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Everyone in Their Place: The Formation of Institutional Care for the Elderly in Nineteenth-Century Ontario

CHERYL DesROCHES

A transformation took place in Canada West/Ontario between 1830 and the 1890s in institutional care for Canada's "aged" population. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Upper Canadians who were old, unable to support themselves and without social or familial networks to rely on could turn to local churches or charities for assistance.[1] Usually, they, and others in need of assistance – the ill, the infirm and the unemployed[2] – were provided with outdoor-relief, including food, fuel and other short term aid intended to tide people over in times of need while keeping them in their own homes.[3] By the late 1830s, colonial communities were hard pressed to meet the needs of the

1 For the purpose of this paper, references to the "Old," "Aged" or "Infirm" pertain to persons sixty years of age and older. During the nineteenth century, individuals in this age cohort were considered to be at a stage in their lives when they experienced a reduction or change in work patterns, as well as some of the physical symptoms usually associated with aging. Throughout the century the characteristics of the aged as a group altered as life expectancy increased, transforming it from a predominantly ambiguous minority, to a unique group. For more on changes in the definition of aged refer to Gordon F. Streib, "Old Age and the Family: Facts and Forecasts," in *Aging and the Individual: Readings in Social Gerontology*, ed. Jill S. Quadagno (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 246-7. W. Andrew Achenbaum also notes a marked increase in the number of older individuals in America. He utilizes the census to demonstrate that the individuals, sixty years of age and older, increased substantially between 1830 and 1890. Achenbaum, *Old Age in the New Land: The American Experience since 1790* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 58-9.

2 William F. Forbes et al., *Institutionalization of the Elderly in Canada* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1987), 2-3.

3 Outdoor-relief was usually administered through churches, local charities and private philanthropists, and allowed individuals to remain in their own home even when hindered by seasonal work patterns, illness, physical handicap or old age. Such traditional forms of relief helped individuals make it through difficult economic times when money and food were scarce. As well as helping some individuals remain in their own home, outdoor-relief frequently prevented individuals living in someone else's home from becoming so great a burden they were forced to seek residence elsewhere. Richard Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario, 1791-1893, A Study of Public Welfare Administration* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 109-11. During the nineteenth century both the Toronto and Kingston houses of industry offered outdoor-relief (Kingston to a much lesser extent than Toronto).

growing numbers of individuals who required assistance. As a result of increasing immigration and changes to the economy, a substantial number of colonists were poor, unemployed, ill or infirmed. Local authorities turned to the colonial legislature for financial assistance. They also began to build houses of industry to accommodate some of the needy. By mid century, most colonial municipalities boasted institutions, financed by a combination of private charity and provincial subsidies, that provided shelter and short term assistance to needy migrants. Houses of industry also offered shelter to a few older colonists who had no other means of support.

With Confederation, jurisdiction for houses of industry, and indeed, all institutions including hospitals and prisons, came under the new provincial government of Ontario. Concurrent with this, attitudes towards who was "worthy" of assistance and how best to provide aid had begun to change. Increasingly, society believed that "the poor" needed to be encouraged to work, so that they did not become dependent on charity or the state. The most effective way to do this, most asserted, was within an institution such as a house of industry. At the same time, the provincial government, and its agent, the new Inspector of Institutions, were determined to be fiscally responsible and limit aid to those who were now deemed most worthy of support. In the early 1870s the Inspector formally initiated a policy that categorized inmates in houses of industry into able and non-able bodied. The two groups were physically segregated within these institutions and they also received different levels of provincial support, with the able bodied receiving the most. By the 1890s, Ontario had also established a system of specialized institutions, which among other things, took the chronically ill and infirm (which often included the elderly) out of hospitals and placed them, space permitting, into sections of the houses of industry.

This had a profound effect on institutional care for the elderly, who had no means of physical and/or financial support. They were not able bodied and were unable to work. At a time when the overall numbers of "the aged," both in institutions and within the provincial population were growing, they found themselves increasingly segregated and isolated as a result of provincial initiatives. A group who had, in large part because of their age, been once respected within the community, were now seen as a burden on society.[4] What would become homes for

4 This is not to imply that older individuals enjoyed a "golden" period prior to the latter half of the nineteenth century. Rather, the meaning here is intended to acknowledge a shift in attitude towards the aged between 1830 and 1890. Several studies examine the dimensions of change in attitudes toward the age during this period. Achenbaum discusses a shift in attitudes in correlation with changes in the area of science and the economy. For more on this, see his, *Old Age*, 39-41 and 48-9. Conversely, David Hackett Fischer disagrees with assessments that attribute a substantial loss in esteem towards the aged to changes in economic and health technology. For more on this discussion, see Fischer, *Growing Old in America: The Bland-Lee Lectures Delivered at Clark University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 21, 58-61,

the aged, emerged more by default than design. Initially, they were those parts of houses of industry that received the least support – both from local and provincial authorities. This study examines the early formation of institutional care for the aged between 1867 and 1899. By concentrating on two specific houses of industry, Toronto and Kingston, it will consider the impact that provincial initiatives had on the early development of institutional care for the aged.[5]

Few scholars have investigated, in any detail, care of the elderly in nineteenth-century Canada and particularly the initial development of institutional care for "the aged." There are a growing number of studies that consider care for the elderly within the context of "modern" social welfare policies.[6] Few, however, place these policies within their historical context. One exception is the work of Elisabeth Wallace, who examines the social and economic factors

98-101. This study will demonstrate that in Canada West/Ontario the number of older individuals without means or family increased between 1830 and 1890 and as such so to did pejorative attitudes towards the aged within institutional care. As well, by the end of the century, as a greater number of persons fell into the "older, old" or 75 plus category, physical limitations associated with old age often gave rise to pejorative attitudes, especially to those in need of financial and/or physical assistance. This theory is supported by the work of Carole Haber who reports similar findings in an American context. Haber, *Beyond Sixty-Five: The Dilemma of Old Age in America's Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 24-7.

5 Ontario's first two houses of industry were located in Toronto and Kingston – they eventually became old people homes. In Ontario middle class women were among the first to provide care for the needy in their communities. By the 1840s, swept up within a wave of religious revival, women established various charitable organizations, which included homes for the aged, to address the ever growing concern over moral decay. However, it appears that initially the aged who received assistance from these women's organizations were not the most impoverished. This study is concerned with another group – needy older individuals who sought assistance within state run institutions. For more information on the former group refer to Marguerite Van Die, "Revisiting Spheres': Women, Religion, and the Family in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario and Kenneth L. Draper, "Redemptive Homes-Redeeming Choices: Saving the Social in Late-Victorian London, Ontario," both in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, ed. Nancy Christie (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 234-63 and 264-89; Carmen Nielson Varty, "The City and the Ladies: Politics, Religion and Female Benevolence in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Hamilton, Canada West," in *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'etudes canadiennes*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Printemps 2004 Spring, 1-20; Varty, "A 'Laudable Undertaking': women, charity and the public sphere in mid-nineteenth century Hamilton, Canada West," PhD thesis, Queen's University, 2004; Varty, "'A Career in Christian Charity': women's benevolence and the public sphere in a mid-nineteenth century Canadian city," in *Women's History Review*, Vol 14, No. 2, 2005, 245-66.

