day. By 1932 the Legion found itself caring for more men than it had anticipated and on several occasions appealed to the civic government for financial aid. The City complied on all occasions.²³

The number of single unemployed, both transient and resident, grew alarmingly in 1932. About 200 men on any given day received aid from the Legion.²⁴ The Mission was caring for 600 men per day. If not boarding at the hostels or staying at cheap lodging houses, some homeless men lived on the city dump. The Red Cross decided to enter the field of caring for the single unemployed by opening a hostel for these unfortunate men and by establishing a clinic.²⁵ The City also covered the cost of sheltering the men.

These three agencies plus all the other charities in Ottawa began to feel the financial pinch during 1932. As unemployment and destitution deepened, concerned citizens at the request of the Mayor mounted a campaign to collect money for the needy unemployed.²⁶ The Ottawa Emergency Relief Committee, or the Citizens' Committee, deemed hostel care suitable only for the transient not for the younger unemployed living in the city. The Committee gave the Union Mission a sizeable grant from the emergency relief fund. The Committee Chairman, F. E. Bronson warned that "large scale hostel care" might attract tremendous numbers of transients.²⁷ Bronson advised that "special care" be taken to transfer the men to the unemployment relief camp at Rockcliffe.

At the instigation of the Citizens' Committee, representatives from the Union Mission, the Y.M.C.A., the Social Service Department and the courts formed the Homeless Men's Committee to oversee the investigation of the single unemployed man. The Committee concentrated on men between the ages of 17 and 45 whom they perceived as having a "better chance of rehabilitation."²⁸ These men were billeted in boarding houses or in private homes whose owners faced

the threat of losing them because of tax or mortgage arrears. Judging from the occupational groups these men represented, the Committee preferred to care for men who had been employed as tradesmen, office workers and salespeople.²⁹ Only eleven of the men came from the labouring ranks. During that period, the Homeless Men's Committee interviewed about 1,860 men but only 151 received relief. Since the majority of them had resided in Ottawa for more than five years, Committee members largely restricted aid to residents of the city. Those who were turned away were directed to the Mission or the relief camp. The Committee ended its work in April 1933, for it had not been the intention of the Citizens' Committee to create a permanent body but merely to oversee the disbursement of relief during the winter.

The pressure on the Mission and the Legion eased slightly, partly as a result of the Committee's work and partly because the Rockcliffe camp eventually absorbed about 600 men.³⁰ When the camp closed in 1936, the burden of looking after all the single unemployed whether resident or transient fell again to the private charities. The City continued to give grants to both agencies. The latter usually incurred more expenditures than originally estimated. The Mission exhausted its resources in September 1938. Because it could only make an annual appeal for funds, the Mission turned to the municipality for help.³¹ After a lapse of one and one-half months, the City provided a partial grant until the province revealed its new policy on single men. Month-to-month grants were made until the end of the year.³² The Legion also experienced financial difficulty and received a small sum to cover expenses until the end of the year.³³ Financial difficulties and uncertainty of government policy towards single men hampered their efforts at caring for the thousands of men who sought out hostel assistance.

The two private agencies continued to care for homeless men but to a lesser degree. The Mission, for example, asked about 100 men to leave the hostel in 1939 when the Ontario government declined to give relief grants for employable single people.³⁴ The men were left to fend for themselves. Few job opportunities existed for them and most congregated at the Ukrainian Labor Temple to contemplate their future.³⁵ The Mission continued to provide limited temporary aid, partly out of their own pockets and partly from public funds,

to the transient and homeless men until well into the war years.³⁶

Throughout the Depression several hundred residents called the Mission "home" although the soup kitchen atmosphere made the hostel conditions dreary and bleak. Thousands more passed through the Mission or Legion shelter, pausing to catch their breath for several days before being told to move on.³⁷ The limited resources of the private agencies who experienced financial troubles from time to time ensured that the men received only a very minimum type of assistance. The private organizations did indeed "make do" until the return of better economic conditions.

Women also constituted part of the single unemployed although their numbers were fewer. The Local Council of Women tried to provide work for jobless women through their sewing centre over 1931-32. No agency comparable to the Union Mission existed to care for the growing number of unemployed and homeless women who, moreover, had no wish to live in a dormitory-style shelter.³⁸ The Women's Emergency Relief Committee evolved in 1932 from groups interested in the plight of destitute single women. With a grant from the Ottawa Emergency Relief Fund, the Women's Committee opened a special office to investigate and arrange care for needy women and to provide employment as much as possible.³⁹ The special office handled 161 cases over the winter. Most of the jobless females were single but a number of widows or separated women also found themselves without a regular income from steady work. The overwhelming majority had previously worked as domestic servants although some had been salesclerks, seamstresses, waitresses or teachers.⁴⁰ Once the women had proven residence in the city for at least a year, they were boarded in private homes or rooming houses if they had no home. Family members were expected to share the responsibility of care if they could. If a woman refused employment, she was denied relief.⁴¹ The Committee secured jobs for 58 women. Another 56 managed to obtain casual employment. About 26 women received relief.⁴² The Women's Committee like its male counterpart disbanded its activities in the spring of 1933. Both these committees had answered a particular need for a short period of time. The need for assistance did not entirely disappear with the coming of spring. The Welfare Bureau assumed some of the more severe cases of hardship and provided care for some homeless women and men who were usually classified as "unemployables."

Both the men's and women's committees illustrated a seasonal and restrictive approach to the problem of destitute single persons. Winter was always the worst time because the severity of the climate caused some businesses to slow down and lay off personnel. Those lay-offs during the thirties endured for more than the four months of winter. The committees displayed little understanding of the economic situation and thought it only to be an emergency. By restricting care to residents of Ottawa, the Committees ignored a large group of unemployed who could not meet the residency qualifications and whose need for aid was just as great. No one really wished to be "stuck" with caring for a great number of homeless men for any lengthy period.

Nor did they wish to care for non-resident families for any extended period. Relief regulations prohibited the Welfare Bureau and the municipality from giving relief for more than seven days to families who could not qualify as residents. Such families were supposed to return to the communities from which they came. However, many smaller areas such as Hull, Gloucester township and Nepean township could no longer afford to distribute relief by 1935.⁴³ Families moved into Ottawa from these places in the hope of obtaining either work or relief. When they did not, it was the private agency such as the Salvation Army or the St. Vincent de Paul Society which responded to their plight. The Salvation Army was sometimes more lenient in allowing people to stay after the normal time period.⁴⁴ These two groups sprang from religious convictions to alleviate the distress of the poor, no matter who they were. They thus tended to look after the most desperate cases which other agencies often declined.⁴⁵ Regular relief channels did not provide for all types of destitute people. These societies attempted to fill some of the gaps.

Church groups tried to help their parishioners who fell upon hard times. The Women's Guild of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church bought shoes for children, paid the rent, arranged hospital treatment or supplied groceries to poor families.⁴⁶ The Poor Relief Committee never spent more than \$450.00 a year on relief.⁴⁷ St. Andrew's was probably typical of church organizations which gave partial aid to their needy members to prevent them from becoming public dependents or to supplement an inadequate relief allowance.

Another female group engaged in charitable activities, la Fédération des Femmes Canadiennes-Françaises, operated through the Francophone Roman Catholic parishes in Ontario and Manitoba. Originally founded in 1918 to improve the conditions of French Canadian veterans and their families, the F.F.C.F. turned its attention to the destitute unemployed in the 1930s. The women at first served Christmas meals to the homeless men, but soon turned their attention to the impoverished families in their parishes. At the annual meeting of the Fédération in May 1931, Mme Desrosiers noted that unemployment had placed an extra heavy burden on three Ottawa branches located in the parishes of Notre Dame, Sacré Coeur and St. François d'Assise.⁴⁸ During that year, 187 families were given food. The need appeared particularly acute in the St. François parish located in the western section of the city. F.F.C.F. volunteers had distributed 69 grocery boxes to needy families by January 1932.⁴⁹ The women also served over 4,000 meals to poor children as well as providing some youngsters with shoes and clothing.⁵⁰

Destitution worsened over the period 1933-34. The national president of the F.F.C.F., Mme P.-E. Marchand, appealed to all members to redouble their charitable efforts during the present crisis. Food, clothing and fuel assisted 100 adults and children of St. François parish.⁵¹ The F.F.C.F. along with the Local Council of Women held clothing drives for the children of the unemployed during the late thirties.⁵² This piecemeal approach did not eliminate any of the destitution but helped some to hold on a little longer before resorting to public assistance or helped those already on relief to obtain necessary clothing or household articles.

In certain instances a situation arose that no one group could possibly handle in an adequate manner. Twice during the thirties special committees were formed to aid the destitute unemployed: the Ottawa Emergency Relief Committee in 1932 and the Women's Emergency Relief Committee in 1936. Mayor Allen called upon Ottawa citizens to respond to the grave situation in 1932 by raising funds for the private charities. The Citizens' Committee attracted prominent people in business, social work and the civil service. Frederic E. Bronson, head of the Bronson Lumber Company, acted as chairman. Charlotte Whitton provided advice on budgeting for the agencies and on appropriate

admission criteria. The Committee hoped to collect \$50,000.00 for family relief, aid to the unemployed single people, clothing relief, medical care and a fund for special emergency cases.⁵³ In their brochure, the O.E.R.C. called the situation an emergency since over 2,600 families and 800 single men required direct relief. No new services would be created but all existing public and private services would be utilized. The brochure assured Ottawans that street begging would become unnecessary; that no one would be hungry or cold over the winter; and that no other appeal for money by these agencies would occur over the next year.⁵⁴

The tremendously successful campaign raised over \$100,000.00 which was more than double the original objective.⁵⁵ The Citizens' Committee did not publicize full details of the disbursement of funds because they feared an influx of people would pour into the city in the hope of obtaining aid. The Committee publicly stated in December 1932 that only those whose destitute state stemmed from lack of work would benefit from the Emergency Relief Fund. Non-residents would be returned to their communities as soon as possible. The Committee pledged to "... get the maximum benefits with the minimum expenditure of the funds, entrusted to them."⁵⁶

The chief agencies to benefit from the money were the Union Mission, the Ottawa Welfare Bureau, the Red Cross, the newly formed Ottawa Neighbourhood Services, the Homeless Men's and Women's Committees plus the Victorian Order of Nurses. The Citizens' Committee avoided duplicating services by giving grants to one agency in a particular field. The funds collected by the campaign enabled the larger private organizations to assist the unemployed. The Welfare Bureau, for example, looked after emergency cases of families who needed medical attention, who required help in moving to a cheaper unit, who could not pay their electric light bill, and who required necessary items that were not included in the relief allowance.⁵⁹

The smaller charities "made do" with whatever resources they had. In some cases the citizens' appeal cut into funds that smaller organizations counted on for their livelihood. The Salvation Army, for example, held the Committee responsible for the Army's failure to obtain a grant from the Civil Service Association which, instead, had supported the emergency relief campaign.

