

**“MOSTLY FOR THE MALE MEMBERS”:  
TEACHING IN WINNIPEG, 1933-1966**

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In 1931 in Winnipeg, the third largest city in Canada, women made up 80 percent of the total of 1,795 teachers in the metropolitan area. This proportion was slightly larger than in the province of Manitoba, where 77 percent of the 5,544 teachers were women.<sup>1</sup> However, their majority position availed little when salary cuts were imposed as a result of the Depression. By 1933 Winnipeg teachers had suffered an overall 20 percent cut, and a Winnipeg newspaper announced “Biggest Part of Burden to be on Women.”<sup>2</sup>

The collective response of Winnipeg women teachers was to form their own organization and to separate from the Winnipeg Teachers’ Association, a unit of the provincial Manitoba Teachers’ Federation. The split of Winnipeg teachers into a Women’s Local and a Men’s Local lasted until 1966.<sup>3</sup> The women worked to abolish, and the men worked to maintain, employment policies which differentiated according to gender. By the mid-1950s some issues had been resolved, but victory in the larger struggle, for equal participation at every level of the profession, still eluded the women.

This paper uses the records of the Women’s and Men’s Locals, together with the testimony of surviving teachers, to examine the impact of the Women’s Local on the working conditions of female teachers in Winnipeg with respect to gender issues. The Women’s Local tended most frequently (although not invariably) to challenge, and the Men’s Local to accept, conventional notions of gender.

First, I analyze the numbers and distribution of teachers. Secondly, I consider the issues of equal pay, access to various levels of teaching positions, the employment of married women, and differential pensions and retirement

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1. Census of Canada, 1931, 7, Tables 40 and 41.

2. Winnipeg School Division [WSD], Scrapbook, 1: 15.

3. Louise Kernatz, “A Cause for Celebration—An Individual To Celebrate,” in Winnipeg Teachers’ Association *Newsletter*, Apr. 1991.

dates. Finally, I examine the views of women teachers in an attempt to find reasons for a continuing inverted power disparity in the profession between the many and the few: between the female majority, who were subordinate, and the male minority, who dominated the positions of authority.

## Numbers

Even in 1881, women formed a significant number of all teachers, but in those days they did not form a majority. As Table 1 shows, only 39 percent of the Manitoba teaching staff in 1881 were female. By 1886 the proportion had already risen to 49 percent. Between 1881 and 1911, the time of massive immigration mainly from East Europe, the province's population increased from 62,260 to 461,394, a rise of 640 percent. The number of teachers increased much more, reflecting the need for education among the large number of child immigrants and the children soon born to the adult immigrant women, who were predominantly of child-bearing age. During this huge expansion, women teachers intensified their hold on the profession. Although the number of men teachers increased three-fold between 1886 and 1911, the number of women teachers increased almost ten-fold. By 1911 women formed 75 percent of Manitoba's teachers. After the first world war, the proportion rose to 80 percent. From then until 1961, the proportion remained over 70 percent.

Table 1. Numbers & Percentage Female Teachers, Manitoba, 1881-1971

	1881	1886	1911	1921	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1961	1971
M	89	237	711	860	1256	1468	1560	1217	1618	2776	4175
F	58	227	2125	3465	4288	4020	3688	3666	3985	5998	8075
%F	39	49	75	80	77	73	70	75	71	68	66

Sources: Census of Canada 1880-1, Vol. 2, Table 14; Census of Manitoba 1885-6, Table 11; Census of Canada 1911, Vol. 6, Table 5; Census of Canada 1921, Vol. 4, Table 2; Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 7, Table 4; Census of the Prairie Provinces 1936, Vol. 2, Table 7; Census of Canada 1941, Vol. 7, Table 4; Census of the Prairie Provinces 1946, Vol. 2, Table 3; Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 4, Table 4; Census of Canada 1961, Vol. 3.1, Table 20; Census of Canada 1971, Vol. 3.2, Table 2.

Table II. Teachers, Male and Female, Winnipeg, 1911-61

	1911	1921	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1961
M	182	230	356	379	387	511	618	656
F	454	1120	1439	1349	1220	1392	1689	1625
%F	71	83	80	78	76	73	73	71

Sources: Census of Canada 1911, Vol. 6, Table 6; Census of Canada 1921, Vol. 4, Table 5; Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 7, Table 41; Census of the Prairie Provinces 1936, Vol. 2, Table 4; Census of Canada 1941, Vol. 7, Table 7; Census of the Prairie Provinces 1946, Vol. 2, Table 4; Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 4, Table 14; Census of Canada 1961, Vol. 3.1, Table 7.

How teachers were distributed among the various schools, and grades, is information which was not systematically reported on an annual basis. A general impression of the proportion of Winnipeg men and women teachers and principals can be gathered from figures culled from the period of 1943-56. The proportion of women teachers was as high as 80 percent in 1943, and although it fell after the war, by 1956 was nevertheless 73 percent. However, the proportion of female principals was never parallel. In 1943, 46 percent of Winnipeg's schools had women principals, and this fell to 33 percent by 1956. Women overwhelmingly populated the ranks of the teachers, and men dominated the positions of principals.

