

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL POLICY:  
A CASE STUDY OF PROVINCIAL HOUSING POLICY AND PROGRAMS  
AS THEY IMPACTED ON THE HOMELESS ADULT SINGLE  
WOMAN IN WINNIPEG, 1982-1988

by

Sharon L. Boyd

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**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Abstract

This study examined the impact of the Government of Manitoba's housing policy during the period 1982-1988 on a group of women identified as at-risk for homelessness. This group consisted of adult, single, women who were prostitutes, post-mentally ill, battered and/or of low-income. The study design is exploratory and descriptive in nature and was an attempt to provide a greater understanding of government housing policy as it addressed the issue of the lack of affordable housing for the target group.

In an effort to determine the dominant forces which impacted on housing policy during this time, a systematic review of relevant documentation was undertaken as well as the completion of semi-structured interviews with both government and non-government key informants.

The research determined that, except for battered women, the target group was virtually ignored in government housing policy. This was, in large part, attributed to the economically depressed climate of the time, limited government revenues, the actions of the federal government which strongly influenced policy through its legislative and financial controls, and the generally low priority that this group was given by both government and non-government organizations.



It was concluded that until such time as significant public pressure is brought to bear on government to improve the conditions of this group or until government deficits are brought under control, it is unlikely that this group of women will ever be given serious attention.

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## Introduction

Traditionally, homeless people have been perceived in a very narrow and stereotypical manner. Most often the image conjured up is one of the skid row bum or bag lady - someone who lives on the streets and seeks shelter in cardboard boxes, alleys, abandoned buildings or flophouses. This homeless group is generally thought of as having chosen their street lifestyle and falling within the broad categories of 'alcoholic', 'crazy', or 'bum'.

More recently, however, the perception of the homeless population has changed. Although the stereotype still exists, there is an increasing recognition that 'non-deviant' men and women as well as children have joined the ranks of the homeless as a result of circumstances outside of their immediate control. The changing makeup of the homeless population became most evident during the latter 1970s and early 1980s as existing shelter facilities discovered they were no longer able to meet the demand for service. Given the extent of the problem, the United Nations General Assembly announced in 1982 that 1987 would be designated the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) as a means of profiling the shelter problems of this population group and rallying support to improve the housing conditions

of these individuals.

The major aim of this research study was to examine how the needs of a particular target group of homeless were addressed in Manitoba during this period of increased visibility and awareness. This target group consisted of single non-elderly women without children or other dependents, who were between the ages of 18 and 64, and who fell within the following categories; prostitutes, post-mentally ill, low-income and victims of domestic violence. Their particular situation was examined in light of provincial government housing policies and programs during the 1982-1988 time period. This time frame not only reflected the United Nations' announcement of the IYSH but also marked a time during which the New Democratic Party (NDP) formed the government in Manitoba.

The examination of provincial housing policy and programs in relation to homelessness seemed reasonable given that a lack of affordable and appropriate housing is perceived as one of the causes of homelessness. Additionally, the NDP Government of Manitoba did at one point commission the preparation of a report on homelessness under the purview of the Minister of Housing. (Bairstow, December 1987) Also, given that there was not then and is not now a formal policy on homelessness, it again seemed reasonable as a beginning

point to anchor the exploration of the problem in an existing policy which could be used as the basis for future planning and policy changes.

This study did not deal with elderly women (65+) nor youth (under 18) given that the problems of these groups would have required extensive examination of other issues such as aging and child welfare which were beyond the resources of this research. As well, this study recognized there were other groups of women such as single parents with dependents who were particularly susceptible to homelessness. In some instances these groups were touched upon in discussions of the common problems of women such as poverty. However, the varied population and special needs of groups within the homeless category necessitated a narrowing of focus to a limited number of groups. The target group in this study, which encompassed the post-mentally ill, prostitutes, battered women and low income women, were all identified in the literature as at-risk for homelessness. As well, these groups were all addressed to some extent in the report on Manitoba's homeless conducted in 1987. (Bairstow, Dec. 1987) The personal interests of the researcher, as well, served to select out these particular groups of women for study.

This research effort was exploratory and descriptive in nature and addressed a number of questions in its

examination of housing policy and homeless women. These included:

- What was the provincial government's housing policy of the time?
- What attention was given by the government to the homeless population group under study?
- What impacted on the government's ability to deal effectively with this social problem?
- What was the impact of the housing initiatives undertaken?
- How do relevant non-profit organizations perceive their role and the government's role in housing for homeless women?

As a beginning means of addressing these questions, this research study provides information on an overall perspective of social and housing policy as well as particular housing problems facing women. Chapter I also provides information on the framework incorporated which includes an integration of Gil's (1981) analytical objectives and Rose's (1980) essential elements of housing policy. Similarly, Chapter II provides background information on the issue of homelessness including consideration of a specific housing model.

Chapter III explains the methodology used in conducting this study including the use of an exploratory and descriptive approach which incorporated the review of relevant documentation as well as key informant interviews.

The latter Chapters, IV through VI, provide relevant data and analysis respecting the various government roles in housing policies over the years under study as well as factors impinging on policy and program implementation. They also provide some insight as to the future prospects of the homeless single adult woman.



## CHAPTER I

### A Social Policy Perspective

In beginning an examination of housing policy as it affects a particular population group, it is important to have an understanding of the broader context of social policy within which this issue is being studied. In an effort to generate a more common understanding of social policy, Gil (1981) examines the focus and processes of social policy to arrive at a "formal, universally valid definition". (Gil, 1981:24) It is Gil's definition that is being used to help provide clarity to the current issue under study. He states,

"Social policies are principles or courses of action designed to influence: 1. the overall quality of life in a society; 2. the circumstances of living of individuals and groups in that society; and 3. the nature of intra-societal relationships among individuals, groups, and society as a whole." (Gil, 1981:24)

Gil further identifies the processes which influence and shape the quality of life in a society. These are the development of material and symbolic resources, goods and services; the allocation of groups and individuals to roles within society; and the distribution of goods and services to individuals and groups. Gil states that these three processes,

"...generate, through their variations and interactions, the specific contents, objectives, and scope of different social policies." (Gil, 1981:15)

He further states that changes in intra-societal relationships and the quality of life occur through the manipulation of one

or more of these three key processes. If there is no modification or only slight modification of these processes, then there will be no significant change in the quality of life or nature of human relations. Therefore valid solutions to social problems can only occur with appropriate modification of the key processes.

Within his definition, Gil inextricably links economic factors with social policy given that they are intrinsic to determining the quality of life that one can achieve.

In addition to economic considerations, Gil states that the key processes of social policy are significantly affected by the major beliefs, values and ideologies of a society. Particular value orientations will result in actions that either preserve structured inequalities or attempt more equality-oriented efforts. Unfortunately, Gil says that often policy decisions are based more on the technical aspects of implementing a particular course of action as opposed to the underlying goals and values that the policy is meant to achieve. For example, he cites the objective of "constructing houses" as often supplanting the objective of "housing people". (Gil, 1981:28)

Unlike Gil, some authors such as Rein (1970) do not

attempt a comprehensive definition of social policy. Rather they subscribe to the belief that such activity is generally wasteful and not important in the "validity of scientific inferences" (Rein, 1970:3) Instead, Rein prefers to describe the boundaries of social policy in an effort to more fully understand the issues that its study faces. He states that,

"Social policy may be seen as a set of solutions that have developed over time by design, by accident, by compromise, and by precedent. These solutions are labelled social welfare services. They include at the least: education, medical care, income transfers, housing and personal social services or social work." (Rein, 1970:xv)

Rein states that policy choices are based on "...beliefs, on reason, on political compromise" (Rein, 1970:xiv). Although he recognizes the roles of values and beliefs in making decisions, Rein questions the extent to which these choices are based on particular ideologies vis-a-vis specific political and economic limitations. He notes that policies are often inconsistent because they reflect "trade-offs among conflicting aims". (Rein, 1970:xiv) In this vein, he states that boundaries between social and public policies are often blurred because of the increasing recognition that,

"...social services in fact respond to a market characterized by the rationing of always scarce resources. ...When the resource supply is fixed, it can be rationed by making less available to more people or more available to few people." (Rein, 1970:14)

Although the development of social policy is generally regarded as a response to identified need, Rein states that 'need' is often secondary to other factors that impact on how services are developed and organized.

As with Rein, Gil (1981) also accepts as given, the inconsistencies in social policy formulation as a result of conflicts between various interest groups. He also adds that social policies cannot be dealt with in isolation but rather should be viewed as part of a comprehensive social policy system.

### Housing and Social Policy

In capitalistic societies, the market does not normally provide for those with insufficient resources. Governments must therefore intervene on behalf of those who do not have a means of satisfactorily providing for themselves and their families, whether it be in the way of food, shelter, clothing or other basic necessities of life.

Early government intervention in housing the needy has been traced back to issues of health and safety. Poor housing contributed to a variety of diseases and illnesses; not only did this situation impact on the occupants of the immediate residence but posed a threat to the larger community

as well. (Hartman, 1975)

Jones (1985) has stated that these concerns were particularly evident in Britain during the mid-1800s and continued as the government's main focus for intervention up until the early 1900s. She stated that although western industrialized countries did not experience the same public health threat as did Britain, there have been other issues which have necessitated government intervention including humanitarian concerns, social control, and social justice issues.

Hartman, for example, (1975) notes a change in societal beliefs respecting the rights of the individual to adequate housing as well as a broader perspective on what constitutes 'decent housing'. He states that housing policy is now not only concerned with the adequacy of the physical structure but with the social environment as well which looks at such things as community mix, access to schools, and green spaces for children to play in as fundamental considerations.

Housing policy is also concerned with issues of overcrowding and the percentage of income spent on shelter, as well as identifying which groups or individuals are given special consideration in housing programs. No longer is

housing considered to be simply an issue of more longer term accommodation such as apartments or single detached dwellings. Rather it is also beginning to encompass various non-conventional forms of housing including crisis shelters, second stage housing models, and cooperative units as well as the more traditional housing types.

Decisions respecting the types of housing to be provided as well as which groups are to be given priority in policy and program consideration are, in large part, made on the basis of social values and beliefs in who constitute the needy. Similarly, the standards which constitute adequate and affordable housing are also a function of larger societal values. (Donnison, 1968)

In her book, Social Policy: A Feminist Analysis, Gillian Pascall (1986) states that housing as a social policy is, in effect, family policy. She states that a person's perceived need for housing is tied to their membership in a particular family. She further states that the ideal of a two-parent family underpins most planning efforts.

For example, in Britain both allocation of public housing units and government building policies have targeted the ideal family and largely excluded the single person except in the case of special need. Pascall states that construction

of owner-occupied housing has, not surprisingly, been particularly dominant with a resulting decrease in rental units built. This trend has had a greater impact on women who generally have lower incomes than men and therefore cannot as easily afford to purchase their own home. They are thus left to rely on ever-increasingly older rental units.

Hartman (1975) states that the rising costs of housing seriously impacts on any nation's ability to ensure decent accommodation for its citizens. The housing sector itself is particularly vulnerable to inflationary pressures because, as he states,

"...mortgage money (the life-blood of housing production and consumption) dries up, interest rates soar, and land prices and other elements prices and other elements rise steeply. In turn, housing production falls, and the prices and rents of new as well as existing housing rise to levels beyond the means of most families."  
(Hartman, 1975:vii)

As Hartman (1975) notes, the key ingredient is money - to finance building construction costs such as land, materials and labour as well as to finance long-term loans for purchasers.

Rose (1980) states that public attitudes also affect the housing sector by impacting on policies and subsequent programs developed to meet the policy objectives. As an example, he states that in the 1960s public concern was

focused on the whole issue of public intervention in the housing market. Increasingly, he states these views have changed to question privately-initiated policies, programs and developments. As well, where municipal and provincial governments were supportive of urban growth through private market initiatives with minimal government intervention, they have now progressed to the point where such growth is tightly controlled through legislative and administrative regulations.

As Jones (1985) notes, the term "Housing Policy" can,

"...conjure up thoughts about the state of the construction industry, whether as a target for investment, a focus for technological research and development, or as a major source of jobs. Others will view the subject mainly from the point of view of architecture and town planning while others...will see housing...essentially as an adjunct of regional development policy." (Jones, 1985:155)

In this study housing policy is primarily viewed in terms of its effect on an individual's opportunity to access and afford specific types and standards of accommodation; housing programs are, in effect, the practical action which is derived from the particular policy.

Although housing is one type of social policy, it is difficult to explore this area without touching upon others. As both Gil and Rein have observed, there are a



number of areas which serve to form a comprehensive social policy system. Within the housing domain, other policies involving the areas of income maintenance and mental health tend to overlap and, at times, complicate the issue under study. Although other relevant policy areas will be discussed, the major emphasis is on how housing policy has addressed the needs of the group under study.

#### Housing and Women

Although it is generally accepted that all individuals have a basic right to obtain adequate and affordable housing, in fact, low-income women experience a greater degree of difficulty exercising that right than do men.

In 1984, 42.9% of female-headed households in Canada lived in some degree of poverty compared to 11.3% of male-headed households. Additionally, the rate of female-headed households increased by 59% from the years 1971 to 1981. (Morissette, 1984:5) Also in 1984, 43.4% of single women lived below the poverty line vis-a-vis 32.4% for men. This trend continued in 1986 with the National Council of Welfare reporting that women made up a greater percentage of the poor and ran a higher risk of poverty in both the 'family-headed' and 'unattached individuals' categories. (National Council of Welfare, 1988)

These statistics help to explain why women more often experience discrimination in the search for housing from landlords who generally assume they are less able to guarantee rent payment. Low-income also explains why single women or women with children who have obtained housing end up in rent-shared or undersized and over-crowded accommodation. (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1976)

Women with children also face potential anti-children discrimination in their search for accommodation. Again, this latter problem is particularly acute for the low-income woman who has limited options available for her in housing. Although legislation exists to protect women from housing discrimination, often they are not aware of the possible recourse in these situations, or the discrimination is subtle enough to withstand official investigation. As well, some women do not wish to destroy their future chances for obtaining housing by 'rocking-the-boat' and therefore will not challenge discriminatory practices.

Although social housing programs are designed to deal with some of the problems of adequate and affordable housing, waiting lists for subsidized housing are long due to the chronic scarcity of units. In addition they often prohibit admission to low income singles unless they fall under some special needs category. As well single parent

headed families who become 'singles' once their children reach the age of majority are often evicted from accommodations because they no longer have responsibility for dependent children. Although this policy does not differentiate between male or female-headed families it impacts more severely on women because they are more likely to fall in the single-parent category.

Shelter allowance programs such as those in Manitoba which are available to subsidize a portion of rent for low income people are also limited to families with dependent children and the elderly thereby excluding poor single women and men.

As well, there are other elements of discrimination within the social housing system even if one meets the face criteria for admission. In a report entitled "Evaluation of the Special Priority Policy for Assaulted Women" (June 1988) prepared through the Ontario Ministry of Housing, it was noted that the powers of local housing authorities allowed discretionary decision-making in the allocation of public housing units. Therefore although a battered women may technically qualify for the 'special priority' status to more quickly access public housing, they may not be registered if the Board were not satisfied that the evidence presented constituted special consideration. It is therefore reasonable

to assume that the use of such discretionary power has the potential to act as an effective screen to admitting certain individuals into public housing. As Rose (1978) has stated,

"...local housing authorities with significant power and capacity to implement decisions can and often do ignore federal-provincial social housing policies, particularly in the field of human rights and operate their portfolios like miniature principalities buttressed by punitive value judgments." (Rose, 1978: 275)

In her book Women and Housing: Changing Needs and The Failure of Policy, (1984), Janet McClain states that women have tended to be neglected in consideration of housing policies. She states that 1975, International Women's Year, marked a beginning recognition of the importance of considering "... sex-specific needs, and most importantly the economic status of over one-half of the population" in housing research and analysis. (McClain, 1984:3) Prior to this time, McClain states assumptions were made such that young, single women under age thirty-five were primarily considered to be temporary consumers of housing who did not significantly affect housing demand. This group's housing needs were seen as transitory in nature and fell between the time they left the parental home and subsequently resided in their own marital home. Research statistics have typically reflected such views on the housing consumer given most record-keeping by family types did not even include gender.

McClain (1984) further states that changing household composition has resulted in a variety of women becoming primary housing consumers. Increasing divorce rates, decreasing marriage rates and the greater participation of women in the work force have all contributed to changing what has been the traditional notion of women as housing consumers. To illustrate, the number of women in the labour force grew by approximately 28% between the years 1977 to 1986; for men the increase totalled 8%. As well, the number of single parent families in Winnipeg rose approximately 17% from 19,145 in 1981 to 22,505 in 1986. (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, 1989) It can now be said that,

"Women of all ages are primary consumers of housing - unattached singles, widows, principal wage earners supporting families, and heads of households as principal recipients of government income assistance through transfer payments." (McClain, 1984:3)

As such, women play a significant role in both private and public sector housing.

In a review of 1980 Statistics Canada data, McClain reported that 63.3% of renters were women compared to 28.9 per cent of men. In Manitoba in 1980, 61.5% were women and 21.6% were men. (see Table 1) Of the female renters 56.7%, reported having wages, salaries and self-employment as their major source of income; 34% reported government transfer payments as their main means of support. In comparison, 84% of men reported their income source as wages, salaries and self-

employment with 11.2% reporting transfer payments as their primary support.

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**Table 1**

Comparison of Female and Male Renters, 1980, Within Provinces  
(Per Cent)

<u>Province</u>	<u>All Renters*</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Newfoundland	35.3	14.7
Prince Edward Island	46.9	17.7
Nova Scotia	49.2	18.8
New Brunswick	53.9	18.8
Quebec	73.8	36.9
Ontario	61.3	28.1
Manitoba	61.5	21.6
Saskatchewan	50.7	19.9
Alberta	63.3	29.8
British Columbia	61.0	26.4
ALL CANADA	63.3	28.9

SOURCE: Women and Housing,  
by Janet McClain, 1984, (originally taken from CMHC 1982 data)

\*NOTE: Derived from CMHC data on Housing Tenure Female and  
and Male, 1980.

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As well in 1980, 56.9% of women with incomes of less than \$12,000 lived in apartment, rent-shared or rooming house situations vis-a-vis 31.7% of men. Women falling within this income group most often (82.3%) rated their housing as substandard in the area of size, persons per room and

amenities. This is not too surprising given McClain also reported that women were more likely to live in older (pre-1950 and 1960) buildings.

In 1980, over 60% of Manitoba's renter population was female with 41.6% of these women paying more than 30% of their income for rent. This compares with a male renter population of 21.6% with 16.2% paying more than 30% of their income for rent. (McClain, 1984) (see Table 2)

Table 2

Comparison of Female and Male Renters, 1980  
and Rent-to-Income Ratios (Per Cent)

<u>Province</u>	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	<u>Less than</u> <u>30%</u>	<u>More than</u> <u>30%</u>	<u>Less than</u> <u>30%</u>	<u>More than</u> <u>30%</u>
Newfoundland	65.3	34.7	79.4	20.6
Prince Edward Island	58.3	41.7	78.1	21.9
Nova Scotia	65.0	35.0	87.8	12.2
New Brunswick	56.9	43.1	84.6	15.4
Quebec	68.4	31.6	89.3	10.7
Ontario	62.4	37.6	82.8	17.2
Manitoba	58.4	41.6	83.8	16.2
Saskatchewan	56.3	43.7	81.6	18.4
Alberta	50.2	49.8	78.0	22.0
British Columbia	53.8	46.2	81.7	18.3
ALL CANADA	61.8	38.2	84.6	15.4

SOURCE: Women and Housing,  
by Janet McClain, 1984 (originally  
taken from CMHC, 1982 data).

The 30% level is a yardstick which the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) uses to measure "Core Housing Need". This designation is meant to identify those individuals who *must* spend more than 30% of their income to obtain suitable and adequate accommodation. In Manitoba in 1982, 24% of renters or 26,000 households were in core housing need. Of these, 65% were single-parent families. (CMHC, 1984)

In 1986, Bairstow reported that there was a relatively high percentage of renters in core need (47%) in Manitoba compared to their distribution in the population (34%). He also reported that 31% of all renters in core need were single; this figure was slightly higher for Winnipeg at 35%. It is also significant to note that based on 1986 data, Bairstow stated that there were approximately 43,000 renters in Manitoba with some type of housing problem as defined by CMHC's core housing need definition. This is substantially up from the 1982 statistic of 26,000. (CMHC, 1984) Unfortunately, these statistics are not broken down by gender but given the trends previously discussed, it can be assumed that the majority of these renters are women - either single or female-headed families.

With respect to home ownership, McClain also stated that men were more likely to own their own homes (71.2%) than women (36.7%). Of the 'unattached individual' group, 32.7%



of women owned their own homes with 21.2% of those carrying mortgages paying more than 35% of their household income towards these payments. For men as 'unattached individuals', 34.7% owned their own homes with 13.% paying more than 35% of their income on mortgage payments. (McClain, 1984)

Table 3

Household Composition and Housing Tenure Status, 1980  
(Per Cent)

	<u>Homeowner</u>			<u>Gross Debt Service</u> <u>Ratio</u>	
<u>Household</u> <u>Composition</u>	<u>With</u> <u>Mortgage</u>	<u>Without</u> <u>Mortgage</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Less than</u> <u>35%</u>	<u>More than</u> <u>35%</u>
<b>Females:</b>					
Unattached	6.7	26.0	32.7	78.8	21.2
Head of Economic Unit	19.9	24.0	43.9	83.1	16.9
Sharers - two or more fam. units	16.6	16.7	33.3	88.7	11.4
Total:All Females	12.3	24.4	36.7	81.3	18.8
<b>Males:</b>					
Unattached	13.3	21.4	34.7	87.1	13.0
Head of Economic Unit	45.5	30.6	76.1	98.3	1.7
Sharers - two or more fam. units	29.1	14.8	43.9	95.0	5.1
Total: All Males	42.0	29.2	71.2	97.1	2.9

SOURCE: Women and Housing, by Janet McClain, 1984,  
(originally taken from CMHC, 1982 data)

It is interesting to note that although men and women as 'unattached' homeowners appear to be comparable in levels of ownership, the most telling sign of differences is in the amount of household income which is allocated to mortgage payments. This may explain the lower incidence of 'unattached' women homeowners carrying mortgages (6.7% vs 13.3% for men) by suggesting that women are less likely to qualify for mortgages or less likely to apply for mortgages given their greater gross debt service ratio.

It is also interesting to note, at this point, that the CMHC report "Housing in Manitoba: A Statistical Profile" (1984) from which some of the above statistics were taken, still used family groupings such as 'family households' (couples with or without children), 'single parent families' and 'unattached individuals' to describe housing trends in spite of what McClain had noted as an increasing trend since the mid-70s to become more sex-specific in housing research and analysis.

Similarly, a recent report issued by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg "Insights and Trends" (1989) using census data from 1981 and 1986 still tended to ignore the gender of single person families. It states that major household types typically consist of a husband and wife with children or without children, single parents, multiple

families and non-families. The 'non-family' category is used to designate either single person households or two or more individuals residing together; it is, unfortunately, not further broken down by gender. This lack of differentiation in data is disturbing given that it is used to identify trends and plan strategies for action. Although female-headed single parent families are given some attention, it is difficult to discern the extent of housing and other problems for single women. The fact that there are problems is illustrated through the increasing numbers of women seeking some type of shelter; this issue will be discussed further on in this study.

#### Framework for the Study of Social and Housing Policy:

For purposes of this study, I used David Gil's (1981) framework for the analysis of social policy and integrated what Albert Rose (1980) has referred to as the 'essential elements' of housing policy.

Gil's framework is ordered to attain three objectives:

- to gain an understanding of the issues that constitute the focus of a particular social policy
- to discern the effects of the implementation of a given policy including an exploration of intended/unintended and short and long-range effects, value premises, etc.
- to generate alternative policies and compare and evaluate their implications, costs and benefits

Given that this research effort was exploratory and

descriptive in nature, this study focused on the first two objectives with the latter left to some future research endeavour.

With these objectives in mind, I used Gil's framework to address the following questions:

- Which areas of concern constitute the focus for this policy?
- What are the main objectives of the policy and underlying value premises and ideological orientations?
- Who is the target group at which the policy is aimed?
- What are the short and long term effects of the policy as well as its intended and unintended effects?
- What changes have occurred in the development of the policy? (i.e. priority, qualitative or quantitative)
- What changes have occurred over time respecting the target group?
- What changes have occurred over time in the allocation of resources to aid the target group?
- What is the historical background of the policy's development and implementation?
- What other policies impact on the policy under study?
- What other factors impact on the policy (social, political, economic, etc.)

Within this framework, I also incorporated Rose's (1980) essential elements of housing policy to provide background information on the legislation surrounding housing policy, review the financial commitment made to the stated policy, attempt to determine the initiator of the particular action

respecting housing initiatives, as well as explore the effectiveness of the administrative and structural arrangements.

More specifically, Rose states that housing policy cannot simply consist of a pronouncement of what the government intends to do. Legislation is required to make implementation of policy possible; it must clearly outline intentions as well as expected beneficiaries. It must also outline the conditions under which benefits are received. The legislation, in effect, is reflective of underlying government philosophy.

Similarly, it is critical to examine financial commitment to the legislation. The allocation of resources can be indicative of token acknowledgement of the problem or can demonstrate sincere commitment to problem resolution. As well, how financial resources are distributed can also have implications for housing policy and unintended as well as intended consequences. Rose cites, as an example, the federal government's post-war policy of providing direct, low-interest loans to selected families for new housing which, in effect, took over the responsibility for urban planning.

The next step following legislative and financial commitments, involves taking the initiative to implement the

policy. Constitutionally, it is the provinces which have authority to negotiate with the federal government respecting cost-sharing arrangements for housing initiatives. The federal government has no authority to deal directly with local municipal governments. Housing initiatives can be undertaken by local governments or other private community groups. At the same time, unless the provincial government places a priority on the initiative, movement can be limited. It is therefore important to examine the province's own initiatives in this area as well as its response to other initiatives.

Finally, Rose states it is essential that effective administrative arrangements exist to oversee housing policies - both structural and personnel. Effective administration helps to ensure that initiatives are not frustrated or terminated due to the lack of appropriate mechanisms for implementation and/or the lack of knowledgeable personnel to direct the process. Not only does this require those experienced in the objectives of housing programs but also requires an understanding of the target groups they are geared to serve.

To reiterate, David Gil's framework provided guidance for understanding issues related to social policy and Albert Rose provided input into housing policy as a more

specific social policy. Together, this integrated framework provided the grounding for a thorough review of the topic under study.

