

The History of Higher Education in the Province of Prince Edward Island

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In a recent work entitled *Changing Patterns of Higher Education in Canada* edited by Robin S. Harris and published by the University of Toronto Press in 1966, Monsignor H. J. Somers introduces his treatise on the Atlantic Provinces with the following generalization:

The history of education in these provinces is a fascinating story of geography, racial rivalry, politics, religion, and education. I have placed education last because many times the other factors were the major influences in determining educational policy, or lack of policy. Normally the educational development has not been planned but has simply evolved in response to local circumstances. It is only within the past century that definite patterns have emerged and hardened into systems, whether at the elementary, secondary, or university level. The First World War and the great depression of the 1930's did little to change the approach to education, except to make more meager the educational facilities, and more austere the lives of those who devoted themselves to the education of youth.¹

The history of higher education in the Province of Prince Edward Island is no exception. The apparently radical changes which have been effected in the structure of post-secondary education in the Island Province over the past few years, when viewed from the historical perspective, may be seen as the result of an almost two-hundred-year history of attempts on the part of the government to provide a provincial institution of higher learning supported by public funds which would serve the needs of the Island people.

The First Hundred Years: 1720-1820

During the first one hundred years of the colonial period (1720-1820) there were few, if any, practical steps taken on the part of either Church or State to provide higher education for the youth of the Island Colony. No less than thirty priests, we are told, administered to the needs of the population during the period of the French regime, yet the records of the French Archives, covering the history of l'Île-Saint-Jean from the time of the arrival of the first French families in 1720

¹ H. J. Somers, "The Atlantic Provinces," *Changing Patterns of Higher Education in Canada*. Edited by Robert S. Harris (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), pp. 17-18.

until their deportation in 1758, do not contain a single reference to education.² Concern for education had been expressed before the British settlements were made in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The Imperial Government, by an Order-in-Council dated August 26, 1767, ordered thirty acres of land to be set aside in each township for the use of a schoolmaster.³ Two years later, when the Island became separated from Nova Scotia, the first Governor, Walter Patterson, received special instructions to the effect

... that no schoolmaster be henceforth permitted to come from England and to keep school in the said Island without the license of the said Bishop of London, that no other person now there or that shall come from other parts shall be admitted to keep school in that our said Island of St. John without our license first obtained.⁴

Yet, during Patterson's seventeen years in office, there is no mention in official documents of any concrete form of commitment to education on the part of the government.

The topic of education apparently had not been brought up in the General Assembly until Bishop Charles Inglis of Halifax presented an official memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council on the subject during his visit to the Island in 1789.⁵ In the March session of the Legislature the following year Lieutenant-Governor Edmund Fanning underscored the necessity for making

² Heber R. Matthews, "Education in Prince Edward Island" (unpublished Master's thesis, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, 1938, p. 2); D. C. Harvey, *The French Regime in Prince Edward Island* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926). This narrative is based upon transcripts from original sources as found in the manuscript division of the Public Archives of Canada. The material is arranged in two main series copied from Archives Nationales and Archives des Colonies in Paris, namely Series C¹¹, and Series B. The Series C¹¹ contains official and miscellaneous correspondence and other papers from Canada, Ile Royale, Ile Saint Jean, etc; Series B, a register of despatches, memoranda, and other papers sent by the King and the Minister to official, ecclesiastical, and private persons.

³ Canada Public Archives, *Report Concerning Canadian Archives for the year 1905*, Vol. I (Imperial Orders in Council Re P.E.I., 1767, Pt. II), Sessional Paper No. 18, A 1906, "Land Grants in P.E.I., 1767," pp. 3-4.

⁴ Canada, Public Archives, Colonial Office Records, *Entry Books of Commissions, Instructions, Correspondence, etc., P.E.I., 1769-1793*, "Instructions to our Trusty and well beloved Walter Patterson, Esquire, and Captain General and Governor-in-Chief in and over our Island of Saint John, and the territories adjacent thereto in America..." Sec. 33, p. 69.

⁵ P.A.C., MS9 C9, 1789, "The Memorial of Charles by Divine permission [sic] Bishop of Nova Scotia and Dependencies to His Excellency Edmund Fanning Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief in and over His Majesty's Island of St. John," May 22, 1789, pp. 232-233

provision for the education of the youth of the Colony.⁶ Although the House cordially endorsed his recommendation, no practical steps were taken at that time. The Lieutenant-Governor's recommendation year after year that provision and endowment be made for the permanent establishment of an institution of higher learning "for the better education and instruction of the youth of the Island" met with no practical response.⁷ Finally on September 12, 1804, Lieutenant-Governor Fanning

...felt it his duty on his approaching departure for England and before he retired from the administration of the Government of this Island to submit to the opinion and advice of the members of the Board the important and interesting expediency and propriety of making a reservation for Ten Town Lots for the Site *[sic]* of a Public Seminary of religion and learning to be Established in this Town by the august name of Kent College in honor of His Royal Highness *[sic]*, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent ...⁸

Accordingly, a parcel of land in Charlottetown was granted to the trustees

...for the purpose of laying the Foundation of a College for the Education of youth in the learned languages, the liberal arts and sciences and all Branches of useful and polite literature ...⁹

A second grant was made to the designated trustees at the same meeting "for a Botanic Garden and for houses for the residence of the President and Professors of said College."¹⁰ Although grants for the two-fold project were ordered to be prepared at that executive meeting, the college did not become a reality for almost two decades.

At the opening of the Legislature in 1820 Lieutenant-Governor Charles Douglas Smith announced that the Kent College School was almost ready and that he was prepared to offer financial assistance.

A commencement is about to take place without delay of a system of necessary Education on the National plan, highly conducive to the

⁶ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of His Majesty's Island of St. John*, 1790, "Speech of His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor Fanning to both Houses of Assembly, March 22, 1790," p. 211.

⁷ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1796, "Speech from the Throne," February 2, 1796, p. 196; P.A.C., C.O.R., P.E.I. *Original Correspondence - Secretary of State*, No. 17-1801, "Journal of the House of Assembly of His Majesty's Island Prince Edward, 1801," July 13, 1801, pp. 92-93.

⁸ P.A.C., MS9 C9, 1804, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber September 12, 1804," p. 434.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

interests of the rising generation, and which will be supported on my part in every reasonable degree that pecuniary means at my disposal may be considered equal to.¹¹

This school, known as the National or Madras School or more popularly Breading's School after the first principal James Breading, opened the following year, 1821. It was conducted according to the Lancastrian system under the superintendence of the Committee of the Society for Promoting the Gospel.¹² The master's salary was made up of the fees paid by the pupils, supplemented by a grant from the provincial treasury which varied from year to year until 1855 when the school was absorbed in the newly-founded Normal School and the office of Master of the National School was abolished.

Thus it was that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century the "Kent College" school emerged as the first institution theoretically dedicated to higher learning on the Island. During the thirty-five years of its existence, however, this school probably did not achieve an academic status above the common school level.

The Central Academy and Saint Andrew's College

The first "Act for the Encouragement of Education in the Different Counties and Districts of the Island" was passed in 1825.¹³ When the Legislature met four years later, it was clear that concrete steps were being taken toward the foundation of two institutions of higher learning in the Colony – a Government institution and a Roman Catholic diocesan institution. In his Speech from the Throne, Lieutenant-Governor John Ready urged the necessity for classical schools:

Public schools are increasing in number under the operation of the present School Act and their beneficial effects are most sensibly felt. The Act, however, as it relates to the organization of Classical Schools appears susceptible of improvement, with the view of opening to the youth of the Colony the means of receiving a more extensive course of instruction ...¹⁴

and suggested plans for a Central Academy in Charlottetown. During the same session, the Rt. Rev. Angus Bernard MacEachern, first Catholic Bishop of Charlottetown, advanced a claim for a government grant in aid of a Catholic

¹¹ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of His Majesty's Island Prince Edward, 1820*, "Speech from the Throne," July 25, 1820.

¹² *Prince Edward Island Register*, I, September 13, 1823.

¹³ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of His Majesty's Island Prince Edward, 1825*, January 26, 1825; *Laws of P.E.I.*, 5 Geo. IV, c. 5 (1825).