In the elementary schools, scarcely a male teacher was to be seen. Despite their general lack of experience in elementary teaching, however, men could be, and were, appointed to the elementary administration, and each year after the war saw an increasing percentage of male elementary principals. Nevertheless, women principals predominated at the elementary levels.

At the junior high schools, established as separate units after 1919 in Manitoba, women teachers dominated but not to the same extent as in the elementary grades, and with each year reported here they lost ground to male teachers. In 1943 women were 75 percent of junior high teachers and five years later their proportion had fallen to 58 percent.<sup>4</sup> Without specific figures one can

4. For the distribution of women teachers at the secondary level for an earlier time period in Toronto and Ontario, when the female percentage was lower than in wartime Winnipeg, see Susan Gelman, "The 'Feminization' of the High Schools? Women Secondary School Teachers in Toronto 1871-1930," *Historical Studies in Education* 2, 1 (1990): 119-48.

Table III. Distribution of Winnipeg Teachers, Male and Female, 1943-56

	1943			1946			1953			1956		
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
Teachers	172	711	80	220	756	77	329	893	73	379	1010	73
Principals*	32	27	46	39	26	40	62	32	34	72	36	33

\*Principals and supervisors, 1943, 1946; "Administrative positions," 1953, 1956.

Sources: 1943: 1943 Winnipeg School Division Annual Report, 9; 1946: 1946 Winnipeg School Division Annual Report, 10; 1953: Winnipeg Teachers' Association, File 5, Teachers' Collective Agreement, Memorandum No. 9, 2 Nov. 1953; 1956: Winnipeg Teachers' Association, File 6, "Negotiations re 1947 Agreement," 25 Oct. 1956.

A more detailed breakdown of the distribution of Winnipeg teachers can be constructed for the mid-1940s.

Table IV. Distribution of Winnipeg Teachers, Male and Female, 1943-48

	1943			1944			1945			1946			1947			1948		
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
Elementary	6	25	80	5	26	84	6	25	80	7	25	78	8	24	75	10	22	69
Principals and supervisors	2	437	99		430	100	2	451	99	8	478	98	12	482	97	9	512	98
Junior High	21	2	8	21	2	8	24	2	7	22	1	4	22	1	4	21	1	4
Principals and supervisors	55	166	75	61	116	65	64	160	71	81	145	64	81	138	63	93	129	58
Teachers, academic	27	16	37	24	15	38	28	21	43	28	17	28	29	18	38	26	19	42
Teachers, Ind. Arts & H.Ec.																		
Senior High	5	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0
Principals	74	68	48	76	64	46	81	70	46	88	75	46	90	74	45	84	79	48
Teachers, academic	12	12	50	12	12	50	12	11	48	13	12	48	13	11	46	13	12	48
Teachers, Ind. Arts & H.Ec.																		
Others	2	12		3	12		2	28		2	29		6	28		7	31	
TOTAL	204	738	78	207	727	78	224	768	77	259	782	75	271	776	74	273	805	75

Source: Winnipeg School Division, Annual Reports, 1943-48.

only speculate that the high proportion of women during the war was at least partly due to the temporary absence of male teachers in the armed forces, and that the postwar drop in that proportion was a reversion to prewar practice. In these schools boys were required to take industrial arts, and girls, home economics. As there were roughly equal numbers of boys and girls in the schools, there was a *prima facie* case for equal numbers of specialist teachers, but this did not occur. There were always fewer Home Economics teachers, who were all women, than Industrial Arts teachers, who were all men. In administrative posts, men dominated. A woman was first appointed principal of a junior high school in 1938.

In senior high schools, women formed just under half of the teaching staff, not only in the academic but also in the practical subjects, which at this level were elective rather than compulsory. No woman was a senior high school principal until 1964 when Agnes MacDonald was appointed to Elmwood High School in Winnipeg.

Overall, women accounted for about three-quarters of the Winnipeg staff. In 1948 women formed 77 percent of the classroom teachers, and 36 percent of the principals. Twenty-two women were principals of elementary schools, only one woman was a principal of a junior high, and there were no women principals of senior high schools.

### Equal Pay and Equal Access

The differing impact of the 1932 salary structure on men and women was neither implicit nor incidental. "The schedule was passed chiefly to establish the principle of a wider spread between salaries of men and women teachers," one trustee said. Seeking to mobilize public indignation against the women, he added that "undoubtedly the majority of the public would be surprised to learn that women high school teachers received as high as \$2,800 for a working year of only 10 months."<sup>5</sup>

Support for the intensified differential came from the Board of Trade, whose spokesman said, "It is generally conceded that the percentage of men on our teaching staff is too small. To reduce the men's salaries too drastically now would mean risking a serious scarcity of the right type of men in the years to come. Owing to the fewer better paid openings for women, there is much less danger of a scarcity of good women teachers."<sup>6</sup> That is, women had fewer career choices and an employer need not pay high wages to attract their labour.

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5. WSD, Scrapbook, I: 15.

6. Winnipeg Teachers' Association [WTA], "The Winnipeg Board of Trade," 3 Feb. 1933.

This onslaught drove Winnipeg women teachers to analyze their situation and conclude that they could not rely for their protection on the Manitoba Teachers' Federation as it was currently structured. While not abandoning the partial security of solidarity with other teachers, they seceded from the Winnipeg local to form the Winnipeg Women Teachers, with a right to make representations directly to the Winnipeg School Board. Through these representations, particularly during the next fifteen years, the women's response to differential treatment was forcefully expressed.

