

Toronto's First Street Kids and the Origins of Child Welfare Systems in Canada Part 1: the early Years

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Abstract

This study focuses on the evolution of a philanthropic movement in the second half of 19th Century Canada that gave particular attention to a population of children and youth in Toronto known as newsboys and newsgirls. The plight of these children, who were largely living on the streets although in many instances still connected in varying degrees to their families, attracted growing attention in Toronto as the city emerged as a major commercial and industrial hub in Canada in the closing decades of the century. Mounting public concern about these wayward young people was fueled by alarmist (though sometimes sympathetic) newspaper accounts of an expanding population of children and youth who were plying their trade from a very young age on the streets selling newspapers, shoelaces, pencils and later working as what were called bootblacks. In establishment circles, these children and youth came to be viewed as a threat to public order whose rough apprenticeship on the streets, so it was speculated, left them vulnerable to a life of crime and prostitution later in life. However, in time, the attention that this population garnered did help usher in a new era that began giving recognition to some fundamental rights of all children. From this, we witness the begrudging acceptance in those early days of a more activist role that government might play in the development of policies that allowed for greater state intervention in protecting vulnerable and marginalized children and youth.

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Introduction

On May 27, 1893, An Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and better Protection of Children was enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario. This landmark piece of legislation laid the foundation of the child welfare system in Ontario and beyond. In fact, it is fair to say that the foundations of present day systems of provincial and territorial child welfare across Canada can be dated from this Act. It can also be argued, for better or worse, that many of the tenets underpinning this legislation have endured to this day. For its time, this one piece of legislation helped consolidate a new way of thinking about destitute and dependent children that had been gaining momentum since the middle 1880s and influenced by events occurring earlier in the century. As Ramsay has noted: 'it established in law a principle vital to organised child welfare services. This principle was that the state has a right to appraise the suitability of a child's environment, and if deemed advisable, in the interests of the child, to remove him from his home and substitute another type of care' (p. 7). The Province of Nova Scotia had earlier passed child protection legislation in March, 1882 reflecting this new shift in attitudes about destitute and abused children that had been brewing for some time but it was the comprehensiveness of the Ontario legislation and the administrative mechanisms put in place to give teeth to the legislation that resulted in this piece of legislation being viewed as groundbreaking in a Canadian context. Subsequently, it led to six other provinces eventually enacting legislation modelled on the Ontario Act (Neff, p. 165). However, despite the legislative and policy shift, the Honourable J. M. Gibson, Provincial Secretary and author of the groundbreaking legislation conceded that much remained to be done to gain public support, as noted in his address to the Ontario Conference on Child-Saving hosted in Toronto in 1894, the first time such a conference was hosted in Canada:

In the first place, there is difficulty in getting the public to understand the legislation and what it means. In the next place, there is difficulty in getting municipal councils to sympathize with the work which you want carried out...Municipal Councils must be educated up to the importance of having the provisions of this law worked out. There is ahead of us, still waiting to be done, a great educational work, for I think you will admit that

we have experienced a want of the enthusiastic sympathy with the provisions of this Act which is so essential and desirable (p. 7).

This specific statutory milestone stood as the culmination of a spate of legislation passed over a short period of time under the Liberal Administration of Premier Oliver Mowat that reflected a more activist and interventionist approach by government to the plight of destitute children. The legislation was not completely novel for its time. To a great extent it drew its inspiration from a British statute known popularly as the Children's Charter, more formally cited as An Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children, 1889. However, in a Canadian context, the Ontario legislation passed four years later was considered quite progressive in its day and enshrined in law the statutory status of the newly established Children's Aid Society in Ontario with the expressed purpose of protecting children from cruelty and providing the care and control of neglected and dependent children. This particular piece of Ontario legislation, enacted in 1893, introduced the first comprehensive child protection system in Canada that formed part of a very ambitious legislative agenda that extended over much of the previous decade and included the added feature of a new bureaucratic structure to support the legislation.

There are a number of key features of this legislation worth noting. To begin, it adopted the expression 'place of safety' to include any industrial school or house of industry for boys or girls, or any shelter or temporary home established by any children's aid society or society for the protection of children. However, these designated 'places of safety' excluded jails, prisons or police cells that were often resorted to in the late 19th Century as shelters for absconded children living on the streets or those escaping from desperate family situations. The word 'constable' was to be applied to agents of municipalities, including Children's Aid Society (CAS) workers, empowered to carry out the provisions of the Act. A new position of Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children was to be established to oversee the administration of the new legislation. The penalties for ill abuse and neglect were clearly outlined:

Any person over sixteen years of age who, having the care, custody, control, or charge of a child, being a boy under the age of fourteen years, or being a girl under the age of sixteen years, willfully ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes such child, or causes or procures such child to be ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed in a manner likely to cause such child unnecessary suffering, or serious injury to its health, shall be guilty of an offence under this Act, and, on conviction thereof by a court of summary

jurisdiction, shall be liable, at the discretion of the court, to a fine not exceeding \$100, or alternatively, or in default of payment of such fine, or in addition thereto, to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for any term not exceeding three months (Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children of 1893, 174).

Further provisions precluded young people from begging, either directly or through the 'pretence of singing, playing, performing, offering anything for sale, or otherwise' (Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children of 1893, 174). Children were to be barred from premises where alcohol was offered for sale along with various forms of entertainment, circuses, etc. unless otherwise licensed by the local police magistrate or head of the municipality. Any person sending a boy under fourteen or a girl under sixteen out in this way could be committed to jail for three months and the child could be handed over to the guardianship of a local children's aid society. The Act clearly provided various options for the placement of children in those instances where there had been contravention of the provisions of the legislation. Orphanages and other shelters for children could be used as temporary homes. However, a key innovation provided under the Act was the establishment of 'well selected foster homes' in municipalities with 10,000 or more. In the first two years following the enactment of the legislation, 186 children were placed in foster homes in Ontario (Inspector's Report 1895). However, it was clearly stated that 'Children demented, idiotic or suffering from incurable or contagious diseases shall not be taken into these temporary homes' (Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children of 1893, 180). Again, this model of a foster care system was not completely novel. It drew its inspiration from the English and Scottish experiences and systems of foster care in place in the American States of Massachusetts, Michigan, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and Minnesota (Ramsey p29). In the Ontario context, local children's aid societies were to oversee and police the supervision and management of children in these homes. Children's Visiting Committees were to be established in each Electoral District with responsibility to oversee the day to day operations of the various facilities caring for children. Financial penalties could be levied on parents to help with the maintenance of the child placed in care. It is worth noting as well that the Act did not preclude any parent, teacher or other person having charge of a child to administer corporal punishment. For children under the age of 16 charged with offences, municipalities were to make separate provision for the custody and detention of such children. They were not to be confined in

ordinary lock-ups or police cells. Requirements for the actual trial of children charged with a crime are clearly spelled out in the legislation:

It shall be the duty of the judge to try all such children or examine into their cases and dispose thereof, where practicable, in premises other than the ordinary police court premises, or, where this is not practicable, in the private office of the judge, if he has one, or in some other room in the municipal buildings, or, if this be not practicable, then in the ordinary police court room, but only in such last mentioned case when an interval of two hours shall have elapsed after the other trials or examinations for the day have been disposed of (Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children of 1893, 189).

Throughout much of the 19th century, court proceedings at the municipal level were viewed as a form of popular entertainment and attracted much attention and some notoriety at the same time. This new found emphasis on providing the child with a certain level of discretion and privacy extended to preliminary charges of cruelty by a parent or parents which allowed the judge to hold the preliminary examination or the actual trial itself against any parent to take place in the house where the parent resided if requested by the parent with a clear stipulation on who could be present during such proceedings. A final clause of the Act allowed municipalities to impose curfews on children and fines on parents when curfews were not observed. Five conditions were established for qualifying as neglected:

1. Child found begging or receiving alms.
2. Child found wondering about without a home or proper guardianship.
3. Child found associating or dwelling with a thief, drunkard or vagrant and growing up 'without salutary parental control'.
4. Child found in any house of ill repute or in company of a reputed prostitute.
5. Child found destitute— orphan or surviving parent in prison (Ramsey from Ontario Act 182).

To reinforce these latter provisions, passage quickly followed in 1894 of an Act Respecting the Arrest, Trial and Imprisonment of Youthful Offenders which was the forerunner of The Juvenile Delinquents Act of Canada enacted in 1908 that remained in place for most the 20th century. The result was the establishment in Toronto of the first Juvenile Court operating in North America in 1895.

As already noted, In the decade immediately preceding passage of this landmark piece of legislation, which became known in some circles as the Children's Charter, the Provincial Government in Ontario began to take a more activist approach to the protection of abused and neglected children starting with an Act for the Protection of Persons Employed in Factories in 1884 that prohibited employment of children where permanent injury to health was likely. No child was to work more than 10 hours per day. Following on the heels of this legislation was passage of an Act for the protection of Infant Children in April, 1887; an Act respecting the Maintenance of Wives deserted by their Husbands, March 1888; an Act for the Protection and Reformation of Neglected Children, March, 1888; an Act respecting the custody of Juvenile Offenders, April, 1890; an Act respecting the Commitment of Persons of Tender Years , April, 1890 and in May, 1891 passage of an Act respecting Truancy and Compulsory School Attendance.

The early piece of legislation focusing on infant children was intended to address the growing abuse of 'baby farms' and the practice of parents entrusting their infants to wet nurses for extended periods of time. This had become a lucrative business enterprise in the second half of the 19th Century but alarmingly high infant mortality rates had attracted government attention through the 1880s. The Married Women Maintenance in case of Desertion Act, 1888 allowed any married woman, deserted by her husband, to seek redress through any police magistrate or justices of the peace. Husbands could be ordered to pay a weekly sum to their wives not exceeding \$5.00. Failure to make such payments could result in a court summons being issued requiring the husband to be present to respond to the wife's claim of non-payment. However, Section 5 of the Act stipulated that 'no order for payment shall be made in favour of a wife who is proved to have committed adultery, unless the adultery has been condoned'. On March 23, 1888, Royal Assent was given to an Act for the Protection and Reformation of Neglected Children. Section 2 of the Act spells out the specific intent of this legislation:

On proof that a child under fourteen years of age, by reason of the neglect, crime, drunkenness or other vices of its parent, or from orphanage, or any other cause, is growing up in circumstances exposing such child to bad, or dissolute life, or on proof that any child under fourteen years of age, being an orphan, has been found begging in any street, highway, or public place, a Judge may order such child to be committed to any Industrial School or Refuge for boys or girls, or other institution, subject to the inspection of the Inspector of Prisons and Asylums, or to any suitable charitable society

authorized under The Act respecting Apprentices and Minors, and willing to receive such child, to be there kept, cared for and educated, for a period not extending beyond the period at which such child shall attain the age of eighteen years (Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Better Protection of Children of 1893, 174).

