Protestant Children's Homes

1926 – 1971

Protestant Children's Homes Prayer

O God, from whom all holy desires,
all good counsels and all just works
do proceed, we beseech Thee to direct
our consultations and to prosper with
Thy blessing the designs of this Society.

Grant wisdom and faithfulness to its
directors and comfort with Thy grace those
benefactors who contribute to its support.

Bless the children who are under its
foster care and may thy Holy Spirit
guide all who are responsible for the
well-being of their souls and bodies,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

Gull Lake, Muskoka 1928

Judith stood shivering with her toes gripping the edge of the dock. She trembled more from excitement than from cold, for this morning she was determined to plunge in and paddle for everything she was worth to where Miss Carr stood, 10 feet away, chest-deep in the chilly, amber water of the lake.

Each morning for the past week, Miss Carr had stood patiently in the same spot – sometimes for as long as 20 minutes – arms outstretched and smiling through blue lips and chattering teeth as she coaxed the little girl to swim to her. And each morning, Judith had remained rooted to the dock, unable to force herself to jump in.

"Come on, Judith, you can do it! I'll catch you. Don't worry," Miss Carr would call.

All her life, thought Judith, grownups had made promises to her that they hadn't kept. Why should Miss Carr be any different?

Each day, the little girl's courage had failed her. Her face would contort in a spasm of anguish as tears of frustration flowed down her cheeks. Defeated, she would run in shame from the dock and along the footpath in search of a quiet corner in which to hide. Inevitably, Miss Carr would find her and encourage her to try again the following morning.

"I'll be there, Judith. I won't let you sink."

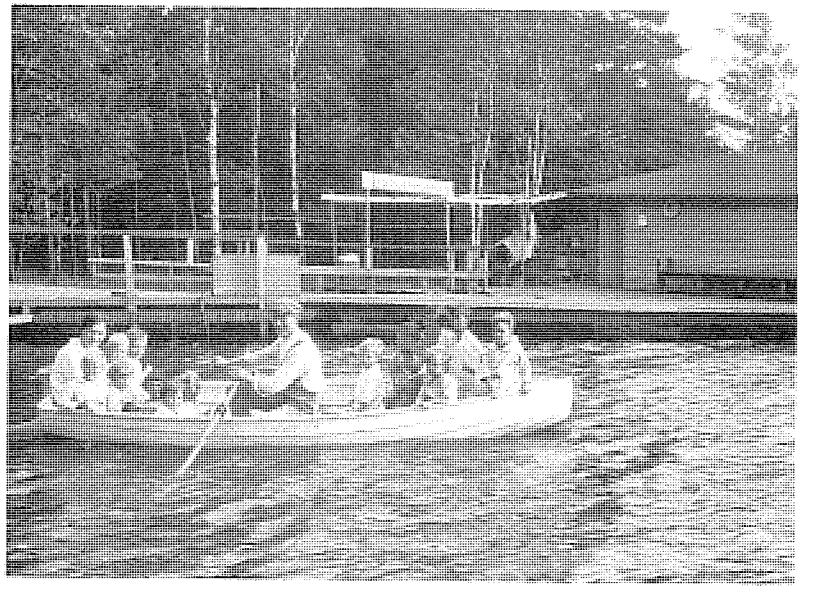
"This morning, I'm going to do it!" Judith told herself. She struggled to stop shaking, but it was no use; her knees would not stop knocking together.

"I'm here, Judith. You go ahead and jump and I'll catch you."

"You'll catch me? You promise?"

"I promise!"

This time, there'd be no tears, no shame, no running away. Judith took a huge gulp of breath, pinched her nose with one hand and, holding the other hand aloft, launched herself into the air, where it seemed to her that she hung suspended for an eternity before plunging seat-first into the



cold water. A second or two later, she bobbed up, a tangle of flailing arms and churning legs. Nearby, she heard Miss Carr calling, "Kick, Judith! Kick!"

The little girl kicked her legs and pulled frantically at the water with her arms until, to her surprise, she found that she was keeping her head above the surface.

"Kick! That's the girl, kick!"

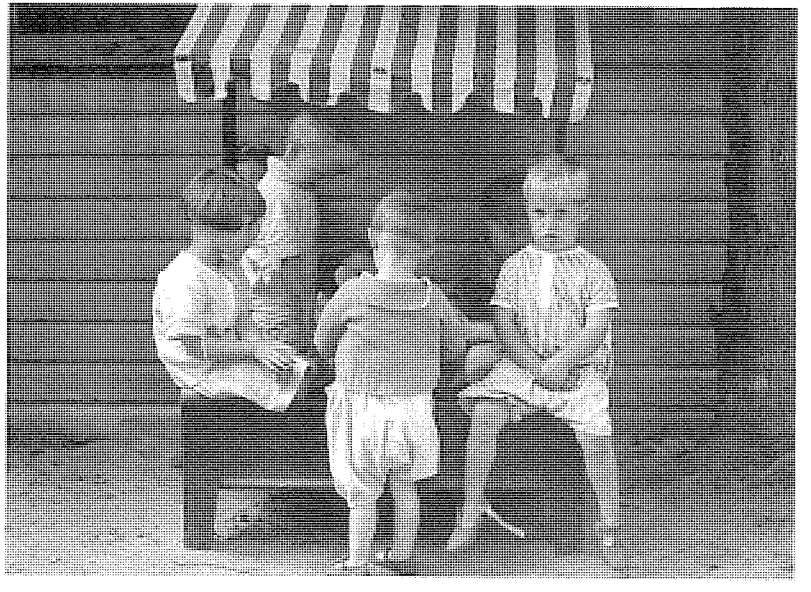
Then a strong hand caught Judith's and pulled her through the water. The little girl flung her arms around Miss Carr's neck and held her fast. "She told me she'd catch me, and she did," thought Judith.

Each day thereafter, Miss Carr stood a little farther from the dock. And each day, Judith plucked up her courage and forced herself to trust – not only Miss Carr, but herself. By the time Judith returned to the city, she had learned much more than how to swim.

In March 1927, the Chairman of Protestant Children's Homes received a letter from a summer resident of the Muskoka Lakes district named Mrs. Alderson, offering to sell 36 acres of land situated on the east shore of Gull Lake, near Gravenhurst. Her asking price was $3,500. For a number of years, the Agency had paid the Children's Aid for the privilege of sending girls and boys to that organization's summer camp at Bronte. But the offer of land in Muskoka provided the Agency with an opportunity to establish its own summer camp. In April, as soon as the spring melt cleared the roads of snow and the lakes of ice a small delegation headed north to inspect the property and the buildings on it. Upon their return, they recommended that the Board purchase the property at Mrs. Alderson's asking price so that Camp Boulderwood might be set up. The motion was carried, and the property purchased. Over the next six months, Board Members, excited at the prospect of sending the children to Muskoka, canvassed friends and relatives and accumulated enough money to not only pay for the property, but to undertake substantial improvements to the buildings, as well. In the meantime, preparations were well under way for Protestant Children's Homes first camping season at Boulderwood. With mounting excitement, children and staff alike prepared for the summer.

Not everyone was caught up in the camping spirit, however, or thought the rustic collection of cottages and outbuildings on the shores of Gull Lake was heaven on earth. On July 31, 1927, a somewhat hysterical telegram arrived in Toronto from Gravenhurst. It had been sent by a staff member by the name of Mrs. McKay, who declared the place "overcrowded" and possessed of "dangerous conditions – bad in every way!"

Another delegation was sent north to check on Mrs. McKay's claims. They found the place completely to their liking and cabled back to Toronto: "We are favourably impressed...by what we find and by the natural beauties of the place, the spirits and health of the children, and by the splendid work of (camp superintendent)



Miss (Ida) Carr and her staff."

Mrs. McKay's concerns were not completely unfounded, however, since the minutes record that a local handyman named Goodsill was consulted regarding repairs to the "main house" in which Mrs. McKay and several little girls were staying. "My worse fears are in this crowded, ramshackle, old building," wrote Mrs. McKay in a letter that she had mailed to the chairman, Mrs. Hargraft. Goodsill recommended the bracing of a centre beam and, as a precaution, the installation of some posts beneath the room occupied by Mrs. McKay, which projected over the front verandah of the old house – apparently at an angle steep enough to have convinced the lady that she, her bedroom, and all of its contents would be deposited in the lake one night as she slept. For added safety, Mr. Goodsill suggested that ladders be leaned against two sides of the house up to the second floor, that the fire extinguishers be re-charged, and that the children be trained in fire drills.

Mrs. Hargraft was clearly annoyed by Mrs. McKay's letter, which claimed also that the main house was either going to fall down or burn down, despite the safety measures taken by Mr. Goodsill. Mrs. Hargraft told another Board Member, Mrs. McMurray, that the telegram and letter had, "created a very bad atmosphere" and that she thought Mrs. McKay should be recalled with the little girls at once. But after discussing the matter at length, the Board decided that it would not be fair to the children to deprive them of the benefits of the camp.

As for Mrs. McKay, none of Mr. Goodsill's efforts appear to have assuaged the poor woman's misgivings about Boulderwood. It is not known if she was summoned to the city on her own. But if she stayed, it is extremely doubtful that she ever surrendered to the charms of Muskoka.

Throughout the summer of 1927, and again in the summer of 1928, the Board approved numerous renovation and restoration projects around the camp. A cookhouse, sleeping porch, and external staircase were added to the main building. The cottages

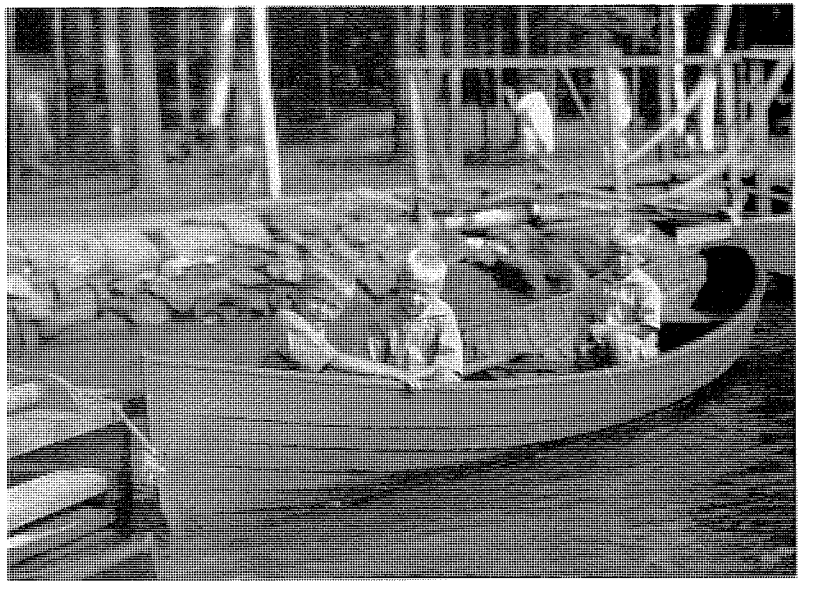
were painted and, with the help of some of the children, a rock wall was erected to protect the shoreline. In fact, one section of the wall, which was built by a boy named Kelly, came to be known as Kelly's Landing. A new cottage named after Elizabeth Busteed, who left money to the Protestant Children's Homes, was built and furnished by a grant from the Colonel George Taylor Dennison Chapter of the International Order of the Daughters of the Empire.

In one of the cottages was a large stone fireplace. A number of rustic ornaments rested on its broad mantel, including a piece of birch bark on which was written a poem by John Oxenham. The poem read:

"Kneel always when you light a fire.
Kneel reverently,
And grateful be
For God's unfailing charity.
And on the ascending flame inspire
A little prayer which shall up bear
The incense of your thankfulness
For this sweet grace of warmth and light,
For here again is sacrifice
For your delight."

In the summer of 1928, Miss Carr organized a field day for the children and invited the townsfolk of Gravenhurst and the summer residents of Gull Lake to inspect the camp and join in the fun. To the children's delight, the guests also provided all the prizes for the three-legged races and swimming competitions.

Sadly, the Boulderwood experience was a short-lived one for the children of the Protestant Children's Homes. In December 1929, a projected operating deficit for the coming year compelled the Board to consider closing Camp Boulderwood. The following January, representatives of the University of Toronto's Settlement House – a community-based organization that began in 1910 and



which sought to provide various opportunities to underprivileged children from the city – approached the Board of Protestant Children's Homes with a proposal to rent Camp Boulderwood. When asked what she thought of the proposal, Miss Gorrie told members of the Board that none of the U.S. child care agencies she had recently visited owned or operated a summer camp. She insisted also that the agency's foster mothers were often reluctant to give up their children for part of the summer. But she appeared to contradict herself by encouraging the Board to consider sending the boys to farms for two weeks at a time, and the girls to the Canadian Girls In Training Camp. At the next Board meeting, it was agreed to rent the camp to University Settlement House for $250 per season.

Throughout the 1930s, University Settlement House continued to rent Boulderwood for its summer camping program. Mounting repair and maintenance bills and a dispute with the Town of Gravenhurst over the water level of Gull Lake ultimately persuaded the Board to sell the property. On May 28, 1940, Boulderwood was sold to University Settlement House, which kept it open until 1967, when the provincial government expropriated the land to build a highway.

Today, few cottagers who travel along Provincial Highways 35 and 121, between Miner's Bay and Haliburton, would realize they are bypassing a spot that occupies such a special place in the hearts of so many of Toronto's seniors who, when they were very young and in need of care and affection, learned to kneel and offer a prayer when they lit a fire and to trust someone else when they were frightened.

The Universal Mother

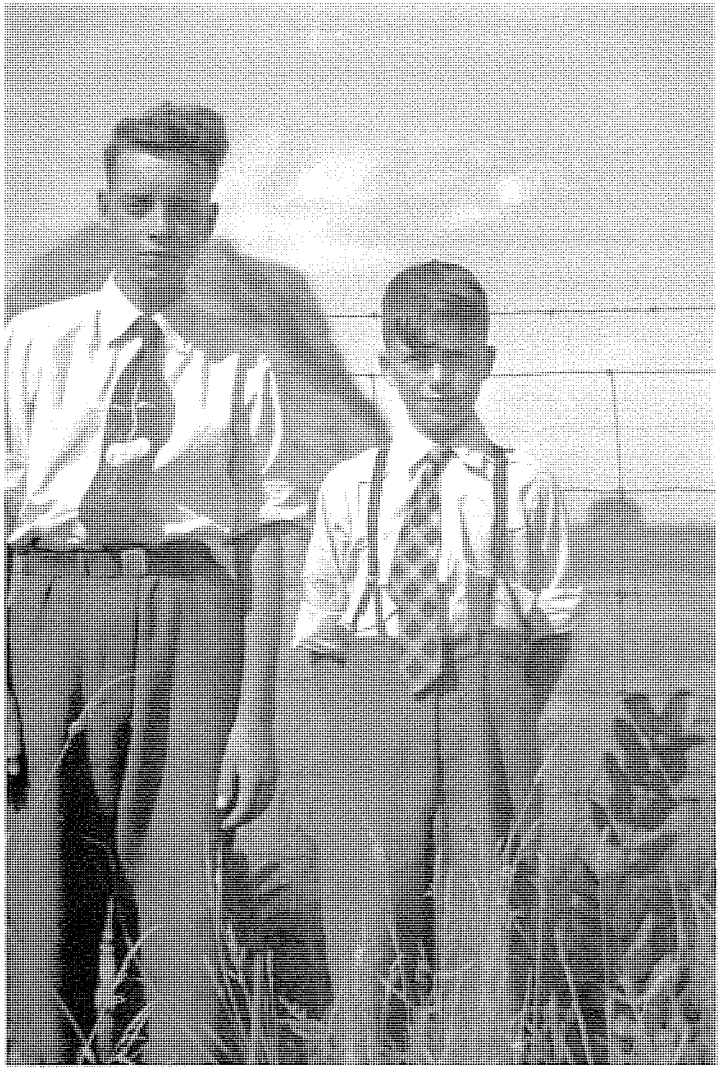
While the Camp Boulderwood experience was short-lived for Protestant Children's Homes, the relationship that the Agency developed with its growing list of foster mothers lasted for many years. But in the initial stages, the shift from institutional to foster care compelled Protestant Children's Homes to acquaint the public with the emerging role played by the women who took up this special kind of work.

