

JUNIOR RED CROSS VOLUNTEER KNITTING IN WINNIPEG SCHOOL  
DIVISION NO. 1 DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORLD WAR II  
(1939-1946)

BY

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A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Clothing and Textiles  
University of Manitoba  
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For my family (Dad, Mom, Greg, Linda, Theresa, John, James,  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine and document the knitting activities of Junior Red Cross volunteers in the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba during, and immediately after World War II (1939-1946) in order to determine the significance of this work.

The specific objectives of this study were: (a) to ascertain how Junior Red Cross knitting was organized in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, (b) to establish the role of home economics teachers in the organization of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, (c) to verify what the members of the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 were knitting and for whom, (d) to determine the significance of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during, and immediately after World War II.

Information from documents relevant to this study was recorded on data collection sheets, developed by the researcher, based on initial research questions and information from the literature review. The majority of material to be recorded on the data collection sheets was found in archives. Several former members of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross were interviewed to supplement this data.

The significance of the Junior Red Cross knitting activities was analyzed by making numerical comparisons and by comparing activities between schools. The importance of

the knitting was assessed by confirming whether Junior Red Cross work became part of the school curriculum, and by determining who considered the knitting to be meaningful.

Student members of the Junior Red Cross thought the work they were doing was worthwhile and rewarding. Throughout World War II the Canadian Red Cross and Junior Red Cross provided food, clothing and other supplies to various groups and individuals in many parts of the world. This research shows that children played an important part in one particular world event.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

"God Bless the Canadians, Says Victim of Nazi Bombs" ("God bless," 1940). This was the headline of a newspaper article from 1940 praising the Canadian Red Cross for parcels they had sent overseas. Canadian Red Cross Society volunteers were involved in giving international aid to many groups of people during World War II. Volunteers raised money for the war effort and packed food parcels for prisoners of war (POW's). They also made a variety of clothing articles for POW's, military casualties, military personnel engaged in combat, refugees, and civilians whose lives were affected by the hostile activities of the war (Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969; Broadfoot, 1974). During 1941-42, the total number of items made by Red Cross volunteers and other organizations doing work for the Red Cross surpassed 6,800,000 (Whitton, 1942). Some of the volunteers were children, many of whom became part of the Junior Red Cross at school (Porter, 1960; Wilson, 1966; Gordon, 1969). The activities performed by the Junior Red Cross were similar to those being done by the adult Red Cross and included knitting clothing items to send overseas.

Canada's official involvement in World War II began on September 10, 1939. During the war, Canada's population grew from 11,267,000 in 1939 to 12,072,000 in 1945. Approximately 1,100,000 of these people served in Canada's armed forces

during World War II (Douglas & Greenhous, 1977; Bothwell, Drummond, & English, 1987). Considering that the nearly 12 million Canadian people represented all ages, one-twelfth of the population serving in the armed forces was a substantial percentage. In addition, Pierson (1986) stated that approximately 3 million Canadian women were performing volunteer work in support of the war, almost three times the number of men and women serving in Canada's armed forces. According to Whitton (1942) and Porter (1960) over 750,000 women volunteers worked for the National Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross during World War II. Therefore, one-quarter of the Canadian female volunteers described by Pierson were working for the Red Cross.

Volunteers affiliated with other groups and organizations were also performing work for the Red Cross during the war. There were 12,500 groups across Canada which included the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.), Women's Institutes (W.I.), women's political associations, and church groups (Porter, 1960). The W.I. raised generous amounts of money and made large numbers of garments for the Red Cross and others (Pierson, 1986). In 1940, Mennonites from all over western Canada donated clothing (mainly for babies and women) to the Red Cross to be sent to London, England ("Mennonites ship," 1940). The I.O.D.E. knitted a variety of clothing items for the Red Cross ("Mrs. James Jenkins," 1941; "I.O.D.E. sends," 1941).

It is no wonder then that Canadians were praised by victims of the war.

The Junior Red Cross was well established in school systems across Canada at the time of World War II (Laine, 1944; Gordon, 1969). The group was officially recognized in Canada in 1922 by a parliamentary amendment to the Red Cross Act (Porter, 1960). Its initial emphasis was on health education, disease prevention, and proper nutrition (Porter, 1960). Gordon (1969) stated that without teachers the Canadian Junior Red Cross would not have been the success it was. Home Economics teachers were instrumental in the organization of some Canadian Junior Red Cross groups (Wilson, 1966). In Manitoba during World War II the Junior Red Cross, through the school system, was active in performing war work. Teachers such as Miss Isabel Robson, the home economics supervisor of knitting done at the Luxton school in Winnipeg during World War II, "saw to it that the articles turned in were correctly made and well pressed" ("Winnipeg school," 1941).

Throughout World War II the Canadian Red Cross provided food, clothing, and medical aid to military in active combat, military who were sick or wounded, POW's, and countries in need because of the effects of the war (Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). At the same time the Canadian Junior Red Cross maintained nurseries for war orphans in Britain, sent musical instruments to POW's,

and provided mobile canteens for troops (Porter, 1960). The Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg knit thousands of clothing articles for the war effort during World War II ("Winnipeg school," 1941; Garrioch, 1945).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and document the knitting activities of Junior Red Cross volunteers in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 in the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba, during, and immediately after World War II.

Many newspaper articles were printed about volunteer work done by the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross during World War II, suggesting that the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg made a significant contribution to the knitted articles sent overseas by the Canadian Red Cross at that time. The newspaper articles also suggest that knitting was being done by a great number of students in Winnipeg, both boys and girls ("St. James inspector", 1940; "Winnipeg school", 1941; Garrioch, 1945). The annual reports of the Manitoba Department of Education (1940-1946) document the membership of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross as fluctuating between 60,000 and 70,000 during the war years. Did the Junior Red Cross really make a significant contribution? How important was this work and to whom was it important?

#### Objectives

Wilson (1966) stated that during World War II the Junior Red Cross was organized in Manitoba schools mainly by

home economics teachers and that a request was made in the senior high schools for volunteers to perform war work. The absence of any mention of the elementary schools suggests that it was organized differently there. By 1946, there were approximately 98,650 children between the ages of 5 and 14 who had attended school in Manitoba for a period ranging from 1 to 12 years (Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1949). Were all students in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 involved in the Junior Red Cross or was it purely volunteer work? Which schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 were involved? If most schools were participating, they would have needed a large quantity of yarn and knitting needles. Where did they obtain their supplies?

The following were specific objectives of this study:

1. To ascertain how Junior Red Cross knitting was organized in Winnipeg School Division No. 1.
2. To establish the role of home economics teachers in the organization of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1.
3. To verify what the members of the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 were knitting and for whom.
4. To determine the significance of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during, and immediately after World War II.

Justification: In case of crisis, open door

It is worthwhile to examine volunteer work within the context of World War II, especially as it relates to these children. This work was crucial at the time it was being done because the volunteers were performing a necessary service by providing clothing to people in need. It is important to examine this work now because volunteer work by school children is still valuable today. Canadian Red Cross Society activities during World War II illustrate how much work can be done by volunteers, both adults and children. According to Strong-Boag (1990) "different choices about what is historically significant are now needed if we are to have a balanced and accurate portrait of how Canadians lived" (p. 176). In this statement, Strong-Boag refers to the need to include women in recorded history. Children's history must be documented as well.

Since its inception in 1864, the Red Cross Society has played a major role in world crises. This was the original purpose of the Society. While many associate the Red Cross with blood donations, the organization only became active in blood collection during World War II, as part of the war effort. Red Cross involvement in blood donations in peacetime only commenced in 1947 (Gordon, 1969). Other peacetime work of the Red Cross began after the First World War (Gordon, 1969; Strong-Boag, 1988). We need to be reminded of the valuable contribution the Red Cross has made

in past crises and the contribution which it continues to make today.

### Definitions

The following definitions, taken from Gordon (1969), were used in this study:

**The Red Cross** - An international organization, governed by the Geneva Conventions, which brings help and support to victims of wars or natural disasters. The Red Cross relies on volunteers to perform most of this work.

**Junior Red Cross** - Lower branches of the Red Cross developed after World War I, in schools, for the purpose of educating young people about improving health, preventing disease and alleviating suffering around the world.

**Volunteer** - A person who takes on a job voluntarily. In this case, without expecting payment.

**Volunteer Work** - Work performed by volunteers. Examples of this work could include, answering phones, delivering messages or packages, knitting and/or sewing clothing items, serving food and/or beverages, packing parcels, giving people information.

### Parameters

The time period covered in this study was during and immediately after World War II (1939-1946). This study involved Junior Red Cross knitting done in the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 from 1939 to 1946. It did not consider work done outside the school system, work done outside

Winnipeg, or any of the other work done by the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross. Since the work of the Women's War Work Committee of the Red Cross continued after the war was over (Weaver Wright, personal communication, 1994), it was conceivable that the work of the Junior Red Cross continued on as well. According to Joyce (1959), the League of Red Cross Societies continued to provide "relief for civilian war victims" in the years following the war (p. 146). For these reasons, the study included the first postwar year, 1946.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

The information contained in this chapter outlines the origins, functions, and mandates of both the Red Cross and the Junior Red Cross. It also indicates the amount and scope of volunteer work done in Canada during World War II, highlighting the Red Cross and Junior Red Cross.

#### Canada During World War II

When World War II began in 1939, Canada was still struggling with the Depression (Douglas & Greenhous, 1977; Bothwell, et al., 1987). Jobs in the armed forces and the war industry helped to relieve the problem of unemployment. According to Bothwell, et al. (1987), there were shortages of labour in some industries, most notably lumber and coal.

In order to maintain control of the job market, and ensure that essential industries did not lose workers, the federal government imposed various restrictions on employment. In October of 1941, wages and salaries were frozen except for cost-of-living bonuses (Bothwell, et al., 1987). After 1941, the government controlled the movement of workers among industries through the National Employment Service (Bothwell, et al., 1987). This service was the only way to find both work and workers. By 1943 persons working in essential industries had to receive government permission to leave their jobs (Chafe, 1967; Bothwell, et al., 1987).

The government also controlled prices and production

during the war. The War Measures Act enabled "the government to avoid parliamentary debate" (Bothwell, et al., 1987, p. 351) on these and other issues and simply do what was deemed best for the country. Even though unemployment brought on by the depression was alleviated because of the war, people still had to make many sacrifices.

On top of wage, price, and employment controls, rationing was introduced in the winter of 1941-42. Rationed items included: tires and tubes, sugar, gasoline, tea, coffee, butter, meat, preserved fruits, sugar substitutes, and evaporated milk (Bothwell, et al., 1987). As the war continued, rationing became more severe (Bothwell, et al., 1987). Clothing and textiles were not rationed but were simplified and standardized (Routh, 1993). Colours, patterns, and amounts of fabric used to make clothing were regulated, as were lengths of zippers and hems (Routh, 1993; Turnbull Caton, 1994). Sometimes clothing, textiles, and footwear were difficult to find (Wilson, 1966; Bothwell, et al., 1987; Turnbull Caton, 1994).

The people of Canada supported the war effort in a variety of ways. Many purchased Victory Bonds and/or War Savings Stamps and Certificates (Chafe, 1967; Bothwell, et al., 1987). Some planted 'victory gardens' and grew a variety of vegetables to supplement the rationed foods (Bothwell, et al., 1987). Numerous volunteers performed work to support the armed forces overseas.

## Volunteer Work in Canada During World War II

Volunteer work in Canada during World War II was not a government directive. According to Pierson (1986), the mainly women volunteers were organized before the autumn of 1941 when the government created the Women's Voluntary Services Division of the Department of National War Services. The National Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross was established in 1939, soon after war was declared (Porter, 1960). Volunteer work was considered by some to be an obligation which involved making sacrifices for one's country (Pierson, 1986).

