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WORKING FOR FAMILY, NATION AND GOD: PATERNALISM AND THE DUPUIS FRERES DEPARTMENT STORE, MONTREAL, 1926-1952.

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT/ RÉSUMÉ

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WORKING FOR FAMILY, NATION AND GOD: PATERNALISM AND THE DUPUIS FRERES DEPARTMENT STORE, MONTREAL, 1926-1952.

From 1868 to 1978, the Dupuis Frères department store serviced the French Montreal community from its headquarters on St. Catherine Street, east of Saint Laurent. This thesis looks at the management strategies of Dupuis Frères through its' employee newspaper, Le Duprex, from 1926 to 1946, and then at their collapse with the Dupuis Frères strike in 1952. The Dupuis Frères management retained the loyalty of its employees by using a combination of paternalism and welfare capitalism. The company supported a union, organized leisure activities, provided sales incentives and rewarded loyalty financially and socially. In addition, the store integrated its French Canadian and Catholic identity with its employees' understanding of their work to impart cultural meaning to their employment. Dupuis Frères equated support for the company with the success of the French Canadian people, and its connections with the Catholic clergy added a sacred element to its enterprise. Dupuis Frères strike in 1952 divided French Canadians along class lines, and those who supported the workers were seen by neo-nationalists as doing so at the expense of French Canadian survival.

Cette thèse a pour objet l'étude des stratégies directoriales du grand magasin Dupuis Frères et leur effondrement éventuel à la suite de la grève de 1952. Ces stratégies sont consignées, entre autres, dans le journal d'entreprise, Le Duprex, de 1926 à 1946. La direction sut garder la fidélité de ses employés grâce à un paternalisme et un capitalisme providence. En effet, la Compagnie soutint la formation d'un syndicat, organisa des loisirs, encouragea la vente, et récompensa encore financièrement et socialement la fidélité de son personnel. De plus, le Magasin sut bien intégrer les identités canadienne française au catholicisme des employés; il valorisa également leur travail en inculquant un sens culturel à leur occupation. La Direction ne sépara pas le succès de la Compagnie du bien-être des Canadiens français, et les rapports positifs qu'elle entretenait avec l'Eglise ajoutaient un élément sanctificateur à l'Entreprise. La grève de 1952 rompit la solidarité des classes parce que les néo-nationalistes reprochèrent à ceux qui soutenaient les travailleurs en grève, qu'ils minaient la survie du Canadianisme français.

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INTRODUCTION

Dupuis Frères, proudly labelled "the largest French department store in North America", closed its doors to the public on 27 January 1978 after servicing the Montreal, Quebec, and global community for 110 years. The store was petitioned into bankruptcy by the Royal Bank of Canada and Trust General du Canada to whom the store collectively owed eleven million dollars.[1] The general sentiments expressed by Montreal and Canadian newspapers about the closing were mixed. Most felt the store was a relic of a bygone era when Saint Catherine Street East was heavily populated and prosperous. Among the numerous reasons given for its failure were inept management, the store's union, a Montreal transportation strike and the decline of the downtown population due to people moving to the suburbs.[2] At the same time, there was an air of undeniable regret, and "waves of sympathy mixed with consternation" were conveyed because the city was losing what had been an institution for over a century.[3] A group of businessmen, headed by Montreal criminal lawyer Raymond Daoust, made a last-minute effort to save the store financially to no avail.[4] The store remained closed permanently.

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[1] The Financial Times, 13-19 March 1978, p. 10.

[2]Ibid; Le Devoir 2 February 1978, p. 6.

[3]Le Devoir, 2 February 1952, p. 6. Similar thoughts were expressed in Maclean's, "Don't Bother to Watch For the Grand Opening" 20 February 1978, p. 62 and Le Devoir, editorial, 2 February, 1979, p. 6. La Presse, the company's major advertiser, was on strike at the time.

[4]Along with Daoust were Pierre Peladeau publisher of the Journal de Montreal, Andre Legarde, François Pilon a former Dupuis director, Rejean Desjardins, Bernard Langerin and Jean Guy Mathers. They were willing to combine two million dollars to save the company, however the government was unwilling to contribute anything to this end. Montreal Star, 1 February 1978, p.A3.

The significance of Dupuis Frères in Montreal urban history was immense.[5] The department store's geographical location on St. Catherine Street East, its employment of only French Canadians, its overt support of the Catholic clergy, its ardent French Canadian nationalism, and its economic success spanning more than a century attest to Dupuis Frères' importance in the Montreal French community. The management used the store's religious and ethnic composition to boost the company's market appeal by relaying the message that money spent there would add only to the prosperity of fellow Catholic French Canadians. Dupuis Frères also played upon the same ideology with its employees inside the department store, as its nationalist identity was a central component of the company's paternalism and welfare capitalist benefits. The employees were told they were not only working for the Dupuis family as an extension of their own, but also for the French Canadian nation under the approving eye of their religious leaders.

Dupuis Frères began as a dry goods store in 1868 near Montcalm Street, and by 1926 had grown into a large and successful establishment comparable to other Montreal department stores such as Morgan's, Simpson's and Ogilvy's. Near the end of the nineteenth century, St. Catherine Street replaced Notre Dame as the main commercial artery of the city.[6] About the same time, it

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[5]For a history of the general evolution of Dupuis Frères, see Roger Duhamel, Une grande aventure commerciale, 1963.

[6]Morgans and Murphy's (bought by Simpson's in 1904) were located on Notre Dame Street until the end of the nineteenth century. Morgan's moved to St. Catherine St. West in 1891, while Murphy's moved to St. Catherine St. West in 1894. Ogilvy's located along the same street in 1896 and Eaton's established their Montreal store on St. Catherine St. W. in 1925. Centre d'Histoire de Montreal, "The Department Stores: Cathedrals of Modernity" Exhibited 9 May to 14 April 1996.

became clear that Montreal had spatially divided itself along linguistic lines; the English were primarily west of Saint Laurent, while the French population was heavily concentrated in the east.[7] The English department stores heavily dominated the French in number. Dupuis Frères' primary mark of distinction, not only in Montreal but in North America, was that it was the only French owned and operated department store on the continent.

In 1882, Dupuis Frères' established its permanent headquarters on the corner of Saint Catherine Street and Saint-André, around the corner from Montcalm, in a decidedly French district of Montreal.[8] This geographical location made Dupuis Frères the closest choice for most French Canadians in the city, a preference that was solidified by the fact that they could always be served in their own language.[9] The store's founder, Nazaire Dupuis, personally made all the store's buying trips to Europe, and controlled almost every aspect of the store in its early days. When Nazaire's brother Narcisse Dupuis took over the business in 1876, he cemented the transition of the company from a dry goods store to an impressive and modern department store. Among Narcisse's achievements were the installation of a Catholic union for his employees, the purchase of garment and hat manufacturing companies, and the opening of a successful Mail Order Service for those

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[7]Paul-André Linteau, Histoire de Montreal depuis la Confédération (Montreal: Boréal, 1992), p. 47. By French, I primarily mean those who spoke the French language.

[8]For a detailed study of a nearby parish, see Lucia Ferretti, Entre Voisins: La société paroissale en milieu urbain Saint-Pierre-Apôtre de Montréal, 1848-1930 (Montreal: Boréal, 1992).

[9]Le Duprex, "Supplément-Souvenir, Dupuis 75e Anniversaire", Vol. 12, No. 1 (April 1943), p. 43.

living outside Montreal.[10] The third Dupuis brother, Armand, died prematurely, so Narcisse groomed his late brother's son Albert to take over the store one day.[11] Albert Dupuis became the company's president and owner in 1924, and remained so until 1945 when his son Raymond took over operations. Dupuis Frères continued as a family owned and operated business for ninety-two year, from 1868 to 1961.

The main source of information for this thesis is Le Duprex, the internal newspaper of the Dupuis Frères employees. Company newspapers have been used as a valuable source for other labour histories, and in their time, served an integrating function by forging personal links between an employer and his employees. The company newspaper also served to educate the workforce on the company's expectations, activities and policies.[12] These papers were designed to alleviate tensions between an employer and his workers, and to avoid disorder in the workplace. My reading of the Dupuis Frères company newspaper was done critically in order to obtain a feeling for the power relationships embedded in its articles and editorials. Le Duprex began in October 1926 as a monthly publication for the employees of Dupuis Frères, in collaboration with their union, le Syndicat Catholique et National des Employés de Magasin No. 1, Section Dupuis Frères Ltée.[13] On

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[10]Centre d'histoire de Montreal, "Department Stores: Cathedrals of Modernity" 9 May 1995-14 April 1996, organized by Monique Laliberté.

[11]Le Duprex, "Supplément-Souvenir, Dupuis 75e Anniversaire", Vol. 12, No. 1 (April 1943), p. 43.

[12]For example, Joan Sangster, Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small Town Ontario, 1920-1960 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) and Susan Porter Benson, Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

[13]In the 1930s, Le Duprex began to appear every other month.

the cover of its first issue, the editorial staff explained that the paper was encouraged and supported by both union and management

> Il sera le lien qui unira en un tout homogène les différentes parties de la grande organisation DUPUIS. Patrons et employés y exposeront librement leurs vues, et une entente encore plus étroite en résultera.[14]

Thus, in theory, Le Duprex claimed to be not an employee newspaper, but a forum where employees and management aired their opinions in the hope that a better relationship would result for both. The years of Le Duprex used for this thesis were volumes one to twelve which spanned from 1926 to 1946, although volumes seven and eleven were unavailable.[15] The opinions expressed in the company newspaper, however, remained surprisingly consistent during the years under investigation.

This project began as a history which incorporated Dupuis employees into a larger study of Montreal retail workers. When I located twenty years of Le Duprex through the grandson of Mr. A.J. Dugal, the store's general manager and vice-president for much of the twentieth century, it provided rich material for me to analyse on its own. [16] This thesis is neither a social history of

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[14]Le Duprex, Vol. 1 No. 1 (October 1926), p. 1.

[15]Volume 7 of Le Duprex covered November 1932-July 1935 and Volume 11 covered December 1940 to April 1943.

[16]Robert Trudel has written an excellent article which gives an overview of Dupuis Frères, "Famille, Foi et Patrie, Le Credo de Dupuis Frères" 40 Cap Aux Diamants, Winter 1995, pp. 6-29 The last known location of the Dupuis Frères archives is 865 St. Catherine St. East, given by Robert Sweeney in his Guide to the History and Records of Selected Montreal Businesses (Montreal Business History Group, 1979), p. 100. The itemized collection included a complete set of Le Duprex, which ceased publication in 1962. Sweeney's inventory, however, was published in 1979, and I was unable to find the archives after an extensive search.

employees, nor is it a business history of Dupuis Frères. Rather, it is an interpretation of the relationship between the store management and its employees as it was conveyed through the company newspaper. Particularly, what follows is a description and analysis of a management's paternalistic techniques, embodied in their historically and geographically specific time and place, and finally, the collapse of that management technique.

The history of retail workers in Canada has been largely overlooked by historians. Several company histories do exist, however, they are often consumed with chronicling the individual department store's progress and failures from an economic standpoint, and with delving into the personalities that owned and managed these institutions.[17] This lack of interest from labour historians in the occupation of retailing is surprising, since department and retailing stores have been major employers of the working class for over a century.[18] There are several possible explanations for this inattention: employees of department stores have been and remain mostly women, the industry has never organized on a large scale, and retail workers still remain a poorly paid and unorganized group today. The story of retail workers is also generally one of consensus rather than conflict, and the industry has seldom been known for its overt labour militance. A story of harmony in the workplace has rarely appealed to labour historians. Indeed, even this work ends in a rather

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[17]For example G. Alan Burton, A Store of Memories (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1986); Mary-Etta Macpherson, Shopkeepers to a Nation (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1963); Douglas E. Harker, The Woodwards: The Story of a Distinguished British Columbia Family, 1850-1975 (Toronto: Mitchell Press Ltd., 1976).

[18]An exception to this is Eileen Sufrin who gives a first hand account of Eaton worker's attempts to organize in The Eaton Drive: The Campaign to Organize Canada's Largest Department Store, 1948 to 1952 (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1982).

bitter and divisive strike.

The most comprehensive look at the nature of retail work from a social history perspective is Susan Porter Benson's Counter Cultures, based on American department stores.[19] Porter Benson investigates the relationships between managers, saleswomen and customers and how these relationships interacted to produce a specific work culture within American retailing in the first half of the twentieth century. The American department store, in contrast to many other sectors such as manufacturing, experienced an increase rather than a decrease in skill requirements since managers realized their staff was a direct liaison with their customers. This fostering of skill associated with salespeople's direct interaction between workers and customers produced a unique work culture in American labour history. Of particular interest to Porter Benson was how gender and class operated within the various relationships inside the store.

In Canada, Eileen Sufrin has written a first hand account of Eaton's workers' attempts to organize in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[20] Heavy on the chronicling of the campaign and light on analysis, Sufrin's book, although an impressive collection of events, fails to provide an historical framework or an analysis of the campaign. Also dealing with Canadian sources, Cynthia Wright has examined the gendered nature of shopping and consumer culture in a case study of the Eaton's

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[19]Susan Porter Benson, Counter Cultures.

[20]Sufrin, The Eaton Drive.

Toronto College Street store.[21] Although her research addresses a fascinating and important aspect of retailing, Wright's focus is not on the employees of department stores, but on the way that management constructed the image of the female customer through its advertising and marketing. Consumer culture is not addressed in this thesis on Dupuis Frères, but rather the focus is on the company's managerial techniques.

Many historians have studied companies outside the retail sector whose management style was paternalistic. Joan Sangster has combined oral and archival sources in Earning Respect to examine workplaces whose owners utilized paternalism and welfare capitalism in a small Ontario town. Sangster demonstrates how the socially constructed gender roles of women in the home worked in tandem with women's positions on the job to enhance the patriarchal structure of the workplace. Familial ideology directly complemented company paternalism and women's positions in the home were comfortably translated into rationale for the sexual division of labour at work. Women's experiences as wage workers and their accommodation and resistence at work were all shaped by their perceptions of their place within their family and community. Joy Parr has also looked at paternalism in her book The Gender of Breadwinners.[22] The Penman factory in Paris, Ontario recruited and employed a large percentage of women in a town that offered less employment for men. Parr shows that although the paternalism exhibited by Penman's sometimes sabotaged women's autonomy at work, women's positions in the home and community were somewhat

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[21]Cynthia Wright, "'The Most Prominent Rendezvous of the Feminine Toronto': Eaton's College Street and the Organization of Shopping in Toronto", 1920-1950. PhD University of Toronto, 1992.

[22]Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

strengthened by the unique power of being female breadwinners. Both Parr and Sangster demonstrate how gender ideology functions and interacts within two different employment settings.

The most important component of a paternalistic system is the ideological scheme in which it functions. For instance, throughout history and even today, women's positions in the family and community have been used on conscious and unconscious levels to legitimize their placement in positions of subservience in the realm of employment. Women's place was primarily seen as being in the home as a wife and mother, so when women did enter paid employment, their jobs were devalued as secondary to men's. The ideological scheme also can be instrumental in, as Bryan Palmer writes, "highlighting not the inequities of social relationships but their supposed reciprocities".[23] Ideology that incorporates a rationale for why certain power relationships exist explains why the paternalistic relationship is beneficial to both parties, even though the power is unevenly distributed. Paternalism is about power; the power exercised by one party over a subordinate party. Ideology functions within a paternalistic system as an interpretation of the relationship between two groups, and allows the dominant group to justify its position of power in relation to subordinates. This does not mean, however, that this ideological control is a conscious one-sided manipulation as Mary Jackman explains

> Because individuals in the dominant group do not feel personally accountable for the expropriated benefits of their existence, there is no impetus for them to contrive knowingly to manufacture such an ideology. Instead, out of the pressures created by their collective

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[23]Bryan Palmer, Capitalism Comes to the Backcountry: The Goodyear Invasion of Napanee (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1994), p. 17.

> relationship with subordinates, there evolves naturally an interpretation of social reality that is consistent with the dominant group's experience. That ideology is a collective property. It permeates the main institutions and communications networks of organized social life and is propagated with an easy vehemence that can only come from uncontrived sincerity. The individuals who comprise the dominant group are caught in the prevailing current; without any exercise of personal guile, they learn to defend their interests with aplomb.[24]

It must be noted that employees contributions to Le Duprex were limited to positive expressions of loyalty, gratitude and deference towards owners and management, or to articles pertaining to issues outside the realm of the store that were in line with the store's image and objectives. This is partly due to the fact that management of the store made up a large percentage of the editorial board of the newspaper. Dissension of many types undoubtedly existed at Dupuis Frères, however, this is beyond the scope of this thesis and would require access to company records which have been lost or misplaced, or to oral interviews. Le Duprex discouraged conflict between management and workers, not by airing opinions, but by defining the relationship between the two groups in such a way as to obfuscate conflicting interests and fuse together the interests of management and workers. This strategy is a concept articulated by Stephen Lukes in his claim that

> ...A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants...shaping their very perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as

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[24] Mary Jackman, The Velvet Glove: Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class and Race Relations (Berkley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 8.

> natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained or beneficial.[25]

Le Duprex reflected and perpetuated three external ideologies to construct its own unique system. In addition to bringing women's subordinate positions in the home inside the company to rationalise their low-paying male dominated position, Dupuis Frères also appropriated French Canadian nationalism and Roman Catholic tenants. These three ideologies served to bind workers and management together in a struggle against those outside their belief system and obscured struggle within. As Jackman writes, "institutions must be enshrouded in a moral code that makes an inclusive rather than exclusive appeal."[26] Le Duprex was one organ used by the company to serve this purpose; the ideas within it enabled workers to define their job as a contribution to the greater national good, and this served to supplement the workers' paycheck.

The way in which the Dupuis Frères management used religion and nationalism to advance its aims was so pervasive that it seems simplistic to classify them as corporate welfare. Stuart Brandes defined corporate welfare as "any service provided for the comfort or improvement of employees which was neither a necessity of the industry nor required by law".[27] Studies of corporate welfare practices have chronicled the types and effects of benefits companies used to please workers, from profit sharing and pensions to sports and picnics.[28] The purpose of these

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[25]Stephen Lukes, Power: A Radical View (London: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 23-24.

[26] Jackman, The Velvet Glove, p. 68.

[27]Stuart Brandes, American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 5-6.

[28]For example, Joan Sangster, Earning Respect; Parr, Gender of Breadwinners.

optional yet arbitrary benefits was to create and maintain a feeling of family and community amongst the entire organization, as well as to stave off any demands from workers to translate 'gifts' under welfare capitalism into rights through union activity or legislation. Once benefits were translated into obligations, employers would be forced to provide them with no discretion on their part, and little or no gratitude from their employees.

Stuart Brandes notes that in the United States, owners used religion by building churches in their communities, encouraging employees to attend services, and by joining the lay structure of the church.[29] Since this mixing of business and religion could blur the lines of where one began and the other ended, disloyalty to the company could be interpreted as defying the sacred as well.[30] In the case of Dupuis Frères, going against the interests of the store could have been interpreted as not only flouting the Catholic religion, but also rejecting the French Canadian nation. The store promoted itself to its employees and to the Montreal community as the defender of French Canada's economic interests in the realm of commerce, and this marketing and management plan functioned well, at least on the surface, for decades. Dupuis Frères' participation in religious and national organizations, and its unremitting identification with the success of the French in Quebec, melded its identity with its employees and those it served so that to show disloyalty to the company was tantamount to being a traitor and a heretic.

The Dupuis organization's more tangible welfare policies included sports, paid vacations, bonuses through contests, and a wide variety of health and death benefits offered through the union.

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[29]Brandes, Welfare Capitalism, pp. 70-71.

[30]Brandes, Welfare Capitalism, pp. 67-68.

The union, created in 1919, was a most effective welfare policy. Although it was part of the Confédération des travailleurs catholique du Canada (CTCC), the Dupuis Frères workers' union resembled a company union in its structure and operation until 1950 when it registered with the government to begin collective bargaining. By encouraging the employees to form a union, and by supporting it economically and socially, the Dupuis company was able to circumvent labour protest by offering a vehicle that appeared to give the workers power, while shaping it for their own purposes. Welfare capitalism is often seen primarily as a mechanism to forestall the formation of unions, however, in this case, the installation of a union worked to postpone labour activity against the company, and became one of their most successful welfare policies until the strike of 1952.