In another article that appeared in *The Globe* in the spring of 1929, Mrs. Hargraft said, "You have been hearing a great deal about foster mothers. Here you have a universal mother." This was an apt description of those women whose strong nurturing instincts and willingness to act as surrogate parents for children in need set them apart. Only after the home-finding worker satisfied herself by means of a thorough investigation that involved every member of the applicant's family were foster mothers accepted for service. Workers looked for women of compassion and upright character, who, with the help and encouragement of their husbands, offered children a stable home environment. And while foster mothers were paid, the remuneration was modest; barely more than enough to meet the basic material requirements of the foster child. Thus, any woman who might have been motivated to apply solely for monetary reasons quickly changed her mind and sought work that was far more financially rewarding.

In the spring of 1930, five months after the stock market crash that precipitated the Great Depression, monthly boarding rates paid to foster mothers ranged from $4.00 to $4.62 per week, per child, depending upon the specific needs of each child. By December of that year, both the Protestant Children's Homes and the Toronto Children's Aid Society, which also supplied foster care, agreed to set boarding rates to foster mothers at a flat $4.15 per week, per child.

From the early 1930s onward, foster mothers were invited to

The "universal mother" with three foster children.



attend lectures and seminars on home economy and child health at the Agency's Selby Street headquarters. Out of these educational sessions came the idea of establishing a Foster Mothers' Association, which afforded the women and Agency staff an opportunity to meet and discuss matters of mutual concern.

Another innovation in child care developed by the Agency in 1933 was officially called "assistance care." Also known as the foster homemaker care plan, it sought to keep motherless children with their fathers by placing a foster homemaker in families with three or more children, rather than separating the children from their fathers and placing them in foster care. In those cases that lent themselves to foster homemaking, families were given perhaps their only opportunity to stay together. Foster homemakers had to possess the same qualities as other foster mothers and be prepared to enter someone else's home and manage it as though it were her own. The Agency paid the homemaker's wages and often supplemented the father's income, as well. In the first year of the program, foster homemakers cared for 36 children in 10 households. The biggest challenge to the Agency quickly proved to be supplying the growing demand for suitable homemakers. In an era of unprecedented financial restraint, the program proved a great success, for the cost of delivering the service was exactly half of what it would have been had those 36 children been placed in foster homes.

Since the inception of foster care, Protestant Children's Homes had supplied all of the clothing that each child needed. Much of it was second hand and had been donated, but many garments had been purchased new, warehoused at Selby Street and then distributed as needed to the foster homes. In 1934, however, the Board changed its policy. Foster mothers were given a clothing allowance for each child in their care to spend as they saw fit. They quickly proved that they were shrewd shoppers, for the result was an immediate and significant saving to the Agency with no reduction in the quality or quantity of the clothing provided to the children.

In 1935, there was a move within the Federation of Community

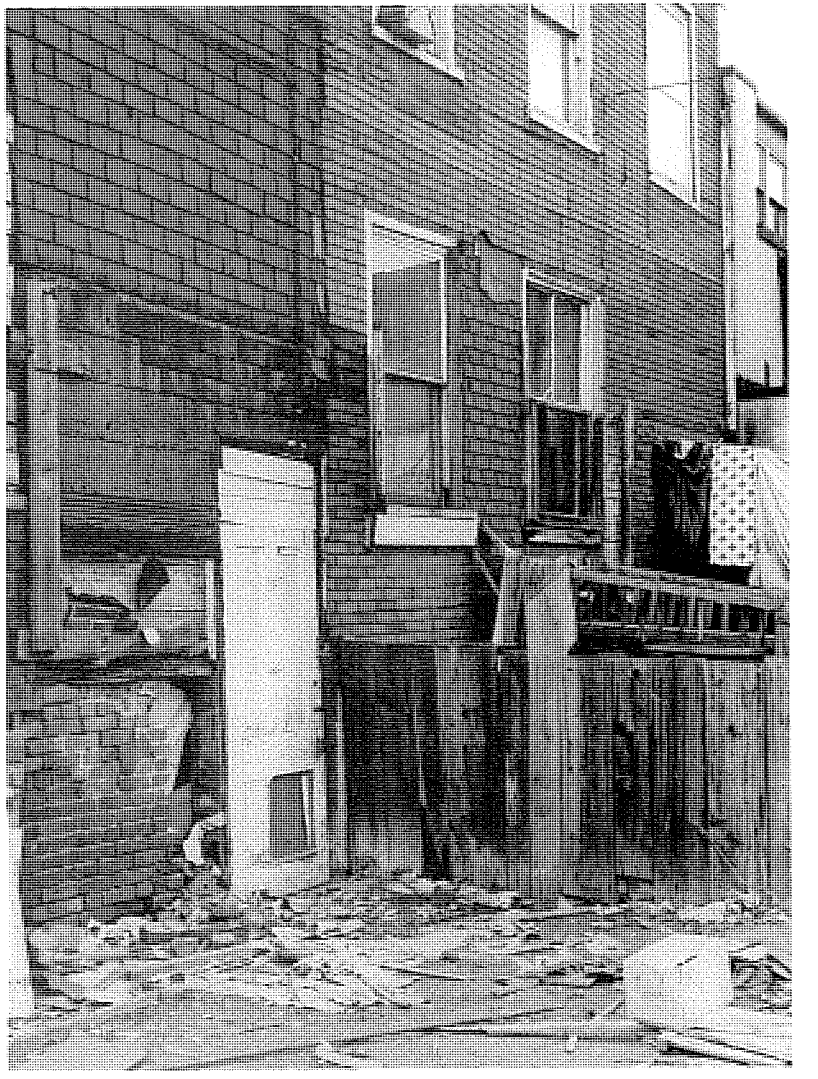
Services to consolidate Toronto's three child protection agencies, the Children's Aid Society, the Infants' Home, and Protestant Children's Homes. Each was asked to prepare a position paper in support of its existence as an autonomous agency. Miss Gorrie attended a Federation meeting to discuss the amalgamation of the agencies and reported to the board that the meeting was "most unsatisfactory and unpleasant." The topic was occasionally raised at Federation over the next two years, but by the spring of 1937, it had withered away.

Canada was among the nations hardest hit by the Great Depression. And while the four western provinces suffered the most during the Dirty Thirties and near crushing economic hardship had already battered the Atlantic Provinces during the 1920s, more heavily industrialized Quebec and Ontario also underwent economic strife, experiencing heavy unemployment. Moreover, the effects of the Depression were felt unevenly between classes. While falling wages and prices generated a higher standard of living for property owners and those fortunate enough to have a job, they produced the opposite effect for farmers, the young, small business proprietors, and the unemployed. As in all cases of economic and social upheaval, the families of the poor – especially the women and children – suffered the most.

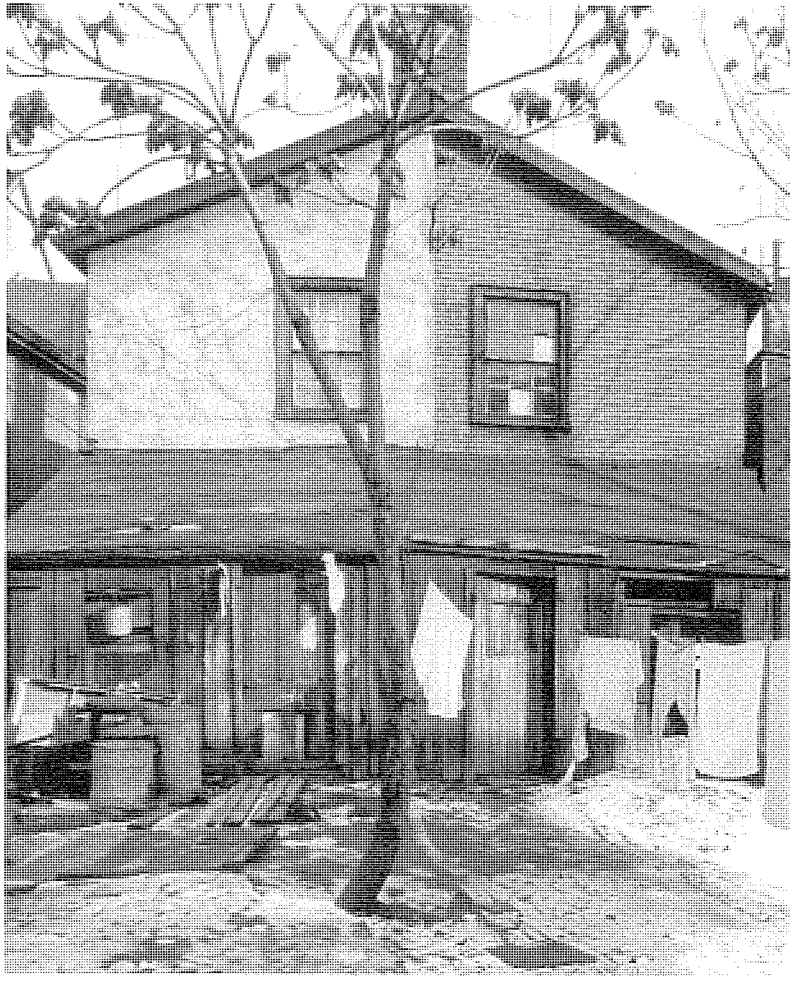
An article that ran in the *Toronto Daily Star* in February 1939 highlighted the plight of many Toronto children who, according to Margaret Hall, then executive secretary of Protestant Children's Homes, lived in squalor that was "almost unbelievable."

Miss Hall told reporters who attended the Agency's annual general meeting: "We find children ragged, dirty, undernourished, and living in badly overcrowded quarters that are often not fit for human habitation."

It was not uncommon, she said, to find families of four or more living in two small, badly ventilated rooms. As had happened before, when hard times hit, applications for admission to all of the child welfare agencies increased. And the same reasons children



Deplorable housing was often the fate of Canada's impoverished children during the great depression.



had come into care nearly 90 years before, when the Sullivan Street orphanage first opened, applied during the Great Depression: a mother's illness or death, the desertion by the father, or the inability of either remaining parent to adequately care for the child.

As the 1930s came to a close, rising food prices forced foster mothers to devise better ways to stretch their grocery budget and still maintain the nutritive value of the meals they prepared. A number of the children who came into care were undernourished and underweight. Restoring these children to health became a major concern. A dietitian was hired who conducted weekly lectures on nutrition for foster mothers. Every child who was taken into care received a thorough medical examination before being placed in a foster home. Once in the home, regular checkups at the Selby Street clinic followed and, because the dental hygiene of more than half the children had been overlooked completely, visits to the dentist also occurred.

Foster mothers had to be particularly sensitive to the emotional needs of the children they took in. Many of them had been neglected or abused and, as a result, had developed low self-esteem and behavioural problems. Often, they were unable to control their anger or suffered from serious eating disorders. The juvenile courts labelled some of these children "delinquent" and assigned those who were not sentenced to periods of custodial care at industrial schools, reformatories, or farm colonies, to the Children's Aid Society, which in turn placed them with Protestant Children's Homes. In this regard, the ongoing series of child psychology lectures and seminars given by members of the Protestant Children's Homes staff, and the foster mothers own association network, were very helpful and supportive.

Sadly, in the 1930s and 1940s, none of Toronto's child welfare agencies were set up to receive children with epilepsy or those children who, today, would be identified as physically challenged. The agencies reflected societal attitudes of the time and considered such children "unplaceable." Developmentally challenged children,

whose ability to learn was then regarded as "retarded," might have been admitted to Protestant Children's Homes had there existed a way of providing to them special care and training prior to their placement in foster homes. As well, the needs of children suffering from psychiatric disorders were inadequately met. They were confined in the asylum in Orillia, or in the Mimico Reformatory. Protestant Children's Homes joined the other agencies in appealing to the Welfare Council of Toronto for special observation homes to care for them.

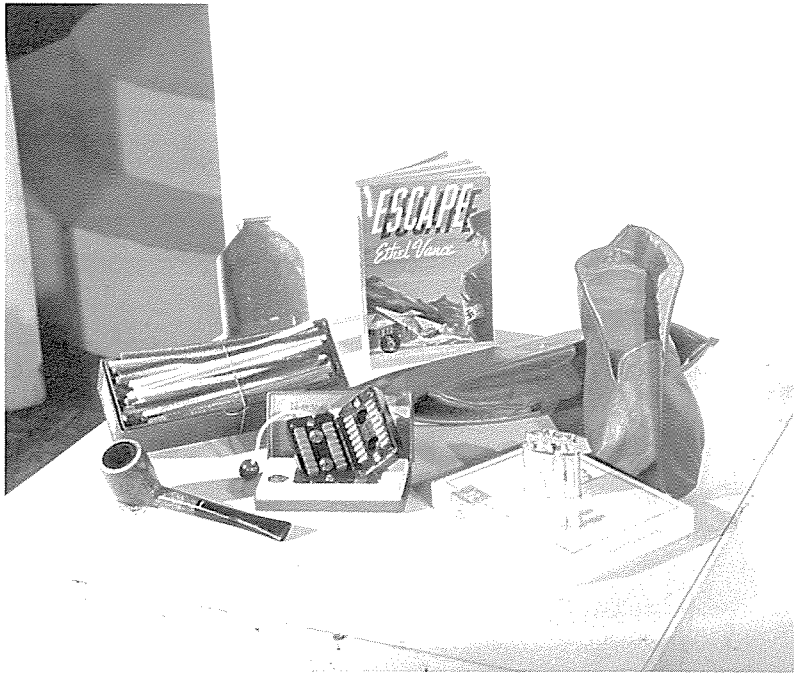
"We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when..."

When war was declared in September 1939, an added strain was placed on Protestant Children's Homes because many more children came into care. Before the war, most of the children admitted to the Agency had been deprived of parental care through the illness or death of one or both parents. When the war began, however, men enlisted in the armed services while their wives, needing to bring more money into the household, took up factory work producing war materials. In the first years of the war, the number of children requiring foster care increased dramatically at a time when the number of people applying to become foster parents was declining.

In an appeal that appeared in a 1941 *Globe and Mail* article, Protestant Children's Homes head social worker, Margaret Hall, was quoted as saying, "Surely it is a part of our patriotic duty to open our doors to Canadian children, especially children of soldiers. I am sure there must be many women who would readily offer their services as foster mothers if they but knew the need."

While the appeal encouraged a number of women to apply as foster mothers, throughout the war, the shortage of good foster homes remained a serious problem.