## CHAPTER II

### Homelessness

#### Problems in Definition:

The complexity of the homelessness issue does not readily lend itself to easy interpretation and comprehensive definition. Interestingly, some of the early literature did not even concern itself with attempting to develop a common definition of the problem. Perhaps this is because, 'homelessness' by implication means lack of shelter. The only thing left to decide, then, is whether its cause is internal to the individual, external to the environment or an interaction of both. Depending on personal perspective, a variety of approaches could then be undertaken to solve the problem.

Unfortunately, homelessness is not that simple an issue. Rather, it is an extremely complex state with a number of antecedents requiring a variety of actions. The definition that one uses to consider homelessness will, therefore, have a major impact on the course of action followed and may serve to exclude certain factions of the homeless population. Similarly, the lack of definition, by governments for example, may be interpreted as a refusal to acknowledge that any problem even exists or perhaps a refusal to accept it as a government responsibility.



As an example, British housing legislation appears to acknowledge homelessness as an issue but specifically differentiates between intentional and unintentional homelessness.

"Thus, for example, households who become homeless through rent arrears, or through domestic violence are declared to be 'intentionally homeless' by some authorities." (Watson & Austerberry, 1986:1)

By designating someone as 'intentionally' homeless, the government may therefore choose to absolve itself of any responsibility for becoming involved in the situation. Additionally, this group does not have to be counted in any official statistics attempting to determine the extent of the problem which would, in turn, impact on the type, scope and cost of programming planned and implemented.

A review of current literature notes varying definitions of 'homelessness' that are used to discuss this population. Some definitions simply state that it is,

"A condition wherein an individual on a given night has no place to sleep and is forced to be on the street or seek shelter in a temporary facility."  
(Kaufman, 1984:2)

Other authors characterize homelessness as the product of an urban lifestyle devoid of permanent housing and supportive familial relationships. Researchers have also developed operational definitions which specify levels of homelessness such as:

- limited or no shelter for any length of time (utilization of cars, under bridges, bus stations,

cafes, etc.)

- utilization of shelters or missions run by religious groups such as The Salvation Army or public agencies
- utilization of cheap hotels or motels where the length of stay or the intent is to stay 45 days or less
- other situations where the length of stay or the intent to stay is 45 days or less such as staying with family or friends or in a tent city (Bean et al, 1987)

The Centre for Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia defines homelessness as follows:

"Homelessness in Canada is the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which individuals or family groups have personal control and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy, and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social and economic public services."  
(Canadian Housing, 1987:20)

It further divided the homeless population into two groups - those who are considered to be the absolute homeless who live on the streets during the day and seek emergency shelter or sleep outside at night; and those who are 'at risk' for homelessness because of their tenuous hold on economic and social stability.

Interestingly, although the Centre recognizes the utilization of emergency shelters by the homeless, it does not incorporate them within the 'homelessness' definition but rather focuses on more continuing or permanent housing. This may be because the 'street homeless' are considered by them

to be a unique group with few in number whereas the 'at-risk homeless' are "...substantial and growing rapidly" (Canadian Housing, 1987:20) and therefore require more immediate and greater attention.

The major point to be made is that the definition used, either explicitly or implicitly, will help determine the course of action followed to deal with the problem. If homelessness is defined as a temporary, short-term problem then short-term responses such as emergency shelter construction will be implemented; if it is seen as primarily an issuing of housing then housing will be constructed to the exclusion of complementary supportive programming.

To date, Hulchanski (Canadian Housing, 1987) states that there is no one objective definition of either homelessness or the homeless,

"They can be defined narrowly or broadly, depending upon the objectives and values of the person or organization doing the defining." (Canadian Housing, 1987:21)

For instance, Hulchanski notes that government has a self-interest in defining the problem in very narrow terms because to do otherwise would indicate a serious problem and call for immediate action. He further states, however, that a generally agreed upon definition must eventually emerge because without

"...broad agreement on the nature and extent

of the problem, there can be no agreement on what solutions should be implemented." (Canadian Housing, 1987:21)

Although there is no one generally agreed upon definition of homelessness, for purposes of this study, homelessness will not simply be defined as the lack of adequate shelter but rather will encompass the lack of supportive facilities, programs and policies which are required to meet the physical and emotional needs of this heterogenous population; this includes the utilization of short-term emergency crisis care. This broad definition which is, in fact, a composite of many definitions as discussed in homelessness literature, reflects the varied nature of the homeless population group and also recognizes that an approach to addressing the homelessness problem requires a multi-faceted response. The following section provides further information on the extent of the homelessness problem.

#### Background and Overview:

Homelessness as an identified social problem has been receiving increasing attention from a broad spectrum of individuals including researchers, human service workers, politicians, and even talk show hosts. We now routinely read about homelessness in the newspapers and often hear about celebrities sleeping on sidewalk grates and staffing food lines to bring attention to the problems of this population.

In 1982, the United Nations General Assembly designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) to profile the plight of those people who do not have access to adequate and affordable housing.

"...one of the objectives was to have every country achieve a measurable improvement in the actual living conditions of some of the poor."  
(Hulchanski, Canadian Housing 1987:3)

Traditionally, the homeless have often been viewed from a medical model perspective with behaviour primarily defined in terms of the individual. As such they have generally been perceived as alcoholics, crazies, or bums; those who are not mentally competent to care for themselves or those who have decided not to work and have simply chosen their street lifestyle (Appleby and Desai, 1987; Bassuk et al, 1984; and Snow et al, 1986).

As Snow et al (1986) have stated, the traditional homeless population has been primarily labelled as, "...interactionally incompetent, conversationally incoherent, occasionally menacing, and institutionally-dependent 'crazy'." (Snow et al, 1986:3) This description fits the stereotypical older, white male alcoholic living on skid row as well as the bag lady type of woman most often portrayed in media reports on the homeless. They have been perceived as eccentric personalities who have selected their current street lifestyle and cut themselves off from all family and friends.

More recently, however, there has been a shift towards viewing homelessness within a structural framework citing problems of poverty and lack of affordable housing as its major determinants. A study carried out in 1983 in Toronto known as the "Single Displaced Persons Project" stated that the homeless were at the bottom of Canada's social, economic, and housing system and were being thwarted by structural barriers in attempts to change their status. (Canadian Housing, 1987)

Although the traditional stereotype still exists, the homeless are now regarded by some researchers as being divided into two distinct subgroups - the chronic homeless and the new homeless.

"...the chronic homeless are considered to be those people who are mentally ill, substance abusers or lazy and shiftless transients." (Stoner, 1984) (4)

Whereas the new homeless,

"...are presumed to be in their state temporarily because of unemployment, and economic dislocation..." (Stoner, 1984:5)

As Stoner (1984) has stated, the more current image of the homeless has resulted in less tendency to 'blame the victim' and a more compassionate response over the growing plight of these people.

The change in the make-up of the homeless population began to be most noticed during the 1970s. The skid row male

was joined by an increasing number of women, younger men and female-headed families. Main Street Project, a shelter service in Winnipeg, stated in 1982 that most of their clientele up, until the late 1970s, were those with alcohol-related problems. Now they were seeing more post-psychiatric patients, and people with emotional problems and bizarre behaviours. As well they reported more requests for help from younger men in their teens and twenties and were seeing more women and children. (Winnipeg Free Press, October 12, 1982)

Osborne House, a shelter for battered women in Winnipeg stated they had been getting more referrals from the evicted, victims of rape, transients and other women who had argued with their spouses and now needed temporary alternate housing. (Winnipeg Free Press, October 12, 1982) Unfortunately, Osborne House was not equipped to deal with the variety of women who became homeless; they were hard-pressed to deal with their current client group. To illustrate, the number of battered women and children seeking shelter in Winnipeg rose by 22% over the years 1985/86. (Bairstow, 1987:26)

Additionally, in a 1987 newspaper report, Major Dave Perry of the Salvation Army in Winnipeg said that admissions to the men's hostel were "soaring". He stated that admission figures for the first six months of 1987 totalled 6,000 people

as compared with the 4,846 figure recorded in 1986 for the same time period. (Winnipeg Free Press, July 28, 1987) Major Perry as well indicated during a recent interview that the establishment of Baldwin House, a Salvation Army crisis shelter for women in Winnipeg in 1984, occurred in response to recognition in the early 1980s of the lack of shelter facilities for women and the changing complexion of Winnipeg's homeless.

Further examples of statistical data used that help to illustrate an increasing problem in the area of homelessness include reports from The Traveler's Aid in Houston which reported a 40% increase in shelter use over a one year period; a shelter referral organization in Los Angeles which indicated it received 1,300 calls during 1981 and 1,400 calls per month in 1982; and another facility in California which reported a 300% increase in usage over the previous year of 1980. (Stoner, Dec. 1983)

With respect to gender differences among the homeless, Stoner (1983) reported that women were generally younger than men; less educated; and more likely to have income from legitimate sources such as social allowance. Women were also more likely to report themselves as married and having current involvement with their children.



Crystal (1984) stated that over half of the 1,798 women he studied had at least one child, with 26% of the group reporting a child in care. Of these women, most indicated ongoing contact with their children even though they were unable to care for them at the present time. This is contrary to the typically homeless male who is often described as being disaffiliated from both friends and families. This observation is also supported in a study by Herzberg (1987) who described women as "more socially stable" prior to hospital admission than men in comparable circumstances.

Crystal (1984) as well reported that women were more likely to have been raised in a foster care setting; were less likely to have a history of incarceration; and were more likely to report a history of never being employed. He also determined that the women he studied were more likely to report histories of psychiatric treatment.

Although it is difficult to determine whether the history of psychiatric treatment is an actual reflection of mental health problems or perhaps indicative of other factors such as a greater willingness on the part of women to seek help or a more liberal labelling practice by doctors, the finding is nonetheless significant in attempting to provide services which meet the need of those women who require supportive counselling. Similarly, other findings with

respect to gender differences are also helpful in identifying and designing the types of services which would address the specific needs of women.

#### Estimates of the Homeless Population:

The problems in definition as discussed above help, in part, to explain why the literature is unable to provide anything but wide range guesstimates in the numbers of people comprising the homeless group. Another factor, of course, is the extreme transiency of the group which makes a count of the population next to impossible. For example, estimates of the homeless in the United States during the early to mid-1980s ranged anywhere from 350,000 to 2.5 million depending on the organization doing the estimating. (Hagen, 1987) In Canada, the Canadian Council on Social Development conducted a survey which revealed, "...shelters housed over 100,000 individuals in 1986". (McLaughlin, 1987:9)

Closer to home, a study conducted by the YWCA of Winnipeg which began in November 1982 estimated that the number of Manitoba's homeless women ranged somewhere between 130 and 160 (YWCA, 1983). They believed this figure to be an underrepresentation of the actual problem as it could not include those women who choose not to bring themselves to the attention of social service agencies and, as well, "... few agencies keep records that would identify their clientele as

homeless" (YWCA, 1983:8)

Although women initially only represented about 25% of the homeless group during the seventies, it is now estimated that in the United States they represent almost half of this population. (Hagen, 1987) Estimates vary due to the transiency of this group and also the sense that women have some additional options which make them less visible in the homeless population. This was illustrated quite clearly during a 1982 newspaper interview when Captain John Moore of the Salvation Army in Winnipeg was quoted as saying that they were hoping to set up a small hostel for women in Winnipeg. He stated,

"A small hostel would suffice, because there are never as many homeless women as there are homeless men, ... Gals can always resort to the oldest profession and get themselves a place to stay." (Winnipeg Free Press, Oct.12/82:1 & 4)

For those women who choose not to revert to the "oldest profession" there have been few options. Pascall (1986) states that many single women without children often feel pressure to stay with their parents or to get married because of the difficulty of finding affordable housing in the community. She states that women who are married may, in effect, stay married in order to retain shelter. Or, in the case of battered women, may end up choosing to return to the abuser because of the lack of housing alternatives. Often, Pascall says, women stay with friends and become part of the

'concealed homeless'. This group of women is never counted in any official homeless statistics and are therefore not accorded a priority status.

A study conducted over the years 1975-79 in Winnipeg's skid row district estimated that of Main Street Project shelter users, approximately 25% were women. (Hauch: 1985) Main Street Project is both a drop-in and emergency shelter facility for men and women which includes a detoxification unit, a hostel which provides a dry environment for recovering alcoholics, as well as a safe environment for some of the more hard-to-house individuals; it also operates an outreach program.

Hauch speculates that the lower percentage of women seeking shelter at Main Street Project may be attributed to their greater ability to access provincial and municipal welfare systems. This idea has some merit given that single women in the municipal welfare system are often quite young and immature and seen as generally less capable of fending for themselves. Of additional interest in Hauch's study is the change in the age range of the female client group over time. For example, in 1979 only 20% of the female shelter users were between twenty and thirty years of age. By 1981, the percentage of women falling in this age group had more than doubled (Hauch, 1985).

As with other homeless groups, it is difficult to determine the number of homeless prostitutes. In 1984 the City of Winnipeg police estimated this population at 500. (Elizabeth Fry, May 1984) In his 1987 report on Manitoba's homeless, Bairstow stated that there were,

"...approximately 250 girls working the streets of Winnipeg, of which at least 80% or 200 have no permanent housing and do make up some of the homeless population." (Bairstow, December 1987:49)

It must also be remembered that of this total number, approximately 40% were juveniles. Of the adult population, then, approximately 120 prostitutes were homeless or at risk for homelessness. The only program in Winnipeg particularly geared toward the prostitute population is Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights (POWER) which provides a drop-in, educational and shelter referral program.

Although the above figures give some sense of the presence of women in the homeless population, as Crystal (1984) has noted, the majority of studies conducted to date on the homeless have primarily focussed on men. This is not surprising given their numbers have tended to predominate in shelter use. At the same time, although in total numbers women currently make up a smaller percentage of the homeless, there is some indication that their numbers are increasing at a faster rate. Crystal cites, for example, a 28% increase in shelter use for women in New York City during a one year

period from April 1983 to April 1984; vis-a-vis an 18% increase for men.

Although this study cannot provide specific figures which reflect percentage increases over time for Winnipeg, nonetheless, non-government key informants such as Major Perry of the Salvation Army and Rick Brundrige of Main Street Project have indicated that women are becoming much more visible in the shelter population suggesting a rapidly increasing rate. Additionally, no doubt their presence would even be more noticeable if one could include in this count the 'concealed homeless'. Unfortunately, as with other research on the estimates of the homeless, the actual numbers of this target group will not likely be known given such factors as diversity of the population, transiency, and other problems which tend to underestimate their presence in the community.

#### Antecedents of Homelessness

Poverty, the lack of affordable housing, deinstitutionalization, and domestic violence have all been identified as contributing to homelessness. These factors are not discrete variables but are often intertwined with each other to culminate in states of homelessness.

### Poverty

A study carried out by the Canadian Council of Social Development (1987) stated that both those individuals and families with low-incomes as well as those in receipt of social assistance experienced serious housing problems. Those that did find adequate housing often spent up to three-quarters of their income on shelter, leaving little for the balance of basic necessities. It has been estimated that 972,000 families and 1,025,000 unattached individuals in 1986 had incomes below the poverty line. (Ross as quoted by McLaughlin, 1987:9).

What is even more disturbing is that there were more people living in poverty in the mid-80s than in the late 1970s. Hulchanski (1987) states that in 1987, there were an estimated 800,000 more Canadians living in poverty than at the beginning of the 1980s.

"Increasing unemployment in the 70s, rapid inflation, and the recession of the early '80s combined to reverse our gradual progress in reducing poverty. The economic nose-dive triggered a number of unfair, if predictable, responses. Lay-offs and reduced hiring, with increasing demand for jobs, created massive unemployment. Competition for jobs was fierce." (Canadian Housing, Fall 1987:53)

Terrence Hunsley of the Canadian Council on Social Development further stated that the resulting economic stress resulted in family break-up and an increasing number of households as well as instability in housing. He noted that other social

processes also contributed to the growth of individual and small family households including:

"...high divorce rates; increasing participation of women in the labour force; the "surfacing" of violence and abuse; the acceptance of normalization principles related to the mentally or emotionally disabled." (Canadian Housing, 1987:53)

Bairstow (December 1987) in his study of Manitoba's homeless also quoted Statistics Canada 1986 data which revealed that a greater percentage of the 20-34 year age group was remaining single; 60% in 1986 vs. 40% in 1961. In Manitoba, Bairstow noted that the proportion of husband/wife households dropped from 68.5% in 1976 to 52.2% in 1986. During the same time, single person households increased from 19.4% to 24%.

All of the above factors contributed to an increased need for housing, supportive community services and some measure of economic security.

A good example of the interconnectedness of antecedents of homelessness was illustrated in a 1985, report entitled "Making Street Connections" prepared by the Elizabeth Fry Society and the Young Women's Christian Association. This study provided background information on Winnipeg's prostitutes. According to the report,

"Virtually all of the women interviewed indicated they entered prostitution due to economic circumstances. Their limited education, lack of alternate employment experience and skills left



them with severely limited options and no perceived choice." (Elizabeth Fry Society & YWCA, April 1985:28)

At the same time, the majority of these women (87%) also reported histories of abuse including sexual, physical, emotional, verbal or situations of neglect.

A further example of the interconnectedness of issues is in the case of domestic violence. MacLeod (1987) reported that at least 68% of the women in her study who were victims of battering and worked outside the home, would be living below the poverty line if they chose to leave their husbands and attempted to support themselves and their children. At the same time, approximately 75% of those women who sought shelter at transition houses in 1985 were already living under the poverty line when living with their spouses. (MacLeod, 1987) Similarly, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg reports that poverty among single parents is primarily a female experience given that average incomes of women were \$19,919 compared to \$31,789 for men.

#### Lack of Affordable Housing and Gentrification:

Problems in affordable housing can, in part, be traced back to government housing policies which do not adequately address this issue. Although Canada's housing policy has evolved over the years to include programs for low and moderate income households as well as single parent

families and the elderly, it nonetheless falls short in providing sufficient housing stock for the homeless and potentially homeless. It is estimated that housing stock generated by public and non-profit housing programs still only represents 4% of Canada's total. (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986) As well, social housing programs do not typically address the needs of homeless singles - either males or females except in the case of an identified special need. For example, unless a single is physically disabled, mentally retarded, or over age 55, they would not normally qualify for any available social housing units.

Hulchanski and Drover (1986) note that with the election of the Conservative federal government in 1984 a number of housing programs were eliminated and spending on social housing and housing rehabilitation programs was significantly reduced. They indicated that party philosophy as well as low and stable mortgage interest rates contributed to the housing restraint. As will be discussed in greater depth later, increasing government deficits also impacted on housing programs of the time. Hulchanski and Drover (1986) further speculated that only a sharp drop in housing starts or a sharp increase in interest rates would stimulate government intervention. Unfortunately, the failure of the government to be proactive in their response will result in longer term problems for the homeless.

Additionally, gentrification is seen as an increasing cause of homelessness as it directly impacts on the affordable housing stock. In this situation, downtown sections of cities are undergoing extensive renovation and revitalization resulting in the destruction of the single room hotel or rooming house which has traditionally sheltered the homeless. These downtown areas have typically contained the skid row and red light districts and provided a degree of tolerance and security for the deviant individual.

"Being close to transportation and requiring little initial outlay (often renting by the week), single room housing has traditionally been utilized by the elderly poor, ...seasonally employed single workers, the addicted, and the mentally handicapped."  
(Kasinitz, 1984:11)

The gentrification movement is generally seen by the community as a positive contribution to city development; it stresses attractive visual aspects of downtown living and entices the movement of young professional men and women back to the city. At the same time it has had the spin-off effect of dislocating the residents already living there. In the United States it has been said that over one million rooms were lost during the years 1970 to 1980 during the initial conversion phase of single-room occupancies into condominiums or co-ops. Today, it is estimated that 500,000 units per year of low-cost housing in the United States is either demolished or upgraded placing it out of reach for the low-income person.

(Kasinitz, 1984)

A result of this trend has been an increasing utilization of public shelters to house those who had once lived in the core area. As an example, in New York City, a 1979 survey of one hundred first time shelter users reported that 50% had lived in a single room occupancy situation prior to seeking shelter accommodation. Unfortunately, even the public shelters are under pressure to relocate from this now prestigious area. In Phoenix, Arizona zoning ordinances were enacted which prohibited the location of shelters and soup kitchens in the downtown area; in Newark, New Jersey shelters have been condemned as a result of an alliance between privately funded builders and political interests.

In Winnipeg, we too, are subject to a reduction of housing stock due to gentrification. It has been estimated that the city has lost over 300 housing units per year over the years 1984 to 1987 inclusive (Bairstow, Dec. 1987). At the same time, although additional units are being built in the city, the key problem is that they are generally not affordable alternatives for the people who have been displaced. Unfortunately, Winnipeg has not kept complete records of those who are displaced which is consistent with overall literature findings. It is therefore only assumed that a large number of these people either seek alternate accommodations through

existing shelters, or live on the street. It is also speculated, that because of the reduction of housing units and lack of affordable alternatives, families often end up in a doubled up situation with other households, thereby increasing an already stressful situation.

Kasinitz (1984) cautions that the single room occupancy hotel and rooming houses are by no means an ideal solution for sheltering the homeless as they are often in a poor state of repair. Nonetheless, they have provided a means of housing those who would otherwise lack shelter and therefore replacement and/or upgrading of these facilities must be considered.

#### Deinstitutionalization

Deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill has commonly been attributed to escalating the problems of homelessness. In the 1960s there was an accelerated move towards discharging patients into the communities in lieu of warehousing them in large facilities. To illustrate the magnitude of this movement, in the United States in 1955, there were 550,000 institutionalized patients which was reduced to a population of 180,000 in 1985. (Conklin, 1985). In Manitoba, the institutionalized population decreased from 2,700 in the 1950s to 727 in 1986 (Bairstow, Dec. 1987).

The major reasons for this shift can be traced back to philosophical changes which saw the treatment of mentally ill patients in the community as a progressive and more compassionate response than treatment in large institutions. As well, there was the development of psychotropic medications to control behaviour and a greater emphasis on patient rights by legal, legislative and judicial forces.

Initially, patients were discharged with their medications into supportive family environments. This group appeared to adapt relatively well given the supportive surroundings and a level of functioning which helped to ensure regular use of anti-psychotic drugs. However, as the movement gained momentum subsequent groups who were discharged included those who responded poorly or not at all to the anti-psychotic medications, who were also highly dependent on the institution, and had no family supports. Although intentions appeared to be good, the promised community follow-up supports for these people failed to materialize. To help illustrate this point, it is estimated that in Ontario, 70% to 80% of money available for mental health services is still funnelled into institutions; approximately 6% is allocated to community support (i.e. residential facilities, drop-ins) with the balance going into private practice psychiatry. (Cole, 1988)

The psychiatrically disabled group, which includes

those with severe mental health problems as well as those experiencing problems from time to time, are estimated to make up one-third of the homeless. Estimates have ranged anywhere from 15% to 90% depending upon the methods utilized, (either brief exams or clinical interviews), definitions used in the research studies, and again, problems in researching this heterogeneous group. (Snow et al, 1986; Roth et al, 1986; Bassuk et al, 1984; and Wright, 1988)

As Wright (1988) has stated, under some definitions all of the homeless people could be considered mentally ill while under others none of them could be considered mentally ill. He illustrates his point by noting that in some research studies alcohol and drug problems are combined under all psychiatric disorders; in others, these areas are treated as separate categories. Given that the estimate is a 40% rate of alcohol abuse among the homeless, no doubt, combining the categories would serve to inflate the percentage of mentally ill individuals.

Roth et al, (1986), state that the majority of homeless are not mentally ill and that homelessness is a multi-dimensional problem. At the same time, they do not ignore that there is a percentage of mentally ill homeless who require service. They are particularly concerned about those people who have serious mental health problems but would be

unlikely to seek out community mental health agencies or request traditional outpatient services. In Winnipeg, approximately 170 clients could be classed as a "hard-to-handle" group with serious mental health problems requiring unusual means and efforts in order to serve their needs. (Bairstow, Dec. 1987)

Similarly, Snow et al (1986) also suggest that contrary to earlier studies which identify a large group of mentally ill among the homeless, these are instead a group of non-psychiatrically impaired individuals who are trapped in a cycle of low-paying, and dead-end jobs which do not allow the opportunity for self-sufficiency. They also suggest that the focus on mental health issues deflects from structural causes of homelessness such as unemployment, lack of housing, and inadequate income.

Some of the difficulties in studying this area are related to the lack of data available from institutions themselves. Hospitals for example, serve a wide variety of populations and do not limit themselves to the ongoing study of one particular group. As well, record-keeping does not typically differentiate between the housed and the unhoused. For these reasons, research on the institutional contacts has been primarily limited to 'on-the-street' interviews with either the homeless or those in contact with the homeless.



In Manitoba, it is estimated that approximately 26,000 people are in need of some form of mental health services, with 6,000 to 8,000 experiencing more serious problems (approximately half of this latter group are schizophrenics). (Bairstow, Dec. 1987) Only 25% of Manitoba's mental health caseload in the Winnipeg Region is housed in established residential facilities such as approved and/or licensed homes and satellite housing. As Bairstow has noted:

"This effort is quite small when one realizes that the estimate of the population of the province with mental health problems is in the 6,000 - 8,000 range". (Bairstow, December 1987:7)

As is the case elsewhere, Manitoba's community support services are insufficient to meet the demands of its client population. Those that do exist are difficult to find because of a problem in clear coordination for services, and are underfunded, overloaded, custodial and stigmatizing. (Bairstow, December 1987) In the YWCA's 1983 report entitled "Of No Fixed Address", they note that housing for recovering psychiatric patients was considered to be the major problem for the psychiatrically disabled group.

As mentioned earlier, Crystal (1984) stated that the women whom he studied were twice as likely to report a history of psychiatric hospitalization than were men. Additionally, he also stated women were more likely to be assessed by an interviewer as experiencing psychiatric problems. Unfor-

tunately, Bairstow did not provide a gender breakdown of those utilizing psychiatric services in Manitoba with which to consider gender differences and mental health problems. It is quite likely, however, that this breakdown was not available given that an inquiry made to Mr. John Kenny of the Department of Health, requesting a gender breakdown of the psychiatrically disabled utilizing residential bedspace in the province was also not available.

This gap in information would appear to give some sense of the lack of government understanding or concern in addressing the problems of homeless women. Again, it must be cautioned that it is difficult to determine the actual extent of mental health problems for homeless women. As Stoner (1983) has stated often bizarre behaviour or poor hygiene are more adaptive behaviours to the rigors of street-life and defense mechanisms consciously used given a woman's increased vulnerability to sexual assault.

Given this is a relatively new area of study, more information must be gathered to determine the degree of problems experienced. Nonetheless, there is no doubt a percentage of women who would require a variety of supportive services. Unfortunately, without focussing on this issue and gaining further understanding, one cannot expect the needed facilities to develop.