Chapter One describes the welfare programs set up over the years at Dupuis Frères to supplement their employees' paychecks. The union, sports programs, family metaphors and rewards for loyalty and performance were all designed to enhance the work experience at the store both socially and financially. According to Le Duprex, 'La Grande Famille Dupuis' was one that worked together and played together, and all was to the credit of Albert, and later Raymond Dupuis' incredible generosity. Employees thanked their bosses through various expressions of loyalty and appreciation such as gifts, celebrations, and nominations for religious honours.

Chapter Two outlines the ideological means that management and owners used to legitimize and cement their positions of power. Paternalism is typically involved with the blending of public and private ideas to produce a culture of consensus and Dupuis Frères was no exception. French Canadian nationalism, Catholicism and gendered understandings of women's and men's positions

in the workplace were all present in French Montreal society. Dupuis Frères was able to capitalize on these ideas by integrating them into its employees' understanding of the work they were performing. By fusing various external ideologies with the aims and purpose of the department store, the company was able to impart meanings to employment there that were not just economic. The store's owners demonstrated their concern by actively participating in civic organizations and events that promoted and benefited their nation and their faith and ultimately, their company.

Chapter Three departs from the first two in both source and tone, as it chronicles and analyses the 1952 strike at Dupuis Frères using newspapers, articles and archives. The company's benevolence and worker loyalty were ruptured against the background of Quebec in the 1950s. The welfare policies and paternalism the company had forged for almost a century were not enough to counter the inadequate salaries workers felt they were receiving, and the currents affecting labour in Quebec at the time. The strike is especially interesting in that it is a struggle between French Canadian owners and workers. Distinct class lines were drawn and the connection of 'nation' dropped when the strikers and the CTCC accused the store of using French Canadian nationalism to subdue their work force. The strike lasted thirteen weeks during which the municipal police arrested numerous strikers. Sympathies were split, not only amongst French Canadians, but also within the Catholic clergy.

Dupuis Frères' workers went on strike again in 1957, although that strike is not discussed here. When the store closed in 1978, the only surviving Dupuis, Mrs. Corine Maillet, blamed the union for the company's failure, showing that bitter feelings still existed between the Dupuis family

and the union as a result of the demands made during the strikes. Mrs. Maillet was quoted in Le Devoir as saying "la compagnie Dupuis n'avait été jamais une compagnie assez grosse pour se payer le luxe d'un syndicat".[31] When Dupuis employees were relocated after the store's closing, there was difficulty placing them according to the Montreal Star, because they were former union members and other department stores feared the Dupuis employees would try to organize their workforces.[32]

The successes the union had achieved in the 1952 and later in the 1957 strikes were not viewed positively in an industry whose labour force remained unorganized and poorly paid. Nonetheless, the determination the Dupuis Frères employees showed in their opposition to a paternalistic national institution was remarkable, and despite the perhaps manipulative management strategies of the store, its closing signalled the end of a commercial era.

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[31]Le Devoir, 25 January 1978, p. 6.

[32]Montreal Star, 13 April 1978, p. A3.

CHAPTER I

"Un Pour Tous. Tous Pour Un." Welfare Capitalism and Paternalism at Dupuis Frères.

The motto of the Dupuis workers' union above could easily be extended to describe the management strategy of the store. Albert Dupuis, continuing in the tradition of his Uncle Narcisse, applied and created popular mechanisms of welfare capitalism and paternalism throughout his control of the company to secure loyalty and deference from his workers from 1924 to 1945. Many of these strategies were common in industrialized countries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The idea that capital and labour should work together cooperatively and harmoniously was used by companies in the United States, and popularized there partly men such as the industrialist Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie, influenced by British Chartism, believed the goal of management should be to employ "the proper administration of wealth so that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship".[1] This view, although it arose out of a distinct tradition, was similar to that of the Catholic church and the Dupuis Frères organization. Albert Dupuis used the Catholic union, metaphors of family, workers' leisure time, and selling suggestions to create a 'culture of consensus' amongst his employees.

The store offered a host of activities, groups, benefits and psychic ties to make Dupuis Frères much more than just a place to work. Some of these in-store activities were offered to male and female employees, some to union members only and others to employees that demonstrated

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[1]Gerald Zahavi, Workers, Managers and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson, 1890-1950 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 14-15.

exceptional loyalty and hard work. The welfare capitalism and paternalism of Dupuis Frères were not limited to the employee's ties to the store, but also created a firmly embedded sense of loyalty and indebtedness *between* all those involved with the store. This is not to suggest that all workers, or even the majority of workers, experienced unquestioning loyalty for the period under investigation.[2] Nor does it mean that all gestures and words were consciously designed to manipulate. Without another source, such as the employees themselves, all that can be ascertained is the picture presented through the newspaper of the staff and management; an idealized version of the relationships in the store.

One of the most important aspects of a functioning paternalistic system are incentives for the employees to perform their tasks without protest. Labour relations in paternalistic companies were usually a dotted landscape of sporadic benefits and unpredictable accolades.[3] To assist in justifying the social and economic relationship which existed between the employees and owners of Dupuis Frères, Albert Dupuis treated his employees like 'one of the family', interested himself with the immediate family members of his employees, and distributed various material rewards. In return, employees spoke of Albert Dupuis with reverence, and performed their tasks without major grievances. The unspoken agreement between employer and employee was that loyalty and

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[2]For example, see Zahavi, Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism, pp. 104-119 and Sangster, Earning Respect. These histories describe factories from the perspectives of workers through oral history and other sources. When consent is investigated by these historians, it becomes clearly more complex than mere accommodation.

[3]See for example, Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners , Judy Lown, Women and Industrialization, Gender at Work in Nineteenth Century England (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Sangster, Earning Respect and Zahavi, Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism.

labour would be traded for family status in the store, verbal appreciation, and frequent opportunities for material and social privileges.

The Union

In the late 1890s, the Roman Catholic Church both acknowledged the existence and what it considered the unnatural nature of class conflict. In the Rerum Novarum (1891) "On the Condition of the Working Classes", Pope Leo XIII proposed "Social Catholicism" as the best means to promote harmony and justice in the industrial structure of capitalist society. [4] While his proposal was more of a rejection of socialism and an endorsement of class-based groups, it was received as revolutionary. In the Pope's interpretation, Socialists were responsible for exciting the envy of the poor towards the rich, and encouraging the abolition of private possessions. Further, although the Pope declared that class inequalities were "a condition of human existence", class conflict was unnatural and wholly avoidable if only Christians would live in the spirit of Christian charity.[5]

Catholicism was a natural enemy of socialism, and the church had to find a way to address class conflict that did not threaten the established order. In what Marx would have seen as a typically repressive attitude from the Church, the Pope claimed that wealth was not happiness but a hindrance, and the real richness was moral and virtuous living because "on one day the strictest

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[4]Pope Leo XIII, "On the Condition of the Working Classes", Rerum Novarum (1891).

[5]Ibid. Here the pope uses the metaphor of the body to illustrate how not all parts are the same, but they must function in tandem. This organic metaphor is similar to one used by the union chaplain later in this chapter.

account for the use of wealth must be rendered to God as Judge". [6] Owners' obligations to practice *charity* were the solution to industrialization's upheaval rather than a recognition of workers' *rights*. Employers' duties were to ensure their employees receive a wage that could adequately support their families, to enable their workers to observe religious duties and to ensure working conditions were tolerable.[7] In the Rerum Novarum, the Pope explicitly expressed a gendered understanding of work. Women were only suited for certain occupations according to the Church , for they were "intended by nature for work of the home -- work indeed which especially protects modesty in women and accords by nature with the education of children and the well-being of the family".[8] Thus female work was restricted and devalued, for a woman's true place was in the home while her husband or father earned the wages. The encyclical was addressing only the male head of a family who was the sole breadwinner and provider.

In the end, the poor were not only the concern, but the responsibility of the rich, and this relationship paradigm was easily translated into paternalism. Pope Leo XIII encouraged the formation of workers' associations that would help to protect employees by building funds that could be given to members and their non-wage earning family members in need of assistance. Workers associations would serve to lessen the gap between the wealthy and the poor created by industrialization; the gap that made socialism such an attractive philosophy to the working classes. These workers' associations were however in need of direction from the church and employers so

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[6]Ibid., Par. 34.

[7]Ibid., Pars. 31-32.

[8]Ibid., Par. 60.

that the result would be the desired "unity of purpose and concord of wills".[9]

Social Catholicism found ready adherents in Quebec society, and in fact, Quebec was the only place in North America where sectarian unions took hold.[10] The need for Catholic workers' associations arose in Quebec around the time of the Rerum Novarum in the late 1800s.. Urbanization and industrialization had progressed to a level that necessitated unionization, both national and international, within the province. The early twentieth century in Quebec was a time of great economic prosperity which brought with it a rise in international unions, particularly in the industrial sector.[11] The number of international union affiliates tripled from 1901 to 1916, and strikes were numerous and militant.[12] Socialist and workers' parties were entering the realm of politics and the Church was alarmed at the influence socialism with its class warfare tactics was exercising over Quebec workers and the social order itself.[13] The Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada (CTCC) came into existence in 1921 out of a Cercle d'Etude Leo XIII in June 1918.[14] The first union that came out of this study group in November 1918 was a store

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[9]Ibid., Par. 76.

[10](CSN), The History of the Labour Movement in Quebec, Trans. Arnold Bennett (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987), p. 87. For a detailed examination of the Catholic church in Quebec, see Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, Histoire du Catholicisme Québécois, Vols. 1 and 2 (Montreal: Les Editions du Boréal Express, 1984).

[11]Jacques Rouillard, Histoire Du Syndicalisme Au Québec (Montreal: Les Éditions de Boréal, 1989), pp. 71-74.

[12]Ibid., p. 89.

[13]Ibid., p. 97.

[14]Jacques Rouillard, Les Syndicats Nationaux au Québec de 1900 à 1930 (Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1979), p 214.

workers union, which later became the Dupuis Frères employees union in June 1919.[15]

The Chaplain of the Catholic unions in Quebec, Abbé Maxime Fortin, had written to Narcisse Dupuis, the president of Dupuis Frères, to request permission for Dupuis employees to form a union under the clergy's direction.[16] The threats to owners that other national and international unions posed, such as inciting strikes and posing unreasonable demands, were nonexistent under the umbrella of a Catholic union. Strikes were not on the agenda as a conflict resolution tactic, nothing in the early constitutions of the CTCC addressed strikes or collective bargaining, and harmonious relations between workers and employers were assumed and encouraged.[17] As French Canadian and Catholic owners, the Dupuis' likely felt an obligation to allow the union, and in fact Narcisse encouraged it.[18] This first act of requesting permission from the owners to form a union, combined with the absence of any collective agreement for over 30 years, set the tone for the mandate of the Dupuis Frères union. By 1921, with the formation of the CTCC, the Dupuis Frères union became the Syndicat National des Employés de Magasin No. 1, Section Dupuis Frères Ltée. The only time the number of members was recorded in Le Duprex was in 1928 when the union wrote that it had ninety percent of Dupuis Employees or 1000 members.[19]

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 11 (Nov. 1932), p. 155.

[17]Rouillard, Histoire du Syndicalisme, p. 102

[18]Ibid.

[19]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 9 (June 1928) , p. 4.

The Catholic Church in Montreal adopted a form of corporatism and followed the idea in the Rerum Novarum that owners and workers were an organic and dependent whole.[20] Each union had a chaplain that was nominated by its members and its chaplain was present during union meetings and activities to advise on spiritual and moral issues.[21] The church's presence was thus felt at all times during union business and pleasure. St. Jacques Church on St. Catherine Street was instrumental in holding services on union anniversaries, and the sermon invariably reflected the interconnectedness of all members of the store. In a sermon delivered by the union chaplain, Abbé Clément, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the union in 1945, he stated

> Vos patrons ont besoin de votre collaboration, de votre coopération, mais n'oubliez pas que vous avez besoin de la leur. C'est un peu comme dans le corps humain: il y a l'oeil et la main. L'oeil n'est pas de même nature que la main; il n'est pas, non plus, destiné au même travail. Il est placé plus haut, la main est placée plus bas; il guide, la main saisit. Lequel des deux est plus nécessaire?...Il en est de même pour vous, mes bien chers frères, c'est par la bonne entente, l'harmonie, la coopération avec vos patrons que vous vivrez heureux.[22]

Using the metaphor of a body, the Dupuis family was presumably the eyes, overseeing the hands, or the employees. Following in the line of the Rerum Novarum, cooperation and harmony was emphasized and the class differences between the capital and labour were rationalized. Albert

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[20]Jacques Rouillard writes that "the professional corporation, as conceived by the confederation, was composed of representatives of workers and employees who would look after the common interests of the profession" in "Major Changes in the Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada, 1940-1960" Quebec Nationalism Since 1945, ed. Michael Behiels (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1987), p. 112.

[21]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Nov. 1926), p. 4.

[22]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 7 (Jan. 1945), 279.

Dupuis was placed in a 'higher' position, as were the eyes, than the employees, or the hands, however, neither a body nor a company could survive without wholehearted cooperation of all their parts. The owners were just naturally the evaluators that oversaw the needs of the company and directed the employees to manually implement whatever they felt was necessary for success. The implication was that this was the natural order of things; something to be accepted and accommodated rather than challenged.

Rather than being merely a tolerable organization independent of management, this particular union very specifically benefited the owners of Dupuis Frères. The owners were heralded as generous and concerned for allowing the union to form and continue, while the union demanded nothing specific in return. Certainly the union expected the company's owners to treat them fairly and reward their loyalty, however, the company was able to encourage employee loyalty in ways and at times of its own choosing. Vacations were paid, a practice that would not become the norm until after the Second World War in 1945.[23] The religious compatibility of employer and employee allowed for all important Catholic holidays to be observed, an issue for which other Catholic unions and employees had fought. Also, unlike other unions, the Dupuis Frères workers' organization held a position of social prominence within the store hierarchy. The union was celebrated by the employers as a great success towards the goal of preserving harmony between workers and management. To serve the union was not only to serve your fellow worker but also to serve the store, and indirectly, your boss. Managers also belonged to the union which was unusual for other labour organizations.

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[23]CSN, Labour Movement in Quebec, p. 121.

Le Duprex, born of the initiative of the Dupuis Frères union, contained considerable amounts of information on the union's activities, elections and goals. Each issue from 1926-1929 had a "page syndicale", and after that time it appeared sporadically. The purpose of this page was to inform existing members of union activities, and to appeal to those who had not already signed up for membership. The union was devoid of such traditional union activities such as discussing the nature of the members' work, salaries, potential grievances and job conditions. What was described in the "page syndicale", therefore, would be better described as a worker's social club, with a benefit fund as a sideline activity. The complete absence of complaints and discussions related to work in Le Duprex reinforced the idea of the union as a social club.

The "page syndicale" used most of its space before 1930 to write convincing arguments to join the union. In fact, this task of recruiting more members almost overshadowed the union itself. After 1930, the union's social aspects were highlighted. Some of the spoken benefits of belonging to the union were complying with the Dupuis family's wishes, banding together as French-Canadian Catholics in opposition to foreign international influences and helping one's colleagues by paying union dues that went to help the sick or needy amongst fellow employees. Unspoken benefits were likely belonging to a social group who organized fun activities outside of work, gaining positions of power and prestige within the store by extension of union positions, and also, using the union an alternate way to climb the store hierarchy by impressing those who worked with you.

Joining the Catholic unions had more significance for the Dupuis Frères workers than merely

congregating with other workers of the same religion. Also included in the package was joining their French-Canadian owners in an economic venture, and operating under the encouraging eye of management.[24] Le Duprex reminded its readers that it was because of the initiative and encouragement of Narcisse Dupuis, the owner and head of Dupuis Frères, that the employees agreed to form a union. The endorsement of the union by the store's owners was used as an incentive to join the organization. One union article in 1929 told readers that the executive of the union went to the store authorities to ask them whether they were still determined to protect the union. The owners replied that they wished everyone would become a part of the organization. The article, of course, praised the owners for this answer: "La réponse fut digne de la mentalité canadienne française et catholique de nos employeurs...quel beau, quel noble, quel digne geste de la part de ceux qui ont le capital en main".[25] How many international unions could say they formed under the explicit instructions of their employer? Thus rather than cut off the working class interests from those of the upper class owners, the Catholic and French Canadian union of Dupuis Frères further connected its members with the interests of the store's ownership. As one union article explained

> Des syndicats neutres sont en train d'envahir notre province en groupant notre jeunesse dans des organisations où il n'y est pas question de religion dans les assemblées...Ne nous endormons pas dans la même fausse sécurité, comme ont fait nos ancêtres et envisageons la sublime mission qui nous est réservée qui est celle de protéger et de défendre notre langue et notre religion et en ce faisant nous serons des apôtres laïques de ces deux patriotismes[26].

The message here was that a new attempt at conquest was being made by neutral unions in Quebec,

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[24]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Jan 1929), p. 4.

[25]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 10 (July 1929), p. 6.

[26]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 9 (June 1929), p. 4.

and that in order to protect not only Catholicism, but also the French language, workers had to become 'lay apostles' by joining Catholic unions. The Dupuis Frères union, then, was another way to preserve the faith and the French Canadian nation.

Even concessions to the union were privileges, not rights. In 1943, Albert Dupuis complied to a request by the union that the store close half an hour earlier, at 5:30, on Friday evenings during July and August. The president of the union's letter thanking Dupuis for granting this request is worth reproducing here

> C'est avec empressement que je vous redis encore une fois, un sincère merci, au nom du Conseil et de tous les membres du Syndicat Catholique et National des Employés de Magasin (SD) Inc., pour cette nouvelle faveur que vous daignez accorder à tout le personnel de fermer vos établissements à 5:30 heures, le vendredi soir durant les mois de juillet et août. Réellement, M. le Président, vous ne cessez de nous gâter par vos largesses à notre égard...C'est avec des applaudissements et des cris de joie par tout le magasin que la nouvelle a été accueillie le matin, lorsque M. Boucher a lu votre admirable lettre.[27]

Allowing the store to close at 5:30 was a 'favour' rather than a right, and Dupuis was 'spoiling' them by granting them this gift. The tone seems similar to a child thanking his or her parents for an extravagant birthday gift rather than an acknowledgement of Dupuis' concession. A veneer of gratitude and deference covered all communiques between employee and employer, but in the end, the noblesse oblige of the owners was expected in return for gratitude, hard work and fierce loyalty. The system functioned well if both parties held up their side of the unspoken bargain.

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[27]Le Duprex, Vol 12, No. 2 (Sept. 1944), p. 124.

Perhaps the most utilized and appreciated aspect of belonging to the union at Dupuis Frères was having access to the union benefit fund. The concept of communal assistance fit in well with the Catholic idea of charity and sharing the wealth. Employees began to write thank you notes to the union in 1929 and they were published in Le Duprex. Again, the notion of these benefits as charitable or voluntary rather than a right that was paid for was evident in these letters. In 1930 the union retained its own doctor, whose specialty was general surgery and gynaecology for the benefit of female employees, and reserved a bed in a Montreal hospital for its employees.[28] Union dues were collected and put towards a fund which helped sick employees and made a lump payment to the next of kin of union members who died. There were two classes of payment; for example, in 1927, those males who made more than $9 a week paid 20 cents per week into the fund, and all the rest paid 10 cents a week.[29] Correspondingly, all benefits were doubled for those paying 20 cents. Another method of fundraising mentioned in 1926 was holding euchre games.[30] The owners had an opportunity in 1929 to show their caring and generosity: when the benefit fund was empty and sick employees were still in need of assistance, the owners put enough money back in to enable it to function again.[31]

Besides material benefits, the union also offered wide-ranging opportunities to socialize with one's co-workers. Included in the union's social events were amateur talent shows, union balls at

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[28]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Nov. 1929), p. 21.

[29]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 6 (March 1927), p. 8.

[30]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct. 1926), p. 4.