There was a considerable amount of work done by volunteers in Canada during World War II. Blankets were sent overseas ("Blankets needed," 1940; "62,000 blankets," 1940; "Back-to-the-land," 1941). A variety of clothing items were knit and sewn by volunteers ("Red Cross makes," 1941; "Winnipeg school," 1941; Whitton, 1942; Garrioch, 1945; Broadfoot, 1974; Pierson, 1986). Clothing was collected to send overseas ("Volunteer bureau," 1945). Parcels of food, clothing, and medical supplies were shipped overseas ("God bless," 1940; "Manitoba Red Cross shipments," 1940; "Mennonites ship," 1940; "Wife of Finnish minister," 1940; "Lies about," 1941; "War work committee," 1945; Gordon, 1969). Money was collected to aid the war effort ("Manitoba prisoner," 1940; Chafe, 1967). Much of this work involved gathering or producing clothing.

The Women's Voluntary Services Division established Centres in forty-four Canadian cities. These Centres kept track of groups doing volunteer work, recruited volunteers, placed people where their skills would be most useful, and distributed information which was received from the war departments of the federal government (Pierson, 1986). Volunteers from the Centres also dispensed wool to various organizations which were knitting many different articles of clothing (Pierson, 1986).

Numerous women's groups in Canada were raising money for the war effort, collecting salvage, providing ambulances for the Red Cross, providing mobile canteens for military personnel, purchasing War Bonds, and providing books, games, cards, puzzles, gramophones, and records to military, internment, and POW camps (Whitton, 1942; Pierson, 1986). In addition to all this, the W.I., Women's church groups (Women of the United Church of Canada, The Catholic Women's League of Canada, Canadian Hadassah), the I.O.D.E., the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women, and the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada were all knitting or sewing articles of clothing or collecting used clothing to send to those in need (Whitton, 1942; Pierson, 1986). Much of this work was done for the Canadian Red Cross Society which was active in dispensing needed clothing to war victims (Whitton, 1942; Pierson, 1986). Some clothing items were also being produced by the Junior Red Cross.

## The Red Cross

Many authors have documented the history and organization of the Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the League of Red Cross Societies. The references cited in this chapter cover a broad time interval. While Red Cross policies have changed over time, the altruistic beliefs behind these policies have not (Geraldson, R. I., Moreillon, J., & Forsythe, D. P., 1982; Dreaver, 1989). The references utilised were chosen because they contained information about the 1939-1946 time period being examined in this study.

### Origins.

The idea of the Red Cross began with Henri Dunant, a young businessman from Geneva. Dunant accidentally found himself in the middle of a battle near Solferino (involving France, Italy, and Austria), while in Italy in June of 1859 (Gumpert, 1942; Joyce, 1959; Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969; Friedlander, 1976-77). Gumpert (1942) stated that the condition and treatment of the wounded after the battle so appalled Dunant that he felt compelled to give assistance where he could. In 1862, Dunant wrote and published a book about the experience, entitled Souvenir de Solferino (Porter, 1960; Blondel, 1987). According to Gumpert (1942) the book drew so much public attention in Europe that in 1863 a commission consisting of five prominent Swiss citizens was appointed in Geneva to study the matter. The

members of the commission had varying backgrounds, yet all realized the importance of Dunant's ideas (Gumpert, 1942; Huber, 1946; Joyce, 1959; Porter, 1960). The commission organized a conference in Geneva in 1863 at which Dunant's proposals were introduced (Gumpert, 1942; Porter, 1960).

In August 1864, the first Geneva Convention was held. It was attended by sixteen states (Gumpert, 1942). At the convention the Red Cross Society was officially established. 'The Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field' was drafted at the same time (Gumpert, 1942; Joyce, 1959; Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). This treaty outlined the rules which governed the treatment of wounded during a war, and stipulated that voluntary organizations could help the Army Medical Corps in this work. The Convention also identified a red cross on a white background as a symbol of neutrality and protection to be used by the Army Medical Corps and any voluntary organization giving them aid (Joyce, 1959; Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). As a British colony, Canada became bound by this Convention when Britain signed it in February of 1865 (Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). The Convention has been revised and expanded several times since then, but the humanitarian principles have remained the same (Porter, 1960). Later Conventions enabled some countries to substitute the red cross symbol with either a red crescent or a red lion and sun on a white background (Joyce, 1959).

### Geneva Conventions.

The Geneva Conventions direct the actions of the Red Cross. The four Geneva Conventions which exist today were drafted in 1949 (Gordon, 1969), and became part of international law in October 1950 (Joyce, 1959; International Committee of the Red Cross, 1971), after World War II. The Conventions in place during World War II were drafted in 1864, and revised in 1906 and 1929 (Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). The original Convention dealt with 'the wounded and sick in armies in the field' (Porter, 1960; Joyce, 1959; Gordon, 1969). It was then extended to cover sailors in 1906 and POW's in 1929 (International Peace Conference, 1915; International Committee of the Red Cross, 1929; Frick-Cramer, 1945; Porter, 1969; Joyce, 1959).

The Convention covering POW's made several references to clothing. It was first mentioned indirectly in Part II, Article 6, which stated that POW's were allowed to keep all their personal effects, including their metal helmets and gas masks. The Convention then stipulated that clothing, underwear, and footwear were to be provided for POW's by the Detaining Power (the country which captured and incarcerated the prisoners) (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1929). Clothing was to be repaired and replaced regularly. Special clothing, if needed for assigned work, was also to be supplied by the Detaining Power (Part III, Section II, Chapter 2, Article 12).

The Convention also specified that prisoners were allowed to receive postal parcels containing food, other consumables, or clothing (Part III, Section IV, Article 37). These were referred to as next-of-kin parcels as they were usually sent by the prisoners' families (Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). Another indirect mention of clothing is found in Part VI, Article 78, which stated:

Societies for the relief of prisoners of war, regularly constituted in accordance with the laws of their country, and having for their object to serve as intermediaries for charitable purposes, shall receive from the belligerents, for themselves and their duly accredited agents, all facilities for the efficacious performance of their humane task within the limits imposed by military exigencies. Representatives of these societies shall be permitted to distribute relief in the camps and at the halting places of repatriated prisoners under a personal permit issued by the military authority, and on giving an undertaking in writing to comply with all routine and police orders which the said authority shall prescribe (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1929, p. 25).

It is this last article which enabled the Red Cross to supply POW's with food and clothing parcels.

#### Functions and goals of the organization.

From its straightforward beginnings, the organization grew to become very complex. The supreme body of the Red Cross is the International Red Cross Conference. As shown in Figure 1, this group is composed of representatives from the ICRC, from the League of Red Cross Societies, from all of the National Red Cross Societies, and from all states that have signed the Geneva Conventions.

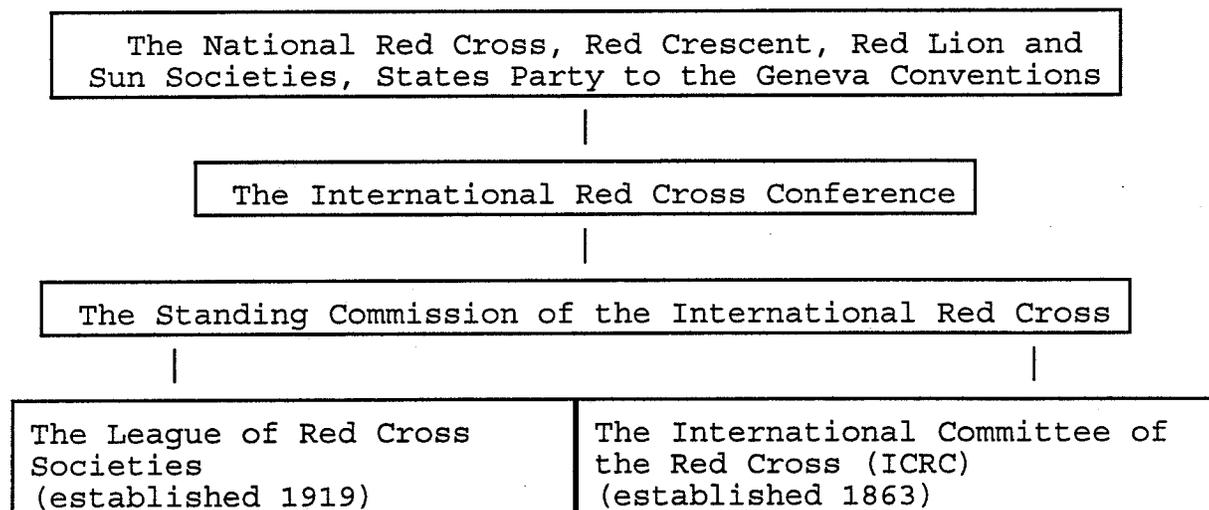


Figure 1. The chart above, taken from Joyce (1959, p. 111), illustrates the hierarchy of the Red Cross.

The International Red Cross Conference meets every four years. Between meetings it operates through a Standing Commission which consists of four members from the ICRC, two members from the League of Red Cross Societies, and three members chosen from the National Red Cross Societies. The main reason the International Red Cross Conference was created was to ensure that the peacetime work of the League of Red Cross Societies did not overshadow the original wartime tasks of the ICRC. Figure 1 shows that the League and the ICRC have equal but separate status, under the International Red Cross Conference and the Standing Commission. The Standing Commission ensures that these two international organizations of the Red Cross coordinate their efforts and work together when necessary.

International Committee of the Red Cross.

The ICRC is based in Geneva. It consists of twenty-five members, all of whom are Swiss citizens. Switzerland has perpetual neutrality, something essential to the continued functioning of the Red Cross. The major functions to be carried out by the ICRC are:

1. To make sure the fundamental principles of the Red Cross (the development and observance of the humanitarian conventions, especially those of Geneva) are maintained
2. To promote the creation of Red Cross Societies around the world and to ensure they conform to the proper principles
3. To create international agencies during a war which will

give aid and assistance to victims of war

4. To be a neutral mediator between governments and Red Cross Societies in war and peace so that assistance can be given where needed as quickly and efficiently as possible

5. To always foresee the possibility of war

6. To strive to revise conventions which are intended to better the circumstances of victims of war (Gordon, 1969).

The ICRC's main functions, then, involve ensuring that victims of war (sick and wounded military personnel, POW's, and interned civilians) are properly treated and that they receive needed food, clothing, or medical attention. To this end, during a war, the ICRC appoints delegates to all belligerent countries, where they enjoy diplomatic immunity, to inspect prisoner of war and internment camps (Gordon, 1969). These delegates then make reports to the ICRC in Geneva. Any interested belligerents may also receive copies of these reports (Gordon, 1969).

#### League of Red Cross Societies.

At the 1919 Convention of the League of Nations, Article 25 outlined a new mandate for the Red Cross. This task involved establishing voluntary National Red Cross organizations whose purposes were to improve health, prevent disease, and alleviate suffering throughout the world (Sackett, 1931; Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960). The article was introduced because of concerns about world health which arose during recruiting for World War I (Porter, 1960). The

development of Article 25 broadened the scope of the Red Cross while retaining its original goals. It also resulted in the creation of the League of Red Cross Societies in Paris in 1919. By 1939, 60 National Societies were members of the League of Red Cross Societies (Gordon, 1969). The International Red Cross Conference recognizes the League of Red Cross Societies as an alliance of National Red Cross Societies with the shared aim of cooperation in peacetime, especially if their activities overlap (Gordon, 1969).

A National Red Cross Society must meet certain specifications in order to be recognized as such. While the objectives of all Societies are based on the same beliefs, each organization is not necessarily identical. In order for a Society to be acknowledged by the ICRC as a National Red Cross Society twelve principles must be adhered to (Gordon, 1969). These principles follow the Geneva Conventions and are humanitarian in nature (Gordon, 1969).