### Domestic Violence

As already mentioned, domestic violence has been identified as a major antecedent of homelessness for women. An increasing of number of women report that they have left their homes due to repeated incidents of abuse, rape, incest and desertion. It has been estimated that up to 40% of homelessness for women has been the result of wife battering (Vosburgh, 1986).

In "Battered But Not Beaten", MacLeod (1987) stated that over 42,000 women with 55,000 children in Canada sought shelter in transition houses in 1985 with

" - another 42,000 women and 55,000 children ... turned away because of lack of space;" (MacLeod 1987:113)

MacLeod (1987) also noted that government support of emergency shelters has grown significantly over the past several years. Crisis shelters themselves more than tripled during the years 1979 to 1985. At the same time, there has been a more limited and gradual support for second-stage housing which provides a transition-type support service in preparation for alternate long-term housing or a return to the family home.

As stated earlier, the use of emergency shelters by battered women and children in the Winnipeg area has sig-

nificantly increased over the years 1985 and 1986. (Bairstow, Dec.1987) The growing problem in this area is not only highlighted by shelter usage but by crisis line utilization as well. For example, information provided by the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse and outlined in the Bairstow Report (1987) noted a 30% increase in crisis line usage from the years 1984 to 1985.

The types of housing typically available for battered women fall under three categories: Shelters and Transition Houses, Second Stage Housing Projects, and Short Term Crisis Accommodation Projects. Shelters and transition houses typically provide safety, security and emergency care on a 24 hour basis for up to one month. They normally house between ten and thirty women and children and include a range of support services including counselling, information and referral, child care, transportation and follow-up services.

A further type of residential service available to battered women is the Second Stage Housing Project. These projects were developed to,

"...provide safe, affordable housing where women could find support and an atmosphere in which they could make decisions and plan for their family's future." (Alberta Social Services, April 1988:12)

Research conducted on some of the initial facilities revealed that battered women most often requested safe and affordable

accommodation which offered emotional support and help in re-establishing themselves in an independent living situation in the community. (Alberta Social Services, 1988)

Creation of the Second Stage Housing Projects has grown over time from the first one established in 1979 in Vancouver to the sixteen in existence in 1986 across Canada. All facilities are self-contained units owned and operated by non-profit organizations. Some units restrict occupancy to women with children, others exclude children - criteria varies across the provinces. (Alberta Social Services, 1988)

The final type of residential service for battered women is the Short Term Crisis Accommodation Project. These typically provide emergency short-term accommodation ranging from one to three days and are often located in areas without shelter or transition houses. They normally provide a limited number of support services such as crisis intervention counselling, emotional support and transportation services. Short Term Crisis Accommodation Projects usually take one of two forms: the Safe Home Network (consisting of private Safe Homes or Safe Home Networks which are private homes overseen by a project coordinator to ensure services are provided); and Satellite Accommodation which uses existing facilities such as churches, firehalls, hostels, etc. which are staffed only when in use.

Funding for Safe Home Networks usually consists of a per diem rate negotiated with the municipality which is normally recovered later from the province. The provincial government may also provide grants to cover the administrative costs of the committees which organize and coordinate these activities.

#### A Housing Model

Some of the elements of the support system for battered women are similar to a housing model adopted by the State of Massachusetts. This model recognizes the crisis element of shelter as well as the need for interim and longer term housing. Its three-pronged approach to homelessness has been specifically identified by Stoner (1983) and Kaufman (1984) as necessary to providing a range of options for addressing the diverse needs and groups of homeless. The Massachusetts model is presented here as a possible approach for formulating a plan of action.

Specifically, the model consists of a comprehensive policy package which includes Emergency, Transitional and Stabilization phases of intervention.

The Emergency Response phase offers temporary shelter and meets the immediate needs of food, clothing and

financial assistance. The Transitional phase provides support to those requiring alternate housing as well as linking up the client with other appropriate resources such as mental or physical health services, employment assistance or social assistance. The final phase of intervention, Stabilization, is reached when the client has secured permanent housing and complementary support services such as day care, welfare benefits, employment, etc.

The Massachusetts model is based on two important assumptions.

- "1. Solutions must come from the local level with policy and program support from the state.

and

2. The federal government must become more involved in supporting state and local efforts." (Kaufman, 1984:17)

Massachusetts is attempting to have local agencies provide alternate solutions and help in identifying why the current programs have failed. The emphasis on local involvement is in recognition that the diversity of the group calls for programs tailored to the specific community. The importance of federal support recognizes that this is not an individual problem and requires supportive policies as well as financial resources. It is believed that insufficient funding and poor coordination and implementation of programs to begin with have contributed to the current problem.

The basic premise of this model is that all efforts have been made to prevent homelessness in the first place. In the United States, for example, some provision has now been made in the Aid to Families With Dependent Children program which allows the payment of back rent and utilities for those families threatened with eviction. As well, a service has been set up to provide the potentially homeless welfare client with information on options available to prevent becoming homeless. One of the recommendations in a study completed on Manitoba's homeless is the adoption of the Massachusetts program which funds community-based organizations to mediate landlord-tenant disputes in an effort to prevent eviction and homelessness. (Bairstow, Dec. 1987)

Massachusetts has also committed to providing additional housing units for those of low to moderate income taking into account the special circumstances of the individual. For example,

"For the mentally ill or alcoholic, the housing continuum may begin with a "dormitory" which is a safe, secure place for people who have been discharged from an inpatient unit and have no housing. Other possibilities include a quarter-way house, ...supervised apartments and independent living apartments...supported by two day treatment programs and an extensive after care staff." (Kaufman, 1984:18)

The Massachusetts model reflects a basic understanding of the diversity of the people and needs that make up the homeless population. As well, it recognizes the



need for a coordinated approach to dealing with the problem. Perhaps most importantly, is that it has also legislated its commitment to housing the homeless through a specific allocation of low and moderate income housing units. Although the effect of this initiative is not known at this time, at least on the surface, this model provides a comprehensive interventive package to addressing the problems of the homeless.

#### Summary

This chapter has attempted to provide a general understanding of the homelessness issue within which to study the impact of Manitoba's housing policy on the target group. As can be seen, how the problem is defined and who is identified as comprising the homeless population has a significant effect on actions taken (or not taken) to address the issue.

As well, the diversity of the group and the variety of antecedents which contribute to homelessness also requires an approach which utilizes a variety of interventive techniques. The Massachusetts model through its incorporation of a three-pronged approach provides a comparison with which to examine Manitoba's efforts. Prior to this examination, Chapter III provides information on the methodology used to conduct this analysis.

### CHAPTER III

#### Methodology

The purpose of this research study is to examine how the housing policies and programs of the provincial government of Manitoba impacted on a target group which has been identified as particularly vulnerable to the risk of homelessness. This group includes single adult women between the ages of 18 and 64 without children or other dependents, who are prostitutes, post-mentally ill, battered and/or of low-income. It does not include elderly women over age 65 or juveniles. The study design is exploratory and descriptive in nature and is an attempt to provide a better understanding of housing policy in relation to the target group.

In line with the nature of qualitative research, this study focusses significantly on 'description' as a means of helping,

"...to understand what is going on in a particular context and to provide clues and pointers to other layers of reality." (Bryman, 1988:64)

Bryman also identifies 'contextualism' and 'process' as further defining characteristics of qualitative research. Contextualism is again primarily concerned with the need to place events within a broad historical and social context in order to better understand and interpret the outcomes. The emphasis on 'process' reflects the researcher's concern with

issues of interconnectedness and change. Bryman further states that the emphasis on 'process',

"...has been attractive to students of policy... since such research can be much more concerned with the process of implementation rather than solely with its outputs." (Bryman, 1988: 65 & 66)

Data collected for this study was primarily obtained through the unobtrusive research method of public archival record review as well as through the use of semi-structured personal interviews with government and non-government key informants. On three occasions, telephone interviews were also utilized given some difficulty in scheduling in-person interviews with the key informants.

With respect to the archival record reviews, some of the information gathered for this study was obtained through a combination of random and purposive sampling of Winnipeg Free Press newspapers. Firstly, all of the Hansard Indexes for the years 1982-1988 were reviewed to identify relevant dates and issues under discussion in the legislature. Corresponding copies of the Winnipeg Free Press were then reviewed the day after the housing issue was discussed in order to identify any public or media reaction. For those times that the legislature was not in session, a random sample of seven days in the month were selected.

As well, a review of all 1982-1988 NDP Throne Speeches and Budget Addresses as contained in the Hansard Publications was also conducted. Additionally, NDP Housing Estimate Discussions from 1982-1987 were also examined. Due to the fall of the NDP government in March 1988, NDP Estimates Discussions were not available for 1988.

Throne Speeches from 1982-1988 inclusive were analyzed with respect to their housing policy and program content and compared for themes and changes over time. Specifically, a content analysis approach was used to identify themes of housing policy which were then categorized under economic policy (as a means of creating jobs or providing employment, stimulating the economy and/or the construction industry); as an issue of social justice (the provision of adequate and affordable housing either rental or owned, to improve the standard of living or as a social right); and as a planning tool (as a means of rejuvenating and maintaining neighbourhoods). As can be seen, there were a number of sub-categories aggregated under the main headings which helped to increase the reliability of the findings.

The particular themes selected were judged by the researcher, subsequent to a review of relevant literature, as appropriate indices of the planned activities and intentions of the NDP government respecting housing policy.

With respect to the identification of themes, although the researcher had some sense of the many facets of housing policy, they were, for the most part, derived from the data. Specifically, the Throne Speeches were reviewed several times to identify key phrases which were then categorized under the emerging themes of housing as an economic or planning tool, or as an issue of social justice.

As a check on the face validity of the findings, other documents such as annual reports and estimates discussions were also reviewed and a number of key informants interviewed to determine if the findings were consistent with subsequent actions. Given that Walizer and Wienir (1978) have stated that a major disadvantage associated with content analysis is the possibility of pre-screening having occurred on the documentation, it was important to compare the findings with other sources of corroborating information.

Content analysis as defined by Carney (1972) is,

"...a technique which aims to improve the quality of the inferences we make. It is based on analyzing communications... It analyzes by objectively and systematically picking out characteristics in specified parts of those communications."  
(Carney, 1972:xv)

In the case of this particular study the content analysis technique was selected primarily for its ready application to historical research, its unobtrusiveness, and its cost

effectiveness. It was a means of systematically reviewing a relevant political document, the Throne Speech, to help assess the government's intended purposes of its housing policy.

As well as public archival records, a number of miscellaneous research reports, government studies and other documents were also studied for insight they could provide on the housing issue. These included studies published through the University of Winnipeg's Institute of Urban Studies and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reports.

Although there is always the possibility of bias occurring given the inability to review all relevant housing material, it was felt that the use of random and purposive sampling methods, the review of a broad cross-section of housing-related public archival documents, the additional review of non-provincial government initiated research reports and background material, as well as the use of key informant interviews with a variety of organization representatives, all helped to reduce the possibility of error.

To complement this first portion of study, interviews with key informants in both government and non-government organizations were also conducted. The interview format was semi-structured with a number of open-ended questions. (see Appendix A) This format allowed a focus on the issues

of homelessness and housing policy while still providing a greater latitude to key informants in offering additional opinions, observations and comments on the subject. It also provided the researcher with an opportunity to further follow-up relevant key informant responses. As Bryman (1988) has stated, qualitative researchers often utilize an 'open research strategy' as a means of increasing the opportunity of discovering unexpected issues.

At the same time, there is a risk to this type of interview in that it allows for the introduction of the personal bias of the interviewer. (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981) Similarly, although this bias may not have been as evident during the telephone interviews, nonetheless, the use of a combination of archival review and personal and telephone interviews helped to substantiate the findings.

Government key informants were primarily selected on the basis of their involvement in the Interdepartmental Committee for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless as listed in the government-commissioned report entitled "Reaching Out for Help: Manitoba's Homeless in 1987" by Dale Bairstow.

These key informants were selected for inclusion given that it appeared they played key front-line roles in the

NDP government's initiatives respecting housing policy and homelessness. They were seen as being able to provide a broad perspective to the issue under study because, as Donnison (1968) has stated, housing is too complex an issue to be left to the responsibility of one department.

It is recognized that, in this regard, other provincial departments such as Urban Affairs might also have been contacted as a means of providing greater insight into provincial-city relationships. However, given that the focus of this exploratory study was primarily concerned with housing in relation to the homeless target group identified, it was felt that time and effort should be concentrated on departments having the greatest involvement with the issue and groups under study.

I was able to contact and interview all government key informants as noted in the Bairstow report; these included Jim Zamprelli formerly of the Department of Housing; Bryan Depape of the Department of Employment Services and Economic Security, John Gunn formerly of Community Services, and John Kenny of the Department of Health. All graciously provided me with their time and appeared quite candid in their responses. At the same time, the shortcoming in interviewing people two years after the fact and operating on recall must be recognized. Nevertheless I am somewhat confident of the



responses I received. Furthermore, on a number of occasions I obtained a similar response to identical questions and received corroborating information in my review of other documents.

In addition I contacted three other government key informants who were identified by others that I spoke with as perhaps bringing additional insight to the issue under study. Specifically, Jane Ursel of the Women's Directorate was contacted upon the recommendation of Sheila Gordon from the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Ms. Gordon stated that although she was prepared to be interviewed, she did not feel that she was in the best position to comment on women and housing related issues given that it has not been a focus for the Advisory Committee. Janet Wikstrom of the Department of Community Services was contacted on the recommendation of John Gunn who indicated that his early departure from the government's interdepartmental committee may have left some gaps which Ms. Wikstrom could fill. Wade Castes of the Department of Housing was also contacted initially in lieu of Mr. Jim Zamprelli who had left the department but whom I was able to interview later. Mr. Castes, a Strategic Planner, with the Department of Housing attended a number of interdepartmental meetings with Mr. Zamprelli and was able to provide a great deal of information on committee operation as well as the workings of the Department of Housing.

There were also several attempts made to contact the former Minister of Housing, Maureen Hemphill, who had responsibility for the department during the major part of 1987. Ms Hemphill was seen as a key political actor during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Although several attempts were made to contact Ms Hemphill and, although at one point she did agree to be interviewed, she did not subsequently follow up with her commitment to schedule an appointment. In lieu of a direct interview, an article submitted to the Canadian Housing journal entitled, "Developing a two-pronged approach" submitted under Ms Hemphill's authority was used to help place the issue of housing in its political perspective. (Canadian Housing, 1987)

Non-government key informants were selected primarily on the basis of their involvement with the homeless women target group which included prostitutes, battered women, post-mentally ill and low-income singles. Specifically, the following people were interviewed: Annette Willborn of the YWCA (who is also a member of the Coalition on Homelessness) who has been extensively involved with all of the target group through the YWCA residence program as well as Osborne House; Susan Chipperfield of the Canadian Mental Health Association (Winnipeg Region) who is responsible for a demonstration project in Supportive Housing for the psychiatrically dis-

abled; Olga Foltz and Patricia Morrison from the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization who primarily advocate on behalf of low-income individuals normally in receipt of social assistance; Jane Runner of Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights (POWER), a board member knowledgeable in the problems of the target group, particularly adult and juvenile prostitutes; Rick Brundrige of Main Street Project who continues to work part time with MSP and who acted as a research member for the 1987 report prepared on Manitoba's homeless by Dale Bairstow; and Major Dave Perry of the Salvation Army, a public relations officer who fielded questions on the operation of Baldwin House, a crisis facility for women. As well I completed a brief telephone interview with Marlene Bertrand of Osborne House. Finally, to provide additional information from a community perspective, Mr. Harvey Stevens of the Social Planning Council was also interviewed.

As a point of clarification, Catherine Charette from the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, who is referred to in this study, was also contacted in the preparatory stages of research as a means of helping to focus the direction of study. Although she provided valuable information related to her involvement with the Coalition on Homelessness, she was not directly interviewed for this study. Instead, Annette Willborn of the YWCA who also participated in Coalition activities helped to provide updated information

respecting the status of this group and its initiatives.

Again it is recognized that there were other organizations which could have been contacted to provide information related to the issue under study such as the Winnipeg Regional Housing Authority or the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation (City of Winnipeg). At the same time, the groups ultimately selected were seen as providing more specific insight into the problems of the target group. The variety of organizations represented were seen as helping to corroborate the overall findings of the interviews.

Although the initial schedule of interviews was to be structured to allow for a move from government to non-government key informant meetings as a means of providing a framework within which to gauge non-government key informant responses, this did not occur. Due to a variety of reasons including vacations, broken appointments and other scheduling problems, government and non-government key informant interviews were interspersed. At the same time, this did not prove to be particularly problematic and, in the case of housing officials, it appeared to be more advantageous to meet with them near the end of the interviews as a means of filling in gaps of information which occurred as the research progressed. (see Appendix B for the interview schedule)

It must again be reiterated that all of these key

informants were attempting to recall events which occurred over the past several years. At times there were also difficulties in that some individuals were relatively new to their positions vis-a-vis the period of time under study; all acknowledged certain shortcomings in their memories as they occurred.

It must also be remembered that these individuals represent and are employed by organizations of one form or another. As representatives, it can be expected that certain information was not provided due to confidentiality or possible embarrassment to the organization. Again, a certain confidence in the response can be attributed to the similarity of responses among key informants as well as with the written documentation reviewed. At times, where informants have been very candid in their responses, I have chosen not to reveal specific sources in order to preserve their anonymity.

As can be seen by the documents reviewed and government key informants contacted, the primary emphasis of this research is on the province's role in housing policy. At the same time, both federal and municipal governments are also able to exert considerable influence in helping to shape provincial actions. The following chapter therefore explores not only the provincial government's role but the contribution that the federal and municipal levels make in influencing

policies and programs. Chapter IV is primarily descriptive in nature as a means of providing a historical and social context for events occurring during the 1982-1988 time period in Manitoba. At the same time, where appropriate, data collected from interviews with key informants is also incorporated.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Role of Government in Housing

#### The Federal Government

Although constitutional responsibility for the provision of housing has been assigned to the provincial governments under Section 92 of the British North America Act, the federal government played and still plays a significant role in the provision of housing to Canadians.

Historically, Rose (1980) states that the federal government's initial involvement in housing was primarily a result of the economic problems of the time which threatened the government's future in the 1935 election. In order to help secure a successful election outcome, the Dominion Housing Act was passed in 1935. Similarly, the passage of the National Housing Act in 1938 which broadened the terms of the 1935 legislation can also be attributed to continuing unemployment and economic problems as well as a political need to survive.

Little occurred in the housing field as a result of the creation of this legislation until the onset of the Second World War. The first real federal involvement in housing occurred in 1941 with the establishment of Wartime Housing

Limited, a crown corporation created to provide needed and more durable housing for wartime workers relocating to the urban centres. As well, the federal government implemented rent controls in response to the wartime related problems of scarce units and spiralling costs. (Rose, 1980) In effect, government intervened in a situation where the private market was incapable of providing an adequate and affordable supply of housing on its own.

Rose (1980) states that a second, expanded version of the National Housing Act was passed in 1944 subsequent to the recommendations of the Curtis Committee which was established as part of the post-war reconstruction effort. The Curtis Report advocated for a greater federal role in the housing field especially in the provision of housing for low-income families. Although Rose (1980) states that this legislation marked a "...milestone in the enunciation of social responsibility by the government" (Rose, 1980:27) he also states that it was, for all intents and purposes, an economic tool which was used as a means of avoiding a post-war depression.

In 1945, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act was passed which absorbed the responsibilities of Wartime Housing Limited and created a federal housing agency to administer the National Housing Act.



"The new agency, headed by a president and a vice-president and supported by a board of directors appointed by the Government of Canada had all the attributes of a well-run business corporation and was designed to hide the potential iron fist of governmental intervention with a velvet glove of respectability or even financial profit." (Rose, 1980:20)

The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, as was the case with Wartime Housing Limited, negotiated directly with the municipal governments for the construction of veterans' housing units with little interference from the respective provincial governments.

Rose (1980) attributes the lack of early provincial involvement in housing to their being unprepared politically and administratively as well as financially. By the late 1940s, the federal government had already been active in the housing field for some years, having negotiated with municipal governments for housing construction, legislated rent controls, operated a mortgage lending program, and worked through Wartime Housing Limited to provide some community and social programming. This was unlike the provinces which were inexperienced in dealing with most housing issues. Rose (1968) also states that the provinces were not politically prepared to deal with both community and legislative opposition to public housing programs. Although Rose (1968) indicates that community opposition to public housing never reached the proportions it did in the United States, nonetheless, it was

significant in discouraging local initiatives throughout the late 1940s and into the 1950s. At the same time, the federal government through its initial lead in housing had already gained some credibility and expertise in establishing a variety of housing initiatives including the introduction of public housing.

As a result, the federal government continued to play a strong role in housing-related issues for two years subsequent to the war with some beginning provincial initiative emerging in the late 1940s. Within this effort, there was a strong emphasis on home ownership with the government providing mortgage money, manipulating interest rates and encouraging potential homeowners to buy housing. In fact, the single family detached house built on vacant land was the only housing type eligible for financing under the National Housing Act during this time.

Rose (1980) states that over the period 1945 to 1964,

"The house-building industry came to represent a sizeable part of Canada's annual capital investment, absorbing two billion dollars per annum by 1965."  
(Rose, 1980:35)

Not surprisingly, the housing industry was significantly affected by changes in economic and monetary policies. It, in turn, also affected policies given that a large proportion

of people were either employed in or somehow dependent upon housing construction.

The economic recession of the late 1950s and early 1960s resulted in the discontinuance of additional housing programs and by 1961, "...the federal-provincial partnership had collapsed" (Rose, 1980:36) This situation was to change, however, following significant amendments in 1964 to the National Housing Act which provided what Rose terms a "turning point" in Canadian housing history.

"From that time on the whole question of whether slum or blighted areas were to be cleared, the social questions accompanying the process of re-housing and relocation, the whole question of whether low-income persons and families were to be offered decent and adequate housing at a price they could afford - these and numerous related social questions were put squarely in the laps of the provincial governments." (Rose, 1980:40-41)

Hulchanski and Drover (1986) state that the 1964 changes introduced for the first time, an effective public housing program as well as a non-profit housing program for the elderly. To illustrate,

"Between 1949, when public housing was first introduced, and the 1964 NHA, only 12,140 public housing units had been built. In contrast, about 40,000 private sector rental units were subsidized as of 1964." (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986:11-12)

In large part, the small number of public housing units can be traced back to initially cumbersome administrative procedures established by the CMHC. Although Rose (1968) states

these procedures were set up as a means of ensuring an objective of excellence in public housing, they impacted on the quantity of units that could be built. CMHC's involvement in all levels of planning and decision-making up to and including appointment of local housing authorities served to severely curtail the number of units built. (Rose, 1968)

Rose cautions that the federal government's extensive involvement in approving social housing projects is not to be confused with their commitment to this area of housing policy. Rather, federal actions in the housing field more clearly demonstrated a commitment to home ownership and not public housing initiatives. This was apparent not only through flexible provisions of mortgage monies through the National Housing Act but also through formal statements in parliament and the press.

The 1960s, then, were primarily focused on provincial assumption of housing responsibility with the federal government playing more of a financial role in the allocation of monies through specific programs under NHA as well as setting standards for intergovernmental relationships and public housing. Rose states that the years subsequent to the 1964 NHA amendment can be used to gauge provincial acceptance of this more clearly defined role through their subsequent action or inaction in the housing field.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were again a time of change and uncertainty in the housing field. With the election of a majority Liberal government in 1968 and greater economic stability, came additional demands for new government initiatives. (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986) As part of these initiatives, the federal government commissioned a task force to make recommendations on the limits and requirements of the federal government in housing initiatives. Its recommendations included the creation of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs to which CMHC would report; as well as an expanded role for the federal government in future urbanization plans. The subsequent incorporation of some of these recommendations left the provinces scrambling to examine and amend their existing legislation to fit within the new policies created as a result of the Task Force on Housing and Urban Development. (Rose, 1980)

In 1973 further amendments to the National Housing Act occurred which Hulchanski and Drover (1986) attribute, in part, to the social democrats who held the balance of power under the minority Liberal rule. These included the introduction of public, private and co-operative non-profit housing programs, land banking, and a rural and native housing program. Both low and moderate income households were targeted to provide a broader community mix within the housing projects.

With respect to housing for low-income groups, Rose (1980) states that 1970 was the "banner year" for financial assistance to these groups during the 1965-1974 period. For the period 1970 to 1973, housing for low-income groups dropped by 50 per cent for Canada as a whole. Rose attributes this decrease to a number of factors:

"The confusion after 1969 - the creation of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs and the indecision of the successive ministers and their senior officials after 1970, the use of housing as a factor in curtailing the progress of inflation in the years 1969-71 - combined to worsen drastically the housing situation of low-income groups in our country." (Rose, 1980:81)

During the 1973 to 1984 time period Canada suffered three official years of recession; these were 1974-75, 1980, and 1981-82. (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986) These times were marked by high unemployment, high interest rates and a rapid increase in government debt. Government response to this situation resulted in a reduction in direct social housing expenditures. At the same time, Hulchanski and Drover (1986) state that the federal government continued to assist the private housing market through hidden tax expenditures such as the Registered Home Ownership Savings Plan (RHOSP) and the Multiple Unit Residential Building program (MURB).

In essence, the growth of social programs, including housing, were seen as causing an imbalance in the economic

system.

"Wage controls, cut-backs in public expenditures, changes in unemployment insurance, the erosion of health insurance, the expansion of the prison system, the promotion of private sector housing, and the stimulation of tax expenditures were all fostered to right the imbalances of the previous decade. Housing was also singled out as a cause for concern." -  
(Hulchanski & Drover, 1986:13)

At the same time, political pressure to provide housing subsidies mounted during a time of escalating housing costs and decreasing housing starts. Government's response was the creation of a number of initiatives directed towards the private housing market including the Registered Home Ownership Savings Program (RHOSP), the Assisted Rental Program (ARP) and the MURB tax provision. As Hulchanski and Drover (1986) state,

"No new social housing programs were introduced and funding levels of the 1973 NHA's non-profit and cooperative housing programs remained very low."  
(Hulchanski & Drover, 1986:18)

Government intervention did result in an increase in single family units as well as apartment dwellings. With respect to rental accommodation, however, once the government's subsidy program ended so did private market interest in providing rental units.