[31]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 9 (June 1929), p. 4.

the Canadian Club, an annual festival at nearby Belmont Park, recreation evenings, educational speeches about sales strategies, annual trips to other areas in Quebec, assemblies once a month (which included a dance, prizes and entertainment), and union anniversaries. The organization also offered courses to women on fashion and cooking.[32]

The semi-annual union ball was held in February, and the elaborate annual dance was held in October. The owner of the Canadian Club, donated the location for the evening.[33] One of these soirées typically included a dance, bowling, card games and grand entertainment. Amongst the guests of honour were the Dupuis family, A.J. Dugal the vice-president, and on occasion other prominent members of the community such as judges and politicians. Dupuis would donate money at each ball to be raffled off as an attendance prize. The average attendance was usually around 200-300 people, however, this did not necessarily indicate the number who wished to attend. Tickets were purchased and spaces were limited, so workers had to have enough money for a space and get a ticket before they sold out. Although the celebration was theoretically for the workers, the owners took the prominent place in this type of celebration. These events served as an opportunity for employers and employees to reinforce their mutual respect and approval. Albert Dupuis, the president of the store, commonly announced significant donations to the general union operating fund during these parties.[34] The annual recreational evening at Belmont Park took place at the end of August after all the employees had returned from their vacations. The employees and

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[32]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 6 (June 1928), p. 10.

[33]Le Duprex, Vol. 8, No. 11 (Nov. 1936), p. 157.

[34]Le Duprex, Vol. 8, No. 6 (March/April 1936), p. 89.

owners both attended the event, and Belmont Park provided an amusement park with carousels, dance pavilions and live music. Le Duprex described the grand finale of the evening in 1935

> La soirée fut brillamment clôturée par un très beau feu d'artifice à la fin duquel le nom *Dupuis* se déploya en lettres flamboyantes. L'enthousiasme général connut alors son apogée et se manifesta par une salve nourrie d'applaudissements.[35]

The closing of the celebrations were therefore marked the highlight of the evening, as employees saluted the name Dupuis spelled out in fire. These types of events further solidified employees' allegiance to their place of employment, and it was never forgotten to whom they owed such lavish celebrations.

Albert Dupuis' investiture as a knight of St.-Grégoire-le-Grand[36] coincided with the union's 10th anniversary in 1930, and the union organized its anniversary banquet in his honour which entirely overshadowed the union's own celebrations in the Duprex coverage. The excitement and pride of the union was likely due to the fact that Dupuis had, according to a Cardinal's letter, received the award because he was "considéré dans son diocèse comme étant bon catholique et il s'occupe d'oeuvres sociales, surtout de celles qui concernent le bien des personnes salariées".[37] Albert Dupuis went further to say "'Pro Deo et Principe', telle est la devise des Chevaliers de St-Grégoire-le-Grand, laquelle je veux traduire ainsi ce soir: 'Pour Dieu et le Syndicat Catholique des

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[35]Le Duprex, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Oct. 1935), p. 51.

[36]This knighthood was instituted by Pope Gregory XVI in 1831, during insurrectional movements in Spain, Prussia, Portugal and Italy which were finally repressed by France and Austria. The knighthood was given to those men whose loyalty was proven and who worked for the cause of honesty and justice. Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 8 (May 1930), p. 99.

[37]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 8 (May 1930), p. 99.

employés Dupuis Frères'".[38] Again, the sacred mission of the store and its workers was highlighted. Dupuis then donated $1000 to the benefit fund of the union. Seven years later, the employees were also responsible for appealing to the Pope to give the St. Grégoire medal to A.J. Dugal and Albion Jetté, the head of the Clergy Department.[39] Prizes for attendance at union meetings were also frequently donated by the store. and a thank you note from the organizers of the evening to Albert Dupuis were always published in the Duprex.[40] For Saint Jean Baptiste day in 1929, and for every year after, the owners also donated a float for the union's use in the June parade.[41]

Union elections were held once a year, and the positions available were President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer. Only one woman was ever elected to any position, and that was Mlle. A. Valiquette who became the union's assistant secretary in 1928.[42] During the first decade of union election coverage in Le Duprex, there seemed to be a healthy interest and competition in the union elections. By the late 1930s, however, most if not all positions were won by acclamation, and the elections seemed to take on a lower profile with less coverage and interest on the page syndical. Coverage of the elections were an opportunity for the outgoing president to give his comments, thanks and assessment of the union's achievements and activities that year. The acknowledgements of those who supported the outgoing president and the year's

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[38]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 8 (May 1930), p. 100.

[39] Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jan. 1937), entire issue.

[40]Le Duprex, Vol. 10 No. 8 (Feb. 1940) p. 149.

[41]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 10 (July 1929), p. 3; Vol. 12, No. 8 (April 1945), p. 341.

[42]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Oct. 1935), p. 4.

social activities were given profuse coverage, while the assessment of achievements were absent[43]. It is impossible to know what contribution the Dupuis Frères union made to the Catholic union movement in general, but certainly no constitutional changes were attributed to it in the staff newspaper.

Cohesive Family

The psychological consequences of a family structure as the model for labour and owners was that the two were fused as a unit with common goals and loyalties. As in a traditional family at the time, those at Dupuis Frères assumed that each member had different amounts of power and different functions to perform, but in the end, the group worked to the benefit of the whole. Such an interpretation of capital and labour, promoted by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novum (1891) and encouraged by the Catholic union movement, was perfected in practice at Dupuis Frères. It was quite noticeable that employees wrote of Dupuis Frères in Le Duprex as a second home. The phrase "La grande famille Dupuis" is repeated innumerable times in speeches by bosses and employees, and in articles from Le Duprex. This theme is also played out in less obvious ways, so that the familial atmosphere is unmistakable.

Le Duprex called itself a "périodique de famille" that permitted employees to keep up with "les peines de l'un ou les joies de l'autre; il nous fait connaître les désirs de nos employeurs".[44] All types of anniversaries, births, deaths and illnesses of employees, managers and owners were

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[43]For example, Le Duprex, Vol 5, No. 3 (Dec. 1930), p. 7.

[44]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Jan. 1930), p. 47.

reported in each issue of Le Duprex, accompanied with a paragraph of sympathy, congratulations or thanks. These reports, set up somewhat in the format of classifieds, were about four or five pages in length, and were an important and popular feature in the paper. They enabled store members to keep up with news of their co-workers, and likely gave them a feeling of connectedness to the other thousand-plus employees in the store. When an employee left the store, often for marriage in the case of women, or retirement in the case of men, an article appeared wishing them well in their new surroundings. Certain employees over the years also wrote in to let the staff know something of their current situation, and how they missed Dupuis Frères' caring environment.[45] For example, upon his departure in 1930, Roland Chabot wrote from his retirement home in Florida that his eighteen years with Dupuis Frères were "les meilleures de ma vie".[46] This presented a picture of loyal employees that were with the store for long periods of time.

If there was a "first family" at the store it was Albert Dupuis and his wife and children. Upon his death in 1946, the president of the union wrote that Dupuis was a "chef chrétien, chevalier du Pape, qui avait toujours une haute idée de son rôle de père de la grande famille constituée par le personnel de son établissement".[47] Albert Dupuis and his family's personal lives often graced the pages of the paper. For example, when Albert Dupuis' daughter died in 1927, employees wrote in sympathy notes, and one even composed a poem, "A la douce mémoire de leur chère disparue",

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[45]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Dec 1929), p. 38; Vol. 4, No. 4 (Jan. 1930), p. 49; Vol. 4, No. 5 (Feb. 1930), p. 60; Vol.10, No. 11 (Oct. 1940), p. 249, Vol. 12, No. 8 (April 1945), p. 343.

[46]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Jan. 1930), p. 49.

[47]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 11 (Jan. 1946), p. 405.

dedicated to Dupuis' deceased daughter.[48] In addition, a Dupuis family vacation to Europe warranted an announcement, flowers were sent to the ship from the employees and upon his return, Albert Dupuis brought a Parisian souvenir plaque for each department head and one medal blessed by the pope for all the employees[49]. Upon returning from another Dupuis family vacation in 1931, an evening was organized to see their photographs and slides, and to hear them talk about their trip.[50] These types of events assumed and suggested a close relationship between Albert Dupuis and his workers.

Reminiscences of previous Dupuis heads of the store provoked stories of generosity of mythical proportions. Upon the death of Narcisse Dupuis, the president before Albert, in 1932, A.J. Dugal, the vice-president and general manager of the store provided a story of the man's charitable spirit.[51] He explained how a poor young girl wrote to the store asking them for a couple of empty boxes to help her move. The superintendent received the order to comply with her request, and Narcisse Dupuis added "cette pauvre femme manque peut-être de chauffage, envoyez-lui les caisses remplies de charbon." When she received the unexpected gift, the young girl cried "Oh! Que le bon Dieu est bon", to which the superintendent added "et M. Dupuis aussi". This kind of benevolent paternalism helped to bind the Dupuis family to their workers for so long.

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[48]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 8 (June 1927), p. 4.

[49]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Nov. 1927), p. 4; Vol. 3, No. 2 (Nov. 1928), p. 5; Vol. 3, No. 3 (Dec. 1928), p. 3.

[50]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Dec. 1931), p. 36.

[51]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 11 (Oct. 1932), p. 156.

Besides the members of the Dupuis family, one of the figureheads in the Dupuis Frères store was Monsieur A.J. Dugal. A.J. Dugal was the general director and Vice-President of the store for the entire period under investigation, and was patronized as a beloved figure by the employees. Similar to Albert Dupuis, his vacations were also chronicled in Le Duprex.[52] One of the reasons given for the breakdown of the paternalistic system which lead to the strike in 1952 was the resignation of A.J. Dugal and the hiring of another general manager more interested in scientific management strategies. A.J. Dugal's birthday, called "la fête du Saint-Dugal", was celebrated on November 22 by the entire store with speeches and cigars. Attendance was about 300 each year of mostly men, and the ritual began prior to 1926 when the first issue of Le Duprex was published. Songs were sometimes created for the event and published in Le Duprex. Below is an excerpt of a typical example

REFRAIN:
Ah! Ah! Ah! Oui vraiment
M. Dugal nous mène de l'avant.

C'est aujourd'hui la St-Dugal,
Patron de M. A.-J Dugal
Grand jour d'anniversaire
D'un Canadien, homme d'affaires.

C'est en l'an 1912
Chez Dupuis Frères, il vit le jour.
Un jeune homme plein d'ardeur
Donna son travail et son coeur.

Il est aussi très valeureux,
Acheta stock de banqueroute et de feu,
Almy, Lamy et Morin
Il vida leurs magasins.

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[52]Le Duprex, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Oct. 1935), p. 39.

Il est bon conférencier,
Récherché par les sociétés,
Le sujet qu'il préfère
Parler de Dupuis Frères.

Patriote, il en est un,
Tous les ans le 24 juin,
Il suit la grande procession
Avec quelques chefs de rayon

Les amis, ne faut pas oublier
Les fondateurs qui nous ont quittés,
Ils sont passés à l'histoire,
Gardons-les dans notre mémoire

Je profite de l'occasion,
Avec les amis, nous vous souhaitons
Bonheur, longue vie et santé
Et que dans 30 ans, nous puisons chanter...
Au refrain.[53]

Celebrations such as these helped to promote the family atmosphere of the store for members of all rankings. On A.J. Dugal's birthday, Charles Marchand was quoted in Le Duprex as saying "en voyant les directeurs de notre maison et les chefs de ses différents départements ainsi réunis, l'on ne pouvait s'empêcher de penser qu'en réalité, patrons et employés forment chez Dupuis une belle famille - une famille véritablement unie dans la joie comme dans la peine."[54]

It is interesting that A.J. Dugal is elevated to the status of a saint on this day; an example of the blurring between the commercial and the sacred discussed in the next chapter. On his birthday in 1935, the customary Duprex article said "tout comme on disait autrefois: 'Je vous verrai à la

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[53]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 12 (Nov. 1932), p. 190.

[54]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 12 (Nov. 1932), p. 176.

Toussaint', chez Dupuis, les employés du magasin et du Comptoir Postal ont pris l'habitude de dire: 'Je vous verrai à la saint Dugal'". The event even received some newspaper coverage, for example in 1938, La Patrie remarked on the lessons to be learned from this annual celebration

> [La Fête du Saint Dugal] démontre, d'abord, que pour atteindre de féconds résultats dans une grande entreprise, employeurs et employés doivent conjuguer harmonieusement leurs forces, sous la poussée d'une intelligente coopération. Tel est l'esprit qui règne chez Dupuis Frères: tous pour chacun, chacun pour tous, paraît être le mot d'ordre dans cette institution canadienne-française si prospère."[55]

The Dupuis Frères working environment was an example of how capital and labour could not only peacefully exist, but also support one another just like a perfect family.

To underscore the cohesiveness of the Dupuis organization, employees were also rewarded for remaining with the store. That employees remained with the store for long periods of time-sometimes lifetimes-added the necessary consistency to the family atmosphere, and was a source of pride for both employees and employers. Department heads and employees alike had biographical articles written about their lives on the occasion of a fifteenth, twentieth or twenty-fifth anniversary with the company. Also, Le Duprex would periodically publish the names of employees who had been with the company for ten years.[56] Further, material rewards were given to Dupuis employees that had worked at the store for a considerable number of years during store anniversary celebrations. At Dupuis Frères' sixtieth anniversary, all male employees received lighters and all

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[55]Le Patrie, November 26, 1938.

[56]For example, Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Dec. 1927), p. 5.

female employees received powder containers.[57] Those who had worked at the store for fifteen years were given an engraved plaque, and for twenty years of service, gifts of men's or women's watches were distributed.[58] Similarly, on the occasion of Dupuis Frères' seventieth anniversary, twenty year veterans of the store were given a medal of loyalty and a watch.[59] Perhaps the most effective way of highlighting and encouraging employee loyalty were the workers clubs created by Albert Dupuis.

The union was not the only organization within the store created by its owners. The largest club was L'Ordre Des Optimistes Dupuis (ODOD) on November 21, 1933.[60] ODOD's purpose was to counteract the effects of the Depression by rewarding optimism and enthusiasm of Dupuis employees, and it continued far beyond the challenging 1930s. The club had its own crest, and its membership reached in the hundreds. More exclusive was the Société des Immortels. This club was founded by Emile Boucher, the store's superintendent, and the membership numbers were not allowed to exceed twelve. The qualifications to be admitted were those of general excellence rather than any specific achievement.[61] By the time its membership reached twelve, the club had eleven men and one woman as members. Le Duprex wrote that Mlle Aurore Lepage's nomination to the Société des Immortels "rejaillit sur tout le personnel féminin de la maison" unlike the male

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[57]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 7 (Supplément Souvenir, April 1928), p. 9.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 9 (March 1938 "Supplément Souvenir"-70e Anniversaire) p. 171.

[60]Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 11 (June 1938), p. 238.

[61]Le Duprex, Vol. 8, No. 11 (Nov. 1936), p. 153; Vol. 8, No. 9 (Sept. 1936), p. 129.

nominations which made no mention of the other male employees.[62] This raised the possibility that her membership was a token acknowledgement of all the other female employees in the store.

In September 1944, Dupuis employees decided to form a group called "Le Club des Vingt-Cinq" for those employees who had spent twenty-five years with the company.[63] Many of the men who were able to join the club had formed the core of the union as past presidents and office holders since its foundation twenty- five years before. To be admitted to the Club, you not only had to have worked at Dupuis Frères for the requisite amount of time, but you were also required to have a sponsor who would speak on your behalf. The club had 49 members at its inception, and a large ceremony was held in October to induct them all into the group.[64] In typical Dupuis fashion, the luncheon party was packed with ceremony and presentations. A speech was made on behalf of each entrant, and the new ClubVingt-Cinq member received a diploma and a pin from Albert Dupuis to cement his or her membership. Thanks were given to Albert Dupuis for encouraging the foundation of the club, and for giving the "fête de famille" that day. Eugène Poitras, the president of the club spoke of employee devotion

> Croyez bien, M. Le président, que notre entier dévouement vous est acquis et que nos faibles efforts seront toujours tendus vers un seul but: le succès et la prospérité de la Maison à laquelle nous sommes heureux de nous identifier. [65]

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[62]Le Duprex, Vol. 8, No. 11 (Nov. 1936), p. 153.

[63]Le Duprex , Vol. 12, No. 6 (Sept. 1944), p. 251.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Le Duprex , Vol. 12 No. 7 (Jan. 1945), p. 294.

Next, A.J. Dugal spoke, and as usual he was the most expressive of the speakers. He referred to the diplomas as "une chose sacrée", and called the members of the club ambassadors who should lose no opportunity to come to the defence of the store on the front lines.[66] Albert Dupuis called the event "la fête de la constance, de la loyauté et de l'attachement."[67] He also gave the club members a paid day's holiday in recognition of their loyal services.

One of the most revered guests of honour at any Dupuis Frères celebration was Delphine Lepine, who had been with the store since 1882, and remained there for sixty-three years until his death in 1945.[68] His status at these events seemed to be on par with that of Albert Dupuis himself, and at them, Delphine Lepine was held up as a symbol of all that was good about Dupuis Frères. He was a loyal supporter of the store, and had an avid interest in the store's history. He periodically wrote articles for Le Duprex as an authority on the rise of the Dupuis empire, and its glorious existence These men and women who were employees of long standing were most valuable to the company for their mere presence implied that there was, as an editorial piece suggested, "une politique de justice et de traitement équitable poursuivie par la maison envers ses employés qui lui sont resté attachés si longtemps, malgré les sollicitations de l'extérieur". [69]

Leisure Activities

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[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 10 (Nov. 1945), p. 338.

[69]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 7 (Jan. 1945), p. 274.

Athletics played a large role in the social lives of many Dupuis Frères employees, and were common additions to firms practising welfare capitalism.[70] The first sport to be featured in Le Duprex was bowling, and indeed the "Ligue des Quilles" continued its popularity right up until 1946. The advantage of bowling was that all ages and abilities could participate in the sport and be relatively competitive.[71] Other sports over the years included hockey, baseball, tennis, golf. table tennis and skiing. Many of the employees at the management level figured prominently on teams, however, the participation of women was limited to bowling, tennis and skiing.

In 1927, all organized sports at the company were contained under the Association Athlétique Amateure Duprex (AAAD). The motto of the AAAD was "s'amuse bien qui s'amuse chez Dupuis".[72] Parties were held throughout the years to give out prizes to the bowling club or tennis club members, but neither was a consistent event. Day excursions were organized by the "Club de Ski Duprex" each year in which the employees visited several Quebec ski resorts in the Laurentiens on different dates.[73] Hockey, as the "sport national des canadiens-francais"[74] was given a place of honour in the AAAD. Funding of the hockey teams was a combination of Albert Dupuis'

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[70]See Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners p. 48; Sangster, Earning Respect p. 154; Zahavi, Workers Managers and Welfare Capitalism, pp. 25-26; Margaret E. McCallum, "Corporate Welfarism in Canada, 1919-1939" Canadian Historical Review 71 (1990), pp. 67-68; Robert Storey, "Unionization Versus Corporate Welfare: The 'Dofasco Way'" Labour/Le Travailleur 12 (Fall 1983), pp. 22-23.

[71]Lizabeth Cohen, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 179.

[72]Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 10 May 1938), p. 197.

[73]Le Duprex, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Dec. 1938), p. 39; Vol. 10, No. 8 (Feb. 1940), p. 165.

[74]Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 10 (May 1938), p. 190.

donation of money for season ice time, the union's donation of $200 to purchase uniforms and equipment, and private donations from employees totalling $150.[75] There were four teams in the "Ligue Dupuis"; Les Montagnards , Le Duprex, Les Volants and Le National.

By 1939, one of the yearly highlights was the sports banquet at the Saint-Laurent Arena where trophies and awards for all sports were passed out by members of the Dupuis family. A king and queen were elected, a hockey game was played between the managers of the mail order counter and the store, and various troupes composed of employees skated around the ice in a sort of amateur ice follies.[76] Snow White and the seven dwarfs, Julius Caesar and his legionnaires, and a huge group of about forty in a number called "Mascarade" were some of the numbers.[77] Lists of both companies and individuals who donated over one hundred prizes, and those employees who solicited donations, were placed at the back of the evening program.

Athletics were indeed a good investment for the Dupuis family. It provided them with another area where they could use their employees for advertising when they played league sports, and to encourage inter-firm competition and reaffirm the family of Dupuis Frères. By donating periodically to the sports program, the owners benefited with the good impression it left in the eyes of employees, and by implying that they were interested in some other aspect of their workers' lives besides their sales figures. The sponsorship by the owners and management followed in the

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[75]Ibid.

[76]Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 10 (May 1938), pp. 204-205.