6 Allan Irving, *The Development of Income Security in Canada, Britain and the United States, 1908-1945: A Comparative and Interpretive Account* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1980); John Myles, *Social Structures and Welfare Policies: Perspectives for Canada and the United States* (Department Working Paper 91-9, Ottawa: Carleton University, 1991); Myles, *Friedman's Revenge: The Reform of 'Liberal' Welfare States in Canada and the United States* (Toronto: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, November 1997); Jon Pynoos and Phoebe Liebig, eds., *Housing Frail Elder: International Policies, Perspectives, and Prospects* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1995); Robert Kane and Rosalie Kane, *A Will and*

that underpinned specific social welfare policies targeting the elderly in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[7] More recently, Stormie Stewart, Sharon Cook and Bettina Bradbury have explored how policies that targeted the aged in the late nineteenth century were gendered. Concentrating on the lives of inmates themselves, their work indicates that women received substantially different treatment than men.[8] Only Edgar-Andre Montigny has examined the impact that government policies have had on care for the elderly, during the early years. In *Foisted Upon the Government*, he concludes that government initiatives for cost containment were, in large part, intended to place the burden of care for aging kin on their families.[9] Like other scholars, Montigny is primarily interested in the development of institutional care for the elderly in the post 1890 period, after governments had moved to establish specialized homes

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a Way: What the United States Can Learn from Canada about Caring for the Elderly (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Frederic Lesemann and Claude Martin, eds., *Home-Based Care, the Elderly, the Family, and the Welfare State: An International Comparison* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1993).

7 Elisabeth Wallace, "The Origin of the Social Welfare State in Canada, 1867-1900," in *Perspectives on Canadian Health and Social Services Policy: History and Emerging Trends*, eds. Carl A. Meilicke and Janet AL. Storch (Michigan: Health Administration Press, 1980). For Canadian studies on social welfare, which include an analysis of the aged and workhouses to a minor degree, see Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); John Myles, *Old Age in the Welfare State: The Political Economy of Public Pensions* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1984); Raymond Blake and Jeff Keshen, eds., *Social Welfare Policy in Canada: Historical Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1995); Dennis Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985); James Snell, "Filial Responsibility Laws in Canada: An Historical Study,: in *Canadian Journal on Aging*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Autumn 1990, 269-77.

8 Stormie Stewart, "The Elderly Poor in Rural Ontario: Inmates of Wellington County House of Industry, 1877-1907," in *Journal of Canadian Historical Association,* 1992, 217-33; Bettina Bradbury, "Elderly Inmates and Care giving Sisters: Catholic Institutions for the Elderly in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Sharon Cook, "'A Quiet Place. . .to Die': Ottawa's First Protestant Old Age Homes for Women and Men," in *Ontario History, Ontario Historical Society*, Vol. LXXXI, No. 1, March 1989, 25-40.

9 Edgar-Andre Montigny, *Foisted Upon the Government: State Responsibilities, Family Obligations, and the Care of the Dependent Aged in Late Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. Montigny provides a substantial amount of information on the aged living with one or more family members rather than the elderly within institutional care – which is the focus of this study. See as well, Jordan I. Kosberg, "An International Perspective on Family Care of the Elderly: An Introductory Overview," in *Family Care of the Elderly: Social and Cultural Changes*, ed. I. Kosberg (London: Sage Publications, 1992); Jane Aronson, "Family Care of the Elderly: Underlying Assumptions and Their Consequences," in *Canadian Journal on Aging*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1985, pp. 115-125; Aronson, "Women's Sense of Responsibility for the Care of Older People: 'But Who Else is Going to Do It?'" in *Aging Canadian Perspectives*, eds. Victor Marshall & Barry D. McPherson (Canada: Broadview Press, 1994).

for the aged.[10] It is important, though, to appreciate how and why specialized institutional care developed in the first place.

The Inspectors' Reports concerning the houses of industry in two Upper Canadian/Ontario communities, Kingston and Toronto, offers us another view of the early development of homes for the aged. A consideration of the Annual Reports for Toronto and Kingston's houses of industry and Reports of the Provincial Inspectors between 1867 and 1899 reveals some interesting contradictions inherent within the general assumptions surrounding institutional care and the inmate population. Initially, houses of industry (also referred to as houses of refuge)[11] were considered a temporary solution designed to provide the less fortunate with shelter for short durations and ensure needy individuals worked to defray the cost of their care. According to the Directors' and Inspectors' Reports, houses of industry also provided care to those who were blind, deaf or old. The reports of the Inspector of Asylums, Prisons and Public Charities from 1867 to 1899 provided demographic data on inmates, as well as information concerning government subsidies. Coupled with Annual Reports from Boards of Directors of houses of industry and hospitals, Acts of Incorporation and provincial legislation, this evidence helps to demonstrate the impact of provincial initiatives on specific groups and examines the implications of such policies for the aged. A commentary complimented the data sets for each institution and, as such, the reports allow for some understanding of how administrators responded to provincial initiatives. Working with the Inspectors' Reports is not without its disadvantages. Several scholars warn against inaccuracies associated with the way in which data is

10 One notable exception to this is the work of Norma Rudy. Rudy addresses the early development of institutional care for the aged in Ontario but only as a pretext to a broader analysis of developments in the twentieth century. Her work represents a thorough investigation of the changes to government policies affecting the aged. Rudy, however, offers no investigation into the motivation behind such changes, either social, cultural or economic. Her analysis on the early developments of institutional care for the aged draws heavily from the work of Richard Splane. For more on this see Rudy, *For Such a Time as This: L. Earl Ludlow and a History of Homes for the Aged in Ontario 1837-1961* (Toronto: Ontario Association of Homes for the Aged, 1987). As well, historian Megan Davies' study merits special mention. Her analysis of old age homes in B.C. begins in 1891 – the point at which the "shift from poor law facility to middle-class medical institution . . ." takes place. However, her consideration of gender, race and culture, in culmination with old age contribute greatly to our understanding of the individuals who entered institutions for the aged. Davies, *Into the House of Old: A History of Residential Care in British Columbia* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

11 It appears that at the start of the nineteenth century the terms houses of industry, houses of refuge, poor house, and poor asylum were used interchangeably. However, after Ontario assumed responsibility in 1867-8 for hospitals, prisons, asylums and charities the terms poor house and poor asylum begin to refer to institutions that established no standards to ensure inmates worked. In contrast, houses of industry and houses of refuge became identified as institutions wherein inmates were expected to work to off-set the cost of the care. As such, houses of industry and houses of refuge received government assistance under the terms of the 1867-8 and 1874 Charity Aid Acts.

collected, and as such, their works offer advice relevant to using this source for an analysis of the aged within houses of industry.[12] Bearing in mind the biases, omissions and the possibility of some misrepresentation intrinsic in the use of data collection, the Inspectors' Reports afford a glimpse into the make-up of the inmate population within Ontario's institutions, unavailable through any other single primary source. A careful reading of the Inspectors' Reports allows us to assess how the recommendations contained within each report served as an impetus for change within the different houses of industry. As such, the Inspectors' Reports for these two cities offer a unique understanding of the attitudes of both the provincial government and administrators of houses of industry.