The League of Red Cross Societies encourages and facilitates the establishment of National Red Cross Societies and coordinates their international activities. One further, fundamental condition of becoming a National Red Cross Society, is that the Society must be voluntary (Gordon, 1969). This is covered by the Geneva Conventions where the term 'voluntary aid societies' is used to refer to those who may assist the Army Medical Corps, and use the Red Cross emblem for protection (Huber, 1946).

### The Canadian Red Cross Society

Porter (1960) and Gordon (1969) have documented a great deal of the history and organization of the Red Cross in Canada. Their books form the basis of the information contained in this section. The work of several others, most notably Whitton (1942), was used to supplement their material.

#### Origins.

The Canadian Red Cross Society is recognized by the ICRC as a National Red Cross Society. Although the Society was formed in 1896, it was not incorporated until 1909 (Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969; Whitton, 1942). After the 1919 Convention of the League of Nations, the Canadian Red Cross Society's original charter was amended to reflect the new peacetime role of the Red Cross (Whitton, 1942). The Society remained a part of the British Red Cross Society until 1927, when it became recognized as a separate national movement (Porter, 1960). The Canadian Red Cross has provided valuable aid through many crises and conflicts since its inception, including the Spanish-American war in Cuba in 1898, the Boer War in South Africa from 1899 to 1902, World War I and World War II (Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969; Whitton, 1942).

The Spanish-American war in Cuba in 1898 was the Canadian Red Cross Society's first time in action (Porter, 1960). The Society collected monetary donations and offered half to the American Red Cross Society and half to the

Spanish Red Cross Society. The American Red Cross declined this aid so the entire amount was given to the Spanish Red Cross (Porter, 1960).

During the Boer War in South Africa, Canadian Red Cross Society branches were formed in Fredericton, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and sixty smaller towns and cities. Branches formed in the larger centres later became provincial divisions (Porter, 1960). These newly formed branches of the Canadian Red Cross collected food, blankets, socks, shirts, wines and spirits, and raised \$50,000 to send to Canadian troops in South Africa (Porter, 1960). Dr. George Sterling Ryerson, who was instrumental in the formation of the Canadian Red Cross Society in 1896, was sent to South Africa to see to the distribution of the supplies and to the management of the money (Porter, 1960).

In August of 1914, with the onset of World War I, the Canadian Red Cross resumed its activities. Committees were set up and funds were collected for the relief of Canadian and British sick and wounded (Porter, 1960). The money that was collected was used to build and operate hospitals, supply hospitals with equipment, buy ambulances, supply patients with parcels of necessary items, supply POW's with weekly parcels containing clothing, toilet articles, medical supplies, and supplementary foods, and to supply comfort bags to the newly hospitalized (Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960).

Other activities performed by the Canadian Red Cross during World War I included keeping track of the Canadian sick and wounded, keeping a record of men who were missing or killed, sending volunteers to visit Canadian soldiers in hospital in England or France, taking convalescing soldiers on outings, locating Canadian soldiers who were taken prisoner, and notifying relatives of prisoners' locations (Porter, 1960).

It was during World War I that standardization of knitted items being sent overseas first became important (Porter, 1960; Fallis, 1984). This was to facilitate neat packing that used a minimum of space and to save materials (Porter, 1960; Fallis, 1984). Much of the money collected was used to purchase raw materials which volunteers then made into needed items (Porter, 1960). By the end of World War I the Canadian Red Cross Society had raised money and materials worth more than \$35 million (Porter, 1960).

#### The Canadian Red Cross during World War II.

During World War II, the Canadian Red Cross Society carried out the traditional Red Cross obligations of providing supplementary services for sick and wounded military personnel, refugees and civilians affected by hostile action (Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960). In addition, the Society conducted POW work (Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960;). The Society's World War II activities were the same or similar to what was done during World War I (Joyce,

1959). The Canadian Red Cross Society also provided 'comforts' to the "combatant forces" during World War II (Whitton, 1942, p. 46). These were distributed on the written requisition of the commanding officer of a unit or the captain or first officer of a vessel (Gordon, 1969).

A great many supplies were distributed during the extremely severe winters of 1939-40 and 1940-41 (Gordon, 1969; Whitton, 1942). These supplies, labelled by the Red Cross as 'comforts' were sent to those in active military service, to the Polish Division which was training in Scotland, and to Britain for civilian bomb victims and refugees from allied countries (Gordon, 1969). Included in these comforts were blankets, handmade quilts, and sewn, knitted and used clothing items. Of the 6,800,000 articles made in 1941-42, 4,190,000 were used for civilian relief, 2,025,000 were sent overseas to those in active combat, 185,000 were sent to women's auxiliary forces, and 400,000 were dispensed in Canada and Newfoundland (Whitton, 1942).

In order to provide these and other supplies, the Canadian Red Cross Society planned national campaigns for funds. The first campaign took place in November of 1939 (Porter, 1960). An appeal was made for \$3,000,000 and over \$5 million was received (Porter, 1960). A National Purchasing Committee was appointed to ensure that the money was spent wisely. This committee bought textiles, food, medical equipment, and vehicles (Porter, 1960). It also

arranged for goods to be packed in standard cases. The committee believed that centralized purchasing and standardized packing saved many thousands of dollars (Porter, 1960). Between 1939 and 1946 the committee spent more than \$71 million (Porter, 1960).

Most of the purchased textiles went to the National Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross, which was established in 1939 (Porter, 1960). This committee controlled the nature and type of every knitted and sewn article (Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960). As well, the committee tested patterns, and provided instructions and samples for volunteers (The Canadian Red Cross Society, 1940 & 1941; Whitton, 1942; Porter, 1960). Standardization was deemed important because it was believed to save labour, materials, and money (Porter, 1960).

Each provincial division was allotted a quota of items to knit and/or sew which was then passed on to their branches (Porter, 1960). Finished goods were sent to division warehouses where they were inspected, sorted, packed and shipped (Porter, 1960). Volunteers were sewing sixty-three different articles and knitting fifty-four different articles (Porter, 1960). The knitted articles included, six types of sweaters, seamen's gloves with leather palms, seamen's long stockings, woollen caps to wear under a steel helmet, rifle mitts, and knitted underclothing for the Women's Auxiliary Services (Porter, 1960).

Some items made by the National Women's War Work Committee went into Canadian Red Cross Society Survivor's Dunnage Bags (for military shipwreck survivors) and/or Capture Parcels (for POW's) (Porter, 1960). Survivor's Dunnage Bags contained a pair of trousers, a belt or braces, a shirt, socks, a sweater, a pair of shoes, a suit of underwear, a woollen helmet, a pair of mitts, two handkerchiefs, and toilet articles (Porter, 1960). Capture Parcels contained a shirt, a sweater, socks, underwear, pyjamas, a blanket, a bath towel, a wash cloth, a razor, a shaving brush, a toothbrush, a sewing kit, chocolate bars, and chewing gum (Porter, 1960).

The Canadian Red Cross Society also sent food parcels to POW's. The Geneva Convention of 1929 established the size and content of these parcels as well as how many could be received by an individual prisoner (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1929; Porter, 1960). Parcels were sent to the ICRC in Geneva, which distributed the parcels to the POW camps (Porter, 1960).

#### Prisoners of war during World War II.

According to Gordon (1969), Foy (1981), and Maines (1985), Germany, Japan, and Russia sometimes had difficulty providing, or did not provide, clothing for their POW's. Joyce (1959), explained that neither Russia nor Japan had ratified the Prisoners-of-War Convention of 1929 by the time that World War II began. Thus, they were not obligated to

uphold the articles contained in this Convention. Where necessary, provisions were supplemented by the Canadian Red Cross which sent clothing items to POW's.

According to the Geneva Convention, Section IV, Article 37, POW's were also permitted to receive parcels from their families (next-of-kin parcels) four times a year (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1929; Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). The Prisoners of War Liaison Officers' Committee of the Canadian Red Cross Society, which maintained communication between POW's and their families, ensured that relatives were aware of regulations governing contents of letters and of next-of-kin parcels (Porter, 1960). If next-of-kin parcels were inspected and stamped by the Red Cross, they reached their destinations much faster and were less likely to have been opened by the Detaining Power (Gordon, 1969). In Canada, if a parcel was found to be missing items which were allowed to be sent or if forbidden items had to be removed, the Red Cross would supplement the parcel so each prisoner was receiving a package of similar value and content (Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). The Red Cross would also contact members of the family to see if they needed assistance or if they simply were unaware of what they could send (Gordon, 1969).

#### Junior Red Cross

The Junior Red Cross in Canada was also active in producing clothing items to be sent to those in need during

World War II. This was compatible with the goals of the organization.

#### Origins and goals of the organization.

The Junior Red Cross was officially established in 1920 at a meeting of the League of Red Cross Societies (Porter, 1960). The group was designed as a peace-time program for school children around the world to help create understanding and friendship between different groups, break down racial barriers, promote health education, instill the ideal of peace, and inspire continued service to those in need (Laine, 1944; Joyce, 1959; Porter, 1960; Gordon, 1969). By 1944, Junior Red Cross was an intrinsic part of the International Red Cross in 50 countries, including Canada (Laine, 1944). Junior Red Cross activities were similar to those being carried out by adult Red Cross volunteers (Laine, 1944).

#### Junior Red Cross in Canada.

Prior to 1920, there was no official Junior Red Cross. In several countries, including Canada, children and young people would often help adult Red Cross volunteers with their work (Sackett, 1931; Porter, 1960). In Canada, this began in St. Mary's, Ontario in 1899 during the Boer War in South Africa (Porter, 1960). The people of St. Mary's founded a branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society in 1899 and sent parcels to troops in South Africa (Porter, 1960). The young people of the community expressed an interest in

helping with this endeavour, so girls were given the task of knitting socks while boys were put to work packing parcels (Porter, 1960).

During World War I school children in Canada, Australia, and the United States assisted adult Red Cross volunteers with their work (Sackett, 1931; Porter, 1960). In 1915 a school group in Northgate, Saskatchewan became the first group in the world to receive a 'junior' Red Cross charter (Porter, 1960). The Junior Red Cross was officially recognized in Canada in 1922 by a parliamentary amendment to the Red Cross Act (Porter, 1960). Its initial emphasis was on health education, disease prevention, and proper nutrition (Porter, 1960).

In keeping with the educational aim, the Canadian Junior Red Cross had its beginnings in schools across the country. It was so successful that it became a model for other countries (Gordon, 1969). By 1935, the Junior Red Cross was well established in school systems across Canada, with 10,283 branches having 324,561 members and strong support of teachers (Gordon, 1969).

#### Canadian Junior Red Cross and World War II.

The Canadian Junior Red Cross was involved in giving international relief during World War II. Examples of their work included maintaining 14 nurseries for war orphans in Britain at a yearly cost of \$41,000, sending musical instruments to POW's, and providing mobile canteens for

troops (Porter, 1960). In many schools in Canada, including those in Winnipeg, Junior Red Cross members were knitting articles of clothing to send to troops, POW's, and civilians ("Winnipeg school," 1941; Garrioch, 1945). After the war the Canadian Junior Red Cross continued to send money, through The Fund for International Help and Understanding, "to help children left destitute by the war and natural disasters" (Porter, 1960, p. 68).

#### Winnipeg During World War II

During World War II, the people of Winnipeg became involved in the war effort in a variety of ways. Farmers and factory workers produced war supplies (Chafe, 1967). Many others joined the armed forces and participated in battles in Hong Kong, Dieppe, Sicily, Italy, the Dutch Islands, and the Rhine, to name a few (Chafe, 1967). Winnipeg prospered during the war because it "had labour, industrial space, and experience" (Bothwell, et al., 1987, p. 361). Unemployment was eased by orders for aircraft parts, gun components, and other steel parts (Bothwell, et al., 1987). Companies in Winnipeg which produced war materials and provided employment included: Defense Industries Limited, Trans-Canada Air Lines, Canadian Airways, Mid-West Aircraft, CN Rail, the Vulcan Iron Works, and Manitoba Bridge and Iron (Bothwell, et al., 1987).