[77]Ibid.

paternalistic tone used elsewhere in the rest of the store's functioning. During a bowling awards banquet, A.J. Dugal commented on sports banquets at Dupuis Frères; "vous savez vous amuser en famille; ce sont ces fêtes-la qui sont appréciées...quand on voit nos enfants si bien s'amuser cela nous fait plaisir".[78] On another occasion A.J. Dugal emphasized that "c'est une bonne chose pour vous et pour notre maison que vous preniez vos amusements dans notre milieu".[79] Sports teams gave the employers a certain amount of control over leisure time of their employees, and sent the message that they loved the atmosphere to the extent that they did not even want to leave. Sports teams were thought to teach hard work, camaraderie, and cooperation, and in the workplace, served as an integrator of the employees.[80] On the other hand, the Dupuis Frères sports teams, as an extension of work, would provide men with a legitimate reason to develop male comradery. Employees who participated in sports may have been happy for some time to socialize with an all male group that their wives would not contest, as time spent away from the family. This was perhaps an opportunity that did not present itself often in married family life, and which offered a different type of relationship than that developed in the work setting.

Another aspect of leisure time discussed in Le Duprex were vacations. One of the benefits of working for Dupuis Frères was that the company offered paid vacations to all of its employees who had worked there for six months or longer. This was a significant benefit in a time when

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[78]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 2 (August 1943), p. 105.

[79]Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 11 (June 1938), p. 230.

[80]Steven Riess, City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), p. 151; Cohen, Making a New Deal, pp. 176-177.

vacations were granted at the discretion of employers. The articles concerning vacations focussed on both the generosity of the owners and the opportunity to reacquaint oneself with the healthy delights of the province of Quebec. Le Duprex reminded readers what they could do each year to repay the owners for these vacations: "que l'on redouble de zèle afin que notre clientèle ne souffre pas de l'absence d'un grand nombre d'entre nous...cela sera un moyen de montrer notre appréciation aux directeurs de notre maison pour ces journées de congé".[81]

According to Le Duprex, the benefits of vacations were not only to get some rest, but also to rekindle the spirit. The advice given in an editorial was to "profitons sagement de nos vacances, pour refaire les forces et retremper l'esprit...connaissons mieux la campagne, nos cultivateurs, aimons notre pays et, surtout, revenons frais et dispos".[82] Vacations were also arbitrarily granted throughout the year as rewards for hard work or for attending some Dupuis related function.[83] Photographs of how workers spent each vacation season were submitted and published, lending what Joan Sangster has called a "family album approach" to the paper.[84]

On The Job: Selling at Dupuis Frères

> [P]our nous, ici chez Dupuis, le bonheur de vivre ne doit-il pas se trouver dans la vente? Plus on vend, plus l'on doit être heureux et

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[81]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 10 (July 1927), p. 3.

[82]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 9 (June 1932), p. 123.

[83]For example, Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No, 5 (Sept. 1937), p. 79; Vol. 12, No. 2 (Aug. 1943), p. 117. Also, a day of vacation was given to employees who attended the Dupuis section of the Saint-Jean Baptiste parade.

[84]Sangster, Earning Respect, p. 156.

> plus on serve bien les clients, plus on les rend heureux et plus la vie est belle pour chacun de nous. Ainsi donc, la vie doit être vécue dans la sphère ou Dieu nous a placés, et ne nous a-t-Il pas sur la sermon sur la montagne: "Heureux ceux qui croient car ils sont sauvés". Moi je dirai "Heureux ceux qui vendent , car ils travaillent au succès du plus grand magasin français de l'Empire britannique.[85]

Sales were inescapably connected to the success of the store, and by natural extension, the success of each individual worker both financially and professionally. Most issues of Le Duprex included a page called "Promotion des Ventes" which served to inform employees of upcoming sales, selling strategies, and new fashions and merchandise. To make selling more interesting, and more appealing, the management were always thinking of contests and incentives to allow employees to operate in an atmosphere of friendly competition. It seems that every time an issue of Le Duprex came out there was some new reason for a sale. A few sales themes were the Department Heads sale, the anniversary sale and the founder's week sale.[86] The first page of every Duprex issue was an address from the head of sales, and so the first thing the reader saw was either what sale was offered, how to sell merchandise or what staff contests were being held. When special sales were not offered, the management developed various short and long-term selling contests and incentives for the employees, most of which were team oriented.

Theme contests were popular with the Dupuis Frères management before the 1930s. Perhaps these types of contests were abandoned because they were ineffective or excessively labour intensive. One example of a theme contest was a horse race, where every department was a horse

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[85]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 11 (Aug. 1927), p. 5.

[86]Le Duprex, Vol 3, No, 9 (June 1929), p. 2; Vol. 4, No. 8 (May 1930), p. 94.

and the one with the highest sales would reach the finish line first.[87] The following year, management hosted a 'regatta' with the same idea as above but with boats rather than horses, and a smile contest with rewards going to the best smiles. [88] For the regatta, for example, a replica of eight boats in the race was placed in the ladies' cloakroom which marked each team's daily progress. The movement of the boats was determined by the percentage sales were augmented rather than by volume, so that departments that necessarily do less cash volume would have an opportunity to win as well. Prizes were awarded to each team, teams being comprised of a combination of seven or eight departments. First to third places received $175, $100 and $75 respectively, and the prize was to be divided equally amongst all the members. Each team was given a colour, and the members were required to wear a ribbon of their team colour at all times in order to be easily identified. The contest lasted for one month.[89]

Smaller and less elaborate contests were periodically held to remedy specific problem the sales managers had in their departments. In 1928, Charles Marchand wrote that employees were directing customers to the wrong departments too often and losing business for the store as a result.[90] A contest was therefore introduced where all personnel received a list of items, and had to identify the department, the department head and the floor. There was then a draw and a prize of $5 for the men and $5 for the women. On another occasion, a "Concours de la Semaine du Nettoyage" was

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[87]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 10 (July 1928), p. 2.

[88]Le Duprex , Vol. 2, No. 8 (May 1928), pp. 2-3.

[89]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 9 (June 1928), p. 2.

[90] Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Oct. 1928), p. 2.

held prior to the department head's sale so that the staff would clean up the store before the big day.[91] If your department won one of the top thirteen places in tidiness, you were eligible for a draw where you could win a watch or a sweater. [92] In the summer of 1935 the store began a more lengthy sales contest between individual salespersons by awarding the twelve highest salespeople the "feuille d'érable", described as "la plus haute décoration qui puisse être accordée dans notre magasin."[93] The winners' photographs were published in the Duprex.

Besides contests, the message in the "Promotion des Ventes" page was that being a good employee was enough of a reward in and of itself. In 1927, a letter appeared from a father to his two daughters who worked a Dupuis Frères. The letter was likely not written by a father, but by the director of Le Duprex and the sales manager of the store, Charles Marchand. The father asked if his daughters were obeying their superiors, and if they were economical in saving their salaries. He also outlined the characteristics of a good salesgirl: "elle est patiente, charitable et discrète tout le long du jour, obéissante à tous les instants et économe aussi bien l'avant-midi que l'après-midi".[94] The shift in paternal authority from father to employer is not difficult to make, and the fictitious father at home was undoubtedly giving the same advice as would the father at work, whether it be a saleswoman's manager or Albert Dupuis himself.

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[91]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 9 (June 1929), p. 13.

[92]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 9 (June 1929), p. 13.

[93]Le Duprex , Vol. 8, No. 8 (June/July 1936), p. 117.

[94]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan 1927), p. 2.

Selling was also a valuable occupation for the opportunity it gave you to please others. The art of pleasing was described as one of the things humans do without ego and for charitable ends.[95] The "Promotion des Ventes" page periodically included quotations attributed to luminaries of the past and the ten commandments of the salesperson. Some examples of quotations are "le travail est un plaisir, l'honneur est un devoir" and "servir et plaire doit être la principale devise d'un homme d'affaire". The theme of these "pensées" were usually hard work, deference, and satisfaction with what you have. Other more elaborate advice such as the "dix commandements du commis" appeared in Le Duprex prior to the 1940s, when management perhaps decided that this more encompassing advice suggested too much desire for control. Not only were suggestions given regarding work, but they often spilled over onto life outside the store. These columns were written by employees not listed on the editorial board of the paper, and each by a different person. Below is the first version of the ten commandments that appeared in 1927

1. Le matin tu te lèveras matinalement
2. Ton déjeuner tu prendras frugalement
3. Au magasin tu rentreras joyeusement
4. Au comptoir tu souriras amicalement
5. Pour ton patron tu agiras honnêtement
6. Le midi tu t'en iras dîner vivement
7. A l'ouvrage tu retourneras hâtivement
8. A ton client tu parleras modérément
9. Ta caisse tu compteras correctement
10. Au logis tu retourneras allègrement.[96]

Another volume contained fifty ways to improve oneself, and covered the physical, mental, moral,

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[95]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 9 (June 1930), p. 111.

[96]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan 1927), p. 2.

financial and social areas of life.[97] The advice included chewing your food well, getting lots of sunlight and air, avoiding temptation and inferior minds, and realizing that your family is your best company. Their aim seemed to be to encourage a healthy, conscientious and Christian minded workforce.

Consent and loyalty no doubt went both ways at Dupuis Frères. The owners had obligations to employees; to support and encourage the union, to interest themselves with employees lives off the job and to maintain "la grande famille Dupuis". Conversely, the employees had obligations to work without organized resistance and to publically praise their bosses. Where Albert Dupuis led they were expected to follow, for he knew best what the company needed to function and prosper. The welfare strategies described above were able to create a culture of consensus in the store that naturalized its internal hierarchy and gave the impression that everyone involved was benefiting from their participation. The union, although it had all the ingredients of a relatively benign company union, was able to carry incredible symbolic significance for employees. Rewards for hard work and loyalty were not only monetary, but carried over into the workers' private leisure time. All of these rewards may have been sufficient to maintain harmony between labour and capital at Dupuis Frères, however the next chapter discussed additional ideological incentives that powerfully cemented that relationship.

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[97]Le Duprex, Vol 1, No. 12 (Sept. 1927), p. 2.

CHAPTER II

Giving Meaning to the Job: Catholicism, French Canadian Nationalism and Women at Dupuis Frères

Dupuis Frères capitalized on a number of ideas present in Montreal society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and combined them with its own aims within the store to form a collective view of French Canadian identity that sustained Dupuis Frères' paternalistic management strategy. Three themes appear consistently throughout the twenty years of Le Duprex; Catholicism, French Canadian nationalism and a traditional gender hierarchy. These three ideologies merged to explain the Dupuis family's leadership over its own employees and to 'naturalize' hierarchies within the store. In general, words, concepts and definitions "help to mark the boundaries of permissible discourse, discourages the clarification of social alternatives, and makes it difficult for the dispossessed to locate the source of their unease, let alone remedy it".[1] Catholicism and nationalism were particularly instrumental in establishing broad commonalities amongst workers, managers and owners, and in reinforcing gender stratification amongst workers. The common French Catholic bond shared by all those involved in the store formed the cornerstone of the familial atmosphere at the store and were arguably the most important feature in creating consent for the relationships at Dupuis Frères. Working for God and nation were noble tasks, and their effect was to hold up goals that had larger consequences than the commercial success of the store alone.

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[1]T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities" 90 American Historical Review June 1990, p. 570.

The ideologies and ideas generated in Le Duprex are not limited to the more concrete ways of creating a loyal employee discussed in the last chapter. Le Duprex also delineated what was required to be a good Quebec citizen, aspects of which were supporting French Canadian nationalism, Catholicism, and traditional gender roles. These ideas surrounding French Canadian citizenship were not new or isolated, but rather they found already fertile ground in the minds of readers and contributors of Le Duprex. The owners and management were able to harness elements of French Canadian identity and use them to shape the needs, expectations and behaviour of their employees.

The Dupuis family most closely resembled a group in Montreal society which Michael Behiels calls the "traditional elites".[2] These men, according to Behiels, "continuously supported political-religious elites who defended the values implicit in a highly symbolic and ostentatious Quebec-centred nationalism, isolationism, clericalism, and belief in free-enterprise".[3] This socio-economic group also included a few large agricultural producers from the Quebec countryside. The traditional elites gave their wholehearted support to the religious elites, and both groups benefitted from the support of the other. The Dupuis family, however, did not possess all the characteristics Behiels attributes to the traditional elites; those that were inconsistent with the ownership of an urban commercial business were discarded by the Dupuis hierarchy. Behiels argues that the traditional elites interpreted their present only in terms of an idealized past, and were incapable of

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[2]Michael D. Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution: Liberalism Versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945-1960 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), pp. 15-16.

[3]Ibid.

assimilating urbanization and industrialization.[4] Clearly, the above characterization does not match those of the Dupuis Frères owners. Although it was true that the store placed great significance on the past, it also expressed a firm belief in progress, looking towards the future and modernization. Urban centres were a 'fait accompli', and the Dupuis' argued that French Canadians must succeed and prosper in business and commerce to compete with the English in the province. Rather than believing in a regressive idealization of the past, the owners of Dupuis Frères turned to liberalism and capitalism to rationalize their success.

Ferdinand Roy focuses on the liberalism of French Canadian businessmen at the turn of the century in his book Progrès, Harmonie, Liberté.[5] Two branches of historiography have emerged concerning French Canadian nationalism and its role in the success or failure of French Canadian businesses.[6] One contrasts English materialism and commercialism with the defensive "monolithisme idéologique" of French Canadians who championed the French language, Catholicism and rural life as a consequence of their feelings surrounding the Conquest. The other perspective argues that there was a high point of progressive liberalism in Quebec in the decades following Confederation. Roy found in her investigation of French Canadian business publications and organizations that French businessmen in Montreal championed private property and individualism above all else, and expressed opinions consistent with liberalism at the turn of the

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[4]Ibid., p. 88

[5]Ferdinand Roy, Progrès, Harmonie, Liberté: Le libéralisme des milieux d'affaires francophones à Montréal au tournant du siècle (Montreal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 1988).

[6]Ibid., p. 11.

century and beyond.[7] The Dupuis' were a part of that business generation, and participated in some of the organizations Roy investigated such as the Chambre de Commerce de Montréal. The Dupuis Frères owners certainly expressed a belief in progress, implicitly supported private property and the privilege that accompanied capitalism, while at the same time, made religion and nationalism the platform of their commercial appeal and management techniques.

The ties that bound the elites within the Dupuis Frères store were located primarily in two areas; their common social views, and their participation in associative life. A "Biographie" section was a regular feature throughout the years of Le Duprex, and it revealed a great deal about what types of men worked at the store. It was not representative of all employees because most of the subjects were male, with managerial or administrative positions. It can, however, tell us a little about how the elite that worked at Dupuis Frères were represented.

Every issue of Le Duprex featured a biography of a Dupuis Frères employee, and outlined his educational background, family life, work experience and hobbies. Most of the men grew up in large families in the Quebec countryside, were educated in seminaries and expressed pride in their French Canadian heritage. One employee even provided his family's genealogy and traced his ancestors back to 1730 in Longueuil, where his family had resided up until his move across the river to Montreal.[8] Many of the men had family members who worked at the store, and their wives were often former employees from the departments they worked in or managed. Another common theme

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[7]Ibid., pp. 269-271.

[8]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 6 (March 1927), p. 3.

was the men's involvement with the union and voluntary Catholic associations, most commonly, the Saint Jean Baptiste Society.

Voluntary associations played a large role in the lives of Dupuis Frères employees and owners. These associations provided their members with a sense of spiritual and social purpose, as well as a place to socialize and show their skills outside of work. Many of the Catholic associations such as the Saint Jean Baptiste Society, were also nationalist organizations, and their mix of religion and nationalism are often difficult if not impossible to separate. The Saint Jean Baptiste Society will be discussed in more depth below, however its members drew on a common past, language and religion expressed through rituals and mutual aid projects. The common background, nationality and religious affiliation of the Dupuis Frères elite bound them together more securely than simply being employed by the same company.

Catholicism

The Dupuis family was heralded by some as doing God's work in the commercial sphere, and the Dupuis took every advantage to highlight this in Le Duprex. The original patriarch of the Dupuis family was Nazaire who founded the store in 1868. Abbé Lambert delivered a speech on the occasion of the company's seventy fifth anniversary that drew an analogy between Nazaire and the great patriarchs of the Bible

> Rappelez-vous les nombreuses affinités qui, selon le texte du sermon, vous rattachent, vous fait ressembler à la maison d'Abraham et d'Issac. Le patriarche avait laissé la terre paternelle pour gagner le pays que Dieu devait lui montrer. Ainsi Nazaire Dupuis laissa-t-il Saint-Jaques l'Achigan pour venir en 1864, habiter l'est de Montréal, à cette époque presque désert, mais devenu depuis une terre de

> prédilection. A Abraham fut promise une postérité aussi nombreuse que les étoiles. Pour vous, essayez de compter vos clients si vous le pouvez. [9]

Abbé Lambert's comparison of Isaac and Abraham's holy mission to Nazaire Dupuis' commercial success is indicative of some of the clergy's view of the Dupuis' place in French Catholic society. Religion played no small part in the operation and spiritual life of the Dupuis Frères owners and employees who ran this 'national' institution. Dupuis Frères with its Catholic employees, its clergy department and its intense involvement with the Roman Catholic hierarchy and charities, gave the impression of being an organization working for and thus blessed by God.

The idea that a department store could have a sacred mission seems entirely at odds with twentieth century modern materialism and consumer culture. Quebec citizens that put their faith in the clergy are often associated with anti-modern rural idealization, and are placed in diametric opposition to liberals in Quebec who are identified with progress, individualism and modernity.[10] Sermons in Montreal Catholic churches at the turn of the twentieth century spoke out against the perils of urban consumer society and championed traditional values such as the importance of family.[11] At the same time, other aspects of the church worked in directions that supported urban industrial society, such as its stress on the importance of authority, large families, private property

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[9]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Supplément-Souvenir, Dupuis 75e Anniversaire, April 1943) p. 95.

[10]Hamelin and Gagnon, Histoire du Catholicisme Québécoise, p. 234-236; William F. Ryan, The Clergy and Economic Growth in Quebec, 1896-1914 (Quebec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1966) p. 205-206.

[11]John Dickenson and Brian Young, A Short History of Quebec, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), p. 238.

and anti-socialism.[12] Dupuis Frères' particular philosophy was a flexible blend of clerical-nationalist ideology and a liberal belief in material progress. Each aspect was instinctively employed where it fit in with the Dupuis store's best interests. The Dupuis family and Le Duprex professed a strong belief in the doctrine of Catholicism, revered religious figures, and advertised with great pride that their entire workforce was French Catholic. The newspaper also promoted self-fulfilment and immediate gratification with its appeals to employees to buy and sell as much as they were able and by stressing the importance of material goods and economic success.

The most conspicuous evidence of Dupuis Frères' connections to the clergy was its clergy department. The store had created a separate department to carry men's and women's religious clothing, jewelry and other necessities required for entry into or promotion in the Catholic hierarchy. This department was an obvious source of pride for the store. The service was frequently mentioned in Le Duprex, and thank you notes from clergy often appeared in the newspaper, praising the store's special services. It is unclear whether or not these notes were solicited, however, they clearly communicated clerical support for the store. If a salesperson of any department saw a member of the clergy in the store, she was instructed to politely detain them until a salesperson from the clergy department arrived to serve as his personal shopper throughout the store.[13] Letters from clergy as far away as Europe and the Middle East reached Dupuis Frères' mail order department, and their

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[12]Hamelin and Gagnon, Histoire du Catholicisme, p. 290.

[13]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 6 (March 1932), p. 84.

authors commended the store's large selection and dedication to the religious community.[14] Below is a typical example of a letter from a grateful member of the clergy living in St. Charles, Ontario in 1944

> Monsieur le Chevalier Jetté,
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> J'arrive de mon voyage de votre belle cité. Je m'empresse de m'acquitter de mon devoir de reconnaissance en venant vous remercier pour votre si franche hospitalité. Vous avez entrepris là un mode de réception "pout le clergé" qui se rencontre nulle part ailleurs.
>
> Tout de même vous me mettez dans une obligation morale de faire tous nos achats de "chez Dupuis Frères" exclusivement. Pour ma part, plus que jamais, veuillez m'en croire, votre Maison a encore monté dans mon estime, elle aura tout mon appui, mon encouragement et ma reconnaissance.[15]

The clergy who visited the store found the welcoming reception and special treatment gratifying, and as the letter above suggests, made shopping at the store a 'moral obligation'. The clergy also had their own private dining room on sixth floor, which, combined with their own department and personal shopping service, gave them their own physical space of honour in the minds of employees, employers and customers.

