

David Munroe

Teacher Education at McGill

The eighteen fifties were years of progress in Canadian education. Concrete steps were taken in each of the colonies to establish public systems for providing educational services which would supplement those already being provided by private and religious bodies. In Nova Scotia, Joseph Howe persuaded William Dawson to become the first superintendent of education in 1850; two years later, Prince Edward Island became the first colony to provide free schooling for all its children; Canada West had already begun to build its public system under the dynamic leadership of Egerton Ryerson; Jean Baptiste Meilleur, after a decade in office as superintendent in Canada East, was challenged because the reform had proceeded too slowly and was replaced by P.J.O. Chauveau in 1855; and in 1858 New Brunswick set up a system of public schools and appointed its first superintendent. Education, which had long been neglected, was now on the move.

Moreover, there was some interchange of ideas between the leaders of this movement. Dawson, after four years in office in his native province, moved to the principalship of McGill, where he became closely associated with Chauveau. Ryerson, who had made an extensive tour of European countries in the mid-forties, was appointed to serve with Dawson on a commission on higher education in New Brunswick. Since the two provinces of Canada East and West were united under a single government, there was regular collaboration between the departments of education in such activities as the publication of a bilingual journal of educational news and developments.* As a further link, and one that was not insignificant, Sir

*See the next issue of the *McGill Journal of Education* for F. Henry Johnson's paper, "The First Canadian Journal of Education" — Ed.

Edmund Head, an enlightened governor with a genuine interest in education, served first in New Brunswick and then as Governor-General of Canada. It was he who established the commission in New Brunswick, who later recommended Dawson for the principalship of McGill and suggested to him that the establishment of a normal school within the university would be a wise and profitable move.¹

the mcgill normal school

Dawson's last major accomplishment before leaving Nova Scotia was the founding of a normal school at Truro and one of his first innovations on entering on his new duties in Montreal was to found a counterpart at McGill. Explaining this action in later years, Dawson said, "Our connection with this project occurred, however, in a manner which appeared to make it, in some measure, an outcome of our poverty itself."² As an alternative to selling some of the valuable land which was then on the outskirts of the city, Dawson sought government support and Sir Edmund Head suggested that he take advantage of "an Act for the establishment of Normal Schools,"³ through which Ryerson had already founded Toronto Normal School in 1847. Chauveau, the new superintendent in Canada East, cooperated fully and established similar normal schools for Roman Catholics in Quebec and Montreal.

The advantages to the university of this new affiliation were suggested by the Governor-General and described by Dawson as follows:

Sir Edmund was very desirous that so important an improvement should be introduced, and thought that if McGill College, and its friends, would move in the matter, and offer their cooperation, something might be done, and that this would be indirectly beneficial to the University, by practically giving additional strength to its staff, and by training young men as teachers, who could prepare students for matriculation. At the same time it would place the University in direct connection with the higher schools of the English and Protestant population, and give greater unity and strength to that portion of the educational system which specially provided for their wants⁴.

Dawson himself assumed the principalship, remaining in charge of the institution until 1870. It was here he had his first experience in the systematic teaching of natural history and, while these added responsibilities imposed a sacrifice in lim-

iting his research activities, they offered some compensation through "the pleasure of teaching classes so earnest and attentive as those of the Normal School."⁵ His senior colleagues were W. H. Hicks, Headmaster of the Colonial Church and School Society's Anglican Normal School and Mr. Samson P. Robbins, both of whom served as principals in later years. Indeed Robbins' career extended through the whole period from 1857 to 1907 when the Normal School occupied the Belmont Street building in Montreal.