### Winnipeg Schools During World War II

According to Chafe (1967) "schools, without neglecting essential work, became part of the war machine" (p. 140). Teachers were among those who enlisted in the forces. Ninety men and women from the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 served in the forces during World War II (Chafe, 1967). Those who stayed in the classroom were also involved in the war effort. Any free time was "devoted to the cause of victory" (Chafe, 1967, p. 134).

Along with war work, teachers had to perform their regular duties. Conditions were not the same as during peace-time. No new schools were built in Winnipeg between 1936 and 1949. Trustees felt that tax dollars were better spent fighting the Depression and the war (Chafe, 1967). School enrolment in Winnipeg dropped steadily throughout the war. Young men often joined the armed forces before they finished school and young women went to work in war industries. There also seems to have been a shortage of qualified teachers during the war. Married women who had previously been teachers were hired to teach in spite of a clause in the contract terminating employment upon marriage (Chafe, 1967).

Despite the somewhat abnormal conditions, schools and school boards tried to continue as normally as possible. The three existing streams of education continued to be offered to students in junior and senior high school. These were:

matriculation, which was for those students going on to university; the high school leaving course; and the Industrial course (Chafe, 1967). The Industrial course had a more practical emphasis with more time spent on either manual training or Home Economics (Chafe, 1967).

In addition to the existing classes, changes were made to the curriculum. Grade twelve, which had been eliminated in 1932, was reinstated in 1939 (Chafe, 1967). New classes were introduced, including Practical Citizenship and Art (Chafe, 1967). Radio was offered as a teaching tool during the war but was not widely used because the school curriculum was already quite full (Chafe, 1967).

#### War Work in Winnipeg Schools

In the midst of this "crowded curriculum" (Chafe, 1967, p. 128) teachers and students in Winnipeg were performing war work. "Students and teachers bought War Savings Stamps and Certificates, every school had a Penny Fund, everybody collected salvage ... Cecil Rhodes school in Weston 'adopted' a town in England called Westonsupermare [sic]" (Chafe, 1967, p. 140). As well, teachers and other employees in the Winnipeg School Division donated a field ambulance and \$650 worth of hospital supplies to the Red Cross (Chafe, 1967).

"In 1940, the physical education program was modified to encourage all junior and senior high schools to organize boys for cadet training and girls into Red Cross units"

(Chafe, 1967, p. 126). During the war, practical arts classes were geared towards the war effort. Examples of this included, "shop skills taught [to boys] were geared to war needs" (Chafe, 1967, p. 130), and "in the fall of 1939, 1500 girls were organized, under Household Arts teachers, in Red Cross units for war service" (Chafe, 1967, p. 130).

According to Wilson (1966), "the organization in junior and senior high schools of Junior Red Cross units for war service work was for the most part directed by Home Economics teachers" (p. 125). During the war, Home Economics classes were offered in grades seven to twelve (Wilson, 1966). In 1940 there were Home Economics classes in 36 Winnipeg schools. These classes encompassed all junior high school students and 2,008 high school students (Wilson, 1966). In 1945 these classes included over 3,300 junior high school students and 2,100 high school students. The Home Economics "programs were designed to assist the students with successful personal living as members of homes and communities, to initiate the skills and appreciations necessary to carry on their home lives and to assume citizenship responsibilities that were extensions of home life" (Wilson, 1966, p. 79). These characteristics were compatible with the mandates of the Junior Red Cross. According to Wilson (1966), as many as 10,000 articles of clothing were produced by home economics students in

Winnipeg in one year. These products were sent overseas by the Junior Red Cross.

Summary: Humanitarian principles put into practice

Volunteer work in Canada during World War II was widespread and involved many different groups. The Canadian Red Cross Society was instrumental in organizing much of this work. Since its beginnings, the Red Cross, governed by the Geneva Conventions, has been involved in giving aid to those in need during war-time.

The Winnipeg Junior Red Cross was one group providing assistance to those in need during World War II. This was done by collecting funds to send overseas, purchasing items such as musical instruments to send to POW's, knitting and/or sewing articles of clothing to send overseas, and providing troops with mobile canteens. While knitting was not the only activity of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross, there were enough students knitting to make thousands of items. This represents a substantial contribution. The humanitarian principles of the Red Cross were put into practice through the work of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross during World War II.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

This chapter describes the archival research conducted to meet the objectives of this study. Topics include preliminary research, identification of archives, data collection, oral history, and analysis of data.

#### Preliminary Research

Initially, the researcher investigated books and periodicals to establish the origins of the international organizations of the Red Cross and the Junior Red Cross, and to outline the beginnings of national branches of these organizations in Canada. Information on general conditions in Canada and Winnipeg during World War II was also gathered to establish context.

With preliminary information gathered, the researcher proceeded to develop data collection sheets which were then used in the examination of primary sources (See Appendix A).

#### Identification of Archives

A list of specific archives and/or government departmental libraries that might yield information about Junior Red Cross knitting activities in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during World War II was compiled using the bibliographies of some secondary sources as well as appropriate directories. Selected archives and libraries were then accessed for information about Junior Red Cross knitting activities in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during

World War II. Holdings which were examined are specified under the name of the archive.

1. The Manitoba Provincial Archives

Manitoba Red Cross holdings - The Red Cross holdings at the Manitoba Provincial Archives have limited access. A letter of permission to examine these documents was obtained from the Manitoba Red Cross Society (See Appendix B).

2. Department of Education Instructional Resources/Library

a. Manitoba Dept. of Ed. Annual Reports 1939-46.

b. Manitoba Dept. of Ed. Curriculum Guides 1939-46.

3. Winnipeg School Division No. 1 Archives

a. Annual reports of the Trustees of the School District of Winnipeg No. 1 1939-1946.

b. Yearbooks of various schools in the school division from 1939-46 (yearbooks were also examined at several schools as the archives did not have yearbooks from every school in the Division).

Data Collection

Several key areas based on initial research questions and the literature review were identified. The following headings represent these groupings and were used to gather information for the study:

1. General School Conditions, Manitoba 1939-46

2. Manitoba School Curriculum, Junior Red Cross 1939-46

3. Manitoba School Curriculum, Home Economics 1939-46

4. Manitoba Demographics 1939-46
  - school population
  - Junior Red Cross Membership
5. Winnipeg Demographics 1939-46
  - school population
  - Junior Red Cross Membership
6. Schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 1939-46
  - school population
  - Junior Red Cross membership
7. Junior Red Cross organization in each school
8. Number of items, including names of articles produced
9. Destination of knitted goods
10. Role of Home Economics Teachers
11. Sources of supplies
12. Knitting importance, by school and generally

The majority of material recorded on the data collection sheets (see Appendix A) was found in archives.

#### Oral History

Interviews with people who were involved in the Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg during World War II were conducted. The search process included an advertisement which was placed in the Winnipeg Free Press requesting information from anyone who may have been a part of the knitting activity. Several groups in Winnipeg were also contacted to determine whether any of their members participated in Junior Red Cross knitting during World War

II. These included the University Women's Club of Winnipeg, Age & Opportunity, Creative Retirement, and several private individuals.

A list of open-ended interview questions was developed using the headings from the data collections sheets and the information already gathered from archival sources (see Appendix C). A consent form was created which could be sent through the mail to people interested in participating in the research (see Appendix D). Once the consent forms were returned, individuals were contacted and interview appointments were set up. The researcher was able to contact and interview four former Junior Red Cross members. Notes were taken during the interviews as it was thought that a tape recorder might make some participants uncomfortable. The information gathered from the interviews was supplementary to the data collected at the archives. It was used mainly to verify information already recorded.

#### Analysis of Data

For each of the four objectives listed below, analysis was determined by the amount and type of information which was collected. Data were available from 14 of the more than 80 schools which were in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during World War II. The Winnipeg School Division No. 1 Archives did not have yearbooks from all of the schools in the Division. All of the schools which existed during World War II and still exist today were contacted but most did not

have data about Junior Red Cross work during World War II. Schools which did have information were quite willing to share it.

To ascertain how Junior Red Cross knitting was organized in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, information on each school was examined individually. Schools were then compared to discern if the structure of the Junior Red Cross groups was similar.

To verify what the members of the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 were knitting and for whom, lists of items knit by the Junior Red Cross were compared with lists of clothing items from Red Cross knitting instruction booklets. The Knitting Instructions for War Work booklets distributed by the Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross established what items were needed by the armed forces and by civilians.

To establish the role of home economics teachers in the organization of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, the work of individual home economics teachers was examined over the war period. The work of the various home economics teachers from different schools was then scrutinised for similarities.

To determine the significance of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during, and immediately after World War II, comparisons were made between the number of students in Junior Red Cross and the

number of items knit; the number of Junior Red Cross members and total school enrolment; the number of items knit by the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg in relation to the total amount knit by the Junior Red Cross in the province of Manitoba. Significance was also established by determining who thought the knitting was important and by confirming whether or not Junior Red Cross work became part of the school curriculum.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

This chapter describes information which was collected from documents at archival facilities and from interviews with former Junior Red Cross members. Material was available from 14 of the more than 80 schools which were in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during World War II. These schools were scattered throughout the Division (see Appendix E). A list of the schools surveyed can be seen in Table 1. Four former Junior Red Cross members were interviewed. The findings are organized under the main headings of, structure of Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg schools, components of the knitting, and determining significance.

#### Structure of Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg schools

There were many people and groups who provided a support network for the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross. This was essential as schools were often affected by the war. Annual reports of the Manitoba Department of Education (1940-46) document that there was a shortage of qualified teachers during World War II and a scarcity of some school supplies.

The annual reports indicated that many in the Canadian Red Cross Society and the Winnipeg school system believed that participation in Junior Red Cross work encouraged the development of good citizens. This made Junior Red Cross a popular school group during World War II. Jean E. Browne, National Director of the Junior Red Cross, stated in her

annual report of 1940-41 that Canadian Departments of Education strongly supported this activity in the schools, while most school Inspectors eagerly promoted it (National Junior Red Cross Committee, 1941).

### Curriculum

In 1943 the Manitoba Department of Education introduced a course called 'Practical Citizenship' into the Manitoba school curriculum. The components of this course included, Health and Physical Training, Fundamentals, Drill or Red Cross work or Home Nursing, Knots and Splicing, Use of Maps or Signalling, Fieldcraft or Woodcraft or Aircraft Recognition, and First Aid (Manitoba Department of Education programme of studies, 1943). While the Red Cross segment of the course was not compulsory, some schools included it and gave credits for this work (knitting) as part of the students' 'Practical Citizenship' marks (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1945 & 46; Gordon Bell High School, 1945; interview participant). In some cases knitting, as part of Junior Red Cross, was worked into the school day (Gordon Bell High School, 1941; Isaac Newton High School, 1943-46; Kelvin High School, 1942, 1943, and 1945; Lord Selkirk School, 1941; interview participants). This was not always possible because the curriculum was already quite full with compulsory courses.

### Junior Red Cross branches

Whether the knitting was done at home or at school, the basic organization of each Junior Red Cross group was essentially the same. Each club had a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, although the last two were often combined into one position. Each class that wanted to participate had at least one class representative who, at the high school level, was responsible for distributing wool, supervising work, collecting finished garments, and generally disseminating Junior Red Cross information to the class about any other school Red Cross projects (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1940, 1943; Gordon Bell High School, 1940; Kelvin High School, 1940; "Cecil Rhodes pupils," 1941; St. John's High School, 1941, 1943; Isaac Newton High School, 1942-45; Laura Secord School, 1944; interview participant).