Further evidence of Dupuis Frères' specific religious affiliation was found on the Duprex covers depicting religious scenes during the Christmas and Easter seasons.[16] The Christmas window

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[14]Examples of this can be found in Le Duprex Vol. 6, No. 2 (Nov. 1931), p. 25 and Vol. 12, No. 8 (April 1945), p. 323.

[15]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Jan. 1944), p. 149.

[16]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 3, (Dec. 1926), cover; Vol. 5, No. 3 (Dec. 1930), cover; Vol. 10, No. 3 (Feb. 1939), cover; Vol. 12, No. 12 (April 1946), cover; Vol. 9, No. 7 (Dec. 1937), cover.

displays were always based on Christian themes, as one woman disclosed in a letter of approval she sent to the store. She wrote that "Père Noël grandit toujours même dans notre famille canadienne-française... il y a dans votre tableau quelque chose d'essentiellement catholique, quelque chose qui est vraiment nous..." signed "un client de l'est".[17] Dupuis Frères also had a choir composed of employees who sang on Sundays at St. Jacques church.[18] The company and its employees expressed their religious affiliation at every opportunity. It drew Catholic clientele to their establishment by mitigating the necessary drive for profit with a more caring and spiritual element.

The religious community's appreciation of the store was reciprocated not only in letters but also by its attendance and ministrations of the store during moments of celebration and crisis. Clergy representatives were present at store and union anniversaries, birthday celebrations and funerals. Special masses were frequently held in honour of some of these events. The clergy were responsible for a large number of sympathy letters when a high profile member of the Dupuis Frères family or staff died. The Church also gave Dupuis Frères permission to open its doors on a religious holiday. The day of the Immaculate Conception in December was a specifically Catholic holiday that all of the other big department stores did not observe, and thus it was to Dupuis Frères' financial interest to stay open on that day to compete with them. In order to maintain high in the clergy's esteem, or perhaps to assuage religious workers and customers, the store wrote every year to the Archbishop of Montreal to request his permission to open for the afternoon of the day of

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[17]Le Duprex, Vol 10, No. 3 (Feb. 1939), p. 53.

[18]Le Duprex, Vol. 10, No. 4 (May 1939), p. 65.

Immaculate Conception.[19] Another religious event which prompted them to close their doors until 1pm was the death of the Pope in 1939.[20]

In addition to publicizing news of the store and its employees' activities, Le Duprex also provided its readership with extensive news about the clergy of the province. The most dedicated and prolific member of the clergy department was Albion Jetté. In 1922, Jetté became the head of this department, and from that time on, coverage of religious news rose sharply with his contributions to Le Duprex.[21] Upon his promotion, Jetté began to send copies of Le Duprex to the clergy, and his articles dealt with the religious community's activities and promotions. This effort to include the clergy in the newspaper was a good public relations strategy on the part of Jetté, for the clergy's approval and patronage of the store could extend beyond their own ranks to include their parishioners or friends.

By the late 1930s, two to four pages of the paper were devoted to Catholic news entirely divorced from the practical running of the store and its employees.[22] Examples of newsworthy religious events in the paper were the appointment of a second Canadian cardinal, the 100th anniversary of the Sisters of Bon-Pasteur's arrival on Canadian soil, and the death of the Pope.[23]

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[19]Le Duprex, Vol. 10, No. 7 (Dec. 1939), p. 126.

[20]Le Duprex, Vol 10, No. 3 (Feb. 1939), p. 42.

[21]Le Duprex, Vol. 5, No. 5 (Feb. 1931), p. 54. Biography of Jetté.

[22]Around this time, the paper's length was typically about twelve to fifteen pages.

[23]Second Canadian Cardinal, Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 12 (April 1946), pp. 445-446; Sisters of Bon-Pasteur, Vol. 12, No. 7 (Jan. 1945), p. 283; Death of Pope, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Feb. 1939), p.

By 1946, religious news took up as many as eight pages out of a twenty page newspaper.[24] The most common topic was new religious appointments in Quebec, and Jetté rarely failed to connect the appointment to the store by writing that he was looking forward to supplying trousseaus to these "ami[s] de notre maison".[25] Religious men often graced the cover of the newspaper[26], and biographies were written upon the death of important local or international religious figures.[27] Often, in the space reserved for employee news, Jetté would publish sympathy letters addressed to clergy who had lost loved ones.[28] Clergy would then write Jetté, thanking him for some kind article in Le Duprex, and their letter would be published below the copy of Jetté's. Religious men seemed almost a part of the staff, since they made up such a large part of the content of the employee newspaper. By addressing material to the clergy within Le Duprex and mailing them free copies, Jetté found a very specific vehicle through which to communicate with his clientele.

French Canadian Nationalism

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[24]For example, Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 5 (July 1944) had 9 pages of religious news on pp. 205-213.

[25]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 9 (June 1930), cover; Vol. 10, No. 7 (Oct. 1939), p. 128-9.

[26]Le Duprex,Vol. 2, No. 12 (Sept. 1928) cover; Vol. 4, No. 8 (May 1930), cover; Vol. 4, No. 9 (June 1930), cover; Vol. 4, No. 12 (Sept. 1930), cover; Vol. 6, No. 10 (Sept. 1932), cover; Vol. 8, No. 1 (April 1935), cover; Vol. 8, No. 2 (July 1935), cover; Vol. 10, No. 4 (May 1939), cover; Vol 12, No. 12 (April 1946), cover.

[27] Le Duprex, Vol. 10 No. 3 (Feb. 1939), cover of death of Pope; Vol. 10, No. 4 (May 1939), cover of new pope.

[28]Examples of this are Le Duprex, Vol. 3. No. 9 (June 1929), p. 6; Vol. 10, No. 10 (June 1940), p. 210 and Vol 12 (Jan. 1946), No. 10, p. 394.

By the 1900s, Montreal was a thriving centre for industry and commerce, and many of those who lived outside the city were moving there to earn a decent living. In 1891, Montreal was home to 14.6 percent of Quebecers, and in 1931, 28.4 percent of Quebec citizens lived in Montreal.[29] Rural avocations could be supported and even preferred in theory, however, the city of Montreal was a reality that none could deny. As Peter Beyer explains, modernity would somehow have to be compatible with the French Canadian, and this amounted to being able to reconcile the characteristics of a French Canadian with those of a capitalist.[30] Although Beyer was referring to Catholic unionism, this idea is equally applicable to the Dupuis Frères store itself. Le Duprex told its readers to stop admiring the industrial achievements of "les étrangers" and to be proud of French accomplishments such as the Eiffel Tower, the Orly Airport and the fastest electric train in the world.[31] By conducting its business with the aim of advancing French Canadians while supporting and glorifying rural Quebec, and by making the business and opinions of the Quebec clergy a centrepiece in their operations, Dupuis Frères was certainly a successful experiment in producing something capitalist and modern without losing sight of its French Canadian essence.

For those rural French Canadians who found themselves in the city to make a living, the urban setting of Montreal could be attractive financially but not necessarily spiritually. The small parish system that operated prior to and during industrialization was not fully replicated and

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[29]Linteau, Histoire de Montréal, p. 160; Young, Short History of Quebec, p. 200.

[30]Peter Beyer, "The Evolution of Roman Catholicism in Quebec: A Luhmannian Neo-Functionalist Interpretation" in Sociological Studies in Roman Catholicism ed. Roger O'Toole (Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), p. 15.

[31]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 6 (March 1928), p. 4.

sustained in the city, and many French Canadians likely worried that the feeling of belonging and community would disappear there. The homogeneity of rural Quebec parishes facilitated the transmission of religious authority and ideals, while the family was able to exert a direct influence over its future generations.[32] The management philosophy of Dupuis Frères may have been comforting to parents of girls who were recruited to work there by their clergy from the smaller towns and villages in the province.[33] As one female employee wrote in an article in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the store in 1928, "entre tes murs plusieurs fois métamorphosés vit une population qui à elle seule formerait une paroisse de campagne".[34] The family, faith and nation credo upon which the store operated may have been more familiar than the ideas in other job environments available in Montreal since Dupuis Frères attempted to foster a community of support and values with similarities to those back home. The store encouraged a respect for religious authority, a pride in one's French heritage and an adherence to a patriarchal structure. Respect for French Canadians was especially stressed through holidays, civic involvement and a championing of the French language.

The French Canadian nation was celebrated by the store and its employees in a number of different ways. The largest annual celebration for Dupuis Frères that did not pertain to the store was

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[32]Hamelin and Gagnon, Histiore du Catholicisme, pp.29-30; 49-40.

[33]Sweeney, Guide to the History and Records of Selected Montreal Businesses, p. 101. The author wrote "L'Eglise jouait un rôle important dans le recrutement du personnel, et plus spécifiquement du personnel féminin, des curés de campagne envoyant des jeunes filles à la ville munies de lettres d'introduction."

[34]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 6 (May 1928), p. 3.

the Saint Jean Baptiste parade on 24 June. La Fête de la Saint-Jean celebrated the birth of the patron saint of French Canada, Saint Jean Baptiste. The parade was not only a religious celebration, but was also a reminder of historical events that defined Quebec society and an expression of nationalistic sentiments that had grown out of those events.[35] The day brought together French Canadians from all class backgrounds to participate in a common ritual. It is no surprise that Dupuis Frères vigorously participated in the parade, since the French Canadian and Catholic composition of their workforce made up a large portion of their commercial appeal. The parade was widely publicized in Le Duprex, and employees were actively encouraged to attend.[36] Dupuis Frères had a float in the parade each year, and the union entered its members names in a cash draw if they attended the event.[37] In the first call for coverage of this Quebec holiday, Charles Renaud, an assistant editor wrote in 1927

> A l'occasion de la St-Jean-Baptiste, dans les gazettes gonflées on parlera beaucoup de patriotisme, sensément et autrement. Pourquoi n'en pas dire un mot dans le DUPREX?...Il faut aimer et SERVIR son pays et sa race tous les jours, en paroles et en oeuvres. Comment servir les siens? Pour les employés d'une grande institution canadienne-française comme le nôtre, la réponse est facile. Servir dans le domaine du commerce, travailler à la prospérité de la maison qui nous emploie et assurer ainsi dans une large mesure la survivance économique des nôtres. Avec notre foi, notre langue et nos traditions nous devons aussi conserver et fortifier nos positions économiques.[38]

The parade represented a great deal to the French Canadian population, and offered a chance

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[35]Donald Boisvert, "Religion and Nationalism in Quebec: The Saint-Jean-Baptiste Celebrations in Sociological Perspective", Ph.D. University of Ottawa", 1990.

[36]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 8 (May 1930), p. 103

[37]Le Duprex, Vol. 3, No. 10 (July 1929), p. 8 and Vol. 8, No. 2 (July 1935), p. 27.

[38]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 9 (June 1927), p. 7.

to publicly demonstrate pride in their French heritage. As the above quotation suggests, Dupuis Frères believed it belonged to a portion of the French Canadian population that was contributing to the group's success in the economic sphere. Each year, Dupuis Frères purchased a float and decorated it thematically for the St. Jean Baptiste parade. The male owners, administration and employees dressed up in their top hats and tails for the parade as "brave patriots",[39] while a handful of female employees participated in costume on the float. As a reward, the store gave a holiday to all employees who attended the parade upon the request of the president of the St. Jean Baptiste Society.[40]

Other civic associations captured the attention and time of Dupuis Frères employers. A cause that was important to Albert Dupuis was the Societé Du Bien Etre Jeunesse, which helped young people financially, socially and spiritually, and L'Institut des Sourds-Muettes, a division of Bien Etre, which concerned themselves with disabled girls being raised by nuns in orphanages. Dupuis family members and administrators of Dupuis Frères were on the executive of both organizations over the years.[41] The most publicised event affiliated with the Institut des Sourds-Muettes was an annual Christmas party with food, drinks and presents in the store.[42] The large tree in the store's foyer was decorated by children from Institut des Sourds-Muettes as the Dupuis

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[39]Le Duprex, Vol. 8, No. 8 (June 1936), p. 120.

[40]Le Duprex Vol. 12, No. 2 (July 1943), p. 117; Vol 12, No. 5 (July 1944), p. 223.

[41]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 5 (Feb. 1930), p. 67; Vol. 8, No. 11 (Nov. 1936), p. 167; Vol. 10, No. 8 (Feb. 1940), p. 159.

[42]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Dec. 1929), p. 40; Vol. 5, No. 4 (Jan. 1931), p. 41; Vol. 9, No. 8 (Jan. 1938), p. 121.

family, friends and upper management looked on. Photographs of the event were published in Le Duprex, and communicated their employers great generosity.

The Dupuis' civic activity extended beyond religious and charitable causes. The store presented thousands of prizes called "Prix de Langue Française" to promote the French language prior to the first Duprex issue. The prizes were gold medals awarded province-wide to high school students who excelled in the French language each year.[43] The paper never disclosed how many prizes were awarded annually, however the recipients were sometimes the children of Dupuis Frère employees.[44] A potential benefit for the store was that these medals may have given young people the impression that the store was interested in their lives and their successes, and could have influenced shopping patterns or job decisions in the future. The company's concern for the French language was not always limited to Quebec. Albert Dupuis and his employees made generous contributions to a French Acadian newspaper in Moncton, and received grateful thank you letters from the Archbishop of that area.[45]

Dupuis Frères was often called a national institution by friends and newspapers, and this was earnestly perpetuated in Le Duprex. In 1928, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the store, Charles Renaud the sales manager, wrote a brief history of Dupuis Frères in Le Duprex. The

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[43]Le Duprex Vol. 10, No. 10 (August 1940), p. 219.

[44]For example, Le Duprex, Vol 6, No. 9 (June 1932), p. 133 and Vol. 10, No. 10 (August 1940), p. 219.

[45]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 2 (August 1943), p. 124 The name of the newspaper was not disclosed.

opening of Renaud's article says

> Faire l'historique même abrégé de la maison Dupuis Frères, c'est écrire l'une des pages plus fécondes du Canada français dans le commerce. Le nom Dupuis s'identifie avec notre progrès commercial et notre survivance économique. L'histoire de ces soixante années, c'est la glorification du travail, de l'énergie, de la ténacité, l'ascension constante et admirable du bas de l'échelle vers les sommets; une démonstration magnifique de ce que peuvent faire les Canadiens français en affaires.[46]

The combination of being both successful in commerce and French Canadian were of great importance to the administrators and workers at Dupuis Frères. The very possibility that a French Canadian could be successful economically was a disputed idea for much of the twentieth century in Quebec.[47] The Dupuis store held itself up as a vehicle for 'rattrapage', or catching up with the English in the area of economics.[48] The ascendancy of French Canadians in the Montreal economy was utilized as a sales incentive on big retail days at the store. An editorial preceding an anniversary sale reminded its readers that "il est le temps plus que jamais de concevoir l'importance d'un réveil complet de notre race dans notre province et dans notre ville"[49].

French Canadian nationalism was used inside the store for more specific reasons. The emphasis on group rather than individual competition served to mobilize all parts of the organization towards a claimed collective interest; the success of the French in Quebec. As an article

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[46]Le Duprex, "1868-1928, 60 ans de Progrès" Vol. 2, No. 6 (March 1928), p. 5.

[47]Claude Couture, Le Mythe de la Modernisation du Québec: Des Années 1930 à la Révolution Tranquille (Montreal: Éditions du Méridien, 1991) pp. 15-16, pp. 20-21.

[48]Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, Quebec, A History, 1867-1929. Trans. Robert Chodos (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1983) p. 265.

[49]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Dec. 1929), p. 31.

commanded in Le Duprex in 1932

> Achetez chez Dupuis:
> C'est une question de logique
> C'est une question d'intérêt personnel
> C'est une question d'intérêt mutuel
> C'est une question d'intérêt national.[50]

This blending of individual and collective interests was useful in defining what work at Dupuis Frères signified for the French Canadian identity. Dupuis Frères' existence in an English dominated market was always framed in the language of battle. One editorial called "La Foi" said that just as faith in God is necessary to religion, so is faith in the sale necessary to material success.

> *La Foi* qui s'appuie sur l'éxperience et la connaissance de notre marchandise est invincible. Chaque jour est pour nous, vendeurs et vendeuses, un jour de bataille: c'est la foi en notre marchandise et notre organisation qui nous mènera à la victoire. Armée de cette foi l'on ne s'avoue jamais vaincus...*cette foi dans la vente* est la pierre fondamentale sur laquelle repose toute notre organisation et qui nous conduira personnellement au succès, tout en contribuant au progrès d'une maison qui fait aujourd'hui l'orgueil de la race canadienne-française.[51]

Trying to sell as much as they could was called "notre lutte incessante", and the battle was fought with the cash registers.[52] During celebrations held in honour of the store or one of its employees, variations on this theme were repeated in speeches and reproduced in Le Duprex.

As could be expected, Dupuis Frères supported the nationalist achat chez nous campaign

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[50]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 5 (Feb. 1932), p. 65.

[51]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 5 (Feb. 1927), p. 5.

[52]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 5 (Feb. 1930), p. 59-60.

throughout the 1930s and early 40s. The decade of the 1930s was especially turbulent for many countries and Quebec was no exception. Unemployment rose from 7.7% to 19.3% between 1929 and 1931, and along with the massive economic downturn, came cries from French Quebec businesses for French Canadians to protect their own.[53] The Achat chez nous movement arose as a reaction to the economic crash in the 1930s, and explained French Canadian failure by pointing to the "unscrupulous business competition of foreigners, especially Jews; and especially against the Jewish merchant scapegoat".[54] It was during these years that the most frequent and serious appeals to buy French Canadian products from a French Canadian store appeared in Le Duprex. The importance of commercial loyalty to the French Canadian race, however appeared in the paper's third issue in 1926.[55] Le Duprex started a "Coin Aux Questions" drawn from excerpts from a suggestion box inside the store. One of the questions was "Pourquoi le maison Dupuis Frères (maison canadienne française) vend-elle des pantoufles "Made in Germany"-pourquoi?"[56] In the next issue, an editorial titled "Trois points Capitaux" outlined the three most important rules of commerce.[57] First, the client is king of the marketplace; second, one must buy from a serious store; and third, one must buy from a French Christian store. The article goes on to say that the store must be Christian in personnel and functioning, for "ne faut-il pas suivre son argent jusque dans ses

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[53]Jacques Langlais and David Rome, Jews and French Quebecers: Two Hundred Years of Shared History, trans. Barbara Young (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1991), p. 88.

[54]Michael Oliver, The Passionate Debate, The Social and Political Ideas of Quebec Nationalism, 1920-1945 (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1991), pp. 158-159.

[55]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Dec. 1926), p. 10.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan. 1927), p. 4.

conséquences?"[58] It is explained that if one's money goes to an unbeliever, it becomes an arm that turns against one's own kind, whereas if it is given to those who have the same faith and blood as you, it is encouraging only good. The piece was authored by the Diocesan director of Social Works.

By 1927, articles began to appear that were more directly aimed at non-French rather than non-Catholics or Christians. Charles Renaud, a mail order employee (later the general manager of sales) wrote an article designed to get employees back into the work mind set after their summer vacations in September 1927. Renaud urged Dupuis Frères employees be get serious and strive to work hard at their jobs that fall

> Dans un pays comme le nôtre, submergé par l'immigration, encerclé par la finance américaine, anglaise ou juive, nous n'avons pas le droit d'être quelconques, médiocres, inférieurs, et de nous résigner à demeurer perpétuellement des scieurs de bois et des porteurs d'eau, des serviteurs obséquieux et craintifs. Dans ce Canada découvert, colonisé et évangélisé par les nôtres, nous avons l'impérieux devosupérieurs en distinction , en savoir, en valeur.[59]

Renaud stressed with very strong language that French Canadians needed to be on guard against other ethnic groups who were surpassing and perhaps sabotaging French achievements. The use of French Canadian stereotypes of submission and obedience were undoubtedly designed to encourage employees to combat them through hard work. Working for a French Canadian firm, provided workers at Dupuis Frères with an opportunity to prove that French Canadians could be both modern and successful.

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[58]Ibid.

[59]Le Duprex Vol. 2 No. 12 (Sept. 1927), p. 9.