Superintendent Wright asked Bronson for a grant of \$600.00 from the fund. His letter illustrated the Army's many activities which required further financial backing:

...in spite of the work which the family welfare are doing, we are often called upon to help out in cases of families which do not measure up to the stipulated requirements of the said committee [Citizens' Committee], and therefore, are not in line for assistance therefrom. For instance we have in the last few weeks housed several evicted families until other rooms could be obtained, and have sent out trucks and men to move other families who have had to get out. We have also supplied four hundred (400) orders for groceries to families similar to the above mentioned to say nothing of the giving of stoves, mattresses, beds, and clothing to the destitute, this well apart from our thousands of meals and beds to transients during the past year.⁵⁹

The Committee declined the Army's request because such a grant was not part of the relief campaign budget.⁶⁰ Probably the real reason was that the Committee felt that the Salvation Army's social service efforts duplicated those of the Welfare Bureau and the Mission.

The emergency that developed in 1936 stemmed more from an inadequate relief allowance rather than the private charities' lack of money for relief. Provincial relief regulations did not include provision for essential household equipment. It was inevitable that after constant use repairs or replacements would be necessary. A crisis arose in 1936 when the Fire and Social Service Departments reported to the Mayor that the condition of stoves used by relief families posed grave fire hazards unless immediately replaced or repaired.⁶¹ The Mayor asked the assistance of the Local Council of Women, the Fédération and the Catholic Women's League in raising money for at least 100 new stoves and repairs to 130 others. The three organizations established the Women's Emergency Relief Committee during February. Over the next month this Committee raised over \$1,400.00 and collected 56 stoves as well as lengths of stovepipes.⁶² The work of this women's group took care of that particular emergency. A more comprehensive relief system possibly could have averted the need for a special appeal.

Few charities questioned the economic system which caused such a severe recession and countless misery. They possessed a narrow viewpoint which held that things would eventually improve and until then they would assist the unemployed by meeting whatever need happened to show up. The piecemeal approach was also partially the result of insufficient funds. Most relied on private donations. Municipal financial assistance helped, but not all organizations were eligible. Up until 1933, Ottawa, unlike other Canadian cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Vancouver, had no central fund-raising agency for the major charities in each field of social service. Establishment of the Community Chest in 1933 eased some of the financial worries of the large charities. The women's groups and the church societies continued to "make do" with what they had for the rest of the Depression.

Despite such financial woes, the charities went about their work as they had in the past. Some individuals engaged in humanitarian activities enjoyed the "good feeling" that came from helping the underprivileged.⁶³ Others sought to preserve family life by supplying the material needs of the poor who would be relieved of the worry of providing for themselves. Such psychological pressure might lead to family breakdowns. The latter possibly would lead to widespread social disorder fueled by a large body of single men who congregated in the city for any length of time. Church-oriented groups provided temporal assistance in the hope of safeguarding spiritual values and cultural customs.⁶⁴ The St. Vincent de Paul Society thus clothed needy families and the F.F.C.F. served hot lunches to children of the unemployed. The limited response suggested an acceptance of poverty as one of the inevitable evils of the world which no one could eradicate.

The private organizations' response to the problems of unemployment and destitution was largely unco-ordinated, erratic and intermittent. To be fair the private charities shouldered the burden of administering and distributing unemployment relief for the first three years while the City merely paid for

the food and fuel. The rising rate of destitution combined with an insecure financial basis made the agencies' response seem woefully inadequate. The lack of co-ordination among all the charities resulted in an intricate maze of organizations attempting to provide assistance to the unemployed. The pressure eased somewhat when the City assumed the responsibility for family relief from the Ottawa Welfare Bureau. The private agencies nevertheless fulfilled several important functions by caring for those ineligible for anything more than temporary assistance and by bridging the gaps in the relief allowance. The organizations came under attack from professional social workers who deplored the "dabbling" in relief practised by groups which normally did not engage in extensive social service as well as the "mass treatment" of the unemployed practiced by some agencies which claimed to be social welfare organizations.⁶⁵

CHAPTER IV

A BETTER WAY? THE SOCIAL WORKERS SPEAK UP

Around the time of the First World War social work began to change from the religious-oriented society run by volunteers to the secular agency directed by professionally trained workers. The University of Toronto and McGill University established schools of social work to provide thorough grounding in the scientific method of social welfare.¹ "Scientific" meant the gathering of statistics, undertaking surveys and preparing reports to determine the nature of the problem posed by people in distress. "Scientific" meant the practice of casework which tailored the treatment of the problem to the needs of the individual. Social workers enlisted assistance from the community - clergymen, teachers, landlords, grocers, and physicians - to help solve the difficulties faced by a particular person and his family.² Frequent visits to the home and to the agency's office enabled the "visitor" to monitor the family's progress. At its extreme the new social work meant interference in the lives of its clients to the point where outsiders managed their entire affairs. The new generation of social workers offered sympathetic counselling and material aid to assist people over the troubled periods of their lives.

During this period new agencies emerged or older organizations shifted towards the scientific social work method by employing trained workers. The Neighborhood Workers' Association of Toronto, the Family Welfare Association of Montreal and the Ottawa Welfare Bureau, for example, accepted the social work principle that personal service must accompany material aid.³ On a national level the Canadian Council on Child Welfare under the dynamic direction of Charlotte Whitton promoted the transition to professionalism by providing advice to private and government welfare agencies as well as acting as liaison between social workers and government officials.⁴ Professional welfare organizations held in contempt the smaller private agency run by well-intentioned volunteers who dispensed material aid to all types of needy

people without applying admission criteria and providing guidance to families to encourage self-sufficiency.⁵ Social workers scornfully referred to this type of assistance as "mass treatment" and "soup kitchen philanthropy."⁶

The Depression challenged the beliefs of the social workers and even forced agencies to compromise their notions of social service. In accordance with their social service viewpoint, social workers believed that relief should be more than the dispensing of food, fuel, clothing and shelter. Relief must also guard the health and morale of the unemployed and their families to prevent them from losing their self-reliance. Once initiative and ambition were lost, an entire family might become permanently dependent on public aid. The result was "a lowered tone of citizenship" and considerable expense to the community.⁷ Preservation of the independent spirit of the family receiving aid necessitated well-planned social services staffed by trained workers who could closely supervise individuals and families.

The Depression caused tremendous numbers of destitute unemployed to flood agencies such as the Ottawa Welfare Bureau which had neither the human nor financial resources to cope. For the unemployed this meant that their condition was lumped together with the agency's problem cases resulting from temporary physical handicap, lengthy illness, desertion by a spouse or maladjusted behaviour. This chapter will examine the reaction of the Bureau to the growing incidence of unemployment and destitution, the consequences of mass treatment by direct relief as seen through the eyes of the Canadian Welfare Council and the solutions proposed by the Council.

The Ottawa Welfare Bureau retained responsibility for helping destitute cases arising from unemployment under the terms of the 1925 agreement with the City. The staff of 22 administered all direct relief to the unemployed while the City paid the maintenance costs (food and fuel) and gave the Bureau a \$10,000.00 grant towards its administrative costs. Most Canadian cities maintained municipal public welfare departments which administered unemployment relief or at least shared responsibility with a private agency. The exception was Ottawa which had one private agency handling direct relief to the unemployed.⁸ Such an arrangement functioned during normal economic times

but buckled when the Depression threw many people out of work for long periods.

Between 1930 and 1932 the number of destitute families receiving unemployment relief increased elevenfold. In July 1930, 186 families received direct relief; in July 1931, the figure jumped to 780; in July 1932, the number stood at 2,086.⁹ At the same time the Bureau looked after over 1,700 families facing difficulties because of physical disability, behavioural problems, inadequate wages and debt. During that month the Bureau handled more than 7,000 applications.¹⁰ The incidence of indebtedness and poverty through unemployment grew steadily as over 12,800 applications poured into the Bureau's offices during October 1932.¹¹ Most likely the penniless unemployed were bypassing smaller private agencies such as church groups and coming directly to the Bureau itself.

The Bank Street offices of the Bureau could hardly contain the throngs of people waiting to be interviewed. The staff consisted of an executive secretary, assistant, registrar, case supervisor and 18 clerical workers employed as investigators, interviewers, dispensers of coupons, and other related occupations.¹² The number of cases assigned to each investigator far exceeded normal loads which should have averaged from 50 to 125 cases per person. One visitor looked after 1,000 cases in her district; no one handled less than 400 cases.¹³ The overworked staff sometimes snapped at impatient applicants who had waited for hours. The unemployed, in turn, complained to Bureau officials about the rental allowance, about the debts they owed and the delivery of fuel.⁵ Under such conditions it was very hard for case workers to maintain a social service viewpoint. Volunteers helped out but their lack of training sometimes hampered operations. The executive secretary of the Bureau, Thelma Williams, reported to the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare that the four senior officials found it impossible to hold classes or direct study courses for the new case-workers or the volunteers.¹⁴

To relieve the overcrowding the executive director of the C.C.C.F.W. asked three social workers from Toronto and Montreal to survey the Welfare Bureau and make recommendations for improvement. Their report released

publicly on December 12, 1932 indicated that the Bureau staff did the best they could under very trying circumstances which frequently were not of their own making.¹⁶ The report did suggest numerous internal changes which aroused much controversy.

The problems of the unemployed on relief receded into the background as the Council, the Bureau, the City Council and public opinion argued over the administrative methods for directing Ottawa's relief programme. On the one hand, the C.C.C.F.W. asserted the necessity of hiring eight social workers at decent salaries to reduce the case loads to manageable proportions.¹⁷ Three or four should be professionally trained, experienced workers who would set standards and direct the more inexperienced staff. The Council's argument rested on the fact that employment of professionals would not only improve the efficiency of the office but also would improve the personal service to Bureau clients. The Council warned that mass treatment of the unemployed would result in more people losing their ambition and becoming permanently dependent on relief.¹⁸ Whitton privately warned one member of the Bureau's Board of Directors that the employment of untrained people:

...cost this city at least one thousand dollars a week in careless, unnecessary expenditure in clothing in the last seven weeks, and I would not venture to say how much in groceries and other orders issued as automatically by overworked and unsupervised staff as if these orders were coming out of a slot machine.¹⁹

The Council also criticized the directors for holding infrequent meetings where matters of little consequence were discussed.²⁰ The report strongly urged the appointment of interested citizens to the Board which would hold regular meetings to formulate policy, compile budgets and establish proper salaries. The Council, moreover, recommended the formation of two district offices in the eastern and western sections of the city to reduce overcrowding and strengthen contact with the community.²¹ The C.C.C.F.W.'s answer to the relief problem in Ottawa was to improve the administrative structure of the relief-giving agency. Their solution implied that destitution would be a lasting situation requiring permanent measures to manage the problem.