Section 6 of the Act called for the municipality, where the child is resident at the time of committal, to contribute to the maintenance of the child up to an amount not exceeding \$2 per week. The Act also provided for juvenile offenders to be tried apart from other offenders. At this time, a shift in attitudes about young offenders was clearly reflected in passage of an Act Respecting the Custody of Juvenile Offenders (assented to on April 7, 1890). This legislation allowed for diversion of children under the age of 13 who previously could be incarcerated in the provincial reformatory in Penetanguishene north of Toronto or a common jail or be committed to one of the certified industrial schools whose champion through the 1880s was William Howard who served as Mayor of Toronto from 1886 to 1888. A year later a supplementary piece of legislation entitled an Act Respecting the Commitment of Persons of Tender Years was enacted stipulating that 'No boy shall be received for confinement in the Ontario Reformatory for Boys who appears to the superintendent of the reformatory to be under the age of thirteen years'. Such children were to be detained in an industrial school 'until he be reformed' or fit to be apprenticed or 'bound out' or permanently or provisionally discharged under the provisions of the Industrial Schools Act of 1877. The offender was not to be detained beyond the age of 17 years. Children deemed to be incorrigible could still be referred to the provincial reformatory for the duration of their period of incarceration.

At this same time, the Ontario school system began to take shape under the initial direction of Egerton Ryerson (Superintendent of Education for Canada West and Ontario from 1844 until his retirement in 1876). In the years between 1871 and 1891, it became a more widely accepted notion that compulsory schooling might serve as a potent weapon in the arsenal of social reformers—often referred to as child savers-- for redeeming unruly children and youth, referred to in the popular press as 'street arabs'. Such a measure, it was contended, would turn them into pliable and productive members of the laboring classes where they would be inculcated with 'self-discipline, punctuality, virtue of hard work, obedience, patience, commitment to work' (Cross, 1985, p. 49). In 1873, a colourful banner hung over the entrance to the Phoebe Street School in downtown Toronto exhorting that 'Labour Conquers All Things' (Wilkinson, 1873, p. 1). However, it took several years before concrete action was taken with

passage in 1891 of an Act Respecting Truancy and Compulsory School attendance. All children between the age of eight and 14 years were required to attend school for the full term in which the local school in which the young person resided was open. Penalties were to be assigned in cases of non-attendance but with some exceptions. Employment during school hours was to be prohibited and employers would be fined if found in violation of the act. Truant officers were to be appointed to enforce the new requirement. Reflecting a propensity in the various pieces of legislation to demonise parents, fines would be imposed on parents who failed to ensure that their children were attending school. However, despite this legislation, school attendance remained erratic into the early 20th century and chronically high levels of truancy were typically blamed on parents even though in many cases, out of desperation, children were needed to provide supplementary income to support the family. Also, these school environments were alien to most working class children who were not able to escape the class bias and authoritarianism of the society around them but at least enjoyed freedom of movement on the street that the constrained, unwelcoming and restrictive classroom environment could not compete with (Bullen, 1988, p. 328).

The significance of the 1893 Act and the legislation leading up to it cannot be understated as pointed out by Jones and Rutman (1981) in their history of the Children's Aid Society in Ontario:

Although there had been provisions for the indenture and institutionalization of neglected, dependent, and delinquent children on the statute books in Upper Canada during the previous hundred years, it was the 1893 Act which first provided for the establishment of Children's Aid Societies with extensive legal powers to intervene in cases of child neglect and cruelty, and which gave official sanction to the foster care system of looking after mistreated children (vii).

The 1893 legislation put in place the basic infrastructural elements of a system that would endure well into the 20th century and up to the present day in many respects. To best understand the thinking underpinning these developments, it is important to understand the changing societal attitudes and prejudices that drove the shift in thinking and the legislative action that followed. For much of the 19th century, the charity model held sway often driven by strong sectarian, evangelical aims and an obsessive and harsh antipathy to creating dependency among the impoverished class as illustrated by the following editorial that appeared in the *Globe* [Toronto] in 1874:

Promiscuous alms giving is fatal...it is the patent process for the manufacture of paupers out of the worthless and improvident. A poor law is a legislative machine for the manufacture of pauperism. It is true mercy to say that it would be better that a few individuals should die of starvation than that a pauper class should be raised up (Splane, 1965, p. 16)

Philanthropic efforts throughout the 19th century rested in the hands of the social elite and a growing and increasingly prosperous middle class who were quick to pass judgment on the condition of the working class poor and especially the quality of family life by reference to their own standards (Huston). At no point were the poor and destitute consulted about the level of assistance provided to them and the stringent conditions under which charity would be dispensed. Neglected children were commonly viewed as potential criminals and threats to public safety. The vested interests of the elites focused on personal and property security which is an enduring theme throughout the 19th century. A modification in that thinking began to emerge in the second half of the 19th century that gave more attention to protection as well as provision for custodial type care initially in orphanages, houses of industry and industrial schools. This led to a shift in thinking in favour of foster care as espoused by the children's aid societies that emerged following the enactment of the 1893 Act. Rapid population growth in the second half of the 19th century in Toronto and elsewhere started with the mass immigration of poor, diseased and displaced Irish in the late 1840s who were mostly Catholic and attracted the disdain and revulsion of the largely Protestant host population who, with considerable reluctance, received them. It didn't help that these new arrivals brought with them deadly cholera and typhus epidemics. Through much of this period, and out of necessity, government in Canada West (as Ontario was known before Confederation in 1867) begrudgingly provided sporadic funding to various charitable organisations. Eventually, by 1872-73, 15 institutions in the province received funding for the care of orphans and neglected and abandoned children as noted in the Sixth Annual Report of the Inspector of Asylums, Prisons and Charities (p. 134). However, it was through the Charity Aid Act of 1874 that the government of the day, with some reluctance, began to provide a modicum of stable and consistent funding and increased oversight of private voluntary organisations (hospitals, poor houses, orphanages and rescue homes) through assistance to indigent populations and organised along sectarian lines (McCullough, 2002, p. 20).

One of the most enduring themes throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century was the redemptive value of labour as a means of saving indigent

children—mostly through indentured apprenticeships for boys and preparation for domestic service for girls. As Lloyd deMause has observed 'it should be remembered that children did much of the work of the world long before child labour became such an issue in the nineteenth century, generally from the age of four or five' (p. 20). As large scale manufacturing and industrialisation took shape in Canada's largest urban centres of Toronto, Montreal and Hamilton, significant numbers of children were recruited as wage earners in manufacturing and commercial factories. In many instances, these children provided an essential safety net for their vulnerable families constantly exposed to the risk of unemployment and death or injury of the primary breadwinner who was likely to be the father or in cases of desertion a mother struggling to make ends meet through sweat shop labour in the home.

Throughout the 19th century, philanthropy and charity work was largely private and church based with government playing a minimal role. In fact, two parallel systems evolved throughout the second half of the century in Ontario based on sectarian divisions and religious strife that marked most of that period. It was the Irish famine in the summer of 1847 that witnessed the first major influx of desperate Irish Catholics, prompting the Catholic church and the fledgling Diocese of Toronto to establish its own charitable infrastructure in order to ward off aggressive proselytizing by evangelical Protestants and hostility from the growing power of the Protestant Orange Order which had arrived in Ontario (then Upper Canada) from Ireland in the 1820s. Most of the famine victims were desperately poor, unskilled and prone to diseases such as cholera and typhoid. As well, they were a largely rural people who were ill equipped to deal with urbanisation and impending industrialisation that characterised the second half of the 19th century (Moir, 1993, p. 316). The Church quickly established itself as protector as noted by Mauro Ho:

the Catholic Church was motivated by fears that Catholic immigrants would turn to the voluntary efforts of Protestant churches if Catholic Services were unavailable. Religious charities, whether they were Catholic or Protestant, were not limited to providing aid to the poor. Their agendas also encompassed moral reform, religious conversion and assimilation (p. 19).

Ten years later in Toronto, the impact of the mass influx of destitute Irish was still being felt as illustrated by this article in the August 4, 1857 issue of the *British Colonist* [Toronto]:

Pass where you will, you are beset with some sturdy applicants for alms. They dodge you round corners, follow you into shops, they are to be found at the church steps, and at the door of the theatre. They crowd into the lobby of the post office, assail you on every street, knock at your private residence, walk into your place of business and beard you with a pertinacity that takes no denial. In this, our good city of Toronto, begging has assumed the dignity of a craft. Whole families sally forth and have their appointed round. Children are taught to dissemble, to tell a lying tale of misery and woe, and beg or steal as occasion offers.

During the early decades of the 19th century, much of the emigration from Ireland had been Protestant and composed mainly of members of trades and the professions and thus, easier to assimilate. All that changed in the summer of 1847. By 1848, the population of Toronto had grown to 23,000 and Irish famine immigrants increased that to over 30,000 by the time of the 1850 census. The breakdown of the 1851 census shows English 4,958, Scottish 2,169, Irish 11,305, Canadian not of French origin 9,856, French 467, American 1,405 and others 515 (Masters, 1977, p. 21). Within a short period of time, hundreds of orphans roamed the streets earning a pittance by selling newspapers. From very early on, these orphaned children—forming a significant portion of a semi-permanent underclass-- showed a preference to roam the streets rather than resort to finding shelter in the various institutions that sprung up, especially during the 1860s and 1870s. Exacerbating the problem was the incidence of abandonment by fathers seeking transient labour outside of Toronto who failed to send money back to their families adding to the desperation of deserted wives and children creating a burden to the community. As Harney (1985) has pointed out, 'the streets were filled with Irish Catholic youths who joined forces as "Street Arabs" becoming newsboys and boot-blacks' and created Toronto's first street youth culture in the second half of the 19th century (p. 60). Another result of this mass influx of desperately poor people was a long period of ethnic and religious hatred that permeated Ontario and Toronto society throughout the 19th century with remnants of that hostility continuing well into the 20th century. Harney has made the point that 'although the Irish Catholics were never fully accepted, they were tolerated eventually and formed another side of Victorian Toronto society—the first ethnic side' (p. 68). However, this would take some time. Like many immigrant groups to follow, these early arrivals tended to congregate in the poorer part of town, namely Macaulay Town which formed the southern portion of St. John's Ward established in 1851. The area that came to be known as Corktown close by St. Paul's Church, the first Catholic Church in

Toronto founded in 1822 and Cabbagetown which housed a mixed population of Catholic and Protestant Irish. Their plight was bleak as illustrated by the following:

They crowded into the tenement and single dwellings in Cabbagetown and on the waterfront, or lived in the shanty towns in the Don Basin or in barns on the periphery of the city, subsisting on what they could grow, beg, or steal. In addition, they retained past forms of social adjustment or defence mechanisms, which had been common in Ireland, including violence as a weapon against prejudice, drunkenness as an escape from a harsh environment, distrust of civil authority, and reliance on their own forms of justice (Nicolson, 1993, p. 158).