Once the effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s had set in, almost every editorial in 1931 was devoted to achat chez nous opinion pieces. The first to appear that year was titled "Jupiter et les Canadiens-français", and it described the god Jupiter gathering four representatives of each race; the "peau-rouge", "le nègre", "le chinois" and "le blanc". Jupiter asked each race if they wished to change anything about themselves. The first three declined to change themselves, but wished to change things about another race's physical characteristics. Finally, when the white man, who happened to be French Canadian, was asked what he wished to change about his race, he replied "j'aimerais pouvoir me faire comprendre de mes compatriotes, leur dire que pour surmonter la présente crise et devenir plus fort chez moi, il faut comprendre plus que jamais l'importance de la coopération Canadienne-Française dans le commerce, la finance et l'industrie."[60] Other editorials contained the same essential message, and mixed the purchase of items from Dupuis Frères with racial allegiance.[61] To show some restraint in tough economic times was expected, said one article, but "les circonstances obligent de pratiquer l'économie et la restriction il est du devoir de tout Canadien français sérieux de réaliser plus que jamais qu'il faut savoir dépenser son argent parmi les siens."[62] What little money you were spending, should be spent supporting your own culture and people.

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[60]Le Duprex Vol. 6 No. 2 (Nov. 1931), p. 19. This was the only editorial or article that was repeated for emphasis, and appeared again in 1936, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Nov. 1936), p. 154, for those who missed the first one.

[61]Examples of editorials with this theme are Le Duprex, Vol. 6 No. 5 (Feb. 1932), p. 59, Vol. 6 No. 7 (April 1932), p. 91; Vol. 6, No. 12 (Nov. 1932), p. 175; Vol. 9 No. 6 (Nov. 1937), p. 67; Vol. 9 No. 8 (Jan. 1938), p. 123.

[62]Le Duprex ,Vol. 6, No. 6 (March 1932), p. 75.

Considering that Dupuis Frères' French Canadian identity was so important to its image, one issue which particularly bothered the company over the years was the rumour that it was really owned by "les étrangers" posing falsely as French Canadians. This caused the owners and management considerable distress for obvious reasons. The first of these rumours appeared in 1929 in the form of a letter from the Librarie d'Action Canadienne Française.[63] The store's response to M. Lévesque, the president of this organization, was published in Le Duprex. The letter, written by A.J. Dugal the general director and vice president, said that this was not the first time the store had been the subject of such rumours, and blamed them on the disbelief of some people that a successful business could be run by French Canadians.[64] A.J. Dugal said those who were propagating this rumour were only trying to employ a divide and conquer strategy, and were thus traitors to the race. He explained in great detail the stock structure and named the company's directors, all of who were all French Canadian.[65] A reference to the same ownership rumours appeared again in an editorial in 1930. "On veut faire croire aux nôtres," the author wrote, "que Dupuis n'est plus Français, c'est Dupuinsky ou Dupuiston, que notre direction est sous une administration étrangère."[66] The editorial then suggested that since all those who worked in the store were French Canadian, not Jewish or English, they should fight to dispel these rumours that harm their employers, and thus their jobs and their race.

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[63]Le Duprex Vol. 3, No. 5 (Feb. 1929), p. 9.

[64]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 6 (March 1930), p. 71

[65]Ibid.

[66]Le Duprex Vol. 4, No. 6 (March 1931), p. 71.

Language also occupied the concerns of the employers, employees and customers within the store. A joke submitted by an employee and published in Le Duprex referred to the unwillingness and inability of English Montrealers to speak French

> "Parlez-vous français?
> I beg your pardon?
> Parlez-vous français?
> I'm sorry I can't understand.
> Do you talk French?
> Oh yes, certainly![67]

Another employee took language very seriously, and submitted complaints to the suggestion box when she felt an advertisement or a memo was not written in proper French. This employee signed her letters "une puriste", and was offended by any anglicisms that were used either by the store employees in their interaction with customers, or by the store's advertising department. The managers of the store insisted on the use of proper French, but also insisted their employees be conversant in English so that the store would not alienate a more diverse clientele. This became a problem when employees used English with French customers. On one occasion, a French customer wrote to the store complaining that his bill had been written up in English a number of times.[68] Mr. Chabot, the store's Superintendent, replied by saying that writing bills in English for French customers was a "détestable et anti-patriotique habitude" and should be reprimanded and stopped. Writing a French bill for an English customer may have been bad business, however, writing an English bill for a French customer in the 'largest French department store in North America' was "tantamount to traitorous".

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[67]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Dec. 1927), p. 6.

[68]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Nov. 1929), p. 18

As much as the store continuously expressed pride in French Canada, there was no doubt that it saw Quebec's population as inexorably linked to the rest of Canada. Dupuis Frères' nationalism expressed the cultural and economic rather than a political supremacy of French Canadians. In 1927, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of Confederation, an article said

> Nous les jeunes qui n'avons connu q'un Canada uni en une seule nation et un seul Dominion pouvons difficilement imaginer toutes les luttes, les batailles oratoires, les persuasions, les concessions, les promesses, les sacrifices qui furent nécessaires afin d'arriver au but de l'union de toutes les provinces. LE DUPREX est fier de la position occupée par Québec dans la confédération canadienne.[69]

The article expressed pride in a united Canada, and reminded its readers of the great men who made the union of Canada possible.

The only other displays of patriotism came during Canada's involvement in the Second World War. Many Dupuis employees fought in the war and regularly communicated with the store while overseas. Often they would request that other employees write to them about news at the store in their letters home. When a male employee went into service, the store gave him a gift of a cigar box and an undisclosed sum of money.[70] In 1945, the store sent 1600 cigarettes and a five dollar post-office voucher to all Dupuis Frères employees overseas who had kept them informed of their locations.[71] The company remained loyal and supportive of their employees who went to war, and believed in the sacrifice these men were making for all of Canada.

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[69]Le Duprex, Vol. 1, No. 10 (July 1927), p. 3.

[70]Le Duprex, Vol. 10 No. 12 (Dec. 1940), p. 281.

[71]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 8 (April 1945), p. 226.

Not only did the store support its former employees in the service, but it also assisted locally in the general war effort. Dupuis Frères was involved in promoting Red Cross blood drives and fundraising campaigns.[72] Le Duprex provided significant advertising space for the Red Cross' various projects, and encouraged its readership to participate.[73] Le Duprex also contained articles promoting the standard war rationing of products such as nylons and rubber[74] and the purchase of ration booklets.[75] The store participated in Victory Loan campaigns whose goal was to raise funds by encouraging people to purchase victory bonds. Dupuis Frères donated a float for each Victory Loan parade, and decorated its storefront and window displays with patriotic themes. The store's campaign managed to reach 128 per cent of its goal in 1943, and continued to participate in the Victory Loan campaigns by donating floats, window display space and free advertising until the end of the war.[76] The store's support remained consistent before and after the controversial introduction of Bill 80 which allowed the government to conscript Quebec citizens into the war.[77] Bill 80 resulted in anger and riots in Quebec, but Dupuis Frères continued to support the war effort and praise its employees overseas by saying after the was had finished "merci à vous les gars, qui nous apportez la Victoire...vous venez d'écrire l'une des pages les plus glorieuses de notre histoire...nous

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[72]Le Duprex, Vol 12, No. 1 (April 1943), p. 13; Vol 12, No. 4 (April 1944), p. 191.

[73]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 1 (April 1943), p. 13.

[74]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 1 (April 1943), p. 11; Vol 12, No. 4 (April 1944), pp. 191,194.

[75]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 1 (April 1943), pp 9, 13; Vol. 12, No. 3 (Jan 1944), pp. 145-46.

[76]Le Duprex, Vol 12, No. 1(April 1943), p. 150 and Vol. 12, No. 7 (Jan 1945), p. 229.

[77]For an in depth look at the conscription issue in Quebec, see J.L. Granastein and J.M. Hitsman, Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977) Chapter 5, "Towards the Plebiscite and Bill 80", pp. 133-184.

nous en souviendrons!"[78]

Women in Le Duprex

Catholicism and French Canadian nationalism helped to support a gender hierarchy within the store that kept women in lower positions and enabled men to function in dominant roles. Dupuis Frères' employees pool was not overwhelmingly female, however, it seems that there were few women in positions of power. Whether in the biography section, the announcement of the union officers' nominations and election results, the authorship of the large majority of the articles in Le Duprex, or the sports section, women did not appear unless the title of the section or sub-section included the word "féminine". The norm was male experience and opinion, and women were marginalized into small areas as a result of others' expectations, and likely in many cases, their own expectations.

The contributions to Le Duprex were overwhelmingly male. The female workers from the outset of the paper were aware of this, and initially tried to bring a balance to the content. A woman writer first appeared in April 1927 with an article called "Féminisme". She complained that "depuis que ce journal existe on n'y a pas lu un mot uniquement consacré à notre sexe, c'est peu galant, je dirais même, ce n'est pas galant du tout!"[79] There was, therefore a definite recognition by some women that the female employees could and should participate in their employee newspaper. What type of participation, however, was clearly defined by the women themselves. Apart from an initial

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[78]Le Duprex, Vol. 12, No. 9 (July 1945), p. 347.

[79]Le Duprex Vol. 1, No. 7 (April 1927), p. 6.

flurry of articles and letters that argued for women writers on the grounds of equality, women's contributions to Le Duprex consisted of poetry, news of their coworkers, and articles on developing the qualities and skills necessary for marriage and motherhood.

Charles Renaud, the editor of Le Duprex, referred to the April article "Féminisme" in October 1927 when he summarized the achievements of the newspaper in its first year of existence. Addressing women specifically, Renaud wrote "Mettez-y de vous mêmes, de vos charmes, de vos rêves, de vos aspirations, de votre légèreté, enfin féminisez ou efféminez Le Duprex...mesdemoiselles, prenez vos stylographes et couchez sur le papier virginal vos pensées frileuses et vos revendications."[80] This invitation to write for the newspaper was generally well received by the female employees who had asked for a chance to air their opinions. Granting them space to print their contributions, however, required the creation of a separate section of the paper in order to segregate the women from the rest of the "news" items.

A "Page Féminine" was thus created in Le Duprex and appeared on the second last page of each issue. The first page féminine surfaced in November 1927, and it consisted of one article written by "Cardeuse" from the Mail Order counter.[81] First, Cardeuse responded to Charles Renaud's characterization of what women writers should bring to Le Duprex. She took offense to his suggestion that all women were concerned with love, romance, beauty and dreams, and argued that women were intelligent and entirely capable of reasoned reporting. "Cardeuse" also had some

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[80]Le Duprex Vol. 2, No. 1 (Oct 1927), p. 5.

[81]Le Duprex Vol. 2, No. 2 (Nov. 1927), p. 8.

comments to make about Benito Mussolini, whom she had greatly admired until recently, when she read the following statement he made about women: "il est évident que la délicatesse de leur sexe les met dans un état d'infériorité physique qui engendre presque toujours une certaine infériorité morale."[82] Cardeuse was incensed at what she saw as an insulting and untrue statement and expounded on why she believed women's morality was not inferior to men's.

Despite these protestations against Charles Renaud's expectations of women writers, the "Page Féminine", by January 1928, was filled with poems about love, the two in that issue called "Toujours à Toi" and "Sans Vous". [83] The same Cardeuse who was arguing for women's capabilities on equal footing with men's in the area of reason and judgement, wrote her next article on preparing to be a good wife and mother and the art of self sacrifice.[84] Were these the areas Cardeuse earlier referred to which logic could be applied? The same type of poetry and articles based on maternal feminism continued, mostly under pseudonyms, throughout the decades. Perhaps the mere action of submitting work to the paper under the credit of one's own name was not feminine, in that it sought personal recognition. Whatever the reason, most of the women who wrote in Le Duprex, following Cardeuse, did so under pseudonyms.

One article written by a male employee caused a great deal of prolonged controversy amongst the regular female contributors to Le Duprex. The article outlined the frivolous nature of

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[82]Ibid.

[83]Le Duprex Vol 2, No. 4 (Jan. 1928) , p. 8.

[84]Le Duprex Vol.2, No. 8 (May 1928), p. 6.

women's conversations, their focus on their love lives, clothing, teas and dances.[85] It seemed that Jean Bernard, the author of the article, had a reputation as a playboy, and most of the women who responded to him were quite flirtatious. The women's responses defended women's gossip as different in content from men's, but not different in form. One woman wrote that men are not completely immune from the label of gossip, and in fact, "politique ou homme, bourse ou théâtre, le sujet diffère un peu, le résultat aussi, mais c'est quand même discussion ou jasette".[86] Other women found men equally as insular, chatting away over their cigars and cigarettes and essentially ignoring women when they walked together in groups on the street. Their conversation is perhaps not about love, but about some "charmante conquête".[87] Men's toiletry was also as time consuming as women's, with "poudre et Cold cream,...une bonne couche de brillantine, un peu de vinaigre de toilette, un beau mouchoir en crêpe de chine tout imbibé d'huile de rose et ...un rouleau de "Life-Saver" pour rendre l'haleine plus pure **en apparence**."[88] Some women were a bit more harsh in their responses. One letter called Jean Bernard impudent, and another thought he was rude.[89] Most of the letters, however, were in a friendly but combative vein, referring to men as their 'lords and masters' in a sarcastic tone.

After the Jean Bernard controversy, various articles appeared about the differences between

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[85]Le Duprex Vol. 3, No. 3 (Dec. 1928), p. 8.

[86]Le Duprex Vol. 3, No. 6 (March 1928), p. 9.

[87] Ibid.

[88]Le Duprex Vol. 3, No. 6 (March 1928), p.10. Emphasis in original.

[89]Ibid.

men and women; whether one sex was morally, intellectually or otherwise superior or inferior to the other. Finally, the editor wrote asking women to participate in the paper, but added that it was not necessary to engage in a war about the stronger sex. He wrote, "Mesdemoiselles, mettez un peu de féminin dans votre revue".[90] Obviously it was not feminine to focus on or argue that women are superior or even equal to men, and the women of the store were given the responsibility for bringing up the issue in the first place. From that time on, there were no more articles outside the realm of clothing, marriage and motherhood; in short, the focus shifted exclusively to women's secondary helping roles.

It was customary for women during the 1920s and 1930s to relinquish their positions in the workforce after marriage. Marriage announcements comprised a large part of the paper, and in an announcement it often said that the particular department would miss the new bride, implying she would not be back to work. On a few occasions, department heads wrote an article when more that one woman in their department was getting married at the same time. Charles Renaud wrote that "l'amour est en train de dévaster le personnel du Comptoir Postal".[91] From the women's perspective, marriage could be both a blessing and a burden. In one edition, a joke about marriage appeared, suggesting that marriage was not necessarily a step up from work:

> Dame dans la maison--Eh bien Marie, j'espère que vous nous quittez pour une meilleur position
> Marie--Oh non, madame, je vais me marier[92]

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[90]Le Duprex Vol. 4 No. 1 (Oct. 1929), p. 12.

[91]Le Duprex, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Sept. 1932), p. 8.

[92]Le Duprex, Vol. 2, No. 11 (August 1928), p. 6.

Employees did marry one another, however these marriages were not proudly published in Le Duprex until the early 1940s.[93] After 1940, announcements of Dupuis employees marrying began to appear, but it does seem realistic that men and women met future mates at their workplace long before that.

The romantic ideals of marriage and department store employees were expressed in a short story written by a female employee of the store.[94] The story was written in the form of letters from a Dupuis employee to her female friend who also worked in a department store in another city, and installments appeared over three issues of Le Duprex in 1930. A contest open to all employees took place to submit the most appropriate name for the story. The letters from the Dupuis Frères employee, Jeanne, contained a great deal about the women's day-to-day responsibilities in an overworked but cheerful manner, and praised Dupuis Frères' owners, A.J. Dugal and the union for its sick benefits which had benefited her. Jeanne met and fells in love with a salesman from the adjoining department. The salesman, André X, was from the United States, and went to a French Catholic school in New England in order to preserve his knowledge of the French language. One day he failed to show up to work. He disappeared for days without a word to her, and she prayed in Church that she would see him again. She returned home to find an older gentleman speaking

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[93]Examples of announcements that two Dupuis employees were getting married are found in Le Duprex, Vol. 9, No. 2 (March 1937), p. 27; Vol. 10, No. 6 (October 1939), p. 122; Vol. 10, No. 8 (Feb. 1940), p. 149; Vol. 12, No. 3 (Jan. 1944), p. 173; Vol. 12, No. 5 (July 1944), p. 225; Vol. 12, No. 5 (July 1944), p. 226; Vol 12, No. 6 (Sept. 1944), p. 263; Vol 12, No. 6 (Sept. 1944), p. 265; Vol. 12, No. 7 (Jan. 1945), p. 308; Vol. 12, No. 10 (Nov. 1945), p. 396; Vol. 12, No. 10 (Nov. 1945), p. 398.

[94]The entire story is found in Le Duprex, Vol. 4, Nos. 7,8,9 (April-June 1930) pp. 86, 104, 115.

to her mother. This man was André X's father, the owner of one of the largest department stores in 'city X'. He had sent his son anonymously to Dupuis Frères to school him in the functioning of a department store. André would take over the family's business immediately, and wished to marry Jeanne. They planned to move to city X with Jeanne's mother, for whom André had promised to buy a beautiful home with a garden. Jeanne quit her job on Saturday after the department head sale, because they were short staffed and needed her. The title chosen from many submitted for this 'retail harlequin romance' was "Idylle d'une Vendeuse" or Romance of a Salesgirl.[95] Jeanne was portrayed as the quintessential female employee; hard working, appreciative and religious. At the same time, the dream of meeting and marrying a department store owner, or at least a wealthy man, was a high romantic ideal for some women working at Dupuis Frères. The ideal of marriage and leaving work, combined with Dupuis Frères' paternalistic and patriarchal management, contributed to men and women's understanding of the female saleswoman's place at the bottom of the company hierarchy.

Dupuis Frères' religious and nationalist affiliations were used as part of its management technique, and were no less important than its employment of welfare capitalism outlined in the last chapter. Perceptions fostered in the home and at work about the roles of women in employment and the family, guaranteed Dupuis Frères a pool of cheap labour. The clergy department, the Church's outright patronage of the store, and the Papal honours conferred on members of the Dupuis Frères elite all placed the psychological force of the Church's approval behind the company. The company's mission to disprove the economic inferiority of French Canadians played on any

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[95]Le Duprex, Vol. 4, No. 10 (July 1930), p. 126.

insecurities of employees to make them feel as though they were contributing to a cause larger than themselves. It was not until 1952 that these management techniques were challenged, and in the case of French Canadian nationalism, used against the company.

CHAPTER III

The Collapse of Paternalism: The 1952 Strike.

> No one is strong forever; parents die, children take their place; love between adults is not a solid object; authority is not a state of being but an event in time governed by the rhythm of growing and dying.[1]

The negotiated loyalty represented in Le Duprex was not sustained indefinitely at Dupuis Frères. Employee dissatisfaction translated into activity in 1950 when the employees' union decided to apply for accreditation for the first time in its history. Registering with the Provincial Department of Labour gave the union the legal right to negotiate a collective agreement with the company, or if that could not be achieved and all the proper procedures were taken, the legal right to strike. The union did not strike until fifteen months after its accreditation with the government due to lengthy delays, numerous procedures required in Quebec at the time to wage a legal strike, and the unwillingness of the company to accede to any of the union's demands. In fact it could be said that Dupuis Frères forced its employees into the strike by its unwillingness to negotiate on any terms.[2] Also working in favour of the strike was its union, the CTCC, which had undergone profound changes in its ideology and was no longer hesitant to take on employers who were exploiting their workers. The Dupuis Frères strike was a unique event that split a group of Catholic French Canadians down class lines and ended almost a century of paternalism at the French Canadian department store.

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[1]Richard Sennett, Authority (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. 167.

[2]Jacques Rouillard, in fact, points to Dupuis Frères as an example of a strike forced by management. Rouillard, "Major Challenges in the Confédération", p. 121.

After the Second World War, another department store union in Toronto, Eaton's Local 1000 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, had attempted to organize 15 000 employees to become the largest union in Canada.[3] The organizers struggled for three years, from 1948 to 1951, and met with failure. The Dupuis Frères workers had much in common with those at Eaton's; they were unskilled workers that could be easily replaced by the company. Unions were hesitant to put time and effort into these types of occupations because of the unlikelihood of success.[4] The CTCC, however, had with the Dupuis Frères employees the benefit of a long established albeit unaccredited union that had been in place since 1919.