Throughout the early colonization period and well into the nineteenth century, the poor were generally looked after by their immediate family and members of the community. Growing changes in the economy led to a shift from a predominantly agrarian to a more capitalist based labour market, creating a free labour market that was fed by increased migration.[13] These changes soon created unemployment, inequality and increased poverty, especially in urban areas.[14] No longer a personal matter, providing assistance for the needy, many of whom were strangers, became a growing problem that strained local resources. Charity organization established to relieve the increasing number of people in distress were unable to provide for the huge influx of needy.[15]

12 For more on this, see Bruce Curtis, "On the Local Construction of Statistical Knowledge: Making up the 1861 Census of the Canadas," in *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 7, Dec. 1994, 416-28; Michael B. Katz, "Occupational Classification in History," in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Summer 1972, 63-88; Nancy Shoemaker, "The Census as Civilizer: American Indian Household Structure in the 1900 and 1910 US Censuses," in *Historical Methods*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Winter 1992, 4-11; Edward T. Pryor et al., "Measuring Ethnicity: is 'Canadian' an Evolving Indigenous Category?," in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, April 1992, 215-34; Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Michael Doucet, "Discrimination Analysis and the Delineation of Household Structure: Towards a Solution to the Border/Relative Problem on the 1871 Canadian Census," in *Historical Methods Newsletter*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Fall 1977, 149-57.

13 Splane, *Social Welfare*, 6-7.

14 Allan Irving, "'The Master Principle of Administering Relief' Jeremy Bentham, Sir Francis Bond Head and the Establishment of the Principle of Less Eligibility in Upper Canada,," in *Canadian Review of Social Policy*, Issue No. 23, 1989, 17; Splane, *Social Welfar*, 6. For an in-depth look at immigration patterns and the development of voluntary societies dedicated to assisting specific groups such as the Irish, Scotts, or individuals without friends or family refer to, Jane Errington, "Information Wanted: Women Emigrants in a Trans-Atlantic World," paper presented to the Canada and the British World Conference, Calgary, 2004. Being considered for publication in Phillip Buckner (ed.) *Canada and the British World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press).

15 Raymond A. Mohl, "The Abolition of Public Outdoor Relief, 1870-1900: A Critique of the Piven and Cloward Thesis," in *Social Welfare or Social Control?: Some Historical Reflections on Regulating the Poor*, ed. Walter I. Trattner, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 40.

Along with the increased migration and economic transformations in Upper Canada came social changes.[16] The "new science of political economy," spreading across Europe and Great Britain, began to have a marked influence on Upper Canada's system of poor relief.[17] Local and colonial elites were increasingly concerned that the poor and needy did not become dependent on charity and the growing number of "strangers" in the colony only added to mounting social anxieties. The term "stranger" had a particular significance. As Michael Katz notes, traditional responsibility for the poor "extended to family and community; there it ended." Communities were morally obligated to assist permanent residents. Everyone else was considered a "stranger." The new classification meant that communities felt little obligation to help arriving immigrants.[18] Poor houses or houses of industry represented the earliest response to the increasing numbers of migrant poor. Thus houses of industry reflected the social demand for increased control over the large group of "strangers," while providing those in greatest need with assistance.[19]

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16 Michael Katz reports such thinking "served to justify the mean-spirited treatment of the poor ... provided a powerful incentive to work [and] ... helped ensure the supply of cheap labor." Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), 13-4.

17 The new science of political economy was established in Britain in 1795 with the implementation of the "Speenhamland System." This system was based on a formula in which parish rates could be used to supplement labourers in difficult economic times. It drew heavy criticism by the nineteenth century in the works of Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo. These authors argued that such a safety net created, or could lead to, reliance on the state and thus turn the poor into paupers. With a guarantee of income supplement, workers would have no incentive to work. Irving contends that this overall philosophy was the foundation for the 1834 poor laws and the principles of less eligibility. The man who played a key role in the implementation of such laws in Britain, Sir Francis Bond Head, became the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada. As a result the principles of less eligibility prevalent in Britain, became the basis for a social welfare system in Upper Canada that was designed to create a free labour market. Policy makers reasoned that relief would be better distributed within the confines of a workhouse system. Irving, "The Master Principle," 14-6.

18 For more on this topic see Katz, *Undeserving Poor*, 11. Carolyn Strange discusses the, "threat of the stranger." Her book, *Toronto's Girl Problem*, depicts an increasingly fearful Toronto population reacting against foreigners or immigrants. Strange argues that society's negative reaction to strangers was a reaction based on a, "fear of the unknown." Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 152.

19 British institutionalization of the poor, sick, insane and aged alike emerged out of a need by those in power, "to regulate the lives of the inmates into a common discipline." This disciplined group, M.A. Crowther argued, would then serve as a form of cheap labour. Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1926: The History of English Institutions* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd., 1981), 4. Lorraine Singer reported similar findings for Canadian institutions, arguiing that in Canada the government often protected the growing industrial sector. The poor were seen by both business and government as a cheap source of labour. Singer, *The Elderly and Institutionalization in Canada*, MA Thesis, Kingston: Queen's University, 1983, 60-7. Positing similar theories regarding the establishment of houses of

The earliest documents pertaining to the establishment of Upper Canada's first house of industry in 1837 highlights the key goals behind the formation of institutions for the poor. The House of Industry Act (1837) clearly stipulated that "all poor and indigent persons who are incapable of supporting themselves," as well as those able bodied individuals in need of assistance were to be given shelter provided, "they were to be 'diligently employed in labour.'"[20] In their report of 13 February 1837, the administrators for Toronto's house of industry further stated, that "the object and purposes of [their institutions] ... which are to provide for the destitute poor ... and to promote and encourage habits of honest industry."[21] The report clearly reflected the ideas of the "new science of political economy."[22] However, the same report listed seventy-two inmates who were sickly and unable to provide for themselves. Although none were listed specifically as old one can assume that in spite of the apparent contradiction individuals such as the age, who were unable to work, received shelter.[23]

Upper Canada's legislators supported houses of industry in part as a means of social control over strangers. As well, legislation surrounding poor relief consistently targeted migrants and neglected older individuals. There was a question, however, over who should pay. To prevent the increasing number of poverty-stricken immigrants from overburdening the new colony, legislation ensured that shipping companies and shipping agents contributed funds to defray the costs of care for sick immigrants and initial expenses to assist indigent immigrants. By 1851 shipping companies were making direct payments to houses of industry.[24]

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industry: Stephen Speisman, "Munificent Parsons and Municipal Parsimony: Voluntary vs. Public Poor Relief in Nineteenth Century Toronto," in *A History of Ontario: Selected Readings*, ed. Michael Piva (Ontario: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988); Rainer Baehre, "Paupers and Poor Relief in Upper Canada,: in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada: New Perspectives*, eds. J.K. Johnson and Bruce G. Wilson (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989); Deborah Carter Park and J. David Wood, "Poor Relief and the County House of Refuge System in Ontario, 1880-1911," in *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (1992), 439-55; Katz, *Undeserving Poor*, 13-4.

20 Splane, *Social Welfare,* 70-1.

21 National Library of Canada (NLC), Canada, *Report of the Committee for the Relief of the Poor and Destitute of the City of Toronto: and Rules and Regulations of the House of Refuge & Industry* (Toronto: J.H. Lawrence, Printer, Guardian Office, 1837), Microfiche. CC-4, No. 61811.

22 These expectations were again established under the Acts of Incorporation in 1851. The terms of incorporation of the House of Industry of Toronto, for example, continued to reflect social attitudes towards the poor and a concern over their increasing numbers. NLC, Canada, *An Act to Incorporate the House of Industry of Toronto*, *1851*, Microfiche No. CC-4-53937, 6-7.