### Individual schools

Aside from the fundamental organization described above, there was variety among the Junior Red Cross groups within Winnipeg School Division No. 1. It is not clear from archival documents whether Junior Red Cross membership, or knitting, in the schools of Winnipeg School Division No. 1 was completely voluntary. Interview participants recall that in elementary school, everyone had to participate while in junior and senior high, it was an optional activity. Written articles from school yearbooks seems to support this. As

Table 1  
Red Cross Work in Winnipeg School Division No. 1

School	Student Involvement	Location of Knitting	Teacher Advisors
Lord Selkirk Elementary, Junior and Senior High School	Boys and girls	at school and at home	2 not Home Ec.
Grosvenor Elementary School	All except grades 1 and 2	at school	unknown
Aberdeen Elementary and Junior High School	Girls in Junior High	at school	2 not Home Ec.
Cecil Rhodes Elementary and Junior High School	Grades 10 and 11	unknown	unknown
Greenway Elementary and Junior High School	Boys and girls	at school	unknown
Laura Secord Elementary and Junior High School	Boys and girls	at school and at home	unknown
Luxton Elementary and Junior High School	Boys and girls	at school	1 H. Ec. 1 other
Mulvey Elementary and Junior High School	Girls	unknown	1 not Home Ec.
William Whyte Elementary and Junior High School	Elem - boys and girls Jr - girls	at school and at home	3 not Home Ec.
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute	Nearly every girl	in Home Ec. class and at home	3 H. Ec. 4 others
Gordon Bell High School	Girls	at school and at home	1 H. Ec.
Isaac Newton High School	Girls	at school	1 H. Ec. 8 others
Kelvin High School	Girls	at school and at home	2 H. Ec. 1 other
St. John's High School	Girls	at school and at home	8 not Home Ec.

Note. Information contained in Table 1 was obtained from school yearbooks and newspaper articles.

shown in Table 1, in most elementary schools all students participated while in junior and senior high it was usually only the female students. Lord Selkirk School was one exception to this, as male and female students at all levels were knitting.

Table 1 reveals that there was also variety in where the knitting was being done. Two interview participants recall that at some schools, students were allowed to knit in class if they finished their school work early. In several schools, principals tried to find room in the daily schedule so knitting could be done at school. If this was not possible, the knitting was begun at school but finished at home (Kelvin High School, 1943-45). As well, we can see that in most of the elementary schools knitting was being done at school, while junior and senior high school students were often expected to work at home.

Supervision was one job of the teacher advisors. At several schools these advisors were Home Economics teachers. This was not always specified in the school yearbooks, or known by people who were interviewed. There were at least 38 teachers involved in facilitating Junior Red Cross work at the 14 schools for which information was obtainable. The Table also shows that eight of these instructors were identified as Home Economics teachers.

According to Annual Reports of the Manitoba Department of Education (1942 & 1943), Red Cross work in Winnipeg

schools was usually coordinated by the Home Economics Department in a school, if there was one. During the war, Home Economics programs in Manitoba (see Chapter 2) were compatible with the mandates of the Junior Red Cross. At the time (1939-46), there were 15 schools in Winnipeg with Home Economics Departments (Wilson, 1966), while Home Economics classes were available in 36 Winnipeg schools (Scraba, 1940).

#### Components of the Knitting

Along with the support of their teachers, students in the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross during World War II needed wool and knitting needles. Once these supplies were obtained, the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 was able to knit a variety of articles for many different recipients. While many schools simply sent their knitted articles to Red Cross headquarters, others sent items to specific people or places. Other than afghan squares, which most of the schools appear to have been making, there was also great diversity in what each school was knitting.

#### Supplies

World War II was a time of shortages and rationing. Even so, schools in Winnipeg were able to obtain supplies in order to knit tens of thousands of items. At times this required a little creativity. For example, there were some schools which could not obtain knitting needles. Instead of

needles, the students were knitting with pick-up-sticks which had the same diameter as size 11 knitting needles (Manitoba Department of Education annual report, 1941; interview participant).

Along with knitting needles, students in the Junior Red Cross needed wool. The Purchasing Committee of the Canadian Red Cross Society obtained quotas of wool from the Wool Board which was established during the war (Maclachlan, 1942). It was not always possible to obtain their full ration because there was a shortage of yarn (Maclachlan, 1942). This shortage was felt by the Women's War Work Committee which found it "necessary to have the wool actually in hand in the National Warehouse before allocating it to Divisions and to keep the strictest supervision over the records in order to insure our knitting supplies" (Campbell, 1942, p. 2).

The Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 received some wool from the Red Cross Society (Gordon Bell High School, 1940-43; Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1941-45; Kelvin High School, 1942-44; St. John's High School, 1942; William Whyte School, 1942; Isaac Newton High School, 1944; Laura Secord School, 1944). Interview participants remember this wool as being very coarse, heavy, and difficult to knit with. Schools felt the shortages too. At Gordon Bell High School in the 1942-43 school year, work was reduced to some extent because of a limited supply of

materials, especially wool (Gordon Bell High School, 1943). At Kelvin High School the following year (1943-44) the limited quantity of wool supplied by the Red Cross meant the number of articles knit was reduced from the previous year (Kelvin High School, 1944). One interview participant recalls that the Red Cross did not supply much yarn to elementary schools because the students were not as proficient at knitting.

The shortage of supplies meant the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross had to become resourceful. Many Junior Red Cross groups raised money, through a variety of school activities, to purchase more wool. Students also donated wool from home (Gordon Bell High School, 1940-43; Manitoba Department of Education annual reports, 1940-45; Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1941-45; Lord Selkirk School, 1941-43; William Whyte School, 1941-44; St. John's High School, 1941; Kelvin High School, 1942-44; Laura Secord School, 1944; interview participants). One interviewee recalls raveling old garments, washing the wool, and re-knitting it into other items. Another recalls that wool came from Mercers (a dry goods store on Portage Ave.), but it is not clear if this yarn was purchased or donated. According to those interviewed, the war was a part of people's lives and everyone did their part to help where they could.

### Knitted articles

From the start of World War II, the Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross Society was putting together instruction booklets for knitted items needed by the armed forces and civilians (Canadian Red Cross Society, 1940 & 1941). Tables 2, 3, and 4 offer comparisons of what the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 was knitting during the war with lists of items from the Knitting Instructions for War Work (Canadian Red Cross Society 1940 & 1941) booklets put out by the Women's War Work Committee. One can see that the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross was knitting similar items. According to interview participants, these instruction booklets were used by Winnipeg Junior Red Cross knitters as were Lux Knitting Books (Lever Brothers Limited, 1941 & 1942). One interview participant recalled that she learned to knit using the Red Cross Knitting Instructions for War Work booklets.

There was some variation between schools in the Division regarding items knit (see Appendix F). Some knit a wide variety of items while others concentrated on only two or three. Interview participants recall that in elementary school beginners learned to knit straight afghan squares before moving on to afghan squares knit on the diagonal. In later grades, students were usually knitting more complicated articles of clothing. Some schools were also able to knit more articles than others (see Appendix F).

Table 2  
Comparison of Items Knit for the Army, Navy, and Air Force

<u>Items listed in Red Cross Knitting Instructions for War Work Number 1, For the Services (1940)</u>	<u>Items knit for the services by JRC members in Winnipeg</u>
Plain heavy service socks	Airmen's sweaters
Heavy service socks with shaped leg	Socks
Knee cap	Scarves
Half mitts with finger sections	Mitts
Half mitts without finger sections	Gloves
Rifle mitts	Wristlets
Whole mitts	Helmets
Two-way mitts	Turtle-neck tuck-ins
Gloves	Turtle-neck sweaters
Broadcast mitts	Sleeveless sweaters
Plain knitted scarf	Turtle-neck seamen's sweaters
Turtle-neck tuck-in	sweaters
Sleeveless sweater with "V" neck	Long-sleeved turtle-neck sweaters
Sleeveless sweater with high neck	Sleeveless V-neck sweaters
Alternative sleeveless sweater	
Heavy turtle neck sweater with sleeves	
Plain helmet	
Balaclava helmet	
Ribbed helmet	
Quebec helmet	
Steel helmet cap	
Toque	
Body belt	
Aero cap	
Aero helmet	
Seamen's socks	
Seamen's long stockings	
Alternative Seamen's long stockings	
Seamen's scarf	
Bed socks	
Heel-less bed socks	
Shoulder wraps	
Medium weight amputation covers	
Light weight amputation covers	
Man's convalescent jacket	

Note. Compiled from information contained in school yearbooks.

Table 3  
Comparison of Items Knit for Babies and Children

Items listed in <u>Red Cross Knitting Instructions for War Work Number 3, Knitted Comforts for Babies and Children, First Size to 14 Years (1941)</u>	Items knit for babies and children by JRC members in Winnipeg
GARMENTS FOR BABIES: Round yoke coat Coat Panties Bonnet Knee bootees Mitts Cap Pullover Knitted shawl Eight piece crocheted outfit Crocheted shawl Legging set	Baby sweaters Baby bootees Baby bonnets Baby jackets Baby layettes Thumbless mitts Soakers Panties Socks Mitts Scarves Dresses Suits Sweaters Gloves
GARMENTS FOR CHILDREN: Girl's dress and knickers Girl's pullover Boy's suit Legging set for girls or boys Boy's pullover Windbreaker for girls or boys Girl's dress Cardigan for girls or boys Girl's scarf Boy's scarf Gloves Mitts Socks Stockings	Leggings Caps Pullovers Shawls Nursery school sets

Note. Compiled from information contained in school yearbooks.

Table 4  
Comparison of Items Knit for Women

<u>Items listed in Red Cross Knitting Instructions for War Work Number 2, Knitted Comforts for Women (1940)</u>	<u>Items knit for women by JRC members in Winnipeg</u>
Cardigan with or without sleeves Pullover with "V" or round neck Sleeveless pullover Knee stockings Long stockings Ankle socks Calot Toque Ribbed helmet Moss stitch scarf Gloves Vest Knickers	Calots Scarves Ankle socks Cardigans Gloves Sleeveless pullovers Toques Helmets

Note. Compiled from information contained in school yearbooks.

A few of the patterns for the items the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross was knitting were not in either the Red Cross knitting instruction booklets or the Lux knitting books. These articles, which included afghan squares and wash cloths, were usually knit in the elementary schools (see Appendix F). It is known that these items were the easiest to knit and were often used to teach simple knitting skills.

#### Recipients

The resourcefulness of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross and the ability of its members to contribute whatever was necessary was of great benefit to those in need. Interview participants were not always exactly certain to whom the knitted items were sent. Some yearbooks and school newspapers simply state that items were delivered to the Red

Cross. According to a report of the National Transportation Committee of the Canadian Red Cross Society (Canadian Red Cross Society, 1942) the Canadian Red Cross shipped parcels to Geneva, Switzerland; the United Kingdom; Athens, Greece; Iceland; Kingston, Jamaica; Aruba, N.W.I.; Lisbon, Portugal; Russia; and Japan. Many of these parcels went to prisoners-of-war (Canadian Red Cross Society, 1942).

Winnipeg Junior Red Cross groups were also sending knitted items to various other individuals and groups. A couple of schools sent articles to former students serving overseas. Several schools were sending knitted things to refugees, Bundles for Britain, British Civilian Relief, all branches of the services, and civilians in bombed-out areas. Children in war zones, British war nurseries, and devastated areas of Europe also received assistance from the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross (Kelvin High School, 1940-46; "Cecil Rhodes pupils," 1941; Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1941-45; Gordon Bell High School, 1941; Lord Selkirk School, 1941, 1943; St. John's High School, 1941; Isaac Newton High School, 1942; Luxton School, 1943; William Whyte School, 1943, 1944).

In addition, Lord Selkirk School (1943) knit clothing for the Women's Auxiliary and Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute (1946) sent items to the Unitarian Service Committee. The Junior Red Cross at Cecil Rhodes School made the town of Weston-Super-Mare in Somerset, England their

particular responsibility and sent some of the articles they knit to homeless children there ("Cecil Rhodes pupils," 1941). Several schools were also making clothing to be sent to the Standon Homestead War Nursery in Ockley, Surrey, England (Beck, 1943). In one case, recipients of knitted items were connected to the wool suppliers. The Netherlands Branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society supplied Isaac Newton High School with wool to be knit into articles for their organization (Isaac Newton High School, 1942-44).

