

AN EXPLORATION OF SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE PROVISION  
OF HOMEMAKER SERVICE TO LOW-INCOME, SOLE-SUPPORT PARENTS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
The University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment

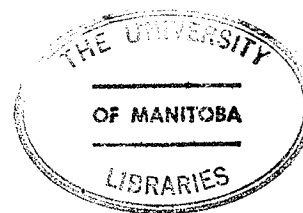
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

by

Penelope Jane Scurfield

October, 1975



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by

**PENELOPE JANE SCURFIELD**

**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of**

**MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend a special thank you to my principle advisor, Dr. Joe Ryant without whose advice, guidance and insight, this thesis would not have been possible.

Other persons whose co-operation, interest and assistance were greatly appreciated include: Dr. Len Spearman, advisor; Dr. Lola Jackson, advisor; Ms. Winnie Fung, Director of the Family Bureau; and Ms. Cae Gillon, Director of the Family Bureau Homemaker Service.

Thanks are also extended to the Homemaker program and support staff of the Family Bureau as well as to the participants interviewed in the study.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The employment of women in the economic sector of society has become a widely prevalent, if not wholly accepted, phenomenon in recent years. The movement of women into paid employment, begun during the second World War, has been continuous. Today, women occupy fully one-third of the labour force (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1970; 1973; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 1968).

Full participation in the economic sector still, however, remains an objective rather than a reality due to a well-entrenched discrimination against the female sex. The basis for this discrimination is the traditional belief that "a woman's place is in the home". The man, on the other hand, has long been accepted in his role as the breadwinner. While appropriate and necessary for an earlier, extended era in history, this belief is no longer applicable within the context of contemporary living conditions (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1973; Women's Bureau Bulletins, July, 1965; June, 1966; Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development, 1968). That it continues to exert a pervasive influence, however, is evidenced by the reluctance of society to extend to women full human rights in all spheres of life. Examples of overt as well as subtle forms of discrimination on the basis of sex

are not rare in spite of the introduction of new and amended legislation to the contrary. In the absence of an underlying consensus as to their worth, even the best of policies created through legislation are ineffective (Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970; Working Paper on Social Services, Document 117, 1974).

It was the general concern of this study to determine whether or not discrimination against working women extended into the realm of social services. Unequal treatment of women in the economic sector has been well-documented as a salient concern not only of women, but of society as a whole. Little attention, however, has been directed towards a similar problem that may exist within social services designed to assist working parents, both male and female.

The specific intent of this study was to determine whether or not low-income, single-parent females who are members of the labour force are subject to discrimination in the provision of homemaker services. Discrimination is defined as inequality of treatment on the basis of sex. Differences in treatment may be discrete or they may be subtle. Therefore, low-income, sole support parents, both male and female, who are members of the labour force and who requested homemaker service from the Family Bureau of Winnipeg over a twelve-month period, were compared in relation to a number of variables.

The Homemaker Service offered by the Family Bureau of Winnipeg provides an example of a supplementary social

service designed to provide practical assistance to sole support families. The homemaker functions to provide personal care of children within their own homes and to assume responsibility for household maintenance. Therefore, homemaker service contributes to ease the burdens of the sole support parent who must cope with responsibilities of the home, children, and work.

Homemaker Service represents one of a variety of child-care programs and services provided under governmental and/or voluntary auspices. The demand by working parents for such services, however, far exceeds available supply and the lag between the two is increasing (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1970; Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971; 1972; Health and Welfare, 1972). In view of the restricted supply, children of sole support parents are accorded priority within government funded and/or administered child-care services. This priority system acknowledges the reality that, for sole support parents, the choice of whether to stay home or to work is often absent. The available supply of child-care services, however, is still not adequate to meet demands for them by single working parents, let alone the demand which reflects the needs of two-parent families. Consequently, providers of services must themselves establish priorities to determine eligibility for service. Typically, agency policy as well as personnel serve to establish priorities through a host of eligibility requirements, conditions and restrictions. It is entirely possible that the practise of providing homemaker

service to sole support male and female parents is influenced by the exercise of discretion on the part of personnel and that this discretion favours men. It was this question which formed the central theme of this study. A series of hypotheses were formulated in order to test for the presence or absence of unequal treatment of female applicants for service. Data were collected through a review of relevant agency files which were opened over the twelve-month period between November 1, 1973 and October 31, 1974.

The utilization of homemaker service clientele as research subjects allowed for the achievement of two secondary objectives. The first was to establish whether or not homemaker service was perceived as an essential service by consumers. The second objective was to determine consumer preferences as to types and methods of delivery of child care. A series of interviews was conducted with a small sample of single male and female parents who received and did not receive homemaker service. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an understanding of the opinions, impressions, sentiments, and preferences of consumers regarding these two policy-related issues.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

Homemaker service provides an example of a social policy that has been translated into an operational program within a social welfare organization. In order to understand

this, or any other social service, it is necessary to be aware as to how and why social policy takes the shape it does. A number of leading critics in the field have provided conceptual tools to analyze and evaluate policy within the context of social change. These conceptual tools form the framework within which to evaluate Homemaker service as a supportive and supplementary social service to families with single, working parents.

### Social Policy and Social Change

Social policies may be defined as collective decisions or sets of solutions that have been developed over time to meet socially recognized needs not provided through the free market or family system (Rein, 1970; Romanyshyn, 1971; Kahn, 1969). Ideally, they are designed to attack and/or prevent major problems created by economic deprivation, family instability, and a declining sense of community (Romanyshyn, 1971). In reality, however, social policies have been developed in an ad hoc, fragmented manner in response to problems that can no longer be ignored due to their serious economic and social implications.

There are a number of reasons to account for the absence of a planned, rational approach to social policy. First, social policy has always occupied a secondary position to economic policy within government priorities. As a result, social objectives are often interpreted in terms of economic programs and concentration is given to monetary and fiscal policy. Social programs tend to become ends in themselves



rather than means to achieve social objectives.

Secondly, responsibility for the implementation of social policy is assumed by, and between, several levels of government. Within each level of government, the administration of policy is further sub-divided among several departments. The net result is, not unexpectedly, a fragmented, unco-ordinated system of social provisions, programs and services (Saskatchewan Newstart, 1970).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is a lack of consensus as to what constitutes a socially recognized need and to what extent society should intervene to meet this need (Romanyshyn, 1971). Social policy relies heavily on values, attitudes and sentiments and perhaps less heavily on knowledge and experience. The task of reconciling a widely disparate range of values and attitudes presents a major dilemma for political decision-makers. The dilemma is compounded by an increasingly rapid rate of change which gives rise to heightened social needs demanding government intervention (Rein, 1970).

### Conception of Social Welfare

Two views of social welfare have evolved in conjunction with economic, social, political, and environmental changes in the historical development of industrial societies. Each has a different emphasis and both exert considerable influence on the shape and substance of current social policy.

The residual concepts hold that "social welfare institutions should come into play only when the normal structures

of supply, the family and the market, break down (Wilensky & Lebeau, 1965: p. 138)". The institutional conception "sees social welfare services as normal, first-line functions of modern, industrial society (Wilensky & Lebeau, 1965; p. 138)."

These disparate views of social welfare evolved as society developed through three relatively distinct stages. These include the pre-industrial era (rural agrarianism), nineteenth-century laissez-faire capitalism, and the complex, interdependent, urbanized, and industrial society that exists today, marked by high mass consumption and an increased awareness of needs requiring collective intervention. (Myrdal (1941) ) labels the corresponding stages of social welfare as paternalistic conservative, liberal, and social democratic prevention. Romanyshyn (1971) utilizes the terms charity and corrections, welfare state, and welfare society.

The residual conception of social welfare had its origins in the Elizabethan Poor Law and became firmly established in nineteenth-century laissez-faire capitalism. The philosophy of charity was appropriate for a society of scarcity bent on developing its powers of economic production (Romanyshyn, 1971). Predominant values of competition, self-help, free enterprise, private property, and economic individualism endorsed government activity in the creation of conditions conducive to economic initiative and the development of a laissez-faire economy. In contrast, welfare expenditures were felt to be a burden on society, being viewed as an impediment to economic growth (Titmuss, 1968). Consequently, soc-

ial welfare provisions were short-term, minimal, and directed towards the recognized poor. Welfare was characterized as "charity to the unfortunates" who were held responsible for their plight by a "benevolent" middle-class. Titmuss describes the system as follows:

The system was redistributive but could function only by operating punitive tests of discrimination, strengthening conceptions of approved and disapproved dependencies, damaging assault of welfare recipients' sense of self-respect and self-determination (Titmuss, 1968, p. 190).

Social welfare policy functioned as a socially divisive form of social control of a minority of people designated as poor due to personal inadequacy. The major underlying premise of social control was achieved or accompanied by the denial of privacy, denial of choice, and loss of self-respect to social welfare recipients.

In sum, the concepts central to a laissez-faire economy were; the acceptance of the inevitability of poverty; an insistence on moral responsibility for destitution; and, an insistence on charity as a proper way to ameliorate the conditions of the poor (Romanyshyn, 1971).

The modern residual approach to social welfare is linked to opportunistic theories of economic growth which hold that the incidence of poverty is declining as increasing prosperity becomes more widely distributed (Pinker, 1971). From this perspective, social welfare policy functions to ensure a minimum level of well-being for those who are temporarily incapable of providing for themselves through the normal institutions of the market and family (Romanyshyn, 1971;

Wilensky & Lebeau, 1965). It is based on a value commitment to a selective form of welfare, utilizing a means-test to ensure efficient allocation of scarce resources. Titmuss (1968) does not deny the validity of selectivity, but argues that some social services should be provided as social rights based on needs of certain categories, groups, and territorial areas and not on the basis of an individual, degrading means test.

The institutional (Titmuss, 1968; Wilensky & Lebeau, 1965) or developmental (Romanyshyn, 1971) concept of social welfare is a twentieth-century phenomenon, created and influenced by rapid social change. The growth of urbanization, automation, and an economy based on high mass consumption have served to heighten the demands made on individuals in society. In the meantime, the traditional supports provided by the extended family and neighbourhood community have all but disappeared. The outcome is an increased demand for supplementary and supportive services to enable individuals and families to carry out their social roles with some competence.

Advocates of the institutional view of social welfare stress that the incidence of poverty has not been reduced in spite of increased affluence. Their claim is that social services must be established as major institutions rather than residual agencies due to the inability of the market to achieve anything remotely related to a just allocation of goods and services in industrial societies (Pinker, 1971). This approach is based on a value commitment to universalistic forms of welfare provisions supplemented where and when

necessary by selective services. As such, it extends beyond the provision of services to the needy to provisions of social services as a matter of right to all citizens in order to ensure an optimal level of well-being and social functioning. Collective responsibility for social welfare provisions, programs and services is endorsed by values of security, equality and humanitarianism.

Kahn's concept of a public social utility derives from the institutional view of social welfare. This is defined as:

a social invention, a resource or facility designed to meet a generally expressed need in social living. It is defined as so vital that the broader community suffers from the result of the deprivation faced by an individual. Because of this the provision is not left to the market economy even though some especially affluent people may continue to resort to the market (Kahn, 1969, p. 178).

Up to a certain level, education in North America provides an example of a public social utility in that it is made available to people in accordance with user option or status. It is felt, by various private and public interest groups that child-care facilities and services should be available on the same basis in view of an increasing demand for them as universal (Romanyshyn, 1971; Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1970; Ruderman, 1968; Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971; 1972; Vanier Institute of the Family, 1970; 1971).

It should be emphasized that the residual and institutional views of social welfare represent purely theoretical concepts that have been isolated and elaborated by lead-

ing critics in the field. It is the theorists who most closely identify with, and propound the more "pleasing" institutional view. In reality their conceptual approaches to social welfare are frequently perceived as unacceptable to the North American public due to a strong stream of individualism that runs through the North American value system. The institutional approach does not coincide with the values of individualism, private property, and free enterprise. So, in effect, such policies are not widely popular.

Values are slow to change in relation to the more rapid pace of social change. Social change, on the one hand, has produced rising expectations that require government intervention in order to be satisfied. On the other hand, the underlying conflict in values does not completely endorse collective intervention to meet widely shared rising expectations. One set of values favours redistribution while the other endorses competitive individualism. The different rates of social and value change have produced a value lag that is increasing rather than decreasing.

In contrast to North America, some Northern European and Iron Curtain countries have legislated many of the newly developed institutional approaches to social welfare (Rodgers, 1971). Ensuing problems have led many of these governments to question the wisdom of their choice.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See press report on election results in Denmark (The Winnipeg Free Press, Jan. 10, 1975).

The vast, complex, fragmented system of social welfare that currently exists in Canada reflects the uneasy co-existence of both the residual and institutional conceptions of social welfare. The prevailing system represents the historical evolution of social welfare from the notion of charity to citizen right, from special programs for the poor to universal provisions, minimal to optimal provisions, individual to social reform, voluntary to public auspices, and from welfare for the poor to a welfare society (Romanyshyn, 1971).

That the social welfare system of today has a long way to progress towards the institutional end of the residual-institutional continuum, however, is pointed out by the Poverty Report. The report states that all systems directed towards the poor are marked by a suspicious paternalism which is demeaning, inadequate, and bureaucratic. It concludes that these systems are punitive in spirit and insufficient to break the cycle of poverty (Report of the Special Senate Committee on Poverty in Canada, 1971).

This observation by the Senate Poverty Committee substantiates that the pace of change in economic development and living conditions has not been matched with actual change in the conception of social welfare. The outcome is a situation wherein more and more people have developed new expectations of government only to have them disappointed. In part, too, people have old expectations but new needs. Some uncertainty exists as to whether these needs can be met and by whom.

### Social Welfare Organizations

Social service organizations, which deliver services to consumers, are not required to meet the same standards of effectiveness by which other organizations providing goods and services are measured. In addition, social service organizations appear able to avoid removal, retrenchment or replacement. This is largely due to the separation of those who mandate, fund, and define the services from those who make use of them (Scurfield and Ryant, 1975).

This situation within social service organizations is a product of characteristics which serve to differentiate social service organizations from private market enterprises. The implications are significant for policy-making.

First, social welfare organizations do not seek financial profit. Services are delivered, without charge or in accordance with ability-to-pay schedules, to consumers. The primary motive of a private market enterprise, on the other hand, is the pursuit of profit through sales of goods or services.

Secondly, most social welfare organizations occupy a monopoly position with respect to service consumers. Therefore, persons requiring the service are unable to choose among alternatives since they are often unavailable. The private market enterprise, in contrast, operates in a competitive market, at least in theory. A producer is able to judge the popularity of his and competitors' products by volume of sales.



A third differentiating characteristic is that social welfare organizations are normally under community, rather than owner or manager control. Most are recipients of budget funds raised and allocated by others (usually government) outside their boundaries. Consequently, a social welfare organization does not have the same freedom to make its own decisions as does an organization in the private market. In addition, social welfare organizations must be responsive to the needs of their funders. These needs can, and do, conflict with those of consumers.

For these reasons, policies in social welfare organizations are made in significantly different ways than are those within market organizations. The manager or owner of the market enterprise has the freedom, together with concrete feedback information from sales, upon which to base rational policy decisions. In the absence of concrete feedback, social welfare organizations are, by contrast, forced to make policy decisions based on other, less tangible criteria such as professional ideology and community and political attitudes.

Social welfare organizations typically employ helping professionals, all of whom share a professional ideology which states that to receive the services of helping professionals is preferable to not receiving these services. This premise rests more heavily on a value rather than a knowledge base since the technologies of the helping professions are relatively uncertain and undemonstrable. The values themselves do not present an issue. They do, however, tend to

replace tests of validity and effectiveness in goal achievement.

Given that professional technologies are unstandardized, little agreed upon and objectively undemonstrable and, given the relatively unpredictable and variant characteristics of a human target population, decision-makers have tended to rely substantially on professional belief systems. These play a dominant role in the shaping of organizational policy (Street, Vinter, Perrow, 1966).

Community and political attitudes provide a second important criterion for decision-making in social welfare organizations. This criterion is a necessity in that most, if not all, social services are recipients of budget funds that are collected outside their boundaries, usually from taxation of the public. Perceived public attitudes toward a particular service are typically very diverse. Consensus among and between community and professional values and attitudes is very difficult to achieve. The outcome is that the goals of a social welfare organization are sufficiently vague to accomodate a wide range of values and interpretations by both professional and public groups. The abstract nature of the goals, in turn, creates difficulties for the organization in defining and prescribing specific operational patterns by which to realize them (Scurfield and Ryant, 1975).