¹⁴ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of His Majesty's Island Prince Edward, 1829*, "Speech from the Throne," March 5, 1829, p. 3.

college at Saint Andrew's. That year the members of the legislature passed "an Act for the Establishing of an Academy at Charlottetown," and a second act to authorize a loan to erect the necessary building.¹⁵ As regards the Bishop's request, the Committee appointed to study the entire question of education decided that since

...the establishment under consideration of a Seminary for Classical Education in Charlottetown shall be quite free and open to the youth of all persuasions, they cannot at present recommend any sum for the support of a Grammar School at St. Andrew's under the tuition of Catholic clergymen.¹⁶

The establishment of a Catholic institution of higher learning on Prince Edward Island was a dream envisaged by Bishop MacEachern many years before Catholic emancipation was adopted by the Parliament of Great Britain. In 1794 Father MacEachern with the cooperation of his parishioners had purchased a farm at St. Andrew's to be paid for by assessing the families of each parish a certain fixed sum per annum.¹⁷ A diocesan college on this site to prepare boys for the priesthood was to be the climax of his long-range plan.

When Charlottetown was constituted a separate diocese the Bishop could no longer look abroad for priests and took definite steps to establish a college for the education of the clergy.¹⁸ The question of government aid for his project had been summarily disposed of by the Legislature earlier in the year and in the summer of 1830 the Bishop met with leading figures of the diocese to devise ways and means to educate the youth not only for the Church, but for any other secular employment. Accordingly the parochial house at St. Andrew's was fitted for his new purpose and on the thirtieth of November, 1831, it was formally opened under the name of St. Andrew's College. The *Royal Gazette* carried the following news story:

We understand that the new Seminary called St. Andrew's College, at the head of Hillsborough was opened on the 30th November, 1831, being St. Andrew's Day. This institution established under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Charlottetown, and the Right Reverend Doctor Fraser, of Nova Scotia, is presided over by Reverend M. Walsh, a Roman Catholic Clergyman, of whose literary attainments report speaks very highly. A Professor of Mathematics has also been appointed ...¹⁹

¹⁵ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 10 Geo. IV, c. 9 (1829); 10 Geo. IV c. 19 (1829).

¹⁶ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of His Majesty's Island Prince Edward*, 1829, March 17, 1829.

¹⁷ John C. MacMillan, *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island* (Quebec: L'Evenement Printing Co., 1905), p. 85.

¹⁸ Archives, Bishop's Residence, Charlottetown, P.E.I., "Minutes of a Meeting held at St. Andrew's," June 29, 1829.

¹⁹ *The Royal Gazette*, December 20, 1831.

When the College had been in operation about a year, Bishop MacEachern deeded the church property at St. Andrew's to the board of trustees. The deed was executed on January 18, 1833, and three days later the Honourable Mr. Brenan, one of the Members for King's County, presented to the House of Assembly a petition praying for the incorporation of the new trustees and their successors in office.²⁰ One provision of the Act was that Trustees should keep a Register for by-laws, college rules, minutes of meetings and lists of contributors to the funds of the Institution and this Register should always be open to the inspection of the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly. Also, by the terms of the Act,

No religious test was to be admitted, no interference was to be tolerated with the religious connections of the students and only the Catholic boys should be compelled to assist at the services of the Catholic Church.²¹

The Act of Incorporation passed both branches of the Legislature and received the assent of the Governor on the sixth of April, 1833.²² Just one year later the Central Academy received its Royal Charter.²³

When the Central Academy formally opened on January 18, 1836, with the Reverend Charles Lloyd, an Anglican clergyman, as principal, resentment was aroused among the Catholic portion of the population. Just a few years previously when the Bishop petitioned the Legislature for a grant in favor of St. Andrew's College, he was told that the house could not vote any assistance for a school "under the tuition of Catholic clergymen." Now the government not only built but actually endowed an institution of a similar nature under the tuition of Protestant clergymen and Catholic taxpayers were obliged to bear their share of the expenses. It is true in March of that same year a Committee of the whole house voted a grant in aid of the funds of St. Andrews:

Resolved that it is the opinion of this Committee that a sum not exceeding Fifty Pounds be granted, and paid to the Trustees of Saint Andrew's College, in aid of the fund of that Institution.²⁴

and the amount was paid annually until the institution was closed in 1845. However, it was the contention of the Catholics that the annual grant of fifty

²⁰ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, 1833, January 21, 1833.

²¹ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 3 Wm IV, c. 17 (1833).

²² P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, 1833, April 6, 1833.

²³ "Royal Charter of 1834," *Royal Commission on Higher Education for P.E.I.*, Appendix A, pp. 45-49. The complete text as cited here is dated May 17, 1834.

²⁴ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, 1836, March 4, 1836, p. 29.

pounds

... was not at all equivalent to the amount of taxes wrung from Catholic sources, and applied to other denominational purposes by the selection of a Protestant minister for the teaching staff of the new Academy.²⁵

Later in the session of 1836 a despatch was received from London stating that His Majesty's Council had disallowed the Act of Incorporation granted to the Trustees of St. Andrew's College in 1833.²⁶ A special Committee was appointed to study the document containing the reasons for disallowance.²⁷ The Committee reported that the objections were mainly of a technical nature and recommended that a new bill, worded to meet the views of His Majesty's Council, might be introduced before the end of the present session.²⁸ Acting on this suggestion, the House repealed the Act of 1833. The Act in revised form was introduced and passed almost without discussion.²⁹

By 1836, therefore, two government-endorsed institutions of higher learning had emerged—the Central Academy and St. Andrew's College—each in response to local needs.

The Normal School

The next step in the evolution of higher education took place the following year. At the fourth session of the fourteenth General Assembly, Sir John Harvey, after congratulating the Colony on “the possession of an Establishment created by its own liberality, where its youth can receive instruction in higher branches,” raised the question of the feasibility of some practical arrangement whereby the Central Academy might serve as a Normal School for the teachers of the district schools.³⁰ The reports of the first Visitor of Schools John McNeil revealed that the plight of the teachers was a sorry one indeed. His report for the year 1839 is typical. It reads in part:

The fact is certain, that whilst the mechanical arts have their period of apprenticeship, and the liberal professions their periods of study and probation, whoever will, may enter upon the profession of an instructor of youth unprepared, and often unauthorized. Here, when everything else

²⁵ John C. MacMillan, *The History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island from 1835 till 1891* (Quebec: L'Evenement Printing Co., 1913), p. 5.

²⁶ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, 1836, February 25, 1836, p. 52.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, March 22, 1836, p. 71.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 18, 1836, p. 83.

²⁹ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 6 Wm IV, c. 24 (1836).

³⁰ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, 1837, p. 7.

fails any man is ready made for a schoolmaster.³¹

Similarly an editorial appeared in the *Royal Gazette*:

... We cannot forbear from again expressing our conviction, not merely of the *utility* but of the absolute *necessity* of a Normal School, in connection with the Educational system of the Colony. If we expect to spread the blessing of a good education throughout the land, the seeds which have lately been sown in the Central Academy must be nourished, and brought to maturity by the support of the people at large. The Legislature must grant means for the proper support of a Normal School.³²

In its report to the House of Legislature in 1847 (the following year), the Board of Education stressed "the absolute necessity of a Normal School."³³ Five years later the Liberal Party boasted that by its education Act (1852) it had led the way in providing free education in the North American Colonies. The main criticism levelled against the Act by the Conservatives was its failure to provide for the professional training of teachers at the Central Academy.³⁴

The first positive step toward the realization of the Normal School was made in 1853 (the year after the Free Education Act was passed) when Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Bannerman, on the advice of his Council, attempted to secure a competent school inspector from an institution in England. Because of the small salary offered, all had declined. The Council then recommended that the Governor communicate with Stow's Seminary in Glasgow, Scotland, and offer a salary of two hundred pounds sterling for a man who could, in addition to his other duties, lecture on agricultural chemistry, and had a practical knowledge of agriculture. In response Mr. John M. Stark, of Stow's Normal School, came from Glasgow and became Inspector of Schools for the province in accordance with the act of 1852.³⁵

In his report for the year 1854, Mr. Stark stressed the necessity of a Normal School for securing the training of teachers, and the introduction of a uniform system of education.³⁶ Regarding the teacher situation, he said:

³¹ John McNeill, "First Report of the Visitor appointed to inspect the District Schools throughout the Island," *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, January 1, 1839.

³² Reprinted in *The Constitutionalist*, Charlottetown, July 25, 1846.

³³ E. R. Humphreys, "Report of the Board of Education to the House of Legislature, February 15, 1847," *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, 1847, Appendix G.

³⁴ *The Islander*, Charlottetown, September 17, 1852; *Laws of P.E.I.* 15 Via, c. 13 (1852).

³⁵ "Letter to the Lieutenant-Governor," *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, 1856, Appendix 1.

³⁶ John Stark, "Extract of the Report of the Visitor of Schools," *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, 1855, Appendix M, p. 1.

