

Judith Fingard

Gender and Inequality at Dalhousie: Faculty Women Before 1950

In today's universities faculty women devote considerable time to ensuring that they are not discriminated against in terms of hiring, salary, rank, and working conditions. To oversee these concerns, women maintain networks on campus and the more progressive universities protect women's rights through committee or administrative structures. Yet the commonality of interest and approach may belie fundamental differences in the historical development of gender-related issues. In the case of Dalhousie University, which has been in continuous operation since 1863 and has offered coeducation in arts and science since 1881, medicine since 1888, dentistry since 1914, law since 1915, and commerce since 1920, the aggregate statistics on student enrolments and the employment of women faculty during the past fifty years may not differ dramatically from the national average. But behind the statistics, the lives of the women who were hired as faculty exhibit some regressive tendencies unworthy of the enlightened environment we expect in our centres of learning. This paper traces the hiring patterns experienced by women at Dalhousie during the first half of the twentieth century and the policies of the presidents who were the supreme decision-makers in staff matters. Four personal case histories enable us to explore the fragility of women's rights as faculty members, especially when their half of the institution of marriage came under attack after the Second World War.

Dalhousie "is too predominantly a man's college for a woman to wish to stay too long," wrote the university's first female full professor in her letter of resignation in 1949.¹ She left during the doldrums of the post-war period when women's presence on campus was weak and beleaguered. The proportion of female students had dropped to 20 per cent in arts and science and 17.5 per cent in the university as a whole as a result of the preponderance of male student veterans. Earlier in the century the percentage of women students had been much higher,

particularly during the First World War and in the 1920s. As for the faculty, the proportion of women stood in 1949 at its highest to date, but that represented only a miniscule seven per cent. Neither of these low percentages of women students and faculty women were of course unique to Dalhousie. What was characteristic, if not exactly unique, about the little college by the sea was the entirely male orientation of the organization and programmes of the university. Unlike universities such as Mount Allison, McGill, and Western Ontario, Dalhousie never included a women's college.² Universities comprehending women's colleges provided more opportunities for the employment of female faculty. The women did not always have the same status as their male counterparts, but the collegiate organization provided the minority with a community of peers and students in which to take refuge from the totally male areas of the campus. Dalhousie also lacked a tradition of academic wardens or deans of women's residences. In most major universities these positions were held by capable women who combined their student counselling and administration with scholarly achievements.

If the more benign organization was missing, so too were the programmes usually identified as female ones. A few positions came to be assigned to women, but Dalhousie lacked programmes in fine arts and secretarial science. Its music students took their professional subjects at the Halifax Conservatory of Music and during its ten year toleration of household science, the practical subjects were provided by the Halifax Ladies College, a private school. Nursing, social work, and library service played no part in Dalhousie's curricula before 1949 except for the short-lived diploma course in public health nursing introduced after the Halifax Explosion. Such female programmes in other Canadian institutions like Saskatchewan and Toronto provided opportunities for women's employment, denigrated though it may have been in male-dominated administrative circles. Because the women's spheres represented by these programmes remained quite distinct, a limited amount of promotion through the ranks could occur without any threat to male supremacy in the university as a whole.

Perhaps, then, it was the predominantly male ambience at Dalhousie which prompted Professor Germaine Lafeuille to make her observation about Dalhousie's masculinity. If, on the other hand, it was the personnel policies of the university which upset Lafeuille, she could at least comfort herself with the knowledge that she had not suffered. She was hired in 1942 as assistant professor of French at a salary of \$2,800, was promoted to associate professor the following year with a two hundred dollar increase, and reached the dizzy heights of full professor two years later. Admittedly, when a new salary scale

came into effect in 1947, she was paid at the minimum for her rank of \$4,250 whereas the Board minutes indicate that most professors received \$4,500. But compared to other women on faculty she had no cause for complaint. Indeed, in her successful career development, Lafeuille was the female exception during the first half of the twentieth century at Dalhousie.³