On the other hand, Welfare Bureau officials and civic politicians hesitated to act immediately on the recommendations. The Bureau officials feared that decentralization and the hiring of extra personnel would involve tremendous expense which the Bureau could not afford.²² Williams admitted that workers' salaries were too low, but felt she had to make do with the financial resources available.²² The uncertainty was shared by the newspapers which questioned the spending of money on salaries instead of on relief, which wondered if too much emphasis was placed on casework when there was "...not the smallest hope of most clients getting work for a long time to come," which felt that district offices were unnecessary, and which urged the middleground, "securing efficiency and the maximum of relief without too great an outlay for staff."²⁴

Between the two strains of thought lay the municipality which, after all, provided the money for unemployment relief as well as the grant towards the administrative expenses of the Bureau. The overcrowded conditions deeply concerned both the Mayor and the Social Service Commissioner who discussed the problem with Whitton while her Council was preparing its report.²⁵ At that time civic officials did not want the City to assume the distribution of relief and favoured the district office proposal. After the release of the Council's report, civic officials discussed the decentralization suggestion with the Bureau's executive secretary who refused to concede the necessity of such a measure.²⁶ There the matter rested for several weeks.

At the end of December the Mayor announced the appointment of three City Council members to a committee to co-ordinate relief matters with the Bureau.²⁷ Then the Mayor announced that the City was relieving the Bureau of its burden for distributing unemployment relief. The municipality assumed the responsibility for direct relief by creating a Public Welfare Board composed of five members from the community and three civic politicians. The Mayor claimed that the City must protect the ratepayers' interests.²⁸ The Welfare Bureau henceforth devoted more time to casework and personal service to troubled families and individuals. The tremendous number of people clamouring for aid forced the Bureau to curtail such activity and thus compromised its social service viewpoint. The crisis invited intervention

from an established social welfare body whose proposals only created antagonism with Bureau officials, who were sensitive to the slightest criticism. With the breakdown in communication, the City stepped in to resolve the impasse. Little came of the Council's recommendation for more trained personnel. Presumably the Bureau could now manage adequately on existing resources.

Behind the Council's strong belief in the hiring of trained personnel lay a fear that any compromise of social service principles would result in the growth of permanent dependency and other social problems.²⁹ The Canadian Welfare Council detected the growth of special problems as early as 1934. There were

... the homeless man who is not absorbed in farm placement or in heavy manual work projects because of unsuitability, age or handicap; the aimless, restless youth who has never known employment or sees no hope in temporary occupation or 'made' work; the increasing number of displaced, older single women; the growing problem of the non-resident individual or family shoved from municipal pillar to provincial government and back to emergency relief or private charity; and the mounting percentage of burned out war veterans, seeking something to eke out the veterans' allowance.³⁰

Moreover, direct relief, however minimal, presented a certain alternative to low wages paid by some employers. Families with more than three children sometimes endured a better standard of living on relief than if the wage earner received only the minimum wage.³¹ Some people were reluctant to leave the relative security of a relief allowance for low-paying jobs that might mean lowered living standards. The low wage earner meanwhile had to cope with living costs, perhaps zealous bill collectors, or illness on a meagre salary. The Council feared the erosion of the work ethic in which the low income person, out of discouragement, might give up his job and apply for public assistance.

The Welfare Council observed that loss of dignity and sagging spirits characterized many relief recipients as a result of "our emergency mass treatment of individual human lives."³² The Council implied that lack of

proper social welfare techniques contributed to the crumbling of individual initiative and self-reliance exhibited by some relief recipients who balked at taking any risks that would jeopardize their relief allowance. They displayed a "cringing subservience" to authority instead of a willingness to question the actions of relief workers and political figures. In the Council's eyes such resignation to a life on relief threatened the democratic principles of free speech, thought and action. The notion of freedom was cynically viewed by some as the "freedom to suffer and to starve."

A contributing factor which affected the personal dignity of the unemployed were the investigations of the relief system launched by municipal politicians eager to "clean up relief."³³ The focussing of attention on alleged abuses committed by those on relief, often as a result of insufficient investigation by the relief worker, served as a convenient scapegoat to explain rising relief rolls for which politicians had few solutions. Such scrutinies took place several times in Ottawa during the Depression. Social workers did not deny that abuses took place but blamed the lack of sufficiently trained investigators as one of the reasons. The attitude of government that relief was a "transitory, 'emergency' problem" requiring only year-by-year grants encouraged little serious planning on how to overcome the problems of unemployment, destitution, loss of morale and loss of vocational skills.³⁴

The Council perceived a certain "lassitude" which not only affected the unemployed and the relief recipient but also permeated the consciousness of the general public. It manifested itself in statements such as "relief is here to stay" and "well, we'll never get work again, anyway."³⁵ The Council felt that the average Canadian had become resigned to the relief system and cared little about the effects of its minimum care. Since the beginning of the Depression, Canada had spent approximately \$900 million on relief but now had more people dependent on assistance than she had at the beginning. As the economic climate improved but relief rolls remained high, there was an increasing tendency to believe that the relief recipient would not search for or take work. Perhaps this was partly true for some, but most unemployed who had held jobs previously were only too eager to accept work when it became available. Nevertheless, the hardening attitudes towards the unemployed

combined with the relief recipients' loss of dignity made such agencies as the Canadian Welfare Council fear that such conditions would breed extreme right or left wing political movements.³⁶

The Council recognized that the economic crisis which had created protracted unemployment and enduring poverty for over 1.1 million Canadians from 1932 to 1935 could no longer be called an "emergency or temporary state of affairs."³⁷ The Depression struck

... a profound and prolonged tremour of our whole economic system which in turn has caused certain displacements in our employment opportunity and structure. These displacements ... have accumulated problems that cannot but become complicated the longer they are regarded as susceptible to treatment through the continuance of emergency programmes alone.³⁸

To alleviate the distress, the Council publicly called for a national relief plan in 1933, 1934 and 1935.³⁹ The Council called for a federal advisory committee to survey the relief situation and to recommend principles and standards of relief administration to be adhered to by each province receiving a federal grant.⁴¹ Relief, however, should cease to be the only way of attacking the problems. Adequate minimum wages, an end to the casualization of the labour force, works projects, resettlement, slum clearance, the moving of the work force to areas which could generate employment and contributory unemployment insurance should be part of community social planning.⁴⁰

The Council also advocated that municipalities seek to know their unemployed on relief. The welfare body called on private and public relief agencies to keep detailed records: work background, previous earnings, occupational skills and fitness for work of the unemployed.⁴² The "unemployables" must be separated from the "employables." Canadians must accept the existence of an "irreducible core of social dependency" made up of people incapable of working again because of age, ill-health or some other reason. Adequate care must provide those unable to work with a minimum standard of living. The unemployed with behavioural problems should be given individual assistance by trained personnel. Able-bodied, young unmarried men and women

as well as unskilled people should receive specialized training to prepare them for future work in skilled occupations. Civic governments could then plan and provide the necessary financial backing for such services. The Council was not advocating total government control of relief, but co-ordination of social planning between the many private welfare agencies and public welfare departments. How far the Council's advice was heeded in Ottawa will be examined in the next chapter.

Social workers during the Depression tried to cope with the tremendous number of people seeking unemployment relief. At the same time the more profession-conscious ones attempted to implement the principles of scientific social work learned from their training. They believed that relief was more than the provision of basic necessities. Relief must protect the morale of the unemployed and preserve their sense of independence. Social workers perceived the unemployed almost as they perceived people with social problems: that these people were "cases" which required constant supervision, direction or rehabilitation. That such an attitude might open the way to excessive interference in the lives of the jobless was not discerned. Scientific social work was believed to be a better method than the wholesale dispensing practiced by many charitable groups. The social service viewpoint became increasingly difficult to maintain as great numbers of people flocked to the welfare agencies who lacked sufficient staff and financial resources.

Professional welfare workers in such agencies as the Canadian Welfare Council, the Family Welfare Association of Montreal and the Neighborhood Workers' Association in Toronto supported and encouraged this viewpoint. They believed that employment of sufficient, qualified personnel in social agencies would keep costs to a reasonable level and provide the proper amount of guidance to people. Such individual treatment would preserve the work ethic among the unemployed and guard against the growth of permanent dependency.

Moreover, the more foresighted of the social agencies recognized that the unemployment and poverty of the thirties could not be erased by improved social welfare techniques alone. Relief of unemployment required comprehensive

economic and social programs initiated by government. But few governments of that time were willing to undertake new measures that might just worsen the situation instead of alleviating it. As a result the social workers' argument was often ignored or compromised. The 1932 report on the Ottawa Welfare Bureau was an example. As Bureau officials hesitated to undertake such changes that would require a heavy overhead, the City stepped in and took over the administration of direct relief. How Ottawa finally administered and gave relief to the unemployed will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE CITY TAKES OVER

The onset of the Depression in Ottawa during the early months of 1930 elicited little reaction from civic politicians whose attention centred on irregularities in the Audit Department and the Housing Commission, the construction of a water filtration plant and Mackenzie King's proposed scheme to re-develop Elgin Street.¹ No one really believed that the economic recession would be anything more than a temporary setback. The winter months regularly brought about increased unemployment which disappeared with the coming of spring.² The City generated casual, snow clearing jobs by hiring extra men after a heavy snowfall. Material aid tided over the needy until the economy picked up. Most municipal leaders, like most Canadians, did not immediately grasp the lasting nature of the recession, preferring to think in terms of an "emergency." The City thus saw no reason to think that public works combined with the distribution of food and fuel would not suffice during the early 1930s. Such traditional responses to the economic recession proved totally inadequate to the effects of a world-wide depression which brought prolonged, widespread unemployment and destitution.

This chapter will investigate the civic response to the problems of joblessness and poverty by examining municipal works schemes, the shift to more material aid, the re-organizations of relief administration plus civic revenues and expenditures. In some cases the conditions attached to the grants from the Ontario and Dominion governments limited the municipal response. Left with the constitutional responsibility for unemployment relief but few tax powers, the municipality was forced to borrow money to finance its relief schemes because government grants and civic revenues proved insufficient to cover the cost of relief.