I could scarce have believed that there could have been in any part of the world so numerous a staff of teachers where so few had even the shadow of a qualification for their important office. With some honorable exceptions, here and there, the education of the children of this community is in the hands of beardless youths, and of uneducated, untrained men of every age and calibre. A meagre knowledge of English grammar, geography, arithmetic and mensuration, with scarce the power, in many instances, to write a sentence grammatically and orthographically correct, is a preposterous title to the office of a schoolmaster.³⁷

After much agitation on the part of the new School Inspector, provision was made for a school of training for teachers by the Act of February 19, 1855.³⁸ On October 1st of the following year the Normal School was opened and on the twentieth of the month a Model School was incorporated with the Normal School.³⁹ It was this institution that unfortunately ushered in a period of religious and political strife which thwarted the Island's progressive educational measures in the field of higher education in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Soirée held at the inauguration of the Normal School has been referred to as the "famous and infamous Normal School Soirée." There were famous speeches by famous men. The opening address, for example, was delivered by His Excellency Sir Dominick Daly. "No circumstances could have occurred, with respect to the interests of this Colony," the Lieutenant-Governor said

to afford me higher gratification than our meeting here this day to inaugurate, with due observances, the Model and Normal School of this City. Prince Edward Island is distinguished – highly distinguished – among the British Provinces of North America, for having taken the lead in establishing... a system of Free Education; and now we are met to inaugurate an institution for the training of teachers, by a system, the value of which is now recognized and acknowledged by almost every civilized country in the world... and, this day, in which we inaugurate the first Normal School in Prince Edward Island, may justly be regarded as the commencement of an auspicious era, whence to date in future the origin of many blessings, and the commencement of a perpetual course of improvement and prosperity to the people of this Colony ...⁴⁰

This was followed by a number of congratulatory speeches by educators and politicians alike. The Honourable George Coles waxed eloquently:

I account this day the proudest of my life: for in the inauguration of the Charlottetown Normal and Model School, I behold the completion, as

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 18 Vic., c. 12 (1855).

³⁹ John Stark, "Report of the Late Inspector of Schools," *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, 1857, March 9, 1857, Appendix V.

⁴⁰ Dominick Daly, *Addresses Delivered at the Normal School Soirée*, October 14, 1856, p. 9.

a means for the universal diffusion of knowledge among the youth of this Colony, of the system of Free Education which I have had the great honour of being privileged to introduce into this my native Island.⁴¹

It was, however, the speech by Inspector Stark, the newly appointed Principal of the Normal School, which was to usher in that “infamous issue” – the Bible controversy – which militated against educational advancement on all levels for years to come.

In the course of his address, Mr. Stark noted:

The education to be imparted here in the Normal School will embrace what constitutes all true education; namely, Moral, Intellectual, and Physical Training. The Moral Department will be carried on by the opening and closing of the Institution with prayer, according to the regulation of the Board of Education; by a daily Bible Lesson (the first exercise of the day after opening) in which the truths and facts of Scripture will be brought before the children’s minds by illustrations and picturing out in words, in language simple and easy to understand, from which everything sectarian or controversial shall be carefully excluded.⁴²

It was this statement and commentaries upon it in the public press which served as a warning to Catholics and Bishop MacDonald wrote a letter on November seventh, 1856, to the Secretary of the Board of Education expressing his concern regarding the proposed changes in the teacher training program.⁴³ John MacNeill, Secretary of the Board of Education, in his reply expressed the solicitude of the Board that the rights of conscience should be everywhere respected, and that the Law for the encouragement of Free Education should be impartially administered.⁴⁴ The Honourable George Coles assured His Lordship by letter that the remarks of Mr. Stark had been made on his own personal responsibility.⁴⁵ Although the Bishop declared himself perfectly satisfied with the assurances received from the Board of Education and the Leader of the Government, the matter did not end here.⁴⁶ Two episodes in particular are pertinent.

Early in 1857 John Stark made a public statement to the press to the effect that he had been directed by the Government to introduce the Bible as a class book in the schools.⁴⁷ George Coles denied this. Relations between the Principal of the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*,

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴³ *The Parliamentary Reporter*, 1855-1856, March 20, 1857, pp. 53-65. The complete letter is reproduced in Macmillan, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 123-125, as well as in *The Examiner*, April 9, 1857.

⁴⁴ *The Parliamentary Reporter*, 1855-1856, March 20, 1857, pp. 53-65. The complete letter is reproduced in Macmillan, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 123-125

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *The Examiner*, February 9, 1857.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1857. Quoted from *Haszard’s Gazette*, Feb. 18, 1857.

Normal School and the Government grew more tense. Stark wrote to the Government expressing his desire to be relieved at once from his duties as superintendent of the Normal School and announced at the same time his intention to relinquish all his duties in May of that year. The Government answered his letter of resignation by intimating to him that he was at once relieved from all his duties, since a part of them had become so disagreeable to him.⁴⁸ An editorial in the *Examiner*, entitled “The Politico-Religious Protector,” claimed that an apologist in Stark’s behalf had eulogised him in the *Islander* as “a loyal and liberal Protestant of the Scottish Presbyterian stamp” who was “dismissed from his office by a Liberal Government” and his dismissal was owing to “his firm Protestantism” and his “unwillingness to become a partner to Romish intrigue.”⁴⁹

The other episode, not unrelated to the first, was to have far more detrimental effects on educational progress. Bishop MacDonald’s private letter of inquiry to the Board of Education had been copied by a Protestant member of the Board – a minister – and its contents were read at a public Bible meeting in Charlottetown on February 13, 1857.⁵⁰ This was but one of the many Bible meetings that were being held by the ministers of various Protestant denominations in an attempt to revivify the efforts initiated by the Bible Society in 1845 to introduce the Bible as a text book in the Central Academy and the public schools of the Island.⁵¹ The issue was reintroduced in the 1857 session of the Legislature when an amendment to the Education Act was proposed providing that the Bible should be read daily as a class book in the public schools of the Colony.⁵²

In the animated discussion which followed the introduction of the “Bible Question,” the Honourable Edward Whelan was spokesman for the Catholic stance:

... We have had a system of public instruction in this Colony for many years, and for the last five or six years the freest and most liberal system known to any of the British Provinces. I certainly think we are not behind our fellow-subjects abroad on the score of religion; and why should we now seek to disturb the public harmony, and impair the efficiency of our educational system, by setting Catholics and Protestants against each other on matters of religious faith?⁵³

On the fourth of March the first issue of *The Protector and Christian Witness* was launched espousing the Protestant cause against the Catholic Church and the Liberal Party with which it was identified at that period. The *Examiner* presented the Catholic case. The unceasing efforts of the ministerial association to introduce

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, March 23, 1857.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, March 23, 1857.

⁵⁰ Peter McCourt, *Biographical Sketch of the Honourable Edward Whelan*, together with a compilation of his principal speeches, Charlottetown, P.E.I., 1888, p. 139; *The Examiner*, February 16, 1857.

⁵¹ P.E.I. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1845, p. 20.

⁵² *The Parliamentary Reporter*, March 16, 1857, pp. 26-27.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, March 20, 1857, p. 62; McCourt, *op. cit.*, pp. 141, 142.

the Bible as a text in the schools were defeated in the 1857 session of the Legislature on a straight party vote. On March 22, 1858, the Committee appointed to study the question was divided on the issue. Chairman McGill cast his vote for it.⁵⁴ In the general election of 1859 the Bible was the rallying cry at the polls and the Liberal party was defeated. The following year (1860) the educational law was amended by a clause which legally authorized the introduction of the Bible into all the public schools.

Saint Dunstan's College and Prince of Wales College

While the Government of Prince Edward Island was involved in providing an institution for the training of teachers, the Right Reverend Bernard D. MacDonald, second Bishop of Charlottetown, was devoting his time and energies toward the realization of a more modern diocesan institution of higher learning closer to the capital city. He closed St. Andrew's College in 1844 and purchased a tract of land on the eastern side of the Malpeque Road, about a mile and a half from Charlottetown, as the site for the new College.⁵⁵ The college was not planned exclusively for the education of candidates for the priesthood, but provided also for those who wished to serve their country in other professions, whether these were political, legal, or medical.⁵⁶ Funds to meet construction costs of the building were almost unobtainable and except for donations from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in France the building probably would not have been completed.⁵⁷ Nine years later, in September 1854, the Bishop issued a pastoral letter announcing the opening of the new college. It was formally opened on January 17, 1855, under the name of St. Dunstan's College with Mr. Angus MacDonald as rector and Mr. James Phelan as his assistant.⁵⁸ The first public closing was held on July 15, 1856, just a very few months previous to the opening of the Normal School. The event was reported in *Haszard's Gazette* and the writer paid public tribute to the excellence of the work being done in the college.⁵⁹

In the meantime the Central Academy had been experiencing its own difficulties. In 1843 the two masters of the Central Academy were dismissed and a bill for the remodelling or better organization of that institution had been

⁵⁴ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.* 1858, March 22, 1858.