23 NLC, Canada, *Report of the Committee for the Relief of the Poor and Destitute of the City of Toronto ...1837*, 5.

24 Splane, *Social Welfare*, 78.

In 1867 the new government of Ontario assumed responsibility for the establishment and management of all hospitals, asylums, charities and houses of industry in the province. Under the terms of The Charity Aid Act of 1867-8, Ontario would provide support to immigrants who required assistance; individual municipalities retained the responsibility for looking after the needy in their regions.[25] To oversee and administer these new responsibilities, the province of Ontario appointed J.W. Langmuir as the first provincial Inspector.[26]

From the beginning Langmuir encouraged institutionalization and not the more traditional means of support, outdoor relief, as the most appropriate form of poor relief in Ontario. Houses of industry provided shelter and they also encouraged inmates to work. An analysis of early Inspectors' Reports illustrates that the local and provincial authorities were determined to regulate the lives of the poor. They believed a common discipline deterred laziness and idleness and set inmates on the path to industriousness (of course, not all in the houses could work). Langmuir's first report of 1867-8 reflected his concerns about how various institutions were operated.[27] In his discussion of local jails, many of which housed paupers, Langmuir remarked: "It is very evident that the municipal authorities, who, to a certain extent, have been charged with the duty of providing labor for prisoners, have looked too much for a means of profitable employment, and failing that, have furnished none at all."[28] Two years later he commented with disdain on the name of Toronto's institution, the "Toronto House of Industry," remarking that, "the name of the Institution does not properly indicate the purposes of the establishment, as little, if any, industry ... is carried on in the House."[29] Langmuir's remarks reiterate his earlier sentiments that houses of industry were to provide shelter to workers. He made no mention of the needs of older inmates who could not work.

And yet, from the beginning, houses of industry accommodated a range of individuals. In 1837, the Toronto house of industry catered to 550 persons over a one year period. Children represented the majority numbering 360 inmates.[30] Of the total, seventy-two inmates were listed as sickly and unable to provide for themselves; none were referred to specifically as "old" or "aged." Although

25 *Ibid*., 80.

26 His inspectorships lasted from 1868-1882. For more on Langmuir see *Ibid.,* 46.

27 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, B-41, Reel 1, 1867-8, 2-3.

28 *Ibid*., 3. Although this report pertains to gaols and prisons, it nevertheless offers insight into the mind set of both groups. Government officials wanted to ensure poor character, morals and values were altered through hard labour. No special mention is given to houses of industry until the 1870-71 report. According to Splane it was not uncommon for, "the gaols to house those who were in poverty." 68-9.

29 RIAP, 1870-1, 75.

30 NLC, Canada, *Report of the Committee for the Relief of the Poor and Destitute of the City of Toronto*, Microfiche. CC-4, No. 61811, 5.

subsequent reports did not regularly provide a breakdown of the inmate population by age, it is clear that the number of older inmates did steadily increase and some reports did acknowledge the presence of older inmates in particular houses of industry. According to Langmuir's report for 1870-1, the "old" represented the majority of inmates in Toronto's house of industry. Interestingly, of the seventy inmates present on the day of his inspection, Langmuir recorded only four children.[31] According to historian James Snell, an increasing portion of the population in Canada was aged.[32] The shift in the demographics of the population of the Toronto house of industry may in part reflect this. But the very presence of a growing number of old inmates in an institution designed to promote work did create significant complications for authorities. In conclusion of his report for 1872-3, Langmuir again emphasized his disdain at the lack of work generated through the houses of industries in Kingston and Toronto. He remarked that, these "establishments are in reality Poor-houses ... it therefore only remains to enquire why they were singled out from other establishments of similar character in the Province to become the recipients of Government aid."[33]

Rising costs of maintaining houses of industry encouraged the provincial government in 1874 to rethink the provision of subsides to municipalities. The shrewd Langmuir decided to use government subsidies as an incentive to coerce administrators of the Toronto and Kingston houses of industry to generate revenue on behalf of their institutions. Under the terms of the original Act, the province had subsidized institutions that offered relief to immigrants and the wandering poor, including those who were elderly.[34] In 1874 the provincial government amended the Charity Aid Act and imposed new guidelines for distributing provincial subsidies to houses of industry.[35] Institutions would now be subsidized based on the number of inmates they maintained overnight,

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31 RIAP, 1870-1, 75-6.

32 James *Snell, The Citizen's Wage: The State and the Elderly in Canada, 1900-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 12.

33 RIAP, 1872-3, 70. According to the terms of Charity Aid Act of 1867-8, the province subsidized Houses of Industry and other charities provided they offered relief for immigrants and the wandering poor and ensured inmates worked to offset the cost of their care. Splane, *Social Welfare*, 80. Under the terms of this Act many local charities that catered to the poor were not entitled to provincial subsidies.

34 According to "the enactment of the Statue of 1868 by the Ontario Legislature in respect to the poor houses," such institutions were entitled to subsidization by the province in direct proportion to " the number of Immigrants and wandering poor they receive and support [ed]." NLC, Canada, RIAP, SP, No. 2, Vol. V, Part I, *1872-3,* 70-1.

35 PAO, *Ontario, Charity Aid Act*, 1874, Reel B91, R 12, 257-67. Houses of Industry are located under the heading "An Act to regulate public aid to Charitable Institutions," implemented on 24 March, 1874. All charitable institutions fell under one of three schedules, A, B or C. Schedule B included Houses of Industry.

the amount of work performed and the income generated by each institution.[36] These changes ensured that houses of industry only derived maximum benefit from the new provincial subsidies if they encouraged inmates to remain in the institution overnight, and only if administrators generated income on their own behalf. Subsidizations in effect focussed attention on inmates who could work as opposed to inmates who could not work. They consciously discriminated against those residents, including the elderly, who were not able bodied.

Officials of Toronto and Kingston's house of industry reacted within the year to the new provincial restrictions. Despite the fact that Langmuir initially recommended that the province support outdoor-relief programs,[37] Kingston terminated their successful outdoor-relief program, implemented only months earlier, because it netted no financial benefit under the terms of the Charity Aid Act of 1874.[38] Local charities, private philanthropy and outdoor-relief programs did continue to operate during this time but without support from the province. Administrators for Toronto's house of industry responded to the new initiatives by establishing a new category of inmates, "casuals." Those poor but able bodied migrants who previously relied on outdoor-relief were now brought into the institution.[39] The Toronto house of industry continued to offer outdoor-relief but only to those unable to work.[40] Administrators for

36 Under the terms of the Act it clearly stated: "Every institution named in said Schedule B shall so have and receive five cents for each day's actual lodgment and maintenance therein of any indigent persons during the calendar year next preceding that for which such aid is given." PAO, *Charity Aid Act, 1874*, 258. Further, the Act stated "that if Poor Houses and local charities are to be assisted at all by Government, the extent of such aid must be proportionate with the work they perform." RIAP, 1874, 122.

