

C. Hawkins

# A Storm in a teAQUPE

Shortly after the Committee of Rectors of the Universities of Quebec was formed, it established a Committee of Deans of the Faculties of Education (*le Comité de Coordination de l'Enseignement Pédagogique*). On June 9, 1965 the Committee of Deans called for the formation of a Quebec association of professors of education. Consequently, on July 2, 1965 ten members of departments and faculties of education in Quebec met to consider the matter. After three meetings they established a Committee for a Founding Congress, composed of Messrs. G. Dussault (Laval), A. LeSieur (Montreal), M. Margot (Sherbrooke) and G. McKay (McGill). This committee drafted a provisional constitution to be presented at the founding congress. Members of the faculties and departments were summoned to the founding congress in the *Institut Familial Sainte-Marie*, Drummondville, on Saturday October 30, 1965.

Then the fun began.

## the elusive formula

The Committee of Deans, in giving impetus to the movement, had seen the need for coordinating professional action among their faculties. The Deans believed that professors of education needed a voice in the discussion which the government was inaugurating on matters of education and they were convinced that such a voice could best be heard from a single professional organization. The Deans were doubtless persuaded also that the proposed concentration of teacher training in the Universities would enhance the value of such an organization. The association which was subsequently

formed has in no way been the creature of administrators; let it be remembered, however, that the Deans inspired and have consistently supported the association.

The committee of July 2, 1965 affirmed the need to coordinate professional action and to secure a voice in the making of decisions — particularly in view of the expanding rôle of faculties of education. Discussions on the relative importance of professional enrichment and of political action resulted in the formulation of a principal aim which was deemed sufficiently broad to encourage both activities: the advancement of the studies of education necessary in the preparation of teachers (*l'avancement des sciences de l'éducation nécessaires à la formation des maîtres*).

The Committee for the Founding Congress drafted a constitution which was designed to incorporate the wishes of the larger group. The greatest difficulty involved the definition of eligibility for membership.

For the majority of Quebec universities, Education is a relatively new discipline. Faculties of Education since their inauguration have in the main been devoted to research. Now that the faculties would be required to assume the responsibility of training teachers, the composition of the faculties would inevitably change. The problem facing the Committee was to provide for the period of transition: to ensure that members of the new association would meet high academic standards and yet, at the same time, not to exclude by specific mention people who ultimately might have a part to play in the broader context of faculty responsibilities.

The Committee laboured hard and long; finally, it was hoped, a formula was found.

Then came Drummondville.

## **the association of quebec university professors of education**

The formula would not work.

From 150 to 200 professors of education gathered at Drummondville. They had no quarrel with the proposed objectives of the association. They even agreed for the most part on who should be eligible for membership. They could not agree on how membership should be defined. For five hours they offered proposals and counter-proposals. Finally

they returned the problem to the Founding Committee which was to re-examine the matter and call another founding meeting where they would present a revised draft constitution.

On January 15, 1966, at Laval, the Association of Quebec University Professors of Education (AQUPE) was founded — complete with constitution which included, finally, an acceptable definition of membership.

On January 23, 1970, the constitution was amended to provide a less restrictive definition of eligibility for membership.

A storm in a teacup? Not at all. Rather, an example of a sincere effort to meet existing conditions and a subsequent readiness to adapt to change. For, by 1970, it was apparent that the Association was not menaced by a wave of applications from unqualified people. Indeed, the task was and continues to be the recruitment of all qualified members.

### study or action?

The next crisis for AQUPE occurred in the winter of 1966-67. Disagreement arose among the officers regarding priority of aims: professional study and advancement or corporate action? The president, rightly or wrongly, believed that his task was to preside over the discussions rather than to take a stand. It became clear, however, that the continued existence of the young association was in jeopardy. Finally, a questionnaire was distributed to the members. A large proportion replied. The great majority favoured maintaining AQUPE and endorsed the dual aim of study and action. They supported the view that the Association should go on record regarding important issues in education as they occurred.

Unfortunately, for a time, the disagreement had paralyzed the Board of Administration. It depleted the ranks of the Executive, some of whom felt that they could not conscientiously continue to serve while they were in disagreement with general policies.

Professional advancement has been sought by AQUPE largely through study sessions, colloquia, and public lectures by authorities in various fields of education. For the most recent events AQUPE has been generously aided by the government *Institut de Recherche Pédagogique* and by the *Fondation Perras*. Ten meetings of this nature have been sponsored

by AQUPE since May 1966. They have been held in Laval, McGill, Montreal, Sherbrooke, and Sir George Williams Universities.