⁵⁵ Archives, Bishop's Residence, Charlottetown, P.E.I., "Minutes of meetings held by the Trustees of St. Andrew's College, 1833-1864," February 11, 1845; "Historical Sketch of St. Dunstan's College," *Centennial Booklet and Directory*, Charlottetown, St. Dunstan's Alumni Association, 1954, p. 16.

⁵⁶ Archives, Bishop's Residence, Charlottetown, P.E.I., "Private Correspondence of Bishop Peter McIntyre," 1889.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, "Private Correspondence of Bishop Bernard MacDonald," January 8, 1860.

⁵⁸ Angus MacDonald was ordained a priest in November 1855; James Phelan in August 1856.

⁵⁹ *Haszard's Gazette*, July 28, 1856.

introduced into the legislature.⁶⁰ According to an editorial in the *Islander*

The Legislative Council, it seems, are of the opinion that the alleged inefficiency of the Institution is, principally, to be ascribed to the inharmonious working of the co-ordinate powers of its two Masters, and that the elevating of one to sole general control, and the placing of another in a subordinate position of Usher or Assistant, will be a means of remedying every defect.⁶¹

The editor disagreed. He recalled the purpose of that institution:

... it may never be forgotten that the Central Academy is not, and never was, meant to rank as a common school; and that, though it is not, indeed, intended that it should as yet, aspire to the appellation either of *College* or *University*, it ought ... to be regarded as the *nucleus* of a future university, and should receive that liberal support and consideration which are due to an Educational Establishment of the highest order...⁶²

and proposed an elaborate scheme for the remodelling of the Academy based on the Scottish Burgh Schools. When, however, the topic was debated in the legislature, it was agreed that three teachers be appointed with separate salaries and that fees for instruction in the highest department be increased so that the privileges of attending the institution might be within the reach of all.⁶³

At the opening of the legislature in 1845, Lieutenant-Governor Sir Henry Vere Huntley commented upon "the unwonted position to which the Central Academy has attained under the reorganization of its system lately introduced and carried out with great zeal."⁶⁴ Eleven years later on the occasion of the inauguration of the Normal School in 1856, many speakers expressed the desire that the Academy be raised to the status of a collegiate institution. The subject was brought to the attention of the House by Lieutenant-Governor George Dundas in His Speech from the Throne on February 16, 1860. He spoke of the necessity "of perfecting the system of Education throughout the Island." In particular he invited them to consider

the propriety of re-constructing the arrangements on which the Central Academy is now based, in order that the increasing requirements for instruction in the higher branches of learning may be met, and the usefulness of that establishment augmented.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ *The Islander*, March 10, 1843.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, March, 17, 1843.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, April 7, 1843.

⁶⁴ P.E.I. *Journal of the Legislative Council*, 1845, p. 6.

⁶⁵ P.E.I. *Legislative Assembly, Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, 1860, "Speech from the Throne," February 16, 1860, p. 9.

he debates which followed indicated there was general agreement regarding the need for upgrading the standards of the Central Academy. According to Mr. Haviland:

The Central Academy, as at present constituted, is but a day school for Charlottetown, and the sooner it is placed on a footing of a collegiate institution, the better ...⁶⁶

The Honourable Mr. Coles said:

The Island should have an institution capable of affording an education equal to that which the youth of other Colonies can obtain. I will cheerfully support any measure which may be introduced based on just and equitable principles ...⁶⁷

The late Government, he claimed, had contemplated making alterations in the constitution of the Central Academy but religious feelings were aroused to such a degree that it was not deemed advisable to introduce the changes until the feelings subsided.⁶⁸

An Act was passed during that session of the Legislature to incorporate the Central Academy as a College in Prince Edward Island in which

a first class mathematical, classical and philosophical education may be obtained, as it is not desirable that the natives of this Colony should have to seek in other lands that attainment of a collegiate education.⁶⁹

The name was changed to Prince of Wales College in honour of the visit that year of the then Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. By the terms of this Act the College was placed under a Board of Governors appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. This new development in the government-sponsored institution evoked an immediate response in the assembly from those who had been actively engaged in promoting higher learning in the diocesan institution in the same city for the past five years.

The day before the Prince of Wales College Act was passed, the Honourable Mr. Kelly moved the following rider to the Bill:

And whereas the Roman Catholic inhabitants of this Colony number nearly one half of its entire population, and who for several years now past, have from their own resources without any assistance from the Treasury erected and established a College in the Royalty of Charlottetown,

⁶⁶ *The Parliamentary Reporter containing an abstract of the Debates and Proceedings of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly of P.E.I., 1855--1865*, February 20, 1860, p. 7.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 23 Vic., c. 17 (1860).

for the education of youth, which is now in full operation, and in which are taught the several courses and branches enumerated in this Act, with the exception of the German language, and in which any of the said inhabitants desirous of giving their children education and instruction in the said superior courses and branches of education have every facility for so doing; and it is but just and reasonable that when the said Roman Catholic inhabitants will have to contribute nearly one-half of the endowment provided under the Act as well as the other expenses attending the establishment of the Prince of Wales College, that the said Catholic College should have at least similar provision for the professors therein.

Be it therefore enacted that for and during the continuance of this Act, there shall be paid to the Professors of Saint Dunstan's College the sum of three hundred pounds in the way and manner prescribed aforesaid.⁷⁰

The Honourable Mr. Haviland moved that the clause be disagreed to and once again no provision was made by the Government for the endowment of St. Dunstan's College. Actually the matter of endowment of St. Dunstan's came up for consideration in the Legislature two years previously (1858) and it is doubtful if in the entire history of the country a more inopportune time could have been selected. The country at the time was, as was been noted, in the throes of the so-called Bible Question and the minds of the contending parties were tuned to a pitch of religious and political excitement that precluded all possibility of a compromise.

The petition of the Reverend Angus MacDonald, rector of St. Dunstan's, praying for a grant in aid of that institution was read March 22, 1858. Mr. Edward Palmer, the member from Charlottetown who presented the petition, said he did so merely because he had promised to do so. He made it clear he had no sympathy with it and would vote against it when the time came to do so on the ground that

although however deserving of patronage, it would still be considered a sectarian institution, and would, besides giving cause for jealousy and ill-feeling, establish a dangerous precedent.⁷¹

Mr. Cooper expressed the opinion that if public money were granted for educational institutions, it should be only to such institutions as were under the control of the Government, and not to such as were under the management of a religious sect.⁷² When the petition was referred to a Committee of the whole House the Honourable Speaker said he was opposed to endowing any institution with a religious tendency. The Colonial Secretary agreed that it would be unwise to give money for endowments to sectarian institutions. "But," he added, "had the House not already, from year to year, appropriated money to the Infant Schools in

⁷⁰ *The Parliamentary Reporter*, May 1, 1861, p. 61.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, March 22, 1858, p. 39; *The Examiner*, April 5, 1858.

⁷² *Ibid.*

this city, Georgetown, and St. Eleanor's, and to the Bog School founded by a few Church of England enthusiasts?"⁷³ Mr. Pope then adverted in terms of highest praise to the good work done by St. Dunstan's and the benefits it was destined to confer on the community, and on this account he proposed a resolution that a certain sum be given annually to the college authorities for the purpose of buying the apparatus necessary for the use of the institution.⁷⁴ Three years later a bill to incorporate the trustees of St. Dunstan's College was introduced in the legislature and passed.⁷⁵ During the same session the Honourable Mr. Palmer presented a petition from the Right Reverend Peter MacIntyre, the Very Reverend James MacDonald, and the Reverend Angus MacDonald praying for an Act of Incorporation for St. Dunstan's College and a petition of the trustees of St. Andrew's College praying that certain funds accruing from property belonging to St. Andrew's College may be transferred by law to the new corporation of St. Dunstan's College.⁷⁶ Both of which were agreed to.⁷⁷ When, however, the topic of endowment was introduced, it became a political issue.