Many foster sons joined the Canadian Armed Forces. Regardless of the fact that no blood relationship existed, their foster parents regarded them as sons nevertheless. Throughout the war members of the Foster Mothers Association met regularly to pack "comfort boxes" containing sweaters, socks, toiletries, candy and cigarettes, which they sent to their sons, wherever they were posted.



During WWII, foster mothers prepared "comfort packages" for former foster sons in the Service.

England, Wednesday, August 19, 1942

"How did that little rhyme go again?" Danny asked himself, as he and his pals jounced around the noisy, rank-smelling landing craft which was being buffeted by choppy seas and the wash of scores of other nearby boats that were part of a huge armada making its way under cover of darkness across the English Channel.

"Something like, Monday's child is full of grace...no, that ain't it. Let's see. Let's see. Monday...Monday's child is fair of face,...yeah, that's how it goes, fair of face."

Now, what was the rest of it?

Mrs. B. had taught the Mother Goose rhyme to him, patiently saying it over and over again each night before bed until he had it right. Mrs. B. and Mr. B., that's what he'd called his foster parents. Mom and Dad had somehow seemed too intimate. Besides, with two sons of their own still at home, Danny didn't feel right calling them that, though he'd often longed to.

"Monday's child is fair of face."

"My gosh," thought Danny, "that was 12 years ago." He couldn't remember the silly thing now to save his soul. In fact, he couldn't remember much at all, except what he was supposed to do when he and his buddies hit the beach about five minutes hence. For weeks, they'd practised on a near replica of the target that had been constructed in the camp where he'd been stationed. Everything, right down to the smallest enemy machinegun nest, had been duplicated. They knew the town, or at least its phony twin, almost as well as they knew the streets, back lanes, and fields they'd played in as kids.

"Tuesday's child is...full of grace. Wednesday's child..."

"Hey! Wednesday's child, that's me," thought Danny, who'd been born in Toronto on a muggy Wednesday afternoon in August exactly twenty-three years before. "And what did you get yourself for your birthday, Danny ol' boy?" he whispered to himself. "Why, I fixed myself up with a little trip to France. Pretty swell, eh?"

Rural couple who became foster parents.

Wednesday's child is full of...

He stopped there and thought back to the four years he'd spent with Mr. and Mrs. B., of the big red brick house on Manning Avenue, even of the after-school paper route he'd had. But that was a long time ago, long enough to forget a nursery rhyme maybe, but not nearly long enough to forget the warmth and kindness of the woman who had taken the time each night to teach it to him. And here she was still taking time to write him letters and to send him parcels. Tucked inside the last one was a picture of her standing arm in arm with Mr. B., both of them grinning, she in her apron, he in the striped woollen trousers and shirt sleeves he always wore. Danny kept that picture inside the tin cigarette case in his breast pocket. He reached inside his tunic for it and, squinting hard in the gloom, tried to make out their faces. No use, it was too dark, and the pitching of the landing craft prevented him from holding their image still. No matter, he had it memorized.

Somebody interrupted his reverie by vomiting – no doubt a case of nerves, thought Danny. They'd be landing soon, and then all hell would break loose as each man slogged through the surf and across the killing beach, under heavy German fire, to the cover of the sea wall.

"Wednesday's child is full of...woe."

He slid the cigarette case containing the picture back into his breast pocket and grabbed his rifle.

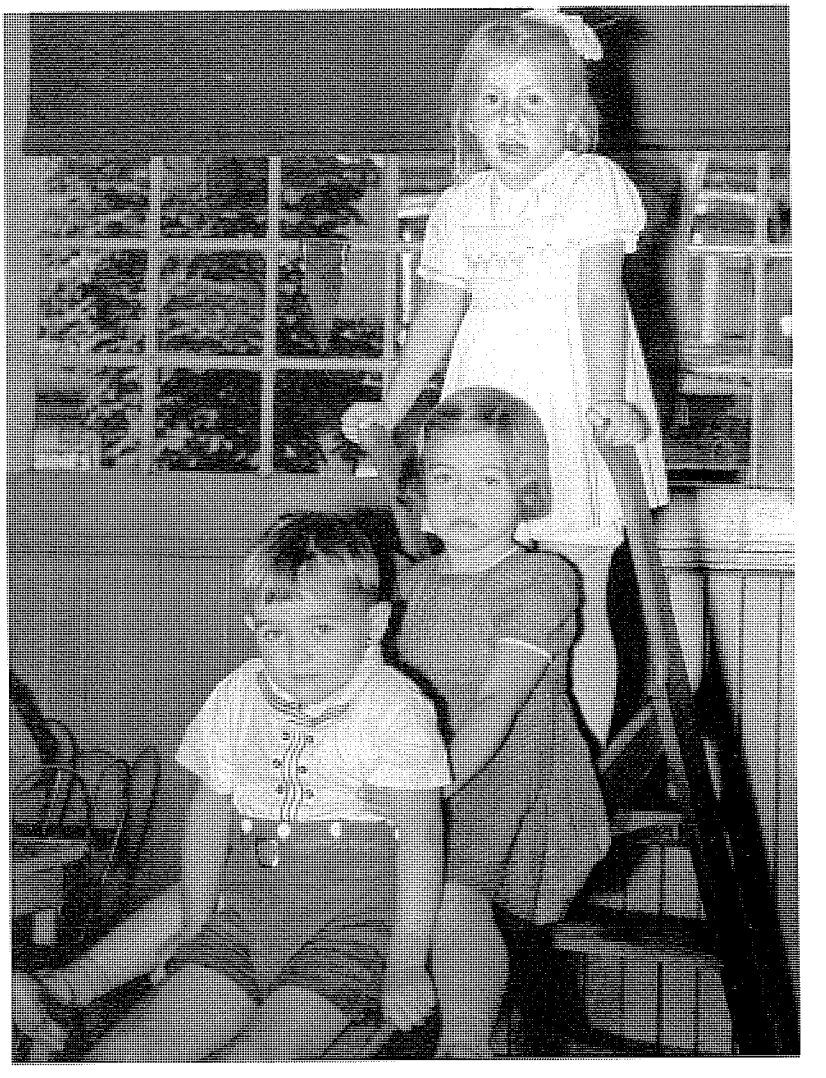
"Happy birthday!" Danny whispered to himself. "Welcome to Dieppe."

The fathers of children who were charges of Protestant Children's Homes, and who were in the armed forces, also received comfort boxes from the foster mothers. These packages carried a special cargo – photographs, cards and letters from the soldiers' children, as well as reports on their progress from their foster parents.

While the foster mothers remembered their sons who served in the war effort, many busied themselves in preparation to receive into their homes some young refugees from Europe. War Guests – children from Britain who had been sent to Canada to protect them from Nazi attack – also swelled the numbers of children who were cared for by Protestant Children's Homes. Miss Hall had taken part in a national planning conference on the care of British refugee children, which had been held in Ottawa early in June 1940. It was agreed that the federal government would be responsible for transporting the children to Canada, and that each provincial government would receive the children at special depots set up for that purpose, where they would undergo complete medical and dental examinations. The children would then be released to the various Children's Aid Societies, who would take responsibility for placing and supervising their care in approved foster homes.

Later that month, the executive committee of Protestant Children's Homes formally offered the provincial government and, by extension, the Toronto Children's Aid Society, assistance in finding suitable foster homes for the British children. To demonstrate their support for the executive committee, the entire staff of the Agency agreed to work overtime without pay to investigate homes in which to place the children. When the first block of 50 children had been placed, the Children's Aid Society asked Protestant Children's Homes to take on the added responsibility of supervising their placements, as well.

Since caseloads were already high, and because staff had voluntarily cut back on the amount of time they would take for their annual leave, the executive committee decided to hire, on a



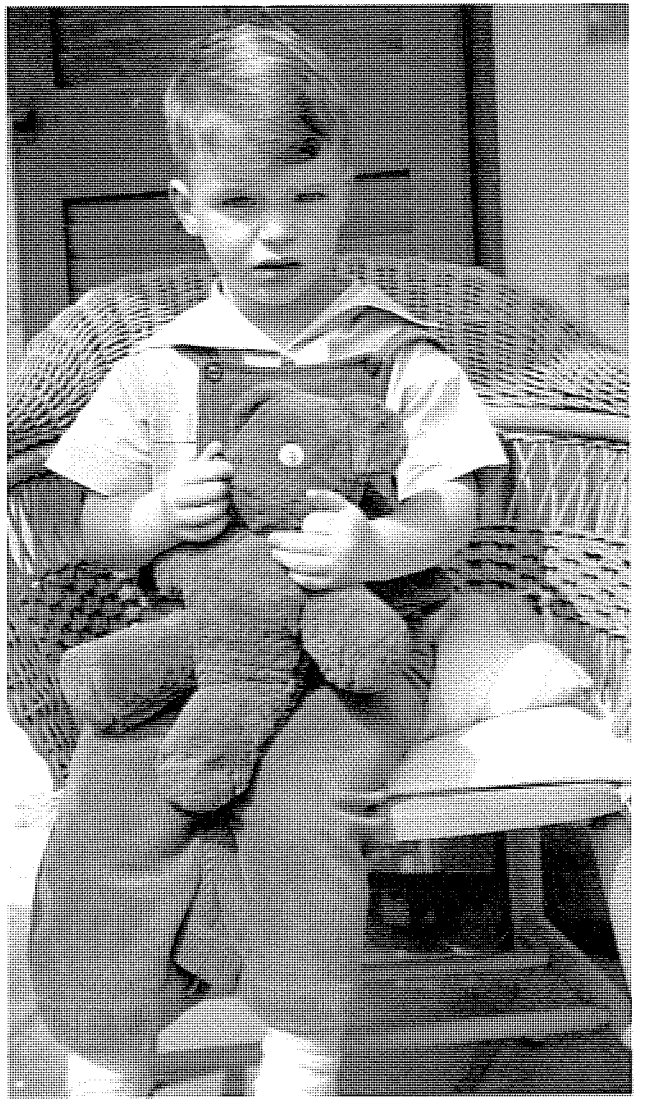
The Agency received numerous British children who were sent to Canada during WWII to shelter them from Nazi attack. (Above photo and photo on following page.)

temporary basis, one additional caseworker, Mrs. Jean Kohl. During the months of July and August 1940, Mrs. Kohl and a team of 25 volunteer workers investigated more than 360 foster home applications.

Everyone at Protestant Children's Homes made a contribution to the British War Guest Program, including certain Board members who quietly paid the additional expenses incurred by the Agency's salaried and volunteer workers. That is why it was particularly difficult for the Agency to withdraw from the work at the end of August due to lack of funding from the Federation of Community Services, a forerunner of the United Way.

Another important initiative undertaken at about the same time by the Agency, and which would suffer the same fate as the British War Guest Program, was the Foster Day Care Program. It began as a twelve-month experiment in day nurseries in February 1940. Prior to the Protestant Children's Homes taking over the experiment, it had been a project of the Foster Day Care committee of the Victoria Crèche. The Agency agreed to conduct a pilot project to provide day care in foster homes to the children of Protestant women employed in industry, and to share the project findings with both the Jewish and Roman Catholic communities, who were interested in conducting their own foster day care programs.

The experiment got under way in March 1940 with the admission of 14 children from the Victoria Crèche, which also offered the service. By June, there were 25 children enrolled in the program, and by September there were 41. When the one-year trial was over, 58 children from 44 families had received an average of 14 days care per month. The program was an unqualified success. But to continue providing foster day care, Protestant Children's Homes depended upon further funding from the Federation. When the Federation of Community Services withheld approval for any "new" programs, citing wartime fiscal restraints, the Agency reluctantly ended the experiment. The Board's disappointment at having to



abandon the program was evident in a comment made by Agency president Mrs. Lawrence Goad, who was quoted in the *Evening Telegram* of February 19, 1941 as saying, "This is a pity because the demonstration proved the need for such care, and the fact that it can be successfully given. We hope this type of service will be included in any extension of child care in Toronto."

In fact, a form of day care very similar to that delivered in the early 1940s by Protestant Children's Homes would one day be extended by the Agency to families living in and around Toronto, but not before 30 years had passed.

In January 1942, the Child Welfare Council of Toronto, of which Protestant Children's Homes was a member, sought to provide a modified form of foster day care to the children of women in industry. They made a presentation to the Minister of Public Welfare. By May of that year, legislation had been enacted that allowed the federal (Dominion) government to spend the necessary dollars to provide day care for the school-aged children of working mothers. Under the new legislation, various agencies would serve hot lunches throughout the school year to children who qualified for the program. In addition, the children would receive after school care until their mothers returned from work. The new program would be the responsibility of the Selective Service Department. In July, the federal government announced an additional program to organize day nurseries for mothers working in war industries on a national basis. It appointed women from across the country to sit as its representative on each of the provincial boards which were set up for that purpose.

In the end, only Ontario and Quebec made use of these funds to share the cost of setting up and operating a number of day nurseries. By September 1945, there were reportedly 28 day nurseries operating in Ontario, 19 of which were located in

Toronto. The cost of this program was shared equally by the Dominion and provincial governments, but it, too, came to an end. With the war over, women who had been employed in industry were discouraged from remaining in the workforce. Women who had held government jobs were actually legislated out of the workforce to make room for returning soldiers. In May 1946, the Child Welfare Council was informed that federal funding for the program would be withdrawn, and that the program would cease as of June 30. In Toronto, that meant that 1,100 children would no longer receive hot lunches and after-school supervision.

By November 1946, nine out of 28 day nurseries were closed, and the continued viability of the remaining programs was in doubt. With the withdrawal of federal support, the provincial government suggested that the Ministry of Education and local school boards assume shared responsibility for the program. The Toronto Board of Education had no money to make up the shortfall. The City of Toronto expressed an interest in continuing the program with provincial assistance, but since its 1946 budget had already been struck, any cost-sharing agreement with Queen's Park would have to wait another year. In the meantime, something had to be done.

In uncharacteristically stiff language, the Board of Protestant Children's Homes sent strongly worded letters to both the Dominion and provincial governments urging them to reconsider their decision to withdraw their financial support for day care. Within a matter of days, the Board received written replies from representatives of both governments advising that while the matter was under review, it was, after all, "a local responsibility." In 1946, the Ontario government passed the Day Nurseries Act to regulate and fund the operation of group day care centres. Such centres, which would focus on early childhood development, were believed by specialists at the University of Toronto's Institute of Child Study to be the only appropriate form of care for children in their early years. This belief was driven by the progressive education movement and by the comparatively new social science of

psychology. The Institute, which was established in the 1920s, provided the model for the wartime child care centres and supplied the teachers to work in them. But the publicly-run centres were expensive to build and staff. Moreover, they were too few and far between to meet the needs of the vast majority of working mothers, who were obliged to make their own arrangements for the care of their children.

In the face of government reticence to adequately fund day care, a handful of Toronto child care agencies continued to offer various forms of day nursery care. Their varied practices and procedures came under the scrutiny of an extensive 1949 survey of family and children's services, which was conducted by a team of professional social workers from the United States, under the auspice of the Welfare Council of Toronto. In addition to making numerous recommendations aimed at both raising and standardizing the level of day care made available to Toronto families, the survey team outlined the fundamental need for such a service:

"Group day care," the authors of the report stated, "is an important and appropriate service for children whose families, for reasons of economic and social need, must seek help during part of the day for the care and supervision of their children. It is a service designed to offer full developmental opportunities to each child through participation in group living program organized according to the child's age level and interests and abilities. It is a supplement to family living. The child's ability to benefit from group day care depends largely on the parents' ability to use the service as a means of strengthening the family unit. It is not a substitute for any other service, having unique values of its own. Its use often means keeping families together. It is mental hygiene which prevents personality damage to children, resulting from inadequate care and guidance during early years."