When Alderman Frank Plant, a member of the Trades and Labour Congress executive, urged the Ontario government to provide money to municipalities undertaking public works to relieve unemployment, he echoed the sentiments of other local governments faced by growing numbers of jobless people.³ Civic officials believed that some form of work was essential for an individual and his family to maintain independence and respectability. "Idleness" was not acceptable. The Dominion government concurred. Declaring that "work, not charity" should be given to the unemployed, Prime Minister Bennett announced a scheme of grants to the provinces and municipalities for relief works in the fall of 1930.⁴ The federal government paid 25 percent of the labour costs while the provincial government contributed another 25 percent. Municipalities paid the remaining 50 percent plus the total costs of materials and administration.⁵ The local government, therefore, assumed much of the financial brunt for relief works. The federal government also required adherence to fair wage laws, the eight-hour day and that work be offered to residents of the municipality as much as possible. The province, in turn, preferred that civic governments choose labour-intensive projects such as drainage construction, ditchdigging and road grading.⁶ Relief public works, thus, provided jobs for the unemployed to prevent them from becoming destitute and dependent on charity.

The City of Ottawa applied for assistance on work programmes expected to cost \$600,000.00.⁷ Because of the heavy demand for grants from across Ontario, the province only authorized the expenditure of \$413,000.00.⁸ The City proposed to finance their share by issuing debentures to interested investors.⁹ Relief works in Ottawa employed men to undertake flood control measures along the Rideau River, to construct water mains at Byron and Tyndall Avenues and to build the first phase of the relief sewer system.¹⁰ Relief work stopped in the spring of 1931 and did not commence until the fall when more grants became available. The unemployed found jobs constructing a drainage system at Lansdowne Park, rounding off street corners, repairing sidewalks and roads, or grading streets.¹¹ These works generally stimulated labouring jobs, but Ottawa also received grants towards the erecting of several buildings which offered some unemployed skilled workers jobs suitable to their training.¹²

The projects undertaken by the jobless men were necessary tasks. Civic officials regularly discussed flood abatement, but the engineers had never drawn up any definite plans.¹³ The availability of grants and the necessity of providing jobs caused the City to initiate action on an important public work which might have been put off until a heavy flood caused extensive damage. In addition, many of Ottawa's sewers dated from before 1900 and had outlived their usefulness. Combined sanitary and storm sewers lacked the size to eliminate safely any overflow.¹⁴ Damaging sewer explosions in 1929 and again in 1931 pointed to the immediate need for "relief" sewers to provide main arteries and outlets for large areas as well as to increase capacity. A new sewage system would prevent potentially dangerous back-ups. While some public works fitted the "make work" category, most of the early relief works were genuinely useful and necessary.

How did the unemployed obtain jobs on these works? The City imposed certain eligibility criteria. Only the unemployed residing in Ottawa for at least twelve months could obtain work.¹⁵ They were obliged to register with the local office of the Employment Service of Canada. It was, at that time, the only agency with the organization and experience in screening applicants for work.¹⁶ It undertook the registration and investigation of all unemployed married men. When the civic works department required men for a particular project, the E.S.C. selected the requested number plus a few extra. When the City hired them, their registration cards were placed at the back of the file so that other men would have an opportunity to obtain jobs. Every month each applicant was given a card which showed the number of days worked and the number of days when no work was available. This general plan permitted "key men," or workers with proven experience whose talents were urgently needed, to remain on the job until its completion.¹⁷

These hiring procedures both annoyed and frustrated the unemployed. All men reported to the office every day to show that they were trying to secure employment.¹⁸ Moreover, investigation revealed that a number of non-residents successfully evaded the residency rule and obtained relief work. Some men complained of the rudeness of the E.S.C. staff. The City intervened

and established its own Civic Employment Bureau in 1931 to hire men for relief projects and for regular municipal works.¹⁹

The City also tightened the eligibility rules to distribute relief works to those they perceived as really needing employment. Married men with families became the preferred group who received the relief jobs first.²⁰ After them came men supporting their wives and lastly single people with dependents. The City thus excluded the single unemployed who had no dependents from relief work. They might receive the occasional snow clearing tasks.²¹ The City, moreover, decreed that only those living in Ottawa for twelve months prior to 1 November 1931 would be eligible for either civic employment or direct relief.²² For the rest of the decade the City hired only residents to undertake relief works and regular civic jobs.

Relief works created jobs on a temporary, seasonal basis which provided neither steady employment nor an adequate income for the unemployed. Two thousand, nine hundred men worked an average of 22.7 days per man during the eight months from October 1930 to May 1931.²³ The men earned about \$4.00 a day for an approximate total of \$91.04 for the eight months. The next season of relief works employed 6,914 men for an average of 12.7 days per man during the seven months from October 1931 to April 1932. They earned only \$61.29 during that period. The infrequent number of days worked caused the unemployed to supplement their wages by other means. Some found additional odd jobs; some lived on the savings of more prosperous years; some relied on a spouse's or offspring's earnings. Relief work just provided temporary employment and, along with private job-finding campaigns, encouraged the casualization of the labour force "by organizing the market for short term work."²⁴ More and more people turned to direct relief when they were out of work. The relief works programme did not meet the unemployed's need for jobs which would have enabled them to provide their families with basic living necessities. Relief works did keep the unemployed from being "idle" part of the time.

Part of the reason for this ineffectiveness lay with the civic government's desire to give equal opportunity for work to all eligible unemployed. Relief works employed men on the "day labour" system for a period of one week (later twelve days) instead of engaging men until completion of the task. The employment bureau assigned a group of men to a particular project for the week and then pulled them off the job in order that the next group of unemployed could have their turn. Such a procedure was known as the rotation of labour. The municipality followed this method for relief works and occasionally for regular civic jobs until 1934. Engineers complained that the constant switching of labour groups and the unfamiliarity of many with general labour delayed completion of projects and increased costs.²⁵ City Council dropped the system of hiring men for short periods to allow all physically fit men to remain until the completion of relief projects, sewer construction and street paving.²⁶

The municipality also carried out public works whether or not there were government funds available. Ottawa residents expected their civic government to undertake and maintain services such as safe water systems, good streets and adequate sidewalks. Civic politicians agreed with this viewpoint.²⁷ Unemployment relief grants financed some segments of the relief sewer system from 1930 to 1933. By 1934 such sewers were still needed in parts of Sandy Hill and LeBreton Flats. No government assistance was available. The City borrowed \$550,000.00 towards the sale of debentures for the trunk sewers.²⁸ Work stopped the following year pending the approval of a new debenture issue. A plebiscite among the ratepayers on the necessity of finishing the scheme revealed equally divided opinion.²⁹ The City then successfully appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board on the grounds that poor sanitation and employment conditions required the completion of the sewer system. The project ended in 1938.³⁰ Civic public works were not aimed specifically at the unemployed; however, many jobless people and relief recipients found jobs. Civic works could never absorb all those out of work, but the City felt it was at least providing some employment opportunities.

The municipal effort to provide as much work as possible led to efforts to make work last as long as possible. Regulations for civic works prohibited the use of large pieces of mechanical equipment and controlled the use of smaller articles such as cement mixers and air compressors.³¹ The selective use of some labour-saving devices, however, encouraged local contractors to submit low bids for civic projects which, in turn, benefitted taxpayers. The City felt that the use of manual labour would result in more jobs for the unemployed. The "pick and shovel" work did not enable the skilled worker to maintain his craft, nor did it help the office worker who was not used to hard physical labour. Rotation of work and the encouragement of hand labour hindered the effectiveness of public works in providing steady employment, an adequate income or maintaining vocational skill.

The drawbacks to public works in absorbing all the unemployed had become evident by 1932. In addition, these projects proved quite costly. Hand labour and the rotation of work groups contributed to increased costs. Excavating on frozen ground during the winter made for less efficient work. The inexperience of many men with labouring work also hindered progress.³² Municipalities such as Ottawa borrowed money from the banks and issued debentures, many of which were sold through the financial institutions of New York City.³³ High exchange rates made this method more expensive than in previous years. The increasing costs of public works made the federal government change its emphasis from providing employment to providing minimum material aid as a less expensive means of assisting the jobless.³⁴ The provincial government indicated it would follow this lead when Premier Henry stated: "The government proposes now to inaugurate a policy of direct relief... We will provide sustenance rather than employment, although the latter scheme is preferable."³⁵ In doing so, governments ensured that destitution would become widespread since the unemployed had to be in desperate straits before receiving direct relief.

Material relief in Ottawa was largely the preserve of the private agencies until 1933 as previous chapters have explained. The City left the administration and distribution of public aid to the Welfare Bureau,

the Union Mission, the Canadian Legion and the Hebrew Benevolent Society. The municipality paid for the food and fuel. It received about two-thirds of the total cost in the form of a grant from the province and the Dominion. The eligibility criteria which applied to relief works also applied to direct relief. As the incidence of destitution increased, the City began to take a more active role in regulating all aspects of relief.

Ottawa issued tenders for the supply of specified goods to relief recipients. The City was one of the few Ontario municipalities to establish set prices which merchants could charge their relief customers.³⁶ The City also contracted the supply of wood and coal at a fixed rate. By early 1932 the City entered into an agreement with fifteen Ottawa bakers to supply bread to relief recipients at a stabilized price. The municipality made a similar arrangement with the ten dairy companies. Civic officials believed that contract agreements would not only keep prices down but considerable savings to the City would also accrue. Ottawa also felt that such arrangements would prevent people from exchanging their vouchers at unauthorized retail stores.³⁷

On occasion the City acted at the behest of the province. Until mid-1932 shelter was not included in the relief allowance. Provincial relief regulations then changed to include this provision to avoid evictions of those on assistance. The City was then obliged to include rent in the relief allowance. The regulations also stated that those receiving rent relief had to perform some "useful task."³⁸ For the rest of the decade the able-bodied unemployed earned their relief by grading "future" streets, levelling garbage dumps, repairing the retaining wall of the Isolation Hospital, cleaning out stables, sweeping streets and cutting weeds. Their "free" labour, incidentally, enabled the civic government to save money which ordinarily would have been spent on wages.³⁹

The logical conclusion of this increased activity in the realm of social service was the direct control of administration and distribution of unemployment relief by the municipality. Ottawa took its first hesitant steps into the family welfare field by relieving the Welfare Bureau of its

responsibility for unemployment relief to families after a crisis developed within the private agency. Mayor Allen remarked that the City had an obligation to the taxpayers to ensure that relief was efficiently administered.⁴⁰

Once the City took over direct relief from the Bureau, it was faced with the task of establishing its own public welfare system. The Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare suggested relief come under the scrutiny of a public board composed of representative citizens. The new Public Welfare Board comprised five such people plus three members of City Council. The Board's duty was to discuss relief policy and make recommendations to Board of Control. Another criticism made by the C.C.C.F.W. had been the lack of trained, experienced workers familiar with techniques of social welfare, especially casework. The City established a Public Welfare Department to provide adequate staff to handle relief.