37 Splane, *Social Welfare,* 104. Further, Splane argues that while initially Langmuir was in support of outdoor-relief, "Langmuir thus appears to have been unsuccessful in formulating any method that was feasible, or at any rate acceptable to the government, for provincial grants relating to the outdoor relief given by the private institutions." Splane, *Ibid.,* 105. However, historian Edgar-Andre Montigny notes that in an effort to supplant the cost of building institutions the government attempted to fill them to capacity. Montigny, "Families, Institutions, and the State in Late-Nineteenth-Century Ontario," in *Ontario Since Confederation: a Reader*, eds. Edgar-Andre Montigny and Lori Chambers (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), .74-5. See also Montigny, *Perceptions, Realities and Old Age: A Comparison of the Realities of Old Age with Government Statements About the Elderly and Their Families in Late-Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, PhD. Thesis, Ottawa: Carleton University, 1991.

38 In 1874 under Kingston's newly established outdoor-relief program, 357 persons received aid. They stopped their outdoor-relief program the same year. RIAP, 1874, 142.

39 In his report to the province Langmuir strongly supported "Casuals." According to Splane, although the province was opposed to providing subsidizations for outdoor-relief Langmuir "did make a recommendation for the provincial support on the somewhat related matter of casuals receiving institutions help." Splane, *Social Welfare*, 105.

40 In addition to the new category of "Casuals" the Toronto House of Industry continued to operate their out-door relief program. The figures remained relatively the same according to the Inspector's report for 1874, 140.

Toronto's house of industry required casuals to remain overnight and as such, were able to take advantage of the new subsidy.[41]

A comparison of Inspector's Reports for two different years offers a perspective in regards to the impact of provincial initiatives on the aged. In his 1870-1 report for the Toronto house of industry, Langmuir described the inmates who were there on 9 December. "Some of the old people have been residents of the House for long periods,"[42] he noted and they represented about 28 percent of the House's inmate population.[43] By 1876 the percentage of aged inmates had dropped substantially to four percent of the total inmate population sheltered at the Toronto house of industry; most of the inmates of the new casual wards were young migrants.[44] In 1870-1 Toronto's house of industry, however, could not have by any means been considered an old age home; by 1876 the influx of young migrants had significantly altered the inmate population and provincial initiatives had reduced the older inmate population to a minority.

In their annual report for 1875, the Board of Directors for the Toronto house of industry stressed their opposition to the increased institutionalization. Board members lamented that "the distribution of the Government allowance is ... based upon the number of inmates of an institution." They questioned "whether this Province already requires the overgrown almshouses of the old world" and they wondered "whether it would not be better to aid the poor in maintaining their little homesteads ... checking pauperism, and cherishing the

41 According to James Pitsula, the casual ward of the House of Industry also took in tramps. The term "tramps" referred to wandering poor who made up a broad cross-section of the working class. The tramp population constitutes a separate and distinct category throughout the nineteenth century. In the context of this paper analysis of this class of individuals offers no significant contribution to our understanding of the formation of homes for the aged and as such will not be covered. Both immigrants and tramps were inmates of the casual wards. Some from the "tramp" classes most likely were immigrants. According to Pitsula, bringing immigrants into the casual wards, allowed administrators to restrict aid to only those who worked. Pitsula, "The Treatment of Tramps in Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto" *Historical Papers*, Montreal, 1980, 122-3.

42 Langmuir discusses the aged reporting many had been there a long time. He notes "1 for 20 years, 1 for 19 years, and 2 for 15 years, and many from 6 to 10 years." RIAP, 1870-71, 75.

43 *Ibid.,* 75-6.

44 Ages were not specified for inmates in either the casual wards or the original building used to maintain long term inmates and as such these percentages only offer an estimate of the older inmates to total inmate population. Given that the casual wards were reserved for workers and the original building was reserved for inmates who could no longer work, the total number of inmates within the original building represented the maximum number of aged inmates. The Inspector noted that on the day of his visit the majority of inmates within the original building were old. Out of the inmates present on the day of the inspection, there were also children, cripples, and blind or physically disabled inmates who were not aged, and as such, the figure of four percent used to indicate the percentage of elderly inmates, is generous. PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel B97-9, 1877, 186

spirit of independence natural to every man."[45] Along with their opposition to institutionalization, Toronto's Board members criticized the reduction of provincial subsidies. In protest the Board wrote, "The managers feel bound in duty to remonstrate, respectfully but energetically, against the operation of the 'Charity Aid Act, 1874,' by which their annual Government grant has been reduced."[46] In spite of their criticism the houses of industry did rely on government support and as such in 1875 the Board of Directors for the Toronto house of industry arranged to expand the accommodation for casuals.[47] Board members noted: "During the past year they have been enabled to add to the premises specially appropriated as a casual ward, thereby doubling the accommodation."[48] According to the Inspectors' Reports for the years 1874 through to 1899 the number of casuals steadily increased.[49] Given that the premises were enlarged to accommodate casual inmates we can infer that workers continued to merit priority over non-workers.

In 1875, in a continued effort to deflect costs associated with the care and maintenance of the poor, the provincial Inspector formalized the categorization of inmates, based on workers and non-workers, within the different institutions throughout Ontario. He distributed circulars to all houses of industry, as well as other institutions under his jurisdiction, requesting that administrators determine who, under their care, could or could not work and the cost of their care.[50] The circulars instructed administrators to categorize their inmates according to: those "not physically or mentally defective," those "physical defectives (i.e. cripples, paralytics, deaf, dumb or blind persons) who were unable to maintain themselves by their work,"and "mental defectives (i.e. insane, idiots, imbeciles or weak-minded persons) who were relieved or supported, and the amount paid for such support."[51] It is worth noting that old age was not used as a category.

Several of the administrators refused to comply and returned the forms blank. The Inspectors' Reports offered no explanation for this. It may be that a number of administrators shared the concerns expressed by the members of the Board of Toronto's house of industry, against institutionalization. Using the data retrieved from the few completed circulars, Langmuir nonetheless proposed that a number of new institutions be built and existing ones restructured.

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45 NLC, Canada, *Report of the House of Industry, City of Toronto for the Year 1875*, Mic. F. CC-25, No A00363, 4.

46 *Ibid*.

47 For further discussion of this refer to Cheryl DesRoches, *Everyone in Their Place: The Formation of Institutional Care for the Elderly in Ontario*. MA Thesis. University of Ottawa, 2002, 40-4.

48 NLC, Canada, *Report of the House of Industry, City of Toronto for the Year 1875*, 5.

49 Note: No figures for the number of casuals are provided for 1875-6 report.

50 RIAP, 1875-6, 186.

51 *Ibid*.

In his report to the government he concluded that the "figures tend to show that in most of the Counties there is expended in unsystematic charity ... more than would suffice to maintain an Industrial Farm or House of Refuge." He argued that houses of industry offered a means "where the infirm, or physically or mentally defective classes could be permanently maintained, and the destitute poor temporarily lodged, at a less cost than is now paid for more temporary assistance."[52] Langmuir's sentiments continued to reflect the contradiction that had been a constant throughout much of the house of industry's history. An institution designed to ensure individuals worked constantly struggled with the problem of what to do with those unable to do so. The Inspector maintained a belief that houses of industry were more cost effective than any temporary means of assistance – especially when full. By categorizing the inmates into "able" and "non-able" bodied, the work of the former would off-set the cost of the latter.