The period 1978 to 1981 again marked a period of attempted federal restraint. The theme, reminiscent of earlier times, was to decrease direct expenditures and instead act as a catalyst to promote private sector involvement in

stimulating the economy. Non-profit and co-operative housing programs were perceived as wasteful and poorly targeted. Rather, the federal government once again focused on the RHOSP and the MURB tax provision to address the high costs of home ownership and problems of profitability in the private rental market. (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986)

The early 1980s have been described as the most severe recessionary period since the Second World War. This time was plagued by high interest rates, personal and business bankruptcies, increasing inflation and high unemployment. Canada's unemployment level was the highest it had been since Statistics Canada began keeping records in 1946. (Winnipeg Free Press, May 7, 1982) A good portion of the unemployment rate was attributed to the construction industry where rates were unseasonably high. (Winnipeg Free Press, May 8, 1982)

Interest rates for mortgages moved from 11% in 1979 to a peak of 21% in the summer of 1981 creating severe financial hardship for those having to renew their mortgages during this time. Additionally, low vacancy rates and the high cost of housing compounded problems for the low and moderate income earner. (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986). Subsequent public pressure resulted in the Liberal government announcing a number of housing initiatives designed to bring housing back into the affordable price range. These included



an interest deferment program as well as a program to promote the construction of rental units. Later, the federal government also provided \$3,000 grants to new home buyers and first time purchasers of existing homes through the Canada Home Ownership Stimulation Plan. As well, the government committed to funding for an additional 2,500 social housing units contrary to its practices of the immediate past.

As Hulchanski and Drover (1986) state, all of these programs were justified on the basis of their ability to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

"None of the new housing programs represented an attempt to stabilize or improve the operation of the housing market... Nor were they designed to help the housing situation of low and moderate income Canadians. They were simply an immediate response to an immediate economic and political crisis." (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986:27)

To illustrate this further, over 250,000 homeowners received CHOSP grants, rental investors through government subsidization were able to construct 33,000 rental units and 20,000 rental units were made available through the ongoing MURB tax provisions. In contrast, only 2,500 social housing units were allocated. (Hulchanski & Drover, 1986)

Although 1983 saw some recovery in the way of decreasing unemployment and interest rates, by fall the mortgage rates had begun climbing again. The Conference Board of Canada stated that,

"Persistent high interest rates are the major stumbling block to recovery...Sluggish growth and high unemployment are in the cards as long as the gap between inflation and interest rates remains wide..." (The Winnipeg Free Press, September 29, 1983:56)

In September 1984, the federal Liberal Party was defeated and the Progressive Conservatives assumed power. In his economic statement, "A New Direction for Canada", the new Conservative Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson, although acknowledging some economic recovery stated,

"...the uneven nature of this growth, the weak demand in several major sectors, and continued high unemployment rates have resulted in a growing perception that the recovery has run out of steam."  
(Canada, November 8, 1984:6)

In addition, Wilson projected a further slowdown in growth for 1985 and a projected federal deficit of \$35 billion dollars for 1984/85. These factors coupled with the change to a Conservative government saw attention being brought to all areas of social programming including housing policy.

In his policy statement on Canada's new direction, Wilson called for a review of existing social programs to help ensure that social policies were relevant for the times and directed towards those most in need. He stated the twin-test of *social responsibility* and *fiscal responsibility* was to be used as a framework for this review. Social responsibility, Wilson said, is based on the premise that scarce resources should be directed to those in most need and fiscal respon-

sibility,

"...suggests that the best income security is a job, and that government expenditures must be allocated to provide immediate employment opportunities and better ensure sustained income growth." (A New Direction for Canada, 1984:71)

With respect to the area of housing, Wilson questioned whether those in most need were, in fact, the groups targeted for attention. As well, he was not convinced that the government's current involvement in social housing was appropriate - should they in fact be giving consideration to changes in existing programs or considering the introduction of new initiatives such as shelter allowance programs? It is not surprising that Wilson wished to explore the government's role in social housing given that ninety percent of the \$1.5 billion allocated through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation went towards the cost of the existing stock of 200,000 public housing units and approximately 179,000 non-profit and co-operative housing units. (A New Direction for Canada, 1986) Subsequent to Wilson's statements, a "Consultation Paper on Housing", (1985) was distributed to over 8,000 interested groups and individuals as a means of stimulating and focusing discussions on housing and government's role in housing.

The consultations on housing which followed Wilson's November 1984 announcement resulted in the announcement of "A National Direction for Housing Solutions". (CMHC, 1985) Changes

in housing policy direction included four key areas: Social Housing, Cooperative Housing, Market Housing, and Housing Quality.

For the most part, social housing programs were to be targeted at those in 'core housing need' both homeowners and renters, with minimal attention paid to mixing of moderate income groups. Although this had been the original focus of social housing policy, the latter 1970s saw a shift towards programs which served a broader mix of income groups. (McLaughlin, 1987) The federal government specifically identified needy families, seniors, natives and the disabled as target groups although one rehabilitation program simply targeted 'low-income homeowners' and a rent supplement program stated assistance would be provided to 'needy households' in private market or co-op units. (CMHC, 1985)

The federal government also announced decreased government expenditures on cooperative housing to be replaced by an "index-linked mortgaging" program. As well, the federal role in market housing was to be limited to providing "improved security" to homeowners through mortgage-backed securities and public mortgage insurance. Additionally, the Conservatives announced that any market stimulation for job creation reasons would occur only after consultation with the provinces and the housing industry to ensure minimal damage

to the "long-term health of the housing industry" (CMHC, 1985:8). As a final point, the government stated its intention to establish a Housing Research Committee to coordinate tri-level government efforts on improving existing housing quality problems.

As well as issuing a policy statement on new housing directions, the federal government also initiated a revised federal/provincial partnership in housing during 1986. According to Mr. Zamprelli, formerly of the Manitoba Department of Housing, this was primarily a restatement of federal/provincial roles and responsibilities. At a more operational level, he stated it resulted in a greater assumption of provincial responsibility under Section 56.1 of the NHA respecting non-profit housing programs; previously the federal government had dealt directly with non-profit groups. As a more "active party" in program delivery, it also meant the provinces or territories had to assume a greater financial responsibility as well. Under these new arrangements, the provinces or territories were expected to contribute at least 25% of the cost of each project with the federal government contributing 75%.

Mr. Zamprelli as well indicated that a Sub-Committee on Special Needs Housing was also created in 1986 by the federal government. This committee consisted of representa-

tives from the various provincial governments as well as the CMHC. Its purpose was to determine the role of the Special Needs Housing program and identify specific target groups. According to Mr. Zamprelli, CMHC wished to make financing less favourable under this program for non-profit groups who were dealing with non-permanent types of housing such as crisis shelters for battered women. He said that, apparently, CMHC saw these types of facilities as a health and social concern falling under the purview of the federal Department of National Health and Welfare and not a housing problem.

However, a press release issued June 7, 1988 by the federal government indicated that \$22.2 million of a \$40 million allocation to address the problem of family violence, would be directed towards CMHC to create 500 new short-term shelter units for crisis assistance. (Government of Canada, June 7, 1988) Mr. Zamprelli stated this did appear to be somewhat of a departure from the federal position and as such he could not explain it. This anomaly may on one hand serve to demonstrate the difficulty of attempting to define shelter issues in narrow terms or on the other hand it may have been an attempt to show a multi-faceted federal response resulting from public pressure to deal with this serious social issue.

In an addendum to the press release, the federal government also indicated that during the 1978-1986 period,

more than 1100 shelter units were developed under the CMHC Non-Profit Housing Program. As well they state their commitment to addressing family violence issues through the creation of a Family Violence Prevention Division within the Department of Health and Welfare in 1986; coordination of a federal/provincial/territorial Status of Women Working Group on Wife Battering; funding of various research and evaluative studies of domestic violence; as well as funding of outreach efforts and public education projects.

It is also important to note that the federal government credits women's groups and professionals dealing with victims of family violence with,

"...the emergence of family violence issues on the federal policy agenda..." (Government of Canada, June 7, 1988:1)

As Rose (1980) has stated, no government is likely to intervene in housing issues unless they are under severe public pressure or there is some political advantage in doing so.

To recap, the federal role in the housing field has changed over the years from its early lead role in housing initiatives subsequent to the second world war, to a less frontline position with the provinces assuming ever greater responsibility for housing efforts. The focus has also changed from a National Housing Act solely geared towards the creation of single detached units to one which incorporates

social housing and co-operative units as well, albeit with lesser emphasis.

As well, target groups have changed over time from the low-to-moderate income family to include the elderly, natives and disabled. In large part, changes in federal activity and its primary areas of involvement are dependent upon a number of considerations including economic, political and social factors.

Government intervention has also occurred as the result of public pressure to provide affordable housing including that for returning war veterans as well as for low and moderate income households affected by recessions. Social pressure such as this is particularly effective as election time approaches; politically it is in the government's best interests to, at least, appear responsive to the people's needs. As Rose (1980) has stated political motives played a large part in the introduction of initial housing legislation in the 1930s.

At the same time, federal involvement in the marketplace has often been justified on the basis of economic concerns; the housing industry has major spin-off effects for the country. The housing sector not only creates direct employment for those in the field but also creates jobs for



others such as those who supply the materials or create the household goods to furnish the accommodation. Although the federal government has stated and demonstrated some sense of social responsibility in providing housing for those who are less able to afford it, more often than not these initiatives have been couched in economic terms.

As well, in instances where the government has intervened for the low and moderate-income earner, this assistance has been primarily targeted towards the private market through tax incentive schemes in lieu of greater involvement in social housing construction. This approach to housing is common to both major political parties which have held power during this time and is consistent with their stated desire of least interference in the market system. As well, this approach is reflective of larger society which values the free-market system but which also recognizes an individual's right to adequate and affordable housing.

As can be seen the federal government has played a lead role in identifying target groups and establishing the parameters of housing policy. It is disturbing to note that except for the battered woman, little consideration appears to have been given to housing problems of others in the target group who were emerging over this time. The fact that the non-battered target group were virtually ignored may be

attributed to what Rose (1978) states is a lesser tolerance of the poor in times of "... economic distress, high unemployment and high inflation..." (Rose, 1978:277) He states there is a greater tendency to view this group in derogatory terms such as 'welfare bums' or 'unemployment insurance cheats', thereby negating a society's responsibility to these groups and focusing instead on a group like the elderly who are perceived as legitimately requiring help. The actions of the federal government would appear to reflect this position to some extent in that the disadvantaged single woman was virtually ignored.

The following section on the provincial government also provides primarily descriptive information on the early provincial role in housing policy. As such it gives a historical overview on the creation of Manitoba's housing policy vehicle, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, and provides background information on legislative and administrative implications.

### The Provincial Government

#### **The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation**

As has been discussed, it was the federal government which, for some time, played the lead role in housing initiatives undertaken in Canada. For the most part, provincial

governments did not become active in the housing field until the 1960s when National Housing Act legislation was passed placing primary responsibility for housing in the laps of the provinces. (Rose, 1980)

Manitoba's response to the 1964 legislation was the creation of its own crown entity, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC), through legislative act proclaimed June 21, 1967. The major objectives of this enabling legislation has been summarized as,

"... ensuring that all Manitobans experiencing affordability problems are adequately housed, and utilizing the construction of new and rehabilitated housing as an instrument of overall economic development and urban revitalization." (Peat Marwick, Spring 1988:71)

This act replaced the previous Public Housing and Urban Renewal Act which had been administered under the Department of Urban Development and Municipal Affairs. Staff from this department were transferred to the new corporation and a Board of Directors was appointed.

For the most part, Rose (1968) described this new legislation as the most fully developed to anything passed previously. He also stated that at least on the surface, it

"...appears to be a full-blown development of provincial assumption of responsibility, at least in legislative terms. In scope and format this legislation rivals the National Housing Act itself." (Rose, 1968:67)

The 1967/68 Annual Report of the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation reveals that its primary area of involvement up to and including this point in time had been in assisting municipalities with the costs associated with undertaking urban renewal studies, schemes and implementation strategies. It had also assisted in the development of a grand total of 490 public housing units in the City of Winnipeg.

There were a number of reasons for Manitoba's slow start in public housing not the least of which was the provincial government's legislative policy which required that municipalities cost-share portions of urban renewal initiatives as well as operating losses of public housing. As predicted by the manager of MHRC in his year end report of 1968/69, continued expectations for municipal cost-sharing resulted in few units being constructed for the following year. (Annual Report, 1968/69)

It is interesting to note that Rose (1968) stated that the MHRC Act as initially proclaimed provided what appeared to be a,

"...clear incentive in Manitoba for the assumption of responsibility at the local level with provincial and federal support, rather than the overall assumption of responsibility by the new provincial housing corporation."  
(Rose, 1968:67)

Unfortunately, although it may have been good-intentioned, this aspect of the legislation served to inhibit housing initiatives because of the limited financial ability of municipalities, especially in rural areas, to contribute to their cost. As well, the generally conservative nature of rural municipalities may have also impacted on the lack of social housing initiatives.

In 1969, the requirement for municipal involvement in public housing construction was lifted. This was, no doubt, due at least in part to a philosophical change in government administration as a result of the election of the New Democratic Party. It is also suggested in the 1969/70 Annual Report of the MHRC that failure to utilize allocated federal funds by the stated deadline of December 1970 would result in a loss of credibility for Manitoba in future requests for money. The elimination of the municipal involvement therefore expedited the construction process. At the same time, it may have also served to mark the beginning of decreased coordination between provincial and municipal representatives in housing affairs.

The early 1970s saw a flurry of public housing construction primarily geared towards low and moderate-income families and the elderly. It also saw the Corporation enter the field of Land Assembly to ensure a future supply of

readily available land. By the end of 1972 the increasing number of public housing units resulted in plans to establish a Winnipeg housing authority to take on management responsibilities then handled by the MHRC. (Annual Report, 1971/72)

By 1974, however,

"Construction of family public housing came to an effective halt in Winnipeg... Frustrated by M.H.R.C.'s inability to obtain suitably zoned land or to secure proper zoning on land that it did hold, the Corporation looked to alternatives to meet what it views as a crisis situation." (Annual Report, 1973/74, no page #)

The 1972/73 Annual Report of the MHRC stated that negotiations which began in 1972 between the municipal and provincial government did not result in the "hoped-for co-ordination and the designation of lands for future public housing developments". (Annual Report, 1972/73: no page no.) Unfortunately, the report does not elaborate on specific difficulties encountered but we do get a beginning sense of the power of city government to thwart plans through its regulatory powers.

As a result of these problems, MHRC redirected some of its initiative into supporting co-operative housing projects through the supply of land and the introduction of a Rent Supplement Program in 1974 whereby rents were subsidized in private market accommodation. As well during this year, MHRC's target groups expanded to include the building of a residence for physically disabled adults. Other inroads

by the MHRC included the introduction of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program, the Rural and Native Housing Program and assistance to First-Time Home Buyers in the form of grants and mortgage subsidies. (Annual Report, 1974/75:no page #)

By the end of 1975, Manitoba had become involved in a variety of housing initiatives. Most impressive, however, was its commitment to public housing which totalled 11,554 units throughout Manitoba with 5,394 of these units in Winnipeg. (Rose, 1980) Of this latter group, 2,037 public housing units were allocated to families; and 3,857 public housing units were designated for the elderly. As Rose (1980) stated, Manitoba's record thus far was very impressive especially considering its population of just over one million people.

At the same time, however, the pace of public housing construction since 1975 has not been as great as that experienced up until this time. As a comparison, in 1987 in the City of Winnipeg, there were 3,617 public housing units available for families; and 4,814 units of public housing for the elderly. (Annual Report, 1986/87:20) However, it must also be remembered that the government had been relying on other programs such as shelter allowance, private market housing support, and private non-profit housing support to provide reasonably priced units for selected target groups.

It is interesting to note some of the changes which occurred over time respecting both MHRC initiatives as well as target groups. For the most part, the early mandate of the MHRC was to,

"...improve standards of living accommodation in Manitoba and to assist residents in obtaining such accommodation." (Annual Report, 1973/74: no page #)

Of particular concern to the corporation were those people whose income did not permit them to rent decent, safe and sanitary housing at the going market rates. (Annual Report, 1973/74: no page no.) As a result, the initial emphasis of the MHRC was in the area of social housing units with some limited involvement in the provision of homes for sale. Over time, a review of annual reports indicates that this has changed to include a heavy emphasis on home ownership with lesser attention given to rental initiatives.

As well, beginning initiatives into the housing field were primarily focused on the low-to-moderate income family. Eventually, however, there was a greater shift towards housing the elderly population with the disabled also beginning to emerge as a priority during the 1970s. These changes are consistent with what Rose (1980) has identified as a major socio-economic and philosophical shift which occurred across the country during the 70s. In large part, this appeared to occur as a result of economic problems which



resulted in increased government restraint and a narrowing of focus to assist only the legitimate needy.

In summary, then, it appears that the Manitoba Government became very active in the housing field during the late 1960s and early 1970s and demonstrated its commitment to assisting the identified 'needy' of the time to acquire adequate and affordable housing through government-sponsored social housing. This is evidenced both by the breadth of the legislation it enacted as well as its actual accomplishments in the field. Prior to examining the Manitoba Governments's housing accomplishments in the 1980s, we turn briefly to the role of the municipal government in housing-related issues.

#### The Municipal Government

Although constitutionally the provinces have responsibility for housing initiatives, as Rose (1980) has stated municipal governments possess a good deal of power to influence housing through zoning regulations, building standards and occupancy restrictions, as well as the specifics of urban development.

In Winnipeg this power was particularly apparent during the bylaw challenge initiated in 1986 by the Winnipeg Zoning Coalition (WZC) which questioned the city's right to require public hearings and approval of a civic committee

before they could establish group homes in the city. This zoning coalition included the Canadian Mental Health Association, the John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Society, the Manitoba League of the Physically handicapped, Winnserv Inc., the Age and Opportunity Centre and the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba. The WZC charged that the city bylaw requirement for public hearings related to the establishment of group homes was discriminatory in that it attempted to zone people and therefore violated individual rights.

Thus far, however, the City of Winnipeg has been successful in defending its right to zone land for group home use. The Court of Queen's Bench ruled that the bylaws are neither discriminatory nor impinge on Canada's Charter of Rights. (Winnipeg Free Press, Sept. 25, 1988) The impact of this ruling for the target group is to effectively limit the amount and type of housing available for such groups as the post-mentally ill and battered women.

The City of Winnipeg is also active in the enforcement of building standards through its Health and Fire Departments as well as the Core Area Residential Upgrading and Maintenance Program. Additionally, it is involved in community improvement programs for which it assumed responsibility subsequent to the termination of the federal Neighbourhood Improvement Program.

The impact that the City can have on the target group through its health regulations was evident in 1988 when its Health Department threatened to pull the operating license of Winnipeg's Osborne House Crisis Shelter for battered women. It stated that the shelter must reduce its bed capacity from 30 to 25 in accordance with Manitoba's Public Health Act. Fortunately, a license extension was granted which allowed the shelter time to locate to larger facilities thereby providing uninterrupted service to the women in need.

As well, the City of Winnipeg played and still plays a role in the actual provision of housing. For example, the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation (WHRC) which began operation in 1980 was created by city council to,

"...acquire and rehabilitate older buildings to provide housing on a sale, rental and/or lease-purchase basis to city residents."  
(Newman, 1986:1)

Its primary purposes were to deal with the increasing amount of poor quality housing stock in the inner city and help address the affordability problems of single-parents as well as young and elderly singles. The WHRC is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of four city council members, and one representative from each of the province, the Social Planning Council and the Winnipeg Homebuilders Association.

Of special note was the city's initiative in the area of single person households. Although the WHRC generally abided by CMHC funding requirements for family household units (families with dependent children), they also provided for a number of single person units as well. In 1985, CMHC's agreement to fund non-family units in the inner city further increased their opportunity to target this group. In 1986, the outgoing manager of WHRC was quoted as saying that there was a need to provide more housing for low-income singles due to a diminishing supply of rooming houses and other accommodation such as the YWCA and YMCA facilities. (Winnipeg Free Press, December 9, 1986) This type of statement appears to reflect some recognition at the municipal level for the need to address the particular housing problems of singles and the need to involve the city in discussions of housing initiatives.

Although there was no formal mechanism which existed to involve the city in housing-related discussions, Manitoba Housing officials Wade Castes and Jim Zamprelli indicated that their department consulted with the City of Winnipeg as the need arose. Mr. Castes also indicated that there exists some greater level of formality since the establishment of the Core Area Initiative through the CAI Sub-Committee on Housing.

As well, non-government key informants Annette

Willborn, Rick Brundrige, and Major Dave Perry, generally indicated they dealt with the provincial Housing Department on issues relating to housing and were not sure who they would contact in the city for advice or information. At the same time non-government key informants are no doubt aware of the role that the city plays in housing as evidenced by a comment made by Jane Runner from POWER who stated they were very fortunate in discovering that the building they presently occupy was zoned as commercial property and therefore they did not experience any relocation problems.

It is interesting to note that the absence of the municipal role in articulating local needs and in the planning undertaken to address these needs was a concern raised during a 1986 seminar on housing which was held in Winnipeg. This seminar included participants from all levels of governments as well as other interested parties in the community. The constitutional imperatives were acknowledged as restricting federal/municipal involvement to some extent, but it was also stated by some of the seminar participants, (who were not identified in Lyon and Carter's report), that the city had not been particularly aggressive on housing issues nor in attempts to include itself in negotiations on housing related policies and programs. (Lyon & Carter, 1986)

Although the lack of city initiative may well have

contributed to its absence in provincial housing policy decisions, it would seem to be the province that should have taken on the aggressor role in involving the city in relevant discussions given its constitutional responsibilities and larger revenue base.

In part, the failure of the provincial government to take on this role might be attributed to their unwillingness to relinquish singular control of resource development decisions. As Gil (1981) has stated, resource development as a key social policy process requires decisions that impact on the,

"...type, quality and quantity of all material and symbolic goods, and services generated by a society, as well as the ordering of priorities in this sphere." (Gil, 1981:18)

If the province were to formally recognize the contribution of the city in housing-related issues, it may necessitate a role shift and the bestowing of greater decision-making powers to the city. Additionally, it would also likely require that the province ensure that the city had the necessary financial resources to carry out these decisions. By not developing a formal mechanism for input and by simply consulting on an 'as the need arises' basis, the province maintains primary control in housing policy and program decisions. Unfortunately, unless some significant change in the key processes occur, the city will continue to be on the periphery of decision-making.

With respect to government key informant reaction to the lack of city involvement, Wades Castes of the Department of Housing stated that, when necessary, the city was involved and the absence of formal consultative mechanisms did not appear to be a problem.

At the same time, it must also be remembered that even if the province wished to involve the city and expand its decision-making capabilities, the province is also constrained by the federal government's ability to control policy through legislative (the NHA) and financial means. As such the NDP's ability to delegate power was also limited. Gil (1981) describes these general limitations as 'constraints' on the level of rights afforded to individuals and groups in society. So unless some changes occur in the key processes at the national level, it is unlikely that they will occur to any significant extent at the provincial level.

With respect to the impact on the target group, the city appears to have the greatest sensitivity to the needs of the poor single and hence the low income woman. This was illustrated through the WHRC targeting of housing units for low-income single person households and its acknowledgement that there would be some impact on the housing circumstances of single women as a consequence of the YWCA closure.

At the same time, the city has also demonstrated the least sensitivity when it comes to issues of zoning for group homes for the psychiatrically-disabled or regulating occupancy restrictions in the case of battered women's crisis shelters. Given its ability to impact on these groups in both a positive and negative manner, it is apparent that some more structured communication should occur with both government and non-government organizations to help enhance opportunities for the target group. As Kaufman (1984) and Donnison (1968) have stated local involvement is imperative to achieving a rational housing policy. Given that social democratic ideology supports the idea of greater participation in decision-making, it is surprising that some mechanism for consultation did not occur during this time.



## CHAPTER V

Housing Policy and Social Democratic Ideology

It has already been stated that the early 1980s were a particularly stressful time in Canadian history. Although the country had experienced earlier recessions, none since the early post-war period was as great as the recession of 1980/81. As was the case with the rest of Canada, Manitoba experienced high unemployment, high rates of personal and business bankruptcies, high levels of inflation and high mortgage interest rates which were to continue on at some level well into the mid-80s..

As well, provinces were hit in the pocketbook by federal strategies designed to control the deficit. In his Budget Address of February 24, 1983, the provincial Minister of Finance, Vic Schroeder estimated that federal cutbacks in transfer payments would reduce Manitoba's revenues by \$100 million for the 1983/84 fiscal year. He stated that federal payments would now account for 35.5 per cent of provincial revenues vis-a-vis 43 per cent five years ago. (Hansard, February 24, 1983) Additionally, there were concerns that changes to the federal block funding program would seriously impact on health and post-secondary education programs.

During this particularly economically stressful time, the New Democratic Party (NDP) returned to power in Manitoba subsequent to its 1977 defeat at the hands of the Conservatives. Given their social democratic ideology, it might therefore be expected that at least some attention would be directed towards addressing the housing needs of the increasing homeless population which also began to surface during the late 70s and early 1980s. The NDP had demonstrated a significant track record in the area of housing for the disadvantaged during the early history of the MHRC and, philosophically, the party is known for its concern of disadvantaged groups and its advocacy of women's rights. (Rose, 1980; McDonald, 1987; and McAllister, 1984)

In his book, The Government of Edward Schreyer: Democratic Socialism in Manitoba, James McAllister states that social democracy is primarily concerned with the welfare of the needy and oppressed and holds as its major tenets a belief in equality, liberty and democracy. He cites the four goals of social democracy as being:

- " - redistribution of wealth and income to eliminate poverty and sharply reduce economic disparities between the poor and the rich
- extension of government control and ownership of the economy through nationalization, public equity in private corporations, or legal and administrative regulation of private firms by the government
- extension of central government planning to

permit the democratic political process to direct economic activity

- greater popular participation in government and private decision-making to dilute the influence of traditional bureaucrats, special interests and the wealthy" (McAllister, 1984:4)

In line with this ideology, the New Democratic Party of Manitoba very clearly announced its intentions in 1976 to address the housing problems associated with lack of income as illustrated by comments from a previous NDP Minister Responsible for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. Specifically, the Honourable Leonard S. Evans declared,

"The present government bases its housing programming on the fundamental guiding principles,

i) that all Manitobans shall be able to afford satisfactory housing, housing that at least meets reasonable standards and

ii) that optimally Manitobans should not have to pay more than 25% of their income to secure such housing.

We recognize the development of reasonable housing to be more than a crude tool of fiscal policy, but rather a basic social right." (McGuire, 1976:71)

Given this platform, it might be suggested that at-risk groups would be assured of adequate and affordable housing. Did, in fact, the actions of the NDP government during the 1980s reflect congruence between its professed ideology of the 1970s and the actual programs and plans undertaken? If so, what actions demonstrate this congruence and if not, what factors stood in its way? The following section provides specific information on housing policies and programs as they evolved

during the period under study. The information provided incorporates relevant background material as well as comments and observations from government and non-government key informants.