The Public Welfare Department which operated from 1933 to 1936 represented an experiment by the City in the principles of social welfare. The Department attempted to provide both material aid and sympathetic guidance to the relief recipient. The Department co-operated with the Welfare Bureau on certain cases where unemployment was not the only problem that families encountered.⁴¹ To undertake this work required much more staff than the 22 people that the Welfare Bureau had in 1932. The City hired 64 people in 1933; by 1936, the Department employed about 100 people.⁴² An experienced social worker, Bessie Touzel, acted as the supervisor of staff which included 21 case workers of varying degrees of experience.⁴³ Trained, experienced social workers were a rare species in the 1930s. The City made do with hiring people who had some training, if not actual job experience. To upgrade and maintain professional standards, the staff participated in a study session over the winter of 1933. The following year some attended a special course on social work and casework principles given through the extension department of the Montreal School of Social Work.⁴⁴ At the same time each case worker handled an average of 235 families, far above the maximum ideal case load of 175.⁴⁵ They visited each family once a month, but as dependency increased, some workers could not keep up to this standard.

The introduction of the new department did not ease the plight of the unemployed on relief. They still had to exist on the minimum allowance set by the province. However, they could hold on to more of their earnings from temporary work. The Welfare Board recommended that the relief recipient be allowed to retain 35 percent of earnings over \$5.00 (instead of 25 percent) and that the remaining 65 percent (instead of 75 percent) would determine the amount of the allowance.⁴⁶ It was thought that the extra cash would enable the family to purchase items not included in the allotment. This move affected those lucky enough to obtain employment. The Board also imposed another restriction on the relief family. It compelled those who held motor vehicle licenses and drivers' permits to turn them over to the relief office.⁴⁷

The uneasiness of civic politicians with the new system grew in relation to the increase in the relief rolls. In 1934 the dependency rate reached its highest peak; the cost of public welfare soared over \$700,000.00. Three separate investigations of the welfare department took place. Two reported fairly favourably on Ottawa's relief administration.⁴⁸ Several aldermen were not satisfied with these findings and managed to convince City Council to hire an independent firm of auditors to examine the accounts of the department. The subsequent report of Messrs. Matatall and Menard took the department and the City to task for its inefficient relief methods. It found evidence of wastefulness in the distribution of clothing, lax investigative procedures and superficial records. It recommended the re-registration of all families, administrative changes, the cash relief system, and the substitution of male investigators, preferably bilingual, for female investigators.⁴⁹ Revelation of "abuses" and "wastefulness" did not suit City Council which largely ignored the report's recommendations.

The City did, however, require all families to "describe their economic condition under oath."⁵⁰ Such a measure illustrated the suspicious attitude that the municipality held towards the relief recipient. Yet, of the over 4,000 families who re-registered, only 20 were discontinued. The investigations also proved a "harassing experience" for the staff of the welfare department. The Social Service Commissioner wrote in exasperation that

the cost of re-registering the families could have paid the salary of an additional worker over the winter.⁵¹ The cloud of suspicion under which the relief recipients lived and the relief workers operated receded temporarily into the background for two years.

The rumblings of discontent surfaced from time to time. The municipality further restricted eligibility for public assistance. Council approved new regulations in 1935 which barred non-resident families from outside the province from receiving aid unless they had been self-supporting for one year without help from relatives or private agencies.⁵² Families would be returned to their home communities. Ottawa claimed that an influx of non-residents would cost more than the municipality would bear. The actual number of "non-resident" families on relief in Ottawa was small. One hundred and forty-nine families out of an average of 4,300 families on relief in 1934 were found to be "non-resident."⁵³

The municipality's share of expenditure on direct relief amounted to well over \$800,000.00 in 1935. The following year the Ontario Minister of Public Welfare set a maximum allowable expenditure of \$922,000.00 for that year.⁵⁴ At the same time the Minister ordered a "purge" of the relief rolls to eliminate those not entitled to relief benefits. At the request of the Public Welfare Board but probably under heavy pressure from the Mayor another investigation was launched.⁵⁵ Eleven special police detectives investigated relief recipients in their homes during April and May of 1936. About 50 people faced prosecution for alleged abuses. Press stories reported on several court proceedings which resulted in fines and implied that many hundreds of families asked to be removed from the relief roll for fear of what the detectives might uncover.⁵⁶ The press did not realize that the movement of families off relief at the end of April had been a normal occurrence for three years. Fifty to 66 percent of these people asked to be removed because a family member had managed to secure employment not because they had defrauded the City and feared the consequences.⁵⁷ The purge yielded few substantial results, but civic politicians could justifiably claim that they had lived up to election promises to "clean up relief."⁵⁸

City Council sent a representative to Montreal and several other cities to study their methods and also considered the cash relief system. After reviewing the findings, Board of Control recommended the re-organization of the Public Welfare Department to bring it under the jurisdiction of the Finance Commissioner, the introduction of the scrip certificate system, and the termination of the agreement with the Neighbourhood Services.⁵⁹ The recommendations went into effect towards the end of August 1936. City politicians claimed that such measures would reduce administrative costs and counteract the previous "loose" method which resulted in abuses.

The Direct Relief Department replaced the old welfare department and employed fewer workers. Many women working as investigators found themselves replaced by a smaller staff of men.⁶⁰ Mayor Lewis was reported to have stated that the City intended to separate direct relief from social service by employing male investigators because they "... did better work than women; they were not interested in social service but in seeing that those on relief gave the city the right information and reported their earnings."⁶¹ Ottawa remained unconvinced that social casework would benefit the relief recipient and the community by reducing public dependency. Bessie Touzel promptly resigned in protest over the firings and the new civic relief policy. The City ignored the recommendation of the Canadian Welfare Council that welfare be placed on the same basis as the educational or hospital systems which had regular tax-supported bases. City Council voted to abolish the Public Welfare Board in 1937 because it has outlived its usefulness.⁶²

The City exercised more control over the relief recipient by re-organizing the administration of aid. The municipality hired three more investigators to check on the families in 1938.⁶³ The City toughened its stance on residency by forbidding the giving of relief to families from outside Ottawa even if they had lived in Ottawa for twelve consecutive months and technically qualified for assistance.⁶⁴ During 1937, 123 applications from non-residents were refused; 48 were refused during the first nine months of 1938.⁶⁵ Non-residents were returned to their previous place of residence. The City felt that more vigilant control over the recipient of aid and over its administration would reduce the cost of direct relief and lessen the burden on the taxpayer.

How much money was spent on relief? Was it really such a "burden" as the city fathers thought? How did the City spend its income? Table 12 (below) illustrates the expenditure incurred by the Social Service Department during the Depression:

TABLE 12

SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURES, 1929-39

Year	City's Share of Direct Relief Expenditure	City's Share of Direct Relief Expenditure plus Administrative Costs	Expenditure Met From Civic Revenues	Expenditure Funded by Debentures
1929	\$ 47,666.71	\$ 58,493.53	\$ 58,493.53	-
1930	56,059.70	68,059.70	68,059.70	-
1931	125,536.44	136,266.44	136,266.44	-
1932	181,663.40	204,775.32	204,775.32	-
1933	601,076.78	621,197.12	621,197.12	-
1934	599,266.54	703,047.21	203,047.21	\$490,000.00
1935	705,640.88	820,639.37	210,639.37	610,000.00
1936	761,228.93	890,056.61	307,056.61	583,000.00
1937	620,839.21	731,958.74	373,958.74	358,000.00
1938	395,779.50	525,244.43	332,244.43	193,000.00
1939	315,583.96	394,321.92	243,321.92	151,000.00

SOURCE: City of Ottawa, "Estimates and Expenditures," Minutes, 1929-40; City of Ottawa, "General Financial Statements," Annual Reports, 1929-39.

The expenditure on direct relief shows only the civic share of the cost of material aid. The actual cost of caring for relief recipients was approximately three times that amount. Until 1937 the municipality paid approximately one-third of the total expenditure while the province paid another one-third and the Dominion paid the remaining sum. The administrative costs include the salaries of the Department's employees plus grants given to the Union Mission, Canadian Legion, Welfare Bureau, Hebrew Benevolent Society, etc. to defray operating expenses. The table illustrates that the cost of direct relief tripled between 1929 and 1932. The increase mirrored the rise

of destitution stimulated by the falling employment rate. The cost of direct relief tripled to \$621,000.00 during a one year period from 1932 to 1933. The drastic jump reflected an increased dependency rate, the inclusion of shelter in the relief allowance and the administrative costs of the new Public Welfare Department. After 1933, the municipality could no longer meet the cost of aid from civic revenues and government grants. The City borrowed money from the banks to pay for public assistance. The government proposed to repay these loans by issuing debentures, a familiar device employed by municipalities usually to finance public works. Ottawa thus added to its overall debenture debt.

Between 1934 and 1936 direct relief expenses increased as the numbers on relief remained at high levels. The amount spent on assistance reached an alltime high of \$890,000.00 in 1936. Provincial cutbacks on relief grants in 1937 forced the City to assume about 41 percent of the total cost of material assistance.⁶⁶ Ottawa used more of its revenues to pay for direct relief, but still issued debentures to spread out its expenditure over a five year period. Expenses did drop in 1937. Civic officials claimed that the administrative re-organization and the introduction of relief certificates had resulted in substantial savings.⁶⁷ The slight decline in the dependency rate also helped. Beginning in 1939 the City matched relief costs with the Ontario government on a dollar for dollar basis.⁶⁸ The municipality was once again forced to assume a greater share of relief expenses. However, the average number of relief recipients in 1939 had dropped to 11,394 from 18,975 three years before. Relief expenditure therefore dropped.

Relief represented just one of numerous services which the City operated and maintained. Funds for direct relief came from the general purpose fund as did money for civic works, the police force, the fire department, playgrounds, traffic apparatus, etc. Table 13 (see page 81) illustrates the main expenditures of the general fund met by civic revenues. Expenditure of civic revenue on the Engineering and Works Department consistently exceeded expenditure on direct relief. Works department expenses did

TABLE 13

EXPENDITURES FOR THE MAJOR ITEMS* IN THE
GENERAL OPERATING FUND, 1929-39

Year	Engineering and Works	Fire	Police	Social Service**	Sanitorium	Garbage
1929	\$557,988.22	\$369,836.59	\$276,588.63	\$ 58,493.53	\$107,673.09	\$110,942.46
1930	525,185.78	370,268.70	298,412.55	68,059.70	115,316.67	107,394.73
1931	609,971.42	385,505.03	322,202.42	136,266.44	111,025.08	-
1932	616,147.13	373,248.89	309,582.86	204,775.32	123,059.47	-
1933	482,955.37	350,635.17	291,594.55	621,197.12	-	-
1934	655,116.34	384,248.89	331,860.33	203,047.21	-	-
1935	545,207.36	376,330.69	331,667.57	210,639.37	-	-
1936	588,609.36	375,438.74	330,120.35	307,056.61	-	-
1937	604,003.25	379,684.73	339,883.09	373,958.74	-	-
1938	572,787.82	380,984.30	348,218.62	332,244.43	-	-
1939	594,420.01	377,441.57	354,753.92	243,321.92	-	-

* Other expenditures were much smaller amounts for such things as playgrounds, traffic apparatus, town planning, sewer claims, health department, swimming baths, county court, building maintenance, finance department, etc.

