

custodians were historians at heart. He viewed archives as neutral and a critical gateway for historians to reach the truth of the past. Issues about the response of the archivist to the needs of the historian are reiterated in several of the articles. Topics covered included the creation of more and better finding aids, and a discussion of the archivist as active collector of historical records. Cappon was well ahead of his time in acknowledging that many subject areas had not been well documented and his wrestling with the idea of archivist as proactive collector is evident in his writing. He seems to have desired active collecting, but on a limited scale. He certainly did not want the “subjective judgment” of the archivist to “take priority over that of the historian” (p. 83). He also worried about the huge volume of records generated by an increasingly bureaucratized society. His difficulty dealing with the masses of material and the time spent on appraisal have a current ring to them. The way that Cappon worked through issues that are at the foundation of the archival profession is important to our understanding of the profession as it has evolved. If we see the world differently – if there are many archivists who no longer have any confidence in the possibility of a truthful reconstruction of the past being created through empirical research using archival documents, and, if there are respected and important archival professionals who see their profession as wholly independent of history – it does not diminish the work of theorists like Cappon who were struggling with many of the same themes as we face but who came to different conclusions appropriate to their time and place. And in reading Cappon’s essays, one finds that many of his conclusions have retained their relevance and lead us to revisit our own positions on key issues, which is what any good retrospective should do.

**Bernadine Dodge**  
**Trent University**

**Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War.** DESMOND MORTON. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004. 326 p. ISBN 0-7748-1108-0.

On 17 March 1916, Agnes Georgeson wrote to her husband’s commanding officer about her family situation: “I aint [*sic*] getting my money from the army the way I ought to ... [The Patriotic Fund] will do nothing not even groceries. They have been awful nasty to me, wont [*sic*] listen to me at all, just turn me right down. I wonder how they expect me and my 3 children to exist ... I have to get money soon or I must have my husband home to see if he can’t get a job, as we are practically starving” (p. 105).

Desmond Morton’s latest book, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War*, demonstrates how Canada’s ability to recruit soldiers was directly linked to their families’ financial situation. A farmer or factory worker was

less inclined to enlist in the army if his wife and children would be harmed by his absence. The government recognized this fact early in the conflict, and moved to address it. Thus, on 4 September 1914, Robert Borden's cabinet approved a separation allowance for every soldier's family. This money was in addition to a soldier's regular pay. As was quietly acknowledged however, the separation allowance would only cover the costs of one dependent (p. 54).

More had to be done, or soldiers' families would be reduced to penury while their men risked their lives on foreign soil. In keeping with a long-standing imperial tradition, Herbert Ames, a Montreal businessman, approached Prime Minister Borden and Colonel Sam Hughes, the minister of Militia and Defence, about setting up a national, donor-supported fund to compensate the most needy and worthy of soldiers' families. This suited the government, which was leery of accepting responsibility for the women and children left at home, because it had never taken on large-scale social assistance projects before. As Morton notes, "thousands of controversial and sensitive decisions about benefits and who would receive them were therefore handed off to an ostensibly independent and non-political body that would be influenced by its own constituents and especially by its more influential donors" (p. 88).

On 18 August 1914 the Canadian Patriotic Fund was officially launched. Morton gives an exhaustive breakdown of the formation of the Fund in each of the Dominion's nine provinces. He explains the challenges of creating a national fund, in particular addressing discrepancies in the cost-of-living, which required that a family in British Columbia receive more money than a family in Montreal. Morton spends some time detailing how funds were raised, and how the money was distributed. As he makes clear, it was not easy to determine a family's need. To do so, branches of the Patriotic Fund across the country relied on middle-class female volunteers who visited all recipient families to determine their requirements.

Morton's book is most compelling when it examines the assumptions about gender roles that underlay the basic tenets of the Patriotic Fund. As he explains, masculinity was inextricably tied to a man's ability to provide: "a father's competence was primarily measured by the quality of support he could offer his family" (p. 23). Canadian men of soldiering age were thus pulled in two competing directions. On one hand, government propaganda urged them to do their patriotic duty. Abandoning their families, however, would mean their failure as men. The Fund solved that dilemma by becoming a surrogate provider in place of the father and husband who was no longer there to care for his family (p. 89).