The impact of those traumatic events of the summer of 1847 still resonated as late as 1889 when W. H. Howland, Mayor of Toronto, addressed the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada and made obliquely derogatory reference to the earlier Irish poor and their plight:

The first cause is, of course, drinking and the second cause is the sending out to the country of people who are unsuited to making a living here—the sending out of great numbers of people who have got the poor-house taint, and who never will work or do any good anywhere...For instance there was a colony of a poor class sent out from some of the towns in Ireland some years ago; they are nearly all to be traced here at the present time, and to a large extent they have remained a charge on the people of this country (p. 159).

The massive wave of immigration peaked in 1851 (the ravages of the Famine had abated by this time) with the arrival in the harbor of Toronto of over 51,000 new immigrants. According to Barbara Sanford (1987) 'many, if not most of the new Irish immigrants arrived penniless and sick. As there were few jobs available in Toronto, those who were able moved on, leaving only the most destitute in the city' (p. 24). Newspaper accounts of the time capture the sheer desperation of the new arrivals:

The Quay at Toronto was crowded with a throng of dying and diseased objects; the living and the dead lay huddled together in terrible embrace. The fever...spread with rapid violence throughout Canada and the inhabitants though they were reduced to great extremity for want of labour,

fled from contact with this gigantic imitation of mortality (The Times, London, 1849).

After 1850, the tide shifted as new regulations diverted much of the traffic across the border to the U.S. In 1847, Toronto received 38,560 new arrivals but 35,650 were sent on but many returned. (Duncan p. 23). The lack of employment and the hostility of the host population left few options other than flocking into the custodial institutions that had been established in the Province or being housed in the local jails which provided places of shelter through much of the remainder of the 19th century and forced mixing with criminals, prostitutes, drunkards and the mentally ill. In 1853, the Roman Catholic chaplain of the provincial penitentiary, in his report to the Legislative Assembly noted that 'persons may be startled at seeing that the great majority of the Catholic convicts are either Irish or of Irish extraction whereas the Irish Catholics do not form much over one-fourth of the whole Catholic population'. He goes on to write that 'about twenty Catholic female convicts in the penitentiary; of this number two are French Canadian, one a black woman, and all the others are either Irish or of Irish extraction' (Appendix 3). Therefore, it is not surprising, as Duncan points out, that 'the Irish, arriving in rags and in hunger and driven to crime by their desperate situations and unenviable prospects, forced the society that received them to create, even if belatedly, a more adequate provision for public welfare and a more humane system of prisons, hospitals, and asylums' (p33). The consequences for much of the second half of the century, as Duncan goes on to describe, led to the following:

the introduction of controls over overseas immigration; the creation of an Irish Catholic urban proletariat; the development of areas of de facto segregation in cities; the accentuation of religious conflict; the introduction of religious considerations into political organization; the differentiation of the Irish population into Irish and Ulster Irish factions; the rapid construction of a network of rail communications; the introduction of a tradition of violence to gain economic, religious, and political ends; and greatly increased crime (p. 33).

As history has shown, alcohol and the excitement of street life became what Duncan has described as 'temporary refuges from filth, vermin, disease, overcrowding, ignorance, discrimination, unemployment, exploitation, and early death' (p. 33). It is against this backdrop that a unique population of street youth appeared in the 1850s, mostly orphaned boys but some girls as well, who emerged as Toronto's first street youth eking out a living selling newspapers,

shoelaces and pencils. The more resourceful could graduate to being bootblacks or move into the lucrative sex trade or a life of petty crime. For most of these young people, life on the street held much greater appeal than incarceration in charitable institutions that would spring up, beginning in the 1850s to contain, what the more respectable elements of Victorian society in Toronto, would deem as a social menace.

Although altruism would undoubtedly play its part in the public response to the plight of the Famine Irish, little attention was given to explaining or attacking the roots of the destitution these people faced in their lives. Instead, most emphasis was placed on keeping in check a largely illiterate and unskilled population, increasingly unruly and considered a threat to public safety. The Calvinistic moral standards set by the Protestant majority saw the Catholicism of the new arrivals as a real threat to the Protestant hegemony that held sway since the formation of Upper Canada in 1792. Nearly a decade after the arrival of the first Famine immigrants, the scale of public hostility to the new arrivals is vividly captured by this excerpt to a letter from a prosperous Baptist merchant who wrote to his brother in England deploring the problem of finding domestic labour: 'I am going to see if I can get a free Nigger Gal instead of these Irish vermin' (Dyster, 1970, p. 443). At a time of such high unemployment, it is puzzling from our contemporary perspective that such a remark would be made and full of such vitriol and bigotry and yet it must be kept in mind that this was typical mainstream thinking of the time and influenced government policy up to the late 1880s.

Aided by an aggressive and progressive legislative agenda in the final decades of the century, the elements of a child welfare system began to take shape. However, the forces of class distinctions, ethnic conflict and religious tensions continued to influence developments throughout the second half of the 19th century and well into the 20th century. Through our secular lens, it may be difficult to understand the potent force that religion played during this time but as William Jenkins has pointed out 'sectarian distinctions were shot through Toronto's landscape of charity' (p. 93). This first mass migration of people, viewed as alien, dramatically changed the demographics of the fledgling province and Toronto, its largest urban centre. Even more alien populations would begin appearing in the closing decades of the 19th century with the arrival of Jews, Italians and other groups from eastern Europe. Although roughly 30% of the new Irish Famine migrants were Protestant, they quickly received aid from the newly established Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, Church of England congregations and the Orange Lodges who had made their presence felt in

Ontario in the early 1820s. These bodies assisted their co-religionists to assimilate fairly quickly and access job opportunities within the business and commercial sectors because they were Protestant and often literate. Catholicism, on the other hand, was quickly viewed as synonymous with chronic poverty and criminality in the minds of many more affluent Toronto Protestants (Jenkins p. 69). The new Irish immigrants were deemed to be a social menace along with being carriers of disease. The social symptoms they displayed through high rates of violence, alcohol abuse and family dissension and desertion reinforced old stereotypes that were fueled by the venom pouring forth from newspapers, pamphlets and public addresses. Some of the most rabid diatribes against Irish Catholics came from George Brown, founder of *The Globe*, one of Toronto's leading newspapers:

'They increase taxation for the poor. They render necessary a strong police. They are the keepers of our lowest tippling houses. They are our chief rioters. They build our Papal churches and were it not for our poorhouses, jails, penitentiaries and Magdalen Asylums would be far less necessary and frequently empty' (Nicolson, 1984, p. 13).

The stubbornly chronic condition of the Famine arrivals lasted throughout much of the second half of the 19th century. Having to fall back on their own meager resources, it should not come as a surprise that a significant element of this newly arrived population would find sustenance through life on the streets by means of begging, peddling, part-time precarious labour of a seasonal nature and petty crime. The one organisation able to provide some relief was the Catholic Church which sprang quickly into action in the late 1840s and early 1850s to put in place the elements of a Catholic charity infrastructure. It was only in the late 1880s that both Catholics and Protestants could begin to find common ground for promoting social reform and increased government intervention in social welfare, a term that did not enter the popular vocabulary until early in the 20th century (Maurutto, 2003, p. 15). For much of the previous period, relationships were marred by mutual suspicion and even competition for the souls of the wayward and destitute. The work to build this Catholic infrastructure, with a dual agenda of providing relief to the destitute and strengthening the faith of adherents, rested with Michael Power who was appointed first bishop of the new Diocese of Toronto in 1842. As Mauro Ho has observed, the Catholic Church was motivated by fear that Catholic immigrants would turn to the voluntary efforts of Protestant churches if Catholic services were unavailable (p. 19). Religious charities, whether they were Catholic or Protestant, were not limited to providing aid to the poor. Their agencies also

extolled priorities of moral reform, religious conversion and assimilation. For example, it became quite evident in the late 1840s that the Widows and Orphans Fund and the House of Industry were being used as a means to convert the Irish poor to Protestantism (Ho, p. 3) It was through the well-founded fear of Protestant proselytism that a parallel system of charity was established and it was the religious orders and lay organisations that would take the lead with Maurutto (2003) pointing out that many of the priests and nuns who staffed benevolent institutions were themselves of Irish poor origins and descendants of the famine émigrés (p. 28). Such a class position engendered an empathetic response to the poor that differed significantly from programs devised by middle-class Protestants. In the early years following the Famine crisis, initiatives to support the desperate new immigrants were largely self-supporting. However, following passage of the Charity Aid Act of 1874, when lump sum contributions to charities were replaced by per diem rates, Toronto's Catholic charities started to receive funding commensurate with the disproportionately high number of the city's Catholic poor (Maurutto, 2003, p. 35). From this point onwards, a convergence of sorts began the trend to a more unified and integrated service delivery system. However, it would be well into the 20th century before this trend reached full fruition. During and following the Famine influx, the Catholic Church very quickly grasped the implications of what became known as 'soupperism' which entailed Protestant evangelicals gathering at the wharf of the various ports—especially at Quebec and Montreal— where immigrants disembarked and were offered a bowl of soup in return for conversion to Protestantism with the call 'a bowl of soup if ye'll turn'—a common refrain to be heard until the end of the 19th century (McGowan, 2005, p. 120).

As Gerald Stortz (1980) has pointed out, the Church moved quickly to ward off the threat of assimilation by establishing the rudiments of a comprehensive network of charities that would evolve and become firmly entrenched by the end of the century and stem any seepage (p. 78). This process started with Michael Power the first Catholic Bishop of Toronto who died ministering to the new arrivals in 1847 and followed by his successors, Bishop Charbonnel and Lynch. It was Charbonnel, in particular, who was able to recruit the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Brothers of the Christian School, the Basilian Fathers who went on to found St. Michael's College and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The plight of the early religious is quite poignantly captured in the Annals of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the decade following their arrival in Toronto:

The responsibility of supporting the House of Providence pressed heavily upon the little Community and the Sisters had to solicit alms from door to

door. Hard work was made even harder by the lack of conveniences. The Sisters took in washing and the water had to be carried from King Street to the House as there was only a small pump in front of the building which supplied drinking water to the inmates. They paid .25 a barrel for all the water they used. Often the work of water-carrying was begun at two or three o'clock in the morning. At other times, the evening hours were devoted to this laborious task (p. 250).