** Does not include the amounts funded by debentures, 1934-39.

SOURCE: City of Ottawa, "Estimates and Expenditures," Minutes 1930-40 and Ottawa, "General Financial Statements - Statements of Expenditure for the General Operating Fund," Annual Reports 1929-39.

not dramatically increase as did those of the Social Service Department. In fact, works department expenses fluctuated from year to year according to the availability of government grants or whether the Ontario Municipal Board approved certain projects. In terms of actual civic revenue spent, social service generally ranked fourth after the works, fire and police departments.

Public projects such as the relief sewer programme were partially financed by debenture issue. Bank borrowings for both direct relief and

relief works boosted the City's debenture debt. Debentures for the construction of the drainage and sewage systems also contributed to the rising debenture debt. Direct relief did not add to the overall indebtedness until 1934 when the City issued a \$490,000 debenture to finance unemployment assistance.⁶⁹ The City issued serial debentures of one to five years' duration from 1934 to 1937 and debentures of one to three years' duration in 1938 and 1939.⁷⁰ Simultaneously, the City had to repay a certain portion of the principal plus the interest earned every year until the debt was discharged.⁷¹ The municipality was thus obliged to pay off its relief debt by 1942. The payments for the direct relief debentures formed about 23 percent of the overall debenture payments due in 1937 and about 28 percent of the overall debenture payments due in 1939.⁷²

Expenditure on direct relief aroused the immediate concern of civic officials who tried to pare costs wherever they could. Their concern over the financial position of the City prompted the several investigations of relief administration and the relief recipient. One can understand the City's concern over rising indebtedness, but one cannot hold public aid totally responsible for increasing the debenture debt. Civic officials more willingly accepted increased public works costs partly because of their belief in the value of work. In their eyes, such projects generated badly needed jobs and benefitted the community. City Council thus approved sewer construction because one phase of the project provided jobs for up to 500 men per day and resulted in a safer sewage system.⁷³

By contrast, the municipality could hardly argue that direct relief benefitted the community. Relief may have kept the penniless unemployed from starving, but it did not solve their jobless state. As the City spent more and more money on assistance, the problems of unemployment and destitution did not go away. In fact destitution threatened to become a permanent state for some people.⁷⁴ Civic officials nervously focussed on the financial aspect of direct relief which might "burden" the municipality and the taxpayer for years to come.⁷⁵

Expenditure on direct relief did not form a major expenditure of the civic government. Approximately 36 to 40 percent of civic expenditures were absorbed in the general purpose category which included the social service, works, fire and police departments.⁷⁶ Expenditure on direct relief formed a small part of the municipality's overall expenses. The education system absorbed 26 to 29 percent of gross expenditure while interest and principal payments absorbed another 15 to 23 percent.⁷⁷ By the late 1930s 21 to 23 percent of civic expenditure went towards the reduction of the overall debenture debt.⁷⁸ The City endeavoured to maintain a "balanced budget."⁷⁹ It never spent more than its gross income from 1934 to 1939.⁸⁰ As a result, the City paid off its direct relief debt by 1942.⁸¹

Throughout the Depression the civic government displayed an ambivalent attitude towards social welfare. On the one hand, the City acknowledged that it could not permit a significant proportion of its citizens to face hunger and cold. It assumed in 1933 the responsibility for giving material assistance during the present emergency. On the other hand, the City provided a meagre allowance which the relief recipient had to "earn" by working at menial tasks. The City shared the social workers' fear that unemployment relief might breed a permanent dependency on public assistance. The municipality listened to the advice of the Canadian Welfare Council by establishing a Public Welfare Department to investigate applicants, to distribute relief vouchers and to practice the casework method. While social workers argued that such personal service would preserve initiative and self-reliance, civic politicians anxiously looked at the static relief rolls and wondered if they already had "... a permanent liability of incapacitated wage earners."⁸² After August 1936, the staff of the Direct Relief Department concentrated on investigating and checking up on relief families and left casework to the Welfare Bureau. The municipality had simply run out of ideas on how to alleviate distress. Moreover, the desire to lower relief costs led the City to relinquish any notion of social service being rendered to the unemployed on relief.

The imposition of more control on both the recipient and the administration of public aid did not solve the relief problem. At the end of the decade,

the municipality still had nine percent of its population on relief and still financed direct relief through debenture. Civic officials felt bewildered by the continuing need for material assistance despite all the money that had been spent.⁸³ They also did not know if industrial revival could absorb all the unemployed.⁸⁴ Municipalities such as Ottawa could not solve the twin problems of unemployment and destitution by themselves. The financing of relief expenditure by municipal debentures illustrated the shortcomings of the division of tax powers in the B.N.A. Act. The solution to the economic woes of the thirties demanded co-operation and imaginative planning among all levels of government. Only toward the late thirties did the federal government begin to examine the problems through the creation of the National Employment Commission and Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations. In the meantime, Ottawa and other municipalities were stuck with the main financial and social responsibility of providing assistance to the unemployed without having sufficient revenues to cover all expenditures.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The economic crisis of the thirties put to rest the myth that a depression only seriously affected large areas of industrial and manufacturing activity. The City of Ottawa, where the service industry and retail trade absorbed much of the work force, experienced its share of employment problems. The principal economic sectors affected were the service industry, building construction, manufacturing and trade. Those in such low skilled occupations as labourers, domestic servants, sales clerks and truck drivers bore the brunt of the economic collapse. However, the ranks of the jobless also included many skilled and "white collar" workers plus some professionals who usually had little difficulty in finding jobs. Unemployment ceased to be the preserve of those at the bottom of the social and economic scale, and now threatened to impoverish some of the middle class. The Depression, moreover, challenged the view that poverty resulted from individual fault. Some people realized that economic circumstances beyond the individual's control caused much of the destitution.

The enduring unemployment led to the pauperization of a significant proportion of Ottawa's population. From 1932 to 1938 approximately ten to seventeen percent of Ottawans received direct relief. To be eligible for aid one had to be without visible means of support. Many unemployed exhausted whatever savings they had previously accumulated before being eligible for assistance. The relief system thus ensured that poverty would become widespread because one had to be indigent and unemployed to receive public aid.¹ Only those with dependents received assistance. Once on relief, families faced the almost impossible task of living on a minimum allowance which barely maintained



the health and well-being of the recipients. To make things worse, most lived in crowded rental units which lacked sufficient heat and required major repairs. Conditions did not improve over the decade and, in some instances, worsened. One tragic result of the Depression emerged in the late thirties as a small core of people who became "unemployables" for one reason or another and would likely require assistance for some time to come. In November 1940, 502 heads of families with 1,324 dependents were classified as "unemployables."²

Relief regulations devised by the municipality excluded most of the single unemployed and reserved most of the relief for families residing within the city limits. The needs of the unmarried worker were not perceived as being as great as that of a married man with dependents. It was much easier for a single person to move to another area to obtain work. Unfortunately those who did search for work lost their residency status in their home town. They became transients who could obtain only a few days care at a hostel before being told to move on. The men and women who remained in their community obtained minimal assistance if they had no relatives to look after them. Of this group, the young were paternalistically looked upon as people whom agencies must protect from the older unemployed. Therefore, the Ottawa Emergency Relief Committee arranged care in private homes and boarding houses for out-of-work young women and "deserving" young men to protect them from the influence of the confirmed tramps. In many ways the single unemployed along with the non-resident family became the real victims of the Depression because no one wanted to care for them permanently.

Throughout the decade the relief system elicited public criticism which usually led to investigations of administration and purges of the relief rolls. Whether the Welfare Bureau or the City administered unemployment relief, criticisms generally took the same tone: relief was too generous; relief was too costly; people were cheating; relief was being mismanaged. Although investigations consistently failed to unearth

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substantial numbers of "cheaters," many people viewed the unemployed suspiciously. Purges of the relief rolls tended to strengthen the myth that the unemployed were a shiftless, lazy lot who refused to work.

Underlying the responses of the private organizations, social workers and governments was the fear of social and civil disorder. Many feared the development of a permanent dependency on public relief by a large body of unemployed. Such dependency would produce not only poorer human beings but second-class citizens. The social workers tried to impress upon municipal relief officials the necessity of casework to restore the unemployed's personal dignity. Otherwise families might disintegrate and social disorder erupt. Some public officials perceived that democracy was being endangered by the unemployed who just might be the spark of protest movements either from the left or the right. No doubt many watched the rise of fascist and socialist movements in Europe and Asia with genuine alarm and apprehension as the thirties unfolded. These fears, whether justifiable or not, helped to create heavy pressure on the unemployed to seek work when none existed and to "earn" their relief by undertaking menial tasks. Governments dispensed relief to the unemployed to offset the threat of civil disorder but never in such a way which would enable them to retain their self-respect.

The civil unrest which public officials feared rarely surfaced in Ottawa. The married unemployed, perhaps out of fear of being cut off relief, confined their dissatisfaction to complaints about the choice of food or the delivery of fuel. The only group to mount any sort of protest were the single unemployed who formed an association which held meetings from time to time. They wielded very little political clout. In 1935 the men who had gone to the Rockcliffe relief camp joined other unemployed groups from southern Ontario in a march on Parliament Hill to draw attention to their need for work. The demonstration did not accomplish anything concrete, but briefly aroused public sympathy for the single unemployed.

The responses to the problems of unemployment and destitution never matched the depth of the deprivation. The private charitable groups pursued limited objectives which tackled the symptoms, not the causes, of poverty. Thus they distributed clothing, replaced defective stoves, delivered grocery hampers or ran shelters for the single unemployed. Some groups undertook "good works" to strengthen family ties or to preserve traditional customs. Some enjoyed the "good feeling" that came with helping the less fortunate. The spirit of Christianity which taught responsibility for the well-being of all people also motivated these groups. Responsibility for others never went beyond the provision of scant material aid. Few grasped the truth that only substantial economic and social change would reduce poverty. The sporadic activities of the private organizations concentrated on immediate problems, usually during the winter. Such response embodied an acceptance of poverty as a way of life for some.