Provincial Housing Policies and Programs: 1982-1988:

**1982/83: Economic Recovery a Priority**

Administratively, perhaps one of the more significant changes which occurred during the 1982-88 period was the creation of a separate Department of Housing in August 1982. Prior to this time, housing-related policies and programs were carried out in a variety of settings including the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, the Department of Co-operative Development, The Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Department of Northern Affairs and the Department of Community Services.

The amalgamation of the MHRC into the Department of Housing resulted in the appointed community-based Board being dismissed and replaced by an internal board which consisted of the Minister of Housing as Chairman, the Deputy Minister as Vice-Chairman as well as divisional heads in the Department of Housing. The reorganization of housing activities under one department was meant to increase coordination of the various elements of the housing industry and add a certain cohesion through the minister's involvement as chairperson. (Hansard,

June 11, 1985) According to government key informant, Wade Castes, MHRC employees other than the general manager and board members were absorbed by the new department resulting in negligible changes in the actual operational level of the department.

It is interesting to note that in this sense the Department of Housing operated until recently as somewhat of an anomaly within the provincial government. According to Housing Department key informants, Jim Zamprelli and Wade Castes, the MHRC portion of the department is used primarily as a legal entity to authorize loans and approve expenditures. As such, they stated that housing officials did not require Treasury Board approval for the release of funds; its board simply made the decision, in conjunction with the minister, to proceed with a project and then approved the necessary monies out of its capital budget allocation.

As Bryan DePape of the Department of Economic Security stated, this procedure was unlike that in most other government departments which, subsequent to yearly budget approval, had to go through Treasury Board for approval of any additional projects. Administratively, the Housing Department could move very quickly to authorize funds in the event a special project arose. With the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 1988, this has now changed with

Housing having to forward all specific project requests through Treasury Board.

The first Minister of Housing, the Hon. J. Storie explained that the creation of a separate department was a means to,

"...consolidate the activities of a variety of departments in the area of housing and shelter needs. The major task of the department will be to develop a rational housing policy which incorporates all the various aspects of shelter and shelter needs into a provincial context". (Hansard, May 19, 1983:2915)

Mr. Storie described the government's primary goal as being to ensure the availability of an adequate supply of affordable housing to all Manitobans. The strategies to carry out this mandate included rehabilitation of the aging housing stock; discussions with other departments such as Community Services and Health to anticipate housing problems associated with an aging population and decreasing family size; addressing the problems of the handicapped; and continuation of subsidized home ownership and rental programs. The minister stated his intention to proceed in a planned and organized fashion and indicated he would be including relevant individuals and groups in discussions around government policy decisions.

The major accomplishments of the Housing Department for the 1982/83 fiscal year, as identified in the annual

report, were two programs, the Affordable New Homes Program (ANHP) and the Buy and Renovate Program (BRP), both of which operated under the umbrella of the Homes in Manitoba Program. The ANH Program funds were available to builders and purchasers of new homes which met some location and cost criteria. The second program provided low interest loans (at least for the times) of 15% to purchasers of existing homes which met age, purchase cost and renovation cost restrictions. Interestingly, the Homes in Manitoba Program was universal in the sense that it did not have family size or income limitations. This, no doubt, was because its primary intent was to boost housing starts and create needed employment in Manitoba. (Annual Report 1982/83) At the same time the modest price limitations imposed on the accommodation were meant to attract mostly moderate income families.

A review of annual reports through the years 1982-1988 reveals a marked upswing in 1982 of renovation and rehabilitation of housing particularly as it affected the inner city. This is not surprising given that 26% of Manitoba's housing stock was built prior to 1946 and approximately 50% was built prior to 1960. As well it was estimated in 1985 that approximately 25% of this stock or 90,000 units needed repair. (Hansard, June 11, 1985)

A number of these rehabilitation programs were run

in conjunction with the Core Area Initiative (CAI) program which also began operations in 1982. This program consists of a cooperative effort among the three levels of government to improve living and working conditions in the inner city of Winnipeg. As a result, programs to enhance living conditions such as the Core Area Initiative Home Repair Program (CAIHRP) and the Winnipeg Core Area Improvement Program (WCAIP) were cost-shared by the governments to help improve the quality of housing and related services in the inner city.

The CAI has had a significant effect on the types of housing built in the inner city as well as playing a major role in targeting groups for occupancy. In a 1983 newspaper report, a number of "downtown community leaders" agreed that a critical component of redevelopment in the inner city was the availability of good quality affordable housing for the middle and high income earner. It was stated that low-income public housing could not support the upscale retailers that the redevelopment planned to attract. (Winnipeg Free Press, November 4, 1983) Subsequent plans for the inner city included the development of new suites for the middle and upper income groups as well as the conversion of existing warehouses into condominiums targeted at the young professional. Builders of these projects were to receive tax concessions from the city as well as mortgage guarantees through MHRC. (Winnipeg Free Press, June 19, 1985) In effect,



the CAI program was looking for its own community mix of income levels and family types.

The programs offered through the CAI were meant to complement those already in existence such as; the Critical Home Repair Program (CHRP - available to low-income families and seniors for critical repairs and financed fully by the province); the federal government's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP - administered by the province which provided partially forgivable loans for the upgrading of homes in designated areas); the Community Improvement Program (due to expire in 1983/84 which provided federal/provincial/-municipal cost-share funding for the improvement or replacement of vital community services); and grants to the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation (WHRC - for the rehabilitation of housing units for sale or rental).

Other departmental initiatives as identified in the annual report included the Shelter Allowance for Family Renters (SAFFR) and the Shelter Allowance for Elderly Renters (SAFER) which were rent subsidy programs targeted towards the low-income family or elderly. The Pensioner Tenants School Tax Assistance Program (PTSTA) whereby senior citizens receive a year-end rebate on rental monies paid in the private housing market was also identified as a program receiving continuing support. Some minimal attention was also given to projects

carried out under the Rural and Northern Housing Program and capital grants provided to non-profit housing groups.

There is no question that the emphasis in housing-related initiatives during this time was on home ownership either new or rehabilitated. This is reflected most clearly in the year end report which describes the Homes in Manitoba Program as the "highlight" of MHRC's activities during the year. At the same time, the government's heavy involvement with assisted home ownership programs was more a means of stimulating the economy through increased job creation than on targeting housing assistance to the low-income group.

As the Throne Speech of February 25, 1982 stated, the government promised stimulation of Manitoba's economy within the "limitations of a strained fiscal capacity". (Hansard, February 25, 1982:2) It cited major construction projects as a means of economic stimulation and committed itself to housing stock rehabilitation as a means of creating jobs and increasing the standard of living.

Although the Minister of Housing stated the government's goal at the beginning of the year as making available an adequate and affordable supply of housing to all Manitobans, in reality only certain groups were targeted for assistance - the moderate income family, the low-income family

and the elderly. Homeless women unless they were over age 55 did not qualify for rental subsidy, nor were they in a position to purchase their own homes.

It would also appear that contrary to government intentions, relevant individuals and groups were not included in discussions of government policy decisions. This was evidenced during interviews with non-government key informants who unanimously stated there were no formal mechanisms established to raise concerns or provide input into government decision-making. Similarly, neither Mr. Kenny of Health nor Ms Wikstrom of Community Services, were aware of any formal consultative mechanisms which were created to anticipate housing problems as promised by Mr. Storie. One government key informant also stated that although the government often stated the need for coordinated planning, they did not initiate any plans to achieve this objective.

In large part, non-government group exclusion from government discussions enabled the province to avoid addressing any issues related to these groups. This may have been a conscious decision on the part of the government or simply reflective of their general method of operation. Interestingly, McAllister (1984) states that although a social democratic government is identified by its willingness to open up decision-making, in fact, the NDP Government in Manitoba

during the 1970s also,

"...undertook only minor measures to make decision-making more public, each of which could just as easily have been implemented by a government which had no pretensions to being social democratic."  
(McAllister, 1984:73)

It would appear then, that the style of the 1970s was simply carried on into the 1980s regardless of government's stated intentions and contrary to what might be expected given their ideology.

At the same time, organizations such as MAPO, the YWCA and the Social Planning Council often use 'informal mechanisms' to attract the government's attention on issues of concern. Specifically, Olga Foltz of MAPO indicated they have used public rallies to draw media attention to their causes; Annette Willborn of the YWCA, stated that in the case of Osborne House, they rallied government support through a mail-out to significant individuals and organizations in the community; and Harvey Stevens of the Social Planning Council indicated that they have also released press reports to profile an issue. Mr. Stevens as well indicated that, for the most part, when the SPC has approached government directly on issues of concerns, the response has been a polite attentiveness with little follow-up response. In effect, in the absence of some structured and effective means of communication, these organizations have used media and public support to make their concerns known to government.

**1983/84: Economic Stimulation Continued.**

The 1983/84 fiscal year saw a change in Ministers from the Hon. J. Storie to the Hon. J. Bucklaschuk. Mr. Bucklaschuk in his presentation of estimates to the house, reiterated the government's objective of ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing for all Manitobans. He described the government's approach to housing as a balance between,

"...social housing activities with stimulative measures in support of the economic development and job creation priorities of our government." (Hansard, June 11, 1985: 2863)

He stated that the government worked within a framework of broad objectives which were continually being refined to reflect the dynamics of the market and the "complexity of adequacy and equity" in housing. (Hansard, June 11, 1985:2863)

He stated that these objectives included:

- appropriate intervention in the housing market to benefit Manitobans and Manitoba as a community
- the enhancement of affordability and accessibility to adequate housing especially for the low and moderate income groups and those with special needs
- the maintenance and improvement of existing housing stock
- ensuring that rent increases were fair and that landlord/tenant relations were governed equitably

Particularly, he said, the government was concerned with shelter for low-income families and for the elderly. Bucklaschuk cited the SAFER and SAFFR programs as a means of dealing with affordability problems for those wishing to remain in private rental housing as well as the Pensioner Tenants School

Tax Assistance Program.

He stated that the province was still overseeing the building and maintenance of over 16,700 public housing units throughout Manitoba which housed seniors, families and the handicapped. (Hansard, May 15, 1984) Bucklaschuk also indicated that an additional 405 units of public housing for these groups cost-shared through CMHC had recently been allocated and served to exemplify the effective working relationship which existed between Housing and CMHC.

In addition Bucklaschuk stated that Manitoba Housing had recently developed a three-year working plan based on CMHC allocations and needs as identified in various regions of the province. This plan, he stated,

"...brings us a step closer to our stated intention to develop a rational housing policy incorporating various aspects of shelter and shelter needs within a provincial context." (Hansard, May 15, 1984:849)

With respect to one of the special needs groups identified, the handicapped, the New Democrats continued to support the Conservative-initiated FOKUS program first introduced in 1978. This program provided community-integrated living for those individuals with severe physical disabilities, initially through residence in modified public housing units and later on in non-profit and private market housing as well. Although the New Democrats had established the first

housing facility for the physically disabled in 1975, subsequent changes reflected a philosophical shift away from isolation of special needs groups towards a greater community mix.

As well the government's Affordable New Homes Program was continued and was supported by additional monies provided through the Manitoba Jobs Fund. By this time, mortgage rates had declined and the government was able to reduce the open mortgage terms for all purchasers to 10%. According to Bucklaschuk,

"Two-thirds of the clients purchasing affordable new homes were moderate income earners. Approximately half were married couples without dependants. However singles and people with dependants were also well represented."  
(Hansard, May 15, 1984:849)

This program was credited with providing a much needed supply of housing to take the pressure off of existing rental accommodation as well as providing needed employment opportunities. Fiscally, it was also seen as advantageous in that the Minister of Housing, John Bucklaschuk, stated that unlike ongoing subsidization of rental housing, it did not pose a burden on the province's deficit. (Annual Report, 1983/84)

In line with increased emphasis on rehabilitation, a complementary program called Core Area Infill Housing (CAIH) which consisted of preferential mortgage financing and cost-shared grants, was also deemed as highly successful over the

1983/84 fiscal year. Specifically, it was praised for providing inner-city residents of low to moderate income with the opportunity to purchase their own homes. In this case CAIH was used as an economic tool to create jobs; as a planning tool to upgrade the inner city neighbourhoods; as well as a means of providing access to affordable homes to the low income groups. As in the case of the ANH Program, Bucklaschuk also reiterated that the subsidy program was fiscally responsible as it was modest and short-term in comparison to costs associated with low-income rental housing.

Within the annual report, the minister also mentioned the MHRC's role in assisting women and children in domestic crisis through the assumption of operating costs for a number of women's shelters. An indirect reference was made to ongoing support for Osborne House, a women's shelter in the City of Winnipeg, as well as assistance provided to two other shelters in rural centres.

As with 1982/83 this year again saw heavy emphasis on home ownership programs both in the area of new home construction as well as in the area of housing rehabilitation. Interestingly, some additional emphasis was placed on these initiatives as freeing up existing rental stock and alleviating problems in the low vacancy rate which, at the time, was 0.9%. (Hansard, May 15, 1984) At the same time, it is



questionable whether home ownership programs aimed primarily at those with moderate incomes actually freed up rental housing for low income groups, especially singles. Donnison (1968) has referred to this type of strategy as the 'filtering theory'. He states,

"Those who get the new housing will leave vacant spaces for others who will in turn leave spaces for yet more. In this way the benefits offered by a better and more plentiful stock of houses will reach the maximum number of people and percolate in time even to the poorest." (Donnison, 1968:27)

Unfortunately, says Donnison, although some of these effects do filter down to many who could not afford new housing, the benefits "do not greatly affect those at the bottom of the income distribution". (Donnison, 1968:27) In part this is attributed to the fact that not all household moves result in the freeing up of more affordably priced housing. Some people choose to retain two residences; others move from parental or other shared housing situations without leaving a subsequent opening behind; and some structures are demolished or converted into offices or stores rather than retained as dwellings.

As well, Donnison states that the workings of the free market system will at some point result in decreased new housing production due to competition that inevitably occurs between builders and second-hand house sellers. The competition for the limited number of new home purchasers

drives down house prices and reduces profitability therefore impacting on the number of new homes built. Donnison says that this restricted production definitely impacts most heavily on the poorest households. There was no indication in the documentation reviewed for this study that the government monitored the impact that their new housing initiatives had on low-income households.

For the most part, Manitoba Housing was not very active in the rental side of housing during this year and chose instead to monitor the impact of some of the privately-initiated rental units which had begun during 1983/84. At the same time they indicated that some consideration was being given to introducing a program to stimulate the development of additional rental units, if necessary.

With respect to target groups in the housing field, it is apparent that the provincial government still identified low and moderate income families and seniors as priority groups with additional emphasis also being placed on the physically disabled. At the same time, it appears that at least some attention was being given to one of the groups identified as at risk for homelessness - battered women. This was made apparent by Bucklaschuk's mention of Housing's involvement in assisting in the operating costs of crisis shelters for battered women. Although the extent of government

commitment to this group was not readily apparent at this time, this may have marked the beginning of the increased emphasis on the problems of battered women and the government's acknowledgement of responsibility in addressing this concern.

Thus far, there has been no indication of any particular attention being given to the other target groups except in vague references to freed up rental stock. Interestingly, it is also important to note the value being placed on non-subsidized housing initiatives as a means of avoiding burdensome ongoing low-rental subsidies. It is not surprising, therefore, that a lesser emphasis is being placed on social housing units in the 1980s than what occurred during the 1970s.

#### **1984/85: On the Road to Economic Recovery**

The year 1984/85 saw few changes in Housing Department policy and program areas. The Homes in Manitoba Program and infill housing were still applauded by the NDP as contributing to over 1,800 housing starts and rehabilitation initiatives. The economic spin-offs included the creation of 52 new building companies since 1982 and the direct/indirect employment of 3,200 people. The minister again reiterated the short term and modest costs of the program vis-a-vis those of low-income rental housing projects. (Hansard, June 11, 1985)

As well existing programs including CHRP, RRAP, and CAIHRP were retained during the 1984/85 fiscal year.

One of a handful of new programs initiated during this year was Rentalstart. This program was undertaken by the government in response to the chronically low vacancy rate that existed during this time. It provided private developers financing at preferential interest rates for a seven year term. Once again, government emphasis was placed on the financial advantages of working through the private sector with an ultimate provincial recovery on initial investment. This emphasis is reflective of events also occurring during this time at the federal level with the Conservative focus on government restraint and the promotion of private sector initiatives to stimulate the economy.

Interestingly, the action undertaken by the New Democrats in the rental accommodation field was reminiscent of early government intervention in housing due to health and safety concerns. A June 1984 Winnipeg Free Press headline announced "Crowded core housing cited in disease surge". The City's Health Department was quoted as saying that low vacancy rates in the inner city may be tied to an increase in diseases related to poor sanitation such as shigellosis and hepatitis. Dr. Luckhurst from the department stated in the news report that the situation was less extreme than what it would have

been a number of years ago; nonetheless, he said, low vacancy rates lead to overcrowding which in turn lead to an increase in those renting housing in unacceptable condition. (Winnipeg Free Press, June 2, 1984) The first proposal call by the government for the building of Rentalstart units also occurred in June 1984 with designated areas of eligibility including Winnipeg's core area as well as rural units.

It is not surprising that the government chose to work through the private market rather than increasing rental units through social housing. Thus far, we have heard of the onerous costs associated with ongoing subsidies for low-income rental projects. As well, philosophically, it appeared that only the truly needy - the low-income family, the elderly or the disabled - deserve this type of financial investment. Thus, the low income able-bodied non-elderly single whether female or male is still left to fend for themselves. Even the moderate income single is better off as illustrated in Bucklaschuk's statement in the legislature noting a shift in provincial housing policy emphasis from,

"... the creation of a much needed, affordable social housing stock, principally rental market oriented, reflected in the 1968-77 period, to addressing the critical affordability and accessibility considerations in the home ownership and private rental markets for moderate income Manitobans during the 80s." (Hansard, June 11, 1985:2865)

As has been seen thus far, this statement is an accurate reflection of housing policy shift. For whatever reason, even though the homeless were gaining increasing attention, the government did not or chose not to notice.

It is unlikely given the public attention paid to the homeless during the 1980s, that the government was totally unaware of the problem. Rather, it might be speculated that the government, by not acknowledging the problem, did not have to commit the necessary financial resources to addressing the issue. Although this is not consistent with traditional social democratic ideology, it is consistent with what Kevin Edwards (1981) refers to as brokerage politics.

Edwards suggests that brokerage politics involves,

"...not offending anyone, or at least as few as possible, so the voters will consider supporting you in the next election." (Edwards, 1981:106)

He further states that although social democratic ideals are not necessarily abandoned, certain compromises occur in an effort to gain the acceptance and support of a diverse electorate. In this respect, he says social democratic government like other governments are limited in their courses of action due to the nature of federal-provincial financial arrangements as well as their dependency on a financial market system which requires that acceptable credit ratings be maintained. Given the increasing government deficits of the

time and shortfalls in expected revenues, it would not have been prudent for the government to direct spending at a group which had not been profiled as deserving of government intervention. As Rose (1978) has already stated, societal tolerance for all but the worthy poor is exceedingly low in economically stressful times.

With respect to social housing initiatives during 1984/85, Bucklaschuk noted that these were still ongoing with over 1,200 units built from 1982-84 throughout Manitoba for the low-income family, elderly and disabled. He also stated that recent federal statements criticizing public non-profit housing programs as poorly targeted, were unfounded in the case of Manitoba where all units were allocated to low-income families and seniors.

Although technically not a new program, the Co-op Homestart Program was announced during estimates which, in effect, replaced the Assistance to Housing Cooperatives Program. This program was expanded to include three possible areas of involvement: ongoing operating assistance, the acquisition of existing buildings, and the provision of funds towards the planning and promotion of these projects. Under the co-op system residence is not restricted to families so that singles can also take advantage of controlled rental situations in adequate accommodations. At the same time,

financial advantages of the program generally benefit the moderate income single.

Finally, Bucklaschuk announced that rent control legislation would continue as a means of ensuring an orderly and equitable rental market. What was not raised, was the fact that rent controls did not apply to CMHC funded non-profit units. As the Minister Responsible for the CMHC, Allan MacEachen stated in 1982, the 6% wage and price control that the federal government was implementing for itself at that time would not be applied to CMHC owned rental units if it resulted in increasing the federal deficit. (The Winnipeg Free Press, July 15, 1982) As a result a number of rent increases occurred during the early 1980s which were substantially higher than the imposed controls. At the same time, the implementation and maintenance of rent controls did benefit those individuals and families residing in older private market housing. In this respect, female renters were beneficiaries of the controls.

It might have been expected that single women would have received greater attention during this year given the 1984 Throne Speech which stated,

"...single women - and particularly elderly women - have the most urgent need for more adequate income protection and support." (Hansard, April 12, 1984:8)

The Administrator of the Province of Manitoba then stated that



the government was committed to using all its influence and policy instruments to work towards economic equality and social justice for women in Manitoba. As an indication of its sincerity, the government spokesperson stated that the government would be participating in a federal-provincial conference on wife abuse and had already been providing financial assistance to agencies active in providing counseling, shelter services and other supports for battered women.

These statements reflected the government's ongoing payment of per diem funding to Osborne House for women who were eligible for financial assistance through the Department of Economic Security. They also reflected the establishment of a branch within the Department of Community Services during the fiscal year which carried primary responsibility for the wife abuse program and which administered program grants. As well, the Department of Housing, as indicated earlier, was also involved in the provision of ongoing operating grants to shelters providing services for battered women.

In essence, however, the government's emphasis on housing for 1984/85 was primarily on home ownership for moderate income families. The Social Housing Program was still being utilized but to a lesser degree than it had been in the early 70s. What had not changed were the target groups which still included low-income families, the elderly and the

physically disabled. The target group of single women, aside from battered women, did not receive any increased attention.

As in the earlier years, economic factors still impinged on government's ability to expand services. As well the election of the federal Progressive Conservatives in the fall of 1984 also marked the beginning of a period of increased public housing restraint and a refocussing of the needy target group.

#### 1985/86: Housing Programs at a Plateau

The 1985/86 fiscal year again saw a shift in Ministers from John Bucklaschuk to Maureen Hemphill. Ms Hemphill reiterated the department's priorities to

"...make sure that people of low income and special needs have access to suitable and affordable housing. We also want to stimulate and influence the activities of the private housing market for the benefit of all Manitobans and...to maintain and improve the quality of Manitoba's existing housing stock." (Hansard, August 18, 1986:3045)

Hemphill also reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensure fair and equitable rent increases. She indicated that the past calendar year saw some 91% of controlled units receive increases at or below the imposed rent increase limit.

A number of other programs were also carried over from previous years including infill housing; involvement in

a variety of publicly and privately-owned non-profit housing; SAFER, SAFFR, and PTSTA programs; CHRP and RRAP; and Rentalstart. Hemphill did, however, indicate that the Department was considering a new home rehabilitation program which would be strictly a provincial responsibility and would involve guaranteed interest rates for owners of homes in need of repair and those who wished to buy and renovate older homes.

Although not mentioned during the initial estimates address, the annual report indicates that the Financing for Community Residences Program under the 'Welcome Home' initiative and Emergency Shelter Program, had assisted, through mortgage financing to non-profit groups, in providing residential beds for the deinstitutionally mentally retarded and women in crisis.

Ms Hemphill's presentation during estimates of the Housing Departments accomplishments and plans were surprisingly brief compared to previous years. This may, in some respects, be due to the chosen style of presentation. At the same time, it is more likely due to the large number and variety of housing programs already in existence; the Housing Department had simply reached a plateau in program strategies. As well, the minister noted the projected year's housing starts which, she stated, were indicative of an overall healthy economy. (Hansard, August 18, 1986) It may well be

that given the current state of the economy, there was now a need to re-evaluate the government's direction in housing.

Again, interestingly, the 1985 Throne Speech made reference to the expanding role of the Manitoba Women's Directorate as a means of ensuring that the concerns of women were reflected in government policy and action. Given the early 1980s marked a beginning recognition of the number of women who were homeless or at risk for homelessness, it might be expected that some specific initiatives would have been undertaken. According to Janel Ursel, however, up until the Conservative-sponsored "Women's Initiative" report in 1988, the Women's Directorate had been largely reactive in their approach in responding to community issues raised. In this respect, she stated that single women are at a disadvantage because very few groups lobby on their behalf for increased support. The exception again, of course, are single women who are victims of domestic violence.

#### **1986/87: A Promise of Hope for the Homeless**

By 1986, the economic outlook for Manitoba had improved; housing starts had increased in 1985 by 23% over the previous year and were projected to increase another 36% in 1986. (Hansard, June 25, 1986) Although there were still some concerns surrounding the amount of revenue available to Manitoba due to anticipated reductions in federal transfer

payments, the good news was that the housing industry was 'booming'. (Hansard, June 15, 1987)

With respect to housing policy, the shift which was observed beginning during 1985/86 was articulated at the beginning of 1987. Maureen Hemphill in her opening address to the legislature on housing estimates stated,

"...we no longer feel that we should be, or need be, providing general stimulus to the housing industry, that the private sector is able to do quite an adequate job of that, and we intend to use our money by targeting it to geographical areas and target groups where the housing needs still remain high,..."  
(Hansard, June 15, 1987:3106)

She stated that the main thrust of the department was now going to be directed towards shelter for the homeless.

Hemphill indicated that the government was working closely with interested community agencies and organizations to deal with the issue of homelessness. She stated that this was an increasing problem "...in spite of an overall healthy housing market". (Hansard, June 15, 1987:3107) Hemphill further identified young males, many of them children, as a specific target group.

It was not clear why Ms. Hemphill specifically identified young males and not young females as targets for attention. In part this may be attributed to the government's

lack of understanding of the range of groups which comprise the homeless population. It may also be due to a conscious decision on the part of government not to become involved with a group who is perceived as being the responsibility of others - either friends, relatives, acquaintances or community organizations.

With respect to Hemphill's announcement, it is also not clear which interested agencies and organizations the government was consulting given that the non-government key informants interviewed for this study stated they had not been involved in a process of problem-raising or problem-solving with the government. If indeed some community organizations had been consulted, it is clear that the lack of representation from organizations serving the target group would reflect the low priority that single women received from the government.

Other areas which Ms Hemphill targeted for attention included Special Needs Housing, which encompassed new women's crisis shelters as well as projects for the physically and mentally disabled. Hemphill also focused on the Co-op Homestart Program which encourages the acquisition and renovation of existing buildings as well as their conversion. She noted the importance of this program and Senior RentalStart, in freeing up larger existing homes for younger

families.

Additional initiatives targeted for 1987 again included the Infill Housing Program. Hemphill stated that it was important to turn around the high rental rate currently existing in the core area as the "key to maintenance of the neighbourhood". (Hansard, June 15, 1987) It is disturbing to note that there appeared to be no recognition of the relationship between the increasing numbers of young homeless and the impact that the reduction of cheap rental stock in the inner city was having and would continue to have on this group.