In one of their first position papers the Women's Local described the dimensions of the inequity. In Winnipeg, 123 women taught in the senior high schools, and there were 174 men working at both the junior and senior high school levels. Whereas the high school women stood to lose an average of \$355 per annum, the high school men stood to lose only \$100 on average. The Women's Local noted that some of the men were single and without wife and children to support, and that some of the women, though single, had family responsibilities, notably in caring for elderly parents or relatives. In the new schedule, the maximum for a woman high school teacher was now \$2,400; for a man, \$2,400 was actually the minimum and his maximum was \$3,300. As the Board of Trade lecturer noted, "the basis of 'equal work, equal pay' raised by the women was evidently thought to be impracticable to work on."<sup>7</sup>

The women's sensitivity was confirmed in 1935. "For thirteen years I paid the membership fee" of the Federation, wrote Vera Patrick in a circular to the Women's Local, "believing the Federation was what its motto declared it to be, 'Quisque pro omnibus,' but during the past two years, to the disillusionment of many, it has been found to be, not each for all, but mostly for the male members." She calculated the accumulated salary of a man and a woman teacher, with the same qualifications, who started in a junior high school in 1924. By 1932 the woman had earned \$16,200, the man \$25,200, a differential of \$9,000.<sup>8</sup>

The women's commitment to equal pay for equal work surfaced in another context in 1936. The Local supported the Board's proposal to open elementary schoolteaching to men, provided that the pay schedule was identical with the women's. The Men's Local insisted that in the event men were to teach in elementary schools, their salaries should not "be out of line with the present minimums of men in Junior and Senior High."<sup>9</sup> That is, elementary men too should enjoy a differential salary scale. The incompatibility between the two Locals resulted in two papers presented separately to the Board in January 1937.

The men supported their point of view by reiterating that it was desirable to have more male teachers. "Low salaries make the teaching profession unattrac-

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7. Ibid; WTA, File 1, Women's Local, "Analysis of the Proposed Schedule," Dec. 1932.

8. WTA, File 2, Vera Patrick, 1935.

9. WTA, File 2, Mr. A.F. Brown to Miss I. Robson, Jan. 1937.

tive to men of the best type...an increase in the number of men teachers in our schools is highly desirable to counterbalance the relative decrease of masculine control and companionship in the home...a man is the head or the potential head of a family—on him, not on the woman, falls the responsibility of maintaining not only himself but his wife and his children, if he has any...the question is not 'Equal pay for equal work' but will the School Board offer such salaries as will attract men of fine character, adequate qualifications, men seized with a sense of the tremendous responsibilities that rest upon a teacher: will the School Board offer salaries that will bear comparison with those obtainable in normal times in other occupations and professions?"<sup>10</sup>

The women more briefly confirmed a commitment to equal pay but in addition made two other observations. "No one—man or woman—wishes to bring down the salary of any individual or groups of individuals on the staff" in pursuit of equal pay. They would rather that women's salaries be raised. In a novel situation, where men had not been used to receiving higher rates because no men had been employed at the elementary level, no inequity would be suffered. Moreover, "an appointment can be made, based only on the qualifications of the applicants for the particular position," a principle which could in the future be applied to women applying for administrative positions.<sup>11</sup>

In 1943 Dr. Mindel Sheps was elected a School Trustee. As a medical student eight years earlier she had resented the comment of the Dean of Medicine, who "took me aside and advised me to leave medicine."<sup>12</sup> As a trustee, she "recognised women's rights" in two motions, one concerning the employment of married women as teachers and the other to eliminate the salary differential.<sup>13</sup> Although both motions were initially defeated, in January 1944 the Board investigated the matter of differentials.<sup>14</sup> The men opposed elimination by a vote of 162 to 26. At the invitation of the Board, both Locals submitted briefs. The men sent a copy of their 1937 brief, together with a new document. They relied on a more sophisticated exposition of the family dependents argument: while a woman teacher might have dependents, the average man teacher had more dependents than the average woman teacher. The men acknowledged they had to deal with the equal pay argument, and did so by defining it in terms of "standard of living and actual purchasing or spending power." As the group for whom the man was responsible was larger than the woman's, the man's group "must receive more dollars" in order to have equal pay. Moreover, a married man "performs an indispensable economic service for the community." Besides performing a

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10. WTA, File 2, Statement of the Views of the Men Teachers, Jan. 1937.

11. WTA, File 2, Statement of the Women Teachers, Jan. 1937.

12. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 23 Oct. 1971.

13. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 Mar. 1943.

14. WSD, Minutes, 20, 18 Jan. 1944, A-1667.



“biological necessity,” he maintained a home and educated his children to be useful citizens, and “his sons and daughters are speedily used in wartime.”