Public values and sentiments typically reflect the goals of social control and conformity. Professional values and beliefs usually reflect the goals of maximization of well-

being and optimum human development. Each of these goal types requires a different set of attitudes and technologies.

In summary, social policies are formed in ways distinctly different from economic policy. In addition, they are realized within social welfare organizations as opposed to market organizations. In the absence of concrete feedback information from the competitive market place, social policy decision-makers are forced to rely on social and professional values, attitudes and sentiments which are frequently diverse and sometimes contradictory. Policies must attempt to reconcile a wide range of beliefs and values because they must receive community and/or society-wide endorsement in order to be effective in goal achievement. Achievement of goals is made more difficult in that the goals themselves must be sufficiently abstract in order to compromise among a wide range of views. The abstract nature of goals in turn creates difficulties in defining organizational procedure.

The prevailing system of publicly provided, organized child-care reflects the conflict among and between professional and public belief systems. It also reflects the lag between rapid changes in living conditions and slower changes within the underlying, well-entrenched value system. One outcome of changes in living conditions is a significant increase in working women, including mothers of dependent children, in post-war years. This, in turn, has produced a demand for child-care services as universal in availability.

Public attitudes towards working mothers, and collective responsibility for child-care do not, however, reflect a consensus in underlying values. Child-care provisions are governed by child-care or social policies. In view of a non-consensus regarding these two issues, the supply of organized child-care arrangements is restricted and the lag between the two is increasing.

The following chapter serves to elaborate the phenomenon of working mothers, the conflict underlying this phenomenon, and the variety of organized child-care arrangements currently available. It also serves to identify the residual characteristics of organized child-care which is marked by unavailability and unaccessibility.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE - PART I

#### Working Mothers and Organized Child-Care

Maternal employment is one of numerous, inter-related issues in the controversy of the role of women in modern societies. Since the emergence of the women's liberation movement in the early 1960's in North America, women have been organizing and acting to end the pervasive discrimination against themselves as a minority group. Some degree of success has thus far been achieved as evidenced by the evolution of the movement from a small, radical core to its current status as a widespread focus of concern by governments as well as by formal and informal interest groups. The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (1970) provides a major example of the success of the movement in forwarding its cause of equality for women. A second example is the designation of 1975 as International Women's Year by the United Nations.

The Report on the Status of Women had as its basic theme that women should have the right to choose whether to stay at home or to work in paid employment. Within the broad boundaries of this theme, the Report made one hundred and sixty-seven recommendations for changes related to the posi-

tion of women in Canadian society. The report does not advocate special treatment for women although it does suggest that special treatment in some areas will be necessary in order to combat the effects of past discrimination. (Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970; Schlesinger, 1972).

The goals of the federal government for International Women's Year are two-fold. The first is to promote equality between the sexes and the second is to educate the public with regard to the changing role of women. In order to achieve these goals, the federal government proposes to introduce new legislation to create a Commission on Human Rights and Interests. In addition, legislation is proposed to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex and marital status (Working Paper on Social Security, Document #117, 1974).

A proliferation of both publicly and privately sponsored studies and surveys have amply succeeded in enumerating the special problems encountered by women who choose to participate in the economic sector. Their difficulties derive primarily from the dual role presented by home and work, accompanied by low wages, low-status positions, hours of work, and lack of adequate child-care (Health & Welfare Canada, 1972; 1973; Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971; 1972; 1973; Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1965; 1966; 1970; 1973; Ruderman, 1968; Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development, 1965; 1966; Yudkin & Holmes, 1963).

Some family sociologists hold that changing defini-

tions of family roles serve to ease this burden somewhat in that both parents are becoming more willing to share equally in the responsibilities related to home and family (Schlesinger, 1972). The situation for the sole support family is, however, somewhat different whether the parent be male or female. (80% of single parent families in Canada are headed by females according to the Canada Census, 1971). Problems are intensified for single parents who often feel that there is no choice of whether to work or stay home and who must reconcile multiple roles of parent, breadwinner and homemaker (Schlesinger, 1972; Thompson, 1971). The increased demand for organized child-care represents diverse needs of both one and two parent families with working mothers as this is a problem which they share in common.

Statistics on Women in the Labour Force. The most recent annual report of the Women's Bureau indicates that in 1972, women comprised one-third (33.2%) of the total labour force. This figure represents a 6% increase over a ten-year period even though the ratio of women in the total population remained stable over the same time period (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1973). A previous survey, based on 1967 statistics, found that working mothers comprised 33.9% of all married women in Canada. This figure represents an increase of some 23% over a twenty-year period. The survey established that one out of every five mothers in Canada worked in paid employment outside the home. Approximately 10% (53,000) out of a total of 540,000 working mothers were either divorced,

widowed, separated or unmarried. The children of working mothers numbered 1,000,000. One out of every ten children had no regular child-care (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1970; Report of the Special Senate Committee on Poverty in Canada, 1971).

Why Women Work. The reason why women work are social, economic and personal in nature as pointed out by the Women's Bureau:

The participation rates for women have been rising over the entire post-war period of Canada as in all other industrialized countries. A multitude of economic and social factors are responsible for the acceleration, including growing urbanization, declining birth rates and smaller families changing work patterns of married women and the growth of job opportunities in the expanding service sector of the economy (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1973, p. 228).

The shift in the economic structure from an industrial to a post-industrial, technological base has provided more job opportunities for women in the expanding clerical and service sectors of the economy. Women are further encouraged to work due to the need for increased disposable income to support an economy based on high mass consumption rather than on production. Associated with this type of economic structure is the growth in leisure and recreational industries, fast-food and convenience food industries as well as other industries designed to encourage high mass consumption and acquisition of material goods. In addition they are designed to meet the heightened demands created by the increasingly rapid pace of change in urbanized life styles.

Technology has also produced more certain methods of



birth control, better methods of health care as well as a multitude of household labour-saving devices. These inventions have left women with more time to spend away from home and family in work and/or leisure pursuits.

Related to changes in the economy and living styles are changes within the family. Women now tend to marry at a younger age and to have fewer children at a younger age than formerly. Changes in the family are endorsed by a social consensus of the value of family limitation.

Also related to economic changes, are changes within educational policies which accord more equal treatment for women. Institutions of higher education have opened their doors to an increasing number of women in order to allow them to acquire higher skill levels demanded by a technological society (Ruderman, 1968).

According to all survey results the personal reasons of women for working are based primarily on economic and psychological motives with the financial incentive rating first. The desire for a higher standard of living by families encourages mothers to work in order to increase the families' disposable income. In addition, the working mother gains some sense of financial independence from her job. Many women and mothers work for the sense of fulfillment and respect which accrues from paid employment. The need for company and a preference for more congenial types of work provide other reasons why women choose to work.

In sum, women tend to work because they no longer

want to be or have to be identified solely in relation to or within the confines of the home and family. Social changes as well as a heightened self-awareness have effected a significant movement of women and mothers from their homes and into paid employment.

Once the choice to work is made, however, the working mother is confronted by a number of barriers such as low wages, poor transportation, and lack of adequate and accessible child care facilities (Schlesinger, 1972). In addition some sense of guilt is felt by mothers who leave their family and home responsibilities in favour of work. Ruderman suggests that the economic motive is the simplest, most acceptable and most easily articulated and, therefore, provides a rationale for working mothers. To work for the monetary gain is "family-oriented". To work for personal gratification or enjoyment is "self-oriented" (Ruderman, 1968).

Conflicting Views Towards Maternal Employment. The trend towards economic and social equality for women, particularly working mothers, is viewed with mixed and often conflicting public attitudes which perceive different implications for the economy, family life and social planning. One view holds that economic equality for women is a positive phenomenon since permanent entry of women into the labour force contributes to the country's economic potential. Proponents of this view suggest that the economy would suffer a recession resulting from the drop in family purchasing power, if all women were to withdraw from the labour force (Schles-

inger, 1972). The point is well taken, given that an economy based largely on consumption is dependent upon a relatively high level of disposable family income. The withdrawal of women from the labour force en masse would significantly affect not only the economy but also life style. Demand and ability to pay for what are not defined as essential goods and services would be drastically reduced. These goods and services, such as those provided by the leisure and convenience food industries, currently form a substantial part of the economic base of Canada.

The negative view towards economic equality holds that male workers are in danger of being displaced by women in view of rising unemployment created by automation and other technological shifts (Ruderman, 1968). This argument is undermined, however, in that the majority of working women occupy low paying, low status positions in which men are not interested. Working women are becoming more aware of their undesirable position in the labour force in relation to their male counterparts. To date, however, the movement towards equal pay for equal work, higher status positions, etc. is primarily in the planning and organizational stages. Verbal concerns have yet to be translated into actual changes as shown by the most recent report on women in the labour force (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1973). On the other hand, however, a precipitous rise in unemployment levels may result in more men willing to accept the low-paying, low-status positions currently occupied by women in the labour force.

The effect of maternal employment on family life is, again, subject to conflicting views. One view holds that increased maternal employment is responsible for the rising incidence of social disorganization and social ills (rising divorce rates, increasing juvenile crime and delinquency, youthful drug use, and intergenerational conflict). It is held that the independence gained by working women serves to weaken the family structure, deprives the father of his traditional authority and self-esteem, and deprives children of maternal love and guidance. This traditional perception of the family sees it as the setting to best assure attainment of parental and social goals for children as the outcomes of child-rearing and socialization (Ruderman, 1968; Schlesinger, 1972; Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970).

A more recent viewpoint holds that women should have the right to choose freely between work or staying at home. It states that maternal employment can have positive consequences for family life in that family members are brought closer together by a more equitable distribution of family and household tasks. It holds that family members gain more independence as individuals and the family becomes a more flexible unit. It suggests further that female children are presented with less traditional role models and grow up to perceive a wider range in which to fulfill their human potential (Ruderman, 1968; Schlesinger, 1972; Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970).

The two opposing perceptions of the effects of maternal employment on family life are couched in emotionally-laden terms because they reflect conflicting values. Thus far, studies undertaken to test the relationship between working mothers and indices of social disorganization have not yielded firm conclusions either way. However, evidence is rarely the determining factor in resolving value conflicts. In this respect, social policies relative to maternal employment are like so many other domains of social policy. Decisions are made, either in the absence of evidence or in the ignorance of, or unconcern about what the evidence reveals.

#### Child-Care Arrangements

Given the pressures of advanced technological society for developing its human resources, the trend towards employment of women is likely to continue and educational and employment opportunities are likely to be increasingly equalized. Attention needs to be given to the facilitating community resources and social policies required to assist women who choose or who are required to work (Romanyshyn, 1971, p. 331).

The trend towards increased maternal employment is well-established. It has produced a singular demand for organized child-care to be made available on a universal basis. This demand is joined even by non-working mothers who justify the request on other grounds.

The demand cuts across all socio-economic levels and thus represents a variety of users whose needs are as diverse as their economic situations, family circumstances, family composition and their personalities (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1972; Yudkin & Holmes, 1963; Organiza-

tion for Economic Co-operation & Development, 1965). The diversity of needs, in turn, calls for diversity in planning and implementation of child-care facilities, programs and services (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1972; Vanier Institute of the Family, 1971).

Ruderman, in her study of working mothers and their child-care arrangements, defined two types of needs. The first represents normal, intact, two-parent, middle-class families with working mothers. The second type of need is problem-focussed, representative of a disadvantaged family environment. The study found that the former need was far greater than the latter (Ruderman, 1968). Likewise, the 1970 Women's Bureau survey found that the majority of working mothers in Canada were members of two-parent, intact families in receipt of middle-level incomes. This type of evidence supports the provision of organized child care as a public social utility available solely on the basis of demand.

Governments have thus far responded to the growing demand for child-care in a relatively limited way. Existing programs and services are diverse in that they include day care centers, family day care, homemaker service and lunch and after-school programs.<sup>2</sup> Each of these alterna-

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2. Private individual child-care arrangements are also provided through the competitive market place. They are available to those who can afford to pay for them or who choose to reduce the increase in disposable income acquired by families with working mothers.

tives serves a distinct purpose and function.

Day care centers are typically full day programs to serve children between the ages of two and five with an increasing number of programs for infants. A well-organized, administered and financed day care program encompasses both care and developmental aspects. Its primary objectives include the promotion of well-being of children, building social skills, feelings of security and trust as well as developing intellectual skills and awareness.

Family day care functions primarily to provide care of children under the ages of three in private homes. Ideally, day care homes are located in and used by members of a local neighbourhood. In addition they are, ideally at least, licensed and supervised by a knowledgeable sanctioning agent. The family day care mother may also provide lunch and after school care for school-aged children (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1971).

Homemaker service usually operates within a social service agency and is available on the basis of need. The homemaker provides personal care of children within their own home and also maintains the household while the parent or parents are away at work (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971).

While the array of publicly provided child care is commendable, the actual supply in relation to a growing demand is severely restricted. A residual policy approach to child-care has produced an ad hoc, fragmented and insufficient system. Organized child care is marked by unavaila-

bility and inaccessibility. Often, facilities are inappropriately located and services are unresponsive to clients' needs. Eligibility for services is determined through a means test which has long been associated with humiliation and degradation for users. In many cases, a client must have a "problem" which requires casework intervention in order to be eligible for services. In spite of and because of these conditions, the supply of organized child-care is grossly inadequate in Canada. A survey conducted by the Vanier Institute revealed that in urban families defined as being in acute need (sole support, serious economic difficulty, pressing family problem), only five percent of the children requiring day care were actually enrolled in public day care programs (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1970).

A second study completed by Health and Welfare Canada found that only  $1\frac{1}{4}\%$  of children of all working mothers were enrolled in full day and/or lunch and after school programs. From 1967 to 1971, the actual number of children enrolled in these programs had doubled from 9,000 to 18,000. This, however, represented an increase of only  $\frac{1}{4}\%$  as compared to the more rapid rise in the number of working mothers over the same period of years (Health & Welfare Canada, 1972).

In the light of findings from these, as well as other surveys, the residual nature of policies governing organized child-care is amply demonstrated. The extent to which government may intervene in the provision of child-care is, again, determined by prevailing attitudes, values, and senti-



ments. A recent Gallup Poll published by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion on the subject of child-care serves to illustrate the disparity between the reality of increased numbers of working mothers demanding child-care, and the underlying value conflict. The results of the Gallup poll, described below, indicated the dilemma faced by decision-makers regarding collective intervention in child-care.

The Gallop Poll asked a sample of Canadians if they felt that child day-care was mainly the responsibility of the working mother and the family or if the government should share in the responsibility. The results showed that 43% of persons sampled felt that child care should be a mother-family responsibility while 44% felt that government should be liable. 13% were undecided. (The Free Press, Monday, February 24, 1975).

The conflict in attitudes regarding public versus private, individual responsibility for child-care both influences and is influenced by a variety of interrelated factors. These include the conflict towards maternal employment, the historical development of child-care as problem-oriented, the professional mentality which pervades services and, finally, the absence of an underlying philosophy of organized child-care. Ruderman maintained that:

the development of broad supplementary child-care programs serving normal children in normal adequate families is precluded by the definition, still powerful, if not predominant, of child welfare as concerned solely with family inadequacy, breakdown and malfunctioning (Ruderman, 1968, p. 16).

The attitudes of professionals within the social

service system have thus far, done little to ameliorate the disparity between a residual approach and an institutional demand. Helping professionals are caught between the opposing values and forces inherent in the two conceptions of social welfare and the implications for social well-being. Consequently, the majority of helping professionals are content to assume a low profile. Professional values are in competition with those of the "system" which supports conformity and control. Even for professionals supportive of an enlarged child-care policy, the dual role of professional and bureaucratic employee presents a peculiar dilemma which they have not yet resolved. An inward focus on problems within the profession have so far prevented social workers, as one type of helping professionals, from becoming an effective political pressure group lobbying for more equitable treatment of minority groups.

Recent provincial legislative changes reflect the compromise between growing demand for child-care and conflicting public attitudes in that they provide a more generous, but still inadequate system of public day care (Manitoba Day Care Act, 1974). A review of the approach taken towards day care serves to demonstrate government priorities of economic and administrative efficiency which tend to supercede social objectives.

To begin with, provincial governments must act in accordance with the federal policy guidelines relating to provision of day care services to children under the Canada

Assistance Plan. This is necessary in order for provinces to receive 50% of funding for day care under the terms of the Plan which allows for a cost-shared agreement between the two levels of government.

The Canada Assistance Plan is designed primarily to help Canadians who require financial assistance to prevent, overcome or alleviate the causes and effects of poverty. By definition, it is directed towards the poor and problem-ridden sector of society. The Plan very clearly leaves no opportunity for provinces to institute a cost-shared universal system of day care even if the desire to do so were present.