Unfortunately, although the employee newspaper was published until 1962, only issues up to 1946 were located for this thesis. There is therefore a six year gap between the last Duprex issue and the strike, so changes in the employee newspaper cannot be monitored. Workers' concerns would not likely have been expressed in the paper, given an editorial staff that included management, however, management's focus could have revealed a great deal by its response to the workers' mood leading up to the strike. The sources for this chapter are therefore very different from the preceding ones. The story of the strike below will not focus solely on how newspapers in particular perceived the event, but rather will concentrate on the dynamics between the union and their employer within the context of Quebec society at the time.

Unions in Quebec, The 1950s

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[3]Sufrin, The Eaton's Drive.

[4]Desmond Morton, Working People (Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1990), p. 215.

Nous demandions non pas des privilèges, mais la justice.[5]

Gérard Picard, the President of the CTCC, made this statement to the newspapers during the 1952 strike at Dupuis Frères. The union wanted justice in the form of fair wages and union recognition, rather than uncertain privileges delivered by a paternalistic management. Picard's statement was reflective of larger changes that had taken place in the ideology of the CTCC after the Second World War. The union was no longer content to rely on the charity of capitalists and preach the principle of harmony between employers and employees. The Catholic union was infused with a more militant and vocal approach to capital in the late 1940s, punctuated by the Asbestos Strike in 1949 and exacerbated by the Duplessis regime.

The post war years were prosperous ones for Quebec and the rest of North America. Union bargaining power was generally strengthened in this time of prosperity and low unemployment rates for obvious reasons. Prior to the war, the goal of the CTCC was to correct the "abus du capitalisme" by organizing its workers in a way that favoured collaboration between owners and workers.[6] The president of the CTCC after the war was Alfred Charpentier, a man who supported Maurice Duplessis and the Union Nationale party. The union's outlook underwent significant ideological changes when Gérard Picard became its president on a campaign for militant action in 1946[7], and the organization's strikes became correspondingly more frequent and salient. Union militancy increased overall on the post-war Quebec labour scene, and the CTCC was no exception. The

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[5]Le Devoir, 20 May 1952, p. 3.

[6]Rouillard, Histoire du Syndicalisme Québécoise, p. 217.

[7](CSN), The History of the Labour Movement , p. 162.

principle of cooperation through corporatism that had guided the organization in the past had lost its appeal, according to Rouillard, after it had been employed by Fascists in countries like Italy, France and Spain during World War Two.[8] The CTCC established a strike fund that went into operation in 1951, enabling its members to wage longer strikes than were previously possible.[9] The union's constitution was also ratified in 1951 to include opposition to "any unfair treatment on the basis of language, nationality, race, sex or religion".[10] The event that allowed the public to see the new image of the CTCC in action was the 'illegal' Asbestos strike in 1949. This well-researched event that took place in the company town of Asbestos in the Eastern Townships saw 5000 union members striking for five months, and is generally treated as a watershed event, not only in the history of the union, but also in the history of French Canadians in Quebec.[11] Owners soon realized that a Catholic workforce was no longer a guarantee of a docile workforce.

Not only did the CTCC begin to openly oppose capital when other avenues failed, but it also eventually gave up its politically neutral stance towards Duplessis' Union Nationale party.[12] The Duplessis government was notoriously repressive towards labour reform and did everything in its

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[8]Rouillard, " Major Changes in the CTCC", p. 113.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Rouillard, "Major Changes in the CTCC", p. 116.

[11]See The Asbestos Strike, ed. Pierre Elliot Trudeau, trans. James Boake (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1974); Fraser Isbester, "Asbestos 1949" in On Strike: Six Key Labour Struggles in Canada, 1919-1949, ed. Irving Abella (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1974), pp. 163-196; Carl Gerry, "The Asbestos Strike and Social Change in Quebec" in Social and Cultural Change in Canada, Vol. 1, ed. W.E. Mann (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 252-261.

[12]Rouillard, Histoire du Syndicalisme, p. 215.

power to halt or roll back progressive legislation and eradicate 'communism'. This negative attitude towards labour started in Duplessis' first term from 1936 to 1939 with the Act Concerning Communist Propaganda, or the Padlock Law of 1937.[13] This piece of legislation, although purportedly designed to fight communism, was in reality so vague in its definition of communism that it enabled the government to wield it as a discretionary tool against organized labour. During Duplessis' second term from 1944 to 1960, the relationship between the provincial government and the majority of unions operating in Quebec deteriorated further. Despite the government's withdrawal of Bill 5, which would have given them the power to decertify a union with one leader tenuously connected to communism, Duplessis was able to thwart unions with various piecemeal legislation and the physical force of the Quebec Provincial Police.[14] Officially, the Provincial Police were summoned to strikes in order to help maintain order, however, in reality they intimidated strikers, assisted strikebreakers and arrested union leaders.[15] Also, the mediators selected by the Quebec Department of Labour were thought to be clearly partial to owners in their arbitration of labour disputes.[16] The unintended effects of harsh state repression was a strengthening of bonds between different Quebec unions who assisted one another in a concentrated opposition to the Union Nationale government.

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[13]Dickinson and Young, Short History of Quebec, p. 283. The Padlock Law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1957.

[14]Herbert Quinn, The Union Nationale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 93-94.

[15]Ibid., p. 94.

[16]Dickinson and Young, A Short History of Quebec, p. 277.

The Collapse of Paternalism

Pierre Vadeboncoeur, the lawyer who represented the Dupuis union members during the 1952 strike, claimed to be shocked by the paternalism practised by Dupuis Frères since the store championed modernity as a part of its business. Modernity is often seen in conflict with paternalism, when in fact this is not the case, especially with department stores. In industries such as manufacturing, paternalism was indeed on the decline in the twentieth century. Bill Lancaster notes, however, that the reverse seems to have been at work in the world of department stores and especially in those that remained family owned.[17] Paternalism's success in the department store milieu as opposed to a management technique such as Fordism, for example, can at least partially be explained by the employee's direct and instrumental contact with the customer as the site of profit. Management was wiser to treat employees in a social and humane manner so that its workers would behave the same way to customers. Selling a product to someone was much too complex and personal to be achieved through scientific management. This was not a clinging to traditional methods by rather amateurish managers but rather was a system of industrial relations that was constantly being refined".[18]

The precise steps that lead up to the collapse of the Dupuis Frères management system were difficult to identify. The reasons for the employees to rise up against their employer were varied and complex, however we do know that the retirement of A.J. Dugal and the nomination of a new

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[17]Bill Lancaster, The Department Store A Social History (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), p. 143.

[18]Ibid., p. 144.

general manager played a role in the dissatisfaction of employees. Pierre Vadeboncouer, a CTCC leader and Citélibriste involved in the strike, explained that the new general manager, Mr. Roland

> ne semblait pas cependant prendre garde aux effets de ses réformes sur le personnel et voulait changer l'aspect du magasin, renoncer à la routine, en finir avec l'aspect traditionnel....et probablement aussi remplacer certains employés dont l'allure s'harmonisait moins bien qu'il ne l'eut souhaité avec le new look recherché.[19]

Roland's management style was perceived as being radically different from Dugal's, and as well, the employees had no history with their new supervisor. Employees were afraid of the changes their new boss would make to their work environment, schedules, and perhaps jobs themselves could be in jeopardy. Stuart Brandes remarks in his study of welfare capitalism that welfare management could engender feelings of fierce loyalty towards owners, however, when the benefits were removed, equally strong feelings of disloyalty could replace them.[20] Brandes also notes that the same economic growth that assisted the popularity of welfare policies also gave rise to problems when organizations grew and management became distant and no longer invested in their worker's happiness.[21] Discontent with a place of employment in a paternalistic system could easily translate into inordinately personal discontent with the owner himself. In his book on authority, Richard Sennett says

> Paternalism personalizes the human relations of work: I, your employer, care about you and will take care of you. This, however, is a dangerous formula. When things go wrong, it isn't abstractions

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[19]Pierre Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères 1952" in En Grève: L'Histoire de la C.S.N. et des Luttes Menées par ses Militants de 1937 à 1963 (Montreal: Les Editions du Jour, 1963), p. 105.

[20]Brandes, American Welfare Capitalism, p. 135-36.

[21]Ibid., p. 141.

> like market stress which the employees hold responsible. It is the employer. They hold him personally responsible for his power.[22]

From the accounts below, the betrayal and anger the employees felt towards management leading up to and during the strike was directed almost exclusively towards the store owners. Dissatisfaction was commonly expressed not only with Raymond Dupuis, but also with the management style of the store over the years, as the union leaders highlighted acts and ideologies whose design was not interpreted as benevolent but rather as manipulative and self-serving.

The Strike

The chronology of events leading up to the strike are long and sporadic. The union accused the store and the provincial government of purposefully setting up delays to slow down or avert a strike, but were determined to follow legal channels at every stage. On 24 January 1950, the Dupuis Freres employees' union was accredited by the Quebec Commission of Labour Relations.[23] By 4 March of the same year, the union held a meeting during which its members approved a project to obtain a collective work agreement. The same day the union was to inform the company of its proposed collective agreement, the management preempted them by announcing a retroactive salary raise.[24] Rather than please or even placate the union, this act was the first of many that infuriated employees and union officials. The union's angry reaction against the company was primarily

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[22]Sennett, Authority, pp. 65-66.

[23](CTCC),Pourquoi Ils Sont En Grève? (Montreal: Syndicat national des employés de commerce de Montréal, 1952), p. 4.

[24]Ibid.

because management did not wait to see what the workers wanted, but rather decided on its own what would be satisfactory. Dupuis Frères was determined to control the process rather than negotiate with its workers as equals.

Negotiations began between the company and the union on 21 March the following year, and soon after, the store announced it would sign separate agreements with the postal order workers and the in-store workers.[25] The consequences of this move would have been disastrous for the union; for instance, the company would have divided workers' power in numbers and significance if one contract was successful and the other was not. Instead of discussing the issue with union representatives or submitting the subject to informal arbitration, the company made the executive decision themselves in the following memorandum

> Nous désirons, par la présente, vous confirmer la décision que nous avons prise de conclure des contrats séparés pour les divisions magasin et comptoir postal.[26]

Again, the store tried to avert problems and get what it wanted by declaring the solution rather than discussing it. Once the issue was submitted to the Quebec Commission of Labour Relations, however, the order was given to negotiate one contract with the entire store.[27] The unyielding condescension contained in the above memorandum was central to the union's growing animosity towards the company. The company's authoritarian management style frustrated the union and

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[25]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 107.

[26]Ibid., p. 106

[27]Ibid.

likely only fuelled them to fight for a measure of control over their work environment. Indeed, according to the General Report of the Minister of Labour of the Province of Quebec, the 'principle litigious subject' during the arbitration sessions was promotions, transfers, dismissals, and discharges; in short, control over the very terms of the workers' employment.[28]

The weekly salary of Dupuis Frères store workers was thirty dollars, while postal counter workers received twenty-five.[29] The average weekly salary in the city of Montreal, however, was $46.60, and the union argued that their average salaries should be more reflective of that average.[30] The union members wanted raises of five to ten dollars per week to compensate for the escalating cost of living, and Dupuis Frères had a long-standing reputation for paying its employees poorly. To obfuscate this fact, the company had resorted to some creative 'pay-raises' prior to the strike, which included reducing hours worked from forty-eight to forty without raising salaries, and raising sales quotas required for commission along with individual pay raises.[31] Previous to reducing the work week hours, employees were only scheduled to work forty hours a week, but Dupuis Frères maintained the official week had been forty-eight hours. This had enabled them not to pay time and a half until six hours after the regular work week, or until fifty-four hours were worked. It also made the base hourly rate for calculating overtime lower, since that figure was reached by taking one's

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[28]General Report of the Minister of Labour of the Province of Quebec, 1952-1953, p. 71.

[29](CTCC),Pourquoi Ils Sont En Grève, pp. 7-8.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., pp. 10-12.

weekly salary and dividing it by hours worked.[32] In all of these instances, the money the employees received remained constant while the hourly rate only appeared to rise.

Another issue that the union wished to address besides salary was working hours and the five day work week. Eaton's was not open on either Friday evening or Saturday afternoon, and Morgan's, although open at both those times, was actively advocating the five day work week so that employees received one day of holiday besides Sunday.[33] Simpson's was also not open on Friday evenings and advocated the five day work week. Friday evenings were introduced at Dupuis Frères in October of 1949, and quickly became controversial amongst the staff.[34] The initial communiqué informing employees of the new hours said "dans tout ceci, nous avons pensé à votre personnel, croyant qu'il verrait dans ce travail du vendredi soir un moyen d'augmentation ses revenus."[35] The company went further to say that all personnel that worked on Friday evenings would receive fifty cents for dinner included in next Friday's pay, and time and a half for the additional hours of work with a minimum of two dollars for the evening. Later, the management made Friday evenings part of the regular work week so that time and a half could not be collected, and they also cancelled the minimum two dollar policy.[36] Employees were angered and frustrated at the haphazard way that management could grant them favours and then recant on their promises.

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[32](CTCC),Pourquoi ils sont en grève, p. 25.

[33]Ibid., p. 20.

[34]Ibid., p. 21.

[35]Ibid., p. 11-12.

[36]Ibid., p. 21.

The most contentious points between the store and its employees during the nine months of arbitration were union recognition and what measure of control each party had over grievances, seniority, dismissals, transfers and pay raises.[37] The company was not about to bend on issues over which they felt they had exclusive domain. The union repeatedly rejected the store's offer of only a two dollar weekly pay raise, and requested official arbitration from the government. Arbitration procedures required the union, the company, and the Minister of Labour to each appoint a representative, and the commencement of these proceedings was delayed because it took the Minister of Labour a month to announce his arbitrator. [38] Arbitration sessions began on 11 February 1952 and lasted over two months until 21 April 1952.[39] Little hope was held out for a quick resolution when, after the first arbitration session, Gérard Picard announced to the union members during a general meeting that

> Cette rencontre, qui a duré trois heures et demie, a démontré une fois de plus que la maison Dupuis Frères Ltée méprise maintenant tout ce que, dans la passé, elle a prêché en matière syndicale. On a constaté, par exemple, que ses employés comptaient peu, lorsqu'elle a refusé de donner la sécurité d'emploi, même aux employés dits réguliers.[40]

The company, in fact, had not changed its stance in regards to union issues, but the union was able to use the company's past vague rhetoric on the benefits of unionization to label them hypocrites. The idea that the company was concerned with what was best for its employees had been exposed

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[37]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 109.

[38]Ibid.

[39]General Report of the Minister of Labour, 1952-53, p. 71.

[40]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères" , p. 110.

as a lie, and the bargain of paternalism and its benefits in return for loyalty had been broken by the company. For the company's perspective, however, the employees had questioned their policies and turned against them, and therefore both sides felt betrayed and quickly became reproachful and unyielding.

Thirty-five sessions failed to produce results and the union finally wrote a letter to the Minister and the company to protest the slow pace at which the negotiations were progressing.[41] Finally, fifteen months after the union's accreditation, the committee submitted its proposals. On the issue of salaries, the union representative recommended a twenty per cent raise, the Ministry arbitrator decided sixteen percent was reasonable, and the company representative advocated a twelve and a half per cent increase in pay.[42] Dupuis Frères did not even comply with its own arbitrator's recommendation, and would only agree to a seven per cent raise. It seems that the committee was unmoved by the company's protestations and financial records that it claimed showed Dupuis Frères was unable rather than unwilling to pay more.

The end of arbitration lead into five post-arbitrational sessions from 23 April to 1 May 1952 in a final effort to avoid a strike.[43] Again, no resolution followed, despite fifteen hours of negotiations. At the last session, the company had not altered its proposals, and gave three reasons why it felt it could not comply with the union: first, it condemned the union's demands in principle,

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[41]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 110.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., p. 111.

second, the demands would be impossible to implement, and finally, the company was financially unable to raise salaries more than two dollars a week. Picard denied the latter, and said at the union's May 1 meeting

> Si je croyais sincèrement que Dupuis Frères est incapable de payer, je vous le dirais. Mais ce n'est pas le cas...Je crois que la compagnie Dupuis Frères est une entreprise capitaliste comme les autres, une entreprise sans entrailles, même si les dirigeants sont sentimentaux. La parole est à vous.[44]

The union, with 1000 of their members in attendance, voted 97% in favour of action, and a strike was declared at midnight on May 2, 1952.[45] Although Dupuis Frères employed 1 415 people[46], 1 035 workers participated in the strike; 445 men and 590 women.[47]

The union leaders were acutely aware that taking on Dupuis Frères meant tackling a national institution. They were going against "une entreprise qu'une foule de patriotards tenaient pour une institution nationale à laquelle il eût été non seulement inconvenant mais anti-patriotique de s'attaquer, fut-ce, pour ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler la justice sociale".[48] Once the strike was in

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[44]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 112

[45] May 1 was the date chosen by militant socialists of the Second International to remember the sacrifice of workers in Chicago who were massacred in 1886 as they were fighting in favour of the eight hour workday. It quickly became a popular date to commence strikes. See Claude Larivière, Le 1er Mai: Fête Internationale des Travailleurs (Montreal: Les Éditions Albert Saint-Martin, 1975) for more information on the history of the date. The beginning of May also coincided with decreased heating expenses so that workers had some extra money to hold out during a strike. The choice of date, however, could have been entirely coincidental in the case of Dupuis Frères.

[46]General Report of the Minister of Labour of the Province of Quebec, 1953, p. 158.

[47]Report on Industrial Dispute Progress, 3 June 1952.

[48]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 103.

progress, the union quickly published a pamphlet called Pourquoi ils sont en grève that strikers distributed on the picket line to explain their position to passers-by outside the store. The pamphlet would have served to garner public opinion and encourage shoppers to boycott the store. Among other things, the pamphlet included a cartoon of a man waving a Quebec flag while standing on another prostrate man's chest. The caption below is "Le patriotisme aux dépends des autres".[49]

One of the most documented and analysed Catholic strikes thus far was the Asbestos strike in 1949. Historians of the Asbestos strike seem to gloss over the immense importance of the American origin of Johns-Manville, the company where the miners worked, to explain French Canadian popular support for the union.[50] The unions, press and clergy that united against the company can be seen as an example of French Canadians uniting against foreign owned capital, and the absence of the English press in the struggle supports this idea.[51] Public opinion towards the Dupuis Frères strike was very different from the opinions of the Asbestos strike because in the former, the workers and owners were French Canadian.

The Dupuis Frères strike split the opinions of Citélibristes and neo-nationalist because of the

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[49](CTCC),Pourqoi ils Sont en Grève, p. 23.

[50]With the exception of Desmond Morton, Working People, p. 219. Although Morton's discussion of the strike is only a page, given the breadth of the topic, he succinctly points out the problems of nationalism facing the CTCC in the Dupuis Frères strike in contrast to other large strikes such as Asbestos. He also calls the Dupuis Frères strike the most important of the 1950s.

[51] Gérard Pelletier, "The Strike and the Press" in The Asbestos Strike, pp. 252-253. Pelletier says the Montreal Gazette maintained a "haughty aloofness" throughout the strike.

different priority each group placed on French Canadian economic subservience.[52] Central to neo-nationalists' assessment of Quebec's problems in the 1950s was the domination of foreign capital in the province. Their solution was simple in theory: "to become economic masters in their own house, French Canadians must start by regaining control over their vast national resources" and by retaining any capital in the hands of French Canadians.[53] In an editorial during the strike, for example, Gérard Filion commented on the Johns-Manville company's foreign ownership

> It is not xenophobia to demand that the natural wealth of our province be placed under the majority control of Canadian stockholders and administrators: it is no more than a mark of self-respect and a sense of good order.[54]

From the perspective of neo-nationalists, the liberation of the working class had to take place within the context of the liberation of the French Canadian people. The Citélibristes believed, as did the neo-nationalists that Quebec needed to modernize itself and reject traditional nationalism if it had any chance of succeeding in the future. In contrast to the neo-nationalists, however, the Citélibristes believed that the clergy and secular elites had used the nationalist platform to the detriment of the Quebec people, and saw the political, ideological and economic modernization of the province as incompatible with the isolationism of French Canadian nationalism.[55] Rather than reinterpreting nationalism, the Citélibristes argued that it must be rejected and be replaced with secular humanism

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[52]For a fuller analysis of the evolution of Citélibriste and neo-nationalist thought, see Behieles, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution and Olivier, The Passionate Debate.