The men noted that in the event that women’s salaries were raised to men’s, that would have the effect of widening the gap between elementary teachers (virtually all women) and women teachers in the junior and senior high schools, “with consequent dissatisfaction and injustice to the latter.” They diverted the attention of the Board by suggesting that the whole salary schedule structure be examined, not merely the matter of differentials between men and women.<sup>15</sup>

The Women’s Local reported that 96 percent of the women supported elimination of the differential. To this the women gave priority: “We are not suggesting any increases in salaries at the present time, but we are asking that the principle of equal pay for equal work be recognised.” The brief disadvantageously compared women’s salaries in Winnipeg with those in other Canadian cities. It applied to women the men’s argument about appealing to the “right type” of recruit. “The salary offered should certainly be adequate to attract the right type of man—and the right type of woman.” Now, many more opportunities were opening up for women, and teaching must be made more attractive in order to compete with careers in scientific research, journalism, advertising, industry, the Civil Service, and (stated first) “the National Film Board.” Equal pay for equal work was “the modern trend” and, they shrewdly added, “women members of the School Board receive the same honorarium as the men....Men doctors, dentists, lawyers and architects would resent it very much if the women in their professions accepted smaller fees than the men do.” It was surprising, they alleged, that the men teachers, like men in other professions, had not insisted on equal pay.

The dependents argument was dismissed by reference to bachelors and to women’s “parents or other dependents”: not all men had dependents and many women did. The women did not dismiss the men’s appeal to a satisfactory standard of living, and turned it around. “The single man who receives the same salary as the married man has the opportunity to exercise this right (‘to live pleasantly’) equally with the married man. A woman, on account of her lower salary, is denied this right.”<sup>16</sup>

The School Board reported in March, 1944, that it was “impracticable” to raise the women’s salaries to be equal to men’s at the present time, but the subcommittee chaired by Sheps continued to consider studying “all matters affecting the teachers’ salary schedule.”<sup>17</sup> There was a flurry of activity over the next eighteen months, with the women persisting in their demand for equal pay

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15. WTA, File 2, Brief submitted by the Winnipeg Men’s Local, Dec. 1943.

16. WTA, File 2, Statement of the Views of the Women’s Local, n.d. [late 1943].

17. WSD, Committee Minute Books [CMB], Minutes, 20, 29 Feb. 1944. A-1680; 16 Mar. 1944, A-1765.

but recommending further upward adjustments in the salary structure as well. When, in 1946, a new salary schedule was adopted in Winnipeg, differentials remained.<sup>18</sup> Success came in the early 1950s. The 1951 negotiations in Winnipeg produced an agreement which recognized seven classes of teacher qualifications and no differential. In 1952 the Manitoba Teachers' Society adopted equal pay for equal work as its stated policy.<sup>19</sup>

## Married Women Teachers

Mindel Sheps was more successful in her move to eliminate the prohibition on married women teachers. Here she had public opinion more on her side, but ironically the organization of Women Teachers did not see the issue as a priority.

From early days, women teachers were expected to retire on marriage, and if they did not do so voluntarily they were dismissed.<sup>20</sup> The 1931 Census showed that a mere 4 percent of women teachers in Manitoba were married, which was the same as in the female labour force as a whole.<sup>21</sup> Despite the miniscule proportion, a forceful campaign to eliminate all married women teachers was instituted during the Depression. In Winnipeg after 1930 each married woman teacher was required to show cause why she should continue in employment.<sup>22</sup> Only two excuses were accepted. Either the teacher had a special skill, such as the teaching of retarded children, which would have been difficult to replace, or she was deemed to have an abnormal domestic situation which justified her earning a salary.<sup>23</sup> The number of women submitting to the annual enquiries intruding into their private lives was small: the highest was 30 in 1930, out of a total female staff of approximately 850.<sup>24</sup>

Ten years later circumstances had changed. The economy had recovered, male teachers were enlisting in the armed forces, and there was more of a demand for teachers on the part of school boards. In Winnipeg, the matter was broached in the guise of women teachers marrying enlisted men. The policy of prohibition was reaffirmed but there was a relaxation in its administration. Married women were permitted to continue in employment, but on one-year contracts, even if

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18. WTA, Contract, 13 June 1946.

19. Haraldur Victor Vidal, "The History of the Manitoba Teachers' Society" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1958), 103.

20. J.W. Chafe, *Chalk, Sweat and Cheers: A History of the Manitoba Teachers' Society* (Winnipeg: The Manitoba Teachers' Society, 1969), 11.

21. Census of Canada, 1931, 7, Table 54.

22. WSD, CMB, Minutes, 12, 8 May 1930, A-488-89; 5 June 1930, A-498-99.

23. WSD, CMB, 12, 4 Sept. 1930, A-514; 28 Oct. 1930, A-526.

24. WSD, CMB, 12, 14 July 1930, A-506.

their previous service had entitled them to be considered as tenured.<sup>25</sup> The numbers involved were tiny. Between 1940 and 1943, eleven married women were confirmed "on the regular staff."<sup>26</sup>

In 1943 Sheps and the other female trustee, Etta Rorke, led a direct attack on the policy. Initially they wished to maintain the security of women teachers who married members of the armed forces. They were unable then to get the policy changed, but increasingly the practice was followed of not requiring women to retire on marriage.<sup>27</sup> Already in 1943 the *Free Press* described forcible retirement on marriage as "ridiculous....Good teachers are hard to find, and hard to keep. So long as their work remains good, why should it matter to the school board whether they are married or not? What has marriage to do with teaching?"<sup>28</sup> The *Tribune* labelled the prohibition reactionary and antediluvian.<sup>29</sup> Sheps and Rorke were no longer on the Board in 1946 when the policy was dropped despite rearguard action from a large minority of trustees.<sup>30</sup> The Board's action was not in isolation: in the same year, the Toronto Board of Education also rescinded its prohibition on married women teachers.<sup>31</sup>

Once the formal prohibition vanished, married women became a steadily increasing proportion of the overall number of female schoolteachers. From 21 percent in 1951, married women reached 46 percent in 1961 and 67 percent in 1971. This was accomplished because of the political initiative taken by women trustees, with the collaboration of educational administrators who needed to staff the schools to accommodate the baby boom school population of the 1950s and 1960s, and with the obvious co-operation of many women teachers who found teaching a satisfactory way of earning a living after their marriage.