Although the beginning of 1986 held little promise for advancing the situation of the target group, by the end of 1986 and the beginning of 1987, there was some indication that their needs might be addressed. On the positive side, battered women were singled out for crisis shelter development. As well the government indicated it was working closely with community groups who were attempting to deal with the problems of the homeless. Although it might therefore be reasonably expected that organizations representing the other groups - prostitutes, the post-mentally ill and low-income women - would also be consulted, it was discovered through subsequent key informant interviews that this was not to be the case.

## 1982/83 to 1986/87: Changes and Events as They Impacted on Housing Policy

The period 1982/83 to 1986/87 marked a five year span leading up to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) in 1987. Given its prominence in the housing policy and homelessness issue, as well as other considerations which will be later discussed, the year 1987 is not included in the review which is to follow. It is important, however, to discuss and analyze significant events which occurred over these years in order to place actions during the 1987 year in perspective.

The following discussion will attempt to answer the questions as outlined in Gil's (1981) framework. Specifically; which areas of concern constituted the focus for housing policy during this time; what were the main objectives of the policy as well as value premises and ideological orientation; who was the target group and what changes occurred in this area over time; what were the short and long term effects of the policy; what other policies and factors impacted on the policy; what was the historical background of the policy development; and what changes occurred in the development of the policy. Additionally, legislative, administrative and financial arrangements, as well as government's involvement in initiatives, will also be discussed as a means of determ-



ining the grounding for Manitoba's housing policy.

As can be seen thus far, there have been a number of changes in provincial housing policy and programs since the late 1970s. The strong emphasis on home ownership, the increasing expansion of the disabled and battered women as target groups, and the increased attention on home rehabilitation all reflect philosophical as well as economic shifts in policy and programs. As well, key informants such as Bryan DePape also stated that housing standards for the elderly changed during this time as reflected in building patterns which supplanted one bedroom social housing units for the usually constructed bachelor suite facilities.

At the same time, although Wade Castes indicated that government attention was still being directed to the elderly during this time, he noted that there was a greater emphasis on addressing their needs through market housing in lieu of social housing construction. Mr. Castes stated that this shift reflected a view of the elderly as less needy and resulted in a subsequent refocussing of government attention towards the low-income family. With respect to housing for families, Mr. Castes noted that there was an increasing need to provide smaller two bedroom accommodation as compared with the three, four and five bedroom units constructed in previous years. As well Mr. Castes stated that there was also a shift

towards greater government involvement in crisis shelters for women during this time. Finally, he stated that community organizations such as Main Street Project were attempting to develop more 'full scale service' facilities in the area of housing project proposals.

So although changes and trends in housing policy and programs have been noted over this time, what is fairly obvious, however, is that few of the changes identified have been targeted to homeless population groups. The problems of singles especially, aside from battered women, have been largely ignored.

As stated, of the target groups under study, battered women have, by far, received the greatest attention over time in housing policy and programs. In this case, although the target group for study is battered single women, no doubt they have benefited from a movement which originally was concerned with battered women and their children. More and more, however, as the issue has gained prominence, there has been less of a distinction between battered women with or without children. This is not to ignore, however, the reality that battered women with dependents are still more likely to receive a greater priority for limited services.

The increased visibility of battered women in

housing policy can be attributed to the advocacy provided by a number of women's groups which were fighting on their behalf for protection and needed services. Given the increasing profile of these women and especially the children involved, the provincial government would have had an extremely difficult time ignoring political and public pressure to give them consideration.

Although only briefly mentioned in the housing documents, government's attention to battered women has been somewhat concealed because of the involvement of other departments in this issue. For example, since 1984 Community Services (renamed Family Services in 1989), has been the lead agent for issues relating to battered women. (Review of Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse, August 1988) According to Janet Wikstrom of Community Services, they administer program grants to the various shelters in the province and are involved in approving requests from groups wishing to access the Department of Housing's Financing for Community Residences Program.

Ms Wikstrom as well indicated that one of the most pressing concerns within the Wife Abuse Program currently was the need to address the issue of stabilized funding for community shelters and services. Although the government had indeed been financially supporting these services over the

past years, the funding was precarious which made it difficult for organizations to plan and carry out services. Although Ms. Wikstrom did not offer an explanation as to why this had occurred, it is suspected that it had some relationship with the government's reactive stance to dealing with such issues. As well the lack of formal consultative mechanisms and planning contributed to what appears to be a piecemeal approach to addressing the problems of battered women.

In addition to Community Services involvement, the provincial Department of Employment Services and Economic Security also supports battered women through its per diem funding of safe homes and shelters throughout Manitoba. The Housing Department, of course, is involved through its ongoing operating grants to shelters as well as capital outlays.

Similarly, the other target groups - the post-mentally ill, prostitutes and low-income women - also received some government attention through other departments. For example, the unemployed single woman with mental health problems may have received social assistance through the Department of Economic Security. The psychiatrically-disabled person may have also received additional services or subsidies through the Department of Health. As well, prostitutes and the unemployed single woman without a visible means of support and without documented physical or mental disabilities would

have also qualified for municipal social assistance. In some sense, then, assistance to these target groups has also been concealed to some extent through the involvement of other government departments or another level of government. Government involvement does not ensure the quality of the assistance these groups receive, but nonetheless their needs are addressed to a limited degree.

At the same time, governmental consideration of the low-income employed single woman is generally non-existent. Similarly, services for the post-mentally ill person whose problems have stabilized and who does not require hospitalization or other residential bed space, are also very limited. Unless someone is experiencing serious mental health problems, it is unlikely they will be given any attention. Interestingly, Rick Brundrige of Main Street Project stated he felt that the psychiatrically-disabled individual received greater government attention than other homeless groups. This may be the case for those who are experiencing serious problems but it is not the case for the more stabilized psychiatrically-disabled person.

This perspective was reinforced by Susan Chipperfield of the CMHA who stated that clients who applied for the CMHA Supportive Housing Program and were initially rejected, may only gain entrance subsequent to hospitalization and

stabilization. In effect, they have to get worse before they can hope to access supportive housing services. Ms Chipperfield, although frustrated by this situation, acknowledged that this criteria ensured the provision of scarce resources to the most needy.

As a point of clarification, the CMHA uses the term 'psychiatrically disabled' to identify their target group. People within this group experience different types and severity of problems. Those people eligible for Supportive Housing have achieved some level of stability but still require help in various areas of skill development; this is the group most often referred to as the post-mentally ill.

The Supportive Housing Program provides single family dwelling housing on a shared basis with supportive counselling help available on a 24 hour basis. This housing is geared for singles and there is no discrimination on the basis of sex. Supportive Housing meets the needs of those who require second-stage types of housing as well as those with longer terms needs. As such, according to Ms Chipperfield, the homes are temporary or permanent depending on the individuals' needs.

Ms Chipperfield also estimated that in 1984/85, the majority of individuals applying for housing were male (75%);

as of 1989, she stated there was approximately a 50/50 split. She attributed some of the change to the fact that in the past women found it easier to stay in the parental home. It was a less stigmatizing arrangement than for the adult male, given it has been traditionally more socially acceptable for women to remain in a dependent setting. Now, she says, supportive housing has become an accepted standard of housing for these women and they are actively seeking out such alternative services. No doubt this situation serves to illustrate the existence of the 'concealed homeless' as discussed earlier whereby women are forced to remain in the parental home because of a lack of reasonable alternatives.

Although first established in 1984, the government did not contribute financially to the Supportive Housing program until 1987, except for the per diems paid through the Department of Economic Security. In the first three years of operation, the program was funded solely by the Winnipeg Foundation, the United Way and CMHA. As the program gained credibility, however, the provincial Department of Health began contributing monies towards salaries for "Activities Workers". According to Ms Chipperfield however, this grant was insufficient to adequately staff the program. In essence they required funding to support the employment of mental health professionals. However, the Department of Health would not provide funds at the level of community mental health

worker because they saw this service as already existing in the provincial system.

When questioned about the Proctor Program initiated by the NDP during the early 1980s which matched psychiatrically disabled individuals with private households and which paid per diems on a sliding scale basis, Ms Chipperfield stated she thought it was a "great program" in theory but she did not know how to access it. A guide to community residential resources distributed under the auspices of the Mental Health Directorate refers only briefly to selected cases where homes are approved as "live-in proctor" situations. (Manitoba, April, 1988) For the most part, it did not appear to be a program widely utilized, at least for the CMHA. It is speculated that both rigid and unknown criteria, which determined the amount of the per diem paid, contributed to access problems. Specifically, when Mr. John Kenny from the Department of Health was interviewed respecting this program, he stated that a \$100 per day per diem would mean "the home would have a registered psychiatric nurse with the provision of 24 hour care, etc. etc."; it appeared that not many situations qualified for this type of financial consideration.

By the end of 1986, it was apparent that traditionally targeted 'needy' groups such as low income families and the elderly remained priorities. Where the



moderate income group originally emerged in discussions of community mix, they also gained increasing prominence in housing policy during this time. This was due to the government's emphasis on housing as an economic tool and the need to target initiatives at a group who could afford them.

A review of Throne Speeches over the years 1982-1988 indicated that housing as an economic tool was to play a major role in reducing unemployment and stimulating the provincial economy. The Homes in Manitoba Program as discussed was repeatedly given credit for doing just that.

Although housing policy as an issue of social justice in the provision of adequate and affordable housing to all Manitobans was also articulated by the government, it took lesser prominence in the years up to 1985. A content analysis conducted on the throne speeches indicated that economic stimulation in relation to housing policy was mentioned more often during the years up to and including 1985, with issues of social justice playing a stronger role in stated government intentions during 1986 and 1987. This is reflective of the tougher economic times which occurred during the early 1980s. A review of outcomes as indicated through housing accomplishments in the annual reports are consistent with government's emphasis on economic initiatives in the 1980s. Although the government began to re-emphasize

social justice issues over economic ones in 1986 and 1987, subsequent events reveal that their actions in housing policy were not dramatically-altered.

As well, housing as a planning tool in the rehabilitation and rejuvenation of neighbourhoods was also articulated by the government in their throne speeches during the early 1980s, although to a lesser extent than economic or social justice issues. The use of housing as a planning tool allowed the government to simultaneously deal with one of its other concerns - the aging housing stock in the province. The Buy and Renovate Program, Core Area Infill Housing program as well as numerous other renovation and rehabilitation programs were structured to achieve both the objectives of planning and economic growth. Fiscally, these programs were also ideal in that they avoided big financial outlays by the government such as those incurred for social housing.

The moderate income family or individual almost by default had to become the beneficiary of these initiatives. Low income families and especially individuals were still not in a position to take advantage of 15% interest loans to purchase their own homes or to contribute to part of their own home renovation costs. The government did indicate that spin-offs of this program would help free up rental accommodation. As mentioned, it is questionable whether this strategy freed

up the affordable housing needed by the low income single woman.

Ultimately, the government had to intervene in the rental market in 1984 due to the low vacancy rates. It is interesting to note that the government appeared to hesitate in initiating a rental program and preferred to monitor what the private market would do. No doubt this had something to do with fiscal concerns but, it may also have had something to do with a shift in philosophy from rental to owned accommodation. Home ownership of course had been a major social goal since NHA legislation was first introduced. However, early MHRC involvement under the NDP administration focused significantly on social housing construction. Comments such as those made by Maureen Hemphill on home ownership as the key to maintenance of the neighbourhood serve to illustrate a greater emphasis on the non-rented value of housing.

It is difficult to say exactly why low income single women were, for the most part, ignored in housing policy during this time. To some extent, it is, no doubt, a reflection of society's general perception that the able-bodied non-elderly single should be able to fend for themselves. As well, it can be attributed to government's allocation of scarce financial resources to housing construction as a means of achieving the most effective outcome; in this case, the

creation of jobs which, in turn, stimulated the economy.

At the same time, it may also have had something to do with the earlier dissolution of the community-based board. Although the newly-structured board system provided a certain expediency between decision-making and approval of funds, it may also have contributed to the lack of a community voice in addressing issues of the time. Interestingly, this decision can be seen as contrary to a social democratic ideology which advocates greater public involvement in decision-making.

To some extent the variety of ministers over the years may have also had an impact on the lack of attention provided to the non-battered target groups. One key informant stated that a lot of programs initiated were "minister-specific"; with one minister you might receive a great deal of support for your recommendations, but others worked on their own agenda. It was interesting to discover that non-government key informants Annette Willborn and Rick Brundrige referred to the housing department staff as a very "socially conscious" and "action-oriented" group. However, even the most socially conscious civil servant must work within the parameters identified by government and approved by Ministers. As Gil (1981) has stated not only do political parties pursue specific policies but individuals as well promote and pursue particular courses of action.

With respect to the issue of government commitment to policy as reflected in budget allocations, government's Statement of Expenditures indicate that the Department of Housing's operating budget ranged from a little over \$39 million in 1982/83 to almost \$48 million in 1987/88. (Public Accounts, 1982-1988) According to Wade Castes, approximately one-half of the Housing operating budget goes towards ongoing operating costs and subsidies associated with subsidized housing programs. Mr. Castes stated that only minimal budget increases occurred during the years of the NDP regime due to policies of fiscal restraint. As a result, he stated, any budget increases that did occur primarily went to service increased operating grant and housing subsidy programs. This money was supplemented by cutbacks which occurred in other areas such as painting and repair of government-owned units, which would not affect the health and safety of tenants.

To some extent it is difficult to determine exact financial allocations to the Department of Housing over time. For example, the MHRC portion of the Department of Housing is also awarded non-budgetary capital authority for construction projects. As well, during the 1980s, the Manitoba Jobs Fund also transferred millions of dollars to Housing as part of the government's job creation scheme. To give something of a comparison, however, the government's 1985 Budget Address

included a \$73 million dollar allocation to MHRC; in 1988, this authority approximated \$100 million.

A review of the government's 'Statement of Expenditure' over the years 1982/83 to 1986/87 and 'Main Estimates of Expenditures' for 1989 illustrate that the government's financial commitment to Housing was not as great as its commitment to other social program areas such as Health and Education. (Public Accounts for 1982-87; Manitoba, March 31, 1989) At the same time, it must be remembered that other shelter-type funding was also contributed by other Departments such as Community Services and Health through per diems and program grants. If one were to include these figures, then the amount allocated to shelter per se would be much higher.

To help illustrate this point, a report entitled "Review of Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse" (August 1988) noted the following 'Provincial Wife Abuse Expenditures':

- Department of Employment Services and Economic Security payment of per diems for safe homes and shelters for 1986/87 totalled \$450,000.00
- Department of Housing: annual capital and operational grants for 1986/87 totalled \$70,000.00
- Department of Community Services: Program grants for 1987/88 totalled \$1,094,600.00.

As well the report cited government expenditures for training workers in wife abuse agencies as well as funding to the

Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse as additional expenditures in this area.

This report also noted that funding for the Community Services Wife Abuse Program increased 55% from \$736,300.00 in 1986/86 to \$900,800.00 in 1986/87. Although Harvey Stevens of the Social Planning Council stated he felt that this was indicative of government commitment to the issue of battered women, a government key informant more pessimistically stated "50% of peanuts is still peanuts". These differing perspectives make it difficult to assess government's level of commitment to the family violence program. On a percentage basis, it appears that the government was serious in addressing this problem; however, those directly involved in providing services were critical of funding which did not adequately meet the need.

At one point this researcher attempted to review financial records to determine levels of support to battered women's organizations, as well as other women's groups. Unfortunately, the current format of the province's Public Accounts records make it almost impossible to find this type of information. This fact was corroborated by Harvey Stevens, a Senior Planner in the Social Planning Council, who indicated that the SPC has pressed for and is currently pressing for a revised recording procedure.

Thus far we have determined that housing policy all but ignored the homeless woman target group in the early to mid-1980s. Although the single battered woman fared somewhat better, in general, government focused its attention on stimulating a depressed economy.

By the time 1987 rolled around, the economy had showed a marked improvement and there was some stated intention on the part of the NDP government to shift its actions towards housing the homeless. The following chapter which deals specifically with the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless helps to further illuminate the government's commitment to dealing with this problem. Information is provided through the provision of historical and contextual material and an integration of key informant interview responses.



## CHAPTER VI

1987/88: The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

The years preceding the IYSH were concerned primarily with economic recovery. The early years of the 1980s were particularly concerned with stimulation of the economy and expenditure restraint. As such there was little attention paid to expanding the 'needy' group category because to do so would require some allocation of exceedingly scarce resources. The government therefore proceeded to focus on housing as an economic tool and devote its energy to job creation programs and expenditure restraint, where possible.

There was some indication, however, by the end of the 1986/87 fiscal year that the government was shifting its focus towards the homeless population; the economic climate had improved and the government stated its intention to redirect its housing initiatives. This was, in fact, explicitly stated by the former Minister of Housing in her housing estimates address. Additionally, the Throne Speech of 1987 provided some optimism in the case of the post-mentally ill. Specifically, it planned to enhance community mental health services.

"Plans include the reallocation of institutional resources to the community and expanding day programs in Winnipeg and the Parkland and Interlake regions. Our efforts in this area will facilitate the successful reintegration of post-mentally ill individuals into the

community." (Hansard, February 26, 1987:5)

Similarly the government planned to introduce a new Mental Health Act which would include safeguards of individual rights. (Hansard, February 26, 1987) It would appear then, that things were looking up - for the homeless in general and the post-mentally ill in particular.

Unfortunately, the New Democratic Party fell in the March 1988 election so an NDP recap of Housing Department accomplishments as typically provided in the estimates discussions is not possible. As well, at the time of writing, the government had not yet released its annual report for the Department of Housing.

At the same time, quite a bit is known about housing initiatives during this period of time as it coincided with the IYSH. As a result more information surfaced on housing and homelessness in the way of two government commissioned studies, the creation of the Coalition on Homelessness, various media announcements, and greater community interest in the problems of these people.

By 1987, the Manitoba housing industry was said to be "...performing at its highest levels since 1978". (Hansard, February 26, 1987) In its Throne Speech, the government indicated that housing in the province was some of the most

affordable in the country. It further reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring all Manitobans had access to adequate and affordable accommodation.

With respect to the homeless, although there was some recognition that 1987 had been designated as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, there was little indication as to what the government's direction in this area was to be. The Throne Speech included only a general reiteration of Manitoba's reputation for the highest number of public housing units on a per capita basis and a brief reference to planned amendments to the Condominium Act and "other" housing legislation.

More concrete initiatives that indicate the government's awareness and concern over the increasing number of homeless began with the preparation of a preliminary report on "Manitoba Directions for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless". This report was commissioned in March 1987 by the Hon. Maureen Hemphill, Minister of Housing, and was completed by Mr. Dale Bairstow in April 1987. Its intention was to lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive study which was yet to follow.

Within this preliminary report, a number of issues were raised with respect to the homeless population. Specifi-

cally, problems in coordination were identified both between provincial departments and among social service agencies and organizations. No formal mechanism existed to coordinate delivery systems and raise concerns. There was also the concern raised that a large number of low-cost housing was being lost in the inner city through demolition. Bairstow's survey also revealed that social assistance levels were seen as inadequate and programs such as SAFER and SAFFR did not address the needs of the low income singles. As well, the pending close of the YWCA residence was seen as potentially contributing to the increase in homelessness for women and government intervention was recommended. Battered women, those with mental health problems, ex-cons, and youth were also profiled as high risk groups. (Letter from Bairstow to Hemphill, March 28, 1987)

In August of 1987 subsequent to funding approval, Bairstow was commissioned to carry out a more indepth study of Manitoba's homeless to help determine which groups were in need and what type of government response would be the most appropriate. This report was subsequently presented to the then Minister of Housing, Muriel Smith, who succeeded Maureen Hemphill later that year. In his covering letter to Smith, Bairstow refers to his meetings with the provincial Inter-departmental Committee on IYSH. Interestingly, although one might assume this was a committee specifically established for

the purpose of discussion and follow-up recommendations respecting the homeless, this was, in fact, not the case.

Specifically, the IYSH coincided with a proposal put forward by Main Street Project to the Housing Department to establish a housing facility for the mentally and post-mentally ill. According to Rick Brundrige of Main Street Project, this residence was to be open to both single men and women and was seen as filling a gap in service for these particular homeless individuals. In fact, Mr. Brundrige indicated that property for the building had already been purchased by the Housing Department and an architect commissioned to build the facility. However, according to Wade Castes, due to the more comprehensive nature of the project which included an allowance for on-site health facilities, as well as the expense involved in ongoing operation of the facility, a number of other departments were called together to discuss the proposal. These included the Departments of Community Services, Health, and Economic Security.

Research conducted during the course of this study determined that, in fact, the IYSH committee arose out of initial meetings scheduled to discuss the Main Street Project proposal. According to Mr. DePape and Mr. Kenny, around the same time that meetings were convened to discuss this housing proposal, the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet,

the policy arm of the government, had also made the decision to recognize IYSH in some way. It was Mr. DePape's and Mr. Kenny's understanding that it was this group which assigned responsibility to the Department of Housing to somehow acknowledge this year. Coincidentally, the Main Street Project proposal group, by default, became the IYSH Inter-Departmental Committee. In fact, one key informant who attended the MSP discussions stated he did not know he was a member of an IYSH committee until Mr. Bairstow made a presentation at one of their meetings.

Unfortunately, the Main Street Project proposal never received the required approval for construction. Mr. Castes, Mr. Zamprelli, Mr. Kenny and Mr. DePape stated that the failure in moving towards construction of the Main Street Project facility resulted from a number of problems both in coordination and financing of the project.

Firstly, although the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet helped create the IYSH Inter-departmental Committee, a staff shuffle resulted in the withdrawal of their committee representative with no follow-up replacement being named. As one government key informant stated, they no longer had a "driver" to push things along. In this particular situation, none of those involved in the committee had the authority to make any decisions around the table.

As well, at least one department representative on the committee acknowledged during an interview that he was suspect of the Housing Department's agenda. It appeared to him that Housing had already made up its mind about the facility and had simply expected rubber stamp approval from the other departments instead of open discussion on the issue. As one key informant stated it seemed as if the Main Street Project proposal was meant to be the "coronation" of the government's involvement during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

The lack of any decision-making authority coupled with the suspicions of the members as to the purpose of their participation on the committee which they had inadvertently stumbled into contributed to the failure in reaching any group consensus. What had been mentioned by a number of informants as being needed to resolve the impasse was direct ministerial intervention. Unfortunately, this did not occur although one key informant indicated that the Housing Department representatives both stated and documented their intention to involve the Housing Minister. Whether or not this consultation occurred is not known.

A major problem also arose in the financing of the project. According to Wade Castes, the Housing Department

because of the MHRC and its non-budgetary capital authority, was able to act very quickly on allocating funds to the project. This, however, was not true for the other departments of Health, Community Services and Economic Security, which had just gone through the budgetary process and already had their funds approved and "locked-in" for the year.

As well, the ongoing expense of operating such a comprehensive facility fell beyond the capabilities of any one department. As Janet Wikstrom of Community Services indicated, is not usually the capital outlay of funds for projects which causes concern but rather the commitment which has to be made to ongoing subsidies.

In addition to financial resistance to the proposed facility, there were also some major philosophical differences concerning the form that the proposed structure should take. In effect, Main Street Project had proposed an 88 bed facility which ranged from dormitory-style to more independent living units depending on the functioning level of their clients. According to Mr. Kenny, the proposed size of this facility, was in complete contradiction to the current community trends towards smaller institutions which, at a maximum, consisted of 25 beds. Although he agreed, in principle, to this facility, he advocated a scaled-down version of the plan in order to avoid a re-institutionalization of the psychiatric-



ly disabled.

Additionally, there was also a concern raised by the Department of Community Services respecting the target group proposed for the facility. According to one government key informant, they were apparently more interested in a housing facility for the mentally retarded who fell under their purview and raised this for consideration at the meetings.

Had approval and completion of the Main Street Project building occurred it would have resulted in one of the few housing facilities geared for the post-mentally ill. Its three-tiered approach to housing is similar to that described earlier as the Massachusetts model. As well, according to Mr. Brundrige, Main Street Project was also planning to target this housing initiative to both female and male single adults; groups mostly forgotten in housing issues.

As stated earlier, the Supportive Housing program is one facility that specifically caters to the post-mentally ill person. According to Susan Chipperfield, as with most special needs programs, the demand for Supportive Housing is outstripping its supply; at the present time, there are 23 beds for 200 applications. Figures provided by Mr. Kenny from the Department of Health also reflect the lower proportion of services provided for the post-mentally ill. He indicated

that of the approximately 9300 residential bed spaces in Manitoba (which included personal care homes for the elderly) only 550-600 are allocated for the post-mentally ill. Interestingly, there were no figures available to determine the ratio of women to men.

Ms Chipperfield agreed with perceptions that not much existed in the city for the psychiatrically disabled woman. She stated that she saw the placement of the psychiatrically disabled in public housing units as a feasible alternative to meeting the housing needs of this group. She also advocated the implementation of mobile crisis units as a support to clients who may need some level of intervention. She indicated the existence of such support would help to ensure placement in the first place as a means of alleviating housing authority concerns around admitting those who are perceived as potentially disruptive tenants.

As mentioned in Bairstow's April 1987 report, the pending close of the YWCA had been identified as potentially exacerbating the problem of homelessness for women. According to Annette Willborn, the YWCA up until 1987 had operated a long term housing facility for women as well as providing emergency shelter accommodation. This facility consisted of a 142 bed residence with approximately 75% of these beds occupied by long term residents; the balance were occupied by

short term transient women on an emergency basis.

Ms Willborn stated that the YWCA received referrals for their housing service from a number of community agencies in Winnipeg including city and provincial social assistance programs, the Salvation Army, the Mental Health Division of the Provincial Health Department, hospitals, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, as well as self-referrals which included some of the prostitute population. She also indicated that the 'Y' also, on occasion, acted as an overflow facility for its Osborne House shelter for battered women once their situation had stabilized.

Approval for long-term residence at the YWCA for women on municipal assistance was given primarily on the basis of some special need. This was because the monthly rental rate exceeded the allowance normally provided to a single woman on social assistance. At the same time, it was recognized that the excess rental allowance was justified for a number of women who would benefit from the physical security of the building and its supportive environment. Similarly, it appears that various provincial government departments utilized the residence for its clients for the same reasons. Interestingly, neither level of government provided the necessary support to keep the facility open. Annette Willborn of the YWCA stated that there was surprisingly little reaction

from any sector in response to the pending closure announcement.

In part this may have been due to a lack of understanding on the part of city and provincial governments respecting the value of the residence for the target group. Unfortunately it is also possible that their failure to get involved is a reflection of their belief that assistance to this group of people is a private matter for families and charitable organizations. With respect to Gil's (1981) key processes the rights afforded by society to this group of homeless are negligible.