The policies applied to most other women were discouraging at best. Hiring was based on personal recommendations. There was no advertising and therefore no attempt to identify a pool of applicants. Not surprisingly, men were usually recommended and hired. But for a number of reasons, women did find their way onto the faculty, even in the 'manly' subjects. The first circumstances that brought women into the university in the 1910's, and one which occurred again in the 1940s, was war. Historians have examined the drafting of women into the workforce during periods of high demand and have applied the theory of the reserve army of labour to working women during wartime. In the universities as in other workplaces, the professors went off to war and women were recruited as replacements. In addition, in the Second World War period, the intensity of the medical training in university medical schools opened up considerably more positions for women than had hitherto been the case. And the needs of the student veterans meant that women who might have been dispensed with at the end of the war, like their counterparts in industry, were tolerated for the rest of the decade. These trends can be seen at Dalhousie as at other Canadian universities. The first two faculty women, apart from an essay reader to assist the professor of English, were hired in the midst of the First World War as demonstrators in Physiology and Physics. One of them, Merle Colpitt, was promoted to instructor in Physics in 1918, and stayed on for another eight years, retiring in 1926, a year after she married her boss, widower H.L. Bronson, head of the Physics Department. During the manpower shortage in the medical school in the Second World War and post-war periods, a number of female doctors joined the faculty. These included Dr. Roberta Bond Nichols, a Dalhousie graduate who was widowed as a young woman in 1939 on the death of Professor E.W. Nichols, head of the Classics Department. Her needs and those of the university coincided. She worked in Anatomy, Biochemistry, and Anaesthesia and eventually in 1951 was accorded professorial status. Another example is provided by the case of Dr. Jean Macdonald Lawson, a graduate of Dalhousie during the war years, whose talents were also utilized in three departments, those of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Anatomy, and Psychiatry, at the end of the war when enrolments soared. Dr. Florence Murray, best remembered as a Korean medical missionary, had been a demonstrator

in Anatomy in 1919-20 after her graduation, and was appointed instructor in Paediatrics in 1943-5 when she was temporarily home from the war-torn east.⁴

In its hiring, as these cases suggest, the university was willing to employ able female graduates of Dalhousie whose achievements commanded respect. Dr. Eliza Ritchie, maternal feminist and suffragist and the first Dalhousie and possibly the first Canadian woman to acquire a Ph.D. (at Cornell), donated her services in Fine Arts and as a student adviser from time to time during the first third of the century though she never had a regular appointment. E. Mabel Mason in French and Dr. Margaret Butler in Botany, two graduates in the twenties were given appointments in the 1930s. Numerous young women, such as Constance MacFarlane, who became an important marine botanist, served as demonstrators shortly after their graduation, most of them going on to do further graduate work. Apart from its use of Ritchie, however, Dalhousie did not exploit the devotion of its alumnae as other universities did.

Another type of hiring is illustrated by temporary appointments. These seem to have been relatively non-controversial for women. Indeed the willingness of women to join the workforce for a year here or there often rescued the university from an embarrassing predicament. For example, when Professor C. Wilson Smith of the Education Department died half way through the 1934-35 academic year, his wife Olive Hawkins Smith took over his classes and completed the year on his behalf. That she was able to assume the duties so readily tends to suggest that she had been quite used to filling in for her husband. There is some written evidence of this in a letter of President Stanley's. He admitted: "Her husband was an invalid and for many years she had assisted him in his work, and had become thoroughly acquainted with it."⁵ Another spouse, Doris Walmsley, wife of Professor Charles Walmsley of the Mathematics Department, was appointed in 1942-43 at a salary of \$2,000 to help the Mathematics Department cope with the wartime upsurge in students. As in the Smith case, however, one suspects she may have been a more regular assistant to her husband. President Kerr wrote revealingly to Walmsley when he retired in 1959: "It was your good fortune to have a wife who is also skilled in mathematics and who took an active interest in your work."⁶ The role of wives as surrogate professors is one of the hidden dimensions of academic marriages. Few wives obtained credit for the duties they assumed to relieve their incompetent, bored, or incapacitated husbands.

This brings us to another hiring policy: that related to the wives of faculty in positions which were not by their nature temporary. Through the thirties and forties and, for many years beyond that, the

administration looked on such faculty women as appendages of their husbands pure and simple. This was the case no matter when they happened to marry—before or after their appointment. With only slight exaggeration, the number of these appointments can be called legion and the more there were, the more hostile the male administrators became. Yet the labour of these women was certainly welcomed. And no wonder, they came very cheap, often with their own connivance, often with the connivance of their husbands. During the depression it was their cheapness which was particularly attractive. Johanna Richter, wife of Professor Lothar Richter taught German at no cost whatsoever to the university between 1936 and 1945. During the war and just after, a wealth of talent appeared among the ranks of the medical faculty wives. Moya Saunders, wife of Professor R.L. de Ch. Saunders of the Anatomy Department, began her Dalhousie career in 1939 and over the next twenty years taught variously in Pathology, Pharmacology, and Anatomy as well as serving as assistant to her husband in his capacity as Director of the Medical Museums. Two other men in the pre-clinical departments, Donald Mainland of Anatomy and Melville Schachter of Physiology, had wives who worked as poorly paid assistants in the medical school, Ruth Mainland in Anatomy and Ruth Schachter in Histology, until both couples moved on elsewhere in 1950. After the war, however, general discrimination against faculty wives on the teaching staff, which had already emerged in individual cases, was institutionalized in the university regulations. That is the story of the policies of the presidents, policies which are crucial to an understanding of the position of faculty women at Dalhousie. It is to those presidential policies we now turn.