The controversy began with an editorial in the *Monitor* on May 15, 1861, stating "a proposal was made to the Government some time ago, to endow St. Dunstan's College out of the public revenue and that the price of this endowment would be support from the Catholics to the Government at the next election."⁷⁸ The following Monday an editorial reply entitled "Catholic Support and its Price" appeared in the *Examiner* which stated we know positively that the subject of a grant for St. Dunstan's College never came under the notice of the Legislature, where only such a proposal could be entertained.⁷⁹ The *Islander* accused the *Examiner* of trying "to cause to be believed that the Government are desirous of purchasing the support of the Catholics of this Island by the endowment of St. Dunstan's College."⁸⁰ The editor of the *Examiner* answered the accusation:

Such was not our subject. We noted the subject merely for the purpose of denying a false and impudent statement in the *Monitor* to the effect that Catholic support was promised to the Government, if the latter would endow St. Dunstan's College. We repudiated the idea that Catholic support could be purchased at any price, by any Government, or that it could be promised by anyone. We now state again, most positively – and all wish it to be understood that we make this statement on the best authority – that no promise or pledge was ever given to any person or persons connected with the Government that the Catholics of

⁷³ *The Parliamentary Reporter*, March 22, 1858, p. 39.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1861, March 28, 1861.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, March 26, 1861.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, April 6, 1861.

⁷⁸ *The Monitor*, Charlottetown, May 15, 1861.

⁷⁹ *The Examiner*, Charlottetown, May 20, 1861.

⁸⁰ *The Islander*, Charlottetown, June 7, 1861.

this Island would support them if a grant were given to St. Dunstan's College.⁸¹

More than a year later the issue was revived in the press. Mr. Whelan made a statement in a column of the *Examiner* to the effect that Mr. Pope had made it clear that it was the intention of the Government to give a grant of public money to St. Dunstan's College.⁸² When Mr. Pope emphatically denied this, Father Angus MacDonald, Rector of the College, published a letter the Bishop had written to him in response to an inquiry concerning Mr. Pope's true position on the question. The letter reads in part:

I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Pope did during the sitting of the Legislature in 1861 give me to understand that it was the wish and the intention of the majority of the Government, to give a grant of public money in aid of St. Dunstan's College.⁸³

Pope declared that whatever statements he had made in the Bishop's presence were made entirely on his own responsibility and that he had absolutely no authority to speak for the Government. He added that any plan he may have suggested to the Bishop was subject to the condition that St. Dunstan's College, in the event of receiving Government aid, should be placed on identically the same footing as the Prince of Wales College.⁸⁴ Father Angus denied this vigorously.⁸⁵ He said that no such condition ever entered the Bishop's mind, nor had it ever been mentioned in the negotiations. It was his contention that anyone acquainted with the Bishop knew well that he would not, for all the money at the disposal of the Government, consent to the secularization of the College, which had been founded expressly for the purpose of disseminating the blessings of religious instruction amongst the youth of the diocese.⁸⁶ A similar statement was made by a prominent Catholic merchant, Mr. Daniel Brenan. In a letter to Father Angus MacDonald (which was printed in the press), he stated that Mr. Pope had discussed with him the question of the College endowment and had entered into details so far as to mention the sum of three hundred pounds which he considered

⁸¹ *The Examiner*, June 10, 1861.

⁸² *Ibid.*, September 22, 1862. The history of the controversy appears in both *The Islander* and *The Examiner* during the months of September and October, 1862.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Charlottetown, September 29, 1862. The letter from Bishop Peter McIntyre to Father Angus MacDonald is reprinted in this issue.

⁸⁴ *The Islander*, Charlottetown, October 3, 1862.

⁸⁵ *The Examiner*, October 6, 1862.

⁸⁶ MacMillan, *op. cit.*, II, p. 235. The entire question of the endowment of St. Dunstan's College with all the religious and political overtones is discussed in this volume, pp. 229-236.

a fair allowance per annum.⁸⁷ Never, according to this statement, did Mr. Pope attach any condition to the grant, or mention, even in the remotest way, that the management of St. Dunstan's should be modeled upon that which obtained in the Government College.⁸⁸

The final nineteenth-century appeal for public funds ushered in the stormiest decade in the political history of the Island. When in 1868 Bishop Peter MacIntyre represented a memorial to the Legislature asking for a grant to the private institutions in his diocese,⁸⁹ the controversy which has come to be known as the "School Question" was launched, a controversy which, in the words of an Island student of educational history, wrought much havoc in the political field – defeating many aspirants to public office and carrying others to victory – yet accomplished little for education.⁹⁰ This controversy, however, was more specifically related to elementary and secondary education and has been documented elsewhere.⁹¹ Another century was to elapse before the authorities of St. Dunstan's again approached the provincial government for financial assistance.

In 1880 Bishop MacIntyre arranged to place the College under the control of the Jesuits. An article in the *Examiner*, dated September 14, 1880, announced that "this well-known institution opens tomorrow under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus." Under the direction of the Fathers, the building had been thoroughly renovated. According to the prospectus, the course of studies would embrace all the branches usually taught in the colleges of the Society.

... The three highest classes of the Collegiate Course will not be opened at present, and it is not to be expected that advanced students will present themselves at the outset in sufficient numbers to warrant the assignment of special Professors to these classes. Younger students, not yet advanced enough for the ordinary classes, will be received in the Preparatory Department, and fitted for promotion to the regular course.⁹²

This arrangement was short-lived. The Jesuits withdrew in June, 1881, and the control of the College reverted to the diocesan priests.

⁸⁷ *The Examiner*, October 6, 1862. The letter from Daniel Brenan to Father Angel is dated October 4, 1862.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of Assembly of P.E.I.*, 1868, Appendix EF, "Copy of Memorial of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Charlottetown...," March 3, 1868; *The Parliamentary Reporter*, 1868, p. 164.

⁹⁰ Margaret Hagen, "Political Implications of the Separate School Question on Prince Edward Island, 1868-1877," unpublished Bachelor's thesis, Department of Education, St. Dunstan's University, 1961, p. 7.

⁹¹ Sister Mary Olga McKenna, "The Impact of Cultural Forces on Commitment to Education in the Province of Prince Edward Island," unpublished Domoral thesis, Department of Education, Boston College, 1964.

⁹² *The Examiner*, September 14, 1880.

In 1892, the year after Bishop McIntyre's death, the rector of the College, Reverend James Morrison, effected the affiliation of St. Dunstan's with Laval University. Twenty-five years later, by an act of the Prince Edward Island Legislature, the Board of Governors of the College was incorporated under the name of St. Dunstan's University.⁹³ The Act of Incorporation was revised in 1965 by the terms of which St. Dunstan's was reconstituted an independent University.⁹⁴ The following year (1966) this institution received for the first time in its history operating grants from the provincial government on an equal basis with Prince of Wales College.⁹⁵

Unlike St. Dunstan's, Prince of Wales College was never seriously handicapped due to lack of funds. Yet, the same social pressures which militated against St. Dunstan's growth and expansion during the third quarter of the nineteenth century backfired also on the provincial institution. Spokesmen for Prince of Wales College claim that the natural growth of their institution was seriously stunted mainly because of political measures.⁹⁶ When for example, in 1879, Prince of Wales College and the Provincial Normal School were amalgamated, the Board of Governors which the College had enjoyed since it was first chartered in 1834 was abolished by Premier Sullivan and the institution was placed directly under the control of the government. The greatest frustration, however, was an early twentieth-century development when unidentified forces in the Legislature prevented Prince of Wales College from becoming a College of McGill University.

On September 12, 1906, Dr. Bagnall wrote an account of a discussion he had had while in Montreal with Dr. Tory and Mr. John Nicholson, Registrar of McGill University, concerning the possibility of an affiliation of Prince of Wales College with McGill University.⁹⁷ According to the statement, the McGill authorities were of the opinion that something could be worked out along the same lines as the new College in Vancouver. The gentlemen offered to come to the Island to study the situation. They also felt that Macdonald funds would be available as part of the endowment. Premier Arthur Peters wrote to the Registrar the following day concerning Dr. Bagnall's representations. "We are very desirous," he said, "as the question has been up for some time before our Government and the Board of Education, to get our College – Prince of Wales – affiliated with McGill."⁹⁸ He asked Mr. Nicholson to send full particulars so that he could lay the matter before his Government and invited both Dr. Tory and Mr. Nicholson to come to the Island at Government expense.

Mr. Nicholson visited the Province and after his return wrote the following to Premier Peters:

⁹³ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 7 Vic., V, c. 20 (1917).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 Eliz. II, c. 39 (1965).

⁹⁵ *University Affairs*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (April, 1966), Ottawa, Canada, p. 9.