In the mid-nineteenth century some governments in Europe and North America had begun to assume the responsibility for "training" elementary school teachers but it was unusual, if not unheard of, for universities to become involved. Like the events which, thirty years earlier, had led to the incorporation of the Montreal Medical Institution into the university structure, the affiliation of the Normal School brought benefits to McGill. Some of the students who qualified for teaching diplomas remained to continue their studies for degrees in the Arts faculty. As Dawson pointed out, this was particularly true of women students for whom other opportunities for higher education were closed until the Royal Victoria College was founded in 1884⁶. Moreover, as graduates began to spread through the classrooms of the province, they carried with them the image and the influence of McGill. Head's hopes were justified. McGill found supporters not only in Montreal but also in other centres of the province.

The management of the Normal School was confided in the McGill Normal School Committee, whose members included representatives of the McGill governors, the provincial government and the general public. Among the most active were Mr. Justice Torrence, the Honourable Senator Ferrier, Dr. George Cornish and John Redpath Dougall. Meetings were held monthly and the committee exercised full control over the budget, the curriculum and the appointments to the teaching staff.

enter the p.a.p.t.

A strong link was established with the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers after its organization in 1864. This was the first association of its kind in Canada and it brought together not only members of the teaching profession but

also other persons interested in the progress of education. The first president was Dr. Jasper Nicholls, principal of Bishop's College and Dr. Dawson was elected to the presidency on three separate occasions. Since many of the members were connected with the Normal School as teachers or graduates, there were discussions periodically about the program and methods. Occasionally these led to demands for reform. One such occasion occurred in 1881, when E.I. Rexford, President of the Association, launched a comprehensive and severe attack on the training program of his alma mater.⁷

The title of the presidential address was "The Normal School Curriculum and its Relation to the Work now Required from Teachers." The English course was too narrow; the mathematics course, too extensive; the practical training was deficient. Some of these opinions were challenged by the Committee. However, during the controversy, Mr. Rexford was appointed to a government post as Secretary of the Protestant Committee and the critics refused to be silenced. Hicks retired as principal to be succeeded by Robbins who instituted a number of reforms, including a reduction in the teaching load of the instructors from twenty hours a week. Thus harmony was restored, with the government, the university and the profession acting again in unison.

Throughout these years the high schools and academies were served by teachers with three-year diplomas or B.A. degrees. Dr. Dawson had given thought to their preparation by instituting the Academy Diploma, which always attracted a minority of the candidates but which often led students to continue their studies to degree level.⁸ A high proportion of the students were women but there were outstanding men also who formed the backbone of competent staffs of the High School of Montreal, the suburban academies in Westmount and Outremont and the rural academies in Lachute, Huntingdon, Knowlton and a dozen other centres.

the adams report

By the end of the 19th century, educational patterns had begun to change in most Western countries under the impact of industrialisation and technology. Herbert Spencer asked the question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" and had proceeded to undermine the old classical curriculum by putting the

emphasis on science and physical development. Psychology began to alter the approach to teaching; kindergartens were opened in many cities, including Montreal and Toronto; courses in domestic science and manual training became accepted as a normal part of the curriculum; the completion of elementary school became recognized as a level to be attained by almost all children and increasing numbers proceeded to high school. Meanwhile, in the United States, university patterns were changing also with the reforms of Eliot at Harvard, the experiments at Johns Hopkins and Chicago, and the opening of Teachers College at Columbia.

It was at this point that Sir William Macdonald* began to show his deep concern about the extension of educational opportunity to a much larger segment of youth. Even as late as 1887, Macdonald had refused Dawson's invitation to become a member of the Normal School Committee because of other commitments.⁹ By 1902, however, probably at the insistence of his collaborator, Dr. James W. Robertson, he was prepared to pay for a study of Protestant education in Quebec as a first step toward some drastic educational reforms. The study was conducted between April and June 1902 by Sir John Adams, professor of education at the University of Glasgow and subsequently Director of the Institute of Education at the University of London.