For women, it did matter who the president was. His views on appointments were decisive. But each of the three presidents between 1911 and 1950, Mackenzie, Stanley, and Kerr, encountered different conditions and came to Dalhousie from different experiences both of which shaped his attitudes. A. Stanley Mackenzie, president from 1911 to 1931, was a physicist. We tend to think of physics as a 'manly' discipline of the first order. Yet in Mackenzie's case there were mitigating factors. He had been a professor at Bryn Mawr, the preeminent independent women's college in Pennsylvania. Fourteen per cent of the graduates of Bryn Mawr in the 1890s, when Mackenzie was a faculty member, went on to pursue careers in teaching at the post-secondary level. Women did therefore successfully enter academic life, a fact with which Mackenzie was well acquainted. He was also meticulous about rounding out his small faculty, which doubled during his twenty-year term, and he travelled as the need arose to interview candidates, male and female, in hotel lobbies across the continent. He

apparently had no problem with Merle Colpitt's employment in the Physics Department, his own department. There is no evidence that she was under any pressure from the administration to resign after she married Professor Bronson though such precedents abounded in the teaching profession. At the end of his term as president, Mackenzie unsuccessfully advocated the endowment of three academic positions for women in arts and science.⁷ He did however recruit Dr. Dixie Pelluet, a zoologist, and appoint her on the same terms as a man, that is, as a lecturer for an initial probationary year, then as an assistant professor. At the same time he decided that there should be a female faculty member in modern languages. His 'affirmative action policy' brought on staff as a King's Carnegie appointment, E. Mabel Mason, who had taught for three years at King's before the college moved to Halifax and for one year at Dalhousie in the mid 1920s before going on eventually to Yale for doctoral study. Mackenzie insisted that Mason should have the rank of assistant professor, a decision which the president of King's College fully endorsed and Carleton Stanley, Mackenzie's successor, respected when Miss Mason took up the appointment a year later.⁸

The 1932-33 academic year therefore saw the first two female assistant professors on the faculty; Pelluet and Mason. Deceptively the timing of their professorial appointments makes President Stanley, who was president between 1931 and 1945, look better than he should. They were not his appointments. For the next fourteen years, he hired only one woman at the professorial level and that was Germaine Lafeuille in 1942. Apparently he was completely captivated by her and it may have been his heart rather than his head that determined her rank, though she did have glowing references from Vassar, Bryn Mawr, and Harvard, a triumvirate hard to beat. Stanley's attitude towards female academics was ambivalent. He proclaimed in his inaugural address that men were the only suitable teachers for older boys, which tends to suggest that in his academic hierarchy women did not rank very high. His most recent experience had been at McGill where women were ghettoized at Royal Victoria College and this may be one reason why the male advocacy of a separate women's college at Dalhousie remained current through the 1930s.

Stanley's record on promotion is poor. He refused to promote Dr. Margaret Butler in the 1930s from a demeaning 'special lecturer' to assistant professor despite the support of her head of department, Hugh Bell, and her superior qualifications. In her request for consideration, Butler coupled the promotion issue with the salary question which may explain why Stanley refused to budge. A salary freeze was in effect for everyone at Dalhousie from the mid 1930s to the mid 1940s

which helps to explain Stanley's delight at the offer of German teacher Johanna Richter to work virtually full time for no pay at all. It was people like Richter, working out of a love of teaching, who made it possible for him to maintain existing salaries at Dalhousie instead of instituting the pay cuts prominent in some Canadian universities during the depression. Part of his disappointment at losing Dr. Butler in 1937 was owing to the realization that he would not be able to find a replacement at anything like the same salary.⁹ In a similar frame of mind Stanley promoted Dr. Pelluet to associate professor in 1941 on the understanding that the promotion would not be accompanied by a salary increase. Yet in 1942 he failed to promote histologist Dr. Elizabeth Bean from instructor to assistant professor despite her fifteen years of service and her dean's assurances that a salary increase was not part of the request.

Stanley's successor, Alexander Kerr, appointed president in 1945, was very hostile to faculty women. He was recruited from that last bastion of male exclusiveness, the theological college. Although he did hire four women with professorial status during the first five years of his presidency, they were in the female fields of Nursing and Clinical Psychology both of which were introduced to Dalhousie in 1949 with external funding from the federal department of health. By the end of his presidency in 1963, the proportion of female faculty had risen to ten percent from seven percent largely because of growth in the female professions. As for the legacy of faculty women bequeathed to him by Stanley, Kerr subjected them to a witch hunt. For women at Dalhousie the cold war began in the late forties, and the role of Senator McCarthy was played by President Kerr. This development can be illustrated by four case studies: those of Dr. Bean, Dr. Pelluet, Mrs. Richter, and Dr. Thompson Welch.