To this end, in addition to categorizing the inmates, Langmuir embarked on a plan to construct or transform the institutions under his jurisdiction into self-sufficient units. He encouraged Boards in Toronto and Kingston to restructure their facilities to make them more appropriate establishments for work. Given that the provincial government awarded a portion of their subsidies based on the total revenue each institution generated, administrators for both institutions complied. In his 1875-6 report, Langmuir noted that officials for the Kingston house of industry had allocated a specific section of their new building for women's work. He further acknowledged Kingston's establishment of a woman's sewing room the same year and encouraged the Director to find additional work for all inmates. In other sections of the House and on the adjacent property, all inmates capable of working were employed at gardening, breaking stones and other types of work.[53] In 1875-6 the Toronto house of industry added a brick shed and carpenter's shop as a means of generating work for inmates.[54] As well, in 1876 Toronto's Board of Directors reported the conversion of the building used to house casual inmates, initially intended as a temporary facility "into a permanent lodging-house," for working inmates.[55] Nothing was done to improve the accommodations for those older inmates who were incapable of working; other than the number of spaces available for these residents decreased.

The government's categorization of the poor was formalized in 1875. The policy centered attention on able bodied workers and conversely brought negative attention to non-workers, particularly infirmed inmates. In 1875-6, the

52 *Ibid*., 201.

53 RIAP,1875-6, 178.

54 *Ibid.,* 176.

55 NLC, Canada, *Report of the House of Industry, City of Toronto for the Year 1876*, Mic. F. CC-25, No. A000363, 5.

Inspector's Report for Kingston's house of industry noted the existence of several inmates who were, "old and unfit to do any kind of work."[56] Reports for the Toronto house of industry indicated similar findings. Langmuir remarked that out of the total inmate population in the Toronto facility: "A large number of them were utterly unfit to earn a living, owing to the infirmities of old age."[57] Once the Inspector identified older inmates as liabilities, different charitable institutions across Ontario allocated them less and less space. An analysis of the Inspectors' Reports shows that the categorization of inmates created an atmosphere in which administrators, eager to derive maximum benefit from provincial subsidies, placed a premium on able-bodied inmates and coveted space for them. For all their efforts in 1876, Langmuir rewarded Toronto's administrators by substantially increasing their subsidy for that year.[58]

According to historian Tamara Hareven, Langmuir borrowed many of his ideas for cost restraints from the United States.[59] The Inspector's Reports substantiate Hareven's claims. Langmuir did travel to the United States to study the American style of running cost effective institutions and in his 1876 report, he remarked on the practice there of building numerous external buildings around the main institution. These outbuildings allowed inmates to work at specific tasks and this improved the organization and economies of the institution. Langmuir initiated similar building projects across Ontario and the new wings and outbuildings at the Toronto and Kingston houses of industry reflected these initiatives.[60] In his 1877 Report, Langmuir emphasized the benefit of countering the escalating costs associated with caring for inmates unable to work with the potential profits of those who could work. He also noted that many inmates in provincial gaols belonged in houses of industry where their labour could be put to good use.[61] Langmuir noted in his report, "had the labour of these vagrants ... been employed on Industrial Farms ... earning their living ... instead

56 RIAP, 1875-76, 178.

57 RIAP, 1877, 186.

58 The increase in subsidy from two cents to five cents was awarded in 1876. It should be noted that the Inspector's report for 1875-6 shows the increase but the explanation for the increase was provided in the records, POA, Ontario, RIAP, 1878 Reel B97-11, 205. In 1878 Kingston failed to generate enough income and as a result failed to qualify for the second provincial subsidy. To rectify the situation the directors looked to expand the Kingston facilities. In his 1879 and 1880 reports Langmuir recommended, on behalf of the Kingston House of Industry, the addition of another wing; with expansion, the already over crowed facility could absorb more inmates. PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel B97-R-11, 1878, 174. For 1880 refer to PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel B97-R-12, 1879, 222.

59 Tamara K. Hareven, "An Ambiguous Alliance: Some Aspects of American Influences on Canadian Social Welfare," in *Social History: A Canadian Review*, No. 3, April 1969, 84-97.

60 RIAP, 1877, 210.

61 This was particularly detrimental to older inmates because within American institutions the blind, deaf and mentally defective were given different forms of work. The new focus on the creation of institutions wherein most inmates could work singled out the aged as "unindustrious".

of being a charge on the public in the Gaols ... the reduction by their earning of the cost of maintenance of the non-productive or helpless class of indigents, who are now a charge upon the Municipalities." [62] The Inspector believed that these additional workers could reduce the liability and burden posed by non-workers in houses of industry, the majority of whom were the aged.

Such categorization that identified the aged as non-able bodied resulted in the segregation of these individuals within houses of industry. In 1880 Langmuir reported, for example, that at Kingston's house of industry, a large number of permanent residents were "old" and "feeble" and as a consequence of overcrowding many deserving poor were denied access.[63] In 1888 the Kingston house of industry received funds for an addition. The spaces in the new three story wing were for able bodied individuals while the aged inmates remained in the older part of the building, effectively segregating older inmates from the young inmates.[64] With each subsequent addition or renovation, older inmates became increasingly isolated from the rest of the inmate population as they remained in the older sections of the different institutions and workers were regularly transferred into the newly available spaces. A similar scenario of segregation transpired at the Toronto house of industry.

In 1882 Toronto's house of industry formally denied outdoor-relief to everyone except those unable to work, "old people, and widows with young and helpless children, and families having sick members."[65] The Toronto Board members clearly intended to eliminate methods of poor relief, beyond institutionalization, for the able-bodied; outdoor-relief was maintained only for those unable to work. In 1885 Toronto's Board of Directors began to express their concerns regarding the impact of such changes on the aged. While outdoor-relief continued to be made available to elderly residents, according to the

62 RIAP, 1877, 201.

63 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel B97-R-14, 1880, 258.

64 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel B97-R-31, 1888, 17.

65 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel B97-R-17, 1882, 265. The removal of the out-door relief program appears to have been a temporary measure to boost the number of able-bodied workers within the Toronto Institution. The out-door relief program was reinstated the following year and continued to run until the twentieth century. It should be noted that in 1878, in a continuous effort to force more migrants into their institution, Toronto's Board of Directors had begun to denounce outdoor-relief. They argued that outdoor relief was not intended, "to create a class of persons wholly dependent upon it for their means of living." In their annual report Board members remarked that migrants had a higher propensity to become dependents because they, "have been accustomed, in cases of emergency, to receive [aid] from the parochial authorities of their native towns." Canada, *Report of the House of Industry, City of Toronto, for the Years 1878,* (NLC), Mic.F. CC-25, No. A00363, 5-6. By 1878 administrators clearly argued in support of institutionalization. Toronto's Board members stressed that migrants should, "not be allowed to hang about our cities, as a nucleus and encouragement to a pauper population." *Ibid.,* Mic.F. CC-25, No. A00363, 5-6.

Director's report such assistance was, "procurable at the House only."[66] The members of the Board worried over how the aged or infirm would, "make long and sometimes painful journeys to obtain their allowances."[67]

That same year, Board members reported the implementation of a work test at the Toronto house of industry to ensure that only workers received shelter in the casual wards.[68] The labour test initially consisted of breaking stone. Eventually, chopping wood proved more cost effective and cost beneficial.[69] The work test was implemented throughout the province to act as a deterrent for those seeking entrance into houses of industry but who were unwilling or unable to work. An inmate who refused work during their first stay forfeited the possibility of future assistance.[70] Notably, the labour test effectively prevented all old people, unable to work, from seeking temporary shelter in the casual wards, especially during the long winter months when many needed it most. Instead, those unable to work relied on outdoor-relief or the few spaces available in the older part of the institution. The casual wards only catered to able-bodied inmates willing to work in exchange for food and shelter.