⁹⁶ "Prince of Wales College Proposals for the Future," *Royal Commission on Higher Education for P.E.I.*, p. 37.

⁹⁷ Public Archives of Prince Edward Island, C1-1/15, Paper F.6.1.

⁹⁸ Public Archives of P.E.I., F. 6.1.

Since my return I have talked things over with the Principal and other influential members of the University, and I can assure you that there will be no difficulty about affiliating Prince of Wales College up to the end of the First Year in Applied Science to start with and also for a year or two in connection with the scientific agricultural courses which will doubtless be established in connection with Macdonald College at Ste. Anne de Bellevue ...

The proposal is to make Prince of Wales a College of McGill University as has recently been done in the case of Vancouver College and call it perhaps McGill University of Prince Edward Island under the immediate direction of the Board of Education of the Government of the Province as is the case now.⁹⁹

In the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the legislature on February 19, 1907, the Honourable Lieutenant-Governor MacKinnon said:

My Government has also under consideration the question of the affiliation of Prince of Wales College with the University of McGill at Montreal, which I have reason to believe will result in great benefits to our Island students ...¹⁰⁰

During the debate on the address the following opinion was expressed

...As to the affiliation of Prince of Wales College with McGill University much will depend upon the terms. If the College is likely under the arrangement to become a mere feeder for the University, the arrangement should be condemned. The fact should not be lost sight of that the *main* great object of the College is the training up of efficient teachers for our schools.¹⁰¹

On March 18, 1907, Premier Peters sent Mr. Nicholson a copy of the Bill which had been drafted and submitted to the House of Assembly. "An Act to Establish the Prince of Wales College and the Provincial Normal School as a College of McGill University."¹⁰² On April 8, 1907, Mr. Nicholson wrote the Premier to assure him that the question had gone through its final stages as far as the University was concerned, "Corporation having approved of the proposal."¹⁰³ Two days later on motion of the Honourable Mr. Peters the bill to affiliate Prince of Wales College with McGill University was dropped.¹⁰⁴ The Premier wrote to Mr. Nicholson:

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, F. 6.2.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Cl-1/6, Paper F.6.14.

¹⁰¹ *The Examiner*, February 23, 1907.

¹⁰² P.A., P.E.I., Cl-1/6, Paper F.6.23.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, F. 6.25.

¹⁰⁴ *The Examiner*, April 11, 1907.

I am sorry to have to tell you that for the present year we do not propose to carry out this proposition. The House has received a number of petitions from Farmers' Institutes, complaining that more money should not be expended on University Education before we have expended some additional on Agricultural Education, and whatever money we have to spend at present should be spent upon this branch of study. We have, therefore, decided to let the matter stand over for another year, in order that a full expression of opinion from all sectors of the Province, in this regard, can be obtained. Of course there is strong sentiment among many of our people that this affiliation would be a good thing for our Province, but, this is a matter that will have to stand for the present.¹⁰⁵

From this perspective the Prince of Wales College Act which raised that institution to degree-granting status in 1964 was long overdue.

*Teacher Training at
Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's University*

During the session of 1861 there was some discussion on a proposal to change the pattern of teacher training and certification, but this proposal, like so many others related to higher education, was defeated on religious and political grounds. In the debate which followed the second reading of the Education Bill on September 27, 1861, the Leader of the Government in the House of Assembly, Honourable Colonel Gray, moved that a clause be inserted in the School Act which would enable a person who received a certificate from any British or Colonial collegiate institution to obtain a license to teach without attending the Normal School in Charlottetown.¹⁰⁶ The Honourable Mr. Kelly wished to make the resolution more definite by having the name of Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's College inserted, and made an amendment accordingly. Colonel Gray felt the resolution should not mention any particular denominational collegiate institution but should apply to all institutions of that kind. The Honourable Mr. Longworth saw no objection provided the teachers were completely instructed in accordance with the Stow system. Mr. Conway wanted to know specifically if that would include St. Dunstan's; it seemed to him that that institution would be excluded if the Stow system were obligatory. Colonel Gray assured him that it applied to St. Dunstan's, Sackville, and any other collegiate institution. Mr. Coles added that although Mr. Stack had introduced the Stow system, there had been many changes made by his successors and at the present time "it was a kind of mongrel system—half Yankee, half Nova Scotian."¹⁰⁷ He felt, however, that if the Committee intended to give those who study at St. Dunstan's the privilege of passing the Board of Education by presenting a certificate from the Principal of that institution, the Committee should say so. The Honourable Mr. Haviland said the Normal School was intended to train teachers according to the Stow system

¹⁰⁵ P.A., P.E.I., Cl-1/15, F.6.2.

¹⁰⁶ *The Parliamentary Reporter*, 1855-1865, September 27, 1861, p. 126.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

so that the system throughout the Colony would be uniform. He claimed the resolution of Mr. Kelly would strike at the very root of the Normal School scheme and that if that resolution were carried out, they might as well lock up the Normal School.¹⁰⁸ The question of the amalgamation of Prince of Wales College and the Normal School was also suggested. Such a move, it was felt, would promote the interests of education and revenue would be saved. St. Dunstan's was not included in this recommendation.

A commentary on this debate appeared in the *Examiner* under the caption of "Our Education System." The article ended in the following manner:

What can the future historian say, in looking over the debate on Education, and finding that Mr. Kelly's resolution was voted down by the Government party in the House, and stranger still, that Colonel Gray's amendment was withdrawn at the bidding of the same majority! He can only reason that they wished to serve their own party end rather than promote the interests of education.¹⁰⁹

Eighteen years later an Act was passed which amalgamated Prince of Wales College and the Provincial Normal School. By the terms of that Act this institution became part of the public school structure of the Province and was placed directly under the control of the government. Teacher training in the Province of Prince Edward Island remained the prerogative of Prince of Wales College and Normal School until 1957 when a proposed program for the training of teachers at St. Dunstan's University received the approbation of the Department of Education. In the spring of that year the floor of the Legislative Chamber was the stage on which the century-old religious controversy was revived.

In the late 1950's, evidences of public concern regarding the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers in the Province became more than usually pronounced. The Very Reverend J. A. Sullivan, Rector of St. Dunstan's University, expressed the concern of the University and explored the possibilities of its helping to relieve the situation. According to the Rector,

upon investigation, we found that various teacher-training programs on the undergraduate level were in operation in nearly all Maritime universities. Considering the situation in Prince Edward Island and in an effort to provide not only extra teachers but teachers of sound academic and professional training, we offered in good faith to the Department of Education a program of teacher-training designed to assist in solving the teacher-shortage situation and to maintain and even enhance the standards of our teaching profession.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, October 4, 1861.

¹⁰⁹ *The Examiner*, Charlottetown, October 21, 1861.

¹¹⁰ J. A. Sullivan, "Brief presented by the Rector of St. Dunstan's University before the Legislative Committee on Education, March 18, 1957," *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, March 19, 1957.

On January 7, 1957, Reverend Edmund J. Roche, Registrar of the University, met with Honourable Keir Clark, Minister of Education, to offer cooperation from the University in the teacher crisis. He requested provincial recognition of two proposed courses in education as credits towards a teacher's license in the Province. After consulting with the director of Education, L. W. Shaw, the Honourable Keir Clark wrote to Father Roche concerning the Government decision:

I can now advise that we shall be prepared to grant a first class license to your graduates holding the bachelor's degree who have completed the classes in education and practice teaching as outlined.

In regard to the undergraduates who have successfully completed at least one full year of academic work at the university level, towards a university degree, and have in addition completed the education courses and practice teaching, we will grant a Temporary First Class license for one year periods on condition that the temporary license holders will continue to take courses approved by this department at your university until fully completing the requirements.¹¹¹

The following day *the Guardian* announced the "new educational policy" which enabled St. Dunstan's University to train Island teachers. The article expressed optimism that at last higher standards had been made possible and the teacher shortage would be overcome. It was not, however, until the Legislative Assembly adopted a motion on March 13, 1957, to appoint a Select Standing Committee on Education "to hear representations from persons interested in presenting their ideas and opinions for educational changes" that the consensus of public opinion came to the fore on this important topic.¹¹²

Among the organizations expressing violent opposition was the Orange Lodge. "As an Orange Association supporting the Protestant Faith," one brief stated, "we deplore the action of the Minister of Education in granting to a sectarian university the same rights and privileges of teacher training as is now enjoyed by Prince of Wales College."¹¹³ The Ministerial Association was another group which openly stated that its members were not in favour of the move. Among the reasons for their opposition were the following:

First of all, we believe that the granting of licenses to students who have completed teacher training courses at Saint Dunstan's University on the undergraduate level will result in an invasion of our public schools by

¹¹¹ Keir Clark, "Letter to Rev. Edmund J. Roche, Dean of Studies, St. Dunstan's University, Charlottetown, P.E.I., Jan. 7, 1957," *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, March 20, 1957.