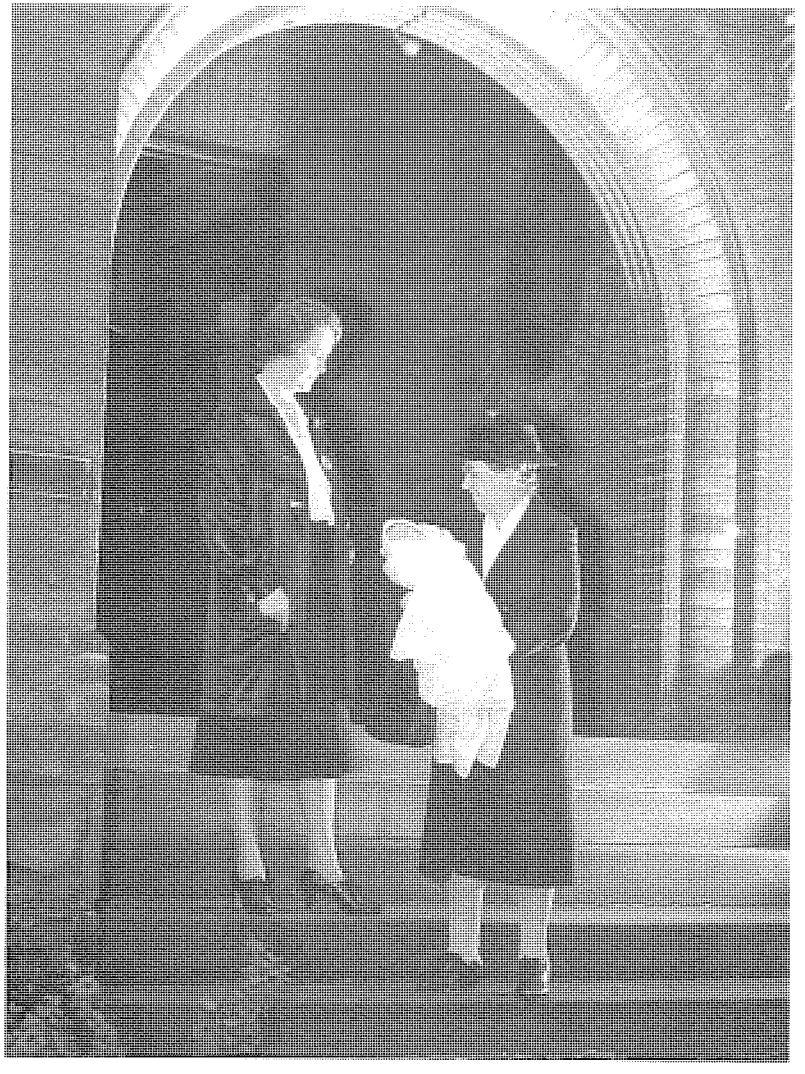
All that may have been true, but for tens of thousands of working mothers, group day care would forever remain out of reach.

Charting a New Course, Finding a New Home

The troubled years that spanned the Great Depression and World War II placed a serious strain on the modest resources of the Protestant Children's Homes and her sister agencies throughout Toronto. Yet they were also exciting years filled with challenge, for they compelled everyone associated with the organization to examine closely the ways in which the Agency served the needs of Toronto's underprivileged children and their families, and forced them to devise new ways of meeting those needs. In the spring of 1944, the Executive Committee had appointed Jean Kohl to conduct a thorough study of the function and duties of every staff member. The result was a comprehensive report which, for the first time since the organization began offering foster care, detailed the many steps taken by Agency social workers and administrators, from the moment they received an application for admission, until a child left the organization's care.

The report was most instructive and useful for Board members because it gave them virtually an hour-by-hour account of the myriad duties performed by intake workers, home finders, case workers, and administrative staff. It engendered amongst the members of the Board a much deeper appreciation for the pressures the staff operated under, and enabled them to make informed decisions about policies and the allocation of money.

Mrs. Kohl's study also identified clearly the various sources of funding that the Agency's annual operating budget relied upon. These included fees paid by parents or other family members who were able to shoulder the full or partial maintenance costs of the children in care; an annual allotment from the Federation for Community Services; a per diem paid by the City's Welfare



Trained staff was essential if foster care were to help children as it should.

Department for the children of financially dependent families; a number of other government grants; and interest earned on various capital investments, most notably on the mortgages the Agency held on various residential properties around the city.

Finally, after years of experimentation, as well as temporary and trial programs, the report redefined the specific role of the Protestant Children's Homes amongst the city's child protection agencies.

"We are," wrote Mrs. Kohl, "a private philanthropic organization, operating as a member of the Federation for Community Services to give foster home care to children whose homes have been temporarily or permanently broken through illness or death of the mother, separation or divorce of both parents; to the unmarried mother who must work to support herself and her child, and to the child who, for reasons of health or behaviour, must be temporarily removed from his own home. Children come into care at the request of the parent, who retains guardianship and may remove him at any time."

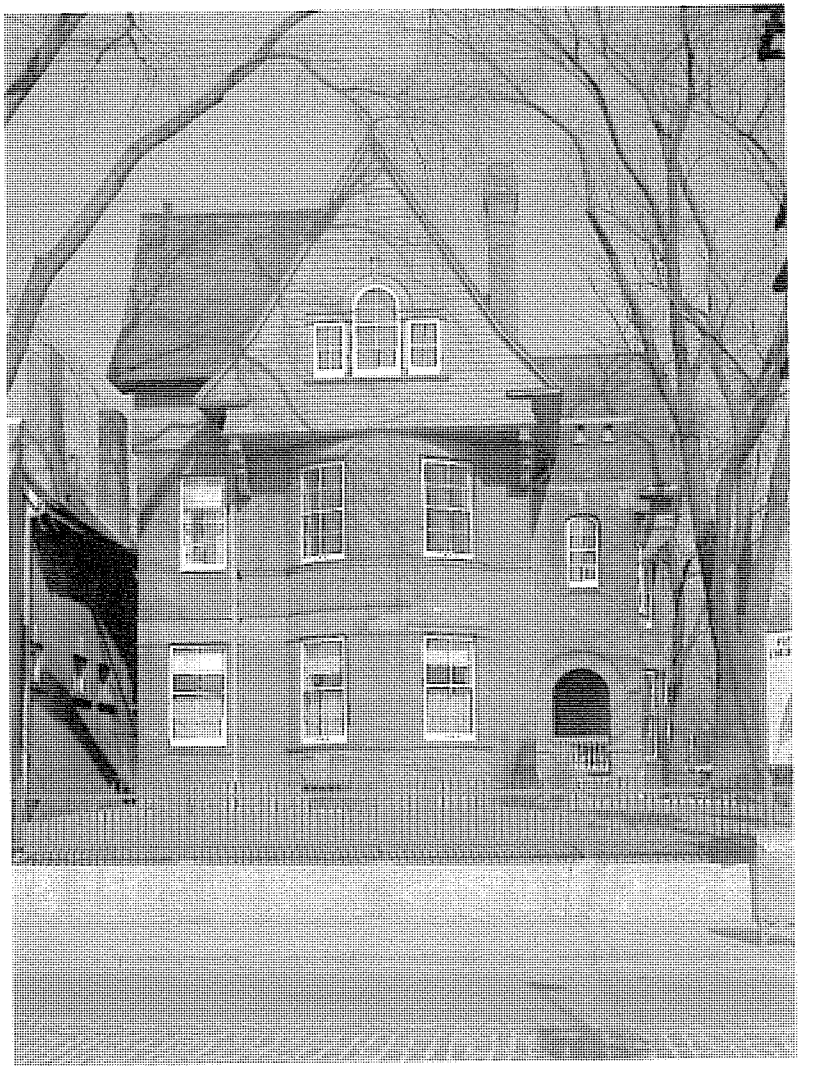
A postwar housing shortage in Toronto, which caused many children to remain in care instead of returning home to their parents, rising divorce rates, and the admission of steadily increasing numbers of emotionally disturbed children, continued to stretch the resources of the Protestant Children's Homes to the limit. Of course, a persistent shortage of suitable foster home applicants made things even more difficult. The scarcity and comparatively high turnover of foster homes in the period immediately following the war could be blamed in part on the housing shortage. It led to uncertainty in living arrangements for many, including prospective foster parents, and an increase in the cost of living.

According to the report of the 1949 Welfare Council of Toronto survey, too few professionally trained supervisory and casework personnel worked for the seven Toronto agencies offering foster care. The report's authors claimed this represented "the greatest weakness in the child welfare field." Large caseloads

prevented workers from properly preparing foster children and their parents for the emotional upheaval that their separation would cause. Trained staff was essential if foster care were to help the children as it should, and if the agencies hoped to reduce burnout amongst its foster parents. Moreover, there were not enough emergency care facilities capable of receiving children on a moment's notice, and too few foster parents specially trained to "cushion the shock to children who were suddenly separated from their parents."

At about the time that the survey results were released, the Children's Aid Society of Toronto and the Infants' Homes of Toronto were planning a merger. Concerned that such an amalgamation would compromise service to children and families in need, the report's authors urged the Board of Protestant Children's Homes to ensure that the Agency remained a distinctively separate organization, and that it expand its services to children of all ages throughout Greater Toronto.

By March 1946, the Agency had found itself in search of a new home. The house at 28 Selby Street, which had served the organization so well for 17 years, was no longer large enough to accommodate a growing staff and the increasing number of uses to which it had been put. For a time, the Board had considered renting and then purchasing a coach house located at 204 St. George Street, but they were never able to come to terms with the property owner. As well, a delegation had been sent to inspect the Agency's old headquarters at 229 Gerrard Street East, with a view to buying it back. However, in September 1946, the Board learned that the properties at 380 and 382 Sherbourne Street at Carlton Street were on the market and made an offer to purchase, which was at first rejected. Eventually, a price was agreed upon and the staff of Protestant Children's Homes prepared for a move to the building at 380 Sherbourne Street. It would become its headquarters for the next 54 years. The second property, a coach house at 382 Sherbourne Street, would house the Agency's caretaker.



The Agency moved to Sherbourne Street in 1947.

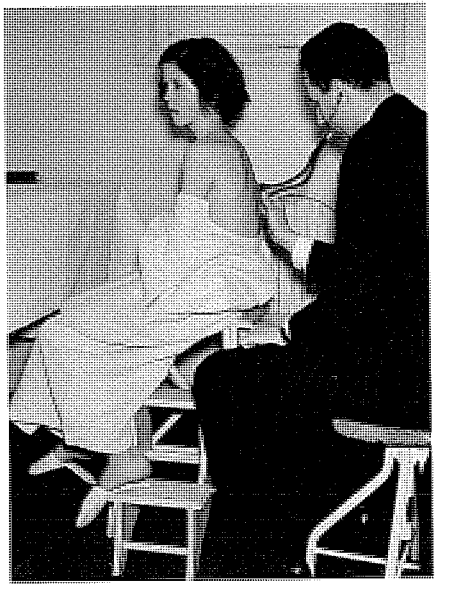
The Dollhouse at 380 Sherbourne Street.

The house at 380 Sherbourne Street boasted an interesting, if somewhat shady, history. It had once been the property of local racing tout, philanthropist and man about town, Abraham Orpen, who, according to legend, kept a mistress and an illegal gambling operation on the third floor. Entrance to his little hideaway was gained through a secret passage. He was an avid horseracing fan. The deed to the property went back and forth numerous times between Orpen and various family members and acquaintances in response to the ebb and flow of his gaming fortunes. The first meeting held in the new quarters took place on May 13, 1947.

While the postwar period brought prosperity to many Torontonians, it failed to ease the hardships experienced by the inner city poor, whose already low standard of living continued its relentless downward spiral. Already beset by an appalling lack of suitable housing, poor families found that the cost of living rose far faster than their meagre incomes. Those among them fortunate enough to have had jobs earned between 38 cents and 53 cents an hour over a sixty hour, six-day week. Such exploitative wages forced many low income families to reduce their consumption of milk, meat, vegetables, and fruit, and to replace such staples with less nutritious, starchy foods. Their health was compromised by poor diet and led inevitably to a serious deterioration in their children's dental hygiene, as well.

Many Agency foster parents found themselves caught in the economic crunch as well. Some of them reluctantly withdrew their services because it had become too expensive to house, feed and clothe the children. At that time, foster parents in rural areas received $18 a month and those in the city received $20. Foster parents caring for children under four received $22 a month. To these modest pay schedules was added $4 of the $5 monthly family allowance for each child. The other dollar was held in trust to take care of any emergencies. Foster parents used to break even, but when rising prices compelled them to reach deeper and deeper into their own pockets to make up the difference, some of them decided

A visit to the Doctor.



100th anniversary dinner at Casa Loma.

they'd had enough. Under such tight financial circumstances, it was difficult for the Agency to find new foster homes. Protestant Children's Homes was not in a financial position to increase payments to foster parents. Already it was hard-pressed to properly outfit each child before he or she was placed in a foster home. In 1946, the average cost of outfitting a child about to be placed in a foster home was $62.68. By 1948, the cost had jumped to $80.

At the 1949 annual general meeting of the Protestant Children's Homes, the problems of all the foster care agencies were summed up by a visiting speaker representing the Buffalo Children's Aid Society. She said increased board rates to foster parents, more public recognition of the service they provided to the community, and greater support from churches would encourage more people to apply to become foster parents. Without such support, she said, there would forever be a shortage of good foster homes.

In 1952, one year after the Agency celebrated its 100th anniversary, a coalition of foster care and child welfare agencies, which included Protestant Children's Homes, successfully petitioned the city's Board of Control for an across-the-board increase of $10 a month for foster parents. In recommending the increase, the city's finance and welfare commissioners urged the province to increase its share of foster care costs, which then amounted to no more than 25 percent.

In 1953, Canada's first metropolitan government was created, when 13 municipalities were reorganized to form the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. The new government was responsible for water, finance, education, public transportation and welfare. Later, police and housing were added.