The creation of the Fund was similarly influenced by Canadian ideals of femininity. Morton identifies maternal feminism as one of the driving influences in the Fund's formation. This line of thought argued that women were best capable of looking after their own children, and should stay in the home

as much as possible. Morton explains that such a feminism was essentially conservative: “the essence of maternalism was selflessness; to claim authority for the protection of the family and for the safety and well-being of the next nation-forming generation [was] women’s divinely ordained duty and responsibility” (p. 14). The question of whether or not a Fund recipient should be allowed to work, or if her time was better spent caring for her children was subject to debate. After all, if the Fund denied a working woman access to its coffers, this might exasperate the “servant problem,” which was of particular concern to the Fund’s middle-class female volunteers. Each branch of the Fund was left to make its own decisions about paying working women, but the emphasis was certainly on keeping women in the home.

The Fund buttressed the maternal feminist ideal, with its self-imposed duty to monitor a woman’s role as a wife and mother. In order to protect itself against donor outrage about misspent money, the Fund instituted some baseline rules about not only the recipient’s need, but also her moral character and fitness as a parent and wife. Thus, the Fund’s visits program sent investigators into every home to assure against fraud and withhold money if the female under investigation was deemed unworthy. Morton’s book is peppered with anecdotes of women who committed adultery or neglected their children and were denied access to the Fund. The government, by keeping its distance from the disbursement of the Fund, allowed the charity to be selective about which families received money.

The existence of the Fund helped to lessen the impact of warfare on Canadian society as a whole. The government could maintain its distance from citizen’s personal lives; men could fight and women could stay home to raise the children. As the conflict dragged on, however, the Fund’s role as a barricade to social change began to weaken. Morton chronicles the increasingly sharp criticism of the Fund’s status as charity, rather than an entitlement for soldiers’ families. There was growing resentment over the scrutiny and discrimination to which soldiers’ families were subjected. It was felt that the Fund should not be monitoring Canadian homes and that the government should take on the responsibility for providing for families. As the *British Columbia Federalist* editorialized in 1917, “neither the Separation allowance nor the assigned Pay is subject to the whim of nose-poking investigators, glorified private detectives, society-lady supervisors or the ‘interpretations’ and ‘decisions’ of a coterie of citizens, however well-intentioned” (p. 192). Similarly, as more and more men joined the army or were conscripted, women were called from the home to work in factories and farms. The power of the Patriotic Fund to maintain the gender status quo was weakening.

Morton’s comprehensive use of archival material serves his book well. He delves into provincial and national Patriotic Fund records, and uses the Departments of Militia and Defence and National Defence records extensively. Where Morton falls short is in giving voice to the soldiers’ families

themselves. As the author acknowledges, the evidence of how recipients of the Fund felt about the charity was difficult to locate. Undoubtedly soldiers' wives wrote to their husbands about their financial burdens and the intrusion of the Fund into their personal lives, but letters sent to soldiers overseas did not often survive. As such, there is a scarcity of material from the wives' point of view. In a book about the soldiers' families, this missing piece is an inevitable, but lamentable, absence.

What is perhaps equally inevitable in a book of this type is the barrage of facts and figures that Morton provides about the Fund. The mid-section of the book is devoted to long descriptions of the financial and economic situation of the Fund in every province, with special emphasis placed on Montreal. While the statistics are undoubtedly important to the study of the economics of war, it can make for a dull and repetitive read. Morton's prose is lightened considerably when we hear from the actual soldiers or their wives. For instance, he quotes one soldier, writing with eagerness to his wife about his impending return. The soldier tells her that she had "better get used to seeing the ceiling for a very long time" (p. 218). This glimpse into the human side of the war's economics serves to make Morton's point more effectively than the figures he quotes at such length.

Ultimately, Morton's book captures the Fund's impressive history of sustained, near-continuous, volunteer fund-raising and management over the course of five fraught years. As Morton reflects, "Soldiering ... had never been a generous or a democratic trade" (p. 142). The Canadian Patriotic Fund was an attempt to redress that historic failure, and despite all of its weaknesses, it did so admirably. Morton's book is a useful history of this endeavour.

**Amy Tector**  
**Library and Archives Canada**

**One Man's Documentary: A Memoir of the Early Years of the National Film Board.** GRAHAM McINNES, edited and introduced by GENE WALZ. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2004. 233 p. ISBN 0-88755-679-5.

Graham McInnes' memoir of his six years at the National Film Board (NFB), beginning just when it was being founded in 1939, is valuable and great fun. It is a lively, literate, evocative, and intelligent personal account of the formative environment, personalities, and projects of those important years. It is a memoir that should find its way onto the shelves of every scholar of film and cultural studies in Canada, and every university and public library in the country.

Graham McInnes was a writer, before and after his NFB career, working for CBC radio, as a freelancer, as an art critic, as a diplomat, as a novelist, and as a memoirist. It shows. Seth Feldman, eminent Canadian film historian, is dead