Elizabeth Bean's story is inseparable from that of her husband.¹⁰ Raymond Bean was appointed in 1923 to head the one-man department of histology and embryology. An American, whose Ph.D. was incomplete and remained so, he married just before he took up the position at Dalhousie. Intellectually, he married up. His wife Elizabeth, who was then in her early 30s, not only had the doctorate he lacked but also the teaching experience, most recently as an assistant professor of zoology at the University of Wisconsin, her own graduate school, and the publications including a well regarded textbook on animal micrology. She arrived in Halifax jobless and proceeded to produce a little Elizabeth Bean as well as to contribute to the work of her husband, who was, by all accounts, propped up by his more talented wife for the whole of his Dalhousie career. When Bean sug-

gested to President Mackenzie in 1927 that Dr. Bean might become his assistant, Mackenzie readily agreed.

Dr. Bean's employment at Dalhousie from 1927 until her retirement in 1951 provides a blatant case of sexual discrimination. But to give Mackenzie his due, none of the infamous treatment occurred during his presidency. Although Elizabeth Bean was hired initially as a lab assistant at \$400 a year, undoubtedly a part-time job, she was within two months promoted to demonstrator at \$1,000 (her husband's salary that year was \$3,300), rising to \$1,500 as an instructor in 1929-30 in recognition of her resumption of part of her husband's work while he served as acting assistant dean of medicine. If Mackenzie had remained president, she would no doubt have been promoted. By 1929-30 Bean herself was a full professor and earning \$4,000. He reached \$5,000 by 1934-35 but, because of the depression, his next salary increase was not till 1947 when he received a \$250 raise, which was the norm. Dr. Bean (always referred to in the records as Mrs. Bean, needless to say) received no increase at all between 1929 and 1947 when her salary was raised from \$1,500 to the princely sum of \$1,650. In the meantime, H.G. Grant, dean of the medical faculty, tried unsuccessfully to get Stanley to promote her to an assistant professor in 1942. Grant wrote: "She is a faithful and conscientious teacher and would appreciate this promotion. In making this recommendation I am not asking for any increase in salary because I know that under the present circumstances this is out of the question", the circumstances being the salary freeze.¹¹ Grant interceded on her behalf again in 1946 after Kerr took over. After the promotion was discussed between unsympathetic president and determined dean, Grant refused to change his recommendation though he admitted that he could "quite see that certain objections to which you referred might be made."¹²

What was the basis of Kerr's opposition? While he is justly noted for his parsimony, his continued refusal to approve this innocuous promotion could not have been based on financial considerations. He might have been a woman-hater; undoubtedly he subscribed to a traditional view of the role of married women. His stand certainly had nothing to do with Mrs. Bean personally for she was a very nice, decent, unpretentious, uncomplaining woman who worked hard in the interests of her students. Oral evidence confirms that everybody knew that she was unjustly treated by the administrators of the university. So serious was the problem, it is said, that her husband took to drink. His failure to sustain the momentum of his own career no doubt undermined his marketability and mobility well before the Second World War. The Beans were stuck at Dalhousie; they were stuck with her inferior status.

The final injustice came in 1951 when it was pointed out to Dr. Bean that it was time for her to retire in accordance with a pernicious regulation passed by the Board of Governors in 1946.¹³ Women were required to retire at 60, five years before men, a rule which, until its repeal in 1956, set Dalhousie apart from all other Canadian universities by creating a two-caste system based on sex. Since Dr. Bean was retiring, the university no longer had any use for Raymond Bean. An alcoholic for some considerable time, only now was this disability construed to interfere with his performance. In other words, without Mrs. Bean there could be no department of histology and embryology. Their technician claimed "that Mrs. Bean rather than Professor Bean had for some time provided the real direction for the department."¹⁴ Their specialties were absorbed into the Department of Anatomy, and Dr. Bean retired on one per cent of her retiring salary of \$1,750 multiplied by a factor of 24, representing her years' service; in other words, \$420. She paid heavily for being a married woman at work. Her good services were exploited because she happened to be on the spot. That she put up with such treatment is evidence of loyalty to her husband not of deference to the institution which oppressed her.