To ensure that day care be selective rather than universal, the Canada Assistance Plan policy guidelines relating to day care demand the use of certain criteria to determine eligibility. Social need criteria include within them a single parent family where the parent is working, attending an educational institution or rehabilitation program, or undertaking medical treatment.

Social need criteria are applied in conjunction with financial criteria in the determination of eligibility for day care. Financial criteria demand the implementation of a needs test for families receiving social assistance. For working parents, however, provinces are given the option of using a needs or income test. Manitoba has opted for the income test which is associated with less stigma than is the needs test.

In sum, the Canada Assistance Plan has a problem focus which is reinforced by the use of social needs and financial criteria for eligibility. Not unexpectedly then, day care financed under the plan is perceived as a residual problem-oriented provision directed towards the disadvantaged (Health & Welfare Canada, March, 1974).

Secondly, the choice of group day care as a major child-care alternative again emphasizes government concern with economic and administrative efficiency. It is seen as the most efficient form of child-care in that the ratio between benefits (number of children receiving care) and costs (staff, facilities) is greater for group day care than for other child-care alternatives such as family day-care and homemaker service. The singular emphasis on group day care, however, ignores the varied needs of users which ideally calls for diversity in planning and programming. Other forms of child-care may be just as attractive as day-care centers if both social and economic long-term costs and benefits are considered.

Child-Care as a Social Utility. As an institutional provision, organized child care would be available to persons on demand, that is, to persons who themselves define a need for it. Users would be able to select one or several of a variety of alternatives which best suits them in terms of family circumstances as well as personal preference. Applicants would not be required to define a "problem" requiring case-work intervention in order to be eligible. In addition, users

would not be obliged to undergo an eligibility test with its associated stigma. In other words, an adequate and comprehensive system of diversified organized child-care would be available as a social right to all persons who see a legitimate need for it.

In view of the substantial and still increasing demand for child-care, it is not unrealistic to consider alternatives in providing child-care on a universal basis. One option is for greatly increased government intervention so as to allow public auspices to assume full responsibility for implementing and administering child-care services so as to make them available, free of charge, to consumers. This option would, of course, be dependent upon a positive change in the underlying philosophy of public child-care. It must be defined as a valuable and essential provision, both economically and socially. The problems inherent in this type of approach have been elaborated in previous discussion relating to characteristics of social policy and social welfare organizations. The cost of universal and free child care would be prohibitive and probably indefensible from the criterion of redistribution goals.

A second option would use the market mechanism to deliver child-care. This approach would enable users to purchase those services which best meet their individual needs and preferences. In contrast to the first option, this method allows consumers some degree of control over the type of services they prefer. Volume of "sales" of

different types of child-care options would enable policy-makers to judge the adequacy and effectiveness of their services in a manner similar to that used by a private market enterprise. In order to exercise this option, however, consumers must possess the funds necessary to purchase services. Here, again, are a number of feasible alternatives from which to choose.

One technique is to increase the amount of child-care exemption from annual income taxes. Currently, a total of \$540.00 can be deducted per child for child-care expenses. This exemption could be substantially increased to provide a more realistic amount, either annually, or by regular pay cheque deductions.

A second method is to provide a Guaranteed Annual Income. This sum must include an amount within it sufficient to cover child care expenses.

A third alternative is to provide subsidies to reduce fees for child-care on an ability to pay principle. This calls for the use of an income test which is relatively free from stigma and, therefore, acceptable to users.

## Chapter 3

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE - PART II

#### Homemaker Service

In 1903, a Family Bureau Association in New York City hired four visiting cleaners to supplement nurses' services to sick mothers in poor families. The primary emphasis was on improved housekeeping and the cleaners performed tasks of washing, cleaning, meal preparation and child care (Morlock, 1964).

Since this beginning, Homemaker services in North America have continued to expand and develop in response to wide societal changes. A contemporary definition of the service is as follows:

Homemaker service is an organized community service provided through a voluntary or public, non-profit organization and is given by qualified persons under professional supervision. Homemakers are assigned to care for children when the mother is in hospital, ill, or overburdened at home, to help chronically ill or convalescent adults, to give assistance to aged persons still capable of some self care. The service assumes responsibility for household management and operations and helps to protect and restore individual and family functioning. It serves to prevent the placement of children and adults away from their own homes (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971, p. 2).

An overall review of the development of homemaker service focussed on its scope, auspices, uses, benefits, purpose, and function. In addition, alternatives to the service

were considered.

The scope of homemaker service has widened to include services to the aged, physically handicapped, mentally and chronically ill, mentally retarded, and convalescent as well as to families experiencing upheaval and stress (National Council for Homemaker Services, 1965; Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971).

Its auspices may be public, private or voluntary. It typically operates within family service, child welfare, aged, and health oriented agencies which offer other supplementary and supportive services as well. The service is essentially a practical, straight forward one designed to protect, improve or restore a family's habitual way of life (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1973). It may be offered to users on a short-term or long-term, part-time or full-time basis. Although homemaker service is generally perceived as an interim service rather than as a permanent alternative, its duration is flexible in relation to needs of users (Stringer, 1967). In addition to its practical function, the service is used variously by agencies as a diagnostic tool, as a preventative measure, for protection, rehabilitation, and assessment of neglect. It is used also as an educative device and, finally, as a therapeutic tool (Council on Social Work Education and National Council for Homemaker Services, 1968).

The benefits which accrue from homemaker service define it as a unique type of service to families. Two of



the benefits derive from the role definition of the homemaker. The first task area is the provision of personal care to dependent family members. The second task area includes the assumption of responsibility for household operations. This practical help given by homemakers allows families to maintain or regain equilibrium during periods of stress created from crisis and/or developmental events. A third advantage is that homemakers are qualified persons, selected, trained and supervised by professional agency staff. Consequently, parents are assured of "good" care of home and family while they are absent. Finally, homemaker service is a social service and is ideally available on the basis of need, regardless of income.

These advantages, taken in conjunction, serve to define homemaker service as a unique supplementary and supportive service to families. It is particularly appropriate for those families who must adjust to recent upheaval such as the death or desertion of a parent, for example. Given the value placed upon the family in society, homemaker service performs an essential function in that it prevents family breakup or breakdown when subject to temporary stresses and strains.

Traditionally accepted alternatives to homemaker service include foster home placement and institutionalization of dependent members of families who exhibit an inability to cope with change and crises. The process involved in removing, maintaining and re-uniting family members incurs substantial economic, social and emotional costs to indivi-

duals and the community. Use of these alternatives is still relatively common due to the long-accepted practise of society to "blame the victim" even though it does not reflect the reality of current heightened demands of contemporary living conditions which test to the limit the ability to cope of many families.

Rapid social change has increased the demand for supplementary and supportive services to families. At the same time, the attitudes regarding the degree to which society should assume responsibility for meeting demand, are in conflict. The lag between the two is reflected in the residual nature of homemaker service. The service is provided only if:

- 1) it can meet the "problem" satisfactorily and only if alternatives are undesirable or impossible.
- 2) The client is willing to share financial information and to pay according to ability.
- 3) The client is willing and able, if warranted, to participate in casework, therapy, treatment, etc. in co-operation with professional service personnel (Child Welfare League of America, 1958; Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971).

#### Sole Support Parents and Homemaker Service

In 1971, one out of every ten Canadian families was headed by a single-parent, male or female. Of a total of 478,745 such families, 46.6% of the parents were widowed, 11.9% were divorced, 33.8% were separated and 7.7% were unmarried. Approximately 80% (378,065) one-parent families were headed by women (Canada Census, 1971).

A number of factors account for the increase in the

number of single-parent families, especially those headed by females, over the past decade. One factor is the introduction of more lenient divorce laws in 1968. Prior to that year, the annual average was about 8,000 divorces. The rate increased by some 300% for several years after the revised divorce law was introduced, but it now seems to be levelling off to some 15,000 divorces per year (Schlesinger, 1972).

A second reason for the increase in single parenthood is related to the relaxed social attitudes towards pre-marital sexual behaviour. More widespread acceptance has its logical accompaniment in the form of more single mothers who choose to keep their children rather than give them up for adoption (Schlesinger, 1972).

A third reason which accounts for the rise in the number of single mothers in particular is related to the attitude of the courts in custody cases. More divorces means more custody cases and it is the usual practice of the court to award custody of children to their mothers. This practice is endorsed by social attitudes which tend to perceive the mother as the parent better suited to child and family care. It serves to increase the proportion of single mothers in relation to the proportion of single fathers with parental responsibilities.

A fourth and relatively recent trend is single-parent adoptions whereby single parents assume parenthood through adopting a child or children.

The outcome of these and other changes has produced

a significant proportion of sole support families headed by females who encounter many problems of discrimination associated with both their single status and their sex. Society still has a relatively long way to move towards complete acceptance of single parents. In addition, previous discussion has indicated that it has a long way to move towards total equality on the basis of sex.

The degree of discrimination practised by the community against single mothers varies in accordance with marital status (Schlesinger, 1972). The widowed status is most acceptable in that widowed parents, male or female, are not judged on moral grounds. Subtle forms of discrimination are, however, built into our "couples-oriented" society. In addition to having to cope with the grief and distress of recent bereavement, the widowed family head must work towards establishing new relationships with the children as well as with other adults and groups in the community. Divorced mothers and fathers are faced with similar emotional and social adjustments but, in addition, single divorced mothers must contend with less acceptance by a community which may perceive the divorced mother as a moral failure. She may be blamed for failing to succeed as both a wife and mother. Social attitudes towards divorced men are, on the other hand, less blaming. Men are seldom judged solely within the context of his family and home, therefore, "failure" in this aspect of life does not preclude acceptance in other areas of life such as employment, group membership, etc. Attitudes towards the un-

married mother are the most rigid and least forgiving. Labels such as promiscuous and immoral may be commonly applied by the community to the unmarried mother.

The individually experienced stresses, pressures and strains of widowed, divorced, separated, and unmarried parents vary enormously in the long run. A commonly shared problem, however, which must be tackled immediately is the economic one. In the absence of a Guaranteed Annual Income or acceptable forms of statutory allowances, single parents are presented with a choice between work or welfare.

To choose welfare means loss of self-respect for self and family. In addition, the problem of making ends meet is hardly solved by the grudging amounts provided through social assistance. The other alternative is to work. The barriers to this alternative are numerous and sometimes insurmountable for single mothers due to lack of necessary resources.

Single mothers form the second largest group (26%) on welfare in Canada, ranking second only to the permanently ill and disabled (46%). (Report of the Special Senate Committee on Poverty in Canada, 1971, p. 31.)<sup>3</sup> Some of these

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3. In defining the concept of Poverty, both the Economic Council of Canada and the Senate Committee on Poverty include female single parenthood as a characteristic closely associated with poverty. Approximately one-half of the 378,065 female headed, single parent families in Canada are in receipt of social assistance. (Report of the Special Senate Committee on Poverty in Canada, 1971; Canada Census, 1971; Economic Council of Canada, 1968).

single mothers voluntarily opt for child-rearing in favour of the economic independence gained through employment. Others are unable to work full-time and are discouraged from part-time work due to the disincentives built into the welfare system. Still others are untrained and insufficiently educated to participate in employment so that it is economically viable. These comprise some of the major reasons which account for the relatively large proportion of single mothers on social assistance.

While a substantial proportion of mothers might choose to work, a small minority are actually participating in full-time employment (53,000). The major dilemma confronting the working single parent, both male and female, is achieving a quantity and balance between money, time, and energy in performing roles of parent, breadwinner, and housekeeper. The economic problem is a primary concern for sole support mothers, however, since traditionally female occupations in the clerical, service, and factory fields are low-paying (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1970). In addition, women continue to feel the effects of employment discrimination in that their average annual income is some \$2,000 less than that of men in similar jobs. For the working poor, however, the major problems are not only financial, but also include lack of access to opportunities, resources, and power. Lack of access is due in part, to discriminatory community practices and to the lack of supply of supportive and

supplementary services.

The needs of single-parents in the area of child care are similar to those of two-parent families but are greater in magnitude since single parents feel compelled to work. Needs include: a wide variety of low-priced (or free) good, convenient child-care services; increased income tax exemptions to a realistic level for costs of day care and homemaker services, plus increased exemptions for children; and, financial and emotional support through supplementary and supportive social services (Schlesinger, 1972).

The single parent, whether male or female, must set up a list of priorities for her/himself as well as children and home in order to effect a balance between time, money, and energy. The most common sacrifice is that of a personal social life in favour of work and child-rearing. The stigma of welfare is perceived as less desirable than little time to spend with children. Indeed, this desire is paradoxically shared by the community which blames the single mother if she does not work (Yudkin & Holmes, 1963).

The vital factor to consider is the lack of a real choice for the single parent. Some may wish to stay home and be a full-time parent/homemaker. Others may desire to work in paid employment for the financial and personal gratification it provides. Each alternative, however, has its drawbacks for the single-parent due to inadequate financial and other resources. Due to discrimination in employment, this choice is even more difficult for the single-parent

mother as opposed to single-parent father who is expected to work and is socially accepted in the work role.

Single mothers face difficulties relating to employment, less accepting community attitudes, and child-care arrangements. The literature indicates that single fathers face lesser difficulties on the former two accounts. The major research hypothesis tests whether single parent mothers also face discrimination or less preferential treatment than single-fathers in Homemaker Service as one form of child-care arrangement available to single parents.

It is felt that Homemaker Service, by virtue of its unique advantages and benefits, may be viewed as an essential service for single-parent, low-income families. The homemaker assumes responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of the household if placed in a home on a full-time basis. In addition, she provides care of children in their homes. This practical kind of support is particularly appropriate for families who must adjust to the recent loss of a parent through death, desertion, etc. The service provides a stable, in-home arrangement to assist in the emotional and social adjustment of the family to a new situation. The arrangement may be relatively short-term until a family is able to make more permanent long-term arrangements for child care.

Homemaker service is also advantageous in that a homemaker may provide special care to children of working parents who may be temporarily or permanently ill. In cases



like these, the regular out-of-home arrangements such as day-care or lunch and after-school programs are not applicable. The working parent may be forced to stay home from work to care for sick children if unable to receive homemaker service or make temporary, private arrangements.

Homemaker service may also be provided to single-parent families on a long-term, part-time basis to assist parents with housework. It provides a relief from housework for parents who may not be able to cope with children, work, and housework. Selective assistance by the provision of homemaker service on a part-time basis enables a parent to spend more time with children and on her/himself.

Homemaker service is advantageous in that it may enable a single parent to work part-time for emotional health and/or for the personal sense of self-fulfillment and stimulation that employment may provide. Day care centers, family day care, and lunch and after school programs are generally available only to children of those parents who work full-time. The lack of supply in relation to demand means that they are seldom available to parents who work on a part-time, rather than a full-time basis.

Finally, homemaker service is a social service under public auspices. It is, therefore, available on the basis of need using an ability to pay principle. As such, the service is available to those families whose levels of income do not enable them to purchase similar kinds of services in the private market.

For these reasons, then, homemaker service is seen as an essential service for sole support families. The practical and supportive nature of the service aids in the re-establishment of family equilibrium following a crisis and/or developmental event. It helps to build a stable home environment from which both the parent and children benefit. Once equilibrium has once again been established, other services such as day-care centers, family day care or lunch and after-school programs may be more appropriate and beneficial for children of sole support families. Homemaker service may still continue to provide part-time support, however, in assisting with household duties to ease the burden of sole support parents.

#### SUMMARY

The literature on the changing role of women in modern, post-industrial societies provides ample evidence of unequal treatment of women, especially working mothers. This takes the form of low wages, low status positions, hours of work, lack of organized child-care, and lack of supportive and supplementary services. It was the major intent of this thesis to discover whether or not discrimination against women is present in the manner by which homemaker service is made available by a particular agency.

The growing disparity between demand supply of homemaker and other child-care services forces providers of service to establish priorities as to who may be eligible. Providers of service are often called upon to exercise dis-

cretion over and above the limits set out in agency policy guidelines regarding eligibility. Use of discretion is unavoidable if for no other reason than that humans are active, reactive and capable of change. Behaviour, situations and circumstances cannot be governed wholly by written rules and regulations no matter how exhaustive they may be. It is assumed that the lack of consensus regarding the position of women in society exerts pressure on providers of service who are both professionals and members of the community at large. Given the lack of consensus, it might be expected that sole support fathers receive preferential treatment in homemaker service which is designed to assist in a practical way with child-care and housekeeping.