Individual women teachers applauded the idea of married women working. To the University Women's Club, principal Aileen Garland quoted Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, "Unless all are free, none is free," but this was not the collective view of the Women's Local.<sup>32</sup> In 1946 the Local requested the Board to replace the married women by single women "as soon as single women are available for teaching positions."<sup>33</sup> They inherited from the Depression years a widespread

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25. WSD, CMB, 17, 4 July 1940, A-1349.

26. WSD, CMB, 19, 18 Mar. 1943, F-959.

27. WSD, CMB, 19, 9 May 1943, F-967; 20, 16 Nov. 1944, A-1900-1.

28. *Free Press*, 11 Mar. 1943.

29. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 Mar. 1943.

30. WSD, CMB, 20, 20 Jan. 1946, A-1889; 14 Feb. 1946, A-1900-1.

31. Cecilia Reynolds, "Too Limiting a Liberation: Discourse and Actuality in the Case of Married Women Teachers," in *Feminism and Education: A Canadian Perspective*, ed. Frieda Forman et al. (Toronto: Centre for Women's Studies in Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1990), 160.

32. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 27 Mar. 1943.

33. WTA, File 4, Women's Local to Winnipeg District Association, 31 Mar. 1946.

but no longer majority view that working single women should not have to compete for jobs with their married sisters, along with all the men.<sup>34</sup>

## Retirement and Pensions

In 1952 and 1953 the antipathy between the Men's and Women's Locals was so marked that the men wished to separate into a unit quite independent of the Winnipeg District Association.<sup>35</sup> The Manitoba Teachers' Society refused to allow this splinter. Whilst several issues bothered the two Locals, a major point of contention was the matter of retirement age and pensions. Men retired at 65, women at 60; and since 1948 men and women had been entitled to different pensions, the men's being larger.<sup>36</sup>

In 1953 the women informed the Board that the Women's Local membership "was in favour of the age of retirement...being extended on a voluntary basis," whilst the men wished "no change in the existing retirement ages."<sup>37</sup> The Board initially agreed to individual voluntary extensions for women, but the MTS did not like the practice of individual arrangements.<sup>38</sup> By 1957 the issue was removed from the immediate aegis of the teachers as all teachers were then included in the pension plan for all provincial employees.<sup>39</sup> By that year the Winnipeg District Association—the parent body of both the Women's and the Men's Locals—agreed on a single maximum retiring age of 65 for all teachers.<sup>40</sup>

## Women as Administrators

Tables 3 and 4 showed how men monopolized the position of principal in high schools, and in junior high schools until the 1950s. Even in the elementary

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34. Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Man/Woman/Teacher: Gender, Family and Career in American Educational History," in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 314.
  35. WTA, File 5, Women's Local to membership, 4 Feb. 1952; Women's Local to Provincial Council, Manitoba Teachers' Society, Apr. 1953.
  36. Vidal, "Manitoba Teachers' Society," 115.
  37. WTA, File 5, Women's Local to Winnipeg District Association, 24 Feb. 1953; Men's Local to Winnipeg District Association, 27 Feb. 1953.
  38. WTA, File 5, School Board to MTS, 24 Sept. 1953; Winnipeg District Association, 19 Oct. 1953.
  39. Vidal, "Manitoba Teachers Society," 117; Chafe, *Chalk, Sweat and Cheers*, 232-34.
  40. WTA, File 6, Winnipeg District Association, Memorandum by the Conference Committee, Oct. 1957.

schools, where women monopolized the teaching, men held over 20 percent of the principalships. Women teachers explained this pattern by reference to several major factors.

Sybil Shack in 1975 identified three prominent reasons for women's reluctance to seek administrative positions: "Lack of self-confidence, a felt clash with family responsibilities and an unwillingness to become involved with work that promises fewer satisfactions than the work they are already doing."<sup>41</sup> Women teachers confirm that the virtual absence of women administrators outside the elementary schools until the 1950s, and then only rarely, had as much to do with women's attitudes as discrimination. Shack overcame her own misgivings enough to be appointed principal of an elementary school in 1948, of an elementary and junior high school in 1964, and of a senior high school in 1975. Nevertheless she understood what was then a common female antipathy towards assuming authority. Speaking of the 1933 split within the Winnipeg Local, she said the formation of the Women's Local

had good points and bad points. A good point was, it gave women opportunity....They *had* to take office. Now the reluctance of women to take office is illustrated by what happened to me in the early 1950s. I had a telephone call one evening from a woman who was on the nominating committee of the Women's Local. She asked me if I would serve on the conference committee (the salary negotiating committee) and I said no. Well, she said, if you don't take this I don't know what to do. You're the nineteenth person I have asked. So I said yes, and it was one of the most important decisions I ever made in my life.<sup>42</sup>

Women's reluctance was not the whole story. There was also the matter of formal qualifications normally expected in principals, and the different ways men and women acquired their training; and the behaviour of the superintendents who served as doorkeepers to the principals' positions. The various components of the explanation for few women administrators in teaching reflected a larger reality: the power disparity between men and women in other occupations, and also in society at large.