My second case study is that of Dr. Dixie Pelluet who was employed at Dalhousie between 1931 and 1964.¹⁵ In essence though not in degree she was treated very much like Dr. Elizabeth Bean, but she did that most unfeminine thing: she complained, though only after eighteen years and only under the most extraordinary provocation. Pelluet first came to the attention of Mackenzie in 1929 when he was looking for a replacement for Margaret Lowe as warden of Shirreff Hall. Wanting to return home to Canada from the United States where she was employed, Pelluet was willing to consider a wardenship as a way of getting into a Canadian university. This was course often followed by well-qualified academic women. She chose instead to teach in 1930-31 in a small American liberal arts college, only to be invited back to Dalhousie in 1931 to fill a vacancy in zoology. Mackenzie's interest in Pelluet was not unrelated to the fact that she was a doctoral graduate of Bryn Mawr. Two years after her promotion to assistant professor in 1932, Pelluet married Ronald Hayes, the other zoologist in the biology department. This was a carefully premeditated move on her part, preceded as it was by a visit to President Stanley to gain his assurances that marriage would not jeopardize her professorial position. She took the precaution on this occasion of refusing to name her intended in case that would qualify Stanley's good will. Once the deed was done, she entered into a long and happy marriage but one which demanded sacrifices and humiliations on her part as a faculty woman. She soon fell behind her male peers in salary and promotion, not because she

was in any way inferior—if anything she was far superior—but because she had the audacity to be a married woman in addition to being a mere woman. Although she was promoted to associate professor in 1941, her promotion to full professor occurred only after Kerr had retired and only a mere three months before her own retirement in 1964. In the meantime her salary like that of most of her colleagues was frozen between 1932 and 1947.

For this reason it was not until the late forties that she reaped the full disadvantages of being a faculty woman. At that point she spoke up for herself, but she failed to remedy her own case, and her forthrightness contributed to the institutionalization of the discrimination against faculty women. Her confrontation with President Kerr and K.C. Laurie, chairman of the Board of Governors, took place on 21 December 1949 when they visited her to tell her in person that she had been designated a 'special case', not qualified to benefit from the new salary scale.¹⁶ This meant that they refused to raise her salary to the floor level of associate professor despite the fact that she had held that rank since 1941. Her request for reconsideration was forestalled for several years. In a letter to Kerr in 1952, Pelluet put her continued concerns in writing: "I still feel that I have no reason to change my view that I am being quite unjustly penalized for a) my sex, which I cannot help, b) my marital status, which is my private concern and does not interfere with the fulfilling of my academic duties. I also think that it is unfair to add the further burden of putting the retirement age five years before that for male members of staff."¹⁷ Given that Dr. Pelluet's own performance as an academic was quite unexceptionable, we have to decide why it was that in the immediate post-war period the sex discrimination was so blatantly institutionalized. For the encounter between the rulers of the university and this solitary woman brought swift reaction. Although they did not contemplate demoting her, they decided to "consider establishing a general policy not to employ or retain both husband and wife in any instance on the permanent academic staff of the University above the rank of lecturer."¹⁸ As a result, on 13 January 1950 a restriction on appointments to the teaching staff was passed by the full Board. But somewhere between the president's office and the Board room, the restriction became gender specific and armed with a few extra barbs.

It shall be the general policy of the University not to employ or retain on the academic staff, above the rank of lecturer, the wife of any permanent member of the said staff. When the wife of any such permanent member is employed, within the terms mentioned, the engagement shall be for a specific period not to exceed one year at a time. The policy here stated shall not apply retroactively.¹⁹

Dr. Pelluet was left to take solace in her teaching, in her research, in her new graduate students, in her home and active social life, refusing to destroy herself as Professor Bean had done over the treatment meted out to his devoted wife.

Our third illustration is provided by the case of Mrs. Johanna Richter, wife of Dr. Lothar Richter, one of the two German refugee professors sheltered by Dalhousie.²⁰ He was hired in 1934 as professor of German on a two-year Carnegie Corporation grant. By the time the grant expired Richter had directed his talents towards public administration, his primary interest, and had established the new Institute of Public Affairs with Rockefeller Foundation money. Officially, however, he remained professor of German. Lacking the inclination to continue these duties, he passed them on to his wife Johanna, who started teaching in 1936 when she assumed about three-quarters of her husband's responsibilities in German. As a special lecturer without pay, Johanna Richter taught until 1945, except for a two-year leave of absence in the early forties when she worked for her masters degree at the University of Toronto. At the end of the war Mrs. Richter had had enough of volunteerism. She asked to be promoted to associate professor on half salary. The Board's insulting response was an honorarium of \$200 for the 1945-46 session. After Dr. Richter made it clear that he would lose interest in Dalhousie unless his wife was treated properly, the president raised her pay to \$1,200 in 1946-47 and \$1,500 in 1948-49.