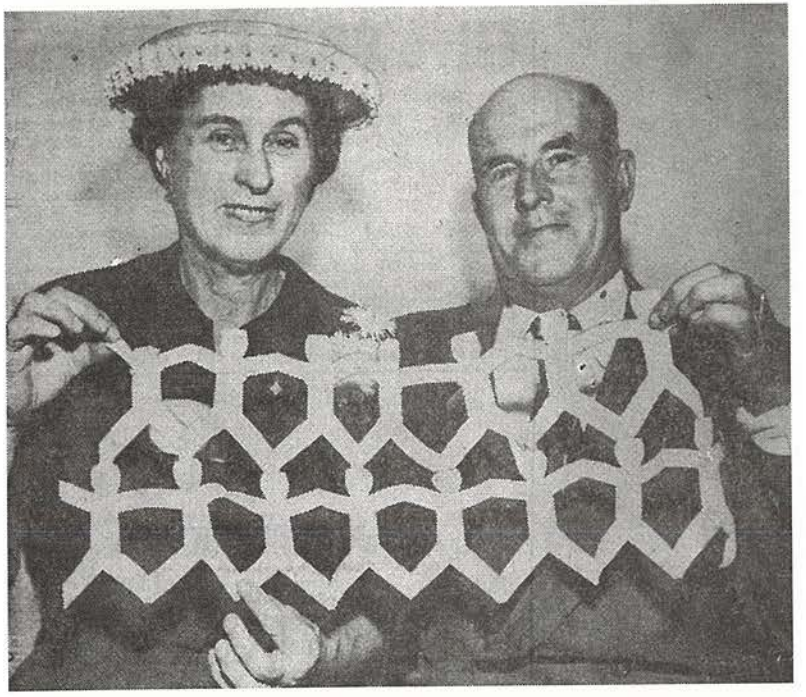
Government restructuring did nothing to reduce the unemployment rate, which continued to rise until, by April 1954, 35,000 Metro Toronto men were out of work. Responding to an array of socials ills that invariably accompany hard economic times – family break-up, parental desertion, child neglect and abuse, malnutrition, and the resulting strain that is inevitably placed on

child care agencies like Protestant Children's Homes – members of the Toronto Welfare Council called for an extension of unemployment insurance benefits and more federal and provincial government aid. The following month, scant relief came in the form of an amendment to the province's Charitable Institutions Act. The legislature increased grants to foster care agencies to 20 cents per child per day, or approximately six dollars a month. However, federal support for social programs in general was still paltry. Indeed, the Dominion government's efforts to protect the country's most vulnerable citizens from the bad times were so feeble that a senior spokesperson for the Canadian Tax Foundation taunted Ottawa with the label "reluctant dragon."

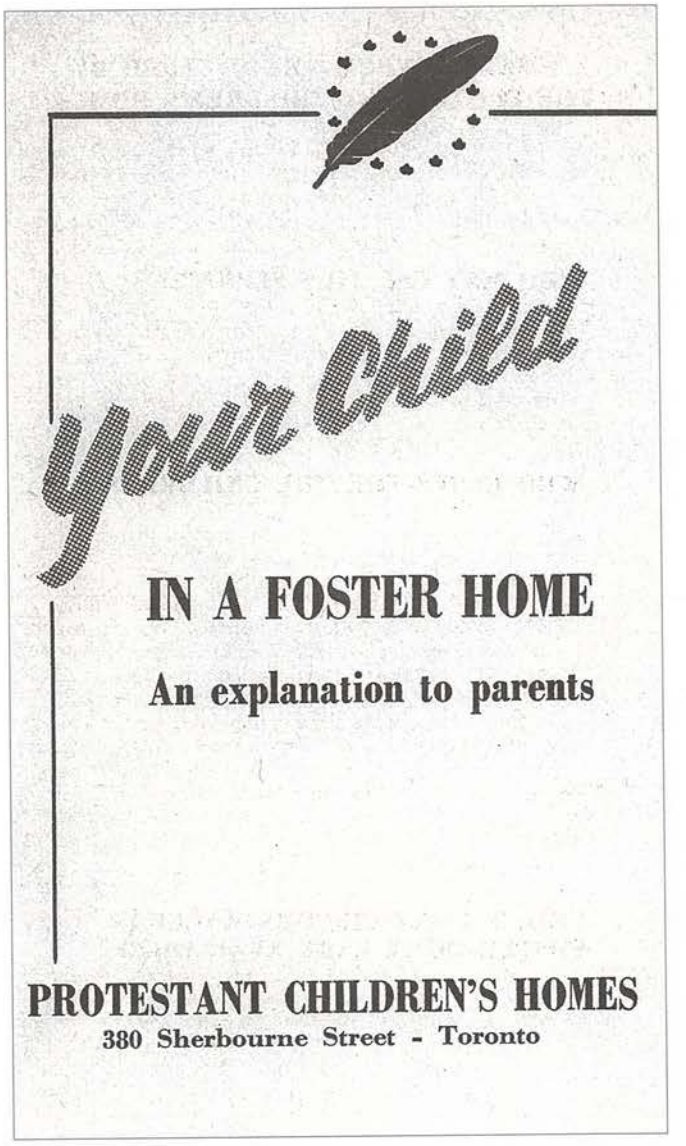
In February 1957, the 20 cent-per-diem provincial grant was suddenly cancelled because, said the Director of Child Welfare for Ontario, "Only children in congregate care were eligible to receive it." The announcement caught the boards of Protestant Children's Homes, Jewish Family and Child Services, and Catholic Family Services completely off guard. All three agencies had recently prepared their operating budgets for the coming year and had no opportunity to make up the unexpected shortfall. They considered making a joint appeal through the Toronto Welfare Council aimed at persuading the provincial government to postpone its decision for another year. A postponement would have given them and the United Community Fund, the organization which had, that same month, succeeded the former Community Chest, and of which they were members, time to raise sufficient funds to make up for the lost grants. It took a year, but the collective $36,000 loss to the agencies was eventually replaced by another provincial grant. Nevertheless, the need to review and upgrade rates paid to foster homes and to coax sufficient funding out of various levels of government were perennial problems that would beset all of the child care agencies for many years to come.

If the agencies had good reason to be frustrated by governmental parsimony, at least they could take heart by the

enactment, in January 1955, of Ontario's Child Welfare Act. The new legislation combined the Children's Protection Act of 1893 with the Adoption Act, and the Children of Unmarried Parents Act, which were enacted in 1921. It contained improvements intended to protect children against abuse and neglect far more effectively than any preceding legislation. For the first time, adults found guilty of mistreating children were liable to a fine or imprisonment. It had taken more than a century, but at last child protection legislation had some teeth.



Foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Frisby, hold paper doll chain representing each of the 15 children they cared for in 26 years.



Toronto, 1968

With one tiny fist Ruth clung to Mina Walker's plaid skirt, with the other she held tight to the ear of a tattered pink bunny rabbit. While Mina fussed over the packing of Ruth's small cardboard suitcase, the little girl chanced a furtive glance over her shoulder and up into the face of the timid young Inuit woman sitting a few feet away. The young woman was Ruth's mother, Naomi. After a lengthy period of treatment and convalescence for tuberculosis at Toronto's Weston Sanatorium, Naomi and Ruth were now going home to Pangnirtung, on the Cumberland Peninsula of Baffin Island.

Though the joy she felt at witnessing the mother-daughter reunion was genuine, Mina also felt deep sorrow at the thought of having to say goodbye to Ruth. She had lived with the Walker family for the full two years that her mother had been in hospital. During that time, Mina had loved and cared for the little girl as though she had been her own. Even though Mina had talked often to Ruth about her natural mother, and about the family who waited for her to return to the Arctic, a powerful bond had formed between foster mother and child. The pain of severing that bond was something all foster mothers lived with but never quite got used to. Mina was momentarily overcome at the thought of never seeing Ruth again. She shook her head apologetically at Naomi, then turned from her packing to wipe away the tears that had begun to well up in her eyes.

By contrast, the state of Naomi's heart was unfathomable. She showed no emotion whatever. Nevertheless, she could not completely disguise her mounting anticipation and nervous impatience to embark on the long voyage home. No longer would she and her daughter be separated. In a day or two, they would be reunited with the other members of their family. Their lives would return to normal. Tentatively, Naomi murmured to Ruth in her mother tongue, but the little girl held tight to Mina's skirt and did not respond. Whatever rudimentary words she had learned as a child of three were long forgotten. She looked blankly

at her mother then turned her head away, pretending to devote all of her attention to the stuffed rabbit.

When Ruth arrived in the Walker home as a toddler, she could speak no English. Now the bright, inquisitive five-year-old could speak no Inuktitut. Like most children, she had quickly adapted to her new, if temporary, home and to the language spoken there. There was no one with whom to speak Inuktitut, and there had been too little time for Naomi to teach her daughter to speak her native language during her weekly visits to the sanatorium.

Presently, Mina composed herself and resumed her packing. Before long, Ruth was eyeing Naomi over her shoulder again and smiling shyly. Encouraged, the young mother smiled back and withdrew a plastic tortoise shell comb from a rough canvass bag containing her belongings. With the comb, she motioned for Ruth to come closer. Cautiously, the little girl released her hold on Mina's skirt and sidled timidly over to her mother, all the while averting her eyes. She allowed Naomi to reach out with the comb and run it once through her straight, black hair.

Ruth was instantly delighted. She tucked in her chin, hunched up her shoulders, and began to giggle. "Do it again," she said coyly.

Appreciating her daughter's reaction, but unable to understand what she had said, Naomi looked enquiringly at Mina, who nodded encouragement. When, once again, Naomi ran the comb through Ruth's hair, the little girl's reticence evaporated completely. She smiled broadly and climbed confidently upon her mother's lap.

"My turn," she said.

She took the comb from Naomi and, clamping it between her teeth, cupped her mother's face in her pudgy hands. When she was satisfied with the positioning of Naomi's head, she began to comb her hair.

"Nuja," said Naomi, as she grasped a small hank of her own hair, letting it run through her fingertips.

"Nuja," repeated Ruth, taking the first step in her long voyage back to life in Pangnirtung.

Warren Reynolds, president of Ronald-Reynolds advertising agency, holds a six month old Inuit boy.

Small Visitors from the North

In the mid-1960s, just as they had in the war years with British children, Protestant Children's Homes foster parents were called upon to shelter children from far away whose lives and those of their families were threatened by a deadly enemy. In this case, the children came from tiny Inuit settlements scattered across the vast Canadian Arctic, and the enemy was tuberculosis.

From the mid-1960s to 1970, under agreements between the child protection agencies, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the Department of Health and Welfare, a number of people suffering from tuberculosis were flown south were they underwent lengthy periods of treatment and convalescence at sanatoria in Montreal and Toronto. Many were mothers who refused medical attention unless at least one of their children was permitted to accompany them. Sometimes, the children themselves had contracted tuberculosis and had to be treated as well. Most times, however, the children were free of the disease and were placed in foster care until the parent had fully recovered, which, in some cases, took up to two years. Since some of the Inuit women were pregnant when they arrived, their children were born in the city. To ensure that the newborns remained healthy and free of tuberculosis, they were immediately taken into care and placed in foster homes. As a precaution, none of the Inuit children were placed in foster homes in which children 12 years or under lived.

Foster parents ensured that all of the Inuit children visited their birth parents at the Weston Sanatorium regularly. During the early stages of treatment, glass barriers separated parent and child. But as recovery progressed, they were permitted to have physical contact. And as recovery progressed still further, the birth parent was welcomed into the foster home for visits.

Foster mothers soon learned to have tea ready when the visiting mother arrived, for the Inuit woman would have done no less had she been receiving a guest in her home. They also learned that their northern visitors favoured fowl and clams, and that their musical

tastes ran to gospel and country and western. A few foster mothers even ferreted out hard-to-come-by copies of an Inuit-English dictionary, which eased verbal communication, if only a little.

Nearly all of the Inuit parents feared that they would never see their children again. Protestant Children's Homes understood full well this issue of trust and prepared all of the foster parents who received the Inuit children to deal with it. Extra care was taken to make the recovering Inuit comfortable and welcome when they visited their children in the foster homes. Photographs were taken of the children and shared with their parents. Though they received plenty of love and affection from their foster families, the Inuit children were always encouraged to remember that there was another family that loved them, too, and who waited for them to return to the north.

While they were in treatment, the patients were permitted to send personal messages to family members at home via the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's short wave Northern Service.

The Inuit foster program would continue until September 1970, when medical attention for Inuit women suffering from tuberculosis was provided by hospitals in Montreal.

Protestant Children's Homes – Benefactors

Throughout its 150-year history, the Agency has relied, in part, on the generous bequests and donations of individuals whose gifts, large and small, have helped the organization maintain its high level of service to children and their families. It is impossible to list the names of every one our the Agency's several thousand benefactors, but here is a representative sample from the years between 1926 and 1971.

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Protestant Children's Homes – Benefactors

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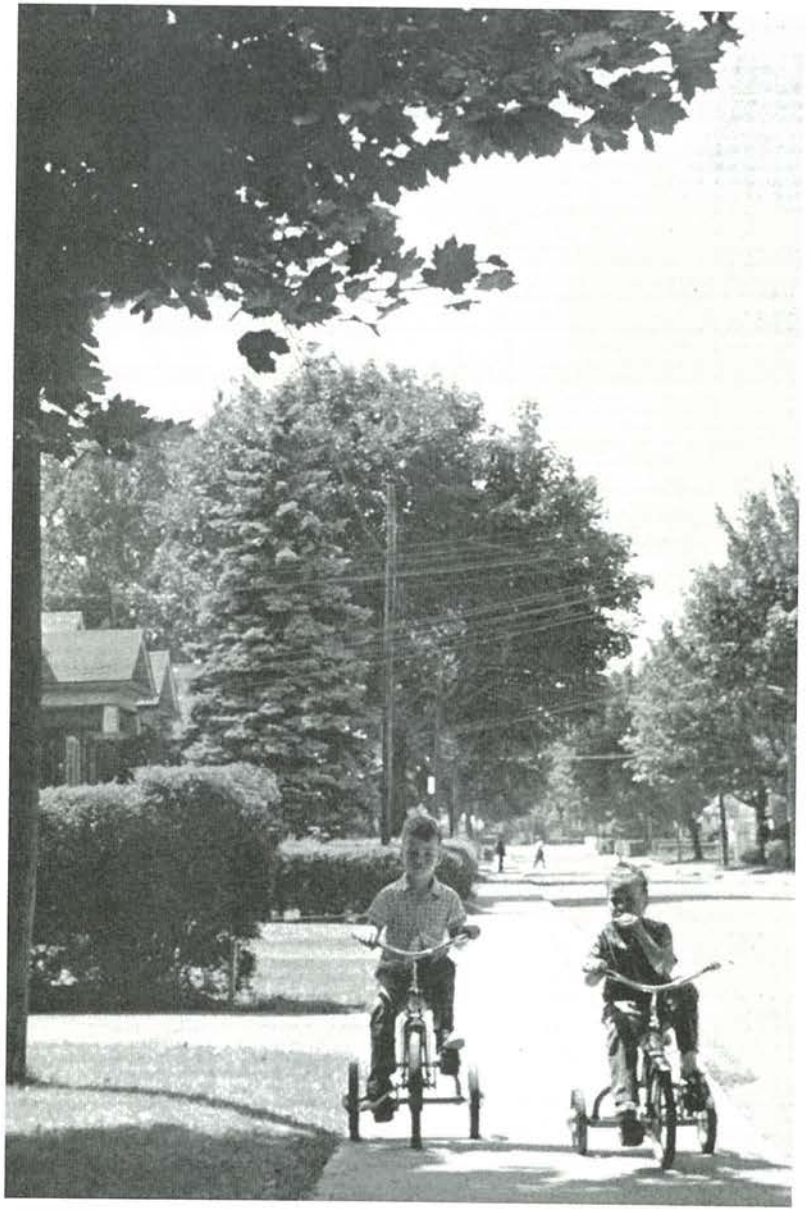


The Challenge of Change

In March 1963, at a meeting of the East York Social Planning Council, which was attended by representatives of various social agencies and the municipal councillors of Scarborough and East York, there was general agreement that day care was a service that a rapidly increasing number of Metro Toronto families desperately needed. Protestant Children's Homes was strongly encouraged to develop a pilot day care project. When this was conveyed to the Protestant Children's Homes Board, Director of Social Work, Betty Quiggin, was asked to make preparations to conduct a pilot project.