[53]Michael Behiels, "Quebec: Social Transitions and Ideological Renewal, 1940-1976" in Quebec Since 1945, p. 31.

[54]Quotation from Le Devoir, May 25, 1949 in Pelletier, "The Strike and the Press" in The Asbestos Strike, p. 246.

[55]Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quite Revolution, pp. 51-60.

for Quebec to realize its potential. As Behiels says

> Neo-nationalists supported the movement for greater industrial democracy because not only would it improve the situation of the workers but it would provide French Canadians with a means of overcoming their position of subservience in the Quebec economy. On the other hand, Citélibristes championed the cause of industrial democracy primarily as a means of humanizing an increasingly impersonal and exploitative capitalist system.[56]

Thus the support of both groups during the Asbestos strike had their roots in two fundamentally different ideologies. While the CTCC leaders viewed the Asbestos strike as a firm example of their organization's commitment to the working class, neo-nationalists, such as Filion, saw the conflict in terms of a battle against foreign ownership and a government in collusion with foreign capitalists.

There were many Citélibriste sympathizers amongst the CTCC leadership during the Dupuis Frères strike, while Le Devoir, with its editor Gérard Filion, was a bastion of neo-nationalist thought. Although Behiels contends that Filion's editorial position at Le Devoir offered the CTCC leaders consistent support on the pages of the newspaper during their union's strikes in the 1950s, the "unflinching commitment" of Le Devoir during the Asbestos strike was not replicated during the conflict at Dupuis Frères.[57] Gérard Filion's sole editorial on the Dupuis Frères strike supported the store's contention that they could not afford to pay their employees more, agreed that grievances, transfers and promotions were the exclusive domain of employers, and concluded that there was

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[56]Ibid., p. 133.

[57]Ibid., p. 91.

nothing serious enough to justify a strike. His feelings about both the union and the company can be summed up by the following quotation; "la maison Dupuis Frères et les syndicats catholiques sont deux institutions particulièrement chères aux Canadiens français...il n'y a pas lieu de s'étonner du conflit qui les devise".[58] What should have characterized the relationship between these two institutions according to Filion, because both were Catholic, was "la bonne volonté que les parties doivent mettre à trouver une solution."[59] Filion expressed serious concern that the strain of the strike, combined with any French Canadian boycott of the store, could put Dupuis Frères out of business. The strike threatened to expose French Canadian nationalism as something sordid that Dupuis Frères used to manipulate fellow French Quebecers to shop and work at their establishment.

The strike also pitted French-Canadian bourgeoisie against French Canadian working-class, thereby endangering solidarity in a time when cohesiveness was viewed by some as the last hope for the survival of the French culture in Canada.

The religious community was watched closely by the newspapers to see whose side it would support. Initially, the Gazette reported that rumours were circulating amongst the strikers that members of the religious community had been instructed not to shop at Dupuis Frères, however, early into the strike it was evident that priests and nuns were taking advantage of the twenty per cent discount the store offered by the store during the strike.[60] A sector of the Catholic clergy affiliated with the CTCC boycotted the store and gave its wholehearted support to the strikers, while other

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[58]Le Devoir, 31 May 1952, p. 3.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Montreal Gazette, 6 May 1952, p. 15.

clergy freely shopped at the store. Cannon Henri Pichette, the head chaplain of the Catholic union movement, addressed the strikers at a mass given for their benefit and commented on the behaviour of Dupuis Frères towards its employees

> La Maison Dupuis Frères s'est tellement vantée d'être un établissement catholique que l'Eglise a le droit d'exiger qu'elle respecte la doctrine sociale prônée par les encycliques. La Maison Dupuis Frères s'est édifiée en faisant appel aux Canadiens français et aux catholiques...son attitude provoque une grande déception.[61]

The vicar's message was that Dupuis Frères should be held to the standard it set up for itself over the years; the standard of social justice outlined in the Papal encyclicals over the years. A young vicar even joined the strikers on the picket lines, and said to Le Travail that those clergy visibly on the side of the strikers "contrebalancent fort heureusement la mauvaise impression créée par d'autres religieux et religieuses qui ont traversé la ligne de piquetage pour aller faire leurs achats".[62] Besides public support from pockets of the clergy, the union was able to convince the American boxer Joe Louis to cancel a scheduled appearance at Dupuis Frères' sports department. Le Travail credited Louis' origins in the working class for his decision to cancel his appearance and refuse to cross the picket lines.[63]

The Dupuis Frères strikers received support from other unions in Quebec during the strike. The Fédération des Unions Industrielle de Québec (FUIQ) which had united the unions of the

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[61]Le Devoir, 9 May 1952, p. 3.

[62]Le Travail, 16 May 1952, p. 3.

[63]Le Travail, 30 May 1952, p. 1.

Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the Alliance des Professeurs de Montreal, were the CTCC's strongest allies. The Fédération Provinciale des Travailleurs du Québec (FPTQ), affiliated with the American Federation of Labour, however, denounced the CTCC and its supporters for using tactics that were strikingly similar to communists.[64] The FUIQ asked its members not tc shop at Dupuis Frères until a collective agreement was signed, and assisted the union financially.[65] The Dupuis Frères union also received support from other CTCC affiliates: members of the Syndicat des Mineurs d'Amiante d'Asbestos voted unanimously to return all catalogues to Dupuis Frères that had been addressed to them.[66]

Dupuis Frères decided to break the strike by sending the message that it did not need the staff that had defied them. During the early hours of 2 May, managers and non-striking workers were busily occupied slashing the store's prices to lure in customers by replacing service with savings. The store offered a twenty per cent discount on all merchandise during the strike, and employed over one-hundred security officers to control crowds, troublemakers, and shoplifters inside the building. The newspapers did report trouble with shoplifters inside the store, but the company downplayed any such incidents.[67] What especially enraged striking workers was the store's announcement that it had planned to move over to a self-service system eventually, and the strike gave it the opportunity to do that. A public statement to the media from an official of the store

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[64]Le Devoir, 16 June 1952, p. 3.

[65]Rouillard, "Major Changes in the CTCC", p. 123.

[66]Le Travail, 30 May 1952, p. 3 and Le Devoir, 7 May 1952, p. 3.

[67]For example, Montreal Gazette, 7 May 1952, p. 17 and La Presse, 7 May 1952, p. 3.

remarked on the efficiency of self-service during the strike

> I am sure that many Canadian department stores will adopt this system of self service for many departments thus replacing with the aid of the public some unneeded employees...This strike may well bring an end to overstaffing of stores with unnecessary help. It has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that the public at large can be trusted and that the confidence which a store has placed in its clientele over a period of years can pay off rich dividends.[68]

Another insult from Dupuis Frères, according to the union leaders, was that the discount was the identical amount the strikers had demanded and the company had rejected in pay raises.[69] The implication was that the store would rather give the money to their customers than to its own workers. In retaliation, the union spread rumours that the company had increased prices on merchandise by twenty per cent and then falsely 'discounted' them the same amount, thereby deceiving the public. Dupuis Frères took the CTCC to court and won a $50,000 judgement against the union for defamation and libel.[70]

By midnight on May 2 hundreds of strikers had collected outside the store along with police officers, and at seven in the morning, reinforcements of mostly female employees arrived to take over the lines.[71] The Montreal Star and Le Devoir reported record crowds at the opening of Dupuis Frères' doors on the morning of May 2nd, and from all appearances and store statements, it seemed

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[68]Montreal Gazette, 5 May 1952, p. 3.

[69]La Presse, 3 May 1952, p. 3.

[70]La Presse, 15 May 1952, p. 45.

[71]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 113

as though the strike was fortuitous for the company.[72] Raymond Dupuis, the store's president, personally greeted all customers inside the lobby as a sign of concern.[73] Mr. Dupuis also dealt with the first sale of 2 May, and was photographed by La Presse with the purchasing customer.[74] In the first few days the papers focussed almost exclusively on the sale rather than the strike. The Gazette ran an article whose title was "Bargain Hunters in Glory as Store Knocks off 20 p.c." while Le Devoir announced "Record de ventes sans précédent".[75] Dupuis Frères ran full page advertisements announcing the sale early on in the strike, and included thank-you's to its customers for their patronage in their advertisements.[76]

Animosity towards the police began early and remained high throughout the duration of the strike. Although the Provincial Police were not involved in the Dupuis Frères strike, scores of municipal police patrolled the picket lines and the anti-subversive squad was called in on occasion. The use of horses especially bothered the strikers since the mounted officers would use their animals to push the picketers out of any area they wished and escort 'scabs' safely out of the store.[77] One photograph of two horses' backsides was taken and circulated on the picket line the next day with

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[72]Montreal Star, 2 May 1952, p. 3; Le Devoir, 2 May 1952, p. 3.

[73]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 114.

[74]La Presse, 2 May 1952, p. 3.

[75]The Gazette, 3 May 1952, p. 3; La Presse, 2 May 1952, p. 3.

[76]La Presse, 2 May 1952, p. 52; Montreal Gazette, 2 May 1952, p. 13.

[77]Le Travail, 16 May 1952, p. 3.

the caption "Les arguments de Dupuis Frères".[78] Union leaders accused the police of unnecessary harassment and strong arm tactics, and gave them the nickname, the "gestapo".[79] Vadeboncoeur questioned why the police were ever-present on the Dupuis strike line, while they were essentially inept at giving severe reprimands to gambling establishments and night clubs according to the Caron Inquiry on morality.[80] A cartoon was included in the strikers' pamphlet with a similar message.[81] The top frame's caption said "grève chez Dupuis, PRÉSENT" with a drawing of a policeman armed with a club at the doors of the store. The bottom frame included a drawing of a judge staring angrily at an empty witness box with the caption "enquête sur la moralité: ABSENT".[82]

The store managed to hire some replacement workers by recruiting amongst students from L'Ecole des Hautes Études Commerciales, the general public and even customers. As in most strikes, the replacement workers, or 'scabs', were treated with hostility by the striking employees, and every Friday evening, thousands of strikers, their family and friends, gathered to harass and intimidate the workers as they were escorted by police into specially commissioned busses after work. These Fridays were when most of the arrests took place, and emotions ran high on both sides. Vadeboncoeur describes these Fridays as jovial events for himself and the strikers: "on chansonnait

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[78]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 114. The photo can be found at CSN Archives, File # 130, 2-4-4-6, "Dupuis Frères Strike photographs, 1952".

[79]Ibid., p. 117.

[80]Ibid., p. 115.

[81](CTCC), Pourquoi ils Sont en Grève, p. 31.

[82]For a closer look at the Caron Inquiry, see Danielle Lacasse, La Prostitution Féminine à Montréal, 1945-1970 (Montreal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 1994).

la police - qui à cette époque avait fort mauvaise réputation -, on était de bonne humeur, on riait, on réclamait la tête de celui-ci ou de celui-là avec bonheur".[83] Songs of the strikers included one sung to the tune of Frères Jacques

Dupuis Frères, Dupuis Frères
Dormez-vous, dormez-vous
Sortez-donc vos piastres, sortez-donc vos piastres
Payez-nous, payez-nous.[84]

By May 7, the management announced to the press that its recruitment office was closed because the company had an abundance of replacement employees, and for its part, the strike was over.[85] Raymond Dupuis left the next morning on a trip to Europe, further communicating the confidence of the company. The store was continuing to act as if all was normal and under control.

The striking employees began to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the company more creatively in the second week of the strike. On the morning of May 9, harmless explosives were set off in the store's foyer, and in the evening, white mice were found roaming the aisles of the drapery and lingerie departments.[86] Continuing in this vein, stink bombs were set off in the store on May 16 while employees outside cried that something stank at Dupuis Frères and on May 17, swarms of bees and frogs were released into the crowded store. These incidents produced no arrests and mass panic since the offenders would disappear into the crowds of frightened shoppers before the store

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[83]Ibid., p. 114.

[84]Le Travail, 16 May 1952, p. 3.

[85]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 116.

[86]La Presse, 10 May 1952, p. 3.

security could identify them. The fact that the employees' workplace and the company's site of interaction with customers was one in the same gave the strikers an opportunity to sabotage the company's operations in a very public way.

During the strike, over seventy arrests were made in total. Most of them were for either disturbing the peace, refusing to circulate or resisting arrest. Women were arrested with the same frequency as men, and according to Vadeboncoeur, "la résistance particulièrement opiniâtre des femmes et des jeunes filles, dans cette grève, fut un objet d'étonnement pour l'employeur comme pour le syndicat".[87] Despite the number of arrests, all but one employee received suspended sentences. The incident that lead to an arrest and two months prison time for a Dupuis striker took place during the Saint Jean Baptiste Parade.[88] As Mayor Camillien Houde's convertible was driving down Sherbrooke Street as a part of the procession, his car was bombarded with dozens of eggs which hit their mark. Although more than one Dupuis Frères striker was involved, only one was arrested. Vadeboncoeur described a livid Houde who appeared at the police precinct yelling "Où est-il *mon* prisonnier" like an ogre who had not eaten for two days, and insisting on prosecuting the man to the fullest extent of the law. Houde was convinced that communists were responsible, because, according to Houde, "qui pourrait m'en vouloir à part les communistes?"[89] An article the next day in Le Devoir commented that "il est vraiment dommage que cet incendie ait eu lieu car le

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[87]Vadeboncoeur, "Dupuis Frères", p. 124.

[88]Vadeboncoeur, "Un ministre, un maire, une souris, un poteau et une omelette" Nouvelles CSN, 31 March 1989, pp. 10-12.

[89]Le Devoir, 25 June 1952, p. 1.

défilé de cette année aurait été sans cela, l'un des plus spectaculaires que nous ayons vus".[90] These strikers' activities during the Saint Jean Baptiste celebrations seem to be a direct assault on the nationalism of the Montreal establishment, and traditional nationalists may have wondered if nothing was sacred.

After thirteen weeks of striking, Archbishop Paul-Émile Léger of Montreal and Gérard Filion, editor of Le Devoir, intervened in the strike and negotiations began again. The strike was concluded on 26 July 1952.[91] The workers received union recognition as the exclusive bargaining agent for Dupuis Frères employees, pay raises of four to six dollars retroactive to 5 March 1951, a forty hour work week and retained their paid vacations.[92] The CTCC had succeeded at the expense of losing the support of nationalists who saw the strike as a sabotage on the solidarity of French Canadians. Michael Chartrand, one of the CTTC leaders, noted that the CTCC "had broken with those who defended the French language by starving those who spoke it". If the Asbestos strike proved the union could wage a protracted and militant strike, the Dupuis Frères strike went further to show that the union placed its worker's rights above all else, including ethnic solidarity. The CTCC would attack nationalism where it was serving the vested interests of capitalists at the expense of employees. The Dupuis workers themselves had successfully withstood the pressure of their employer, and had refused to settle for less than they felt they deserved. Paternalism from the Dupuis Frères management would no longer be accepted by workers, and the privileges employees

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[90]Ibid.

[91]Labour Gazette, 1952, p. 1014.

[92]CSN Archives, File #130; 2-4-6-6, "Convention Collective De Travail, 28 July 1952.

had traded for loyalty in the past were secured as rights.

CONCLUSION

The Dupuis Frères management and owners offered their employees material and social benefits in a 'family atmosphere', while employees returned their employers favours with demonstrative loyalty in Le Duprex. Ritual festivities served to make workers feel appreciated, and to reinforce the employees gratitude and deference towards their superiors. Nazaire, Albert and Raymond Dupuis acted as the official patriarchs of the Dupuis family of workers in their respective eras, and each exhibited a personal interest in the lives of their workers. Le Duprex perpetuated this impression, with the publication of birthdays, births, marriages, anniversaries and deaths of employees and their family members. Organized company recreation and the support for the Catholic union underscored the Dupuis owners' interest in the well-being of their employees on and off the job. The particular manifestation of paternal management associated with Dupuis Frères extended beyond physical well-being to cultural and spiritual health.

Working at Dupuis Frères meant more than material benefits and a good relationship with one's employer. The store fostered a strong sense of ethnic and religious identification with its workers, and supplemented this with social incentives in order to satisfy its employees. By suggesting that the prosperity of the store made a direct contribution to the success of the French Canadian population, management played successfully on its workers' pride and sense of community. The store proclaimed itself the representative of French Canadian commercial success, and conveyed to its employees and customers that shopping and working at Dupuis Frères would

positively impact upon French Canadians. Nationalism in this case benefited the upper class management and owners at the expense of the working-class employees. The interests of employees and employer were conflated so that the economic success of the store and thus the profit of the owners was correlated with the cultural survival of the French Canadian nation. Similarly, anything that would jeopardize the store would also impact poorly on all French Canadians. Combined with the support of the Catholic clergy, these management techniques seem to have been remarkably effective, and mollified employees for almost one hundred years.

The social, economic, and political climate of Quebec in the 1950s contributed to the break down of the 'grande famille Dupuis'. Changes in the CTCC, which gave the union a more proactive and militant approach to capital, undoubtedly played a role in the eventual strike of 1952. The union leaders branded the self-proclaimed nationalist mission of Dupuis Frères as a manipulation, designed to keep its workers submissive and its French customers shopping within its walls. In contrast, neo-nationalists such as the editor of Le Devoir, Gérard Filion, resented the union's attack on Dupuis Frères, and felt the French Canadian success personified in the store was more important than a protracted conflict that could destroy the national institution. Not used to dealing with their workforce on equal terms, the owners responded to the union's accreditation and demands with unyielding contempt. With the management unwilling to bend and the union flexing its newly found power, the strike lasted for thirteen weeks with little hope of resuming negotiations until Archbishop Léger and Gerard Filion intervened. The union's victory was almost total, and the store likely never looked at its workforce in the same way again.

This thesis touches on only a small part of retail history, and much more needs to be explored. Retail history needs to be investigated, not only as a vital part of labour history, but also as a component of both business and women's history. It is especially astonishing, given the recent proliferation of women's history, that more has not been written about retail employees, considering the industry employed a largely female workforce.[1] Most important would be a localized study of the industry from the perspective of workers that could weave oral history and company sources in order to take the worker's attitudes and beliefs into account . Attempts to organize retail workers would also be useful, in order to understand the reasons for their failure or success. A study taking into consideration not only the conditions and perceptions of the workplace, but also the home lives of retail employees, would offer a more comprehensive look at the forces that shaped worker's employment. Essentially, the field of retail workers in Canada remains virtually uncharted.

When I was nineteen, I began to work part time in retail to supplement my spending money, and at the age of twenty-two, I spent a year managing a clothing store to finance a trip to Asia. In total, I have worked in four stores, each with its own distinct philosophy regarding its employees. Working in the retail sector today usually means complete job insecurity, a largely female workforce, minimum wage and arbitrary or no benefits. Benefits in my experience were mostly related to contests; for instance on Saturdays at a Hazelton Lanes store in Toronto, the manager would pick a low selling item, and whoever sold the most of them would receive a free piece of clothing or a commission. Unfortunately these non-contractual benefits could also be taken away.

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[1]For example, notice the absence of retail history in Diana Pederson's recent bibliographical work, Changing Women, Changing History: A Bibliography of the History of Women in Canada (Ottawa: Carelton University Press, 1996).

At another retail store, a staff Christmas dinner at the restaurant of our choice was always a highly anticipated and rewarding annual event. One year, in mid-December, the staff was informed that the company would sponsor no festivities, and although we still went out for dinner, this rescinding of tradition was bitterly received.

Today in retail, most employers and managers are looking for young attractive women to fill sales positions. The industry remains difficult to organize, and large scale unionization has met with failure, in part because employees are mostly young, transient, female, part-time and easily replaceable. Looking at the retail industry today, it seems that perceptions about salespeople have not changed a great deal from those present at the Dupuis Frères store. To make an adequate living working at, or even managing a store, is difficult today, and paternalism remains a common management strategy. There are currently efforts to organize retail workers, but until they cease to be perceived as an unskilled workforce, as they have been for over a century, the battle will be uphill. Perhaps the growing recognition of service as an important component of a successful economy will push owners of retail establishments to value selling as a skill. The Dupuis Frères strike still remains a glaring exception to the retail industry's relatively benign labour force, and a reminder that paternalism cannot last forever.

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