Unsatisfactory as this response must have seemed to the Richters, nothing more might have been made of the matter had not Dr. Richter been killed in an accident in 1948. Kerr granted the rest of Richter's salary for the 1948-49 to his wife who had in the meantime taken over virtually all the work in the German department. She now wanted an independent status commensurate with her contribution to the department. In response to Mrs. Richter's suggestion that she must have professorial status if she was expected to continue to carry the full load in German and some assurances of the security of her employment rather than yearly contracts, Kerr magnanimously put her on the footing of a new probationary lecturer at the bottom of the salary scale for assistant professor. He gave her no reason to think that her work was important to Dalhousie and in fact advised her not to accept his offer unless she felt that "the terms were entirely fair."²¹

In the circumstances it must have been with some degree of trepidation that Mrs. Richter admitted that she had reached the age of 60 at the very same time that the sixty-year rule for women's retirement was enacted by the Board. Kerr waived the ruling in her case, perhaps because she had heard him tell faculty that "this limitation was not intended primarily for the teaching staff."²² In fact, Mrs. Richter,

finally promoted to assistant professor in 1950, worked on well beyond the normal male retirement age anxious lest retirement would mean penury. Pension discussions were long and rancorous. She based her case on the tens of thousands of dollars that she estimated she had saved the university while working initially for no wages and then for token wages. While Kerr was inclined to believe that she had a claim to a pension on both moral and compassionate grounds, he still subjected her to a demeaning means test before deciding the amount. He also allowed her to continue to teach until she was 69 because "we do not wish to see her leave the University with a sense that she has been exploited by us."²³ But when she tried to argue that both her unpaid years and her post-retirement years should be included in the calculation of a pension, a member of the Board reiterated that "she was entitled to absolutely nothing in the way of a pension, and yet now wants a pension of at least \$100 a month to which . . . she has made no contribution whatever."²⁴ For Mrs. Richter, employment at Dalhousie was a vicious circle: service without pay was valued at nothing; failure to pay into a pension plan, because her yearly appointments did not entitle her to contribute, deprived her of her basic right to a pension as a longtime, dedicated professor of great teaching ability.

For married women at Dalhousie there was no justice, not in 1949, when Pelluet was in essence demoted, not in 1957 when Richter retired; not for the whole of Alexander Kerr's tenure as president. The final indignity to the pre-1950 employees is provided by the fourth case, that of Dr. Louise Thompson Welch, a Yale graduate.²⁵ The arrangements for Professor Thompson's appointment were made in 1949 though she was unable to take up the position until 1950. She was at the time of her appointment head of the Psychology Department at the University of New Brunswick. She was the first woman to be appointed to the Dalhousie faculty as a full professor when she assumed her duties as head of the new federally funded programme in clinical psychology and member of the new graduate faculty. A couple of years later she decided to marry a businessman, and, like Dr. Pelluet twenty years earlier, she made a pilgrimage to the president to ascertain how this course of action would affect her career. With the example of the Pelluet/Hayes marriage in mind, Kerr told Thompson that her appointment would be "unaffected by her change of marital status."²⁶ In 1953, however, Dr. Thompson Welch committed the cardinal academic indiscretion: she got pregnant. As though that was not bad enough, she also shocked her superiors by proclaiming her intention to continue in the 1953-54 session to teach and supervise on a part-time basis for which she believed she should receive a pro-rated salary based on three-fifths time. Her effrontery added to her physical

condition brought out the worst the university misogynists had to offer. When consulted by Kerr, arts and science dean, George Wilson, a bully with little sympathy for women, proclaimed categorically: "Having a baby ends a woman's appointment. She can't eat her cake and have it too. She has made her choice."²⁷ Accordingly Kerr demanded that she either resign or take a year's leave of absence pending the adoption of a university regulation to deal with her case. What the president had in mind was enacting what he called a 'classified' policy making marriage grounds for the termination of the appointment of a woman on the academic or administrative staff. Oblivious to these grumblings behind her back and secure in her externally funded position, Louise Welch continued to teach on terms satisfactory to herself, producing a second child before she resigned in 1957 to pursue part-time work at the children's hospital.