The decision of the YWCA's board to close the residence was made on the basis of financial reasons; the 'Y' could simply no longer afford to continue its operation. According to Ms Willborn the provincial government had been approached at one point for financial support. However, it indicated that it was already providing support through its per diem payments for those on social assistance. Unfortunately, once the decision was made by the 'Y' executive to close the facility, little effort was made to rally further support. Ms Willborn, did indicate that the government's inter-departmental IYSH committee requested that she make a report on the circumstances surrounding closure but, for the most part, the government representatives just thanked her for

the information and offered further assistance should the 'Y' wish to re-enter the residence field at some point in the future.

The fact that the YWCA closed its residential facility during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, seems to be a reflection of the lack of government understanding for problems of all the target groups under study. The closure not only impacted on the Y's ability to act as an overflow for battered women, but affected those experiencing mental health problems, as well as prostitutes and low income singles. Ms Willborn described their clientele in the 1980s as a more needy group, with more post-mentally ill, mentally ill, and prostitutes seeking their services. With respect to relocation of these women, the YWCA staff took primary responsibility to help them find alternate housing. According to Ms. Willborn, some of these women went into private rent-shared situations, others ended up in rooming house or hotel situations. As well, it is also speculated that some women simply ended up on the street or were absorbed by families, friends or acquaintances.

Although the YWCA was not successful in rallying government support for their women's residence, at the same time, they indicated that the government had given a lot of support for its Osborne House shelter. Ms Willborn generally

felt that their working relationship with government, regardless of political affiliation, was very effective. Typically they see themselves as the initiator of activity with the government prepared to listen to their concerns. This is consistent with the perceptions of other key informants, including government key informants Wade Castes and Jane Ursel, who saw government as playing a reactive role in housing.

In Winnipeg, Osborne House, a battered women's shelter run under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association of Winnipeg, houses twenty-four women and children on a short term basis. Admittance is not restricted to women with children and single women can access this facility. Per diem rates are paid by the Manitoba Government for up to ten days; this time can be extended (with some difficulty) subsequent to receiving prior approval from the client's social worker if the woman is eligible for social assistance support.

The fact that the Manitoba Government will cover the per diems for all women at Osborne House who are unable to pay, regardless of marital status and length of separation, is a relatively recent change which also occurred in 1987. Prior to that time, there was a definite split in responsibility between the city and provincial social assistance

programs with the province only assuming financial responsibility for those women who met categorical eligibility requirements. Specifically, the province would not assist single women without dependents unless there was documentation to the effect that they were physically or emotionally disabled. Similarly, they would not financially assist women with children unless they had been separated for a period of 90 days.

In 1987, however, the issue of threatened closure of the Brandon, Manitoba based Westman Women's Shelter was raised in the legislature by the opposition. Political pressure as well as public pressure appeared to contribute to an announcement made shortly thereafter. On June 23, 1987, the Minister of Economic Security announced that the government would begin paying per diems for all women in financial need who were utilizing shelter services and safe homes. Mr. DePape from the Department of Economic Security confirmed that this change was ministerially-influenced and that the new arrangements have worked out quite well.

Although on the surface, this may not appear to be a significant change, it was a dramatic departure from previous government practice wherein single women were not eligible for provincial social assistance unless deemed physically or emotionally unfit or in the latter stages of

pregnancy. This change in policy can be seen as very progressive in that it recognized the need for equal treatment of battered women regardless of marital status or number of dependents.

At the same time although this was a step in the right direction in terms of ensuring the consistent financial treatment of women, there were some restrictions placed on the length of time a woman could automatically receive financial support at Osborne House. These restrictions, although fiscally responsible, proved problematic for a number of women.

In a December 26, 1988 newspaper report, Marlene Bertrand Executive Director of Osborne House, was quoted as saying the ten day restriction on per diem funding resulted in women spending more time looking for accommodation during a time when they should have been receiving supportive counselling and other assistance. She further added that instead of getting needed help women ended up locating substandard housing and having to move again in a few months anyway. In effect, although the short-term shelter needs of these women were better addressed, the government failed to consider the importance of supportive services as well as the longer term housing requirements of the target group.



It is interesting to note that Osborne House planned to relocate to a larger facility in June of 1989. The process of obtaining government approval for funding of the new facility also began in 1987 and straddled two government administrations - the NDP and Progressive Conservatives.

As part of the YWCA's plans to request an upgraded and expanded facility, Annette Willborn stated that they solicited support from 300 city agencies and organizations. Letters were sent out which explained the need for a new facility and asked for their support. The strategy of mobilizing the community and increasing the profile of the issue is felt by Ms Willborn to have helped move the government to action and obtain the desired results. This type of strategy is illustrative of the informal mechanisms which non-government agencies use to gain the attention of government.

It is interesting to note that final approval for the purchase of a new building occurred in the summer of 1988 shortly after the Progressive Conservatives came to power. In an August 1, 1988 news report of these events, the Executive Director of Osborne House expressed surprise at the outcome of a meeting that was held with the Conservative Minister of Urban Affairs, the Hon. Gerry Ducharme. Specifically,

"After years of going in there trying to prove the case, the response was: We understand your need,

go shopping for a shelter." (Winnipeg Free Press, August 1, 1988:5)

It is curious that a government philosophically oriented to helping the disadvantaged and profiled for its progressive view towards women should appear to have dragged its feet in granting final approval for a needed shelter facility to house homeless and at-risk women. It is also interesting that the PC Government should move so quickly given it had not been extensively involved in the Osborne House issue.

In the case of the Conservatives, their quick actions might be indicative of the brokerage politics discussed earlier. The PC's, given they are in a minority ruling position, may simply be attempting to present a well-rounded image of a caring government as a means of increasing electoral support. As one government key informant stated, each government attempts to rectify perceived shortcomings in their philosophical stance. In the case of the Conservatives, their reputation as a pro-business government is well-known; what is needed is greater exposure as a government concerned with social issues as well. Gil (1981) also states that beliefs, value, and ideologies in society do not remain fixed. As such the PC's actions to address shelter funding may also be a reflection of a genuine commitment towards meeting the needs of battered women.

Similarly, there may have been some legitimate barriers towards final approval of the new Osborne House facility under the NDP administration. The NDP, however, may not have felt it necessary to explain their position given their reputation as a sensitive and caring pro-woman party.

In addition to providing funding for shelters such as Osborne House, the NDP government also supported the use of Satellite Accommodation Projects throughout the 1980s, initially through per diem funding and later through grants which were used to cover support services or costs of administration.

In an April 1988 report entitled "Second Stage Housing and Short Term Crisis Accommodation Projects in Canada", it was noted that,

"The Manitoba Government is now encouraging an alternative to Safe Home Networks in the form of Satellite Accommodation. The government has stated a preference for Satellite Projects operating out of crisis centres. Satellite Projects are believed to be more desirable because of their ability to address safety and security concerns as well as support services, crisis counselling, follow-up and support groups."  
(Province of Alberta, April 1988:46)

Although this may seem to be a beneficial shift, in fact, a study released in March 1989 indicated that women's groups were generally critical of satellite systems which did provide 24 hour service and were seriously under-funded.

The study entitled "The Women's Initiative" (March 1989) and commissioned by the Conservative government of Manitoba through the Women's Directorate stated,

"A woman in crisis does not make the distinction between a facility being a 'shelter' or a 'satellite'. A service that is not staffed 24 hours is dangerous." (Province of Manitoba, March 1989:p.28)

Although the NDP were supportive of these types of shelter, their strategies of the time appear to be somewhat at odds with stated need. Again, a reminder that the NDP government fell before any intentions could be realized. It is possible that prior to any policy shifts, consultations would have been held with interested groups and individuals.

Where increasing government attention had been given emergency shelters for women, there was still little emphasis on the second stage housing type as discussed earlier. In Winnipeg, there was one such housing project 'Women in Second Stage Housing' (WISH) consisting of 10 suites (20 beds) located in various public housing projects. It offers social programs, programs in parenting, social and life skills and coop babysitting. WISH is supported financially to some extent by a grant through the Department of Community Services and, as well, all clients are required to pay a rental allowance which is normally provided on their behalf through the Department of Economic Security (amalgamated under Family

Services in 1989). In the case of WISH, accessibility is limited to battered women with children thereby excluding singles.

Although the concept behind WISH appears to be generally supported in the community, there were a number of criticisms levelled respecting the operation of this project. Specifically, Marlene Bertrand stated that the restrictions on entry and exit times precluded a woman in crisis during the winter months from taking advantage of the program. She also stated that while WISH discouraged women from seeking employment during their period of residence, she felt that the attainment of employment was a necessary step towards establishing a sense of independence.

What appears to be needed then are projects similar to WISH but which also incorporate a greater flexibility in their entry criteria and include groups which are missed - specifically the single woman. Unfortunately, neither second-stage nor more permanent housing solutions have been given the necessary attention by government.

From 1982 up until the time that interviews for this research were conducted, there were no specific housing policies that addressed the longer term more permanent housing needs of battered women. Unlike Ontario, the Manitoba

government did not institute a special priority placement for battered women in public housing. In Ontario, battered women who are designated as having special priority status are bumped to the top of the list for public housing. Although there is still a waiting period, the length of time is somewhat reduced. (Ontario, June 1988)

In Manitoba, however, battered women who applied for public housing were routinely placed on a waiting list for accommodation that became available; selection for admittance was based on a point system. Tragically, long waiting lists for alternate housing often leaves the battered woman with little choice but to return to the abusing partner. The special priority placement status is one practice which Janet Wikstrom and Marlene Bertrand would like to see implemented in Manitoba.

Unfortunately, there have been some problems identified in this system that have still to be worked out. As one of the non-government key informants stated, battered women are often seen as a liability when it comes to accessing public housing which is administered by local housing authorities. They can therefore be effectively screened out through the discretionary powers of local housing authorities. Government informants also echoed the sentiment that housing authorities are often interested in admitting the 'best' of

the needy to avoid complicating problems such as violent husbands tracking down their wives and causing disturbances or property damage.

Interestingly, although some government informants agreed that subtle discrimination existed in the current allocation of social housing units; at the same time, it did not appear as if this issue had been pursued to either substantiate the suspicions or consider way of intervening which might alleviate the problem. This would appear to be another example of government's reactive stance in dealing with issues. It may also be reflective of communication and coordination problems among departments. Although more than one government key informant noted the problem, there did not appear to be a means or a real motivation in addressing the issue.

Even if a woman did qualify for a unit, this does not circumvent the problem of a general shortage of social housing. It is interesting to note that in the Ontario study a number of shelter personnel indicated that because of the long waiting lists for housing, they did not often encourage women to apply given the unlikelihood of obtaining a unit. (Ontario, June 1988) At the same time, the waiting lists are often used by governments as a means of determining the demand for this housing and the construction of additional units.

With respect to the key processes as identified by Gil (1981), the development of social housing is obviously not a government priority. As has been seen, government preferred to invest its scarce resources in projects which provided a greater return on investment. The existence of waiting lists also gives some indication of the quality of rights allocated to those who meet the criteria for social housing. (Gil, 1981)

Two additional initiatives during the IYSH were also undertaken in 1987 by the Province of Manitoba which should have had a direct impact on the homeless. One was the change in Housing Department policy to allow able-bodied non-elderly low-income singles into the public housing. The second was the financing for the new Salvation Army Men's hostel which subsequently opened in November 1988.

Firstly, the policy change in public housing eligibility was as Ms Hemphill stated, "...in recognition of the growing number of young, single homeless people". (Canadian Housing, Fall 1987:39) On the surface this appeared to be a very significant step forward to increasing the standard of living for this group. However, this policy was more easily stated than implemented.

Practical problems of implementation included the



lack of one bedroom units in traditionally constructed family housing and the reluctance to "overhouse" singles, as well as problems in integration of singles into elderly units where most one bedroom units were found. To illustrate the latter point, government key informant Wade Castes related a situation wherein a single man accosted an elderly resident in the hallway one of of the buildings. As a result, only a handful (Bairstow, December 1987 identified 200) of singles are housed in over 16,000 public housing units.

So although government policy appeared to become more sensitive to the problems of the single person, at the program level, little had changed. As confirmed by Wade Castes, no attention had been given as to how this integration would occur; neither were issues of shelter allowances pursued.

As well it must be remembered that the decision to admit tenants is still the responsibility of the Regional Housing Authority which, it was commented during interviews, prefers those with a "more quiet living style". This situation again serves to illustrate the limited rights of the low-income non-elderly single. Although they technically are entitled to social housing units by virtue of their membership in the low-income group, they are bound by constraints imposed indiscriminately by others in positions of power. In some

sense, the existence of housing authorities can be seen as a tool to be used in maintaining the status quo.

Interestingly, the issue of gender in public housing units did not arise in terms of breaking down the numbers of men and women on waiting lists or in determining the male/-female split in the few units that were occupied. Mr. Castes did indicate, however, that 75-80% of Manitoba's social housing was occupied by single parent families, the majority of whom are female-led. The collection of gender related information would seem to be critical in helping to determine the source of demand and in attempting to assess factors contributing to demand. According to Mr. Castes, the Department of Housing has recently begun to develop a computer information system which will include gender data. In large part, this new change has had to do with federal reporting requirements.

A final point on this issue is that single person eligibility for these units does not appear to be widely known. A number of community-based organizations in Winnipeg including the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization which deals extensively with low income singles were still under the impression that public housing prohibited single person occupancy for the able-bodied and non-elderly. The fact that agencies providing direct service were not aware of this

policy change is disturbing in that those who meet criteria cannot be made aware of this resource.

As well, waiting lists often serve as an indication of demand; if people are not aware of their eligibility, they will not apply. This lack of application can, in turn, be interpreted as a low need thus maintaining the status quo. As Rose (1980) has stated, it is not sufficient to simply state intentions of housing policy, there must also be some concrete commitment attached to the initiative. It is also recognized, however, that significant increases in the length of waiting lists are no guarantee that any action will be taken. Nonetheless, it would make the situation somewhat more difficult to ignore.

In November 1988 the Salvation Army in Winnipeg opened Booth Centre, a 200 bed men's hostel. This facility was built to replace the aging men's hostel. As such it was not a new innovation in the sense that it created more bed space. At the same time, the new facility not only provided improved residential facilities for homeless men but also provided expanded services in the way of a Crisis Stabilization Unit and a Health Clinic. Although, Major Perry stated that the original plans for the facility included some bed space for women, it was decided later that integration of women into this facility would significantly increase its operating

costs. The Army therefore opted to continue to use its Baldwin House facility with Booth Centre offering referral counselling services for women.

It is interesting to note that when interviewed, Major Perry stated that the provincial government had no involvement in the construction of Booth Centre. It was an Army-initiated and Army-planned facility. According to the former Minister of Housing, however, government funding for this project was committed during 1987 as part of its initiatives to address the problem of homelessness. (Canadian Housing, Fall 1987)

In fact, the government did provide mortgage financing through MHRC as well as through a Core Area Initiative grant. Similarly, both provincial and municipal levels of government contribute to the operating expenses of Booth Centre through payment of per diem rates for clients eligible for social assistance.

The perception that government is not really involved if it simply contributes funding is an interesting one. For the most part it fits with the Army's philosophy that government's role in addressing the needs of the homeless is to provide the "wherewithal" with non-profit organizations taking responsibility for the running of the operation.

Otherwise, Major Perry stated, you begin to have political needs taking precedence over social needs. Overall, Major Perry believed that their relationship with the government was an effective one. In part, this was attributed to the fact that the Salvation Army did not see themselves as overly using the government; they preferred to put their energy into 'dealing with people rather than the government'.

The Salvation Army's perception of what government's role should be is shared by other community groups as well. Olga Foltz of MAPO stated that government's role should be to support non-profit groups through stabilized funding procedures. In particular she stated funding should be approved for shelters for single women and services should be provided for the mentally ill and the particularly hard-to-house individuals.

Similarly, Susan Chipperfield stated that government's primary role was to provide funding and set standards for the delivery of services which could then be assumed by almost any group. She also suggested that the government provide an administrative umbrella group which can assume responsibility for providing services such as payroll, bookkeeping and office supplies. She stated that where government will provide program grants to non-profits, they are very reluctant to cover administrative costs. This

observation was corroborated by Annette Willborn of the YWCA. shelter.

As with other organizations, Ms. Willborn also stated that she saw government's primary role in housing the homeless as funding. She doubted that the government would ever become directly involved in the operation of programs given the costs involved. In the case of a program such as Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights (POWER) it is also unlikely that the government could even hope to run a similar service. Interestingly, POWER had approached both housing ministers, Maureen Hemphill and Muriel Smith prior to and including 1987 to contribute funding to their program but were unsuccessful in their requests. At the same time Jane Runner stated they are now somewhat more optimistic of receiving funding given they have been in operation a few years and have gained some credibility.

In the case of the Salvation Army, as well as other non-government informants contacted, there was no formal mechanism which existed between them and the government to discuss issues of concern. This was somewhat contrary to Ms. Hemphill's stated desire for government and social agencies to work more closely together to meet the needs of the homeless. (Canadian Housing, 1987)

With respect to formal mechanisms which existed between non-government organizations, the Coalition on Homelessness was created during 1986/87 which included representatives from a number of agencies and organizations working with the homeless. According to Catherine Charette, a policy analyst with the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, who was interviewed in the preparatory stages of this study, representatives from organizations such as the YWCA, Social Planning Council, Main Street Project, the Institute of Urban Studies, group homes, etc. were brought together for a workshop and general meetings during 1987 to discuss common problems and concerns. Unfortunately, much like the government's IYSH inter-departmental committee, although it was never formally disbanded, it is relatively inactive except for informal contacts and an infrequent newsletter.

In large part, this situation can also be attributed to the lack of a full-time "driver" to keep up the momentum. Although Ms Charette continues to act as contact point for the Coalition, her involvement with other responsibilities does not permit the level of activity needed to maintain contacts. The relatively dormant state of this group since 1987 was also confirmed by Annette Willborn who was a member of the Coalition.

To recap there were a number of events occurring

during the 1987 IYSH which directly impacted on the shelter needs of battered women, prostitutes, post-mentally ill, and low income women. On the more progressive side, the change in government economic security policy provided all battered women, single or with dependents, seeking shelter at women's crisis units with equal access to provincial social assistance. As well, program monies allocated to the Wife Abuse Program were significantly increased by over 50%. The Department of Health also began to provide programming monies to the Supportive Housing Program of CMHA for the post-mentally ill. And, finally, low-income women were entitled to apply for public housing.

On the down side, the change in economic security policy while dealing with the emergency shelter needs of battered women did little to support them in finding appropriate longer term accommodation. As well, those working in the wife abuse field were not significantly impressed with the increased monies allocated to the area. The provincial contribution of monies to Supportive Housing while covering some of the operating costs through per diems and program costs through grants fell short in ensuring adequate staffing of the program. The policy to admit low income women into public housing was simply that, a policy, and did not translate into action at the program level. Similarly, services which emerged during the 1980s in response to the homelessness



issue such as those offered through POWER were rejected in their funding requests to the Department of Housing.

As well, the failure to intervene on behalf of the 'Y' residence closure contributed to the problems of all the target groups who had routinely used this facility as a safe and permanent long term housing arrangement. Similarly, the inability of government to reconcile problems in the establishment of the Main Street Project facility particularly impacted on the psychiatrically disabled population.

Overall, the IYSH did not appear to result in any dramatic changes for any of the target groups. Generally both government and non-government key informants stated they were not aware of any "earth-shattering" changes which occurred during this time. IYSH's greatest contribution as identified by several key informants was that of a consciousness raising process which helped to quantify the need; 1987, then, was seen as a year of awareness and understanding rather than a year of action.

#### **1987/88: Changes and Events as They Impacted on Housing Policy**

As was the case in the early 1980s, the target group, aside from battered women, were again ignored during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987.

Although the government promised to devote attention to the homeless population and did commission two studies to explore this area of concern, according to all key informants no significant changes occurred.

With respect to the historical context of the time, although economically the climate had shown some improvement by this year, both federal and provincial governments were still concerned with accumulated deficits which had occurred over the previous years. The federal government in particular targeted 'housing' as an area of review and restraint as a means of helping to reduce government debt. Its refocussing of housing programs towards the most needy, who were identified as low-income families, seniors, natives and the disabled, reflects the priority groups as also identified by the Manitoba Government during this time. As Mr. Zamprelli has stated the province primarily assumed an image of control with the development of the revised federal/provincial partnership in 1986 which was designed to tighten up the criteria for program eligibility and to assign a greater financial responsibility to the provinces.

With respect to housing policy and homeless women, if anything, the problems of the target group were exacerbated in 1987 by the closing of the YWCA residence. Prostitutes, post-mentally ill and low-income women were significantly

affected by the closing of a facility which, in effect, offered the three levels of support as identified in the Massachusetts model. Although perhaps not as noticeable during the first year, no doubt the Y's closing also contributed to the overcrowding situation which occurred at Osborne House in 1988 and which moved the city to threaten to suspend its operating license the following year. The termination of the Y's residential program, in effect, eliminated its back-up use as an overflow facility.

Had the provincial government followed through with its intentions to work more closely with community groups attempting to address the needs of the homeless, perhaps some greater effort might have been made to prevent the closure of the YWCA residence, reach agreement on the Main Street Project facility, provide some guidelines for single person public housing admission, and offer greater support to initiatives such as the POWER drop-in centre and the Supportive Housing project. Unfortunately, although contrary to social democratic ideology, the absence of these participative mechanisms appears to be consistent throughout the period under study, and, indeed, in the NDP's earlier reign in the 1970s as discussed by McAllister (1984). As speculated earlier, however, the province did have a vested interest in not involving community groups because to do so would have given attention to an issue and a group they were not prepared to deal with at the time.

No doubt, the minimal attention paid to the homeless target group during 1987 was, in part, the result of conflicting policy goals. Rein (1970) cites, for example, the conflicting goals of 'self-liquidation and adequacy'. He states there is a dilemma in pursuing policies which enhance the quality of a program because as it becomes more attractive, the demand for it increases as well. At the same time, this outcome has to be balanced with a conflicting goal that calls for fiscal responsibility and the reduction of program size and expenditure. In the case of singles and social housing, although philosophically the government may have wished to expand the program, practically it also had to balance the additional cost. Interestingly, the infamous lengthy waiting lists for public housing help governments to achieve this balance given the program becomes self-limiting by the people who do not bother to apply. Again, this does not imply that adding to the waiting list equates with follow-up action. Rather it is a means of providing a more accurate picture of the extent of the need and demand for this service. No doubt a realistic portrayal of the numbers of people needing subsidized housing would have made it somewhat more difficult for the province to ignore.

Similarly, a proposal such as Main Street Project was given the appearance of support through the establishment of a committee, but structurally it was set-up to fail. This

was confirmed by a number of government key informants who indicated that, "the timing was all wrong", and that "we had the wrong people at the table". In this way, both goals are achieved - an appearance of movement towards dealing with social issues and minimal financial outlay. This situation also compares to the funding situation for battered women - a 50% increase in financial allocation appears to reflect a serious commitment to the addressing the problem; at the same time, "50% of peanuts is still peanuts".

To reiterate, the influence of economic objectives and the federal direction is clearly reflected in the stated objectives of Housing Department as identified at the end of the 1987/88 fiscal year in an 'administrative overview' document as provided by Mr. Wade Castes. Specifically, departmental objectives were grouped into four major areas:

- "- Economic Development and Market Support - programs which provide for direct economic development and stimulation of the housing and construction industry resulting in concomitant employment creation;
- Economic and Social Security for Households in Need - programs which provide assistance and shelter opportunities to lower income consumers by assuring access to and affordability of housing accommodations appropriate to individual needs and by promoting the maintenance and preservation of the existing housing stock;
- Regulatory and Consumer Protection - programs which review and enforce government regulations created to protect and advocate for rights of tenants and land lords and provide for a system of arbitration of

disputes between these two groups;

- General Government Services and Administration - programs which provide administrative, planning and operational support to all internal and external activities of the Department" (Manitoba, April 1988:2)

It is interesting to note that housing as an economic tool was listed first among these objectives. This seems to be reflective of the noted shift in priorities from housing initially as a issue of social justice in the 1970s to housing as a major tool in economic development and job creation during the 1980s.

This shift is not surprising given the larger social context within which the NDP were operating. Armitage (1988) has stated that the New Democratic Party have traditionally been strong advocates of social welfare programs and the pursuit of welfare ideals. At the same time, he also states they faced a strong challenge during the 1980s to defend the status quo from 'government-initiated reform'. He further states that,

"The challenge for the NDP as we look toward the 1990s is to be the friendly critic of welfare institutions, providing support to the ideals and objectives of welfare while recognizing institutional problems and resource limitations."  
(Armitage, 1988:92)

For the most part this appears to be strategy undertaken by the provincial NDP during the 1982-88 period. Overall, the ideals of adequate housing for families and the elderly and

adequate shelter for battered women have been upheld and in some instances expanded. However, these changes have occurred in light of fiscally responsible strategies which saw the government working through the private market. Generally, though, there was little movement in other target groups identified as needy, especially the homeless woman.

## CHAPTER VII

### An Analysis of Findings and Implications

The purpose of this research effort has been to determine how the housing policies and programs of the NDP government addressed the needs of a group of homeless single adult women which included the post-mentally ill, prostitutes, low-income and battered woman. As stated, the period of time under study, 1982-1988, reflected an increasing profile of homelessness as an issue as demonstrated by the U.N. designation of IYSH in 1987.

In brief, housing policies and programs generally ignored the homeless single woman during the period and, in some instances, made her situation more difficult rather than contributing to problem resolution. An exception to this statement is in the case of the single battered woman who appeared to achieve greater gains over this time given a movement which was already underway to address the needs of battered women with children.

There are a number of reasons suggested for this lack of attention to the target group including the government's lack of awareness and understanding of the homelessness issue; the lack of a publicly and politically popular cause as well as the lack of a coordinated voice to address the



problem of homelessness for single women; the impact of the role of the federal government in housing policy; the lack of a coordinated tri-government housing strategy; internal problems in coordination among departments; and the economic circumstances of the time.

It is not too surprising that provincial housing policies and programs did not reflect an awareness or concern with the target group under study. As both Gil (1981) and Rein (1970) have stated, the development of social policy requires that choices be made and compromise occur. Allocative decisions respecting the distribution of scarce resources,

"...involve the pursuit of multiple social goals, some of which are in partial conflict either with each other or with economic and physical objectives, but all of which...are difficult to identify and select." (Rein, 1970:29)

In the case of homeless single women, the government chose instead to focus its resources on economic growth. In some fashion this may reflect a view of social planning which holds that improved standards of living can only occur in conjunction with economic growth and that,

"...efforts to redistribute limited resources result only in the redistribution of poverty."  
(Rein 1970:26)

As such the government had limited choices during the period under study but to devote itself to economic stimulation while still attempting to retain intact the welfare services already

existing at the time. However, these actions still reflect the limited rights allocated to the target group such that little was done on their behalf even though specific opportunities arose such as the pending closure of the YWCA.