Over the next six months, while the Day Care Committee of the East York Social Planning Council conducted a detailed needs assessment for day care amongst its clientele, Betty Quiggin examined the way in which services were delivered to the Agency's clientele. She found that between 10 and 15 percent of applications resulted in admission of the children to foster care – a comparatively small percentage. As for the remaining 85 to 95 percent of applications, the Agency helped those families to make other suitable arrangements. The evidence was clear to Betty Quiggin: Protestant Children's Homes should provide a variety of services and facilities for helping children in their own homes, not just foster care. With so many mothers entering the paid workforce in the 1960s – two of every five women working outside of the home had children – it was essential to provide a range of services, and that surely included adequate day care. Miss Quiggin told her Board that as far as she was concerned, day care was as essential to the health and well-being of society as were public utilities like water and electricity.

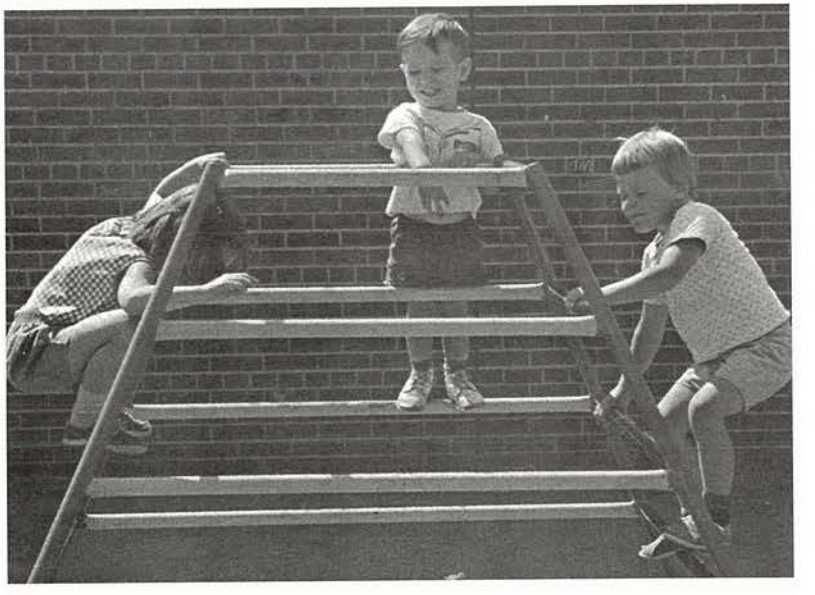
In September, the Board moved to go ahead with a pilot project in East York. Staff from Protestant Children's Homes worked with representatives from the Toronto Social Planning Council, Victoria

Day Nursery and St. Christopher House to develop a pilot project to test the feasibility of offering day care services in neighbourhood homes. While each agency followed guidelines set out by the Child Welfare League of America, they nevertheless developed different approaches to offering services as a way of testing this new form of day care. The following month, Miss Quiggin met again with the East York Social Planning Council and outlined her vision for her agency's part of the program. She told them Protestant Children's Homes would provide day care in supervised private homes for pre-school children, and that the cost of the program would be born entirely by the Agency, which would continue to provide foster home placement service to the children of families who needed it.

By early December 1963, the first children were received into the East York program. Within a few months, their numbers grew, and by the fall of 1965, more than 50 children were receiving day care. The program was an unqualified success, and the Agency had to appeal for secondhand playpens, highchairs, tricycles, and toys to fill the growing demand.

In October 1965, Betty Quiggin was invited to make a presentation supporting a request for more than $25,000 in program funding to the East York Township Health and Welfare Committee. Keenly interested in the program's success, and determined that it should grow, the East York Committee recommended to the Township's Finance Committee that township council approve the funding. At the same time, the Committee appealed to the Minister of Public Welfare to amend the Day Nurseries Act so that the province would share the cost of providing family day care equally with municipalities. As the law stood, the province was only obliged to share the cost of government-run day nurseries. The appeal fell on deaf ears at Queen's Park, however, and proved to be the first round in an ongoing and very public battle over funding that was waged by non-government child care agencies against the provincial government.

Working through umbrella organizations such as the Ontario



Welfare Council and the Association of Women Electors, and by advocating on their own behalf, Protestant Children's Homes, Cradleship Crèche, Victoria Day Care Services, and the West End Crèche – known as the Group of Four – repeatedly petitioned the provincial government to broaden the Day Nurseries Act to recognize family day care as a complementary service to the care offered by nurseries.

In January 1966, a new Child Welfare Act came into force, which also excluded the Group of Four from shared provincial-municipal funding for their programs. Unlike wards of the Children's Aid, the children they served came into care on a voluntary basis. Under the new legislation, municipalities could not share with the province their portion of the costs to deliver foster care that was supplied by the four "voluntary" Metropolitan Toronto agencies.

In 1966, the federal government passed Canada's first national welfare legislation, the Canada Assistance Plan, which consolidated the Unemployment Assistance Plan and legislation that provided social assistance to people who were physically challenged. Incorporated within it was a cost-sharing arrangement with the provinces to subsidize the provision of day care to low income families in need, people who were so poor, they couldn't possibly pay for day care themselves, and as a preventive measure, those who were considered "likely to be in need."

In Ontario, responsibility for implementing the Canada Assistance Plan would be shared by both the provincial and municipal governments. In most other provinces, child care remained solely a provincial responsibility. Anticipating this, the Association of Women Electors, which represented 20 social agencies, including Protestant Children's Homes, took the lead in pressing Metro Council to ensure that the delivery of welfare services to area families would not suffer under the new régime.

Protestant Children's Homes was particularly worried that money which had been allotted by East York Township Council to

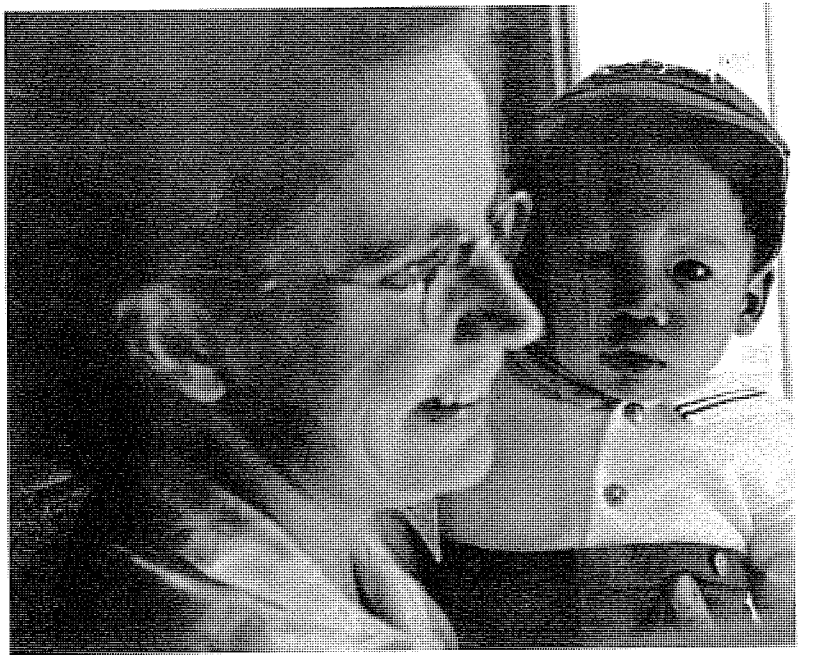
run the family day care program there would disappear once the Metropolitan government took over. Miss Quiggin pressed Metro Council to give a definitive statement in respect of the new legislation and its likely impact on the future of voluntary day nurseries within the city. She wanted to know if there would be cost sharing for such programs between the province and Metro.

These were uncertain times for the Agency. The new Child Welfare Act transferred responsibility for many foster care arrangements to the Children's Aid and compelled Protestant Children's Homes to re-evaluate the provision of foster care. By the end of 1966, only 20 children remained in Agency foster homes. There were, however, between 60 and 70 children enrolled in the East York family day care program, and plans were underway to place 20 more in homes in North York. To further complicate matters, the United Community Fund had reduced Protestant Children's Homes funding allocation for 1966 because Metro Chairman William Allen and Welfare Commissioner John Anderson had announced that Metro intended to put more money into day care centres, then the municipality's focus, despite advice to the contrary offered by their constituents and numerous social agencies.

A notation in the Agency's minute book for May 10, 1966 reveals the Board's mounting frustration with Metro's decision:

"Recent articles in the press have made it clear that Metro Chairman Allen, and public welfare officials have been unreceptive to advice from the Social Planning Council and private agencies. There is considerable concern being voiced in the community from individuals and groups such as the Association of Women Electors."

Despite the atmosphere of uncertainty created by new legislation and the obduracy of certain local politicians and bureaucrats, the members of the Protestant Children's Homes Board remained optimistic about the future of the Agency. However, they also realized that a fundamental change in direction was required if the organization were to survive and continue to serve Toronto's needy families, as it had for the previous 115 years.



Their willingness to embrace change and their confidence that they would ultimately succeed was reflected in the minutes taken at the May 24, 1966 meeting:

"Several members ... stated that there appears to be a great future in day care for Protestant Children's Homes. Recognition was given to the problems of financing the service, but it was felt that this would resolve itself as more recognition is gained for the need of (sic) increased day care, and that P.C.H. should move forward with confidence."

A motion to realign the Agency's services by phasing out full time foster care and using the freed-up funds to develop a network of day care homes throughout the city was carried. The decision was a momentous one. Not since 1926, when the Agency decided to phase out the orphanage in favour of foster care, had such a fundamental shift in focus been made.

Having charted a new course, and realizing that success depended in large measure upon greater public awareness of the contribution family day care was making in the lives of the families who had come to rely on it, the Board decided to mount a major public relations campaign to seek support. Retaining the services of a professional public relations consultant, they focused on politicians and other community opinion-makers to help get their message out. For greater impact, the public relations launch was timed to coincide with the fall United Appeal campaign, preparations for the 1967 Metro Toronto budget, and the inauguration of the Agency's second family day care program in North York. Community leaders, such as East York Reeve True Davidson, also waded into the controversy, which the media dubbed "the crisis in day care."

"The crisis," said Davidson, "is the refusal of Queen's Park to give financial assistance to day care." At the time, the province subsidized only municipally-run day nurseries.

The Agency's Director of Child Care Services, Kathleen Sutherton, agreed with the Reeve of East York. While sitting as

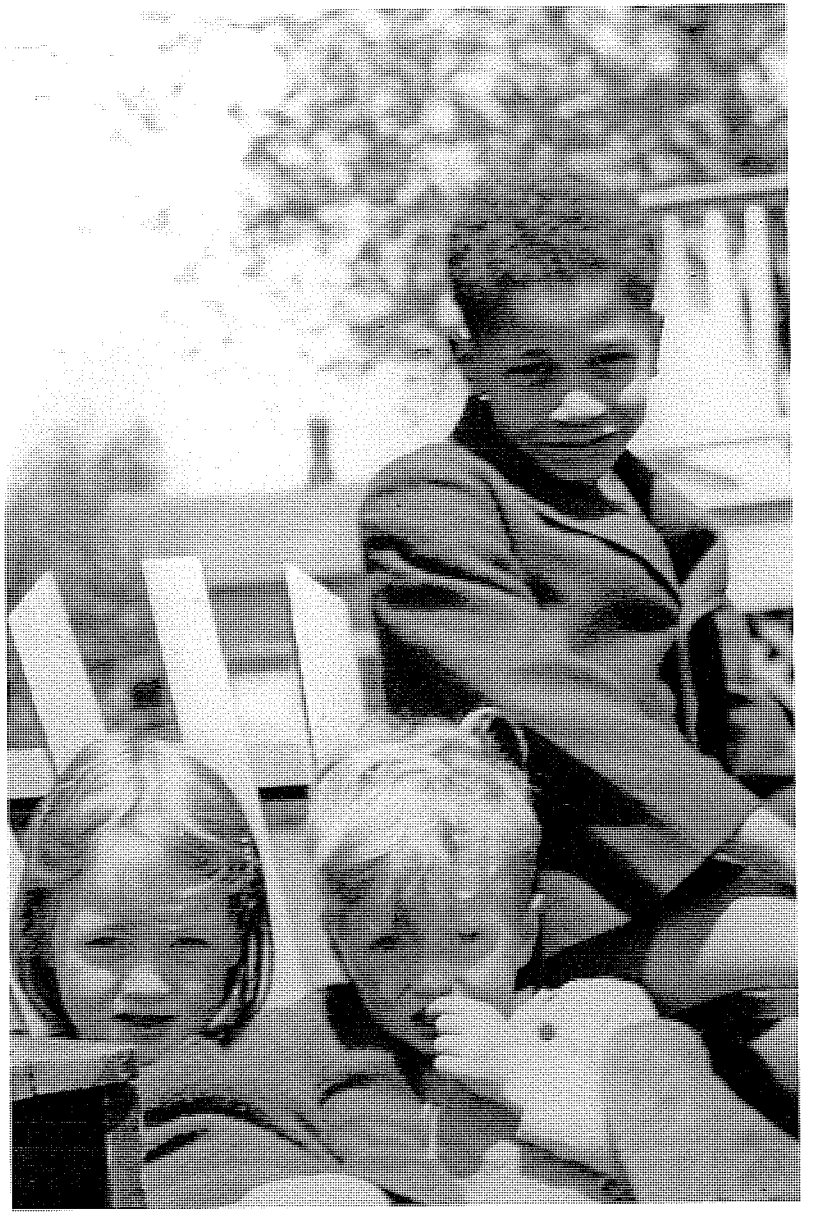
Protestant Children's Homes representative on a child day care panel that was convened by the Agency in the fall of 1966, Miss Sutherton said that since 1961 there had been a sharp increase in the demand for care for babies and school-aged children of single, widowed, separated, and divorced working mothers. These women had to work to feed and clothe their children. Many believed their only option was to place their children into foster care because no alternative existed.

"The separation of a child from his or her parents just for economic reasons is a very serious experience in the life of a young child," Sutherton told reporters covering the panel discussions.

Protestant Children's Homes workers, whose clients faced such a dilemma, realized an alternative existed to full time foster care, a way to permit the mother to continue to earn a living outside the home and keep her family together. That way was some form of day care. This realization, and the agency's leadership and participation in the pilot project with the Social Planning Council and other agencies, led to the establishment of the East York family day care program. Their approach to family day care was an extension of the foster care model. It saw quality care being achieved by a thorough initial assessment of providers' home settings and families' needs, careful matching of children and providers, regular visits to providers to monitor the care they offered, and meetings with parents to ensure their ongoing satisfaction with care.

By June 1966, Metro Toronto had nine public nurseries, five United Appeal nurseries, nine church-sponsored or other non-profit nurseries, thirty private profit-making nurseries, and an unknown number of independent day care providers who were not subject to any supervision or standards whatever – a seemingly sizeable network. Even with all of these, however, the growing demand for day care far outstripped the supply.

Vast numbers of women with children had to find work outside their homes to supplement their families' incomes, even when that meant, as it inevitably did, that they received low wages. Just as



child-rearing had always been undervalued by society, so was the contribution to the economy of working mothers. In one newspaper article published in 1967, Betty Quiggin wondered out loud about what would happen if women abruptly stopped working.

"It would be the same as a general strike," she said.