Twenty-five of the 137 pages of his Report were devoted to teachers and teacher training. It was found that school commissioners, though "evidently intelligent and progressive men in their own business," chose the cheapest from among the many applicants for teaching positions. The salary levels were scandalously low, "\$15 a month is not uncommon, \$16 is quite usual; \$17 is regarded as satisfactory, and \$18 or anything above it is distinctly good."¹⁰ Of the teachers in the Protestant schools, only 36.1% were graduates of the McGill Normal School, while 54% had no training at all!¹¹ The Normal School offered four different courses, one of four months, another of nine months, one of two years and a course of fifty half-days for university graduates. Adams found the Normal School students and graduates enthusiastic about their training but there was a "singular hostility" among the Academy Diploma students who, like students in Scotland and else-

*See Maurry H. Epstein, "Sir William Macdonald — A Biographical Sketch," in this *Journal*.

where, showed "tolerant contempt" toward their courses.¹² Commenting on these problems, the commissioner stated:

It is now recognized that the function of the teacher is to mediate between theory and practice. The university must supply the theory — the Practising School should supply not mere mechanical practice as a thing in itself, but an exemplification of the carrying out of the theory. Hence the necessary connection between the University Chair and the Normal School Classroom.¹³

In the last of his eight recommendations, he made it clear that "We must look to the University to maintain the status of the teachers in the Province." There was need, he said, for a Chair of Education, so that the standing of the subject should be acknowledged and the professor should establish a "correlation between theory and practice to enable teachers to make the most of themselves and their pupils."¹⁴

the macdonald movement and other developments

The Chair of Education was established and endowed by Sir William Macdonald in 1907 but there were also other developments of great consequence. The "Macdonald Movement," as it was called, was directed toward comprehensive reforms in education, particularly in rural areas. It proposed central schools in each of the provinces and offered special assistance for instruction in household science and manual training and agriculture. To meet the special needs of Quebec, it led to the radical suggestion that the Normal School be transferred to Ste. Anne de Bellevue where it would become an integral part of the new Macdonald College. This plan was approved by the university and the provincial authorities and the School for Teachers became the first residential teacher training institution in Canada.

By the end of the first half-century, teacher education was well rooted within the university with support from the provincial government, the professional association of teachers and the school authorities of Montreal. The separation of the two departments, the School for Teachers to concentrate on training for the elementary schools and the Faculty of Arts to assume responsibility for high school teachers, was the immediate problem; nevertheless, under Sir William Peterson, new developments were close at hand. Sir William was interested in preparing music teachers and this became one of

the functions of the McGill Conservatory of Music, when it was established with his encouragement¹⁵ and with Macdonald's support. An initiative of another sort was the founding of the McGill School of Physical Education in 1912 within the Faculty of Medicine.

McGill's interest in physical education is quite properly traced to Dr. R. Tait McKenzie, who as early as 1890 urged the university to integrate in one department the activities of medical care, physical instruction and competitive games. This approval was rejected by the Governors and McKenzie was given the title, Director of Physical Training. After nineteen years at McGill, he was given the opportunity to create the department he had hoped for at the University of Pennsylvania, where he spent the rest of his life. His work was carried on at McGill by Miss E. M. Cartwright who was placed in charge of sports and physical training for women and began classes for teachers of physical education in 1909. Three years later, Dr. Arthur S. Lamb was appointed Director of Physical Education with responsibility for co-ordinating health services, inter-collegiate and intra-mural sports and teacher training in physical education. The School of Physical Education was established within the Faculty of Medicine in 1919 and offered diploma courses from then until 1946, when a four-year degree course was introduced. A decade later the program came under the authority of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

In the new pattern that developed after 1907, the School for Teachers fell under the authority of the Teacher Training Committee. This was presided over by the Principal of the University, with representation from the Senate and from the Protestant Committee of the Council of Education acting on behalf of the government. From 1913 to 1949, the School for Teachers was under the direction of Dean Sinclair Laird, a Scot with a background of teaching in France and Canada. Standards for entrance were raised several times, the curriculum was brought up to date with emphasis on assembly lessons in Macdonald High School and regular practice teaching there and in Montreal. The enrolment increased steadily until the 1940's when, for several years, the School was transplanted to the campus at McGill to make room for the Canadian Women's Army Corps. A new enquiry into Protestant education, under the chairmanship of W.A.F. Hepburn in 1937, noted that the teaching profession was not attracting the best candidates and those who did enrol at Macdonald were given "bundles of recipes for every conceivable emergency

which may arise in teaching.”¹⁶ Dr. Hepburn’s report recommended more rigorous selection, a minimum course of thirty-six weeks duration, an extended period of practice teaching, and a teacher-training institute to coordinate the training and licensing of all Protestant teachers.