The professional social workers believed that the "scientific" method of social welfare would offset the worst effects of destitution. They strongly believed that personal counselling must always accompany the distribution of material aid. Social workers advised their clients on various matters to promote ambition and independence as well as encouraged them to seek work so that they would cease to be a burden on the community. The implementation of social welfare principles required the establishment of permanent administrative machinery. With such machinery came admission criteria which restricted assistance to residents of the municipality. The transient unemployed or the non-resident family would be strictly excluded from anything more than a few days of care. Nevertheless, the advocacy of permanent welfare administration in Ottawa probably was the only original idea on how to solve the problem of widespread destitution. Social welfare therefore focussed on the results of unemployment, not unemployment itself. The social workers' ideas may have sprung from the humanitarian desire to deal with the poor in an efficient and sympathetic manner, but their methods also represented another way of controlling the lives of the unemployed.

The efforts of the social workers met with limited success. Inadequate personnel and financial resources hampered the activities of the Ottawa Welfare Bureau to the point where the Bureau staff merely dispensed relief

tickets to the unemployed and rendered very little social service. The municipal welfare department attempted to implement the casework method between 1933 and 1936. There were never enough trained social workers to handle the heavy volume of families requiring relief.³ The mounting public relief costs made the City concentrate on the controlling aspects of relief rather than "personal service." Civic relief workers therefore paid more attention to the investigation of recipients, the reporting of earnings and the weeding out of "chisellers." The municipality set aside any notions of social service which, if needed at all, could be handled by the private agency.

The problem of unemployment was never really solved during the Depression. The City of Ottawa undertook extensive public works projects with and without the financial assistance of the two senior governments. The projects were never large enough to absorb all the unemployed nor did the physically demanding work suit the needs of the skilled, "white collar," professional or female workers. Civic politicians placed much of the responsibility for creating jobs on the shoulders of private business and on the individual.⁴ Whether initiative came from the civic government or the business community, the municipality could not possibly generate sufficient employment by itself. That demanded co-operation and planning by all levels of government, which were reluctant to do anything which might aggravate the situation.

The events of the 1930s indicated the dangers and the injustices of an economic system which caused periodic recessions and unemployment without having adequate social services to cushion the impact of depression. Despite some tentative measures taken by the federal government during the late thirties, very little improvement to social and economic conditions took place. Federal and provincial politicians retreated behind the constitutional division of powers which left municipalities like Ottawa stuck with heavy financial debts or, in some cases, on the brink of bankruptcy. Ottawa's dilemma in the 1930s illustrates that solutions to the problems caused by severe economic depression are exceedingly difficult to alleviate without the continual, firm support of both public and private bodies. Unfortunately, the financial aspect of the economic crisis obscured the human tragedy of the Depression.

NOTES

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17. Ibid.
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19. Charlotte Whitton to C. E. Russell, 16 December 1932, C.C.S.D., vol. 44, f. 215: Ottawa Welfare Bureau 1932.
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30. "The Relief Outlook in Canada," Winter 1936/37, C.C.S.D., vol. 123, f. 1918: Relief Outlook 1936-37.
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34. Ibid.
35. "All This Weary Pilgrimage, The Dependency Outlook in Canada 1939," C.C.S.D., vol. 123, f. 1918: Relief Outlook 1938/39.
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40. "A National Relief Plan, An Urgent Need," 27 February 1935, C.C.S.D., vol. 122, f. 1913: Work Schemes 1935; 1938-46.
41. "The Relief Outlook in Canada," December 1934, C.C.S.D., vol. 122, f. 1913: Work Schemes 1935; 1938-46.
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V THE CITY TAKES OVER

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2. Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, p. 18.
3. The Ottawa Citizen, 15 January 1930.
4. Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, pp. 56-7.
5. Ibid., pp. 57-8.
6. Ibid., p. 135.
7. Ottawa, Minutes, 6 October 1930: Board of Control Report No. 25, pp. 723-24.
8. Ottawa, Minutes, 17 November 1930: Board of Control Report No. 28, p. 807.
9. Ottawa, Minutes, 26 January 1931: Board of Control Report No. 3, pp. 55-6.
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11. Ottawa, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Works for 1931," Annual Report 1931 (Ottawa: 1931), p. 619.
12. Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, p. 99.
13. Ibid., p. 131.
14. Ottawa, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Works for 1935," Annual Report 1935 (Ottawa: 1935), pp. 478-80.
15. Ottawa, Minutes, 6 October 1930, p. 730.
16. Ottawa, Minutes, 20 October 1930: Board of Control Report No. 26, pp. 755-56.
17. Ottawa, Minutes, 17 November 1930: Board of Control Report No. 28, pp. 808-09.

18. Ottawa, Minutes, 20 October 1930, pp. 755-56.
19. Ottawa, Minutes, 6 July 1931: Board of Control Report No. 15, p. 747.
20. Ottawa, Minutes, 1 June 1931: Report of the Special Committee on Employment, pp. 480-81.
21. Ottawa, Minutes, 19 October 1931: Board of Control Report No. 25, p. 901.
22. Ottawa, Minutes, 2 November 1931, p. 931. The residence regulations were changed to twelve months prior to 1 April 1934 on March 19, 1934. See Ottawa, Minutes, 19 March 1934: Board of Control Report No. 7, p. 196.
23. Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, p. 145.
24. Marsh, Canadians In and Out of Work, p. 344.
25. See Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, pp. 150-52; Ottawa, Minutes, 19 February 1934: Report of Civic Employment Bureau Committee, p. 131; and Ottawa, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Works for 1931," Annual Report 1931, p. 580.
26. Ottawa, Minutes, 15 January 1934: Board of Control Report No. 2, p. 47.
27. Ottawa, Minutes, 6 January 1930: Mayor's Address, p. 11.
28. Ottawa, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Works for 1934," Annual Report 1934 (Ottawa: 1934), p. 383.
29. See Ottawa, Minutes, 8 December 1936: Board of Control Report No. 24, p. 828 and Ottawa, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Works for 1937," Annual Report 1937 (Ottawa: 1937), p. 331.
30. Ottawa, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Works for 1938," Annual Report 1938 (Ottawa: 1938), p. 427.
31. Ottawa, Minutes, 15 January 1934: Board of Control Report No. 2, p. 47.
32. Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, p. 151.
33. See *ibid.*, pp. 158-59 and Ottawa, Minutes, 4 January 1932: Mayor's Address, pp. 17-18.

34. Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, pp. 70-1.
35. The Toronto Mail and Empire, 6 May 1932, cited by Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief, pp. 116-17.
36. Ibid., pp. 190-91.
37. See Ottawa, Minutes, 1 February 1932: Board of Control Report No. 2, p. 88 and Ottawa, Minutes, 21 March 1932: Board of Control Report No. 7, p. 223.
38. Ottawa, Minutes, 3 October 1933, pp. 785-86.
39. See Ottawa, "Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Works for 1933, 1935 and 1940," Annual Reports 1933, 1935 and 1940 (Ottawa: 1933, 1935 and 1940), pp. 460; 501, 526; and 148, 193.
40. Ottawa, Minutes, 3 January 1933: Board of Control Report No. 31, p. 7.
41. "The Social Worker," November 1936, copy in C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief - General Inquiries 1935-36.
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45. Ibid., pp. 219; 223.
46. Ibid., p. 218.
47. Ibid., p. 217.
48. Ibid., p. 222.
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50. Ottawa, "Annual Report of the Social Service Commissioner for 1934," Annual Report 1934, p. 222.
51. Ibid., p. 223.

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54. Ottawa, Minutes, 17 February 1936: Board of Control Report No. 14, p. 125.
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56. See "The Ottawa Journal," 8, 9 June 1936, clippings in C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief - General Inquiries 1935-36; "Canadian Business," June 1936, copy in C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief - General Inquiries 1935-36; and "Canadian Welfare Council Press Release," 9 June 1936, C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief - General Inquiries 1935-36.
57. Ibid.
58. Marjorie Bradford to D. L. Morrell, 20 May 1936, C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief - General Inquiries 1935-36.
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60. "The Social Worker," C.C.S.D., vol. 120, f. 1905: Relief - General Inquiries 1935-36.
61. Ibid.
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63. Ottawa, Minutes, 6 September 1938, p. 624-25.
64. Ottawa, Minutes, 1 March 1937, pp. 144-45.
65. G. S. Ford to C. Whitton, c. 1938, C.C.S.D., vol. 64, f. 249: Non-Resident and Migrant Aid 1939-40.
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67. Ottawa, Minutes, 17 May 1937: Estimates, p. 313.

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69. See Ottawa, "Estimates and Expenditures," Minutes 1935, p. 321 and Ottawa, "General Financial Statements," Annual Report 1935, p. 399.
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71. Ottawa, Minutes, 9 May 1935: Estimates, p. 321.
72. Calculated from Ottawa, "General Financial Statements - Instalment Debentures Payable in 1937," Annual Report 1937, pp. 493-94 and Ottawa, "General Financial Statements - Instalment Debentures Payable in 1939," Annual Report 1939, pp. 404-06.
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75. See Ottawa, Minutes, 6 January 1936: Mayor's Address, p. 27 and Ottawa, Minutes, 4 January 1937: Mayor's Address, p. 24.
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83. Ottawa, Minutes, 3 January 1939: Mayor's Address, p. 22.
84. Ottawa, Minutes, 4 January 1937: Mayor's Address, p. 24.