Under the auspices of the various religious bodies, the Church was able to gain a firmer hold on its flock and impose a level of discipline on their unruly Irish congregants that would, over time, gain for them a qualified level of acceptance from their fellow citizens through its inter-connected network of social services, parishes, schools and religious institutions (Parthun, 1988, p. 4). In addition to benevolent societies set up by Catholic women, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, begun in Paris, France in 1833 by Roman Catholic university students in Paris under Frederic Ozanam (O'Driscoll p. 2). It was a lay organisation of men committed to the spiritual development of its members and to work with the poor (Parthun, 1988, p. 3). Vincent de Paul was a 17th century theologian and social reformer who 'combined a commitment to planned, encompassing social services with traditional Catholic charity' (O'Driscoll p. 2). Following its introduction to Canada in Quebec City in 1846, the Society held its first gathering or conference in Toronto on November 10, 1850 and quickly set out to work with the destitute and poor fleeing the Famine in Ireland (Jubilee p. 3). Mark McGowan (2005) captures quite effectively how the Church so adroitly mobilised its resources in the second half of the 19th century:

The sudden and continued burst of activity with the construction of new churches, rectories, halls, schools, orphanages, the House of Providence, hostels for girls, apprentices and newsboys, the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the religious orders and women's groups, and towards the end of the century, the establishment of St. Michael's Hospital and the Catholic Children's Aid Society did little to allay Protestant fears (p. 121).

McGowan goes on to argue that what the Protestant population failed to grasp was that Catholic institutions in the city grew in proportion to the inequity, intolerance, souperism and ill treatment Irish Catholic immigrants experienced in public institutions (p. 121). Over time however, although Protestantism continued to be the dominant force in religion in Toronto and much of Ontario throughout the second half of the 19th century and well into the 20th century, changes were afoot that would influence the emergence of a more secularised

welfare system in the closing years of the century. Neil Semple (1990) sums these up very clearly:

A fundamental transformation occurred in Protestant religion in Ontario during the nineteenth century. Into an environment defined by Anglican and Calvinist ideologies came not only the Wesleyan churches but, equally important, a new personal commitment to vital religion spawned by Wesley's English revival and the American 'Great Awakening'. Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Presbyterians and many with no previous religious belief were caught up in the revival and either altered their church affiliation or became active supporters of a personal, experimental spirituality within their own denominations (p. 96).

The mainstream Protestant churches had not been particularly welcoming of the unwashed poor and destitute as S. D. Clark (1942) has pointed out:

Respectability was a condition of membership in the church, and respectability was maintained by ignoring undesirable members of the population. Charitable contributors to the poor and sermons denouncing vice were means of preserving the isolation of these contaminating elements within the urban community. The psychological and philosophical assumptions of most of the leaders of the church, and the orthodox techniques of evangelization, made almost impossible the adoption of effective methods of dealing with problems such as the slum, crime, and prostitution. Elements of Protestant theology helped support the view that success in life was evidence of godly living and God's grace (p. 44).

From all the spiritual turmoil typical in the closing decades of the 19th century, emerged the Social Gospel movement that helped shape approaches to social and child welfare activity. Toronto became fertile ground for organisations like the Salvation Army, imported from Britain in the early 1880s, to stake out a claim in the turbulent streets of Toronto:

Toronto, unhappily, was not behind its great sister cities of the world. Prostitution was unblushingly rife. The first officers found the work more difficult than in English cities, for while the evil was apparent in those centres, here, in the New World, it was under cover and fiendishly camouflaged. They visited the Police Courts and, angels of mercy that they were, tracked down any clues to be picked up there. Houses of ill-fame were visited and earnest attempts were made to persuade the inmates to

leave their sordid trade. In the first few weeks a score of girls were plucked from the traffic, and most of them were, by God's changing power, successfully rehabilitated (Brown, 1952, p. 75).

The class system, wrote the editor of the *Christian Guardian* in 1884

Must exist as long as there are different degrees of thrift, intellect and religious education in a community, and the antagonism to the church among the lower classes, he felt, was to some extent the outcome of the feeling of the unsuccessful and the needy against those who are successful and comfortable. Their energies absorbed by denominational conflict and their funds by the construction of magnificent buildings housing high-rent pews, the organized churches left the work in the streets and slums to the revivalist movement of the 1890s and the Salvation Army, which mushroomed in the industrial cities (Saywell, 1967, p. 116).

By the 1880s, J. J. Kelso, a police reporter for the *World* [Toronto] and subsequently the *Globe*, summarised the conditions under which the urban poor eked out an existence:

Standards of life among the working classes were extremely low. Many families lived in unsanitary hovels fronting on lanes and alleys without toilet facilities. Wages are scandalously low, but men and women sought to drown their troubles in drinking saloons and drinking places were to be found on nearly every corner. Education was not compulsory and thousands of children rarely entered a school. During the winter, building trades were entirely suspended throwing a large force of men into idleness. To keep the family in food and the parents in drink, many children, girls as well as boys were sent on the street to sell newspapers and peddle laces and pencils and other trifles—a form of begging in disguise. Immorality among the children was exceedingly common and apart from a few church missions very little was done of a constructive character (Kelso, 1911, p. 52).

He goes on to observe:

Some of the boys live at home, but the majority are wanderers in the streets, selling papers generally and sometimes forced to be. In the summertime they can be out all night, but in the winter they are obliged to patronize the cheap lodging houses, the Newsboys' Home or St. Nicholas Home. The course of life they pursue leads to miserable results as when a

newsboy gets to be seventeen years of age he finds that his avocation is at an end, it does not produce money enough and he has acquired lazy, listless, habits which totally unfit him for any kind of work. He becomes a vagrant and perhaps worse a wanderer all over the country (Kelso, 1911, p. 56).

It is in this context that we can envisage the Dickensian image of roving gangs emerging in cities like Toronto passing time begging, stealing, peddling newspapers and composed mostly of young boys but some girls as well. Nor can we deny the emergence of a vibrant and exciting street life as an alternative to life in poorly constructed hovels racked by violence and disease, lacking safe drinking water, overcrowding, the stench from outdoor privies and total lack of waste disposal. In effect, public streets and back lanes became playgrounds and neighbourhood gathering places. It took no time for enterprising children and youth to discover that a living could be made by hanging out on street corners, outside pubs and saloons, train stations, hotels and other venues for popular entertainment. In an article appearing in *The Canadian Magazine*, Kelso (1894), writing in the sanctimonious style of the day, vividly outlines the conditions of life faced by many destitute children:

Consider the case of a child born of drunken and degraded parents, growing up in a hot-bed of vice; hearing nothing but profanity and obscenity; learning nothing of the difference between right and wrong; no prayer whispered over its cradle; no pure thoughts of a better life instilled in its budding mind; its playground the streets; its companions equally benighted with itself. It cannot attend school; it has no clothes; it is not kept clean; the mother would not take the trouble to send it, and school boards are not always sufficiently interested to provide accommodation and enforce attendance. Growing up untrained, except in evil and cunning ways, the child at seven or eight years of age is sent out to sell newspapers or to beg, sometimes to steal, on the streets constantly, and with companions older in vice than himself. The boy learns rapidly, until at age fifteen or sixteen he becomes a thief when opportunity offers, and trusts to luck to escape detection and retain freedom (pp. 212-213).

Generally viewed as petty criminals or criminals in the making, the street urchins or arabs, as they were often described in the popular press, mostly worked in pairs if not gangs, engaged primarily in mischief by pilfering clothing, food or cigars. In one incident described by Joy Parr, 25 pies were lifted from the pastry kitchen of the St. James Hotel on York Street (pp. 134-135). There was a

certain allure about life on the streets that was hard to resist. This would be a constant source of frustration to the authorities in the second half of the 19th century as their efforts to do good works were often rebuffed—especially by that segment of the street population known as newsboys and newsgirls. As Parr has noted 'youngsters who worked in the streets lived in an identifiable society of their own, frequenting the municipal baths and, more often, the pool halls and cheap theatricals' (p. 139). As a sympathetic observer of Toronto street life in the 1890's noted 'you can scarcely walk a block without your attention being drawn to one or more of the class called street boys' (Parr p4). To compound the hardship faced by the inhabitants of all ages in these slum districts, the increasing industrialisation brought with it a period of growing labour stridency often aggravated by cyclical economic depressions starting in the middle 1850s and continuing through into the 1890s.

In 1850, the population of Toronto was roughly 50,000. By 1900, the population had reached 200,000. With expansion of the railways beginning in the middle 1850s, Toronto very quickly became an important transportation hub leading to its emergence as a major manufacturing center beginning to rival Montreal as an economic and financial power house for the young country. The rough and tumble of everyday life made alcohol an important way of enduring life in the growing and congested slums that were emerging starting to the east of Yonge Street and then expanding into what became St. John's Ward with their outdoor toilets, garbage thrown onto the streets and hundreds of orphans roaming the streets who quickly were labelled as a menace to society. These first street kids were able to eke out a living on the streets by selling newspapers. Very early on, as already noted, they gained notoriety for choosing to live on the streets rather than use what few and deplorable shelters were available to them. As Masters (1977) has observed, as early as 1850, a clear social structure had emerged in Toronto composed of the old Family Compact aristocracy; an emerging mercantile class and everyone else as he put it (p21). By 1850, Toronto was able to support 5 newspapers in addition to a number of church circulars: *The Globe*, *the Examiner*, *the Patriot*, *the British Colonist*, *the Mirror* and *the North American*. It was primarily through this medium that we are able to track the plight of the growing number of destitute families in the city, many of whom had a parent, usually a father, who left Toronto to find jobs and never returned. The result was that the streets in the core of the city were filled with Irish Catholic children and youth branded as 'street arabs', as noted earlier, who formed the earliest contingents of newsboys and boot-blacks and remained as such throughout the period covered by this study. By the early 1870s, Careless

makes the point that increasing public support was beginning to take shape for a more structured welfare system under provincial auspices for obvious reasons:

Charitable provisions such as these were no less influenced by the rising concern among the possessing class over the dangerous potential for lawlessness that lay in the neglected and untaught. The filling city was generating a rowdy street youth from family breakdowns among its hard-pressed poorest elements, or from their need for every bit of income, which set poor children to work not just in homes or craft shops, but as newsboys, trifle pedlars and the like. Some indeed were homeless cast-offs, managing to keep alive by ingenuity, thievery or prostitution. All could be seen as present or future threats to moral, safe society (p101).

In response to these conditions, a rising faith was placed in general education, not only as a wholesale means of betterment but also as a community bulwark against poverty and crime. This new found commitment to public education occurred at a time when most children were involved in the labour force by the age of 14. The push for compulsory schooling was slow in gathering steam and was only partly altruistic in its intent like the other policy initiatives that would follow suit. A city wide public school board was first established in 1850 and compulsory schooling was first legislated in 1871 but never really enforced. The impact of an unstable job market and poor housing left their mark on the growing city:

Roaming tramps seemed to defy social regulation. Inadequate housing was a continual bane, winter unemployment a repeated scourge to the point that a City alderman moved in 1875 to set up 4 soup kitchens to provide some relief to the unemployed. His proposal was voted down on the basis that the city was already providing \$15,000 for charitable purposes of which \$4,000 went to the House of Industry. Job losses in bad years caused far more misery than any strikes which became increasingly common as the century wore on—so much so that the poor might put their children in orphanages to redeem them in better days from veritable pawnshops. Baby farming, broken families and battered wives, drunkenness, vagrancy and violent assault were still other vicious aspects of poverty on the dark side of Toronto the Good (Careless p147).