An apparent lack of impartiality in treatment of males and females who request homemaker service was raised as a concern by the Welfare Advisory Committee in its 1973 Annual Report. It noted that:

in the cases that occurred before us, where the single parent is a male and working, there is no hesitation on the part of the director (of provincial welfare) or of the Family Bureau - acting for the director - in providing full-time homemaker services. This means that male working parent can return home at the end of the day and provide full attention to his children. On the other hand, the board has found that where the sole support parent is female and is working, homemaker services are seldom provided. The female sole support parent who requires day care service is advised to get a babysitter, place the child in a day care center or find a relative to care for the child. This means that a sole female parent who is working must return home and do all her own housework in addition to attempting to give time and attention to her children.  
(Welfare Advisory Committee, 1974, p. 50).

This observation by the Welfare Advisory Committee

is strongly suggestive of discrimination against women in the provision of homemaker service. Whether or not this observation has substance was tested in the major research hypothesis.

## Chapter 4

### RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Discrimination exists in the provision of homemaker service to low-income, single-parent female family heads who are members of the labour force.

Discrimination is conceptually defined as the according of differential treatment to persons on the basis of sex. Differential or unequal treatment may be overt and subtle with regard to responses to requests for homemaker service.

Discrimination is operationalized by a comparison of sex with one or more other variables. Variables by which to assess unequal treatment are considered in the following series of hypotheses.

#### 1. Sex

Females who request homemaker service receive service less frequently than do males who request service, other things being equal, that is, single, low-income working parent status.

The rationale for this hypothesis lies in the existence of conflicting attitudes towards working mothers. The rapid pace of twentieth-century change has produced a blurring of traditional parental roles. Underlying values and attitudes, however, are unable to keep pace with changes in living conditions which have as one result a larger proportion of mothers entering the labour force. The lag between

the two has produced conflict. It is felt that this conflict may be reflected in unequal treatment of women despite laws to the contrary.

It was expected that if the hypothesis was not demonstrated, as large a proportion of female applicants as male applicants would be accepted for and receive service.

## 2. Marital Status

Unequal treatment of single mothers in homemaker service is related to marital status. They receive service less frequently across a continuum of widowed, divorced, separated, deserted and unmarried status categories. The marital status of a single father, on the other hand, does not influence treatment.

This hypothesis rests on the fact that the traditional role of women has been defined within the context of home and family interests. They, more than men, lack associations outside home and family which serve to dilute criticism levelled against them during family and marital disruption. (Schlesinger, 1972). It was speculated that single mothers tend to be judged on moral grounds solely in relation to marital failure. Due to external associations of men, however, the failure to succeed in marriage and family concerns is balanced by success in other areas such as employment or group membership.

Treatment of single mothers varies in relation to marital status. The widow receives most sympathy and acceptance since she cannot be blamed for the loss of her spouse through death. The divorced, separated or deserted parent, on the other hand, is perceived as having a hand in events

leading to marital and family breakup. She is seen as having somehow failed in her roles of wife, mother and homemaker due to selfish interests, personal and/or moral inadequacy. The unmarried mother is subject to the most severe criticism from the community. She is seen as "immoral" and "promiscuous". The unmarried father, in contrast, is able to remain relatively invisible and receives little attention from the community. (Schlesinger, 1972)

### 3. Age

Unequal treatment is more pronounced in the two extremes of the age continuum for both males and females. It is greater for women in the upper and lower age extremes, however, due to unequal treatment on the basis of sex.

There is little question that older (45 years of age and over) and younger (16-20) adults are least preferred by employers (Tiffany, Cowan, Tiffany, 1970; Sheppard & Belitsky, 1966; Report of the Special Senate Committee on Poverty in Canada, 1971). This hypothesis proposed to test whether or not age is a factor in relation to sex in the provision of homemaker service. It was speculated that younger women with young children would not receive service due to the feeling that such mothers should stay home to look after their children. Older women, with older children might be perceived as having less need for the services of a homemaker.

### 4. Number of Children

The more children a single mother has, the more she is encouraged to stay home to care for them. The more children a single father has, the more he needs homemaker service to assist with child

care and household maintenance. Therefore, a single mother will receive service less frequently than a single father with the same number of children.

The rationale for this hypothesis lies, again, in social attitudes which tend to define parental roles and areas of expertise as separate and distinct. Fathers have not traditionally been held responsible for direct care of children. They are believed to lack the "maternal instinct" which makes mothers particularly suited to their role as child-carers. One point of view holds that a mother's constant care and guidance, particularly up to school-age, is essential for optimum child development. Many studies have been produced which examine the effects on children of working mothers. To date, they have yielded no firm conclusions either way. The views for and against, however, receive strong, emotional and value-laden support.

#### 5. Ages of Children

Mothers of pre-school age children do not receive service as frequently as do fathers with pre-schoolers.

The reasoning for this hypothesis is a continuation of that presented for the number of children. It is generally agreed that young children not yet in school require constant care and attention which, it is felt, mothers are best able to provide. The consistent presence of the mother is believed to foster important feelings of security in young children. The major issue here is that single mothers often do not have a real choice of whether to work to support their



families or to remain home until their children are in school at least. Financial circumstances of the single-parent mother often demand that she work in paid employment or receive social assistance with its associated stigma for herself and her children. Given the prevailing negative attitude towards welfare, it is likely that from the perspective of single mothers with pre-schoolers and who request homemaker service, welfare does not present itself as an acceptable alternative. After all, why should mothers in this position accept welfare as an alternative to work when the larger society, of which they are members, does not readily condone social assistance?

#### 6. Income

The lower a person's income, the less likely that he/she will receive homemaker service.

It was speculated that, at the lowest end of the salary scale, women would more likely be refused for service because they sacrifice little income to stay on Mother's Allowance and remain at home to look after their children. It was also speculated that at the proportion of women in receipt of the lowest incomes would be greater than the proportion of men in a similar financial position. This is due to the fact that the average salaries of working women in Canada is some \$2,000 less than those received by working men (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1970).

A second rationale for the hypothesis was based upon the agency's use of a flexible financial assessment which allows for an 18% exemption from total net income for pay-

ment of debts.<sup>4</sup> This is a discretionary policy in that it sanctions the already differential living standards experienced by families who request the service. An applicant

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4. A standard income measure necessary to test the hypothesis is developed by calculating net annual income adjusted for family size for each family. 1974 Poverty Lines are used to determine whether families are above or below the Poverty Line.

The Statistics Canada definition of poverty used to calculate 1974 Poverty Lines is:

When more than 62% of family income is required to provide the minimum necessities of food, shelter and clothing, the family is living in poverty (Statistics Canada, 1974)

Table 1 illustrates the 1974 Poverty Lines in areas where the population numbers 500,000 or more. They have been established by Statistics Canada in accordance with their definition of poverty.

Table 1

1974 Poverty Lines for areas where  
population is 500,000 or more

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Family Size	Population of 500,000 and over
1 person	\$ 3,456
2 persons	5,008
3 persons	6,391
4 persons	7,601
5 persons	8,496
6 persons	9,328
7 persons	10,228

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(National Council of Welfare, Appendix No. 1,  
March, 1975).

with a relatively high income and who has debt obligations may be assessed at a fee similar to an applicant who earns a relatively low-income but who has no debts. The service, therefore, presents itself as a more attractive alternative to persons with debts. It is likely that a greater proportion of men than women would have debt obligations due to the latter's pre-conditioning to live within a cash flow income and their greater difficulty in obtaining credit.

## 7. Recorded Special Problems

- A. Families headed by females that receive service have a higher incidence of recorded special problems than do male-headed families that receive service.

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- 4. (Cont'd.) The 1974 Poverty Lines developed by Statistics Canada show a considerable increase from those for 1970 which has as a low \$2,686 for one person families and \$7,953 for families of seven or more persons. The National Council of Welfare, in a 1975 report applied the 1970 lines to find that a startling 69.1% of all children in female-headed, single parent families live below the Poverty Line. The percentage varies slightly from province to province and reaches a high of 76.8% in Manitoba. In areas of 500,000 or more persons, the average is 67.7%. The report indicates that 33.7% of all children in male-headed single-parent families in Canada live below the Poverty Line (National Council of Welfare, March, 1975). It is expected then, that the proportion of females in the sample falling below the Poverty Line will exceed the number of males in a similar economic position.

- B. Families headed by females that receive service have different recorded special problems than do male-headed families who receive service.

Special problems include parent and/or child health as well as other family related problems. The latter encompasses family stress incurred by recent separation, custody action or return of children after a period in care. All of these problems necessitate changes which may temporarily inhibit smooth or habitual family functioning. One of the major functions of homemaker service is to assist in the readjustment of families to new circumstances.

The first hypothesis suggests that, if discrimination does not occur, both male and female sole support families will have stress-inducing problems which inhibit normal patterns of functioning. It may be, however, that the agency perceives childcare and housework as special problems for fathers but not for mothers. Therefore, men may be accepted for service in the absence of special problems as defined above.

The second hypothesis predicts that women who request service have different problems than do men. It was speculated that mothers request service more frequently in relation to problems of personal or child physical and emotional health rather than for assistance in coping with the effects of recent separation from a spouse. A single-mother may be reluctant to publicize her "failure" at marriage by requesting service for fear of negative feedback which would

serve to reinforce her already present feelings of guilt. The guilt regarding separation may be an inevitable result of the tendency of society to blame the mother for marital break up. A sole support father, on the other hand, may feel quite justified in requesting the practical assistance provided by a homemaker in cases of marital breakdown.

#### 8. Reason for Request

Women request homemaker service for different reported reasons than do men.

Persons request homemaker service for a variety of reasons. First, private arrangements may be unsatisfactory in that they are too costly, poorly located, poor in quality, unavailable, inaccessible, ad hoc or temporary. In addition, they may be simply non-existent. Secondly, a person may request service because a private arrangement is ending or has ended due to marriage, moving, employment, etc. of a housekeeper or babysitter. Service may be requested if a child is temporarily ill and must stay home so that permanent child-care arrangements are disrupted. Inability to cope with the burdens of multiple roles constitutes another reason for requesting homemaker service. There may be a need for a stable, supervised arrangement due to loss of a parent, custody cases or return of children from care. An emotional disturbance or permanent physical disability of a child may require special care that can be provided by a trained and screened homemaker. A job with variable shifts or one which requires day and nights spent out of town may

lead a person to request homemaker service in the absence of available alternatives. Other reasons for requesting service may include parental concern for "good" care of children.

It was speculated that the reasons for which women would request service would not be related to inability to cope with multiple roles or loss of a spouse while these reasons would be most frequently given by male applicants.

#### 9. Waiting Period

The waiting period for sole support mothers who have been accepted for service is greater than that for sole support fathers who have been accepted for service.

The waiting period is defined as the number of days between request for service and receipt of service. The hypothesis suggests that waiting periods are longer for mothers because the sense of urgency, as perceived by providers of service, is less than that for male-headed families. A mother may be expected to cope with home, family and work more easily than a father because of her "natural abilities" in the former two areas.

Related Policy Questions. Two further questions, which follow from the literature, were addressed in this study. The first concerns consumer perception of the essential nature of homemaker service. Does the service effectively meet the need of sole support parents to achieve a balance among demands of their multiple roles? Are other child-care arrangements seen as more appropriate and desirable?

These questions were asked of males and females who received service and who did not receive service.

The second policy question concerned preferences of consumers from among the existing range of child-care arrangements (homemaker service, private, individual arrangements, day care, nursery schools, lunch and after-school programs, etc.). Respondents were asked to state reasons for their choices. They were also requested to select what they felt to be the most attractive form of delivery of child-care. For example, would they prefer to retain the existing system of government and community controlled services? Would they rather choose to purchase similar services from the market place and be financially assisted to do so?

In sum, the two policy questions addressed were:

1. Is homemaker service perceived as an essential service by low-income, single family heads?
2. If given a choice, what child-care arrangements would consumers most prefer and why? What would be the preferred method of delivery?

The value in addressing these issues lies in the reality that consumer needs are not thoroughly considered by policy-makers whose primary interests are economic and administrative. It was felt that the information gathered from users themselves may be of some interest to formulators of child-care policy.

## SETTING FOR RESEARCH

Family Bureau

The Family Bureau located in downtown Winnipeg, is a voluntary community family service agency under the leadership of a board of directors representing the community. The agency receives all but a small proportion of its funds from the provincial government for the delivery of certain statutory services. The secondary funding source is the United Way whose annual contribution comprises an increasingly small proportion of total costs. Either way, however, the Family Bureau is accountable to external organizations for mandate and funds.

Internal policy is formulated by a five-member management team composed of the agency director and four program directors. Services offered include family counseling, community services, day care and homemaker service. The agency is non-sectarian and services are available to anyone in the City of Winnipeg as long as more appropriate services are not available elsewhere. Clients must undergo an income test and pay according to ability.<sup>5</sup>

Homemaker Service Program

This program operates as a relatively autonomous

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5. This information was gained from an interview with the director of Family Bureau and from the Manual of Social Services (1973) published annually by the Community Welfare Planning Council of Winnipeg.



unit within Family Bureau. Its director is responsible for the overall administration, homemaker service policy, and public relations. The staff of eleven members is made up of homemaker co-ordinators, a homemaker interviewer and visitor and a financial worker. Levels of education and training represented include Masters' of Social Work, community college diploma graduates, and ex-homemakers.

Each request for service is received and recorded on an intake form which is included in Appendix A. Applicants are refused at intake if eligibility requirements are not met, if service requested is better provided elsewhere or if intake is closed, that is, if no homemakers are available. In the last situation, applicants may be placed on a waiting list for service rather than being refused directly.<sup>6</sup> Requests for emergency or immediate service are refused in accordance with policy. Other organizations such as City Welfare and Children's Aid of Winnipeg are designed specifically to provide immediate and temporary service in situations of an emergency nature.

A request that meets conditions for eligibility is referred from intake to the financial worker for assessment.<sup>7</sup>

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6. A list of eligibility requirements and conditions for homemaker service is found in Appendix B.
  7. The financial assessment form used by Family Bureau is found in Appendix C. This form has been developed by and is unique to Family Bureau. Allowable amounts for debts are flexible and may vary from one case to another, depending upon individual family financial circumstances.

When both parties concur regarding an assessed fee for payment, the authority to provide placement of a homemaker and follow-up is allocated to relevant workers who carry the case for duration of service.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

The research format of this study was descriptive. Information was collected through a survey method utilizing the instruments of file review (secondary source material) and interviews.

The descriptive format was selected as most appropriate in view of a two-fold objective: to describe the characteristics which the designated population share in common; and, to determine the existence and extent of discrimination on the basis of sex in the provision of homemaker service (Selltitz, Jahoda, Deutch and Cook, 1959). The survey method was applicable in that the information to be acquired pertained to the pre-designated factors of sex (male-female) and request for service (received-did not receive).

#### SAMPLE

Information related to the major research hypothesis was collected from a sample comprised of all low-income, single-parent family heads who were members of the labour force and who requested service between November 1, 1973 and October 31, 1974. The sampling criterion was request for service. The time period for study was selected for a number of reasons. First, the researcher was informed that the

position of intake worker became permanent just prior to November 1, 1973. Requests were handled by a variety of workers on an ad hoc basis up to that time. It was felt that a survey of requests handled by a single intake worker would reduce the risk of variability that could occur at the initial intake level. Secondly, the researcher was advised that most, if not all requests and subsequent files would be up to date if received before October, 1974. Therefore, relevant files would be up-to-date, available and accessible. Through the much appreciated efforts of the homemaker service program director, all recorded requests for service over the twelve-month period were made available to the researcher.

The major sample was selected in accordance with a number of predesignated factors. All members had to be single, have at least two dependent children, be in receipt of relatively low income and be members of the labour force. Those not included in the study sample were two-parent families whether formal or informal, families with less than two dependent children and single parents who were not members of the labour force. The latter includes persons who requested service because of illness or attendance at an educational institution. In addition, persons not in receipt of low incomes (as defined by the agency financial assessment) were excluded from the sample. A breakdown of the total number of requests over the twelve-month period under review is shown subsequently. The total sample

numbered 214 single parents.

A count of applications for homemaker service from the Family Bureau during the period under review revealed that a total of 470 requests were made, 193 of which were from two-parent families and 277 from single-parent families.

A sub-sample of twenty-four single parents was drawn from the larger one for the purpose of interviewing. The larger sample was stratified according to sex (male-female) and outcome of request (received-did not receive). The smaller sample was then randomly selected. Six members in each of the following four groups were interviewed in relation to the two policy questions previously stated.

1. Males who requested and received service.
2. Males who requested and did not receive service.
3. Females who requested and received service.
4. Females who requested and did not receive service.