VI CONCLUSION

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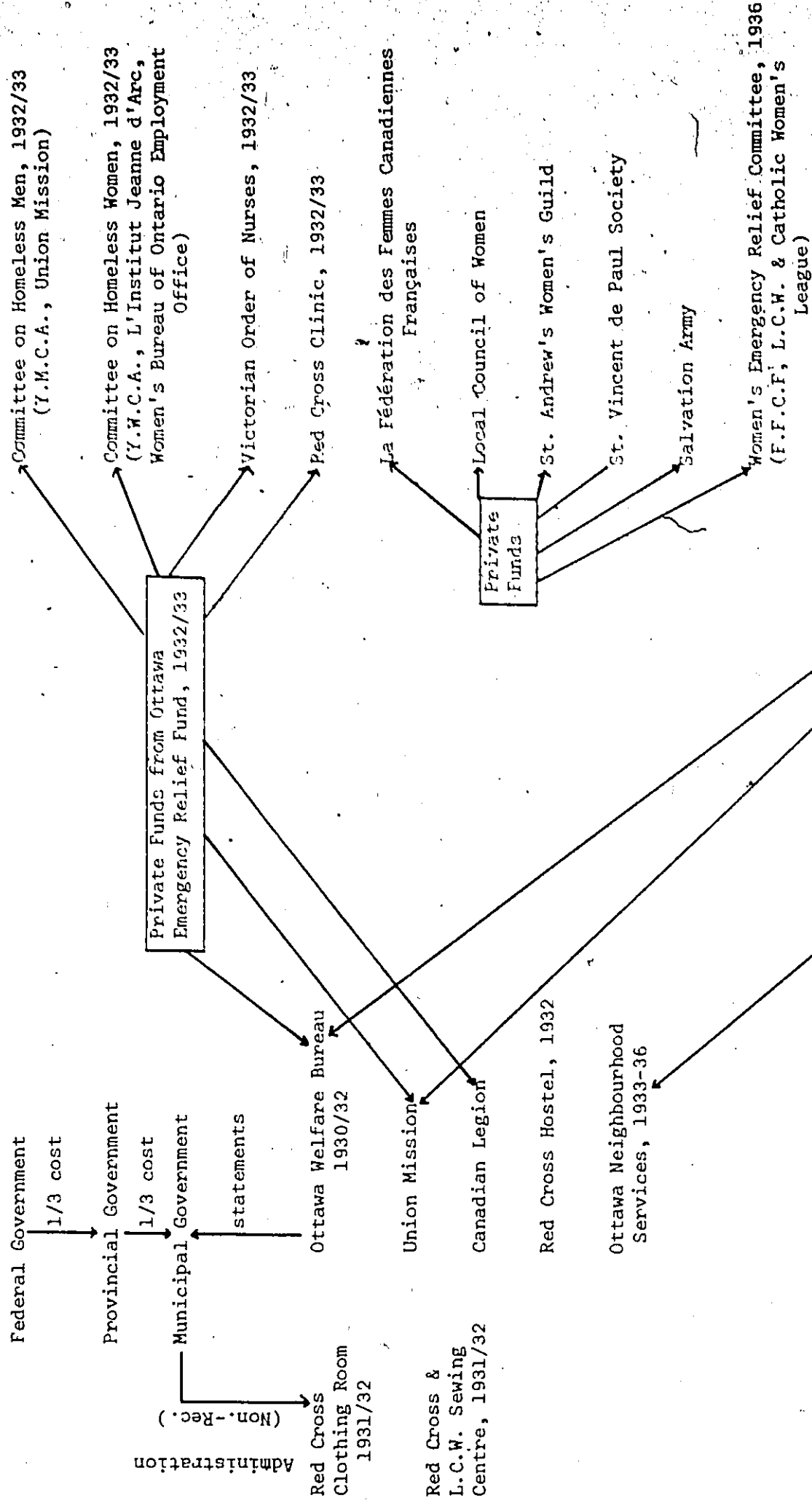
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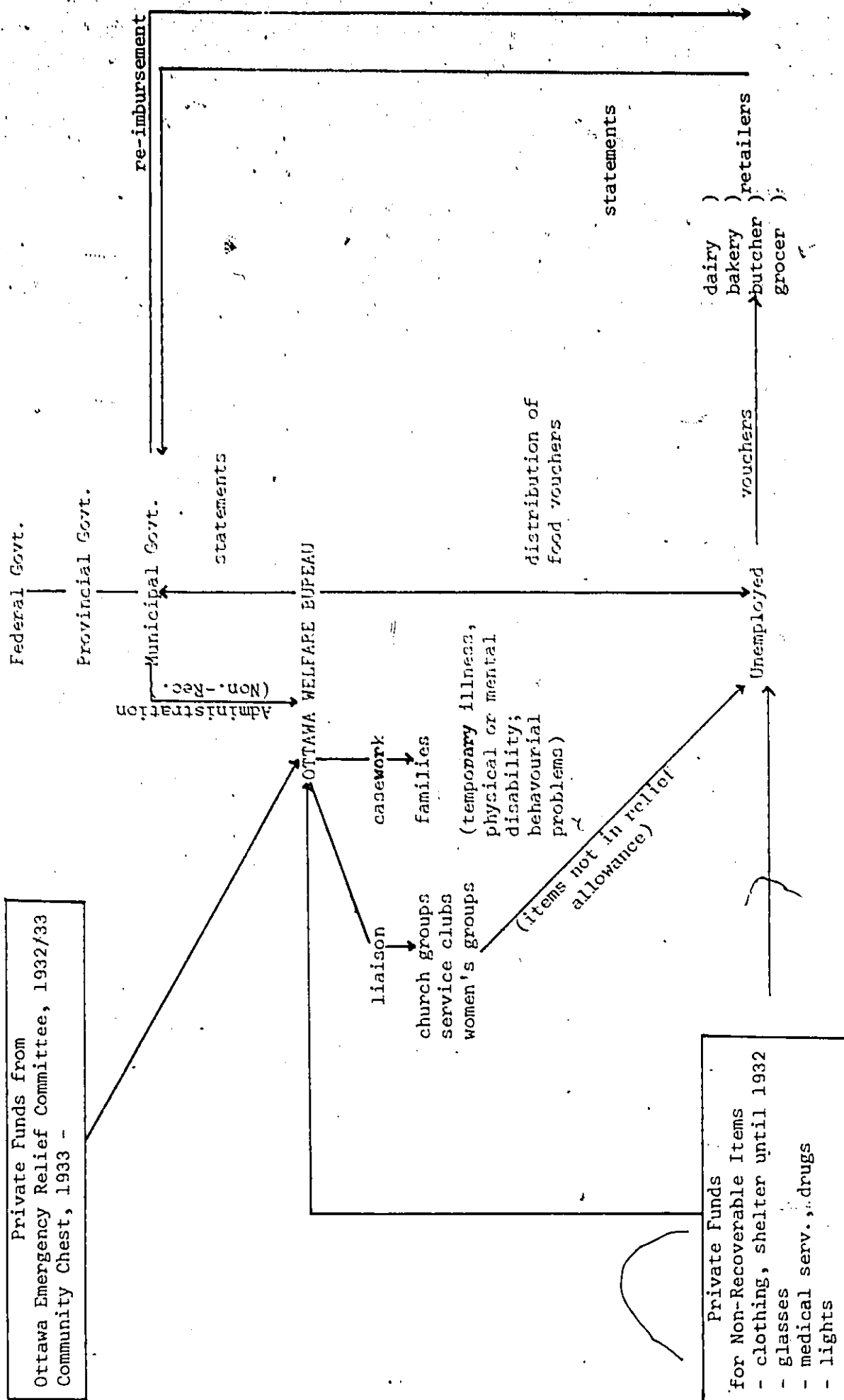
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APPENDIX

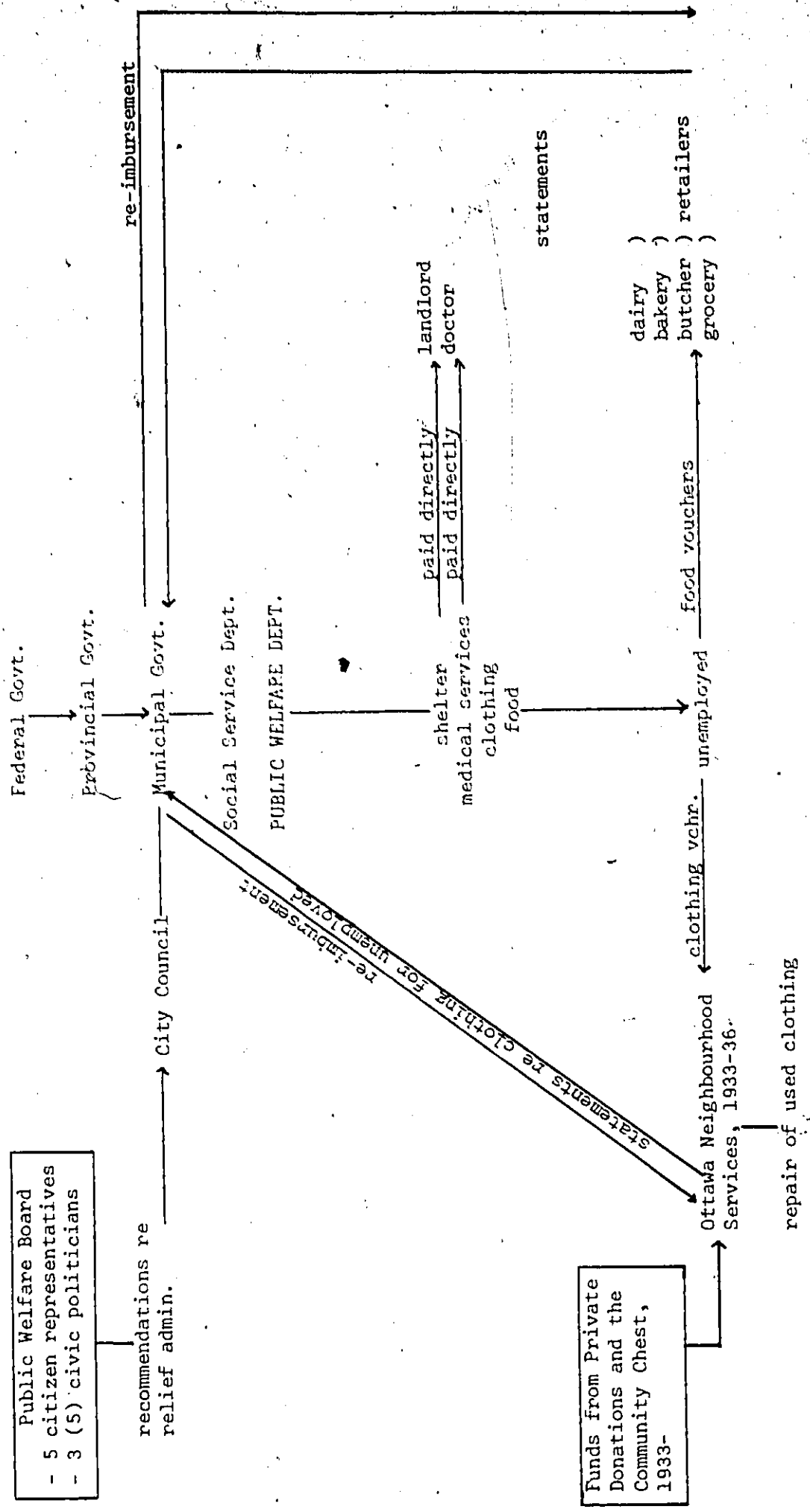
FUNDING - PRIVATE AGENCIES DEALING WITH THE UNEMPLOYED



II FUNDING AND FUNCTIONS - OTTAWA WELFARE BUREAU - UNEMPLOYED AND THEIR FAMILIES, 1930-32



III FUNDING AND FUNCTIONS - PUBLIC WELFARE DEPT. - UNEMPLOYED AND THEIR FAMILIES, 1933-36



FUNDING AND FUNCTIONS OF PRIVATE AGENCIES CARING FOR THE SINGLE UNEMPLOYED

IV