It would take some time yet before such a proposal would be put into action. In the meantime, the city fathers would focus their efforts on the establishment of a house of refuge with a mandate to relieve

the meritorious poor to exercise a strict control over the idle, the lewd, the dissolute and the vagrant members of the community. Its objects and purposes were: Firstly—for the relief of all indigent persons incapable of supporting themselves, such as the decrepit, deformed and invalid poor, the helpless orphan poor, the maimed, the blind, etc. and all who from supernatural causes may be incompetent to provide for themselves. Secondly—For all able-bodied without means of maintaining themselves, and all able bodied who refuse or neglect work. Thirdly—for all persons leading a lewd or vagrant life, and exercising no ordinary calling or lawful business sufficient to procure an honest livelihood. Fourthly—For all who spend their time in public-houses to the neglect of any useful calling. Fifthly—For all idiots, or such as from birth or from bodily infirmity, or severe visitation are bereft of reason without hope of restoration (City Council Minutes, January 17, 1859, p. 106).

What we witness here is an ongoing concern that only the deserving poor were worthy of relief but still needed to be policed just in case they gave in to dissolute ways. In 1869, the municipal council instituted a system of visitations by the Mayor and select city council members to charitable and benevolent institutions: the House of Industry; the Hospital; the House of Providence; the Magdalen Asylum; the Boys' Home; the Orphans' Home; the Sisters' School; the Lying in Hospital and the Public Nursery. By this time, the City was contributing a pittance to the operations of these institutions but used these visitations as a means to make sure that it was receiving good value for its beneficence.

Starting in 1867, following Confederation and establishment of the Provincial Government of Ontario (the British North America Act under the division of powers gave the provinces responsibility for health, education and social services), annual inspections were carried out by the Inspector of Asylums, Prisons, and Charities for Ontario whose reach then extended to include all institutions in the province serving neglected and destitute children. This signaled the beginning of significant state intervention in monitoring services for children, youth and families. Although the Ontario Government, as Maurutto (2003) has noted, was not directly involved in the distribution of welfare provisions, by the 1870s, it was clearly becoming more active in regulating and supporting the expansion of the charity sector (p. 5). Inspection became the *modus operandi* on the part of government in the way it chose to influence the sector. The Charity Aid Act of 1874 replaced lump sum grants with per diem rates in which funding was tied to the number of individuals cared for. One

outcome was that Catholic charities for the first time received a more equitable portion of the funding available.

By the late 1860s, two parallel networks of services for children, youth and families mentioned earlier had taken shape in Toronto—one Catholic and the other Protestant. As Stephen Speisman (1973) has pointed out 'prior to 1900, the very religious character of Toronto militated against the assumption of social welfare responsibilities by the city government' (p. 31). Religious bigotry was reinforced by a disproportionate number of Irish Catholics continuing to show up in police and court records. As industrialisation and manufacturing expanded, the labour movement was also becoming increasingly militant with intermittent strikes becoming increasingly commonplace. At the same time, religious tensions continued to be manifested in frequent sectarian driven riots. Families of the poor continued to be subjected to the instability of seasonal labour; it was quite common for people to live behind privies with garbage and food waste thrown in the back yard or out on the street leading to sporadic epidemics like the typhoid one in 1881 that was especially virulent (Sobel p. 3). Unemployment was rife during the winter period and women and girls, in particular, were likely to be engaged in home based sweat shop operations. It was mostly boys (although it included a minority of girls as well) worked the streets as newsboys and girls in order to supplement family incomes. Until well into the 19th century, the concept of a brief childhood prevailed in working class and poor families. A Philippe Aries (1962) has pointed out, 'once he had passed the age of five or seven, the child was immediately absorbed into the world of adults' (p. 329). However, starting in the late 1860s, the plight of newsboys was increasing drawing the attention of establishment philanthropists. The unseemly and very public profile of so many unkempt looking children hustling their wares on the streets of the city was viewed as an affront to the sensitivities of the urban elite (Jones & Rutman, 1981, p. 39). In their minds, street trading became associated with criminal and immoral activities. A direct link was established between neglect, crime and immorality. As a result, government was beginning to pay more attention to the problem as illustrated in this editorial in the *Globe* on February 27, 1869:

It will be strange if all the wealth and benevolence of Toronto be not able to grapple with all the juvenile ignorance, destitution and crime of our very progressive, flourishing and attractive, but as yet not very populous, metropolis; and stranger still, if all the talk about such juvenile waifs should, without any practical effort at all, end merely in talk.

Despite the dire conditions under which they eked out an existence, newsboys and girls were serious businessmen as Bettina Bradbury (2000) has pointed out. To a degree, this distinguishes them from the other waifs and strays who lived on the streets but they were always prone to exploitation and harassment by the police and the courts that all too often made little distinction between those children seeking to merely survive and the few who engaged in actual forms of crime (Bradbury, 2000, p. 206). For the latter, the Provincial Reformatory at Penetanguishene north of Toronto had been established in 1859 with the reception of 13 boys who had been transferred from the Kingston Penitentiary and 10 further from the Reformatory at Isle-aux-Noix with the total number reaching 94 by December 31 that increased in 1870 to 166 with the following breakdown in ages: one at nine; seven at 10; 10 at 11; 18 at 12; 16 at 13; 22 at 14; 7 at 15; 24 at 16; 22 at 17; 14 at 18; 9 at 19; 4 at 20; 2 at 21. It is interesting to note that of the 166 inmates, 24 had parents who both had died; 39 with the father having died and 27 the mother. For convicts having 'intemperate' parents 14 had both parents in this category with four just the father and a final nine with the mother (Second Report of Inspector of Asylums, etc. 39). Emphasis was placed on equipping the inmates with the rudiments of a trade through work in the carpentry shop and garden. In the report of the Warden, William Moore Kelly on October 18, 1869 he recommended that boys between the ages of 10 or 12 receive seven year sentences instead of the standard two so that they could gain more proficiency in a trade. He added the following anecdote during a recent visit to Toronto:

I was also accosted by one of the two years' boys, aged about 13, who had a set of shoe brushes in his hand; he told me that he sometimes made a dollar a day in this precarious mode of livelihood. If this poor youth had been sentenced to seven instead of two years, he would, with that period, have acquired a good trade, and at the same time have had the advantage of a secular and religious education (Second Report of Inspector of Asylums p. 83).

The brutal conditions of street life from the child's perspective from the 1850s and 60s onward are difficult to gauge. We need to mostly depend on the accounts of their 'betters' with time to spare who were literate and had the means to describe—often in somewhat florid and moralistic language—what conditions were like. Because charity throughout the 19th century was considered a personal and voluntary enterprise, dramatic tales appeared frequently in the newspapers as a means of pulling at the heart strings of a Victorian readership whose sentimental attachment to charity work with children

masked what Susan Houston refers to as a fundamentally disparaging view of the poor (Abstract). However, for a population unable to present its own authentic voice and lacking literacy, there are, in these narratives, fragments of the reality that street youth faced in their daily lives. One of the biggest fears of street youth through the 1850s and 1860s was coming in contact with the local constabulary and possibly ending up in the local jail which all too often became the only option for the destitute as well as criminal elements in the community. The response of the elites in the 1860s was to support the emergence of a network of private refuges intended to segregate children, in particular, from the less savoury elements of society as noted in 1859 when the Board of Inspectors of Asylums and Prisons stated in their report that: 'Our common Gaols are schools of vice, to which novices in crime repair to receive, in an atmosphere of idleness and debauchery, lessons in villainy from hardened adepts...who at once become their models and their guides' (Duncan p32). Unfortunately, however, the common jails remained an option until the end of the 19th century often in response to the economic depressions that recurred from the 1850s until midway through the 1890s as a result of increased industrialisation and population growth.

By the late 1860s, in particular, the newsboys of Toronto (and newsgirls to a lesser degree) were garnering increased attention from individual philanthropists because of their high visibility and the public ambivalence towards a class of street youth who were seen on one hand as vulnerable candidates for crime later in life while also attracting a certain amount of admiration for their entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen despite the daily hardships they faced. They tended to hang out on street corners in the commercial district, hotels and train stations. Attendance at school (compulsory schooling was introduced in 1871 but had little impact on the poor working class) but could not compete with the allure of street life. By the 1880s, as Bullen notes a rather sophisticated system of newspaper distribution had evolved:

The boys usually picked up and paid for their papers at the newspaper office and then rode the street car to various locations. Most lads worked alone, but more experienced boys bought their papers in bulk and distributed them among a network of younger sellers. Newsboys knew how to embellish a headline, especially those dealing with murder and scandal, to attract the attention of potential customers. Another common newsboy's trick was to approach a customer with a single newspaper claiming that it was the last one he had to sell before heading home. If the unwary citizen

fell for the con, the newsboy then returned to the hidden piles of papers and repeated the trick (p. 143).

One very real concern of the general public focused on career prospects once the typical newsboy outgrew the selling of newspapers and then the bootblack trade in late adolescence. The generally held view was that they might eventually become violent, untrustworthy adults who would become dependent on public resources (McCullough, 2002, p. 3). As a result, the idea of a lodging home for newsboys was first vetted in City Council proceedings in June, 1859 when, in reference to youth vagrancy it was proposed:

That a female be appointed to take charge of the Institution at a moderate salary, and also that a person may be engaged, whose character will bear the strictest inquiry, to give instruction two hours every evening in an English education, which will qualify the boys for useful employment. A bath room to be attached to the lodging house, a cut of bread to be given to each one night and morning, every lad will be expected to deposit not less than two pence every night and morning in a drawer or place of safe keeping, separately, with the name of the drawer, and that at the expiration of six months, the drawer to be opened in the presence of the Committee; the money so deposited in such drawers, shall be given to each boy, to be disposed of for clothing; if at any time before the expiration of six months, any boy or boys should obtain a situation, his drawer may be opened, and what he may have deposited shall be given him. This institution to be supported by public subscription not to be over three pence to each subscriber per week (Appendix to City Council Minutes, June 27, 1859).

Keeping in mind that the City Council was not prepared to draw on public funds for the support of such a home, the impetus for actually doing something about the plight of newsboys (there is no reference to girls at this point) came nearly a decade later from Professor Daniel Wilson of the University of Toronto. Following the precedent of establishment figures indulging in philanthropic interests, he set about to lease the old Canada Company on Frederick Street as a lodging house for newsboys. However, as Houston (1974) points out—and this was a challenge that would continue throughout the remainder of the century—this new shelter 'was to compete with the attractions of penny boarding houses, brothels, and the determination of intoxicated parents for the allegiance of newsboys and bootblacks' (p312). The focus was to be placed on friendless and deserted boys between the ages of 10 and 17 drawn from the working class poor

many of whom did retain varying degrees of connectedness with families who depended on the income generated by their children working the streets. This simply continued a longstanding tradition of shared responsibility by all family members at all age levels for keeping the household intact, especially during perilous time of unemployment, desertion or the injury or death of the primary breadwinner.