Those who received knitted items would often show their appreciation by writing letters of thanks to the knitters. One interview participant recalls how excited her class became when such a letter arrived from someone who had received one of their afghans. Afghans were often labelled so recipients knew where they were made and by whom. Three P.O.W.'s, who were originally from Winnipeg, wrote a letter to a teacher at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute expressing their appreciation for knitted items they had received (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1942). They stated that British P.O.W.'s also appreciated Canadian Red Cross work. The children at the Standon Homestead War Nursery also wrote letters thanking the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross for knitted garments they received ("Canadian Juniors," 1946; "Junior Red Cross has," 1945).

### Determining Significance

Members of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross knit many items for a variety of people during World War II. The following sections document the level of Junior Red Cross involvement in Winnipeg and Manitoba schools during World War II and indicate which groups and individuals thought the war work of the Junior Red Cross was important. This was a subjective determination involving whether or not groups and individuals thought Junior Red Cross work was important enough to mention in their annual reports or elsewhere.

#### Level of Junior Red Cross involvement

As shown in Table 5, Junior Red Cross membership in Manitoba schools during World War II consisted of 50% or more of the Manitoba school population throughout World War II. Junior Red Cross membership increased steadily during the war, reaching its peak (59%) in 1943-44, even though the school population continued to decline until after the war was over.

In Winnipeg during World War II, Junior Red Cross membership fluctuated but was usually made up of approximately 36% of the city's school population. Table 5 illustrates that Winnipeg's school population also declined during the war. Young men often joined the armed forces before they finished school and young women went to work in war industries.

Table 5  
Junior Red Cross Involvement in Winnipeg and Manitoba  
 Schools During World War II

Year	Manitoba			Winnipeg School Div. No. 1		
	School pop.	JRC pop.	# items made	School pop.	JRC pop.	# items made
1939-40	134,411	52,472	unknown	34,247	11,861	11,032
1940-41	131,562	62,980	1000's	33,678	12,580	10,655
1941-42	126,610	62,614	23,619	32,243	10,615	15,788
1942-43	123,080	68,240	1000's	31,067	10,655	10,389
1943-44	119,074	70,170	1000's	30,038	11,471	unknown
1944-45	118,390	69,767	unknown	29,854	unknown	unknown
1945-46	121,272	64,404	unknown	30,736	unknown	unknown

Note. Data from Junior Red Cross Committee reports (National and Provincial), Manitoba Department of Education annual reports, and Winnipeg School Division No. 1 annual reports to Trustees.

Even though school populations were declining, there was still a high level of Junior Red Cross involvement. Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg schools made up approximately one-quarter of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross during World War II. Those interviewed believed Junior Red Cross work was what they could contribute as part of their war effort.

During the 1941-42 school year, the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross made 67% of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross contribution for that year. Winnipeg Junior Red Cross donations remained fairly constant throughout the war. The number of comforts made during the 1941-42 school year was the highest at 15,788. The numbers in Table 5 show that approximately one item was made by each Winnipeg Junior Red Cross member per year.

### Importance of the knitting

The war work of the Junior Red Cross in Canadian schools did not go unnoticed. People at various levels of government, on school boards, and within the Canadian Red Cross thought this labour was important for various reasons.

According to minutes from the annual meeting of the Central Council of the Canadian Red Cross Society, Manitoba Division (1944, April 19-20), Brooke Claxton, then parliamentary assistant to the Prime Minister of Canada, believed the Canadian Junior Red Cross could continue to provide assistance to children in occupied countries at the end of hostilities. As well, annual committee reports of the Manitoba Division of the Canadian Red Cross indicate that, in 1943, Ivan Schultz, then Manitoba Minister of Education, requested a report from the Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee outlining the part played by the Junior Red Cross in the curriculum of Manitoba schools (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1943).

Within the Manitoba Department of Education, various groups and individuals also considered the work of the Junior Red Cross to be important. The Superintendents of Education, H.R. Low (until 1940), C.K. Rogers (Acting Superintendent, 1940-45), and R.O. MacFarlane (as of 1945), and the Public School Inspectors often mentioned Junior Red Cross knitting and other war work in their annual reports (Manitoba Department of Education reports, 1940-46). They

frequently included Junior Red Cross membership numbers for the province as well as lists of what the students were knitting.

As mentioned previously, the Manitoba Department of Education introduced a new course entitled 'Practical Citizenship' in 1943, which included a component on Junior Red Cross war work (Manitoba Department of Education report and programme of studies, 1943). According to the programme of studies (Manitoba Department of Education, 1943) this particular part of the course was considered optional. In several schools in Winnipeg, credits were given to students for Junior Red Cross knitting work done as a portion of the 'Practical Citizenship' course and banners were awarded to the classroom with the highest academic average in the course (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1945, 1946; interview participant).

At the Winnipeg School Division No. 1, various committees and individuals thought the knitting work of the Junior Red Cross was noteworthy. During World War II the Chairmen of the School Management Committee documented Winnipeg Junior Red Cross membership figures in their annual reports to the school trustees (Smith, 1939; Scraba, 1940; Knox, 1941; Chappell, 1942; Beck, 1943; Chappell, 1944; Robertson, 1945). They usually included the number of articles made by members of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross as well. J. C. Pincock, the Superintendent of Winnipeg Schools,

would also list yearly figures for Winnipeg Junior Red Cross membership and amounts of articles knitted in his annual reports to the Manitoba Department of Education (1940-45). In 1940, he described the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross as "expanding rapidly" (Manitoba Department of Education report, 1939-40).

The Director of Home Economics in Winnipeg schools, Miss Isabel Robson, showed her support for the war work of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross in a more tangible way. It was her job to supervise the making of clothing which was sent to the Standon Homestead War Nursery in Ockley, Surrey, England (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1942 & 1945). All of this clothing was made (knit and sewn) in the Home Economics departments of Winnipeg schools (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1945, 1946; National Junior Red Cross Committee, 1942, 1944; Robertson, 1945; "Canadian Juniors," 1946). The production of the clothing began in 1942 at Isaac Newton and William Whyte Schools with other Winnipeg schools becoming involved the following year (Beck, 1943).

The Canadian Red Cross Society believed all the work of the Junior Red Cross was important. As C. K. Rogers, Chairman of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee until 1945, stated in Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of November 28, 1940, Junior Red Cross work was well regarded by schools as it was an excellent way to teach better citizenship (Canadian Red Cross Society, Manitoba Division).

Mr. Rogers, who was also Acting Superintendent of Education for Manitoba from 1940-45, stated in further reports that Junior Red Cross work was effective (Manitoba Department of Education report, 1941), and that it was supported by the Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross Society (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1940). He included amounts of items knitted annually by the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross, as well as Manitoba Junior Red Cross membership figures, in many reports (Manitoba Department of Education reports, 1940-45; Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1940-45; National Junior Red Cross Committee, 1941-46).

Mr. Roger's successor as Chairman of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, E. D. Parker, reported that in the 1945-46 school year, members of the Junior Red Cross continued to knit and sew for home and overseas relief (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1946). He also mentioned that clothing was still being made and sent to the Standon Homestead War Nursery by the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1946).

In addition to this, the National Director of the Junior Red Cross, Jean E. Browne, and the Directors of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross, Gladys Pritchard (until 1941) and Ina M. Harris (after 1941), promoted the Junior Red Cross in Canadian schools. Miss Browne praised the "motivated energy" of school children and the "quiet, steady and devotioned [sic] work" of teachers (National Junior Red Cross

Committee, 1941). Miss Pritchard and Miss Harris visited schools in Manitoba, including those in Winnipeg, to help set up Junior Red Cross branches as well as to inspect work and give support (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1940; Gordon Bell High School, 1940; Kelvin High School, 1940; "Winnipeg school," 1940).

Among the duties of the Director of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross were, discussing Junior Red Cross programs with teachers and students, speaking at teachers' conventions and other school gatherings, "requisitioning Red Cross materials for war work for the ... city and suburban high school members" (Snyder, 1941). She also had to keep records of this war work and accept completed and donated articles (Snyder, 1941).

The Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross Society supported the work of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross. Many of the knitting instruction booklets used by the Junior Red Cross were supplied by this committee (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1940; Gordon Bell High School, 1940; Kelvin High School, 1940; "Winnipeg school," 1940; Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1940; interview participants). Mrs. Alexandra W. Hogg (1943), Chairman of the Women's War Work Committee, Canadian Red Cross Society, Manitoba Division, praised the work of the Junior Red Cross in her annual report of 1942-43.

During the war, the Canadian Red Cross Despatch, the official publication of the Canadian Red Cross Society, would feature a different provincial Junior Red Cross group in each issue. This usually included photographs with captions telling of the work that was being done. The April-May issue of 1946 contained an article on the clothing being sent to the Standon Homestead War Nursery ("Canadian Juniors", 1946). As previously mentioned, this clothing was being made by Junior Red Cross members in Winnipeg Home Economics classes.

In addition to the federal government, the provincial government, the Manitoba Department of Education, the Winnipeg School Division No. 1, and the Canadian Red Cross Society, there were others who believed the knitting work of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross was important. In 1943, the Hudson's Bay Company displayed the July shipment of clothing for the Standon Homestead War Nursery in the window of their store for one week (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1943). The Christie's Biscuits company placed an advertisement in The Winnipeg Tribune in March of 1943 (p.5) praising the work of Junior Red Cross school children. The ad included cartoon diagrams illustrating what students could do to help, including knitting. As well, Her Royal Highness, the Princess Elizabeth, became patroness of the Canadian Junior Red Cross in 1941 (National Junior Red Cross Committee, 1942).

At the school level there were many who believed Junior Red Cross war work was important. This included many of the people already mentioned, some of whom visited schools to start up Junior Red Cross groups or to give praise for work done. People working in the schools also promoted the work of the Junior Red Cross.

School Principals praised Junior Red Cross war work in school yearbooks. Some even rearranged the school schedule so knitting could be done during the school day (Gordon Bell High School, 1941; Lord Selkirk School, 1941; Isaac Newton High School, 1943-46; Kelvin High School, 1942, 1943, & 1945). According to two interview participants, students who finished their work early were often permitted to knit for the Red Cross.

Teachers used whatever time was available to provide instructions, advice, encouragement, direction, and supervision to their students so the work could be accomplished (William Whyte School, 1939-40, 1942-45; "Winnipeg school," 1940; Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1940-46; Gordon Bell High School, 1940-41, 1943-45; Kelvin High School, 1940, 1942-46; Mulvey School, 1941; Lord Selkirk School, 1941-43; St. John's High School, 1941-42, 1945; Isaac Newton High School, 1942-45; Aberdeen School, 1945). Many of these advisors were Home Economics teachers but other teachers were involved as well. Some teachers set an example for students by knitting (Gordon

Bell High School, 1944). Others inspected the knitting before it was sent to the Red Cross (Kelvin High School, 1940). The teacher advisors were often the liaisons between the student organizations and Red Cross headquarters (Snyder, 1941). The student members of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross acknowledged and thanked their teacher advisors in school yearbooks and school newspapers.

While principals and teachers facilitated the war work, the students actually performed it. Interview participants indicated that during the war, they did not attach a great deal of significance to their knitting work. As young people, there was not much they could do. Knitting became part of their war effort, everyone was involved, and they took part "because it needed to be done" (interview participant). Several of the people who were interviewed stated that they never expected anyone to want to talk to them about their war work.

Along with donating their time and energy towards knitting, some students also donated wool (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, 1942, 1944; Kelvin High School, 1942, 1944; interview participants). One interviewee also remembered her mother donating time to sew together afghan squares. Yearbook write-ups indicate students thought this was a worthwhile, rewarding experience.