In part, the limited rights afforded this group may be connected to the lack of a government definition of homelessness. In this situation it did not appear that government had a working definition of either the problem or the problem group with which it was attempting to deal. What is particularly disturbing, is that the search for greater understanding of the homelessness issue did not even reach prominence until 1987 when studies were commissioned in what appears to be a knee-jerk approach to IYSH. Even then a preliminary study prepared by Bairstow (April 1987) which cautioned against closure of the women's 'Y' and which identified problems in coordination both between provincial departments and among service agencies, had little effect on government direction.

In an article submitted to Canadian Housing (Fall, 1987), Ms Hemphill discussed Manitoba's "two-pronged approach for dealing with the housing and social needs of the homeless". (Canadian Housing, 1987:39) Although she did not offer a specific definition of homelessness, Ms Hemphill appeared to be working from a somewhat implicit definition

which was revealed through her statements about homelessness and the actions which were being taken by the Department of Housing to address this issue.

Specifically, we may assume that homelessness to the Minister of Housing was primarily the lack of adequate shelter whether it be temporary or long term. This was illustrated through her examples of the efforts of the Department of Housing to deal with this problem through funding of new shelters and cooperative units; the creation of programs to expedite this funding; as well as the emphasis on the maintenance of public housing units and conservation of existing low-income and rooming house stock. The policy of allowing singles into public housing also reflected a concern for providing shelter facilities.

Although the government had some sense of the need for long and short term shelter arrangements, there was no mention of a transitional type of housing as identified in the Massachusetts model. Thus, there appeared to be a gap in Manitoba's understanding of a comprehensive approach to sheltering the homeless. This missing piece also gives some indication of the lack of understanding of the diverse and complex group which makes up the homeless population.

The second 'prong' of the approach as addressed by

Ms Hemphill was more vague. She stated that government and social agencies must work more closely together to meet the needs of people beyond the immediate need of finding a place to sleep. The minimal emphasis on supportive services also seems to indicate a lack of understanding of the importance of this aspect of programming. Without this appreciation, the importance of retaining such facilities as the YWCA residence or the building of the Main Street Project facility would be underestimated. For the most part, however, the emphasis on shelter needs was consistent with her role as Minister of Housing and the consideration of homelessness as primarily a shelter issue.

With respect to a government definition of the homeless population, the implicit definition was that they consisted of a range of individuals including an increasing number of younger men, a disproportionate percentage of singles, children, the chronically unemployed, single mothers, psychiatric outpatients, abused women, the mentally retarded, and the psychologically impaired. (Canadian Housing, Fall 1987) Interestingly, "single women" were not specifically mentioned as a group unto itself within any of the target groups mentioned. Again it is important to note that how the issue is defined and who is identified as needing attention has a major bearing on the subsequent actions that are taken. In this case, the lack of recognition of single women as a

target group appears to be reflected in government housing policy direction. As well, the government would appear to have had a vested interest in not identifying the single woman target group because to do so might require that resources be committed to addressing their specific needs.

What is also interesting is that key informants in the government bureaucracy are still not aware of a generally agreed upon definition of homelessness or who comprises the homeless population. Wade Castes, John Kenny, and Bryan DePape stated that they had some "sense of the issue" but that no formal discussion had been pursued on this topic. John Gunn, formerly of Community Services, also stated he had a personal perspective on homelessness which saw lack of income and unemployment as root causes. At the same time, he also indicated that he saw the provision of shelter as an immediate means of dealing with the problem. Interestingly Mr. Gunn initially stated during a telephone interview that Community Services had 'no role in housing'. He stated that his department's involvement in the IYSH Committee was due to a sense of need for 'human services to be involved'. None of the government key informants seemed to feel that there was a problem with not having a common definition because there was a general appreciation of the concern.

The problem with this approach, as Hulchanski (1987)

has stated is that agreement on problem resolution is based on a general agreement of the nature and extent of the problem; without one you cannot have the other. Similarly, Rose (1980) states that effective administrative arrangements are an essential element of housing policy and require the involvement of those not only experienced in housing program objectives but with the capacity to understand the target groups they are geared to serve.

It is suspected that the "minister-specific" actions in programs and policies may also have had something to do with the lack of a commonly shared definition of needs and target groups. Similarly, Harvey Stevens of the Social Planning Council stated that there was a need for government to differentiate among the homeless groups in order to help clarify the roles of various departments and generate coordinated efforts to deal with the problems; he did not have the sense that government had this type of understanding. Given that homelessness does cross boundaries of a variety of departments and service agencies, there must be some common understanding of the problem in order to know who must be involved in problem identification and problem resolution discussions.

It is interesting to note, that definitions of homelessness among non-government key informants also indi-

cated some *sense* of the issue vis-a-vis a broad understanding of the concern. Definitions ranged from: "no domicile - can't receive mail", "no permanent address (hotels don't count)", "individuals without permanent residence" to a description of characteristics of the homeless population such as, "battered women, youth, prostitutes, young females, new immigrants". The nature of homelessness as a complex and diverse issue was evidenced in the variety of responses to this question.

In the same way, that governments are influenced by implicit or explicit definitions so are community organizations. Each has their own understanding of the issues and pursues problem-resolution based on this understanding. As Rein (1970) has stated, every agency carries out a specialized function dependent upon its stated mission. He further states that this specialization increases the potential that some group will be left out. Although the target group is addressed in one way or another by a number of agencies, the competition for scarce resources and the varying perspectives of homelessness and the homeless tend to diffuse the issue and the needs of the group. There did appear to be an attempt made to coordinate the concerns of the various groups through the creation of the Coalition on Homelessness during 1987, however due to the volunteer nature of the coordinator position, the momentum of the group did not continue beyond 1987.

As mentioned earlier, the case of battered women is somewhat different from the balance of the target group in that government has been giving increasing financial support to shelter agencies and has drawn greater attention to the issue by establishing a separate Wife Abuse program within its own department. In large part, though, non-government and some government key informants felt this was not especially by design but rather was a political response to increasing public pressure to do something about this growing problem. This is reflective of Albert Rose's observation that,

"No government is likely to take the requisite action to provide housing for those who require societal intervention unless there appears to be a political advantage or unless the pressure for action on the government in power is so strong that it can no longer be resisted." (Rose, 1980:3)

Unfortunately, the same kind of political pressure and public outrage has not been brought to bear in the case of the low-income, prostitute, or post-mentally ill woman. As was reiterated several times during the course of interviews by key informants, single women are hard to organize and have had no one to speak on their behalf. Although this does happen to some extent through organizations such as POWER, CMHA, or MAPO, the effect is not as great because as Janet Wikstrom noted, the issue is not as "hot" as for domestic violence. Additionally, as Armitage (1988) has stated, organizations such as MAPO often experience their own funding problems which require that attention be diverted to dealing



with in-house issues as well.

Jane Ursel of the Women's Directorate agreed that single women do not have a well-defined lobbying voice or group to speak on their behalf. She also commented that often government's awareness of problems was only as good as the advocacy groups raising the issues. As such allocative decisions made on the basis of community pressure often ignore the socially less popular causes and groups.

To illustrate this further, women's groups such as the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women have not dealt with the issue of women and housing in any depth. In fact, Sheila Gordon of the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women indicated, when approached for an interview, that housing for women has not been a priority for the Council. As well, the Social Planning Council, although it directed some attention towards housing in Winnipeg during the late 1970s has not had the resources to revive this area for study. Additionally, although the Council appreciates there is an imbalance of services for singles as a whole, there was no recognition of housing problems differing between men and women. Similarly, where some gender differences were identified by non-government key informants, these were seen as having more to do with hygiene and greater levels of social interaction; lower income and housing discrimination were, for

the most part, not mentioned. The exception to this was Olga Foltz's comment that women who seek help from the Anti-Poverty Organization often request assistance to get additional rent monies from the welfare department. As such, MAPO is very aware of the housing problems of low-income women in receipt of social assistance. At the same time, however, welfare is generally regarded by society as a necessary evil and, as such, it is difficult to garner public support for a group of people who are usually seen in a very negative stereotypical fashion.

Also, the Women's Directorate of the Manitoba Government state their areas of new and ongoing involvement in women's issues as described in their pamphlet, include wife abuse, day care, job creation, affirmative action, training and non-traditional jobs, legal and justice issues, health, women in business, work-related issues, pensions, family law, pay equity, and resources to women; nowhere is there mention of women and housing. (Manitoba Women's Directorate, no date/page) This is not to say that strides in job creation, training and pay equity will not contribute to improved housing standards - they will. But at the same time, housing as an immediate area of concern has received little attention. Unfortunately until such time as there is a coordinated and vocal voice on women's housing issues this is unlikely to change.

A major factor which impacts on Manitoba's ability to redirect resources towards the single population group is the role which the federal government plays and continues to play in housing. Although it is the provincial governments which have been assigned responsibility for housing under the constitution, it must still be remembered that the federal government is an active partner in housing through its financial ability to control the purse strings. Although the following quote from 1968 may appear to be somewhat outdated, it is, nonetheless, still relevant in today's context.

"The federal government still plays a significant role in the housing industry because of the financial arrangements under which housing is undertaken. As well the influence of federal financial and monetary policies is crucial in the largest part of the housing market, the private sector, where 95-99 per cent of all dwelling units created during the past twenty years have in fact been constructed." (Rose, 1968:46)

As such provincial initiatives are undertaken within the limits imposed by financial constraints, either through direct allocation of money through CMHC or through other constraints of monetary or fiscal policies. As Armitage (1988) states, conditional grant programs such as those offered under the National Housing Act require that programs be designed in a certain way thus significantly influencing provincial priorities and programs. As Mr. Zamprelli stated, the provinces only have "an image of control" in that they are perceived as the active party in program delivery. Interestingly no additional

monies were allocated through CMHC in recognition of IYSH. Rather, according to Jim Zamprelli, "moral encouragement" was provided to the provinces in lieu of funds.

Given the 1986 CMHC directives to refocus attention on the most needy which were identified as families, seniors, natives and the disabled, it is unlikely that significant attention will be given the single woman in the near future.

It is interesting to note that the only level of government to give some progressive attention to singles housing is the City of Winnipeg through its Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation. As stated, they provide housing units for sale or rental to those with low-income including singles in receipt of social assistance. They primarily focus on the inner city and thus are able to combine rehabilitation efforts with low rents.

The city, as well, through its Social Services Department also gets a first hand look at low-income singles accommodation in the inner city as well as other areas. Health and safety concerns in housing are identified by departmental social workers for low-income singles in receipt of social assistance. The Social Services Department also tends to play somewhat of a monitoring role in housing through the difficulty that its clients experience in finding suitable, affordable

accommodation.

Given its closer position to the community, it would seem beneficial for the province to take a more aggressive role in involving the city in housing policy and program discussions. As discussed earlier, however, the province has a vested interest in not relinquishing some of its power to the city because to do so would result in some loss of decision-making respecting resource development issues and a transfer of financial resources to support the city's participation.

As well as coordination problems between governments and community groups, the provincial government also faced problems within its own hierarchy. This became readily apparent during the meetings held on the Main Street Project proposal. Each department came with its own agenda to the meetings and no one seemed to have a clear sense of what was to be achieved. According to Wade Castes, there was apparently some hope at one point that this group could discuss other non-MSP homeless issues, but it was discovered that they had the "wrong people" at the meetings to pursue anything but the specific proposal on the table. Again, this is indicative of a failure to provide the required structural arrangements to ensure efforts were not frustrated or terminated due to problems in departmental coordination. This, plus other

actions such as the haphazard creation of the IYSH committee seem to reflect a lack of any commitment by the government to deal with the homeless.

As well, where Housing could move quite quickly and independently on the project, other departments were bogged down by budgetary limitations and the need for special approval. As one key informant said, "the timing was all wrong". As well no one had any real authority at the meetings to make decisions. This was similar to a problem identified by Janet Wikstrom of Community Services who stated that one department may have responsibility for a program but cannot proceed unless other departments are prepared to come up with per diems or operating grants. Similarly she noted that often departments have a very effective working relationship until it comes time to make specific budgetary commitments.

Given the overlapping responsibilities inherent in homelessness, departments that deal with income maintenance, licensing of care facilities, and housing programs must have some means of dealing with common issues on a coordinated basis. To date, however, no formal mechanism exists to maintain communication among departments to deal with mutual concerns; departments and city jurisdictions consult with each other on an 'as the need arises' basis. As Rose (1980) has stated, housing policy must have the essential administrative

elements in place to ensure initiatives are not frustrated or terminated due to the lack of appropriate means for implementation. Unfortunately this is an extremely weak area in Manitoba's administrative arrangements.

The failure of the government to address the housing needs of single women was, in large part, due to the economic circumstances of the time. Ideologically, the government used its powers to intervene in the marketplace to direct economic activity. In this sense the government's actions were very congruent with social democratic philosophy. At the same time, it is questionable whether their action especially in the early years of the 1980s was consistent with a philosophy of reduction of economic disparities between the poor and the rich. Although it may have been the intention of the government to incorporate this value in directing intervention towards the moderate income, for the most part, the really needy, the homeless, were ignored. Again this is reminiscent of Edwards' 'brokerage politics' with the government attempting to accommodate the needs of the financial market system, as well as appearing fiscally responsible to the electorate.

This situation serves as a good illustration of both Rein's (1970) and Gil's (1981) observation that policy often appears inconsistent because of trade-offs among conflicting

aims. Similarly, this situation is also an example of the blurred boundaries of public and social policies. It reflects the realities of scarce resources as a result of reduced revenues and increased deficits and an allocation of these resources which may not necessarily be based on social need.

With respect to policy differences as reflected in the philosophical orientation of the party in power, Jim Zamprelli stated, that if one wished to, a case could easily be made which supports a specific ideological basis in housing actions. The majority of government and non-government key informants however, stated unequivocally that there were no major differences in housing policies and programs between political parties. Most felt that political parties acted in their own self-interest. In the case of the New Democrats one key informant observed that given their basic philosophies the NDP do not have to work at proving themselves sensitive to women's issues. In the case of the Progressive Conservatives, however, their public image is such that they must demonstrate such concern; hence the publication of "The Women's Initiative" report.

Most key informants, both government and non-government alike, felt that the bottom line for all political parties was money and that good intentions were significantly affected by available revenues. In one instance, Major Perry



of the Salvation Army was adamant in his proclamation that there was a difference in political party actions. However, he also stated that often party philosophies do not filter down to the bureaucratic structure. There is no doubt that bureaucracies do play a significant role in translating general policy statements into operational programs. At the same time, politically the elected officials must assume responsibility for the programs enacted.

The key informant perspective is also reminiscent of Edwards (1981) 'brokerage politics' which states that political parties adapt to the most publicly popular positions. Although there are no doubt elements of philosophical beliefs inherent in their actions, compromises occur which reflect a dependency on other groups such as the electorate, the federal government and the financial market system.

Interestingly, since the Progressive Conservatives assumed power in Manitoba in March 1988, a number of steps have been taken to deal more equitably with women, especially battered women and women with children. Specifically, the Conservatives gave quick approval to Osborne House in the purchase of an expanded facility shortly after their election. Since that time, they have also significantly increased the per diems payable in line with shelter organization requests. They have also changed government housing policy to provide

priority placement for battered women in social housing units. And most recently, they assumed immediate responsibility for recently separated single parents. Prior to June 1989, single parents were the responsibility of the municipal social assistance system pending a 90 day separation period. It is too soon to say whether this momentum will continue or evaluate their actions respecting target groups, but as with the NDP, battered women, at least, are getting some of the recognition they deserve. Again, time will tell whether or not the PC's have simply take a publicly popular position given their minority status or whether this is reflective of a deeper concern for women's issues.

In summary, then, although the New Democratic Party gave some increased housing attention to the target group through shelter initiatives and funding for battered women, other groups received no significant assistance other than what they had been typically provided through per diem payments in residential care homes or welfare assistance. With respect to Rose's (1980) essential elements of housing policy, the legislative capability existed under the MHRC Act to assist the single woman, but financially and administratively provincial commitment fell short.

Although the provincial government did allocate monies to abuse shelters and made a beginning commitment to

the Main Street Project, the economic problems which plagued the country during the 1980s made it difficult for them to commit the financial resources necessary to prevent the Y's closing, to establish the Main Street Project facility, or to support the building of additional social housing units. Administratively and structurally, the government also failed to establish the arrangements necessary for developing a rational housing policy. Specifically, they lacked effective intra-departmental mechanisms for communication and coordination as well as failing to involve the city and other relevant groups in discussions.

### Conclusions

As Rein has stated, social policy can be perceived,

"...as a set of solutions that have developed over time by design, by accident, by compromise, and by precedent." (Rein, 1970:xv)

In the case of Manitoba's housing policy over the years 1982-1988 elements of design, accident, compromise and precedent combined to shape the actions of the government of the time. The federal government through its lead in the housing field not only provided a basic design for provincial programming through its designations of target groups and financial control mechanisms but also set precedents in home ownership initiatives and the types of housing to be constructed.

Similarly, Manitoba's involvement in rent supplement

programs might be perceived as an accidental occurrence resulting from problems encountered in the building of public housing units in the 1970s. As well, Manitoba's heavy involvement in home ownership programs geared towards the moderate income families may also be seen as a compromise between economic considerations and philosophical concerns about helping the most in need. In this sense, then, Manitoba's housing policy is consistent with other social policies which evolve in response to known and unknown factors.

To be able to understand the housing policies of any government, however, the larger societal context has to be considered as well. Armitage (1988) states that,

"...Western industrial countries hold a view of economic life that gives primary attention to the freedom of individual decision-making. The individual is expected to provide for himself. Social welfare provision is closely related to this Western view of economic freedom and responsibility." (Armitage, 1988:20)

The deeply held values of economic self-reliance and independence therefore place the provision of social welfare services in a secondary objective position. Armitage notes that social welfare expenditures are frequently "...identified as a burden, an item of unproductive expense the economy has to sustain." (Armitage, 1988:21) He also notes an increasing trend among Western countries towards wider acceptance of these views as evidenced by

"...the increasing conservative thrust of governments in Britain, Canada, and the United States, all of which have

recognized a limit to their commitment to support welfare institutions, shown a concern to prevent general expansion, and, in some cases, sought to reduce the relative level of expenditures." (Armitage, 1988:22)

Armitage's observations are very reminiscent of what has occurred in Manitoba respecting housing as a social welfare service. As a result the future outlook for the majority of single homeless women is not good. Housing policy as social policy will continue to be influenced by current political and social agendas which promote restraint and a narrowing focus of the disadvantaged groups. Until such time as governments are subjected to intense public pressure to deal with the particular problems of this group or government debt is significantly decreased, homeless women will have to continue to rely on the charity of others for basic support. Indeed, as has already been stated, inaction on the part of the government in acknowledging or addressing the problems of this group appears to reflect the position that these women are, in fact, a private responsibility. A large percentage of homeless single women including the 'concealed homeless', who are faced with few existing shelter options, must therefore continue to turn to friends, relatives and acquaintances for help.

Interview Questions:

Government Key Informants:

Department of Housing:

1. How would you say the provincial government defined the issue of "homelessness"?
2. What was your role as a member of the Inter-departmental Committee on Homelessness?
3. What would you say were the major objectives of Manitoba's housing policy during the period 1982/88?
4. Do you feel that the government was successful in meeting its objectives? If not, what factors impacted on the government's ability to deliver programs in line with identified objectives?
5. Were there sufficient financial resources committed to the Housing Department to effect delivery of programs?
6. What major changes, (if any), occurred in the provincial government's housing policy during this time?
7. What were the major advantages/disadvantages to amalgamation of the Department of Housing and MHRC in 1982?
8. What group or groups constituted the main focus of housing policy during this time? Why?
9. Would you say that the target group(s) changed over time? If so, how were the new target groups identified?
10. How responsive was government housing policy to problems of the single woman? Had there been any government housing initiatives directed towards battered women, the post-psychiatric patient, prostitutes and those women with low-income?
11. What mechanisms are in place to address problems in coordination of housing issues? (i.e. involvement of municipal government and community groups)
12. How are programs evaluated/monitored to ensure they are congruent with stated policy and also meeting the needs of the particular target group? Are statistics kept by gender?
13. What changes, if any, occurred in provincial housing policy and programs in light of the U.N. pronouncement of 1987 as IYSH?

**Department of Employment Services and Economic Security/Health/and Community Services/The Women's Directorate:**

1. How would you say the government defined the issue of homelessness?
2. What would you say was the thrust of the provincial government's housing policy during the 1982-88 time period?
3. What was your role as a member of the Inter-departmental Committee on Homelessness?
4. How is your department involved with battered women, post-psychiatric clients, prostitutes and single women with low income?
5. What mechanisms are in place to address problems in coordination of housing issues? (i.e. the involvement of the municipal government and community groups)
6. What do you see as the role of your department in housing-related issues vis-a-vis the role of the Department of Housing? vis-a-vis non-governmental groups? Is this an effective working arrangement?
7. Did the role of your department change during 1982-88, respecting the target group under study? (greater/lesser emphasis, decreased/increased support)
8. What changes, if any, occurred in provincial housing policy and programs in light of the U.N. pronouncement of 1987 as IYSH especially as they relate to women?

**Non-Government Key Informants:**

**Baldwin House/Osborne House/Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization/Canadian Mental Health Association (Winnipeg Region)/Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights/Main Street Project/the YWCA\*:**

1. How does your organization define homelessness and which target groups of women do you consider most seriously affected?
2. What types of services do you provide?
3. Could you please describe the characteristics of the client group that seek out your services?
4. Can you identify any changes that occurred during the 1982-88 time period respecting the target group (i.e. services offered, increasing/decreasing numbers, frequency of shelter use, increasing/decreasing age, changes in problems presented, etc.)

5. What specific service delivery problems have you encountered in attempting to meet the needs of this homeless group?

6. What do you see as your role in addressing the needs of this group vis-a-vis that of the provincial government? What do you feel the government's role should be and what are the consequences if the government fails to take on this role?

7. How would you describe your working relationship with relevant provincial departments respecting issues of homeless women? What mechanisms exist, (if any), to coordinate problems in the area of housing?

8. Are you aware of any specific program initiatives which the government undertook before, during or after the 1987 IYSH which would have directly impacted on housing for the homeless population under discussion?

\* Additionally, the YWCA was questioned specifically on the closure of its residence facility which occurred during 1987 respecting the type of facility, client group, government reaction/non-reaction, and consequences.

#### The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg:

1. How does your organization define homelessness and which groups of women do you see as most seriously affected?

2. What do you consider to have been the government's housing policy during the 1982-88 period?

3. Can you identify any changes that occurred during this time period which impacted on the target group under discussion? (social, political, economic?)

4. What do you see as the major obstacles to overcome in order to meet the shelter needs of women in the target group?

5. What do you see as government's role in addressing the needs of this group vis-a-vis non-governmental organizations? What are the consequences if the government fails to take on this role?

6. What mechanisms exist to address problems in coordination of housing issues?

7. Are you aware of any specific program initiatives which the government undertook before, during or after the 1987 IYSH which would have directly impacted on housing for the homeless women under discussion?



MAJOR INTERVIEW FINDINGS

1. How did the provincial government and community organizations define the issue of homelessness?

The government did not specifically define 'homelessness'; rather, each department key informant had his or her own sense of the issue. Similarly, each community organization had their own understanding of what comprised 'homelessness'.

2. What was your role as a member of the government's Inter-departmental Committee on Homelessness?

The majority of departmental representatives saw their role as reaching some agreement respecting the development of the Main Street Project housing facility.

3. What were the government's main housing policy objectives during the 1982-1988 time period?

Neither government nor non-government key informants could specifically address this question. Most non-government key informants stated they had no sense of what comprised the government's housing policy. Government key informants responded to this question by noting trends that had occurred over time such as a shift away from elderly public housing units and towards low-income families, as well as a change in the size of apartments being built.

4. What group or groups constituted the main focus of housing policy during this time?

Responses to this question varied from the traditionally targeted elderly and low-income family populations, as identified by government key informants, to the post-mentally ill and battered women groups as identified by some non-government key informants.

5. Would you say that the target group(s) changed over time?

Neither government nor non-government key informants saw a change in target groups, except for the battered women group.

6. How responsive was government housing policy to problems of single women?

Both government and non-government groups generally indicated that single women were not a priority for the government and therefore received little attention.

7. What do you see as the major obstacles to overcome in order to meet the shelter needs of women in the target group?

Non-government key informants indicated that single women were difficult to organize and, as such, they did not have a strong community voice with which to gain government's attention?

8. What mechanisms are in place to address problems in coordination of housing issues? (i.e. involvement of municipal government and community groups?)

There are no mechanisms in place to coordinate housing issues. Non-government key informants stated they had never been approached by the government to become involved in housing-related discussions. Government key informants corroborated this statement and also indicated they liaised with the municipal government on an 'as the need arises' basis.

9. What do you see as the role of your department/agency in housing-related issues vis-a-vis that of the government/community?

Non-government key informants saw the role of government as being primarily one of funder; they saw their role as one of service delivery. Government key informants stated that government took a more reactive stance in addressing problems which were identified by the community as needing attention.

10. What changes, if any, occurred in provincial housing policy and programs in light of the United Nations' pronouncement of 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless?

There were no changes which occurred as a result of IYSH. The year 1987 was considered by both government and non-government key informants as a year of awareness and understanding rather than a year of action.

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>INTERVIEW TYPE</u>	<u>PERSON AND ORGANIZATION</u>
May 5, 1989	Telephone	John Gunn, Community Services
May 8, 1989	Personal	Janet Wikstrom, Community Services
May 9, 1989	Personal	Harvey Stevens, Social Planning Council
May 12, 1989	Telephone	Rick Brundrige, Main Street Project
May 12, 1989	Personal	John Kenny, Dept. of Health
May 16, 1989	Personal	Annette Willborn, Y.W.C.A.
May 16, 1989	Personal	Olga Foltz and P a t r i c i a Morrison, M.A.P.O.
May 17, 1989	Personal	Major Dave Perry, Salvation Army
May 18, 1989	Telephone	Marlene Bertrand, Osborne House
May 19, 1989	Personal	Wade Castes, Dept. of Housing
May 19, 1989	Personal	Jane Ursel, W o m e n ' s Directorate
May 25, 1989	Personal	Jim Zamprelli, Dept. of Housing

May 30, 1989	Personal	Bryan Depape, Dept. of Economic Security
June 7, 1989	Personal	Jane Runner, P.O.W.E.R.
June 7, 1989	Personal	S u s a n Chipperfield, C.M.H.A.

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