In order to teach in Manitoba, a teacher had to hold a certificate issued by the provincial Department of Education, and for most of the period 1870-1970 the Department maintained an intricately stratified system of eligibility require-

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41. Sybil Shack, *Women in Canadian Education* (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Ltd., 1975), 51; Sybil Shack, *The Two-Thirds Minority* (Toronto: Guidance Centre, University of Toronto, 1973), 37-42.
  42. Sybil Shack, "One Woman's View of Women Teaching in Manitoba," talk, 4 Dec. 1991, University of Manitoba, in commemoration of the 1989 killings at École Polytechnique de Montréal.

ments for each level of certificate. The Department could also issue a permit which allowed a person ineligible for certification to teach for one year, and did so at times of severe teacher shortage. Annually, the Department reported on the total number of teachers by level of certificate held, and although these were not differentiated by gender, the reports give a general impression of the training and qualifications of teaching staff across the province.

Teacher training was provided by the Department through a provincial Normal School, created by legislation in 1882.<sup>43</sup> The minimum qualification was a third-class certificate, granted to a person who had graduated from grade 10 and had then completed a short course, generally four weeks long and available in various towns around the province, of teacher training. Third-class certificates were last issued in 1932.

Over the years, eligibility for a second-class certificate was tightened. By 1916 a person needed grade 11 standing, followed by a one-year course at the Normal School in Winnipeg or Brandon. A first-class certificate could be attained in a variety of ways and carried several additional levels which allowed the holder to teach higher grades in the school system and which also entitled her to more pay. In order to teach grades 1-9, first-class certification was granted to someone who held a second-class certificate and had also completed certain grade 12 subjects and a university-level summer session. In order to teach higher grades, first-class certification was granted to a grade 12 high school graduate who had completed a one-year course at the Normal School. Holders of first-class certificates who upgraded their qualifications with further university or Normal courses would improve their level entitlement.

A collegiate certificate, which allowed the holder to teach senior high school courses, was granted to a person who held a university degree and had also completed a one-year education course from "the university or its equivalent," or who already held a first-class certificate.<sup>44</sup>

As a result of recommendations from the 1959 Macfarlane Royal Commission on Education, and the election of a new government in Manitoba, the system was modified. Teachers continued to be certified to teach in either elementary or secondary schools. Instead of the first and second-class certificates, a teacher was assessed to a certain level according to a mixture of academic (university) and professional (Normal School or Faculty of Education) qualifications, com-

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43. For descriptions of early teacher training in Manitoba, see Alexander Gregor and Keith Wilson, *The Development of Education in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education, 1983), and William Peters, "A Historical Survey of Some Major Aspects of Pre-Service Teacher Education in Manitoba" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1963).

44. Gregor and Wilson, *Development of Education*, II: 54; Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education (Macfarlane Report), 1959, 101-4.

bined also with years of experience. The minimum requirement remained one year of post-secondary training.<sup>45</sup>

Rarely did career teachers rely only on their initial Normal School training. More usual was the habit of regular upgrading by taking evening or summer courses to acquire qualifications enabling a teacher to teach higher grades, or to go into junior high or senior high school. Often these courses, undertaken piecemeal over the length of a career, could eventually be combined to fulfil the requirements for a degree. This was commonplace for career teachers before 1970. Male teachers were assumed to be upwardly mobile, on the way either to better teaching or administrative positions within the schools or to better-paid careers outside teaching.

Female teachers were expected to marry, and until World War II were required to retire at the time of marriage, but single women who planned a career in education had some incentive—although not as great as men—to upgrade their qualifications. The pay for a junior high teacher was greater than for an elementary teacher, and greater still for a senior high teacher. Even if junior high and senior high schools had no women as principals, there were many female elementary principals both in the cities and in the countryside. After the prohibition against married women was lifted, and more women, both married and single, made a longer career of teaching, it was unusual for a teacher not to improve initial qualifications gained as a student. Teachers were rewarded with improved pay, but in general only male teachers were additionally rewarded by access to the highest-paid positions, as school principals at the senior high schools.

Superintendents kept an eye open for qualified candidates as management material and invited suitable teachers to consider such promotion. “We looked at teaching competence, educational qualifications, general suitability, and whether they could work with colleagues,” said a superintendent of the 1950s. He and his colleagues knew that one of the Winnipeg superintendents of the 1940s deliberately discouraged women from getting the higher credentials which might place them in the pool from which principals were plucked. “He would say, ‘You don’t want to waste your time getting more qualifications,’” and consequently many capable women felt inadequate and in effect counted themselves out of the informal competition. “Women were slow in putting themselves forward.”<sup>46</sup>

In a 1992 survey of women who taught before 1970, women teachers corroborated these protocols.<sup>47</sup> “In my early teaching years,” said a teacher who

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45. Macfarlane Report, 78, 81-82.