The mid fifties were years in which the faculty, through the Senate, attempted to exercise its puny rights as a self-governing body. A five-man committee chaired by Dr. C.B. Weld reported to Senate in March 1954 on appointments, promotion and tenure. With the example of Dr. Welch, the only female senator, fresh in their minds, the committee decided that the employment of pregnant faculty members should be regulated. Such a woman was required to notify her dean of her condition "without delay" and the president would then decide what to do about the woman's contract. The Board of Governors, in collusion with the president and deans, did not like this proposed Senate regulation any more than they did the rest of the recommendations in the report but recognized that some compromise between their habitually ad hoc approach and the Senate's newly found zeal for rational procedures was politically desirable.²⁸ They therefore enshrined in the 'Regulations Concerning Academic Appointments and Tenure', approved in 1956, Kerr's preferred policy for avoiding a repetition of the Welch incident: "Marriage by a woman faculty member is deemed to terminate her appointment, but the University is free to propose an appointment under a special contract."²⁹ Given the capricious way in which that regulation was enforced, it was the rulers of the university, not faculty women, who were eating their cake and having it too. The policy persisted, at least on paper, until after Kerr's term of office and the anti-nepotism, provoked by Dr. Pelluet's courageous stand lasted in an attenuated form until 1970.³⁰

These four case studies do not illustrate all the problems encountered by faculty women but they do underscore basic inequalities. Almost half of the twenty-four women appointed before 1950 who stayed for three years or more were married to male faculty. In the marriage literature of the day their marriages would have been des-

cribed as companionate marriages, denoting a degree of equality between husband and wife. But in the public sphere of the workplace the wives were treated as anything but equal. The prevailing ethos consigned married women to the home, at least in theory, and if in practice they happened to find their way onto the paid faculty their self-fulfillment and pride as academics was not only undervalued, it was ignored. The notion that the husband's wages should determine those of his wife was yet another example of the typical view that women worked only for pin money. But married women provide only the worst cases. The others—single women in the 'manly' subjects and women married to non-faculty men—shared dead-end jobs for salaries at the bottom of the scale. All faculty women were expected also to be paragons of virtue. Before Marion Pennington was hired as assistant director of the new school of Nursing in 1949, for example, President Kerr had to satisfy himself that she had been the aggrieved party in her divorce case two years earlier.³¹

We are left wondering what kind of university would allow sexual discrimination not only to persist but to escalate during the 1940s and 1950s. As Jill Vickers and June Adam wrote in their 1977 study of the status of women in Canadian universities: "There is something offensive for academics whose lives are supposedly dedicated to impartiality and objectivity to have to confess to such a crime."³² In the case of Dalhousie the powerlessness of the very small number of faculty women was accentuated by the male orientation of the university. For the women there were no procedures for redressing grievances. Sometimes, as we have seen, a woman's department head or dean supported her case but no administrator threatened resignation if his demands were not met. Chivalry (that greatly under-rated virtue) was no where to be found at Dalhousie. Not even the husbands—men of stature like Hayes or posturers like Bean—had the guts to protest, preferring to distance themselves lest support for the wife's position be interpreted as nepotism. Dalhousie faculty women seem to have derived no help from the alumnae despite alumnae representation on the Board of Governors. At other universities their counterparts were better served by women graduates. Queen's alumnae, for example, demanded assurances from their administration in 1948 that non-discriminatory policies would be followed in respect to the hiring and firing of faculty, the concern being that women would be laid off once the student veterans left.³³ Several Dalhousie women did appeal their cases directly to the Board of Governors which established various committees of inquiry: in 1942 to investigate the firing by the dean of medicine of Edith Fenton, director of the Public Health Clinic, and in the early 1950s to formulate responses to Dixie Pelluet's well-founded complaints and to

review Johanna Richter's pension status. Senate, a male body, turned a blind eye to the injustices. When Senate did get involved in the mid fifties, it welcomed its first female member by outlawing her pregnancy. The faculty association, formed in the early fifties, had no power and even if it had, priorities reflected a membership comprised of few women.

Nor did women do much as a collectivity to help themselves. Their 'male' subjects isolated them. Some of them did not even discern that there was a problem. This applies in particular to women who had no experience of working elsewhere and came from a parochial Nova Scotian background. They never thought of comparing their positions to those of their male counterparts. One faculty woman in the 1930s thought that she was doing well in comparison to what she considered to be her peer group. It was not a male academic one. It was the women she had known in school and university who were school teachers and secretaries and earned only half the amount she made.³⁴ Such faculty women never thought of organizing a female network. The only unifying organization was the Dalhousie-King's Reading Club which sometimes provided a forum for the progressive views of women like Dr. Pelluet and Dr. Bond Nichols.³⁵ As the major focus of female solidarity between the 1920s and the 1960s it included and was accordingly dominated by faculty wives whose interests were seldom those specific to faculty women. They might have been spirited women but they were lamentably women without a cause.

In contrast, women who tried to play the male individualist game of threatening to leave if their salaries were not increased found that they were treated not as individuals but as members of a threatening gender caste. Kerr wrote to Dean Grant in 1946 in regard to Jean Peabody, the statistical assistant in Preventive Medicine: "I am happy to accept your word as to her worth in the Faculty of Medicine, but am loath to deal with salaries piece meal. If I grant this increase, other women who have been in the service of the university very much longer than Miss Peabody and who are doing very important work, might have cause to complain";³⁶ a singularly curious statement given the secrecy with which salaries were dispensed.