Daniel Wilson was born on January 3, 1816 in Edinburgh. He emigrated to Toronto in 1853 to take up the position of Chair of English Literature at University College. A profile appearing later in *The Globe* noted that 'the institution in which he takes probably the greatest interest, and of which he may be justly proud, was the Newsboys' Lodging and Industrial Home' (Hulse, 1999, p. 263). The home grew out of a discussion at the Diocesan Synod of the Church of England in 1868. A public meeting followed in December 1868 when his biographer H. H. Langton (1929) noted that 'Professor Wilson proposed to procure a House in which vagrant children could be taken care of by women employed for the purpose'. To garner public support, Wilson sponsored in November, 1868 an 'Arabian Night's Entertainment' in St. James School House that marked the beginning of his many years of fundraising efforts on behalf of the home.

Wilson, who was the driving force behind the establishment and maintenance of the home, served as Deputy Chairman of the Managing Committee for the remainder of his life until his death on August 6, 1892 by which time he had become the first President of the federated University of Toronto having served for several years as President of University College. In addition to his duties as university president, he continued to bring in money largely through public lectures like the one in 1887 when he lectured on 'America before Columbus' that brought in a total of \$196.75. Langton, his biographer, goes on to note that four years later at the age of 75 he was still fundraising as illustrated by this note in his diary: 'a weary day. Started out collecting for the Newsboys. From morning to 3 pm toiled at uncongenial work. Got \$60, and after a cup of coffee at a restaurant spent another two hours at the Board of Trustees' (Langton, 1929, p. 190). His daughter Sybil shared an interest in work with the Newsboys' Home as well along with his wife, Margaret who headed the Ladies Committee of the Home. As Wilson's biographer put it she 'supplied just that element of caution and carefulness in the management of this world's goods which her husband lacked, and her calm, equable temperament balanced and corrected his enthusiasm and impetuosity' (Langton, 1929, pp. 36-37). In addition, Wilson was able to enlist the support of the fledgling YMCA based at

the University of Toronto. They started by conducting religious meetings for the boys. This did not work particularly well so members of the organisation shifted their attention to organising games, telling stories and singing college songs which apparently elicited more enthusiasm (Ross, 1951, p. 18).

In 1871, An Act to Incorporate the Newsboys' Lodging and Industrial Home in the City of Toronto was passed by the Ontario Legislature and assented to on 15 February with the objects and purposes to 'establish and maintain a home or lodging for vagrant boys frequenting the streets of Toronto' (p. 1). The home would provide food, lodging and washing at a moderate charge and take care of the earnings of its residents. To elicit public support for the new home and pull at their heart strings, the Globe published The Newsboys' Reform Bill on June 2, 1869:

Whereas it is desirable that the Newsboys and their Lodging, and the Public, be made a great deal better than they are:

Therefore, be it enacted with the consent of the boys, their friends, matron, superintendent and the public:

The said public who care for their own sons with clean collars and decent clothes to wear and good beds to sleep on and mammas to kiss them, shall care also for boys in dirty rags, with hunger in their stomachs, tears in their eyes, and no homes.

And the said public shall try to help the institution that helps these boys, and for that purpose the public shall ask for Newsboys as they buy a paper from them; where they lodge, and who cares for them; and shall visit their lodging; and say a kind word to the superintendent, and ask if teachers are wanted, and try to be teachers in the same.

And the said public shall go to where other Newsboys live, and see how poor, and dark, and wretched the houses are, and try to get light, and air, and water supplied, and shall speak kindly to the mothers, and sisters of the boys and help them make their homes comfortable, or get them to go to the Lodging.

And the public shall get good situations for the boys recommended by the managers of the lodging, and give them proper wages, and cheer them on and help them to escape to a healthy country life out of the reach of all the terrible temptations to which City Arabs are exposed.

And the public shall send cheques for \$5, \$10 or \$100 for the lodging to pay for fitting it up, and providing a proper superintendent, matron, wash-room, beds, and all other indispensable things.

And the public shall think it an honour to pay and pray for the poor homeless Newsboys, so that the said public may better enjoy their nice firesides and cheerful breakfast tables.

And the public shall talk and think not only about balls, parties, dinners, picnics, concerts, flower shows, parliaments, bonnets, railways, politics, gossip or tittle-tattle but also about the good of their fellow creatures which they can do so much to help and must all answer for at a day coming soon and swiftly.

And regarding the Newsboys' Lodging, be it enacted that it shall get good active gentlemen on the Committee, not idle man, but those 'perfectly overwhelmed with business,' who always work the best, and also shall get the ladies to help them. And all those shall get to work at once—no time to be lost—can't begin sooner, and shall work the first day as hard as they can, and harder every day after.

And with regard to the Newsboys themselves, be it enacted that all of them shall be very good boys; and if they are ever bad boys, and get punished, suspended or fired, they shall not get into the sulks, pet or doldrums.

And they shall turn out every morning with hair combed, and head-pieces highly polished with soap and water, to enlighten the understanding of the public.

And they shall behave well at the morning prayers, and try to wish and hope what is there said, and to understand and practice what is there read.

And they shall not squander their money on tobacco, or at pitch-and-toss, but shall come home at the fixed time, and pay over their savings to the Superintendent and the boys shall get fond of their penny book and the penny bank and try how much they can lay by.

And each of the said boys shall feel and speak and act and live as one who has earned his own money; and be thankful.

And after each Newsboy has applied soap and water to his outer boy, and tea and bread, treacle and other like comforts to his inner boy, he shall try

to please his Teacher, read better every weak (sic), write 'pothooks' and 'hangers', do sums, go to bed at the proper time, and disturb nobody when there.

And that each boy may sleep sound at night, he shall be honest with his pennies during the day, lest they trouble his conscience, or make it hard to trouble.

And every boy shall be thankful to the Giver of all good gifts, and grateful (sic) to the Committee for management and to the Superintendent for care and teaching and the public for patronage.

And lastly, be it enacted, that the public who think that Newsboys have souls, and were created for some better end than the gaol, penitentiary, or worse, shall not impose on the Newsboys' friends the punishment of being themselves apprehended as sturdy beggars; but shall send to them the needed contributions, without waiting to be begged, or solicited or even hinted at; under the penalty of having the Newsboys' Lodging and Industrial Home shut up and abandoned, and the houses of idleness, and ruin licensed by the city of Toronto as the best its Worshipful Mayor and citizens think it for both bodies and souls of the Newsboys.

God save the Queen, and the poor Newsboys also!

The first home was a rented house at 29 Frederick Street that was soon purchased for \$2,750 partly paid for by a loan of \$1,400 from Mr. William Cawthra, a local business magnate. The loan was forgiven in April 1875. The home operated on Frederick Street until 1890-91 when it was sold and a new property purchased at the corner of Gould and Church Streets. The home started operation on May 26, 1869 with the occasion 'celebrated on the previous evening by free entertainment for a number of boys apparently most in need of such a home' (Clifton House, 1982, p. 1). The Honourable G. W. Allan presided and a number of prominent citizens took part in the evening's entertainment. Eight boys were taken in as lodgers the following night. The following description of the home at its opening clearly reflects the aspirations espoused by its founders:

The Home contained a large dormitory on the upper floor provided with plain but comfortable beds, and in the basement was a bathroom, the expenses of which was reported as amounting to nearly a third of the whole outlay. On opening day, the Home housed eight boys each paying 10 cents

per day to cover supper, bed and breakfast. No dinner was provided except on Sunday, when it was given as a reward for good conduct, which included attendance at Church and Sunday School (ibid. , p. 1).

Interestingly, the original plan for the home called for the Board of Education to furnish a building and a teacher for a common school with support from a committee of citizens who would be expected to supplement this from voluntary resources, with food, industrial training, and provision for transferring neglected children, and those of criminal parents to the country which, for some time, had been viewed as a convenient dumping ground for surplus children whose only life experience was in densely populated urban environments. However, financial support would not be forthcoming from the Board for some time.

The First Annual Report of the Managing Committee covered the 11 months ending on March 31, 1870 provides a good picture of what life was like for those boys who took up residence in the home: 'The first requirement on admission is the very needful use of the bath. Some difficulty was anticipated in the enforcement of this regulation; but, contrary to expectation, it seems to be appreciated as a novel luxury, and after a short time the improvement in habits of personal cleanliness has been very noticeable' (p. 8). The evenings were filled with entertainment on Mondays and lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic on the other evenings during the week with the purpose of keeping the boys off the street at night. Sundays were dedicated to Sunday School and the singing of hymns with dinner provided as a reward for participation in Sabbath activities. Reflecting the clear delineation of responsibilities along gender lines, the Ladies Committee, often the wives of members of the Management Committee, provided domestic oversight for the operation of the house and were constantly frustrated by boys selling their hand me down clothes in order to purchase cheap jewelry, gaudy neckties, perfumery, or pastries and ice creams (p. 9).

The First Report for the home also vividly depicts the plight of the street youth who had taken up residence in the home:

It is scarcely possible for those who have taken no part in the work, to realize the condition of children, from seven or eight to sixteen years of age, without homes or guardians; or what is even worse, escaping from scenes of drunken violence and crime; sleeping in sheds, hay lofts, or in wretched lodgings, exposed to every temptation, and with little idea of modesty, cleanliness, or moral restraint of any kind (p. 11).

In keeping with the sectarian competition for wayward souls, the First Report for the home notes somewhat cryptically that 'some months after the inauguration of the Industrial Home, a Roman Catholic Institution was opened on Stanley Street, and some of the inmates were induced to leave' (p. 12). In addition to competition from the Catholic facility, it remained a challenge throughout its existence for the institution to retain a stable population of residents. As noted in the First Report, two private lodgings sprouted up in the vicinity of the home in the first winter of its operation. One provided a basement room for lodgers of both sexes enjoying freedom from all restraint. The outcome was that boys would be lured from the Newsboys' Home; clothed with the fruits of their own labour and then return after a time almost naked (p. 13). The Ladies Committee of 18 members was supplemented from the outset by a cohort of 'Visitors'—males, of course, whose task was to inspect the conditions and standards of the institution. It was not until after 1900 that professional care workers began to appear on the scene. Before that, institutions relied exclusively on volunteer help, usually supported by a male superintendent with his wife as the matron. In the Third Annual Report published for the year ending April 1, 1872, it was reported that the inmates for the past year were made up of 'friendless and deserted boys from 10 to 17 years who were the children of criminal and dissipated parents—in some cases in gaol' (p. 5). Some homeless vagrants were brought to the home by police. Every effort was made from the outset to remove the stigma of a charitable institution by promoting the image of a hotel like environment. Each resident was charged 10 cents daily and issued with three tickets for supper, bed, breakfast, with dinner provided for an extra 8 cents. Through these means, a conscious effort was made to distinguish this new type organisation from local orphanages and houses of industry where indigent children also found shelter. A free dinner was available on Sundays for those who observed the Sabbath with lady visitors providing a Sunday evening Sunday school. The institution had a definite Protestant hue despite the injunction that 'everything of a proselytizing character is avoided. Any special denominational connections are respected, in so far as an assured attendance on religious worship can be secured; and in the case of Roman Catholic children they attend their own church' (p. 14).