46. Interview with W.C. Lorimer, 5 May 1992.

47. Teachers belonging to retired teachers’ associations were surveyed with a questionnaire by mail and-in interview. Seventy were requested to participate, and of these, 6 requests were returned by Canada Post, 9 declined to be involved, 10 made no reply, and 45 responded. Respondents indicated whether they wished to be acknow-

began in 1942, "it was just accepted that school principals would be male."<sup>48</sup> Another 1940s teacher said, "There were many more male principals but many female teachers were also involved with families and had little desire to become administrators."<sup>49</sup> Beneath the surface of acquiescence lurked considerable discontent. "I was often very frustrated and had to compete somewhat aggressively even to be noticed. Any male could be considered for administration," said a teacher who qualified twenty years later, in the 1960s.<sup>50</sup> Even a teacher of the 1940s vintage expressed dissatisfaction with the convention. "I decided to go into administration and did not have a problem doing so. But, generally, women did not have the same opportunities. I know *many* good women who were discouraged from applying by male principals and superintendents."<sup>51</sup> Some who did become principals sometimes felt it necessary to insist that they had never put themselves forward, so great was the taboo against a woman's appearing to be ambitious. "I never applied for a job as principal....I would never have *applied*," said a successful teacher who eventually became a high school principal.<sup>52</sup> In a wide-ranging 1974 study of women as teachers and administrators, surveying over 200 women and men, Linda Asper discovered that fewer than 10 percent of the women teachers had ever applied for an administrative position.<sup>53</sup>

While it was clear from my survey that many women preferred to remain in the classroom, women with the ambition to become administrators could and did serve as vice-principals, principals, and towards the end of the period, superintendents.<sup>54</sup> However, in the years after the second world war a new factor operated to retard the pace of women's entry into the superior ranks: the fact that an increasing number carried domestic responsibilities along with their teaching work. Whereas in 1974 "women teachers remain[ed] in the teaching force regardless of their family responsibilities," nevertheless work in the home militated against an augmented workload by promotion to administrative positions.<sup>55</sup> Among the teachers surveyed, those who became administrators before 1970 were all single.

On the general issue of the link between family and professional work, almost all considered it was inevitable that a woman's greater domestic responsibilities,

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ledged by name or anonymously. The latter are here acknowledged by a number.

48. Respondent 7.

49. Ruth McLean.

50. Shirley Gibb.

51. Phyllis Moore.

52. Agnes MacDonald.

53. Linda Asper, "Factors Affecting the Entry of Women Teachers into Administrative Positions of the Manitoba Public School System" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1974), 148.

54. *Ibid.*, 6.

55. *Ibid.*, 149.



compared to a man's, took a toll. "Parents should provide a stable home life for children. It has tended to fall to the mother."<sup>56</sup> "Who gets the larger paycheque? Does wife sacrifice her aspirations on his account? Children—do we or don't we have them studying away from home? There are a lot of pressures put on women."<sup>57</sup> Consequences of a mother's work in the home were understandable. "She probably finds she cannot contribute as much as her male colleagues if she has sole responsibility for children."<sup>58</sup> "Many women enjoy their teaching but are limited in the time they feel able to give to their career because of family."<sup>59</sup> "Some women cannot accept promotions due to home responsibilities."<sup>60</sup> Some problems were intractable. "Women are in a very difficult situation when there are young children to be cared for."<sup>61</sup> "Most sick children have mother as the nurse during the night crises."<sup>62</sup>

A family could be a benefit as well as a drain, although only one or two mentioned this possibility. "In teaching, your 'teachers' and supporters are right in the family."<sup>63</sup> One respondent had great confidence in women: "Women just work harder and longer. They have broad shoulders and bear responsibility quite willingly." This particular teacher, who served in administration at the end of her career, also noted that "becoming a principal meant I had to be superlady. I worked with many mediocre male colleagues."<sup>64</sup> Not everyone had the energy, or the desire, to be a superwoman.

The married teachers agreed in unison that marital and maternal considerations affected their own personal decisions about employment. All who married before the mid-1940s retired immediately. "I left the profession when I married [1938]. Married women were not hired as teachers."<sup>65</sup> "Upon marriage in 1942 I relinquished active teaching."<sup>66</sup> Although stories were told of teachers who kept their marriages secret in order to retain their positions, no direct examples came to light.<sup>67</sup> After the rescinding of the policy in Winnipeg and its disuse elsewhere, women tended to defer retirement, complete or partial, until the birth of children. Only two, who qualified in the early 1950s, continued to work

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56. Respondent 16.

57. Respondent 12.

58. Respondent 27.

59. Respondent 38.

60. Phyllis Moore.

61. Alice Mark.

62. Laurena Leskiw.

63. Mary Macbride.

64. Shirley Gibb.

65. Ethel Buchanan.

66. Respondent 21.

67. Interview with Irene Grant, 19 Nov. 1990.

full-time after children were born.<sup>68</sup> The same number retired completely at the birth of children.<sup>69</sup> The remainder worked part-time, or as substitute teachers, through their children's infancies and resumed full-time work later.