The impact of the meetings upon the public, upon the education milieu, upon Faculties of Education, upon the members of AQUPE would be very difficult to assess. Tangible results can be found in publication. A volume of reports was published after each of two meetings: November 18, 1967 "Practice Teaching in Quebec" and October 26, 1968, "Quebec's Children" (the pre-school child) — the latter with the help of IRP. Reports inform us that "Quebec's Children" has had great influence in shaping policy for the Quebec Department of Education at the level of pre-school education. A paper by Professor E. Sheffield on "Research in Education in Canada" (September 11, 1969), constituting an inventory of work in the field, aroused widespread interest. This address, together with other papers by Professors P. Ricoeur, "The Future of Higher Education in Canada" (May 28, 1970) and L. Dion, "Reasons for Reforming the University" (October 23, 1970), are due to be published under the auspices of the *Fondation Perras*.

In the domain of professional activity, AQUPE has secured representation on the *Comité de la formation des maîtres* of the Quebec Department of Education, on the Executive of the Canadian Council of Research in Education, and in the planning committee of the *Institut de Recherche Pédagogique*. AQUPE has been consulted by such bodies as the Superior Council of Education of Quebec, has been represented at meetings of various education bodies and has volunteered recommendations on several occasions to education administrators.

Much remains to be done before AQUPE can be sure that it is in the process of realizing its potential. The Association, for example, has had difficulty setting up internal committees to investigate matters which the membership believes to be important. One drawback endemic to educational endeavours everywhere is a shortage of funds. As a consequence, the Association lacks, among other things, a permanent secretariat without which an association like AQUPE is severely handicapped.

The new executive, recently installed for the period 1970-1972 under the presidency of Rev. J.-M. Hamelin (Laval), inherits a legacy of recommendations from the outgoing administration. Prominent among these is the establishment

of a journal following the expressed wish of a majority of members. (Will this be a rival to the *McGill Journal of Education*? Let us prefer to consider it a complement.)

## regret, disdain and the language problem

Sad to say, we have a language problem in AQUPE. It is difficult to attribute the responsibility elsewhere than to the English-speaking members of our Faculties, who have not noticeably rallied with great enthusiasm and in vast numbers to the banner of AQUPE.

True, several English-speaking members have played a prominent part in the early activities of AQUPE: Professors C. Bockus, M. Braham, K. Jobling, E. Lofthouse, G. McKay, and F. Stinson to mention only a few. Others have shown readiness to serve if needed. One recent arrival from the United States has taken great pains to improve his command of French and to attend AQUPE meetings faithfully. Generally, however, many of our English-speaking colleagues seem to view AQUPE with a mixture of rueful regret and disdain. Do they regret that they cannot participate more fully, and do they despair of an organization where, they believe, their needs are not met?

Perhaps the remedy lies in a reappraisal of the functioning of AQUPE and a new evaluation of the potential contribution of English-speaking members.

Officially, AQUPE is a bilingual association. The full title is "L'Association des Professeurs d'Education des Universités du Québec — The Association of Quebec University Professors of Education (APEUQ — AQUPE)." In all activities, members may use either language, and may request translation of a statement made in the other language. All resolutions, motions and recommendations are to be drawn up in French or English with mandatory translation in the other language. The official text, as in many other organizations, is French.

In practice, English has dominated a few meetings where the majority of those present were English-speaking and even where the principal speaker was English-speaking though the other participants were in the main French-speaking. Naturally, in most meetings, French has prevailed.

French-speaking members have generously and with very good grace respected the use of English by those who wish to

speak that language. Translations have been forthcoming where essential — but it will be appreciated that no association should be expected to hold up on-going activities for a word-by-word translation of every transaction. The situation at meetings is such that monolingual English speakers can function adequately in the Association while those with even a minimum of proficiency in French are gratified at the extent to which they can participate.

And the participation of all is needed. If there is any field in which total participation by all Quebecers is necessary, that field is education. Quebec's education problems are the problems of all Quebecers. Quebec's education depends on all Quebec educators. A strong professional association of professors of education cannot fail to make a positive contribution to the development of education in Quebec — and to be strong, that association needs universal support among professors of education.

## Ben Wicks

### ON EDUCATION



'And isn't it time the teachers had another strike?'



'Excusez-moi. May I go to school, please?'