#### Definitions of Terms to Describe the Sample

Low Income. This term is defined on the basis of two factors. First, one was in receipt of a low income if disposable income (difference between net income and expenses) was less than that necessary to compete for services in the private market. Such services may include private, individual arrangements as well as commercial, organized services. Disposable income was available for persons who had been accepted for service and had completed the financial assessment.

Secondly, one was in receipt of a low income if payment for child-care serves to make full-time employment economically non-viable, that is; if total net income after expenses was less than that afforded by social assistance levels. This criterion was used primarily for those subjects for whom average net income only, was available.

It should be again noted that the financial assessment used by Family Bureau was individually oriented. There were standard guidelines for expenses set out under provincial regulations, however, these were not rigidly adhered to in agency practice. An exception to the regulations was often made in the case of debts for example, whereby 18% of total net income may be allowed for debt payment. The flexibility inherent in this practice of assessing payment for service means that levels of income can vary from one applicant to another and still be defined as low. Applicants assessed at a fee of \$120.00 or less were deemed to be low income and, therefore, met the sampling requisite. The sum of \$120.00 was chosen as the minimum amount necessary for payment of private, individual or organized child-care services available in the community.

Single-Parent. Sample members had to be widowed, divorced, separated, deserted or unmarried and living as a single parent at the point of application for service. Those excluded from the sample were married couples and common-law unions.

Labour Force. According to the census definition of labour force, all members of the sample had to be at least fourteen years of age or over who, at the time of the survey, were employed or unemployed but available for work. Persons who were ill, attending an educational institution or otherwise not available for work were excluded (Labour Canada, Women's Bureau, 1974).

Request for Service. This was defined as any and all requests for service received by the intake worker during the period under study. Agency procedure required that all requests be recorded whether or not eligibility conditions were met.

#### METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

##### File Review

Data related to the major research hypothesis were collected by a review of available agency files. There were three types of file material. One type was the initial intake form completed at the time of request for service. If accepted, the applicant was interviewed by the financial worker who opened a financial file. This file was up-dated with regular income assessments. A third file contained process recordings and regular summaries of casework and overall activity. In sum, the three files reviewed, where available, were the intake form, financial and personal files.

Intake forms were reviewed by the researcher during two weeks of December, 1974. Data collection was com-

pleted during February, 1975 when financial and personal files were reviewed. A data sheet comprised of the following variables was recorded for each member in the sample:

1. Sex (male-female)
2. Marital Status (widowed, divorced, separated, deserted, unmarried)
3. Age
4. Number of Children
5. Ages of Children
6. Net Annual Income
7. Net Annual Income Adjusted for Family Size
8. Recorded Special Problems
9. Reason for Request
10. Type of Service Requested (long-term, short-term, part-time, full-time)
11. Employment (not employed, part-time, full-time)
12. Assessed Fee
13. Date Service Requested
14. Date Service Received
15. Outcome of Request (Accepted/Received, Refused/Did Not Receive, Accepted/Client Refused)
16. Reason for Agency Refusal
17. Reason for Client Refusal
18. Source of Referral

Data were coded and transferred onto I.B.M. computer cards in preparation for analysis.

A review of homemaker service files was chosen as the major instrument to collect data for reasons of efficiency, accuracy and objectivity. All information necessary to test the major research hypothesis and to describe the population already existed in agency files. The problem of researcher bias is alleviated since relevant data had been previously recorded by agency staff for purposes other than those of the present research. The use of a file review also enabled the researcher to deal with a relatively large sample over a relatively long period of time.

Reliance on information collected by others for a

different purpose has its disadvantages as well as advantages. In some cases, data relevant for research were not recorded and, in rarer instances, files were missing altogether.

### The Interview

Interviews designed to address the two policy related questions were conducted in April, 1975 by the writer and by another graduate student. On the advice of the directors of the Homemaker Service Program and Family Bureau, letters of introduction were sent to potential respondents one week prior to making a telephone contact. A copy of the letter signed by the homemaker service director is presented in Appendix D.

Fifty-five letters were sent to potential respondents. Attempts to contact twenty-three persons indicated that the telephone number was no longer in service or had changed. Directory Assistance contained either no new listing or gave a wrong number. Twenty-seven persons were contacted by telephone in order to obtain twenty-four interviews. Three persons refused to be interviewed and were not pressed to give reasons. An additional two persons were interviewed in a pre-test of the interview guide.

The majority of interviews took place in homes of respondents. Most were completed during the day, but several had to be conducted in the evening as respondents were away at work all day. Four persons were interviewed at their places of work and one at Family Bureau.



Time to complete interviews ranged from approximately twenty minutes to an hour depending upon respondents' willingness and ability to expand upon issues. All respondents interviewed were interested in receiving a report of the findings.

A copy of the interview schedule is contained in Appendix E. It contains a few close-ended questions with most being open-ended. It was used as a guide to questioning respondents rather than as a schedule. Questions were relatively simple and straight forward. Respondents were encouraged to elaborate their responses as fully as possible as the major purpose of the interview was to gain knowledge and understanding as to their opinions, impressions, sentiments, and preferences relating to the essential nature of homemaker service and types of child care. The interviewer did not hesitate to clarify questions as well as to use probes in order to encourage respondents to answer as fully as possible. The flexibility inherent in the use of the interview as a guide made it the most appropriate technique for eliciting relevant information. "Its focus is on subjective experiences, attitudes and emotional responses regarding the particular concrete situation in which persons had been involved (Young, 1966, page 219)".

In order for the interviewer to gain an understanding of consumer perception of the essential nature of homemaker service, all participants were asked why they requested the service. Probes were used when necessary to discover

what family circumstances were at the time; what if any alternatives were considered; and what, if anything, about homemaker service in particular led to their decision to request it. Participants who received service were asked what they liked and disliked about it, would they ask for the service again and why. Those who did not receive service were asked: what alternative arrangements did they make; were they satisfactory; what did they like and dislike about them; would homemaker service still have been preferred and why.

The inclusion of both males and females who received service and did not receive service enabled comparisons on the basis of sex. This was in addition to gaining an understanding of the essential nature of homemaker service from a consumer point of view.

The second section of the interview concentrated on consumer preferences regarding types of child-care arrangements and methods of delivery. Participants were asked what types of child-care arrangements they would choose if money were no object to them. They were expected to answer within their own knowledge of different kinds of arrangements that were available. The second question asked was: if money were an object, would participants prefer to be given money to pay in full for services or arrangements they choose themselves or would they prefer to have services offered by community agencies on an ability-to-pay basis.

The final section of the interview focussed on ways

in which consumers of child-care could be provided with funds to gain access to child-care arrangements. Participants were asked to select one from among three options presented to them. In addition they were asked to explain as fully as possible the reasons for their choice. The options were:

- A. Through a Guaranteed Annual Income that allows a realistic sum to working parents for child-care expenses.
- B. Through increased personal tax exemptions to allow working parents to claim the full amount spent for child-care during a fiscal year. The sum could be provided with the annual income tax return or could be returned with regular pay cheques from employment.
- C. Through a government subsidy paid to a consumer to cover costs of child-care.

In some cases one or all of the options had to be elaborated to enable participants to understand them.

It should be emphasized that the interviewing of a small sample of subjects represents a secondary technique designed to yield qualitative information. The interviewer was interested solely in gaining an understanding of the views, opinions, and impressions of single parents who need child-care in order to work. The results of the interviews are presented in a descriptive way in terms of general themes rather than specific outcomes. They provide merely a descriptive accompaniment to the quantitative data yielded from the file review. The latter is the major technique used to test the major research hypothesis.

## MEASUREMENT

Data relating to the major research hypothesis and collected from the file review were classified primarily as nominal data since they were comprised largely of social characteristics which describe the sample. There were several exceptions to this classification of data, however. The waiting period variable measured by number of days between request and receipt of service was treated as an interval measure and the arithmetic mean was calculated. The variables of net annual income and assessed fee for service of those males and females receiving service were treated as ordinal data. Kendall's Tau was used in a rank-order correlation of these two variables.

I.B.M. computer cards containing data were run through a counter sorter. Percentages and the two statistical measures mentioned above were calculated manually with the aid of a calculator. Use of the computer for data analysis was originally intended but a strike of relevant employees at the University of Manitoba prohibited this option.

## Chapter 5

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION RELATING TO SEX DIFFERENCES AND DISCRIMINATION

This chapter focuses on a description of the sample together with findings relevant to the series of hypotheses elaborated in the previous chapters. Both are presented in tabular form and interpreted through subsequent discussion. The discussion attempts to discern tabular indicators which may or may not suggest sexual discrimination in agency policy and practise.

Males and females who requested homemaker service were compared in terms of: outcome of request, marital status, age, number and ages of children, reason for request, income, assessed fee for service, recorded special problems, employment, and duration of service requested.

A conclusion to the chapter concentrates on similarities and differences revealed by a comparison of profiles of male and female applicants for service in relation to the aforementioned variables.

The first hypothesis suggested that females who request homemaker service receive it less frequently than do males, other factors being equal.

Table 2

A Frequency Distribution by Number and Percent  
of Applicants for Service by Sex

Sex	Number	Percent
Male	60	28
Female	154	72
	214	100

Females clearly applied for service in far greater numbers than did males. Therefore, no significant issue was suggested by Table 2 in that female over-representation in applications for service was an expected outcome.

Table 3

Percentage of Applicants for Service  
by Outcome of Request and by Sex

Outcome of Request	Sex	
	Males (N=60)	Females (N=154)
Received Service	40(24)	47(72)
Refused by Agency	15(9)	28(43)
Accepted by Agency/Refused by Client	38(22)	20(31)
Unknown	8(5)	5(8)
	(60)	(154)

$$\chi^2 = 8.703 \text{ df} = 3 \text{ p} < .05$$

A potential issue was raised by Table 3. The proportion of males accepted for service exceeded that of females (78% to 67%), however, men were almost twice as likely to refuse an offer of service from the agency (38% to 20%). Conversely, twice as many females as males were refused service by the agency (28% to 15%). When a  $\chi^2$  was administered, it was found that the relationship between sex and outcome of request was significant at a .05 level. Therefore, support was shown for this hypothesis.

There are several reasons to explain this phenomenon. Female applicants may not have met required eligibility conditions for service one of which is that applicants must be totally self-sufficient. Due to lower incomes of women in the labour force, particularly those in unskilled or clerical positions, female applicants were more often in receipt of a welfare supplement provided by the Province as an incentive to work. This, of course, was unacceptable to the agency in accordance with its policy.

It is suspected that the rationale for this particular policy relates to the position of women in society in that it reflects an ambivalent attitude towards women in the labour force. They are presented with more alternatives than are men since the latter are expected to work whereas women may either work or stay home to care for children and house. Financial support for mothers to stay home comes from Mother's Allowance or maintenance and child support from former husbands. Given these alternatives, the

need and expectations for women to work are not as strong as they are for men.

Many single mothers are relatively uneducated and unskilled. Consequently their pay scales are so low as to make a partial welfare supplement to earned income a necessity. It is felt that the policy regarding self-sufficiency is shaped by economic rather than social concerns and has negative ramifications for women in that it reflects the supposed choice between work and welfare.

In contrast to females, an unskilled or semi-skilled male applicant may well earn enough money to support his family without the need for a welfare supplement. An illustrative example may be provided by comparing the salary of a waitress to that of a construction worker. The point is that men have greater opportunities to earn higher incomes, and therefore, stand a better chance than do women of being accepted for service.

A higher income, however, means that a higher assessment of payment for service accompanies any offer of service by the agency. The higher assessment serves to explain the higher incidence of male refusals for service. In cases where the assessed fee was relatively high and thus encroached upon anotherwise available income, the service was more likely to be refused in favour of some other alternative.

In those cases, however, where a relatively high income was accompanied by a significant amount of debt obli-



gation, assessed fee for service would have been correspondingly decreased in accordance with agency policy. Up to 18% of net annual income may be exempted towards payment of debts. An assessment based on remaining income will obviously be relatively low or non-existent. Males in this position would be unlikely to refuse service when it was offered.

In view of the preceding tabular indicators and discussion, some qualified support was available for the hypothesis. The difference in treatment of male and female applicants was due to discriminatory or misguided policy which is shaped by economic rather than social concerns.

The statistical information in Table 2 and Table 3 yielded another fact that must be noted although it bears no relation to the hypothesis. The fact is that less than one half of all applicants actually received service. The high rate of overall refusal clearly shows that demand for service exceeded supply. Economic realities common to all child-care service dictate the imposition of certain criteria for service provision. These may be at worst, arbitrary and at best, judgmental. Social policy or, at least, the economic ability to implement policy once formulated, is seen to lag behind the actual societal changes which have led to rising expectations and increased demand for services. For example, more women than ever before are participating in the economic sector but, the necessary supportive and supplementary services, particularly child care,

have not expanded correspondingly to meet increased demand.

Table 4

Percentage of Applicants Refused for Service  
by Reason\* for Agency Refusal and by Sex

Reason for Agency Refusal	Male (N=10)	Sex Female (N=41)
Intake Closed	30%	12%
Client Situation in Flux	30	10
Client's Hours of Work	0	2
Homemaker Service Inappropriate	20	22
Client Does Not Meet Eligibility Requirements	10	46
Combination of Above	0	7
Unknown	10	0
	100%	99%

\*These are categories used by the Agency so little evidence as to their reliability exists.

Almost five times as many women as men were refused service due to a failure to meet eligibility requirements as shown by Table 4. The explanation developed following the previous table has equal validity here. Female incomes are frequently low enough to require a welfare supplement. This, of course, creates conflict with the eligibility condition of financial self-sufficiency.

What is illustrated by this is an unfortunate para-

dox which derives from conflicting policies of two different programs whose ends are one and the same. The Province provides a welfare supplement as a work incentive to persons with low income potential. It encourages people who might otherwise be totally dependent upon the state, to work full-time. This, of course, is desirable from the public's perspective as well as by individuals directly involved in view of the value placed upon work. It is also more efficient economically. The homemaker service provided by Family Bureau may also be seen as an incentive to work for low income persons in that it affords single parents the assurance of good child care during working hours. It is, however, denied to those single parents who make the effort to work but cannot earn enough to survive without a welfare supplement.

These two policies are clearly inconsistent and are more likely to effect women negatively given their lower earning power in the labour force. The need for more integrated policies is made evident by the statistics presented in Table 4.

Table 5

Percentage of Applicants Not Receiving Service  
by Reason\*for Client Refusal and by Sex

Reason for Client Refusal	Male (N=23)	Sex Female (N=31)
Made Own Arrangements	22%	32%
Assessment Too High	13	10
Spouse Returned	22	13
Did Not Recontact Agency	26	19
Job Fell Through	9	6
Combination of Above	0	6
Unknown	9	13
	101%	99%

\*These are again categories used by the Agency  
so that evidence as to their reliability is  
not known.

Table 5 shows a fairly even distribution of males and females in relation to reason for client refusal. Therefore, no significant issue was raised by this table.

It will be recalled that the second hypothesis predicted that women receive service less frequently across a continuum formed by marital status categories. It was expected, on the other hand, that marital status does not influence treatment of men who apply for service. The frequency distribution for females then should show a rank or-

der from high to low whereas for males, the distribution should be random.

Table 6  
Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service  
by Marital Status and by Sex

Marital Status	Sex	
	Male (N=60)	Female (N=154)
Widowed	50(10)	0(5)
Divorced	40(5)	37(19)
Separated	45(33)	52(118)
Deserted	17(12)	50(4)
Unmarried	0(-)	25(8)
	(60)	(154)

The distribution for females was completely random, therefore showing no support for the hypothesis. It was concluded that marital status made no difference as to how single parent applicants were treated by the Agency.

Most applicants were separated but Agency records did not differentiate between legal and informal separations. It is highly probable that Agency policy and practise reflect an emphasis on one parent as opposed to two parent status thereby making any finer distinctions in marital status irrelevant.

The third hypothesis suggested that relatively few applicants in the age extremes receive service. A previously cited connection between age and employment led to this hypothesis. It further predicted that fewer women than men in the age extremes receive service due to unequal treatment on the basis of sexual differences.

Table 7

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service  
by Age and by Sex.