Meanwhile, the training of high-school teachers on the McGill campus developed slowly. The first professor to hold the Macdonald Chair of Education, Dr. Dale, remained only briefly. For a number of years, instruction was provided by Dean Laird and other lecturers from the School for Teachers. In 1929, however, the appointment of Professor Fred Clarke brought new vision and vigour to the whole enterprise. Clarke was a graduate of Oxford who had served for some years in South Africa. He reorganized the courses and introduced, for the first time, a program leading to the M.A. This was an important step because it attracted some of the principals and senior teachers from the Montreal schools, thus serving as a stimulus to the improvement of the whole educational system. After six years, Clarke was succeeded by John Hughes, whose experience was also in the United Kingdom and South Africa. The graduate program continued and the requirement for the high school certificate was raised to a full year of post-graduate professional study.

the bachelor of education degree

In the years following World War II, the three teacher-training programs expanded rapidly like most other sections of the university. The School for Teachers re-established at Macdonald College, attracted larger numbers of men; the enrolment rose in the high-school training courses at McGill; and the McGill School of Physical Education launched its degree program with a class of both men and women candidates. Basic changes were necessary, however, and they were begun even before the retirement of Dean Laird in 1949. It was now clear that new forces were challenging the teacher and, indeed, educational leaders generally.

Even in the early 1950’s the schools had begun to feel the impact of the explosion of knowledge, an increased demand for mastery of technical skills, the revolution in communications and, with the wave of immigration from Europe, the new importance of human relationships and understanding. Popu-

lar demand for education grew louder and more insistent, and, while the schools multiplied, the recruitment of teachers failed to keep pace. There were impatient calls for emergency measures, such as lower standards of admission and shorter periods of preparation and, with the salary levels then prevailing, careers in teaching were less attractive than the wide opportunities in business, industry or the other professions.

It was at this juncture that McGill took the bold step of adopting the degree of Bachelor of Education. Recruitment was only one of the problems in the teaching profession: retention was equally serious. It seemed probable that those with a full professional preparation before entering on a teaching career would remain in it permanently. Moreover new social patterns were emerging and large numbers of young women were anxious to return to the classroom once their family responsibilities permitted them to do so. The new degree was carefully designed in consultation with the academic departments in the Faculty of Arts and Science, school board officials, and professional leaders. The academic session was extended by two months in each of four years, so that the required curriculum for an Arts or Science degree could be placed side by side with the professional courses and experience. In this way, a new type of teacher preparation was added to those already offered in the university.

The Hepburn Committee had pointed to the need for co-ordination among the various programs being offered and, in 1955, this was effected at McGill with the establishment of the Institute of Education. In the years following, the one-year program for graduates and the School of Physical Education were transferred to the Macdonald campus. These changes were effected in 1957, when the university celebrated the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Normal School and the first degrees of Bachelor of Education were awarded.

On the occasion of the centenary celebration, Principal F. Cyril James noted that all types of teacher training were now co-ordinated within the Institute and, he said:

It is already apparent that the new programme makes it possible for the University to offer teachers in training a much greater opportunity, and one that can help them face their professional responsibilities with a richer cargo of wisdom and knowledge.