Women were damned if they complained and damned if they did not. Their frustrations were too many to enable many of them to produce creative work. But they did impart their ambitions for woman-kind to their students. With the benefit of hindsight, Dr. Pelluet now sees herself as a pioneer, preparing the way for others and getting her revenge by training a new generation of women to take up where she left off. But for every faculty woman who stayed for at least six years, two or more voted with their feet and left, and no wonder. They might

not have articulated the problem as succinctly as did Germaine Lafeuille but they must surely have shared her sentiments about Dalhousie as "a man's college."

NOTES

1. Lafeuille to Kerr, 8 July 1949, Dalhousie University Archives (DUA), MS-1-3-C-248.
2. Margaret Gillett has written the only history of women in a Canadian university: *We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill* (Montreal, 1981).
3. Information on Lafeuille's career is found in her staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-248.
4. Basic information on appointments is found in the Board of Governors minutes and the annual presidential reports, DUA.
5. Stanley to Briggs, 12 June 1936, DUA, MS-1-3-C-465.
6. Kerr to Walmsley, 1 June 1959, DUA, MS-1-3-C-523.
7. Board of Governors Minutes, 2 May 1930, DUA.
8. Information on Mason's career is found in her staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-334.
9. Information on Butler's career is found in her staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-48 and in a taped interview, 1985, Judith Fingard Collection, Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS). For pay cuts at Saskatchewan, see Michael Hayden, *Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan 1907-1982* (Vancouver, 1983), chapter 5.
10. Information on the Beans' careers is found in their staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-25. References also occur in taped interviews with Dr. Dixie Pelluet and Dr. C.B. Weld, 1984, Judith Fingard Collection, PANS.
11. Grant to Stanley, 20 March 1942, DUA, President's Office, Past Staff, Part-time File: Medicine.
12. Grant to Kerr, 6 March 1946, DUA, MS-1-3-C-25.
13. Board of Governors Minutes, 8 Jan. 1946, DUA.
14. Memorandum, 19 April 1951, DUA, MS-1-3-C-25.
15. Information on Pelluet's career is found in her staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-381, and in taped interviews, 1984, Judith Fingard Collection, PANS.
16. Board of Governors Minutes, 6 Dec. 1949, DUA.
17. Pelluet to Kerr, 25 Nov. 1952, DUA, MS-1-3-C-381.
18. The policy was not to apply retroactively. Memorandum, 23 Dec. 1949, DUA, MS-1-3-C-381.
19. Board of Governors Minutes, 13 Jan. 1950, DUA.
20. Information on Richter's career is found in her staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-414.
21. Kerr to Richter, 29 Dec. 1948, DUA, MS-1-3-C-414.
22. Richter to Kerr, 3 Jan. 1949, and Kerr to Richter, 18 Jan. 1949, DUA, MS-1-3-C-414.
23. Memo for the committee appointed to make recommendations regarding Mrs. Johanna Richter's letter to the president, DUA, MS-1-3-C-414.
24. Covert to Kerr, 4 Sept. 1957, DUA, MS-1-3-C-414.
25. Information on Dr. Thompson Welch's career is found in her staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-530, and in her letter to the author, 13 Aug. 1985.
26. Kerr to Laurie, 2 July 1953, DUA, MS-1-3-C-530.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Report of the Committee on Appointments, Promotion and Tenure, 15 Mar. 1954, and Recommendations of the representatives of the Board of Governors on the joint Board/-Senate Committee to consider the question of Academic Appointments, Promotion and Tenure, C.B. Weld Papers, DUA, MS-13-53-B-4.
29. 'Regulations Concerning Academic Appointments and Tenure', approved 2 Feb. 1956, Section II, 1.(1).
30. 'Regulations Concerning Academic Appointments and Tenure', approved 25 Feb. 1966 (the Grey Book); Senate Minutes, 8 Dec. 1969; Board of Governors Minutes, 19 Feb. 1970.
31. Information on Pennington's career is found in her staff file, DUA, MS-1-3-C-382.
32. J.M. Vickers and June Adam, *But Can You Type?: Canadian Universities and the Status of Women* (Toronto, 1977), p. 107.
33. F.W. Gibson, *Queen's University, vol. II, 1917-1961* (Kingston and Montreal, 1983), p. 344.

34. Taped interview with Dr. Margaret Butler Morrison, 1985, Judith Fingard Collection, PANS.
35. The minutes of the Dalhousie-King's Reading Club are in the Dalhousie University Archives.
36. Kerr to Grant, 28 Jan. 1946, DUA, MS-1-3-C-375.