Age	Sex	
	Male (N=60)	Female (N=154)
16 - 20	0(-)	33(3)
21 - 25	60(5)	70(27)
26 - 30	50(6)	75(40)
31 - 35	57(7)	58(24)
36 - 40	73(11)	71(7)
41 - 45	29(7)	100(2)
46 - 50	67(3)	0(-)
51 & over	50(2)	0(-)
Unknown	5(19)	2(51)
	(60)	(154)

It is indeed true that the majority of applicants who requested and received service fall into the middle age

range. Otherwise little or no conclusive support was shown for the hypothesis. The small number of applicants in the extremes of the age continuum made it impossible to draw any reliable conclusions. It is probable, however, that older men requested service primarily for its housekeeping function in addition to minimal supervision of older children. It is also speculated that older women would tend not to request service since children would require only minimal supervision. It is likely that a working mother with older children would feel responsible for household maintenance herself. This expectation as to a mother's role is shared not only by mothers themselves but also, by society at large.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that the more children a mother has, the more likely it is that she will not receive service whereas, number of children does not influence treatment of men.

Table 8

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service  
by Number of Children and by Sex

Number of Children	Male (N=60)	Sex Female (N=154)
2	30(23)	40(95)
3	59(22)	59(41)
4	33(6)	77(13)
5	33(3)	0(2)
6	24(4)	0(3)
7	0(2)	0(-)
	(60)	(154)

The hypothesis was shown to be contradicted by the distribution of female recipients with two to four children. Women with more than four children seldom applied for and did not receive service. The distribution for men, however, was random throughout the categories although, like women, relatively few men with many children applied for service.

The reason why women with fewer children were more likely to receive service may be explained by reference to the previous Table 7 which showed that more younger women (21 - 35 years) tended to apply for and receive service. It is logical to assume that younger parents will have fewer children than older applicants. If an applicant has



many children it is likely that some of these are old enough to assume surrogate parent roles with younger siblings. Therefore, service is unlikely to be requested by such mothers. Older fathers with many children are slightly more likely to request service, probably because of its housekeeping function in addition to minimal supervision of children.

Hypothesis five suggested that mothers with pre-school children do not receive service as frequently as do fathers with pre-school age children.

Table 9

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service  
by Ages of Children and by Sex

Ages of Children	Sex	
	Male (N=60)	Female (N=154)
Pre-School	33(15)	45(53)
Both	37(27)	49(73)
School-Age	50(18)	42(26)
Unknown	0(-)	50(2)
	(60)	(154)

No support was shown for this hypothesis. Women with pre-schoolers applied for and received service more often than did men. This again was consistent with the age distribution of applicants illustrated in Table 7.

Since more younger female single parents applied for service, it was not unexpected that they would have a higher proportion of pre-school age children.

A further explanation for this outcome may lie in the possibility that men with pre-schoolers are offered service by the agency but choose to refuse it due to unacceptable conditions. For example, an assessment for fee payment may be perceived as unrealistically high so as to make alternative private arrangements more attractive in that they are less costly. Since men usually have cars, other arrangements are not as inconvenient for them as they may be for women who must usually rely on public transportation or find a babysitter close to home or work. A check back through raw data found that 40% of male applicants with pre-schoolers did, indeed, refuse an offer of service due to unacceptable conditions. This compares with 33% who accepted and received the service as well as 27% who were refused by the agency.

Women in this category, on the other hand, are faced with a somewhat different situation with regard to agency service as opposed to staying home. Alternative arrangements are often inaccessible due to cost and lack of private transportation. In addition, women generally earn incomes that are low enough to prohibit an assessment that is so high as to make alternative arrangements more attractive.

Although not part of the hypothesis, it was speculated that female headed families with teenagers are treat-

ed less favourably than are similar male-headed families with regard to receipt of service. Table 10 shows only minute differences between male and female receivers of service in relation to presence or absence of teenagers in the home. All applicants were far more likely to receive service if they have no teenage dependents.

Table 10

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service by  
Presence of Teenagers and by Sex

Teenagers in the Family	Sex	
	Male (N=60)	Female (N=154)
Yes	25(24)	29(14)
No	50(36)	49(138)
Unknown	0(-)	50(2)
	(60)	(154)

The following table presents a different way of examining the relationship between sex and ages of children. It was included for the purpose of describing the sample rather than to test the preceding hypothesis. The evidence yielded from this tabular description does, however, raise some issues that are suggestive of unequal treatment of women with school-age children.

Table 11

Percentage of Applicants for Service  
by Ages of Children and by Sex

Ages of Children	Males		Sex	
	Received/Did Not Receive (N=24)	Received/Did Not Receive (N=36)	Received/Did Not Receive (N=72)	Received/Did Not Receive (N=82)
Pre-School	21%	28%	33%	35%
Both	42	47	50	45
School-Age	37	25	15	18
Unknown	0	0	1	1
	100%	100%	99%	99%

Men with school-age children received service more readily than did women in the same category. In fact, more than twice as many men than women with school-age dependents received service. The proportion of males not receiving service also exceeded that for women but the difference was substantially smaller.

The numerical evidence suggests that if a woman requested homemaker service for the dual purpose of supervision of pre-schoolers and housework, she was likely to be accepted for service. If, however, she requested service for part-time supervision of school-age children and for assistance with housework, she was more likely to be refused. It seems that the agency expected a working mother to be

able to cope with housekeeping duties in addition to working full time. The presence of pre-school children provided a categorial exception to this practise since their need for full time consistent and individual attention overrides any preference which might otherwise be extended to male applicants.

Conversely, a male who applied for a homemaker to provide part-time supervision of school-age children and assumption of full-time household duties was not as likely to be refused for service. It seems that the agency did not expect a male to perform housekeeping duties in addition to full-time employment. This was precisely the issue raised by the Welfare Advisory Committee in its 1973 Report. Needless to say, the discriminatory practise of the agency resulted in an inequitable distribution of leisure time and energy between otherwise similarly qualified applicants. As a consequence of this agency practise, women are forced to seek other child-care alternatives for their school-age children such as lunch and after-school programs, part-time babysitters in the neighbourhood, etc. Beyond this, they are responsible for full-time employment and full-time home maintenance as well as for parenting of children in the evenings and on week-ends.

A secondary explanation for unequal agency treatment of women with school-age children may be found in a general attitude or belief that all children need a maternal influence. This influence is provided by a homemaker in

motherless families while parents in fatherless families are expected to provide this influence, albeit briefly, after work.

The next table shows net annual incomes for male and female applicants and was again, included for the purpose of describing the sample of low-income, single parents who applied for homemaker service over the year under study.

Table 12  
Percentage of Applicants for Service  
by Net Annual Income and by Sex

Net Annual Income	Male		Sex	
	Received/Did (N=24)	Not Receive (N=36)	Received/Did (N=72)	Female not Receive (N=82)
0 - 2000	4%	11%	1%	1%
2001 - 4000	21	0	29	13
4001 - 6000	25	17	56	26
6001 - 8000	42	11	10	6
8001 -10,000	4	3	0	2
Unknown	4	58	4	51
	100%	100%	100%	99%

Women who receive service were significantly poorer than men. Almost nine out of every ten women receiving service earned incomes of less than \$6,000.00 per year. In contrast, almost one-half of the men receiving service claimed annual incomes in excess of \$6,000.00.

The fact that men have larger earning capacities than do women explains the larger proportion of male applicants in the higher income brackets. A higher annual income should show a correspondingly higher assessed fee for service, but subsequent numerical evidence will serve to show no support for such a relationship.

It will be recalled that the sixth hypothesis predicted that the lower the income, the less likely it is that service will be received. Since the percentage of female-headed families with incomes below the Poverty Line is significantly higher than that for male-headed families, it was assumed that women applicants receive service less frequently than do male applicants.

Table 13

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service by  
Net Annual Income Adjusted for Family Size  
(using 1974 Statistics Canada Poverty  
Lines) and by Sex

Net Annual Income Adjusted for Family Size	Males (N=60)	Sex Females (N=154)
Above 1974 Poverty Line	50(12)	14(7)
Below 1974 Poverty Line	70(23)	62(109)
Unknown	8(25)	8(38)
	(60)	(154)

The findings in Table 13 totally contradicted this hypothesis. Poorer people were definitely favoured whether they were male or female.

In the less poor category, a difference based on sex was evident. Significantly more males both applied for and received service at this level. It is expected that this outcome is directly related to an agency policy which allows 18% of annual income to be exempted towards debt payments. Assessed fee for service is then based upon remaining income less expenditures for basic necessities. Fee for service then, did not always correspond with income, particularly in cases where applicants had debts.

Men, for social and cultural reasons, are extended credit more easily for the purchase of material goods and services than are women. Agency policy governing the financial assessment structure consequently favours men. Having debts enables men to enjoy a higher standard of living as a result of goods purchased on time. At the same time, they receive homemaker service at a minimal cost to themselves. In addition, males are given the freedom to occasionally renege on debt obligations when an emergency or contingency arises which requires money expenditure. Omitting to pay a monthly sum towards debts is unlikely to have serious ramifications if it happens infrequently.

Low-income women, on the other hand, are not as likely to incur debts due to a pre-conditioned tendency to live within a cash-flow income. In addition, credit is not



as freely extended to women as it is to men who are viewed as bread-winner/or earners by the wider society.

Consequently, males and females may have similar disposable incomes which they are required to contribute towards payment of homemaker service. Men, however, have a higher real income and are able to enjoy a higher standard of living based upon acquisition of material goods through credit. Administration of the Kendall's tau test of rank-order correlation yielded a high but negative correlation between assessed fee and income for male applicants. Application of the Z test of significance showed that the value of tau ( $-.9$ ) was significant at a  $.03$  level indicating a strong, negative correlation between these two variables. A Kendall's tau value of  $.1$  was found for female applicants indicating a minimal correlation between assessed fee and income. The Z value was  $.25$ . The probability that this value would be obtained or exceeded was  $.80$ . Therefore, the tau of  $.1$  was not significant for females.

This finding provides the strongest evidence thus far for discrimination based on sex in agency policy and practise. This finding is supported by the results from interviews conducted with a group of applicants whose recognition of an unfair practise was reflected in their opinions of the service. Less poor persons without debts refused the offer of service in favour of alternatives which could be procured at a more reasonable cost. Poorer persons without debts felt it was unfair to have to contri-

bute all disposable income towards payment particularly when this income was relatively small. Often, it is the disposable income that makes the difference between work and welfare for low-income women. Persons without debts generally felt that they would have been wiser to purchase goods on credit prior to applying for homemaker service. At least they would have been able to enjoy material acquisitions purchased on time and which contribute to a higher standard of living in conjunction with homemaker service for minimal or no cost to themselves.

Hypothesis number seven suggested that women who receive service will have a higher incidence of special recorded problems than will males. In addition, problems will be different for males and females.

Table 14

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service  
by Presence of Recorded Special  
Problems and by Sex

Recorded Special Problems	Sex	
	Males (N=60)	Females (N=154)
No	58(12)	46(92)
Yes	35(48)	48(62)
	(60)	(154)
$\chi^2 = 27.297 \quad df = 1 \quad p < .05$		

Table 15

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service  
by Type of Recorded Problem and by Sex

Recorded Special Problems	Sex	
	Males (N=48)	Females (N=62)
Parental Health	0	16
Child's Health	29	42
Family Related	71	42
	100%	100%

Support was shown for this hypothesis in that women did have a higher incidence of recorded special problems which were different from those given by men. Application of the  $\chi^2$  test of significance showed that the relationship between sex and presence of recorded special problems was significant at the .05 level. Therefore, support was given for the first part of this hypothesis.

A higher proportion of male recipients stated family problems relating to family upheaval produced by the recent separation from or loss of a mother and wife. This may be explained by the fact that children, particularly younger ones, tend to tolerate the loss of a mother less easily than the loss of a father. The trauma incurred by such a loss is reflected in increased stress and strain

in family relationships as well as by more intensive and extensive behavioural problems exhibited by children in motherless families.

Conversely, females were under-represented in this category. It was speculated that females are more reluctant to attribute family difficulties to a recent marital breakdown and, in fact, it is perhaps true that such families adjust more easily than do those without a mother. This hesitancy on the part of women to request service because of family problems also coincides with a general social attitude which is more apt to blame the wife and mother for marriage failure.

A second widely held expectation derived from role stereotyping is that women should be able to cope with home and family in spite of the additional burden of full time work. This expectation is recognized by mothers and contributes to their hesitancy to request help with family problems. Perhaps the extra burden of full-time employment, together with a more obvious (but not necessarily actual) concern with children's health causes women to request and receive service for reasons relating to parental and/or child health.

The eighth hypothesis suggested that women request homemaker service for different reasons than do men.

Table 16

Percentage of Applicants Receiving Service  
by Reason for Request and by Sex

Reason for Request	Sex	
	Males (N=60)	Females (N=154)
Private arrangements unsatisfactory	36(14)	52(63)
Private arrangements end	33(9)	43(23)
Children home temporarily	0(-)	62(13)
Need for stable, supervised arrangement	42(31)	39(18)
Parent cannot cope	100(3)	38(8)
Parent's hours of work	0(1)	50(6)
Combination of above	0(1)	100(2)
Unknown	0(1)	26(21)
	(60)	(154)

The categories developed for this table are based upon agency records and, as such, are highly unreliable. The number and grossness of categories renders it impossible to draw conclusions. Some speculative comments can be made with regard to the first two categories, however, dealing with private arrangements. Women were over-represented in both these categories indicating that men do better in the private market and/or that they are less critical of private arrangements than are women. Higher incomes

by men may enable them to procure better individual arrangements in the form of private stable housekeeper arrangements, for example. In addition, more men than women are likely to operate an automobile and are thus more readily able to take advantage of alternative arrangements either close to home or work.

Women, on the other hand, seem unable to secure satisfactory private child-care arrangements. This may be due to financial restrictions imposed by lower incomes and a tendency to have higher expectations than men regarding quality of service.

The final hypothesis predicted that women accepted for service must wait longer than men before they actually receive the service. Calculation of the arithmetic mean for males and females showed that the average waiting period for males was 23.7 days. Females waited an average of 25.6 days for a homemaker. Administration of the t-test for difference of means yielded a value of .25 for  $t$ . This was not significant at a .20 level. Therefore, no support was shown for this hypothesis as there was no significant difference in waiting periods for males and females who applied for service.

This is consistent with an agency policy which does not allow for emergency provision of homemaker service. Economic restrictions placed upon the agency by external funders shape this policy in that it reflects the lag between demand and supply, a supply governed by an

inability to seek and pay for additional homemakers with suitable qualifications.

The three tables and related discussions presented below serve to round out a description of the sample of low income single parents.

Table 17

Percentage of Applicants for Service  
by Employment and by Sex

Employment	Males		Sex	
	Received (N=24)	Did Not Receive (N=36)	Received (N=72)	Did Not Receive (N=82)
Not employed	0	8	0	22
Part-time	0	6	12	6
Full-time	100	86	88	72
	100%	100%	100%	100%

In accordance with agency policy, all applicants who received service were employed full time. One minor exception occurred in the case of some women working part-time. The rules of the agency are flexible enough to provide service to females who worked at least thirty hours per week, were financially independent, and could provide assurance that their working hours were to be expanded in the near future.

Individuals in the unemployed category typically

had full-time jobs pending. Their advance requests for service signified a desire to have assurance of homemaker placement when they started work. Due to the restricted supply, however, and reinforced by eligibility restrictions, this advance reassurance is a luxury which the agency cannot afford to extend.

Table 18

Percentage of Applicants for Service  
by Request for Part-time Full-time  
Service and by Sex

Type of Service Requested	Males		Sex	
	Received/ (N=24)	Did Not Receive (N=36)	Received/ (N=72)	Did Not Receive (N=82)
Part-time	8	17	13	11
Full-time	92	83	88	89
	100	100	101	100

Table 19

Percentage of Applicants for  
Service by Term of Service  
Requested and Sex

Term of Service	Males		Sex	
	Received/ (N=24)	Did Not Receive (N=36)	Received/ (N=72)	Did Not Receive (N=82)
Short Term	8	11	13	6
Long Term	92	89	88	94
	100%	100%	101%	100%



The findings of the preceding two tables were not unexpected in that the great majority of all applicants requested full-time and long-term service for the purpose of child-care and household maintenance while parents were working full-time.

## SUMMARY

The research findings showed the typical male recipient of homemaker service from the Family Bureau to be separated and in the older age group of thirty-one to forty-five years. He had three school-age children and no teenage dependents. His net annual income was \$6,000 to \$8,000, which, when adjusted to his family size, placed him below the existing Poverty Line. The typical male user was assessed a fee for service that bore a strong, but negative relationship to his total income. Any special problem he had related to family functioning although his reason for requesting service might have been any one of a number of different reasons. He waited three to four weeks before a homemaker was placed in his home, was employed full-time and required full-time and relatively long-term service.