According to the Inspectors' Report, the casual wards in Toronto were again enlarged in 1886.[71] Despite the additions, the following year the Inspector continued to note overcrowding in the casual wards and reported that a number of indigent were already on a waiting list.[72] Older inmates remained in the original building termed the "House Proper."[73] The process of segregating older inmates from young inmates was not unique to the two houses of industry in Toronto and Kingston. The Inspectors' Reports discussed similar patterns in other institutions across Ontario. For example, according to the Inspectors' Report for 1875-6, after the Toronto house of providence built an addition the "old women who are confined to bed" were located in one wing.[74] In 1877 the Kingston house of providence designated a basement room as "the old men's dormitory."[75] In 1884 the Magdalen Asylum and Industrial House of Refuge officially changed its name to include, "and Aged Woman's Home."[76]

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66 NLC, *Report of the House of Industry, City of Toronto, For the Year 1885*, 6.

67 *Ibid.*

68 *Ibid.,* 6. In 1887 the Inspector's Report also discusses the implementation of a work test. According to the Inspector's report for 1887, "the labour test had been applied to the able-bodied and physically strong who sought admission." RIAP, 1887, 8.

69 Pitsula, "Treatment of Tramps," 124-5.

70 Mohl, "The Abolition of", 40.

71 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel B97-R-25, 1886, 8.

72 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-28, 1887, 8.

73 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-21, 1884, 8.

74 RIAP, 1875-6, 177.

75 RIAP, 1877, 191.

76 NLC, Canada, *Annual Report of the Toronto Industrial Refuge and Aged Woman's Home, 1885*, Micro. F. CC-25, No. 01611, 3.

Established for the purpose of assisting fallen women, administrators formally segregated the old women who could no longer work, from those who could. The situation in Hamilton is particularly illustrative of this trend. In 1878 Langmuir conveyed his growing concern over the overcrowding at the Hamilton institution and recommended that the provincial government withhold further subsidies. As a proposed solution, the Board of the Hamilton facility suggested that, "the old men, then in the House of Refuge, should be removed to an out-building attached to the General Hospital premises."[77] The older inmates remained there until 1886. During that time only two old men returned to the main building. In 1882, Langmuir reported: "There were also 2 old men, who properly belong to the branch of the Refuge at the Hospital, but they were drafted here for their usefulness in doing outside work."[78] In 1887 the building occupied by the older inmates was converted into a smallpox hospital. Additions to the refuge did allow older inmates to transfer back to the main building, but the Inspector remarked, the new lodging also "enables a better classification of the inmates to be made. Thus the women now occupy the ground floor; the more infirm and aged men the next floor and the men with full use of their limbs, sleep on the top flat."[79] According to reports as early as 1870-1, the total inmate population had been separated by sex. What was new was a separation of inmates on the basis of their ability to work effectively and this policy isolated the aged.[80]

The final stage in the creation of homes for the aged was the result of a growing policy of "Specialization." Evidence drawn from the Inspector's Reports beginning in the late 1870s reveals an attempt by the provincial government to ensure that appropriate classes of inmates were maintained within the appropriate facilities and institutions. The earliest forms of specialization did not affect the aged.[81] Rather, the focus seemed to have been on separating

77 RIAP, 1878, 211.

78 RIAP, 1882, 271.

79 RIAP, 1887, 15.

80 Several Charities began the process of separating and eventually isolating older inmates. It appears that categorization and segregation of inmates led to the eventual specialization of different institutions in Ontario.

81 Note, the exception to this was the earlier forms of specialization which singled out a specific group of older women. For example, two homes for aged women were established for the care of women from the well-to-do classes. In 1877 Hamilton opened a Home for Aged Women, established for the purpose of serving and caring for older women from well-to-do families. Langmuir reported, "the House is much superior in its appointments than the general class of refuges of this description," and added, "The persons admitted to it also appeared to be generally drawn from the more respectable classes." Either family members, church organizations or the individual were required to pay an entrance fee. RIAP, 1885, 14. A few years later the Aged Women's Home opened in Toronto. Like the home for respectable ladies of Hamilton, the new Toronto institution solely catered to older, wealthy women and not to the aged individuals within provincial institutions. RIAP, 1885, 14.

women and children, believed to be particularly vulnerable inmates, from the larger inmate populations. Soon, it was decided, largely as a result of financial considerations, that particular institutions such as hospitals, houses of industries, and orphanages should cater to specific clienteles. In accordance with the terms of the Charity Aid Act, hospitals, houses of industry and orphanages received provincial subsidies based on their classification. Hospitals received the highest amount of subsidization and houses of industry received substantially less.[82]

Hospitals were intended to cure the ill and the injured. In his 1878 report on provincial hospitals, Langmuir warned that "it is most important that the period of treatment should be no longer than is actually required to restore the patient to sound health." He cautioned that "Were this not closely looked after, Hospitals" designed to operate as "curative establishments exclusively, would be apt to degenerate into mere Houses of Refuge." He articulated that "a considerable number of patients are admitted to all the Hospitals who ... are not proper subjects for such establishments." Langmuir stressed that "the granting of Government Aid to Hospitals was intended ... to provide the means of restoring to sound health such persons as are temporarily withdrawn from the working community." In his opinion "the admission of persons afflicted with incurable diseases, or ... patients whose maladies have developed into the chronic stage, is contrary to the spirit, if not the provisions of the Charity Aid Act."[83]

This sentiment had a direct impact on elderly patients. The Inspector recommended that the provincial government impose stricter legislation limiting hospital stays to one year.[84] By associating abuse of hospital care with patients who remained in the hospital for over a year, the Inspector was identifying aged, chronic patients as a particular problem. Notably, the Inspector recommended reducing provincial subsidies for patients remaining in the hospital over one year to the subsidy rate provided for inmates of houses of industry.[85]

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82 Under the Charity Aid Act of 1874 charitable institutions fell into one of three categories: hospitals were classified as schedule A, schedule B referred to houses of industry and refuges, and schedule C pertained to orphanages. According to this Act, "Schedule A-shall so have and receive twenty cents for each day's actual treatment and stay of every patient admitted to . . .; Schedule B-shall so have and receive five cents for each days actual lodgement and maintenance therein . . .; Schedule C-shall so have and receive one and a-half cents for each day's actual lodgement and maintenance therein of any orphan or neglected and abandoned child. . ." In addition "every such institutions shall also be entitled to . . . further aid. . . (a) Every Institution named in Schedule A, ten cents; (b) Every Institution named in Schedule B, two cents; and (c) Every institution named in Schedule C, one-half cent. . ." PAO, Ontario, *Charity Aid Act*, *1874,* Reel B91-R-12, 1874, 258.

83 RIAP, 1878, 167-8.

84 *Ibid.,* 169.