At the time, it had been estimated that 94 percent of stenographers, sales clerks, teachers, and nurses were women. The Ontario Ministry of Labour predicted that by 1970, women would perform 57 percent of all service industry jobs. If, to underscore their true value to the economy, these women had all decided to withdraw their services for a time, the country would have instantly suffered a crippling labour shortage, the economy would have screeched to a stop, and the overall standard of living would have plummeted. If, however, politicians and the leaders of industry and commerce were to have placed a fair value on women's contribution to the economy, and if they had acknowledged the profound importance of raising children, they would have provided affordable day care. But they didn't. And as a result, the overwhelming majority of Metro Toronto's working mothers were obliged to leave their children with relatives, neighbours, or with an unsupervised babysitter. Many had no choice but to leave their school-aged children unattended, giving rise to the term "latch key kids." Rather than jeopardize their children's safety and the unity of the family, some women left the workforce and turned to welfare. But in doing so, they often found themselves ghettoized and scorned.

Day care centres met the child care needs of some working mothers, but there were far too few centres and the municipality couldn't build them fast enough to keep up with demand. Family day care, which involved the placing of children in homes supervised by a social agency like Protestant Children's Homes, presented a better solution. The day care homes, which were obliged to meet basic health and safety standards, were often located within a short walking distance of the child's home. Because there were no high labour costs, no money had to be spent on bricks

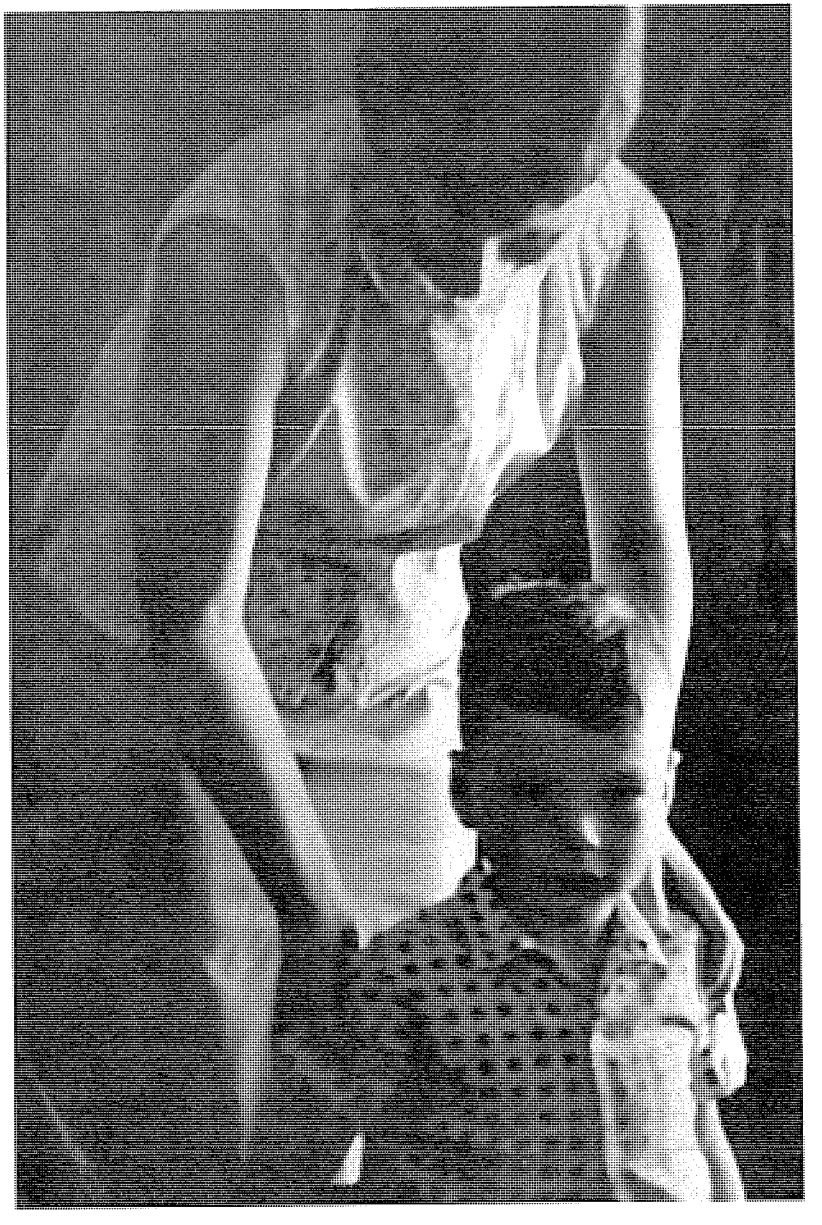
and mortar, and parents paid only what they could afford for the service, family day care was also less costly.

Most of the working mothers whose children were part of the East York program earned between $40 and $60 per week, while most of their husbands earned between $60 and $100 per week. They lived in rooms, flats, small apartments, or with relatives. On average, they paid $1.20 per day for each child's care. The actual cost for Protestant Children's Homes to screen applicants, supervise the children, administer the program, and pay the day care mothers was $4.60 per day per child.

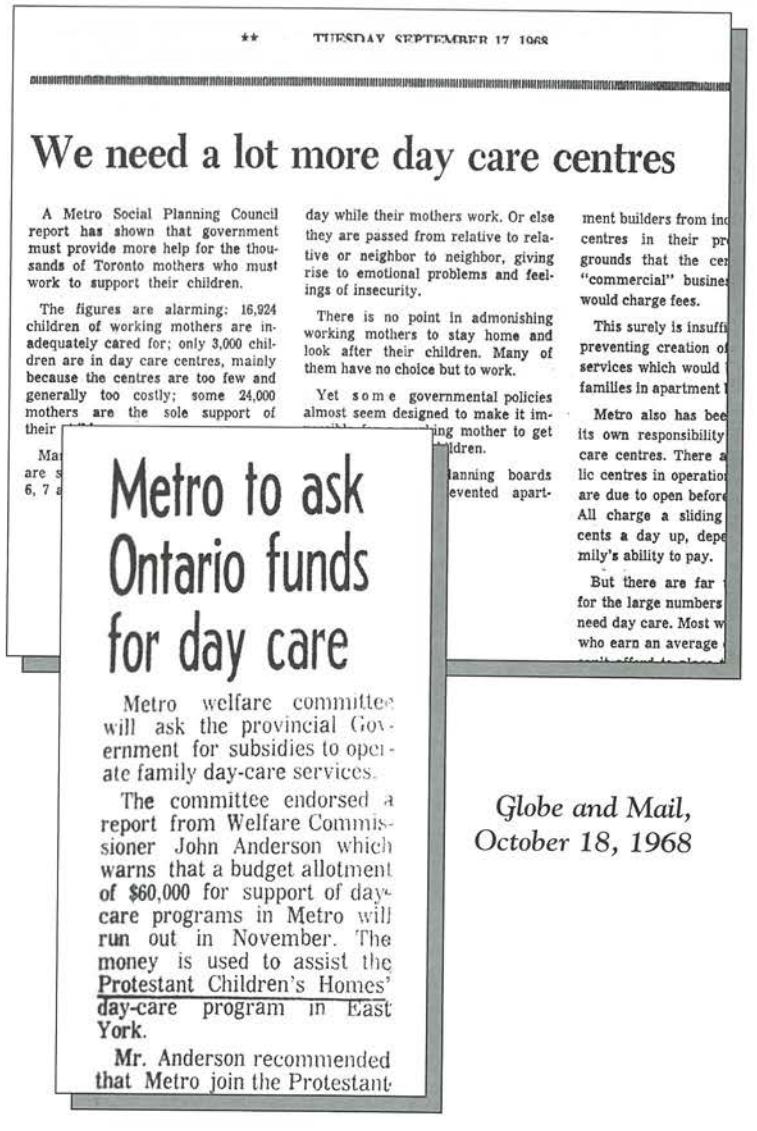
The day care mothers, as they were called at the time, were paid $2.42 per day per child. Usually, they were women with children of their own, or women whose families had grown and left home. They were experienced in caring for children, a fact that working mothers found reassuring.

A great deal of effort went into finding suitable day care homes. In the case of one family whose working mother sought care for her three children, caseworkers searched the family's neighbourhood for a month, logging 65 kilometers on the Agency car, before a prospective day care home was found. There followed a series of pre-placement visits, medical examinations for all the children, and a chest X-ray for the day care mother, before the children spent a single day in care.

Despite the obvious need for day care and the success of the East York program, as 1967 came to a close, the Agency was deeply concerned about the future. Metro Toronto Welfare Commissioner John Anderson had recommended that no financial support be given to the program beyond 1968 because it was not eligible for provincial cost sharing. Anderson's recommendation came in for immediate criticism by East York Reeve True Davidson, who told reporters, "This is just what we were afraid of when Metro took over welfare. It is a disgusting betrayal of all the principles we were assured would be upheld. To me, the thought of dropping this service is completely improper."



Tuesday, September 17, 1968



** TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 17 1968

We need a lot more day care centres

A Metro Social Planning Council report has shown that government must provide more help for the thousands of Toronto mothers who must work to support their children.

The figures are alarming: 16,924 children of working mothers are inadequately cared for; only 3,000 children are in day care centres, mainly because the centres are too few and generally too costly; some 24,000 mothers are the sole support of their

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day while their mothers work. Or else they are passed from relative to relative or neighbor to neighbor, giving rise to emotional problems and feelings of insecurity.

There is no point in admonishing working mothers to stay home and look after their children. Many of them have no choice but to work.

Yet some governmental policies almost seem designed to make it im- ing mother to get ildren.

anning boards evented apart-

ment builders from inc centres in their pr grounds that the ce "commercial" busine would charge fees.

This surely is insuffi preventing creation o services which would families in apartment

Metro also has bee its own responsibility care centres. There a lic centres in operatio are due to open befor All charge a sliding cents a day up, depe mily's ability to pay.

But there are far for the large numbers need day care. Most w who earn an average

Metro to ask Ontario funds for day care

Metro welfare committee will ask the provincial Government for subsidies to operate family day-care services.

The committee endorsed a report from Welfare Commissioner John Anderson which warns that a budget allotment of $60,000 for support of day-care programs in Metro will run out in November. The money is used to assist the Protestant Children's Homes' day-care program in East York.

Mr. Anderson recommended that Metro join the Protestant

Globe and Mail, October 18, 1968

Metro Councillor and Municipal Controller Margaret Campbell, herself a working mother and grandmother, supported Davidson. "We were assured that Metro would maintain the services existing in each of the municipalities (that compose Metro Toronto)," she said, in an article that appeared in the *Toronto Star*.

In September 1968, the Metro Toronto Social Planning Council made a public appeal to government on behalf of working mothers. The Council said 24,000 women were the sole supporters of their families, and that there were 3,000 children of working mothers enrolled in Metro's day care centres. Another 17,000 children were in private arrangements. A large number of children ranging in age from six to eight years had no supervision whatever while their mothers worked. As a result, many were frightened, insecure, and had developed serious emotional problems. Their mothers were caught between the need to provide for them and government policies that made it impossible for them to get affordable and accessible day care.

While the public battle raged on, members of Protestant Children's Homes Program Committee quietly visited as many Metro area day care centres as they could in an effort to understand how they ran and the program and facilities they offered. When they had completed their survey, they made their report to the Board.

September 1968 was a pivotal time for the Agency, as was noted in the minutes of a meeting held on September 24:

"...1969 will be a crucial year as Metro has clearly stated it will withdraw its support from our program at the end of 1968 if by that time it is not covered by provincial legislation, and this seems most unlikely to us.

"The question the Executive Committee faced (and which was, at that very moment, facing the Board) was, "Are we committed to maintaining our present day care program in East York and North York, and to developing a demonstration project in group day care homes, to the extent that we are prepared to finance it from our own capital funds throughout 1969, if necessary? If we choose to

assume a leadership role in the community in the development of adequate day care services, it will mean a staff recruitment and development program and a commitment to competitive salary scales for professional staff."

The members of the Executive Committee reminded the Board that they had found themselves in a similar position five years before when the Agency decided to phase out foster care in favour of family day care. At that time, the Board was prepared to underwrite the new venture. But did they have the confidence to keep the service going? The answer was a resounding and unanimous yes. Wise investments and the faith of countless individuals over the years, who donated both large and small sums of money, ensured that the Agency was in a strong enough financial position to both maintain its current programs in East York and North York and undertake a pilot project in group day care when the time was right.

In January 1969, the Agency enlisted the help of the general public by encouraging people to write to their members of provincial parliament urging them to support a change to the Day Nurseries Act that would permit funding of subsidies to families using family day care. Letters from members of the Agency's executive committee to Social and Family Services Minister John Yaremko had failed to bring about the desired result. Betty Quiggin was barely able to disguise her frustration with the government's intransigence, as the minutes of the March 25, 1969 meeting reveal:

"Miss Quiggin commented on the correspondence received from members of parliament in response to letters requesting the inclusion of family day care under the Day Nurseries Act. She noted that if we were naïve enough to think that by writing letters of explanation we could win support for this form of day care, we have learned from the replies that this is not so. The replies which have been received show an increasingly firm position which excludes not only the program, but by implication, rejects the need for it. She noted that our concern should be focused in two areas:

Editorial, Toronto Star April 7, 1969

A place for kids

Perhaps the most telling weakness of the Ontario government is that it does not comprehend the realities of life in Metro Toronto and the other growing cities of this predominantly urban province. This has been demonstrated once again in the attitude it is taking to the difficulties of working mothers and their children.

working, at a cost the family can afford.

The Metro Social Planning Council reported last fall that in Metro Toronto alone 16,924 children of working mothers were "inadequately cared for." What this colorless phrase means in fact is that youngsters of 6, 7 and 8 are left to fend for themselves all day while their mothers are at their jobs, while many others are passed around among unwilling relatives and neighbors, often to the great detriment of their mental and emotional health.

THE TELEGRAM, Toronto, Mon., March 31, 1969 51

Tory MPPs ignore daycare – agency

By YVONNE CRITTENDEN
Telegram Staff Reporter

The lack of daycare for many children of working mothers is being ignored by Conservative MPPs, a Toronto family agency charges.

Protestant Children's Homes bases its opinion on the reaction of Tory MPPs to letters from constituents urging the Ontario Government to bring family daycare under Provincial legislation.

Family daycare — private care in the home of another family — is probably the most widely used form of daycare by working mothers who can't afford babysitters or have no nearby day nursery available.

Last year, the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto reported that at least 17,000 children and possibly many more were inadequately supervised because of lack of daycare facilities.

Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers and the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

"To date," says Mrs. Murray Turner, president of Protestant Children's Homes, "the only success betrs know about daycare," how little our elected members've had is to discover.

Letters received back from NDP and Liberal MPPs were enthusiastic about family daycare being brought under Provincial legislation.

Tory MPPs, however, almost to a man replied with the sentiment expressed by Mr. Yaremko:

UNLIKELY

"The department considers it preferable that daycare of children apart from their parents should take place in a setting like a nursery, where trained staff provide a beneficial experience for them."

It is unlikely, Mr. Yaremko added in one letter, that funds will be available for nursery programs nor the need for their expansion," comments Betty Quiggan, executive director of PCH.

"We're simply concerned with those children whose mothers must work and for whom day nurseries are just not available."