¹¹² P.E.I. General Assembly. "Report of the Select Standing Committee on Education of the Legislature of P.E.I.," 1957, p. 7.

¹¹³ Grand Lodges of the Loyal Orange Lodge of P.M., "Brief presented to the Select Standing Committee on Education, April 1, 1957," *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, April 2, 1957.

a vast number of sectarian trained teachers. At the present time about 75 per cent of our teachers in training are of the Roman Catholic faith. We are given to understand that approximately this percentage has been the case in recent years. We have noted, and continue to note, that in the school systems functioning in the City of Charlottetown pupils of the Roman Catholic faith are strongly encouraged to attend those schools which, for all practical purposes, are separate schools, and which are under the direction of Roman Catholic teachers. We see no reason to believe otherwise than that this practice would continue in the future in regard to possible choices of place for teacher training.

It appears obvious that by far the majority of the Roman Catholic teachers who can qualify for entrance into the undergraduate teacher training courses at Saint Dunstan's University would choose to take their teacher training in the university of their own church. This being the prospect, we foresee that in the future the great majority of our teachers in training will be trained in a sectarian college rather than our provincial Normal School. We protest strongly that the great majority of children in public schools, now non-sectarian, will be taught by sectarian trained teachers.¹¹⁴

The brief presented by W. Chester S. MacDonald on behalf of an anonymous group of Prince County Citizens registered "the strongest opposition to the recognition of St. Dunstan's University as a training school for the public schools of Prince Edward Island" on several grounds including the fact that St. Dunstan's was a sectarian institution.¹¹⁵

The Alumni of St. Dunstan's University noted in its brief that:

there has been introduced into the operation of these hearings a current of thought foreign to the very idea of this study. Issues not at all pointing to the solution of the teacher shortage problem are being pressed upon you by groups and individuals who have at no time in the past made any significant contribution to the problems of education, and whose protestations, being entirely negative indicate none for the future.

It stated furthermore:

Any brief presented to this committee which proposes the dismissal of 65 of our best trained teachers or which would deny to the Department of Education the opportunity to increase the number of teachers at a time such as this, on no ground other than religious prejudice, is born only of ignorance and bad faith. Those who now would so loudly decry the

¹¹⁴ P.E.I. Ministerial Association, "Brief presented before the Legislative Committee on Education, March 25, 1957," pp. 1-2 (mimeographed).

¹¹⁵ Prince County Citizens, "Brief presented by W. Chester S. MacDonald on behalf of an interested group of citizens from Sununerside and vicinity, March 27, 1957," *The Charlottetown Patriot*, March 28, 1957.

accomplishment of the Department of Education and of those people who helped themselves, were strangely silent when there was work to be done.¹¹⁶

Chairman of the Education Committee, Frederick A. Large, was quoted as saying that

St. Dunstan's teacher training plan is a direct violation of the cherished principle of equal rights of all the branches of the church and at the same time an invasion of our public school system.¹¹⁷

Yet, according to Minister of Education, Keir Clark, when the Chairman (F. A. Large) was Minister he licensed twelve teachers who had been trained at sectarian universities outside the province.¹¹⁸

When the report of the Select Standing Committee in Education was finally presented, it initiated one of the sharpest Legislative Debates in the almost two-hundred-year-old history of the Legislature. When the report was finally accepted, Dr. L. G. Dewar (Minister of Education at the time) remarked, "I mentioned that education in this province is a smouldering fire and I think most of you will agree that it is not all smoke."¹¹⁹

Two years later Dr. Milton LaZerte reviewed the teacher training set-up and suggested:

When the enrollment in both teacher-training institutions is only 100 or less it would simplify the whole teacher-training problem if training for First, Superior 1, and Superior 2 Licenses were the responsibility of Prince of Wales College, and that for Superior 3, Superior 4 and graduate programs were vested in St. Dunstan's University.¹²⁰

The Report was published in April 1960, and at the Convocation Exercises held at St. Dunstan's University on May 13, 1960, the Rector announced plans "to offer a course of study leading to the Bachelor of Education degree for students who already hold a Bachelor's degree in the Arts, Science, or Commerce."¹²¹ This marked the beginning of the controversy concerning post-secondary education in the 1960's which culminated in a new pattern for higher education for the Island Province.

¹¹⁶ Alumni Association of St. Dunstan's University, "Brief presented to the Select Standing Committee on Education," March 28, 1957. (mimeographed).

¹¹⁷ *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, April 3, 1957.

¹¹⁸ *The Charlottetown Patriot*, March 28, 1957.

¹¹⁹ *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, April 17, 1957.

¹²⁰ *Report of the Commissioner on Educational Finance and Related Problems in Administration, Prince Edward Island, 1960*, p. 86.

¹²¹ *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, May 13, 1960.

The Controversy during the 1960's

In 1959 a one-man Royal Commission on Educational Finance and Related Problems in Administration was appointed. Although the so-called LaZerte Commission was not specifically concerned with the post-secondary level, a review of the briefs and letters presented to the Commissioner (as well as other documents) reveals that the teacher training controversy of 1957 had, in fact, planted the seeds of educational ferment on that level.

Reverend Keith Hobson, President of the Prince County Ministerial association, expressed the conviction of the Association of the need for a non-sectarian university in the Province, and submitted that the elevation of Prince of Wales College to a degree-conferring institution was imperative.¹²² On May second of the following year the Committee on Protestant Affairs of the Baptist Association of Prince Edward Island distributed a progress report among the various Protestant denominations dealing with the Protestant position in relation to that of the Roman Catholic Church in the field of education in the Province. Recommendations were made that the Baptists make public their traditional stand on the separation of Church and State; that a plan be executed to unite Protestant denominations to study the situation and take corrective action; that Pastors be urged to guide and encourage young people into the teaching profession; that Protestants recognize the fact that the present trend is to the advantage of the Roman Catholics; that

regardless of the opinions of professional educationists, a request be made to our Provincial Government to have Prince of Wales College raised to the status of being able to confer degrees necessary to qualify for the teaching profession; thus encouraging Protestant pupils to finish their education in this field while remaining in their native province of Prince Edward Island;¹²³

that the Provincial Department of Education have only one course of studies to qualify for a degree necessary for teaching in the Public Schools of the Province; that the Public School Act be enforced; and finally

that the findings of this Committee (and those of other Committees working for the same result), when documented, and the conclusions and decisions of those so engaged be properly consolidated and prepared, be presented to the Government of Prince Edward Island so that this governing body may be made unmistakably aware of the feelings and purposes of those who believe in religious freedom.¹²⁴

¹²² Keith R. Hobson, "Letter to Dr. LaZerte," Department of Education, Charlottetown, February 3, 1960.

¹²³ Baptist Association of P.E.I., Committee on Protestant Affairs, "Progress Report - Protestant Affairs," Charlottetown, P.E.I., May 2, 1961 (mimeographed).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

The following year a group of interested citizens, encouraged by the representations made to the Provincial Government by others, constituted themselves a "Citizens' Committee" to study the feasibility of Prince of Wales College becoming a degree-granting institution. The report was completed in July, 1962, and submitted to the Government of the Province.¹²⁵

In his Speech from the Throne at the second session of the fiftieth General Assembly, held on February 11, 1964, the Lieutenant-Governor W. J. MacDonald stated, "My Government notes with interest the widespread appeals that have been made to elevate Prince of Wales College to a degree-granting status."¹²⁶ According to Dr. George Dewar, Minister of Education, at least fifty petitions and recommendations had been presented to him relating to the topic and he said he would like to see some action taken during the current session on matters pertaining to the college.¹²⁷ On March 24, 1964, the Prince of Wales Act was assented to and in July of the same year the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Education appointed a Royal Commission to study the resources and needs of the Province in the field of higher education.¹²⁸

The Commission saw itself confronted with three major problems:

1. How to give Prince of Wales College its independence as a full-fledged university developing its curriculum to four college years without any high school program.
2. How the Government could contribute to Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's toward both operational and capital costs.
3. Should the efforts of Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's University be integrated into a single institution or become constituent members of a federated university?¹²⁹

After its reappraisal of the structure of higher education in the Province, university costs, and related matters, the Commission recommended in its report to the Government that the new Prince of Wales Act be proclaimed at once; that annual operating grants be given by the provincial government to both Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's University on the same basis; that Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's University be federated into a new provincial university of Prince Edward Island, each, however, to retain its own identity.¹³⁰

The Prince of Wales College Act which gave degree-granting status to that institution was proclaimed in 1965 and steps were taken immediately to extend the program of studies toward the degree level by 1967. The recommended

¹²⁵ P.A., P.E.I., Cl-1/4.