This is a fitting celebration of a century of devoted effort by all those who have gone before us and pointed us the way.¹⁷

the second century

New challenges were close at hand. The first of two Canadian Conferences on Education was held in Ottawa in 1958. It focused public attention on the national aspect of teacher supply and preparation, educational finance, manpower needs and new teaching media. In 1959 Commonwealth leaders met at Oxford to discuss mutual aid through exchanges of students and staff and by technical assistance. The Institute of Education was represented at both these meetings, so that McGill was drawn into close and direct contact with contemporary movements both at home and abroad. Assistance was offered to Nigeria. For example, Professor C. Wayne Hall spent a year in Lagos as consultant on teacher education, while successive groups of Nigerian students came to Macdonald College. Professor H. D. Morrison also served overseas, first in Nigeria, then in Kenya. For several years, the staff of the Institute assisted the External Aid Office in briefing sessions for Canadian teachers going to foreign postings.

Perhaps the greatest challenge, however, because it was the one which directly affected the educational system of Quebec, was the comprehensive reform undertaken by the Parent Commission. Both by representation on the Commission itself* and by the direct interest and support of the university, McGill demonstrated its continued concern for the welfare and prosperity of the Quebec community. The first of the public hearings were held in Redpath Hall and the first brief to be presented was from McGill.

The task of the commission was a formidable one. A million and a quarter students, divided by religion and language, were being taught by 70,000 teachers in 9,000 private and public institutions. These must be brought within the framework of a modern educational system which opened the schools of Quebec "to every child regardless of religious belief, racial origin, cultural background, social position, age, sex, physical or mental health."⁸ The services must not only be extended, the structure must be redesigned, taking into account not only the direction of change but the rate of change in the nineteen sixties and seventies. The reforms raised problems of finance,

*Professor David Munroe, author of this paper, then Director of the Institute of Education, was Vice-Chairman of the Parent Commission. — Ed.

pedagogy and administration but the key to all solutions, according to the commission, was the teacher. It warned,

The public of Québec must rid itself of an old habit of mind, by granting teachers sufficient prestige and remuneration to attract a great number of able candidates to the profession and keep them in it permanently... Thus it is urgent and necessary to raise the status of the teaching profession, to select candidates for it carefully, and to improve the program of training.¹⁹

To meet this new level of professional responsibility, the commission demanded that all teacher training be brought within the structure of the universities and that minimum standards should be raised to the level of the undergraduate degree.

Having pioneered both in the integration of teacher-training within the university structure and in the development of a bachelor of education program, McGill is well prepared for these responsibilities. Further steps have now been taken to ensure success by the establishment of a Faculty of Education and by its return to the Montreal campus, where staff and students may enjoy the support of a full range of academic departments. The Faculty also broadened and extended its graduate offerings to include programs leading to the M.Ed., and doctors degrees in certain areas. Through the years, McGill has been consistent in discharging the responsibility it accepted in 1857. As the first prospectus stated:

Every effort will be made by all connected with the institution to perform efficiently the important task.

references

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
7. John Calam, "McGill Trains Teachers," *The Teacher's Magazine*, Vol. XLV, No. 223 (September, 1964), pp. 21-22.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
9. D. C. Munroe, "The Education of Teachers Seventy Years Ago," *Educational Record*, Vol. LXVII, No. 1 (January-March, 1951), p. 18.
10. John Adams, *The Protestant School System in the Province of Quebec*, Montreal: Renouf, 1902, p. 32.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
15. Edgar Collard, "Sir William Peterson's Principalship," in Hugh MacLennan, ed., *McGill, The Story of a University*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1960, p. 90.
16. W. A. F. Hepburn, *Report of the Quebec Protestant Education Survey*, Department of Education, Quebec, 1938, p. 190.
17. *A Century of Teacher Education, 1857-1957* — addresses delivered during the celebrations of the centenary of the McGill Normal School. The Institute of Education, McGill University, 1957.
18. *Report of the Royal Commission of Enquiry on Education*, Quebec: Government Printer, Vol. 1 (1963), p. 75.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Ben Wicks

ON EDUCATION



'Who is it?'



"Lovely day like this. How come you're not outside rioting?"