Accommodations were accepted with varying degrees of quiescence. Most had to juggle several responsibilities. A few were explicit about practical arrangements and their personal attitudes. "Of course" decisions about employment were affected by husband and children, wrote one. "I needed to be close to home—able to be there at lunch and soon after the closing time." There was a further dimension. "I stayed in elementary [teaching] because after fifteen years of being at home with small kids my confidence was not up to applying for high school. My training, interests, and ability would have enabled me to be an excellent high school English teacher."<sup>70</sup> Wrote another, "All courses, studying, teacher lesson preparation etc. were done around my family life. Summer schools meant delayed holidays. Because opportunities for *women's* advancement were virtually nil in my school division I was 'deprived' of my one objective to go into administration as my husband's employment was in Brandon and one never considered moving to other cities for *my* career."<sup>71</sup>

### Impact of Winnipeg Women's Local

It is difficult to evaluate the impact of the existence of the separate Winnipeg Women Teachers' Local. Their major concern, to introduce equal pay for equal work, was implemented in the early 1950s. Undoubtedly the organization must take most of the credit for this achievement but it also benefited from a nationwide campaign for equal pay led by the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, which by the end of the decade had achieved both federal and provincial legislation.<sup>72</sup> Recalcitrant jurisdictions, in order to circumvent the act, were still

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68. Respondents 19, 35.

69. HESSIE GUEST, Respondent 36.

70. RUTH BRECKMAN.

71. LAURENA LESKIW.

72. ALISON PRENTICE, PAULA BOURNE, GAIL CUTHBERT BRANDT, BETH LIGHT, WENDY MITCHINSON, and NAOMI BLACK, *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 331-33. Separate women teachers' organizations in other jurisdictions worked for this issue, too. See APOLONJA MARIA KOJDER, "The Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association: A Demand for Recognition," in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West*, ed. DAVID C. JONES et al. (Calgary: Detselig, 1979), 177-91; ALISON PRENTICE, "Themes in the Early History of the Women Teachers' Association of Toronto," in *Women's Paid and Unpaid Work*, ed. PAULA BOURNE (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1985), 97-121; *The Story of the Women Teachers' Association of*

able to argue that women were not performing "equal work"; but Manitoba teachers implemented an undifferentiated scale. This was partly due to the presence on the Federation's Conference Committee of a half-dozen articulate and experienced women who had served administrative apprenticeships as much in the executive positions of the Women's Local as in principalships. Also, the Local's clear and coherent position papers contributed to an expansion of understanding and sympathy for their cause on the part of some school trustees, administrators, and public opinion as expressed in the local newspapers.

The achievement of a single salary schedule scale, the major object of the Winnipeg Women's Local, was only the first part of a success story. It did not result in equal pay. The male teachers, a higher proportion of whom had degrees, were concentrated in the supervisory and higher-paid teaching levels. The women, even into the 1960s, included large numbers who were trained in only one year. The Macfarlane Report of 1959 pointed the way to a more rigorous future with respect to the qualifications of teachers, and with the transfer of the Normal School functions to the University, the Macfarlane reforms were soon under way. At the same time, the demand for greater numbers of teachers, together with a new political climate of support for education, resulted in increased government grants to schools. Salaries rose. More men were attracted to teaching. In 1971, 34 percent of the Manitoba teaching force was male, up from 25 percent in 1946.

The Winnipeg Women's Local was primarily concerned about equity and differentials. Born out of deliberate inequity and an exacerbated gender gap, the Local promoted the interests of women teachers, who in the 1930s and 1940s were for the most part single. After the 1950s, without the cut-throat competition for jobs which had characterized the Dirty Thirties, in the glow of relative affluence, and with security both in terms of employment and improving credentials, there was less division inside the profession along gender lines. Single and married women worked in harmony. Nevertheless, one of the major differentials of the early years, whereby administrative positions were dominated by men, remained.

This feature of gender disparity evident at the beginning of the twentieth century remained constant until after 1971. The pattern of men in positions of

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*Toronto*, Vol. 1 (Toronto: Nelson, 1931); Eva K. Walker, *The Story of the Women Teachers' Association of Toronto*, Vol. 2, 1931-1963 (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1963); Sandra Gaskell, "The Problems and Professionalism of Women Elementary Public School Teachers in Ontario 1944-1954" (D.Ed. thesis, University of Toronto, 1989); Cecilia Reynolds, "Ontario Schoolteachers 1911-1971: A Portrait of Demographic Change" (M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1983); Alison Prentice, "Multiple Realities: The History of Women Teachers in Canada," in *Feminism and Education*, ed. F. Forman et al. (Toronto: Centre for Women's Studies in Education, OISE, 1990).

authority in teaching, as in the wider society, was only minimally disturbed.<sup>73</sup> The relegation of women teachers to the margins of their profession must be explained by the attitudes and behaviour of the women teachers, by the concerns of the men teachers, by the organizations that each group used to serve their interests, and above all, by the “structural factors which served male dominance in the wider world.”<sup>74</sup>

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73. Asper, “Entry of Women Teachers,” 5-6.

74. Susan Oram, “‘Sex Antagonism’ in the Teaching Profession: Equal Pay and Marriage Bar, 1910-1939,” in *Gender and the Politics of Schooling*, ed. Madeleine Arnot and Gaby Weiner (London: Unwin Hyman and The Open University, 1990), 288.