The typical female recipient was also separated but in the younger age group of twenty-one to thirty-five years. She had three or four children who were both pre-school and school age although the latter were not teenagers. Her net annual income ranged between \$4,000 and \$6,000 which clearly placed her below the Poverty Line when adjusted to family size. Unlike a typical male user, her assessed fee for service bore almost no relationship to level of income. A special problem related to family functioning or a child's physical or emotional health. A dissatisfaction with private arrangements constituted the reason for requesting homemaker service. She had to wait three to four weeks

before a homemaker was actually placed in her home. Her request was for long-term and full-time service while she worked full-time in paid employment outside her home.

The profiles of typical male and female users of service point to a number of differences between the two. Females were younger and so were their children. Women also had slightly more children although their net annual incomes were some \$2,000 less than those of men. Assessed fee for service for men showed a strong, but negative relationship to their net annual income but, for women, this relationship was almost negligible. The typical male had family related problems whereas the typical female experienced problems relating to family functioning or a child's health, either physical or emotional. She was most often dissatisfied with private arrangements and this prompted her request for homemaker service. Males, however, did not have one dominant reason for requesting service as their requests might have been prompted by any one of a variety of reasons.

The series of hypothesis tested did not receive strong support from the findings. Some were directly contradicted by research findings while others received weak or qualified support.

## Chapter 6

### FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

This chapter opens with a descriptive analysis of results of interviews conducted with twenty-four single parents who requested homemaker service. The two-fold purpose was to determine whether or not applicants viewed the service as essential and, to discover preferences as to types and methods of delivery of child-care. The chapter is concluded with a summary of findings which relate to and augment findings derived from the hypotheses in the previous chapter. It must again be cautioned that findings from the interviews are purely descriptive as the interview itself was designed to elicit opinions and impressions from a small sample of applicants. As such, the information provided forms a descriptive accompaniment to findings related to the major research hypothesis.

In response to the question as to why homemaker service was requested, these reasons were named:

- Recent separation from spouse created upheaval in the family
- Private arrangements unsatisfactory or unavailable
- Financial circumstances prohibited viable alternatives
- Inability to cope satisfactorily with multiple roles of breadwinner, parent and homemaker

- Temporary help required so as not to disrupt regular family routine while the regular babysitter was on holidays.

Two primary needs arose from these personal, family and financial circumstances. The first of these centered around a concern with reliable and good child care. The second focussed on assistance with household maintenance.

Men and women had different reasons for requesting the service. The most common reason among the men was the recent separation from, or loss of spouse. They were generally unaware of available child-care resources, either public or private. In addition, men tended to express an inability to handle the practical aspects of housekeeping. They turned to friends, relatives and less frequently to social agencies for advice and assistance. These sources, in turn, recommended Family Bureau. The sense of confusion and loss experienced by the males comes through in their comments below:

Being a man, I didn't know the ropes of running a household - like things such as meal preparation, laundry, etc.

Everything was upset due to the recent separation. It was a new, strange experience and I didn't know where to turn.

For several reasons the sense of confusion and loss as to "what" to do in this situation cannot be viewed as an unexpected reaction among male-headed families. First, it is highly probable that the trauma experienced among remaining family members is more pronounced in families which lose a mother rather than a father. Secondly, male heads are not

expected to and consequently do not have experience in home management and child-care since these have long been defined as traditional female domains.

The sense of confusion as to "what to do" was absent among the women interviewed. They were more aware of available public and private child-care resources. They were also more experienced in household maintenance so that disruption in this area was not as extensive as for male-headed families. It is expected that the confusion and insecurity experienced by women in their places of employment could be compared to similar feelings experienced by their male counterparts in the home front.

Women more often expressed dissatisfaction with private arrangements that were inaccessible, inconvenient, and, in some cases, unavailable. In some cases, one babysitter was shared by several single mothers. This meant that the babysitter could not give individual care and attention to children simply because she had too many to care for. The lack of individual attention, particularly for young children, created difficulties for both the children and their mothers. Some mothers indicated that their children developed behavioural problems in that they constantly demanded attention from their mothers in the evenings and disobeyed requests frequently. Single mothers expressed further concerns relating to babysitting arrangements in that most were not in-home arrangements. Children most often had to be walked or bussed to the babysitter which meant they had to

arise very early in the morning. It also meant that mothers had to devote at least several hours of an already crowded day to taking children to and from the babysitter's home. Several of the women interviewed worked irregular or evening shifts and were unable to take advantage of alternatives such as day-care centres, nursery schools, etc. In addition, it was next to impossible to procure a private sitter for these hours. In almost all cases, mothers had reason to doubt the quality of child-care their children were receiving in terms of attention, nutritional value of meals provided, discipline, etc.

Lack of money for suitable alternative arrangements was expressed by both males and females as a reason for requesting service. This reason was typically given in conjunction with one of the aforementioned reasons as illustrated in these quotes:

My wife and I had incurred large debts through business failures. I couldn't consider a private arrangement due to serious financial circumstances and besides, I didn't know of any.

I was working but after I left my husband money for child-care became a problem. I was not earning enough on my own to cover these costs.

The babysitter I had wanted more money but I couldn't afford to give her any more.

I had hired private sitters in the past but lack of funds after a recently declared bankruptcy made this impossible.

An inability to cope adequately with multiple responsibilities of children, home and work comprised a reason shared by both men and women. For men, this inability

related primarily to unfamiliarity with household duties such as meal preparation, mending, laundry, etc. For women, on the other hand, the problems stemmed from long hours of work or irregular hours of work, both of which left too little time to spend with children (and none for themselves).

It was significant that throughout the whole series of interviews, men were far less reluctant to express a need for help with housework, particularly meal preparation. In addition, several men voiced the importance of some free time for themselves to relax or to spend in social pursuits. It was clear that both males and females shared a strong concern for the welfare of their children but the female members cited this as their only concern. It is probable that women feel responsible for household maintenance since past experience and expectations make them more efficient in this area. They make an effort to retain this responsibility in spite of the substantial additional burden of full-time employment. First to be sacrificed is time for personal relaxation and pleasure. It, perhaps, takes women a longer time than men to discover that coping adequately with full-time work, children and housework with only assistance in the one area of child-care cannot be achieved. They then turn to the Family Bureau homemaker service which may or may not provide assistance. The decision is dictated by availability of homemakers and by policy concerns.



Men, on the other hand, recognize that they cannot cope satisfactorily with all three roles and responsibilities and furthermore, they are not expected to. Consequently they are more apt to request assistance immediately after a separation from their spouses and to emphasize the need for help with both child-care and household maintenance.

In answer to the question as to whether alternatives to homemaker service were considered prior to the request, different trends were revealed between men and women. The majority of men did not consider alternatives because they did not know of any. The few men that did hire private babysitters or housekeepers stated that they ranged from "disastrous" to "expensive". A number of applicants discarded the idea of finding a babysitter independently, feeling uncomfortable with assessing the capabilities of a relative "stranger" to look after their children and homes without supervision.

The benefits of the service cited by recipients were numerous, but some were repeated throughout the interviews. The most often voiced benefit was that of peace of mind knowing that their children were being well cared for in the security, freedom and comfort of familiar home surroundings. Children were happier, more content and more secure in their own homes. The stability of the service and assured quality of screened, trained and supervised homemakers enabled parents to work more effectively in their jobs. More importantly, it enabled families to adjust more quick-

ly and smoothly to the loss of a parent and the change in life style that this loss necessitated. Many parents appreciated the opportunity to relax and to spend time with their children in leisure activities because they arrived home to a clean house and well-adjusted children.

Some common comments were:

My children can move around freely at home and don't have to be told 'not to touch' things which don't belong to them.

The youngest can play with his own toys, his own friends around home, and have his afternoon nap in his own bed.

The children are much happier and more contented at home than are my friend's children who cry every morning when they have to go to Mini-School.

The flexibility of the financial assessment was another aspect of the service that was appreciated, although almost solely by parents with debt obligations. The debt exemption implemented by the agency enabled persons to pay off cars, business loans, etc. and at the same time receive reliable and stable child-care service.

The major complaint regarding the financial aspect of the service came from parents who had no outstanding debts. They generally felt that, as compared to those who had debts, the assessment was unfair. The inclusion of all disposable income over and above expenses for basic essentials allowed no money for small "extras" beyond necessities. In addition, no allowances were made for contingencies or emergencies that cropped up periodically. Some persons, in fact, regretted their honesty during the initial assessment for pay-

ment of the service. They felt that the "smart" people were those who purchased cars, new furniture, etc. on time and prior to application for service or those who did not reveal bank accounts. Expectedly, individuals with debts were far less critical of the financial criteria.

A second perceived drawback of the service was the amount of red tape involved before a homemaker could be provided. It was suggested that the service be provided immediately upon request with an assessment to be completed in the few days subsequent to placement. From an agency perspective, however, this is not possible due to both a lack of funds and the unavailability of homemakers.

An infrequent complaint centered on individual homemakers who were described as "sloppy housekeepers", "poor cooks", and "not interested in children". Parents who cited this complaint, however, felt that this was not typical of agency service at all.

Overall, the benefits and advantages of the service as perceived by single parents, far outweighed any drawbacks. In-home care provided by qualified and supervised homemakers, together with a subsidy, led the single-parent recipients to perceive it as a desirable service that could not be matched by any known alternative. Applicants refused for service by the agency or who themselves refused service due to unacceptable conditions found alternatives ranging from housekeepers and out-of-home babysitters to day-care centres. A number of families had no child-care arrangements at all.

In these cases, the children involved were of school-age and maintained contact with parents at work by way of telephone. Children prepared for school in the mornings on their own and usually returned home to an empty house. They were generally able to have lunch at school. There were several exceptions to this however, due to an unfortunate school regulation which does not allow children to stay at school over the lunch hour if their homes are within a certain proximity to the school. School holidays tended to be particularly difficult times for these families, being described by one mother as "hectic" and "hairy".

Each of these parents experienced difficulty in maintaining the housework in addition to full-time work. Emotional problems and faulty relationships were particularly evident in one family where the mother found it very difficult to cope with her multiple responsibilities. Under no circumstances, however, would she consider quitting work in favour of welfare.

In each of these cases, service was refused by the applicants themselves because they felt that their disposable income was needed for items other than child-care. Examples given by respondents themselves are presented below:

I thought the assessment was too high. It would have meant that we couldn't afford to do things that we formerly did as a family such as taking car rides and eating out occasionally.

I would have had to give up my savings in the bank. There would have been no money to cover emergencies that might arise and none for 'rainy days'.

My 'disposable' income was to go towards payment

for the service but much of it went for basic necessities. No room was left for extras. My living standard which is not high would have been decreased even further.

Several mothers felt impelled to quit work to look after their young children after having been refused by the agency due to a lack of homemakers. Private arrangements in lieu of homemaker service were found to be unsatisfactory or too expensive so as to make employment impractical.

Day care was found to be a good alternative for parents with cars and regular hours of work. The discontinuation of hot meals at lunch-time at one such centre made this a less pleasing alternative for one parent. It was continued, however, in the absence of viable alternatives.

The remaining respondents who did not receive service managed to find housekeepers through relatives, friends and newspaper advertisements. These arrangements proved to be satisfactory on the whole although in all cases receipts for income tax purposes could not be obtained from "employees".

In general, few differences were found between male and female single parents with regard to alternatives to homemaker service. The one exception to this was provided by the several mothers of pre-school children who felt impelled to quit work to provide full-time child care.

The second portion of the interview concentrated on eliciting responses regarding preferred types of child care. Parents were almost unanimous in their preference for some type of in-home arrangement. Variations in dura-

tion ranged from part-time to twenty-four hour live-in service.

The benefits from this type of arrangement would positively effect both parents and children in one-parent families. Children would receive consistent attention and discipline within their familiar home surroundings rather than have to be taken out every morning to babysitters, day-care centres, etc. by parents who must be at work between 8 and 9 a.m. It is recognized that consistent attention may be provided in a day-care centre by trained staff but, having someone in the home was felt to be a significant factor in developing feelings of security and confidence in children who are at a disadvantage by having one parent instead of two.

Most of the respondents preferred in-home service provided under the auspices of an agency such as the Family Bureau. Screened, trained and qualified agency personnel eliminated the risk of hiring a relative stranger through newspaper advertisements, or having to rely on the advice of friends and relatives who are not qualified to be potential housekeepers or babysitters. Some male respondents, however, agreed that a babysitter or similar person hired privately through friends, relatives or newspapers would serve the purpose satisfactorily. These were applicants who refused agency service because they felt the assessment was unrealistically high.

Relatively few parents felt that group care was pre-

ferable to having someone in the home. Those who did choose group care favoured nursery schools, day-care centres located close to work, and organized playground or community club activities on a full-time basis during school holidays. Opportunities for developing friendships, the ability to share and creativity were given as reasons for these choices.

When given a choice between community agency service which is subsidized or money to purchase service independently, the majority of respondents preferred the former. Reasons for this choice included reliability, convenience and reduced risk of abuse associated with subsidized community agency provided service. This option was almost always qualified by a proviso that it must be accompanied by a flexible and more generous financial assessment schedule than the one which is currently implemented by the Province. That the schedule used presently was too rigid and the amounts too low, received unanimous agreement by respondents.

Some of the comments received regarding the choice of agency provided subsidized service are presented below:

I would choose a community agency because the people are reliable. It would be an awful risk securing a sitter from the paper.

I would choose an agency. It is convenient and reliable. It is hard to find a good person on your own. With an agency providing service, there is less responsibility for me to find good child care.

I would choose an agency because it's easier. For myself, there were too many other problems to cope with.

I would choose an agency on an ability to pay basis taking an income test. Just giving money leaves room for abuse.

An agency, but applicants should be screened very carefully to eliminate abuse.

Most persons who chose the agency provided service indicated that the system of the Family Bureau provided a fine example of the type of service and delivery they would like to see more of. Several exceptions were made to this, however:

I would choose agency provided service but not an agency like the Family Bureau. Their system is too discretionary. If one has debts, that's fine, but if one has no debts, one is penalized.

The several persons who stated a preference for money assistance rather than agency provided service were those who refused service because of high assessed fees. They were able to make subsequent private arrangements at a lesser cost to themselves.

The third and final section of the interview presented three different methods by which financial assistance could be provided to cover costs of child-care. A Guaranteed Annual Income which would allow additional money for working parents to cover costs of child-care was presented as the first option. It proved to be the least popular choice among the parents interviewed. Those who did select this method had the following comments to support their choice:

This is the cleanest and simplest method. The others require too much form filling and red tape. (This was the response of a physically disabled parent).

This option provides a set amount, therefore, one knows where one stands. Of course, the level of income assured would have to be realistic.

While preferred by some respondents, this option al-



so came under heavy criticism by others:

This option wouldn't encourage or force people to better themselves. It presents no incentive for people to get off their rear ends, better themselves, and be purposeful people.

This is a form of socialism which destroys incentive.

It encourages lazy bums to remain lazy bums. There is danger when people can get something for nothing.

The second alternative presented to respondents was an increased personal tax exemption for child-care. The increase would reflect a realistic cost of such care in view of current average prices. This choice was a popular one among parents interviewed:

I wouldn't have to rely on the government and be accountable to someone or something else.

I have always paid my own way and this method would enable me to continue to do so.

More people could make it on their own if exemptions were increased to a realistic amount. I feel that people who try hard to be independent should be given some concessions through reduced taxes.

This is the fairest method and, certainly, tax exemptions for child-care should be increased. It means that people with more money would pay more than those who have lower incomes but the same need for child-care. This is equal and fair.

The message that comes through clearly in these responses is a strong sense of independence and self-sufficiency. This method did not escape criticism, however. It was commonly agreed among critics that, if implemented, a situation would be created whereby the government "would give with one hand and take away with the other". In other words, it was felt that if child-care exemptions were in-

creased to realistic levels, the government would just find other ways to take it back.

The option of a government subsidy for child-care received acceptance among respondents as often as did the previous choice of an increased tax exemption. The reasons to support this choice include:

I think that people should contribute as much as possible towards child-care. I brought my kids into the world and should support them. The high cost of living makes this impossible though. A government subsidy may mean that government can pry into your life but this isn't such a bad thing.

Because of my financial position, people like me who need service can get it.

This is the fairest way but the subsidy should be provided through the same agency that provides service. This eliminates the need for a middle man and, therefore, more money goes where it is needed rather than towards administration.