Local newspapers also thought the work had value. There were hundreds of articles written about Red Cross work in

both The Winnipeg Free Press and The Winnipeg Tribune. Many of these documented the work of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross. Some dealt with specific work done at schools in Winnipeg. These articles included names of teachers and students involved, lists of what was being and knit and in what amounts, and often reported where the items were being sent ("Young knitters," 1940; "Cecil Rhodes pupils," 1941; "William Whyte pupils," 1941; "Home economics students," 1942; "We are proud," 1942; Garrioch, 1943; "How young Canadians," 1943). With much support from many areas, the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross was able to knit tens of thousands of items (approximately 70,000).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion and Conclusions

#### Discussion of Results

The following section offers explanations and suggestions regarding the data reported above. Topics include structure of Junior Red Cross, components of the knitting, and determining significance.

#### Structure of school Junior Red Cross groups

Information was available from approximately one-fifth of the schools (14 of 80) which were in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during World War II. This was a fairly representative sample, as the schools which were surveyed were scattered throughout the division (see Appendix E). Information which likely existed may have been lost or destroyed in relocation of schools or may be in some forgotten storage area. The basic structure of Junior Red Cross was the same in every school examined, however, there was some variety in how each group was organized.

#### Curriculum

The introduction of the 'Practical Citizenship' course in 1943 made Junior Red Cross part of the school curriculum in Manitoba. While it may not have been implemented in every school, it was included in curriculum guides. Whether the schools introduced the Junior Red Cross component of 'Practical Citizenship' or not was likely at the discretion of individual principals. Nevertheless, Junior Red Cross was

active in Canadian schools well before the introduction of 'Practical Citizenship' as students were knitting items to be sent overseas from the beginning of the war. Just as the volunteer work of women in Canada during World War II was not directed or started by government agencies, neither was the work of the Junior Red Cross.

#### Junior Red Cross branches

School annuals, interview participants, and newspaper articles all confirmed that at the elementary level, each student (male and female) was required to be a Junior Red Cross member. Once in junior and senior high school, student participation in Junior Red Cross appears to have become voluntary, with the membership being mostly female. Boys in junior and senior high school had the option of enrolling in cadets and as a result, may have been less likely to join the Junior Red Cross. At most schools, girls could not be cadets so Junior Red Cross was their only opportunity to be involved in the war effort.

Between 1939 and 1946, knitting was not seen as a male activity, so it is unlikely that older boys were encouraged to be involved in this 'feminine' exercise. St. John's High School conducted a school poll in 1942 in which one question was, "Should the boys knit for the Red Cross?" Only 33.3% of the school was in favour of boys knitting for the Red Cross. The President of their Junior Red Cross thought boys should knit "if they feel they have enough time" but "it should not

be compulsory for boys to knit" (St. John's High School, 1942, p. 23).

The basic structure of Junior Red Cross groups in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 was the same. This was determined by the regulations set out by the Canadian Red Cross Society. There were, however, some differences. These differences were likely related to the general school conditions of the time (i.e., the shortage of qualified teachers and lack of supplies). Another reason was because, as stated by one interviewee, each Junior Red Cross group decided, at their weekly meetings, what particular activities they would pursue in order to further the war effort. Not every group or grade level was knitting. Children in grades one and two did not knit (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1940). Some groups collected aluminum foil and/or salvage. There were many projects other than knitting which Junior Red Cross members could have chosen to take part in.

Groups which were knitting did not all conduct their work in the same manner. Principals who were able to fit knitting activity into their schools' schedules did so, but it was not essential that the work be done in school. At many of the high schools knitting was done at home, while most elementary schools knit in class. Perhaps it was presumed that the older students did not need as much supervision to complete their work.

The teachers who provided supervision were sometimes, but not always, Home Economics teachers. In the 14 schools surveyed, 21% of teacher supervisors were identified as Home Economics teachers; however, many supervisors were not identified by the subjects they taught. During World War II, there were Home Economics classes available in 36 of the more than 80 schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1. At these schools, according to Annual Reports of the Manitoba Department of Education (1942 & 1943) the Home Economics teacher was probably involved in Junior Red Cross knitting. At other schools, different teachers had to become involved, most likely whoever knew how to knit.

#### Components of the Knitting

##### Supplies

There are a number of explanations for the diversity in type and number of knitted items produced by each school in the Division during World War II. One of the determining factors was the availability of materials, especially wool. Yearbook write-ups from Gordon Bell and Kelvin High Schools indicate that if more wool had been available, students in the Junior Red Cross would have knit even more articles to send overseas. The wool shortage doubtless limited every group which was knitting clothing items to be sent overseas at the time. Students did not allow shortages to prevent them from making a contribution. Most schools raised money to purchase more wool. Students also donated wool from home

and unravelled clothing to re-knit the wool into other items. The students' resourcefulness may have been a result of their families' practices during the Depression.

#### Knitted articles

The Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross provided the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg with knitting instruction booklets. A comparison of what students were knitting with items listed in the instruction booklets confirms this. Interview participants recalled using these booklets. One person who was interviewed stated that she learned to knit from Red Cross instruction booklets.

Skill of knitters and size of Junior Red Cross groups may also have been contributing factors towards the type and number of knitted articles made by Junior Red Cross members in Winnipeg School Division No. 1. Interview participants remember that the better wool was given to the more competent knitters. Those less adept were given leftover yarn to knit afghan squares or other simple articles. Since most of the students in elementary school were just learning to knit, these would have been easy projects for them to practice on. They were also suitable endeavours for those students whose knitting skills did not progress beyond the basics. As well, afghan squares and wash cloths did not have to be the same colour throughout and so would have been a useful way to use up remnants of yarn.

### Recipients

In many cases Red Cross headquarters decided who received the knitted items. Numerous Junior Red Cross groups simply sent their knitted articles to Red Cross headquarters which then determined where to send the comforts. Other groups chose their recipients themselves. In one case, Isaac Newton High School received wool from the Netherlands branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society in order to knit items for their organization. It was not always this simple. There were so many people in need that it would have been difficult to decide where to send the knitted items. It is hard to say how this was decided.

### Determining Significance

To determine the significance of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during, and immediately after World War II, the level of Junior Red Cross involvement within the school Division had to be established.

#### Level of Junior Red Cross involvement

Although the contribution of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross, approximately 70,000 articles, may seem small in comparison with the millions of items made by the Red Cross as a whole, one has to remember that the contributors were children, many of whom were only eight years old (Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee, 1940). As well, had afghan squares been counted individually, the numbers of items

would have been much higher since it took between 49 and 81 six-inch squares to make one afghan (Lord Selkirk School, 1941). Some schools were making as many as 20 afghans in a year, which was a substantial amount of knitting. The 14 schools included in the study knit more than 300 afghans throughout the war, which means the students knit over 24,300 afghan squares. If 1942-43 was a typical year, then the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross made the majority of the knitted items contributed by the Manitoba Junior Red Cross during World War II.

Schools with larger populations would likely have been able to have larger Junior Red Cross groups and thus, more knitters. Membership numbers which were available for individual school Junior Red Cross groups ranged from 250 to over 400 (see Appendix E). The amounts knit by these groups were not always reported but it seems as though the larger clubs were knitting a wider variety of items. At many schools, only the girls were reported to be knitting, which would have limited the size of the school's Junior Red Cross group. Lord Selkirk School was one exception to this as boys and girls at all grade levels were knitting, but Junior Red Cross membership numbers were not available for this school. It was not possible to obtain information about every school in the Division so it is possible that Lord Selkirk School was not the only exception to the rule.

School conditions would also have had an effect on production of knitted articles. During the war, Home Economics programs in Manitoba (described in chapter 2) were compatible with the mandates of the Junior Red Cross, which may explain why Home Economics teachers were among the educators who became involved in Junior Red Cross work. Not every school had a Home Economics teacher, so other teachers who had the skills, interest, or time became involved as well.

The shortage of qualified teachers (Manitoba Department of Education reports, 1940-46) would have limited the number of teachers who were available to help with Red Cross work, and possibly restricted the knitting work students were able to do. Inexperienced teachers would have had their hands full teaching their assigned classes and may not have been able to participate in extra-curricular work.

#### Importance of the knitting

In addition to confirming the activities of the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross, significance was also established by ascertaining who thought Junior Red Cross knitting was important. This was a more subjective determination involving whether or not individuals and groups thought Junior Red Cross work was important enough to mention in their annual reports or elsewhere. It was essential to examine what was written as well as who wrote it.

Government officials recognized the value of the work done by school Junior Red Cross groups in Canada. This is evident by their requests for reports on Junior Red Cross activity in Manitoba schools. The inclusion of summaries of Winnipeg Junior Red Cross work in various annual reports is another indication that government executives, school board officials, and Superintendents of Education believed Junior Red Cross work had value. The fact that the Manitoba Department of Education made Junior Red Cross work part of the Manitoba school curriculum is further evidence that the provincial government considered this work significant.

It is clear the members of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross Committee also believed the knitting being done by Winnipeg school children was of some importance. Details of Junior Red Cross activities were usually included in the annual reports of the Committee's director. As well, supervision of knitting in Winnipeg schools was included as a duty of the Director of the Manitoba Junior Red Cross. Unquestionably, the Red Cross made every effort to encourage Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

Other groups and individuals showed support for this work, and thus indicated its importance. Newspaper advertisements would not have been placed, newspaper articles would not have been written, and displays of knitted articles would not have occurred if the companies involved did not think the work that Winnipeg school

children were doing was valuable. Princess Elizabeth's acceptance of the title of "patroness" of the Canadian Junior Red Cross in 1941, also demonstrated support for the work being done by this organization. With so much backing, it is no wonder the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross made such a large contribution of knitted articles to the Canadian Red Cross Society during the war.

#### Conclusions

The first objective of the study was to ascertain how Junior Red Cross knitting was organized in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during World War II. There were several questions related to this objective. Were all students in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 involved in the Junior Red Cross or was it purely volunteer work? Which schools in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 were involved? Where did they obtain their supplies?

Information was available from 14 schools in the Division. Each school yearbook which was available to be examined contained information about Junior Red Cross knitting and/or other Junior Red Cross activities, which would lead one to believe that most schools in the Division were involved in Junior Red Cross work of some sort. Whether or not Junior Red Cross work was entirely voluntary is also unclear. Junior Red Cross in elementary school appears to have been compulsory, according to interview participants and yearbooks. Junior and senior high school students, on

the other hand, seem to have had the option of volunteering to be members of the Junior Red Cross.

Yearbooks and interview participants, confirm that supplies were mainly obtained from the Red Cross. Shortages of supplies also necessitated that Junior Red Cross groups donate wool from home and raise money to purchase what the Red Cross could not provide. Several yearbooks indicate that the Junior Red Cross was willing and able to produce more knitted articles but the wool was not available.

The second objective of the study was to establish the role of home economics teachers in the organization of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1. Home economics teachers provided instructions, advice, encouragement, direction, and supervision to Junior Red Cross members. Other subject teachers did this as well. Home economics classes were available at 36 of the more than 80 schools in the Division, so it does not appear as though home economics teachers were any more or less involved than other teachers, although they are the only subject teachers mentioned in relation to Junior Red Cross work in Manitoba Department of Education annual reports.

One home economics teacher who appears to have made an exceptional effort was Isabel Robson, the Home Economics Supervisor for Winnipeg School Division No. 1. She directed the manufacturing of all the clothing which was sent to the Standon Homestead War Nursery in England. This work was

accomplished by Junior Red Cross members at various schools in the Division.

The third objective of the study was to verify what the members of the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 were knitting and for whom. Evidence from yearbooks, interviews, and Junior Red Cross records all indicate that the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross was knitting the same items as the Women's War Work Committee of the Canadian Red Cross and that the Junior Red Cross obtained their knitting instruction booklets from the Women's War Work Committee. Recipients of these knitted items were many and varied. How or why particular recipients were chosen remains unknown.