By the Fifth Annual Report for 1874, the board was able to report the following: 'the record of the entrants to the News-boys Lodging not infrequently run thus: Age 10, 11, 12, or 13; mother a drunkard, father in gaol, or runaway; or again, both parents criminal drunkards, gone they no not where. In the past year, 138 boys were lodged in the home - 70 were sent to situations and some apprenticed

to trades. Since 1869, when the home first opened, 627 boys were lodged with 264 sent to situations. In that first year, the home received its first grant from the provincial government for \$240. The City Government followed suit in the following year with a grant of \$200 (p. 11).

By publication of the Tenth Report in 1879, it was reported that the home housed two classes of boys. The first consisted of the casual wanderers seeking shelter for a few nights, generally in winter. Some would drift back to the home 'after fruit-less efforts at self-maintenance, or as a renewed trial of mendicancy and such wretched shelter or burden of criminal parents will give' (p. 5). The profile of W.W. is used to depict the backgrounds of children residing in the shelter: Aged 10; father dead; mother drunkard; trained to beg; living on the street; afraid to go home for days. And then, there is the background of W.O. aged nine: mother dead; father in Kingston Penitentiary; elder brother in Penatenguishene Reformatory; living with sister 'leading a dissolute life' (p. 8) and required him to earn his daily board by begging.

By the time of the Eleventh Report in 1880, growing concern is expressed by the numbers of homeless children getting caught up with the police and the court system. By reference to work being carried out in the New England states, it is observed that:

Here, on the contrary, may be seen any day, in the Police Court of Toronto, children whose heads barely reaching above the dock, awaiting their turn, with drunkards, prostitutes and burglars. On conviction of some petty offence, the Police Magistrate has no option but fine, or imprisonment; and so young boys, in default of payment of a fine entirely beyond their means, are committed to gaol, from which they return after associating with the inmates, not infrequently with the reformatory work of months, or even years, undone (p. 6).

By the early 1880s, a focus on compulsory schooling gained momentum as a means of reducing what was seen as the growing social menace of large hordes of children left to fetch for themselves for prolonged periods of time with dismal prospects for meaningful employment in adulthood. For the first time, reference is made in the Eleventh Report of the Newsboys' Home to the need for a more structured schooling for young inmates. Through the decade of the 1880s, newsboys (and some girls) would be increasingly targeted with education seen as the best solution to a growing problem. This was not a new idea. As early as 1865, T.J. O'Neil, in a separate report within the Annual Report of the Board of

Inspectors of Asylums, Prisons and Public Charities had proposed that the common school be seen as a vehicle for transforming street youth in order to 'civilize the street-arab and convert the vagabond from the alarming vice of idleness to habits of honesty and industry' (Houston, 1975, p. 89). The only problem with this suggestion is that the common schools were reluctant to accept indigent children as pointed out in the Nineteenth Report of the Home in 1887:

It is a reproach to our Public School system if it can be shown that it provides free education for the children of the prosperous tradesman and the skilled artisan, while it fails to overtake those who, aside from poverty and the lack of any healthy and moral home-training, ought to have the first claim on any system of free education in the Public Schools (p. 9).

Increasingly by the 1880s, the popular press was taking up the cause of newsboys. Here is one popular account of the life of 'Willie Worth' that garnered much public sympathy (Royal Canadian Series pp. 161-162).:

1. The landlord was standing behind the bar at the village tavern as little Willie Worth came in one winter night to sell his papers. 'Have a glass of beer, said the landlord. 'It will make you warm this cold night'.
2. But Willie went on selling his papers to the half-tipsy men who nearly filled the room, and only shook his head in reply. 'Why not?' said the landlord more loudly than before, 'Beer won't hurt you. It never hurt me; come, you must take a glass'.
3. Willie grasped his papers firmly in one hand, and facing the landlord, with a pale face and flashing eye, said: 'Beer won't hurt me'. What's the reason I? Why do I have to sell papers and sometimes beg for work? Why am I forced to go half clad and without shoes when I am at work?
4. My father became a drunkard, and died a drunkard, and you sold him beer. He used to spend his days here, and at night he would come home and beat mother and me. Often he turned us out on the street on cold winter nights. At last, he was found one morning frozen to death, after drinking your beer.
5. My mother is sick, and we are very poor. All I can earn hardly keeps us from hunger and cold. All these terrible troubles came from your

beer, which you say will not hurt me. 'It has hurt me. It does hurt me. I hate your beer. I will never touch it'.

6. The landlord sneaked off from the curses and jeers of the half-drunken men, who were not, however, too tipsy to miss the force of Willie's sad but truthful reply.

Occasionally, stories would appear in newspapers describing newsboys who had managed to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and make something of their lives. The following 'Story of a Montreal News-boy' was published in the Daily Globe on Wednesday, December 16, 1868. It was a story provided by a correspondent of The Montreal Gazette about a boy who started selling newspapers for a new newspaper (now defunct) called The Montreal Courier. The boy was now in the '35th year of his age' and had been spotted by a reporter 'with the ladies of his family, amid the galaxy of the gay streets, flitting along the snow in their litter, with robes of fur, fast pacing horses, bells merrily, cheerily tinkling bells'. From there, the reporter goes on to tell the man's story:

He was an Irish boy from the County of Cavan. On arriving in Montreal in the summer of 1847, then in his 14th year, knowing nobody, he hired himself as clerk on the Lachine Canal. The man he hired with, cleared away at the close of navigation, and did not pay wages. With no money in pocket, the forlorn youth came to the city. After seeking employment around without success, he applied, tired and hungry, at the office of the Courier. The publisher gave him papers to sell. He paid two shillings a week for lodging, and purchased wherewith to eat as best he could, and swept the office to make himself useful, though not asked (p. 3).

Eventually, as the account goes, he was employed as a typesetter and then found work in a foundry for a 'term of years' eventually becoming a partner in the firm. By 1867, he bought out the owner 'at a large price' and found himself the owner of one foundry, two warehouses employing 120 men (p. 3). While considerable newspaper attention was being directed at newsboys as this example illustrates, little thought was given to newsgirls and their plight. In an editorial in the Globe of May 16, 1879 ten years after the founding of the Newsboys' Home, reference is made to comments by the Reverend Dr. Potts who observed that 'One thing impressed his mind, and that was seeing so many little girls selling newspapers. The mixture of these girls with the newsboys was evil, and only evil, and he wished that something could be done to remove the girls from such associations' (p. 1). As reported in the same article, Chief

Justice Hagarty concurred by suggesting 'Perhaps some kind-hearted ladies might look after the little girls the same as they (the gentlemen) looked after the boys' (p. 1). There is no indication that such kind-hearted ladies answered Hagarty's call to attend to the girls. However, as Constance Backhouse (1991) has noted, there was growing concern about the plight of newsgirls:

In 1887 the Toronto Young Women's Christian Guild began to organize evening sewing classes for newsgirls, and 'more than a score' enrolled. Over thirty turned up to attend a New Year's Eve party put on by the YWCG for female news-vendors in 1888. It was generally conceded that 'the nature of their occupation expose(d) them to hardship', and that they tended to be a poorly dressed, overburdened, and weary lot. The reformers worried that these girls were particularly susceptible to sexual attack. It wasn't until the late 1880s that provision was made for the establishment of industrial refuges for girls with passage of Chapter 49 An Act to Amend the Act to establish an Industrial Refuge for Girls which empowered the authorities to bind girls as apprentices over or under the age of 12 either in trades or preparation for domestic service. The Superintendent of Asylums, etc. was empowered to bind girls up to the age of 18 at which time the individual girl would be granted absolute discharge or discharged on probation. Wages were to be paid to the girl for the period of indenture or 'some other person for her benefit'. The Act goes on to note that the Judge of any County Court or any Police Magistrate or the Inspector of Prisons reserved the right to re-incarcerate any girl who violated the conditions of her discharge (p. 292).

Following the inauguration of the Newsboys' Home on May, 25, 1869 'by a free entertainment to a number of city vagrants, selected from among those apparently most in need of such a home', the Catholic Community moved very quickly to establish a similar facility that added to the growing precedent of developing parallel services to ward off the proselytising impulses of the Protestant establishment and subtle and not so subtle efforts at cultural as well as religious assimilation (Newsboys' Home Annual Reports, 1870-1875).

The driving force behind the establishment of the St. Nicholas Institute, as it was officially called, was Roman Catholic Archbishop, Joseph Lynch (third bishop and then archbishop from 1860 until his death in 1888). Lynch envisaged 'opening a house for working boys wherein they would be protected from evil society, and experience at the same time the comforts of a home' (Sister Mary Agnes, 1951, p. 141). The home was to be connected to the convent of the Sisters of St.

Joseph on Lombard Street on the site of the old St. Alphonsus School and operated under the auspices of the Sisters supported by a 'trustworthy man' (a Mr Barry who is described as a gentleman of excellent education and high moral character) who would have the immediate superintendence of the boys. The house was blessed by Bishop Lynch on June 21, 1869 with Mother St. John Mallon present along with Sister Louise Clancy who was appointed Superior and assisted by Sisters Gabriel McKassey, Bonaventure Farelly and Presentation Kearns (p141). The first occupants took up residence on August 25. A pamphlet addressed 'To The charitable and Ever Generous Citizens of Toronto' on July 23, 1868 had previously announced the establishment of the home and outlined its purposes:

This Home will be called the 'St. Nicholas' and will be conducted on hotel principles. A book of entry will always be kept; none will be admitted except the industrious, and those who strive to be good. Credit will be given to the deserving—but repayment will be expected, when a boy procures employment. No lazy or dishonest boys are to be admitted.