## SUMMARY

An affirmation that homemaker service is an essential service received unqualified support both from the perspective of the single working parent and from an objective viewpoint. In accordance with the institutional conception, the goals of social welfare and social policy are to maximize well-being and social functioning of all human beings. These goals can be achieved if supportive and supplementary services are made available to families to enable them to cope within a society marked by rapid social change, increased complexity and heightened demands. Within this framework, based upon and developed from humanitarian values, homemaker service is indispensable in that it contributes significantly to the optional adjustment and functioning of single parent family units. The practical assistance and emotional support provided by the service enable single working parents to cope with pressures and burdens of multiple responsibilities in such a way that is beneficial for themselves, their children, the community, and ultimately, the society in which they live.

The preceding interviews have established two major needs of single parents. These include good, reliable child-care and practical assistance with housekeeping. These needs are shared in common with two parent families where both parents work but, single parent families are missing a number of advantages which serve to make these particular needs more acute. First, single parent families are forced to exist on

one income instead of two. Sole responsibility for support of the family is assumed by the single parent. This income is usually relatively low, particularly for female heads who occupy low paying, low status positions in the labour force. In many such families, the income from work covers costs of basic necessities and leaves room for little else including the costs of child-care as well as "extras" which are not defined as essential.

Families with two working parents, on the other hand, receive two incomes from employment. The amount enables such families to cover costs of basic necessities and child-care as well as to purchase goods and services which contribute to a higher standard of living.

Secondly, in single parent families, the absence of a spouse does not allow for the option of sharing responsibilities and tasks involved in maintaining a home as can be the case in two parent families.

Third, a stable and secure home environment is often absent in one parent families where a regular routine has been disrupted by a recent separation or loss of spouse. All members of the family must go through a period of adjustment in order to establish a new routine that better fits their changed circumstances. This period may be particularly difficult for children who do not understand the situation fully. They may require constant support and attention from the remaining parent who now must work full time away from home in order to support the family. Behavioral difficult-

ies demonstrated by children, in turn, create internal stress in the parent who may realize the problems but is frustrated by a lack of sufficient hours in a day and the multiple responsibilities placed upon him/her. Two parent families, in contrast, are not subject to upheavals and stresses created from the separation or loss of a spouse and parent. The stability and security of a familiar home environment for children is, therefore, not threatened in two parent families, at least, for this reason.

One may argue that single mothers have the option of Mother's Allowance available to them, therefore, they are able to devote themselves to home and childrearing responsibilities. A large proportion of female-headed families indeed either voluntarily choose or feel impelled to take this option. Many who feel impelled to do so have insurmountable barriers blocking entry into the labour force (such as lack of education, skills, work experience, acceptable child-care arrangements, and therefore qualify only for low-status, low-paying positions). That these barriers exist has been amply demonstrated in literature cited previously.

Acceptance of state assistance for all single mothers with limited earning potential may help to alleviate the demand for supplementary and supportive services. The denial of certain basic human rights to this particular segment of society also goes hand in hand with this option of welfare. Such rights include the right to full participation in all areas of life, the right to self-respect, economic self-sufficiency and dignity all of which are closely

associated with employment in accordance with a strong work ethic which continues to be upheld in our society. For most of the single working mothers interviewed, welfare or state support was perceived as totally unacceptable to them. Under no circumstances would they sacrifice privacy, self-respect and dignity which are associated with economic self-sufficiency through employment.

If the espoused goals of social welfare and social policy are to be achieved in reality, homemaker service presents itself as an essential service for low-income, single working parent families in that it optimally meets their particular needs.

The service is subsidized and as such, single parents have access to a service of a quality which they otherwise could not afford in the competitive market place. It is reliable, convenient, stable and supportive to such families. These attributes make the service particularly valuable to families who are in the process of adjusting to the loss of a parent. Both the parent and children must assume new responsibilities and establish different relationships with one another to better suit their new circumstances. The assistance of a homemaker who provides individual and consistent attention to and care of children within their own home contributes significantly to the process of optimal adjustment for children who are able to gain security and self-confidence. Parents are relieved of the burden of housework and are able to spend their time with their child-

ren in constructive ways which enhance the development of positive family relationships. In addition, parents are better able to view their employment as an enjoyable as well as necessary pursuit if they are secure in the knowledge that their family and homes are being well taken care of.

Public and private forms of group care such as nursery schools, day-care centres, etc., on the other hand, do not as adequately meet the needs of children or parents in one parent families. Out-of-home arrangements are more appropriate and convenient for families who have an established routine within a secure and stable home environment and who have cars with which to transport children to and fro before and after working hours. Low income single parents more often do not own cars, do not have a stable home environment and do not have regular working hours. For these reasons, then, homemaker service is defined as an essential service for the particular population under study, within the framework set by an institutional approach to social welfare and social policy.

## Chapter 7

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the research findings lend only weak support to the series of specific hypotheses developed to test the major hypothesis. It is submitted, however, that this investigation is not without positive value. Serious concerns regarding agency treatment of women have been raised by the research findings. A subtle form of discrimination on the basis of sex does exist through a misguided policy which, in turn, influences practice. Policy is shaped by economic concerns at the expense of social objectives which include the maximization of well-being and optimum human development.

An eligibility criterion which limits service to persons who are totally self-sufficient through income from employment presents an insurmountable barrier for many single mothers who receive an income supplement from the Province. The discrimination in the labour force (low wages, low status, non-unionized positions) which women are subject to is, therefore, reinforced by agency policy. This policy serves to perpetrate rather than to alleviate the social and economic disadvantages of single women who have families to support. Such a policy, in effect, denies homemaker service to families headed by females. Male heads of



families are able to avoid the need for an income supplement because of a greater variety of job opportunities available to them. The example of the construction worker and the waitress provides an apt comparison of job opportunities for unskilled persons of both sexes.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Change eligibility criteria to eliminate the condition of economic self-sufficiency through earned income alone.

Secondly, women are at a greater disadvantage than are men in the private child-care market. Lower incomes, irregular hours of work, difficulty in obtaining credit and a pre-conditioned habit of living within a cash flow income are some of the factors which decrease the availability and accessibility of private arrangements and some public child-care services for women. (e.g. Day Care centers are appropriate and convenient for persons who work regular hours and own automobiles.)

#### RECOMMENDATION

Expand Homemaker Service to meet the needs demonstrated by a select group of low-income, single-parent families.

A further form of unequal treatment of women is revealed by a policy relating to the structure of the financial assessment. Persons without debts are at a disadvantage since 18% of net annual income is exempted towards debt payment. Such a policy serves to reinforce differential stand-

ards of living of service users to the advantage of males since men tend to have debts far more frequently than do women. It, therefore, constitutes a subtle form of discrimination on the basis of sexual differences.

Furthermore, the question of work incentives to low-income single parents must become a focal issue for funders of service. Disposable income (net income less necessary expenditures) constitutes assessed fee for service. Allowable expenditures on food, shelter, clothing and work-related expenses closely approach those set down by the Province in the Social Assistance Act although some flexibility in amounts is exercised through agency discretion. The debt exemption, however, forms the only exception to this formula. The assessed fee for service, then, includes almost all disposable income, but it is this portion of income that makes work a worthwhile endeavour for low-income, single, working parents. The formula used to assess fee for service appears to contain an economic incentive that is only minimal for recipients. Tangible money benefits are lacking although certain intangible benefits derived from work as opposed to welfare undoubtedly exist. However, the dignity and self-respect attained from employment may be insufficient if no significant material gains accompany them. It is concluded, therefore, that all disposable income should not be applied in payment for service.

As a result of the debt exemption, it may be argued that Homemaker Service supplies a greater incentive to male

users. Men clearly have more debts than do women and thus receive service at less cost although their incomes are higher than their female counterparts. This practice, of course, favours men and serves to reinforce differential standards of living for reasons cited previously.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Exempt at least 18% of net annual income for all applicants whether or not they have debt obligations.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Apply more generous minimum and maximum levels of allowable expenditures for basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing to reflect working class as opposed to welfare status.

These recommendations are based upon the conclusion that discrimination based on sex in the general labour force causes an imbalance in the ability of Homemaker Service applicants to support their families. Homemaker Service itself cannot be held responsible for the unequal treatment of women in the labour force or for the social attitudes, values, and customs which perpetrate them. If, however, sexual equality within this particular program is to become a reality, a fundamental re-examination of the eligibility structure is needed. Criteria must be developed and implemented in an attempt to correct the present inequities in the labour force. It is not enough for the agency to remain neutral for such a position is, in a sense, a condonation of existing sexual inequality. Guidelines presently employed by the agency make

no allowance for the pre-existent discrimination against women workers. This is particularly applicable to the Family Bureau Homemaker Service since the majority of its single parent applicants are female. Social conditioning demands that extra incentive be provided to single parent women to encourage them to become self-supporting and contributing members of society. Male applicants have greater employment and income opportunities as well as a stronger conditioned work drive. This is exemplified by their comparatively fewer numbers in receipt of a welfare supplement from the Province, and much smaller numbers completely dependent upon social assistance.

It is these types of deficiencies and inequalities which exist in our society which a social agency should try and meet. An important and essential role of social policy and social services should be to overcome current inequities and imbalances which serve to stifle optimum human development. Present Homemaker Service policy does not approach an espoused goal of sexual equality. Rather, it serves to accentuate or, at least, maintain a rift that has long been in existence.

Two final recommendations, related to future social policies and programs which will determine methods of delivery of child-care, serve to conclude this study. Federal and provincial government policy proposals indicate a preference for a Guaranteed Annual Income to best ensure adequate income for all Canadians. Based upon interview findings, it is speculated that this preference is not shared by

low-income, single, working parents who place strong value on the sense of self-sufficiency and self-respect gained from full participation in the labour force. It is also speculated that further research might reveal that this particular segment of the low-income sector favours alternative methods which contain strong incentives to work. Such alternatives would more closely coincide with shared values of self-sufficiency and a belief in work. Two of these alternatives were presented to interview respondents and proved to be substantially more popular than the Guaranteed Annual Income option.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That government decision-makers recognize the diversity in the values, aspirations and needs of the low-income sector. Social and economic policies designed to ensure individual self-fulfillment and social well-being must be sufficiently varied and flexible to recognize these differences.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That methods of delivery of child-care to low-income, single, working parents contain strong incentives to work in order to coincide with values of self-sufficiency and a belief in work shared, not only by this group, but also by the wider society.

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## APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Homemaker Service Intake Form



## DATE ALLOCATED AND TO WHOM:

name	M. 1st name	W. 1st name	W. maiden name	Date	W.	No.

Address: Mr.			How did client learn of F.B. and/or referred by:
Mrs.			
Telephone - Home:		Office:	Client initiating contact:
Mr.			Who will take part initially?
Mrs.			
Marriage Date:	Birth Date	Occupation or Grade	Problem:
			Help Wanted:
			Cross References: (Prev. unions, relatives, others) -
			MC CLC W SEP. DIV. S
			NOTES:
Other Significant Information:			

## Appendix B

### List of Eligibility Requirements and Conditions for Homemaker Service

Eligibility

The following situations are typical of the circumstances in which our service is available.

- a) Parent hospitalized or to be hospitalized
- b) Parent ill or convalescing at home
- c) Parent is physically or mentally disabled
- d) Parent deceased
- e) Parent absent due to desertion, separation or divorce
- f) Parent needs tutorial help in developing homemaker skills
- g) Parent needs help in caring for handicapped or ill child
- h) Both parents away - one works, one goes to school
- i) Relief of mother of a large family

The following circumstances render a family ineligible for our homemaker service.

- 1. We do not usually place a homemaker if there is no responsible parent or guardian in the home i.e. single parent family where the parent is in hospital or out of the home for a twenty-four hour period and not able to supervise the home and children.
- 2. If there are two working parents, service is not provided unless there are unusual circumstances such as the illness of one parent.
- 3. We do not provide help for most simple confinements. However, if there are complications or no available alternative care plan, as in the case of a large family, we will attempt to provide help.

4. We do not assist in situations where parents are requesting care of their children while the parents are on vacation or otherwise absent by personal choice.
5. We do not ordinarily place a homemaker for the care of only one child except where a gross health problem exists or when a specific difficulty of an emotional nature which the parents are unable to handle is the reason for the request.
6. We do not use our homemakers for the care of elderly individuals or for the care of only one person who is incapacitated or injured as other agencies are currently involved in providing this specialized care.
7. We attempt to avoid misusing homemakers by not placing them in homes requiring only a convenient babysitter or a periodic housemaid.

## Appendix C

### Homemaker Service Financial Assessment

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ASSESSMENT

NAME..... DATE.....  
 FILE NO..... SOCIAL WORKER.....  
 PROGRAM.....  
 ADMISSION DATE.....

RESOURCES (MONTHLY)

Gross Monthly Earned Income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Compulsory Deductions:

Income Tax \_\_\_\_\_

Unemployment Ins. \_\_\_\_\_

Pension Plan Payments \_\_\_\_\_

Canada Pension \_\_\_\_\_

Contributory Ins. \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Expenses of working:

Union Dues \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation \_\_\_\_\_

Meal Costs \_\_\_\_\_

Spec. Clothing \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Net Earned Income:.....

Exclusions on Net Income.....

Available Resources:

Net Income Balance.....

Maintenance.....

Rental.....

Boarder.....

Other.....

Total..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment (monthly)..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost of Care (daily)..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Social Allowance Grant..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSES (MONTHLY)

Mortgage (Prin. + Int.).....

Taxes.....

Insurance.....

OR Repairs.....

Rent.....

Fuel.....

Utilities (Light, water)....

Food.....

Clothing.....

Personal.....

Household Supplies.....

TOTAL BASIC EXPENSES: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs: (monthly)

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

General Health,  
dental \_\_\_\_\_Other Payments Necessary:  
(detail over page)

Total.....

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D

Letter of Introduction for The Interview

# The Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg

264 EDMONTON STREET, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA R3C 1R9, PHONE 947-1401  
Accredited Agency, Family Service Association of America



President: Mr. Robert G. Plaxton

Executive Director:

Miss Winnie Fung

April 7, 1975

Dear

An independent survey of Homemaker Service is being undertaken by Ms. Penny Scurfield, a student of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of the survey is to discover whether male and female applicants for service are treated differently or if they are treated equally.

In order to complete the survey, Ms. Scurfield would like to talk to persons who received Homemaker Service as well as to those who did not. The survey covers people who requested service between November, 1973 and October, 1974. Ms. Scurfield will phone you at the end of this week to set up an interview time and place that is most convenient for you.

Your help would be very much appreciated by Ms. Scurfield as she requires your opinions and impressions in order to gain a true picture of the Homemaker program. You do, however, have the right to refuse such an interview and may inform Ms. Scurfield of this when she contacts you by phone.

The general results of the survey will be made available to Homemaker program personnel here at the Family Bureau. Names of persons who participate in it, however, will not be revealed to us.

We support any survey that can help us to make improvements in our service to people. Therefore, we hope you will support this survey being done by Ms. Scurfield.

Yours truly, *[Signature]*

(Miss) Cae Gillon  
Director  
Homemaker Program



## Appendix E

### The Interview

InterviewPart I. Group Identification

1. Sex: male \_\_\_\_\_  
female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Outcome of Request: Received Service \_\_\_\_\_  
Did Not Receive Service \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ages of Children \_\_\_\_\_

Part II. Homemaker Service

4. Why did you ask for homemaker service?
  - a) What were family circumstances?
  - b) Did you consider alternatives?
  - c) What, if anything, about homemaker service influenced your decision?
5. Did you receive the service? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_
6. If received, did homemaker service help you? How?
  - a) What did you like about it?
  - b) What didn't you like about it?
7. Would you ask for homemaker service again? Why?
8. If you didn't receive homemaker service, why?
9. What other arrangements did you make?
10. Were they satisfactory?
  - a) What did you like about them?
  - b) What did you dislike about them?
11. Would you still have preferred homemaker service? Why?

Part III. Preferred Child-Care Arrangements and  
Methods of Delivery

12. If money were no object, what type of child-care would you choose for your children?
13. Why would you choose this type of arrangement?
14. If money is a problem, would you rather be provided with money to pay for child-care or would you prefer to obtain service from a community agency on an ability-to-pay basis?
15. Would you like to see child-care programs and services offered by community agencies expanded?
16. Money to cover child-care expenses could be provided to you in a number of ways. Which of the following methods would be most acceptable to you? Please explain why.
  - A. Through a Guaranteed Annual Income that allows a realistic amount for child-care expenses.
  - B. Through increased personal tax exemptions for child-care. Right now, you can claim up to \$540.00 a year for child-care. Would you like to see this amount increased to a more realistic level?

Would you want to be reimbursed once a year with your annual income tax return or would you prefer to see a reduction of tax in each pay cheque that you receive from work?

- C. Through a government subsidy paid to you to cover the part of child-care expenses which you cannot manage.