The final objective of the study was to determine the significance of Junior Red Cross knitting in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during, and immediately after World War II. Numbers which were compared show that a large quantity of items were knit by the Winnipeg Junior Red Cross. These numbers indicate that the equivalent of one item per year was knit by each Junior Red Cross member. However, not every group was knitting. This shows that those who were knitting probably knit more than one item per year. The total amount of articles knit might seem even more significant if the actual number of students knitting was known. It is known that students of all ages were knitting and that they knit approximately 70,000 items from 1939 to 1946.

At the time (1939-46), many others definitely thought this work was important. Several groups and individuals encouraged students to become involved in Junior Red Cross work. Newspapers and retail outlets gave the Junior Red Cross positive publicity. The Manitoba Department of Education eventually made Junior Red Cross a part of the school curriculum during the war. Government, public officials, school boards, and teachers gave support to the war work of the Junior Red Cross. Many wanted Junior Red Cross work to continue after the war was over in order to foster good relationships between children of Canada and children of other countries. This massive support network would lead one to believe the war work of the Junior Red Cross had a great deal of significance.

Student members of the Junior Red Cross thought the work they were doing was worthwhile and rewarding but did not view it as an extraordinary effort because so many others were doing the same thing. They remember doing it and some still knit as a result of their war effort. All of the people I interviewed were surprised that I wanted to know about the knitting they had done as children during the war. It appears as though the things they learned and did in Junior Red Cross have stayed with them.

Throughout World War II the Canadian Red Cross and Junior Red Cross provided food, clothing and other supplies to various groups and individuals in many parts of the

world. Work done by the Junior Red Cross may have been supervised by adults but it was all done by children of various ages. This research shows that children played an important part in this particular world event.

World War II was a significant event in Canadian history. While the work of the Junior Red Cross may not have had the importance of a military operation, these students did what they could to help those in need, including the military. Many who were overseas at the time may not have known that the mittens, socks, or afghan they received from the Red Cross might have been made by a member of the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

APPENDIX A



## Data Collection Sheet

JUNIOR RED CROSS IN WINNIPEG FOR THE YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

Source(s) :

1. \_\_\_\_\_ school demographics  
 (name of school in Winnipeg)  
 school population \_\_\_\_\_  
 Junior Red Cross membership \_\_\_\_\_

2. Role of Home Economics teacher(s) at this school:

3. Who the knitting was for at this school:

4. Where this school received knitting supplies from:

5. Organization of Junior Red Cross in this school:

6. Who the knitting was important to at this school:

7. What was knitted at this school:

Names of items

Number of items

APPENDIX B

The Canadian Red Cross Society  
La Société canadienne de la Croix-Rouge

200-360 Broadway  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3C 0T6  
Telephone (204) 982-7300  
FAX (204) 942-8367  
Emergency Number (204) 982-REDX  
Manitoba Division du Manitoba



Your File \_\_\_\_\_

Our File \_\_\_\_\_

March 11, 1994

Provincial Archives  
200 Vaughan St.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 1T5

Attention, Ken Reddick,

Please accept this letter as authorization for Mary Nowlan,  
to access Red Cross information in the Manitoba Archives, around  
World War II time period.

Sincerely,

Judy Jänzen  
Commissioner  
Manitoba Division

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

- a. What school did you attend in Winnipeg? What grades were you in? Which years of World War II did this include?
- b. Was the whole class involved or only some of the students? Were both boys and girls knitting?
- c. How did you feel about knitting for the Junior Red Cross?
- d. What sorts of items did you knit?
- e. Do you remember where the yarn and knitting needles came from?
- f. Do you remember who the knitted articles were sent to?
- g. Did the school promote Junior Red Cross work and/or actively recruit volunteers? Were credits given for knitting?
- h. Was knitting done during class time or was it an extracurricular activity? Were there competitions between classes to see who could knit the most items?

APPENDIX D

Consent Form

Dear (insert name of participant)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. I would like to take a few moments to refresh your memory about our telephone conversation of (date) regarding the purpose of my research and the procedure of the interview.

I am interested in finding out more about the knitting activities of the Junior Red Cross in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 during and immediately after World War II. Any details you are able to provide could prove useful to my research. Once you have signed this consent form and returned it to me by mail, I will contact you to set up an interview time. The interview can take place over the phone and I will take notes of your answers to my questions. You do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with and you may end the interview at any time. Any information you provide will be used as descriptive support to data I have been gathering from documents at the Provincial Archives and other archival facilities.

Only my advisor and myself will have access to the information that you give me. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym and your address and phone number will be kept confidential. All consent forms and responses from interviews will be stored in a locked drawer to which only I have the key.

I hope that you will agree to participate in my research by signing at the bottom of this form and returning it to me as soon as possible in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Nowlan

---

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand the conditions of this research and agree to participate.

---

Signature

---

Date

APPENDIX E



APPENDIX F

Tables E6 to E19 list the items JRC groups in Winnipeg schools were knitting and in what amounts. The tables are arranged alphabetically by school level.

Table E6  
Grosvenor School (Elementary)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1943	articles for soldiers ditty bags	604
	afghans	12
<u>members</u>	socks	3 pairs
415	baby jackets	1
	baby bootees, mittens, bonnets, face cloths, leggings	unknown

Table E7  
Aberdeen School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1944-45	baby sweaters, baby booties, baby bonnets, face cloths, socks, airman's sweaters	No specific numbers given, a "splendid number of articles knit for the Red Cross."

Table E8  
Cecil Rhodes School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1941	mitts	124 pairs
	socks	70 pairs
	scarves	6
	afghans	9
	baby jackets, woollen novelties	unknown

Table E9  
Greenway School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1940	scarves	3

Table E10  
Laura Secord School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1944	helmets	14
	face cloths	71
	turtle-neck tuck-ins	2
	sleeveless pullovers	18
	ankle socks	3 pairs
	babies sweaters	2
	children's pullovers	3
	bootees	2 pairs
	shawls	1

Table E11  
Luxton School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1940	string wash cloths, afghans, sweaters, socks	unknown
1943	scarves, mitts, khaki sweaters, children's suits and sweaters	unknown

Table E12  
Mulvey School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1940-41	wash cloths, afghan squares, scarves	unknown

Table E13  
William Whyte School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1939-40	doll clothing, sweaters, mitts	unknown
1940-41	baby jackets	14
	bootees	13 pairs
	mitts	15 pairs
	bonnets	14
	girls' sweaters	4
	boys' sweaters	13
	airmen's scarves	8
1941-42	afghans	5
	bonnets	71
<u>members</u>	bootees	49 pairs
293	soakers	18
	thumbless mitts	1 pair
	baby jackets	45
	tams	1
	panties	5
	sweaters	31
	mitts	50 pairs
	2-piece suits	3
	shawls	4
	socks	15 pair
	children's sweaters	32
	children's scarves	13
	scarves for Armed Forces	48
	other articles	69
1942-43	baby articles, children's sweaters	unknown

Table E13 (continued)  
 William Whyte School (Elementary and Junior)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1943-44	afghans	4
	baby sweaters	29
	panties	22
	bonnets	27
	bootees	38 pair
	mitts	28 pair
	girls' ankle socks	10 pair
	helmets	23
	sleeveless sweaters	6
	wash cloths	30
	boys' sweaters	5
	nursery articles	75
1944-45	face cloths	44
	socks	7 pair
	baby bootees	73 pair
	baby bonnets	47
	baby jackets	16
	baby soakers	10 pair
	children's socks	14 pair
	children's ankle socks	73 pair
	Nursery school sets (sweaters, caps, scarves, & mitts)	30

Table E14  
Lord Selkirk School (Elementary, Junior and Senior High)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1940-41	afghans	71
	bonnets	23
	bootees	26 pairs
	baby jackets	39
	baby mitts	14 pairs
	scarves	20
	sweaters	24
	mitts	95 pairs
	helmets	26
	dresses and suits	4
1941-42	baby bootees, bonnets, jackets	274
	refugee sweaters, scarves, mitts	143
	Army and Navy garments	132
	afghans	38
1942-43	calots	18
	scarves	10
	ankle socks	43 pairs
	cardigans	7
	sleeveless sweaters	15
	helmets	13
	turtle-neck tuck-ins	12
	grey socks	23 pairs
	baby jackets	5
	bonnets	8
	mittens	7 pairs
	bootees	6 pairs
	baby articles	40
children's articles	5	
afghans	5	

Table E15  
Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute (High)

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1939-40 <u>members</u> 300	scarves	300
	wristlets	152 pairs
	helmets	25
	personal property bags	64
1940-41 <u>members</u> 400	scarves	143
	mittens	145 pairs
	turtle-neck tuck-ins	14
	wristlets	4 pairs
	sweaters	21
	socks	23 pairs
	dresses	2
	baby layettes	25
	large afghans	15
baby afghans	10	
1941-42	sweaters	73
	socks	41 pairs
	mitts	86 pairs
	scarves	143
	baby jackets	82
	bonnets	68
	bootees	65 pairs
	soakers	29
	toques	1
afghans	18	
1942-43	sweaters	unknown
	babies' layettes	9
	dresses & suits	75
	afghans	10
1943-44	afghans	7
	other articles	767
1944-45	afghans	6
	other articles	1413
1945-46	afghans	23
	baby clothing	42
	other articles	122

Table E16  
Gordon Bell High School

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1939-40 <u>members</u> 260	scarves, sweaters, wristlets, helmets	Exact numbers unknown, "large amounts."
1940-41	afghans other articles	25 845
1942-43 <u>members</u> 350	socks, mitts, gloves, turtle-neck tuck-ins, sweaters, baby clothes	unknown
1944-45	socks face cloths children's sweaters	615 pairs 110 20

Table E17  
Isaac Newton High School

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1942 <u>members</u> 250	scarves, socks, afghans, turtle-neck sweaters	unknown
1943	body belts	59
	baby garments	80
	helmets	7
	scarves	36
	ankle socks	10 pairs
	property bags	50
	mitts	23 pairs
	sleeveless sweaters	42
	Navy dickies	10
	turtle-neck seaman's sweater	1
1944	sleeveless sweaters	20
	scarves	17
	helmets	13
	mitts	5 pairs
	gloves	2 pairs
	wash cloths	71
	baby sweaters	10
	bootees	4 pairs
	bonnets	2
	soakers	1
	mittens	1 pair
1946	children's mitts	73 pairs
	children's socks	75 pairs
	children's caps	13
	children's sweaters	52
	suits	1
	dress sets	1

Table E18  
Kelvin High School

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1939-40	scarves, helmets, wristlets, bootees	unknown
1941-42	sleeveless sweaters Navy helmets Navy scarves mitts afghans children's scarves children's mitts children's sweaters baby jackets baby bonnets baby bootees complete layette (16 articles)	55 142 16 6 pairs 8 133 201 pairs 20 58 43 51 pairs 1
1942-43	afghans socks, gloves, helmets, mitts, turtle-neck tuck-ins baby jackets, bonnets, bootees	5 other articles: 225 baby sets: 21
1943-44	afghans long-sleeved turtle-neck sweaters, sleeveless V-neck sweaters, socks, gloves, face cloths, mitts, scarves, children's outfits	6 other articles: over 200
1944-45	socks, wash cloths, dresses	unknown
1945-46	children's caps	400

Table E19  
St. John's High School

Year	Names of items knit	Number of items
1941	sweaters mitts	43 112 pairs
<u>members</u> 385	scarves face cloths baby bonnets baby jackets bootees afghans	147 58 11 10 11 pairs 20
1942 <u>members</u> 400	afghans, socks, baby layettes, sweaters, helmets, mitts, scarves, and clothes for all ages and all shapes and sizes	unknown

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