The Government should recognize that family daycare, which is widely recognized in countries like the U.S. as a necessary part of an overall daycare program, is no longer in the "experimental stage" (as some Tory MPPs declared in their letters), Miss Quiggan adds.

"The Government is simply shutting its eyes to facts. The problem of daycare will continue to grow," she says.

"There aren't enough day nurseries to go around and even if there were there would still be many children not served because they would be inaccessible."

MOTHER'S VIEW

husband and therefore have to work during the day and support these children and myself. I think there is no better place for a child to grow up and spend his formative years than in his own home. However, when circumstances prevent this and the children must be taken care of by someone else during the daytime, the best alternative is to have the children in a private home cared for by a mother who is able to stay home.

"An impersonally operated day nursery or daycare centre does not take the place of a home environment, especially for a very young child. My youngest is five months and older."

The Telegram, March 31, 1969

Toronto Daily Star, May 20, 1971

Toronto Daily Star

What's Happening, page 95
Ann Landers, page 100
Martha Gwan, page 100

FAMILY SECTION

8

Survey proves most family day care is good

By MARGARET WILLES
Star Staff writer

At least half the private homes giving day care to the children of working mothers would participate in some form of voluntary registration, according to preliminary findings of a survey conducted by the Community Day Care Committee of the Social Planning Council.

Members of the survey committee, headed by Helen Davidson, and some of the volunteers who took the survey talked about it this week for the first time since they began the project in early February.

Another important finding, said Julia Schulz, a member of the Social Planning Council staff who was adviser to the survey committee, is that about 80 per cent of such private family day care arrangements work out well both for the children and the working parents and only 20 per cent are "sick

HELEN DAVIDSON
Survey chairman

JEAN ROGERS
Committee chairman

JULIA SCHULZ
Committee adviser

Working parents

Concern for the narrow and inflexible position of the Day Nurseries legislation, which continues to state that only group care is acceptable day care, and implies that every child requiring day care can best be served in a day nursery setting.

"For the unwillingness of the Department of Social and Family Services to recognize its responsibilities and its opportunities in the area of preventive and supportive services such as we are providing to the families using our day care."

Protestant Children's Homes was by no means the only agency encountering difficulties in dealing with senior levels of government. Virtually all of the delegates attending a two-day discussion on the Purchase of Services under the Canada Assistance Plan, which was sponsored by the Canadian Welfare Council, voiced the same complaint. Voluntary agencies, such as Protestant Children's Homes, felt they had no collective voice and no established channels for communicating with the government and its agencies. Neither was there any dispute resolution mechanism in place to deal with problems when they arose. There was growing fear among delegates that the Ontario government was moving inexorably towards the provision of all services under its own jurisdiction.

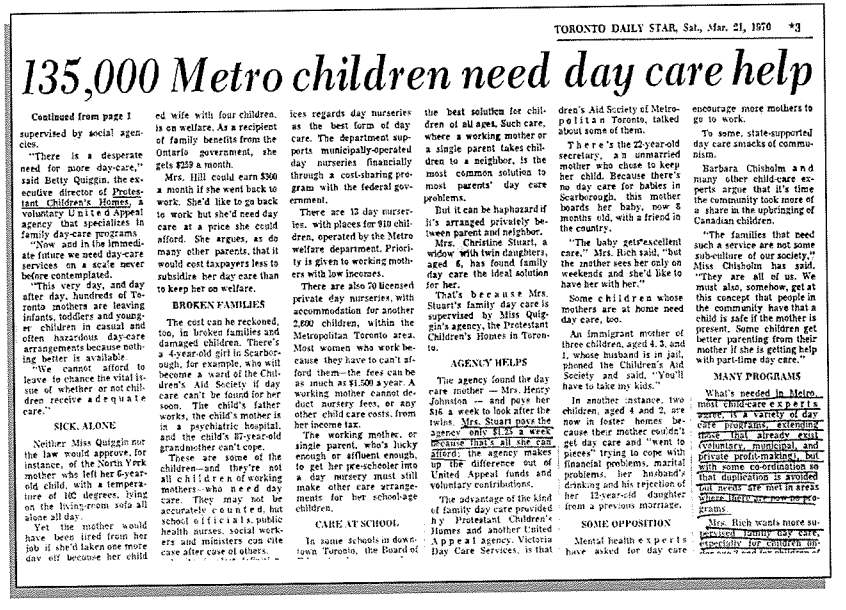
The future of the private, voluntary agencies was very much in question. What services would they be permitted to offer? And was there any reason to hope that they could one day look forward to provincial funding, or at least a more amenable legislative framework? Protestant Children's Homes had obviously been pondering such questions, especially the members of the Agency's Change of Name Committee. In the spring of 1969, in their attempt to describe more accurately what Protestant Children's Homes had to offer the community, the committee had narrowed down their choices to: Care and Counseling Services, Child and Family Services, Child Care and Counseling Services and, perhaps attempting to reflect the upbeat tenor of the times, Child Services Unlimited.

In April 1969, Metro Toronto Welfare Commissioner John Anderson announced that the municipality intended to build a group day care centre in East York for the families served by the Protestant Children's Homes family day care program. Because the province would not underwrite the cost of building a new facility, the municipality intended to renovate an existing one. But since it wouldn't be ready until some time in 1970, the Agency's East York program would be permitted to operate.

When Betty Quiggin told Anderson that Protestant Children's Homes was interested in developing a group day care centre that would be eligible for provincial funding and would not call for building or even renovation costs because it would be located in a private home, he claimed such a scheme would likely run counter to municipal zoning regulations. But he did offer a ray of hope by indicating that the province had been encouraging Metro to purchase day care services from private and commercial operators, especially agencies supported by the United Appeal, like Protestant Children's Homes. Unfortunately, it was only the slimmest ray of hope, for when Anderson met with members of the Ontario Cabinet, as a representative of the Ontario Municipal Board presenting a recommendation for family day care services, he was flatly told that the government would not consider supporting family day care in any way, only group day care centres.

Also in the spring of 1969, the Agency undertook a study of group day care centres in Houston, Texas. In the early 1950s, several child care centres in that city had amalgamated to form the Houston Day Care Association. In addition to operating seven centres, each of which could accommodate between 30 and 100 children, the Association supervised 195 family day care homes. They told Protestant Children's Homes representatives that the group day care centres had ongoing problems with staff turnover, zoning and fire regulations, and health. When those who had conducted the survey returned and made their report to the Group Day Care Home Committee, it was recommended to the Board that

Toronto Daily Star, March 21, 1970



TORONTO DAILY STAR, Sat., Mar. 21, 1970 *3

135,000 Metro children need day care help

Continued from page 1

supervised by social agencies.

"There is a desperate need for more day-care," said Betty Quiggin, the executive director of Protestant Children's Homes, a voluntary United Appeal agency that specializes in family day-care programs.

"Now and in the immediate future we need day-care services on a scale never before contemplated.

"This very day, and day after day, hundreds of Toronto mothers are leaving infants, toddlers and younger children in casual and often hazardous day-care arrangements because nothing better is available.

"We cannot afford to leave to chance the vital issue of whether or not children receive adequate care."

SICK, ALONE

Neither Miss Quiggin nor the law would approve, for instance, of the North York mother who left her 6-year-old child, with a temperature of 102 degrees, lying on the living-room sofa all alone all day.

Yet the mother would have been fired from her job if she'd taken one more day off because her child ed wife with four children, is on welfare. As a recipient of family benefits from the Ontario government, she gets $259 a month.

Mrs. Hill could earn $360 a month if she went back to work. She'd like to go back to work but she'd need day care at a price she could afford. She argues, as do many other parents, that it would cost taxpayers less to subsidize her day care than to keep her on welfare.

BROKEN FAMILIES

The cost can be reckoned, too, in broken families and damaged children. There's a 4-year-old girl in Scarborough, for example, who will become a ward of the Children's Aid Society if day care can't be found for her soon. The child's father works, the child's mother is in a psychiatric hospital, and the child's 87-year-old grandmother can't cope.

These are some of the children—and they're not all children of working mothers—who need day care. They may not be accurately counted, but school officials, public health nurses, social workers and ministers can cite case after case of others.

ices regards day nurseries as the best form of day care. The department supports municipally-operated day nurseries financially through a cost-sharing program with the federal government.

There are 13 day nurseries, with places for 910 children, operated by the Metro welfare department. Priority is given to working mothers with low incomes.

There are also 70 licensed private day nurseries, with accommodation for another 2,600 children, within the Metropolitan Toronto area. Most women who work because they have to can't afford them—the fees can be as much as $1,500 a year. A working mother cannot deduct nursery fees, or any other child care costs, from her income tax.

The working mother, or single parent, who's lucky enough or affluent enough, to get her pre-schooler into a day nursery must still make other care arrangements for her school-age children.

CARE AT SCHOOL

In some schools in downtown Toronto, the Board of

the best solution for children of all ages. Such care, where a working mother or a single parent takes children to a neighbor, is the most common solution to most parents' day care problems.

But it can be haphazard if it's arranged privately between parent and neighbor.

Mrs. Christine Stuart, a widow with twin daughters, aged 6, has found family day care the ideal solution for her.

That's because Mrs. Stuart's family day care is supervised by Miss Quiggin's agency, the Protestant Children's Homes in Toronto.

AGENCY HELPS

The agency found the day care mother — Mrs. Henry Johnston — and pays her $16 a week to look after the twins. Mrs. Stuart pays the agency only $1.25 a week because that's all she can afford; the agency makes up the difference out of United Appeal funds and voluntary contributions.

The advantage of the kind of family day care provided by Protestant Children's Homes and another United Appeal agency, Victoria Day Care Services, is that

dren's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto, talked about some of them.

There's the 22-year-old secretary, an unmarried mother who chose to keep her child. Because there's no day care for babies in Scarborough, this mother boards her baby, now 8 months old, with a friend in the country.

"The baby gets excellent care," Mrs. Rich said, "but the mother sees her only on weekends and she'd like to have her with her."

Some children whose mothers are at home need day care, too.

An immigrant mother of three children, aged 4, 3, and 1, whose husband is in jail, phoned the Children's Aid Society and said, "You'll have to take my kids."

In another instance, two children, aged 4 and 2, are now in foster homes because their mother couldn't get day care and "went to pieces" trying to cope with financial problems, marital problems, her husband's drinking and his rejection of her 12-year-old daughter from a previous marriage.

SOME OPPOSITION

Mental health experts have asked for day care

encourage more mothers to go to work.

To some, state-supported day care smacks of communism.

Barbara Chisholm and many other child-care experts argue that it's time the community took more of a share in the upbringing of Canadian children.

"The families that need such a service are not some sub-culture of our society," Miss Chisholm has said. "They are all of us. We must also, somehow, get at this concept that people in the community have that a child is safe if the mother is present. Some children get better parenting from their mother if she is getting help with part-time day care."

MANY PROGRAMS

What's needed in Metro, most child-care experts agree, is a variety of day care programs, extending those that already exist (voluntary, municipal, and private profit-making), but with some co-ordination so that duplication is avoided but needs are met in areas where there are no programs.

Mrs. Rich wants more supervised family day care, especially for children un-

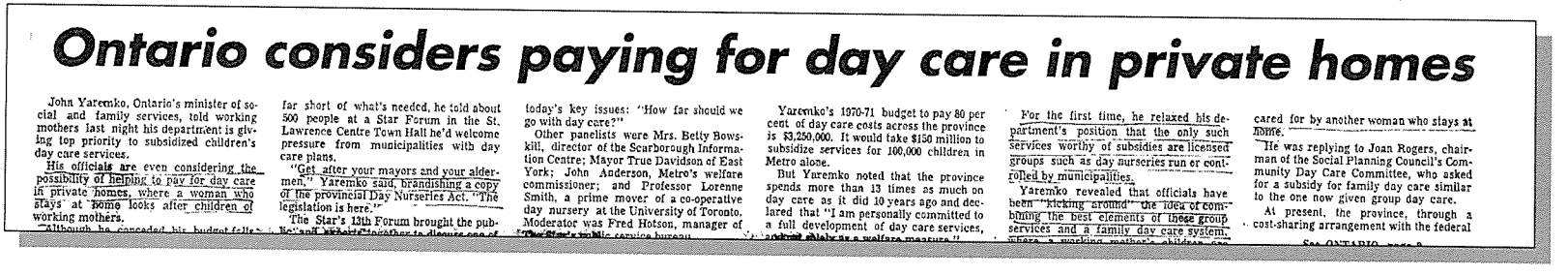
all further investigations into such a program cease, and that the Protestant Children's Homes concentrate all of its resources on family day care.

In October, Protestant Children's Homes and Victoria Day Care Services – the only agencies then offering family day care services to Metro residents – were surprised to learn that the province's Day Nurseries Branch had authorized Metro Toronto to develop and operate their own family day care project to serve 850 sole-support families in the city's west end. The private agencies received the news with some ambivalence. While they were encouraged by the provincial government's apparent, if belated, acceptance of family day care services, they were annoyed by the fact that neither of them had been consulted or even informed of the project.

The following month, Betty Quiggin met again with John Anderson and was heartened to learn that the welfare commissioner had included estimates in his 1970 budget for both the Agency's East York and North York programs. Moreover, he told Miss Quiggin that he sensed a softening in the attitudes of both Metro's Welfare Committee and the provincial government on family day care. He said that if Protestant Children's Homes maintained its high standard of care, he would recommend to his committee that the municipality increase its financial support of family day care.

In the spring of 1971, the Executive Committee placed before the Board a new name for the 120-year-old Agency, a name that won immediate approval. The change required an amendment to the Protestant Children's Homes Act in the form of a private member's bill, and on June 17, 1971, the Agency's name was changed to Family Day Care Services.

Toronto Daily Star, January 12, 1971



Ontario considers paying for day care in private homes

John Yaremko, Ontario's minister of social and family services, told working mothers last night his department is giving top priority to subsidized children's day care services.

His officials are even considering the possibility of helping to pay for day care in private homes, where a woman who stays at home looks after children of working mothers.

Although he conceded his budget falls far short of what's needed, he told about 500 people at a Star Forum in the St. Lawrence Centre Town Hall he'd welcome pressure from municipalities with day care plans.

"Get after your mayors and your aldermen," Yaremko said, brandishing a copy of the provincial Day Nurseries Act. "The legislation is here."

The Star's 13th Forum brought the pub-

today's key issues: "How far should we go with day care?"

Other panelists were Mrs. Betty Bowskill, director of the Scarborough Information Centre; Mayor True Davidson of East York; John Anderson, Metro's welfare commissioner; and Professor Lorenne Smith, a prime mover of a co-operative day nursery at the University of Toronto. Moderator was Fred Hotson, manager of

Yaremko's 1970-71 budget to pay 80 per cent of day care costs across the province is $3,250,000. It would take $150 million to subsidize services for 100,000 children in Metro alone.

But Yaremko noted that the province spends more than 13 times as much on day care as it did 10 years ago and declared that "I am personally committed to a full development of day care services,

For the first time, he relaxed his department's position that the only such services worthy of subsidies are licensed groups such as day nurseries run or controlled by municipalities.

Yaremko revealed that officials have been "kicking around" the idea of combining the best elements of these group services and a family day care system.

cared for by another woman who stays at home.

He was replying to Joan Rogers, chairman of the Social Planning Council's Community Day Care Committee, who asked for a subsidy for family day care similar to the one now given group day care.

At present, the province, through a cost-sharing arrangement with the federal


Family Day Care Services