85 *Ibid.*

Hospital administrators, needing the higher subsidies awarded for patients from the working classes, transferred out older, chronic patients to houses of industry. In his 1878 report for the General Hospital, Hamilton, the provincial Inspector reported: "The old chronic and incurable cases, who had occupied beds for years, had been removed to the House of Refuge."[86] In 1879, under threat of subsidy reductions, the Kingston General Hospital transferred out patients suffering from old age. The provincial Inspector remarked, "at least 9 of the inmates were not proper subjects for a curative establishment, or, at any rate, were not of the class to which aid, under schedule A of the Act, could be extended, as many of them were only suffering from the infirmities of old age."[87] The Inspector also issued comparable warnings to the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston.[88] The Hotel Dieu Administrators learned of the seriousness of the threat when in 1881, after the hospital failed to turn away older patients suffering from chronic illness, the province withheld a portion of their subsidy.[89] By 1881 the Toronto General Hospital had transferred out all of their, old chronic cases."[90] The provincial Inspector warned in 1885 that at the incurable wards, located in the Toronto house of providence, government aid for the category incurable, "will not be allowed for ... anyone merely infirm from old age or debility or senile decay."[91]

At the very time the aged faced a deterioration of alternatives for care, the number of aged who were already inmates in houses of industry was increasing.[92] Indeed, by the mid 1880s, old age had become a recognizable category within an institution that valued work and industriousness. In his reports, the provincial Inspector attributed the increased number of aged to declining mortality rates. In his 1885 report on the Kingston house of industry, the Inspector commented on the drop in the number of deaths and indicated his surprise at the age of many of the inmates.[93] Six years later, he again noted the rise in the number of individuals living in provincial houses of industry and suggested that this was due to a substantial drop in mortality rates over the last few years. It was at this time that he identified these inmates as "older, old" or seventy-five-

86 *Ibid*., 189.

87 RIAP, 1879, 203-4.

88 *Ibid*., 205.

89 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-15, 1881, 221.

90 NLC, Canada, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Inspector of Prisons and Public Charities for the Province of Ontario, Being for the year ending, 30, September, 1881*, No. ON. 2865, 234.

91 RIAP, 1885, 10.

92 Throughout the nineteenth century, the aged population increased substantially. Using Toronto as an example, in a study by Gordon Darroch, between 1861 to 1871, "about 17 per cent of the population was over 40." Those figures increased by 1901, with 26 percent of the population over 40 years of age. Gordon Darroch, "Early Industrialization and Inequality in Toronto, 1861-1899," in *Labour/le Travail,* No. 11, Spring 1983, 57.

93 RIAP, 1885, 18.

plus.[94] One old inmate of Kingston's house of industry was apparently 110 years of age. The Inspector marvelled the following year when the inmate turned 111 years of age.[95]

These individuals were not only older or old, they were also identified in the Inspector's reports as non-functioning contributors to society. In his assessment of language Michael Katz contends that societies use language, "to exclude, to distinguish – to discriminate."[96] The Inspectors' Reports substantiate Katz's assessment. In the 1880s the provincial Inspector described this new class of inmates in pejorative terms which focussed on their physical weaknesses. In one report, the Inspector referred to the aged residents of houses of industry as "decrepit" and "helpless."[97] The terms "chronic" and "infirm" were also frequently used.[98] The Inspectors' use of negative language to describe older inmates established a framework to justify segregation of the aged at a time when provincial initiatives circumscribed changes that effectively separated workers from non-workers, several of whom were old.

By the 1890s categorization, segregation and specialization had resulted in significant changes within houses of industry and contributed to the further isolation of the aged. Small groups of older inmates had established some form of name recognition. In 1892, for the first time the provincial Inspector referred to the building used to house the older inmates at the Toronto house of industry, as the "Old People Home."[99] In 1897, the Inspector recorded the section of the Kingston house of industry, reserved for the older inmates, as the "Old People" section.[100] This shallow recognition afforded no improvements in the accommodation and treatment of aged inmates, however; it was merely a reclassification of their living quarters. While the Toronto house of industry improved the casual wards, no substantial improvements were made to the building used to house the old people. In spite of the numerous renovations and additions made to the Kingston house of industry, older inmates remained in the

94 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-38, 1891, 20.

95 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-54, 1896, 24 and Reel, B97-R-58, 1897, 28.

96 Katz, *Undeserving Poor*, 6.

97 RIAP, 1882, 265.

98 Rosemary Nossiff discusses the power of discourse, arguing that "the interpretation of discourse as a political weapon that groups use first to shape the way policy issues are understood, second to discredit their opponents, and third to bring about change." Rosemary Nossiff, "Discourse, Party, and Policy: the Case of Abortion, 1965-1972," in *Policies Studies Journal,* Vol. 26, No. 2, 1998, 246.

99 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-40, 1892, 15.

100 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-58, 1897, 28. Initially, many aged individuals continued to be housed informally in prisons, jails etc. Also, please note that this study only considers provincial initiatives that precipitated a shift from houses of industry to homes for the aged and as such does not consider corollary influences leading to the establishment of homes for the aged. As well, it does not take into consideration the living situation of older individuals not housed within institutional facilities.

oldest part of the building. Nonetheless, as the century pulled to a close the provincial Inspector and administrators of Toronto and Kingston's houses of industry could no longer ignore what had become a recognizable category – the old.

The recognition that part of provincial houses of industry were really reserved for elderly residents was accompanied by a change in who administered these sections of the institutions. From the Inspectors' Report, it appears that women took over the administrative duties associated with the care and maintenance of older inmates in the houses of industry.[101] In his 1893 report, the Inspector commended the efforts of the administrators and he made special mention of "the efforts put forth by the ladies, who in most cases control and manage these institutions for the comfort and happiness of the aged and in many cases helpless inmates." Again in 1894 the Inspector reported that institutions catering to, "the care of friendless ... old people are all doing a good work," and he noted that they were "all, under the direction of a board composed of ladies." The Inspector added that "The ladies who are engaged in this laudable work of caring for the old ... deserve the sympathy and liberal help of all true and loyal citizens."[102]

The 1890s mark a period of transition in which the roots of institutional care for the aged took hold. The formation of such facilities was not the product of initiatives targeting the old but, rather by-products of provincial initiatives intended to assist and control migrants or "strangers." As a new century loomed, elderly inmates had been given a small measure of recognition and their dwellings became identified as places uniquely theirs. "Old People Homes" were places where older individuals who required assistance could live out the rest of their days. In the end, the identification of "Homes for the Aged" afforded a form of hollow recognition. This categorization awarded neither status nor additional comfort. According to the Inspector's Report for 1899, recognition only ensured that the old people, "are not expected to work if sick, or unable to work."[103]

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101 According to a study by Jane Aronson, the state provided care for the aged based on the model of care provided within the home. She argues that women caring for older individuals "demonstrates the socially constructed nature of what has been perceived as an obvious way to care for the elderly by highlighting the invisible divisions of caring work between men and women and between the public and private arenas." Aronson, "Family Care of the Elderly: Underlying Assumptions and Their Consequences," *Canadian Journal on Aging,* Vol. 4, No. 3, Autumn 1985, 115.

102 PAO, Ontario, RIAP, Reel, B97-R-47, 1894, 1.

103 RIAP, 1899, 19. Carole Haber reports similar findings in her study of the aged in America. She notes that the name "City Almshouse" changed in 1903 to "the Home for the Aged and Infirm." The change reflected a new understanding of the inmates within the institution. She asserts, "In contrast to poorhouses of the past, New York's asylum was not filled with the lazy, corrupt, or able-bodied." Rather she argues, "Most of the residents were simply old and ailing." Haber, *Beyond Sixty-Five*, 82.