The facility had its origins in a refuge first opened in 1862 by Lynch and the local Catholic philanthropist, John Elmsley intended for 'street urchins' wandering the streets of Toronto and operated under the auspices of Father Eugene O'Reilly. The home became known as the Boys Industrial School of the Gore of Toronto. However, the school was closed in 1869 because of financial difficulties and the boys transferred to the new St. Nicholas Home (Nicolson p. 5). The men's lay association, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, was quickly enlisted to operate a night school at the home using its members as teachers along with young men preparing for the priesthood who were students at St. Michael's College. Lynch dedicated the proceeds from a yearly lecture he gave to support the operation of the school. In 1871, he established the Notre Dame Institute which provided a similar service to that of the St. Nicholas Home but focused on 'respectable' working girls—a cut above newsgirls-- deemed to be respectable young women who had moved to the city to take up jobs in stores, learn trades, prepare for domestic service or attend Normal School to prepare as school teachers. By 1871, it was reported that 36 boys made up of newsboys, apprentices, bootblacks, factory workers and 'street arabs' were resident in the St. Nicholas Home. Various efforts were made in the years following establishment of the home to solicit government support but to little avail. In a letter dated August 17, 1872, Sister Louisa addressed a letter 'To His Worship the Mayor and the Aldermen of the city of Toronto in Council Assembled' seeking aid for the home. None was forthcoming. It would be some time yet before any financial

assistance from the public purse would be made available. Despite this challenge, a favourable article appearing in the Daily Telegraph entitled 'Our City Charities', a description is provided of the new St. Nicholas Home:

The dormitories, bath rooms, and kitchen, are marvels of cleanliness, and throughout every department is felt the effects of the zeal of devoted womanhood, whose maternal tenderness for the unfortunate and the young is spurred into activity by religious enthusiasm! The boys appear of a better class, more intellectual and respectful, in this than the other Institutions and more appliances of comfort are at hand, owing no doubt to the liberal support they receive, as in addition to private donations, a collection is taken up at the Chapel for it every Sunday morning. The Sisters are making arrangements to have a workroom attached to the Home, where ladies of the city can come in and make and mend clothes, for some hours every day, for the inmates as well as for the deserving poor of the neighbourhood and, on the moral influence of dress is well recognized in raising a boy into a better condition (p. 1).

Although the preponderance of boarders were newsboys, the first register for the home lists a number of occupations such as moulders, printers, cabinet makers, porters, intelligence boys and cigar makers as well as newsboys. The register for October 17, 1870 records the following:

John Enright (Half Orphan) Aged 14—newsboy

James O'Halloran (Entire Orphan) Aged 15—tobacconist left of his own accord June 28, 1870

Patrick Mara (Entire Orphan) 14 newsboy

John Cronan 15 (Half Orphan)—apprentice in the G. Freeman Office—dismissed for non observance of rules September 15, 1870. The youngest children admitted in this first lot were Michael Gillespie described as a half orphan, aged 9; occupation newsboy and Edward McMahan, age 7; described as a school boy.

Because the operation of both homes relied primarily on private charity, Christmas was a popular occasion for appealing to the general public for support. The following report of the Globe for December 25, 1890 outlines how this festive day would unfold:

At the St. Nicholas Institute for boys, where under the charge of sisters of charity some 50 lads from eleven to sixteen years are cared for, preparations are being made for a good time. The rooms are being decorated, especially the chapel and the dining room. At the call of morn early mass will be said by Father Gibrat in the chapel, and then there will be a generous spread of chicken on the breakfast table. The day thereafter will be given over to jollity, except for the benediction, which will be said in the dining room at 5 in the afternoon by Father Minehan. The Christmas cheer will be of good Canadian style, turkey and plum pudding.

Not far away, similar plans were underway for the Newsboys' Lodging:

The twenty boys at this institution were by no means forgotten by their many kind friends, and the contributions, while making ample provision for a proper celebration of the day, will also serve to remind them of Christmas during many stormy winter days. Dinner will be served about one, and it will be just such a dinner as boys like—turkey, goose, roast beef and plum pudding. Sir Daniel Wilson and others who take a warm interest in the institution are expected to be present when dinner is served. When the boys go to breakfast this morning they will each find on his plate a warm grey flannel shirt, a cap, a tie and a Bible from Mr. Shaw and their other teachers at St. James' Cathedral Sunday School. Candy, oranges and apples will be served out to the boys during the day. During Christmas week there will be a Christmas tree and magic lantern show.

As the population of Toronto grew rapidly in the second half of the 19th century and manufacturing and industry expanded, particular attention and concern was focused on public order. Policing and the workings of the court system drew increasing attention. The newsboys and newsgirls were quickly caught up in this mounting concern about personal safety and property security among the expanding middle class and their upper class overlords. As a result, the police and police courts became important instruments for the maintenance of social order. Throughout the second half of the 19th century both police and courts oscillated between harassment and benign neglect in their approaches to the growing population of street youth who were increasingly depicted as criminals in training who potentially placed the community at large at risk. Paradoxically, the popular press contributed to feeding these fears although they continued to depend on the newsboys to sell their newspapers. This became quite evident in the late 1880s when efforts were being made to regulate the street trade of newspapers by requiring newsboys to be licensed and girls to be barred from

selling papers. Not only was there this fear of increasing crime but also a recurring concern that, as they moved into adulthood, this particular population would add to the numbers of indigent people drawing on public resources. What we would today associate with a neo-liberal agenda was very much taking shape before this concept became associated with a reduction in government largesse in the provision of financial support for welfare related programs and services.

For newsboys and girls, the police were in a sense both a bane and a blessing. By 1889, Toronto police stations gave shelter to 539 waifs not identified as offenders (Sutherland, 1978, p. 103). From the formation of the first force in the 1850s, the rationale for a strong police presence on the streets of Toronto was placed at the feet of the influx of poor Irish into the growing city—a position constantly reiterated by George Brown in his role as Editor of the *Globe*. Interestingly, as Parr has pointed out, much police work by the 1890s had welfare connotations (p135). This was a far cry from the early days. In 1859, the police force was transformed with administrative control shifting from the Toronto City Council to a newly established Board of Police Commissioners. Before that time, a rudimentary force had been established in 1835 shortly after the Town of York changed its name to Toronto and was incorporated as a city with 5 paid constables under the supervision of a high bailiff (Careless p100). This original force was disbanded on December 1, 1858. In the Police Force Order Book for 1859, it was clear that the after effects of the Famine influx had become, in the view of the City Council, one of the primary reasons why the police force was entrusted with maintaining public order and security as noted in the Toronto Police Force Order Book entry of November 12, 1859:

Constables when on Beats are directed to arrest any women caught in the Act of Begging and exposing their children, as appeals to the sympathy of the public. Serious complaints have been proffered at this office as to the frequency of this evil in the streets of Toronto...the immediate attention of the Constables directed to three or four characters who are particularly officious in their applications for charity and unnecessarily exposing their children.

As the century progressed, Boritch notes that, by the 1890s, the police were issuing licenses, controlling dogs and livestock, enforcing health standards, taking censuses, providing shelter, serving as truant officers and maintaining ambulance services. They took on these assorted tasks because no private or public services existed for these purposes (p102). Beginning in 1875, new stations erected at strategic locations in the growing city provided rooms for

sheltering waifs. In the first year, 669 'waifs' were provided with accommodation—especially over the winter months. In 1859, there were three stations and 60 men on the force. By 1891, there were seven stations and 285 men serving a population of approximately 185,000 (Boritch pp122-123). Within the police force, a Morality Department was established. In 1892, Toronto established a closed Children's Court to keep young offenders at arms' length from the public courts. With the passage of the Vagrant Act in 1868, the police had been entrusted with considerable discretionary power to arrest not only drunks and vagrants, but, more generally, the poor, the homeless, the unemployed and the transient (Boritch p252). The work of the police was supported by the Police Court of Toronto presided over since June 2, 1877 until the end of 1919 by George T. Denison (1920). The Police Court was able to try all serious offenses except murder, manslaughter, rape, high treason and one or two crimes associated with the use of explosives. During his long tenure, 650,000 cases were dealt with. Denison also served as a member of the Board of Police Commissioners along with the mayor and a county court judge. Denison was always quick to disparage the Irish population, who, for much of the second half of the 19th century, represented a disproportionate number of cases tried by Denison. In his Recollections, he noted that 'The Irish forty years ago, as I have said, formed a very large proportion of the population, the labouring classes at that time being almost all of that nationality. They added very much to the humour of the proceedings in the Court when I first occupied the Bench' (p178).

Over time, the police, when not controlling riots, labour strikes and the petty larceny of roaming gangs of children and youth, became viewed as important agents for advancing the moral reform of the poor. Police recruits were prevented by regulation from living in lower income neighbourhoods and associating with lower class populations during their off duty hours. The gulf was widened by the fact that the bulk of the force was made up of Protestant Irish who were not particularly sympathetic to the hordes of Irish Catholics whom they were expected to keep under control (Vronsky, 2014, Part 3, p. 3). As Vronsky has pointed out, arresting drunks and prosecuting prostitutes became a major preoccupation along with 'curbing the activities of "mischievous urchins" who sought to soil the crinoline dresses of respectable ladies on national holidays' (Vronsky, 2014, Part 4, p. 2). Until the establishment of the Humane Society in 1887 and the Children's Aid Society in 1891, the police served as a de facto child welfare agency focusing mostly on child support and abuse (Vronsky,

2014, p. 6). By 1890, public concern about the growing gang culture continued to preoccupy the 'City Fathers' as noted in the minutes of the City Council:

Vagrant bands parading the streets at night have given the police a good deal of trouble, composed, as they are, of rowdy youths belonging to no responsible Society or organization. They play party tunes for the distinct purpose of being offensive and with the object of causing a disturbance. They are usually accompanied by a rabble who are always glad of an opportunity to throw stones, the damage from which might be serious and a breach of the peace is always imminent. The police cannot be in the spot at all times, not being aware of the movements of the bands before hand. I would recommend the passage of a By-law making it obligatory upon all bands (military excepted) to obtain a permit to play through the streets after sun-down (City Council Minutes 1890 p48).

By the closing decades of the 19th century, the major societal fault lines remained largely intact and reinforced, buttressed by sectarian hostility and discrimination coupled with deeply entrenched class differences. Philanthropy continued to be viewed as a private matter inspired to a great extent by religious sentiments. What little support was provided by public bodies, focused largely on social control and public safety. The labouring classes were considered fodder for the growing capitalist/industrial sector; the indigent were widely distrusted and blamed for their own misfortune and children provided a ready pool of cheap labour—girls as domestics or sweat shop workers and boys as farm hands. However, the allure of street life continued to attract growing numbers of boys and girls who were able to eke out an existence on the streets through a variety of means—sometimes to support families left destitute or often on their own and able to stealthily avoid the clutches of the orphanages, shelters and houses of industry in the region. It was this specific population that was gaining increasing public attention by the 1880s as public attitudes began to shift about children and youth; support for indigent populations and the role of the state in providing support and protection for children in this post Confederation phase. It is in this climate of changing societal attitudes that a young Irish Canadian would appear on the scene who would spearhead major changes in how services would be provided to dependent and vulnerable children, youth and families. His name was John Joseph Kelso, known as J.J. Kelso, who would later become recognised as the founder of the child welfare system in Ontario and whose reach would extend to other provinces in the still young confederation of former British colonies well into the 20th century. It is an

analysis of his work and its impact that will form the second and concluding part of this history.

A full bibliography and list of references will appear with the second part of this study.

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