¹²⁶ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of P.E.I.*, 1964, p. 11.

¹²⁷ *The Journal-Pioneer*, Summerside, February 26, 1964.

¹²⁸ *Report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education for P.E.I.*, Appendix "D", p. 61.

¹²⁹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education for Prince Edward Island*, Appendix "D".

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31; *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, January 21, 1965.

provincial grants began in the fiscal year 1966-1967. Steps toward federation, however, were slow and faltering. The chairman of the newly formed Board of Governors of Prince of Wales College publicly announced in November of 1966 the decision of that body to retain Prince of Wales College as a separate institution.¹³¹ Prince of Wales, the statement read, was prepared to offer its full cooperation with St. Dunstan's in all university matters but the Board decided against either amalgamation or federation with that university. At the same time joint meetings of the two Boards of Governors were being held and a committee was established to study areas of cooperation between the two universities.¹³² In January of 1967 the Board of Governors of St. Dunstan's publicly reaffirmed its policy of cooperation with Prince of Wales College and offered to participate at once in discussions aimed at a federation of facilities and personnel of the two universities.¹³³ Less than two weeks later Prince of Wales College announced that Phase One of its plan for expansion as a separate institution would begin in the spring.¹³⁴ In an effort to expedite cooperation, the government appointed a universities coordinating council in May of 1967.¹³⁵

By the spring of 1968 the provincial government had initiated with Federal support a comprehensive plan for the economic and social development of the Province.¹³⁶ Of crucial importance to the achievement of the economic objectives of the Development Plan was the organization of a well-rounded post-secondary program directed towards the needs of the provincial economy and the people of the Province. A Bill to create a University Grants Committee to coordinate university development and finance was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on March 26, 1968, but it was unacceptable to the academic community. During the debate that followed, the Honourable Alexander B. Campbell presented the now famous ninety-minute policy statement on post-secondary education which stated clearly the government's stance on the question:

The time has come that we, and the government, as representatives of the taxpayers of the province, must cease to merely serve the interests of institutions of higher education and ask ourselves how these institutions can best serve the needs of the province and, in particular, the needs of

¹³¹ *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, November 5, 1966.

¹³² *Ibid.*, November 7, 1966.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, January 7, 1967.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, January 18, 1967.

¹³⁵ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 16 Elizabeth II, c. 54 (1967).

¹³⁶ Canada, Department of Regional Economic Expansion, *Development Plan for Prince Edward Island* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969). The agreement for a Comprehensive Plan extending over a fifteen-year period was signed by the Honorable Jean Marchand, Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, and the Honorable A. B. Campbell, Premier of P.E.I., March, 1969.

our youth.¹³⁷

He continued

... it is now the policy of this government to proceed with a massive program in the field of post-secondary education. It is approximated that the total program will cost approximately one hundred twenty million dollars over the next ten year period.¹³⁸

The essential ingredients of the proposed comprehensive plan, he said, would include a program of student aid, including bursaries and scholarships; a program to develop a single university of non-denominational character and as a public institution; and a program to develop a college or institute of applied arts and technology.¹³⁹ Such a plan would obviously involve the physical integration of the two existing universities, at once. However, the premier noted:

I must emphasize that integration will not be forced upon either institution. If either wishes to continue its existence as a private institution utilising its own financial resources, the government certainly will not interfere. But, let one thing be very clear, the government will support financially with all the funds at its disposal, only a single public university in Prince Edward Island.

It must be considered to be the university of all religious faiths, the university for each and every ethnic group. In short the university of and for all Islanders.

It will be our university, and our program—for the Island. A university that can grow as we grow, and one that all Islanders can support, utilize, and cherish.¹⁴⁰

The University Grants Commission Bill had assumed the existence of St. Dunstan's University and Prince of Wales College, so it was withdrawn and another Bill to establish a Commission on Post-Secondary Education was substituted and passed on April 25, 1968.¹⁴¹ The purpose of the Commission was

...to direct the planning and development of education at the post-secondary level for the Province of Prince Edward Island and to provide the youth of the province with the educational opportunities necessary for them to fully participate in the advance of the Province and the

¹³⁷ P.E.I. Legislative Assembly, "Statement by the Honorable Alexander B. Campbell on Higher Education in Prince Edward Island," April 2, 1968; *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, April 3, 1968.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 17 Elizabeth II, c. 10 (1968).

Nation.¹⁴²

However, this Act was not proclaimed until May 21, 1969. As an interim measure the Government appointed Edward F. Sheffield of the University of Toronto as Advisor on Higher Education for one year from June 1, 1968, and in July named two committees to plan the new university and the new college of applied arts and technology.¹⁴³ Both the University Planning Committee and the College Planning Committee were made up of persons drawn from St. Dunstan's University, Prince of Wales College, government service, and community. These were later superseded by the governing bodies of the University and the College.

Acts incorporating the public, non-denominational University of Prince Edward Island, and Holland College, a college of applied arts and technology, were passed at the 1969 session of the Legislative Assembly and assented to on April 23.¹⁴⁴ In May, St. Dunstan's University held its last convocation and Prince of Wales College granted degrees to what was both its first and last graduating class. On July 1, 1969, the operations of St. Dunstan's University and Prince of Wales College were taken over by the University of Prince Edward Island.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the proposed union between Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's University announced by Premier Campbell in the spring of 1968 was referred to as a "shotgun wedding by proxy," the actual changes brought about in the pattern of higher education by the Acts of 1969 did not, in fact, take Islanders by surprise.¹⁴⁵ At the Fall Congress of the Association of Atlantic Students held at St. Dunstan's University in 1966, Premier Campbell already expressed the hope for one university in the Province. "Perhaps," he said, "the next time you delegates return to our Province, you will be greeted by a banner reading University of Prince Edward Island."¹⁴⁶ Pre-dating that statement, a Ten-Man Study Group, composed of lay and clerical members of Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths, expressed the opinion that the concepts of cooperation and federation advanced by the Royal Commission on Higher Education in 1964 were "too vague, too easily misinterpreted, and too easily prostituted toward the maintenance of division and the creation of new barriers producing further division" to merit consideration.¹⁴⁷ They felt that one completely amalgamated university would be better than any attempt to "marry" the two existing

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *First Annual Report of the Prince Edward Island Commission on Post-Secondary Education covering the period to December, 1969* (Charlottetown: The Commission, February 1970), p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ *Laws of P.E.I.*, 18 Elizabeth II, c. 21 (1969).

¹⁴⁵ *The Guardian*, April 3, 1968. This was the comment made on the Premier's statement by Dr. Frank MacKinnon, Principal of Prince of Wales College.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, October 22, 1966.

¹⁴⁷ *The Journal-Pioneer*, Summerside, February 23, 1965.

institutions. Membership in the group was increased to twenty-four, four of whom were Protestant ministers and three Catholic priests, and this larger group reaffirmed the position set forth in the original proposal for the complete merging of Prince of Wales College and St. Dunstan's University.¹⁴⁸ The basic thesis of the group was that Canada's smallest province can afford only one university and that complete amalgamation would be the best way to handle the two existing long-established institutions of higher learning.

The contention of the group advocating a single university for the Province of Prince Edward Island was that the then-existing pattern of higher education in the Province was the result of religious intolerance.

The existence of two universities on Prince Edward Island has been determined solely by our attitudes toward our religious differences and the resultant inability to arrive at an effective compromise.

Anyone at all familiar with the historical development of Prince Edward Island will realize that there has been a bitter and often destructive hostility between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant sectors of our population...

Seldom have our two opposing camps entered into enough communication with each other to effect any solution to our mutual problems other than a retreat into isolation and segregation.

In these days, perhaps as never before, some communication has become possible and we recognize the efforts of our group as an expansion of this changing atmosphere.¹⁴⁹

Members of the group said they were fully aware that their proposal seemed to run counter to strong historical, cultural, and religious patterns in the provincial society, and that it involved a rethinking of the long-standing goals and desires of the many people who had devoted their time, talent and knowledge to the advancement of the two existing institutions. Despite this, they were convinced that the single university proposal offered too many academic, social, economic, and cultural advantages to be lightly considered. Launching what was termed "a modest ecumenical movement," in the spring of 1965, they called on all men of good will (who were concerned primarily with the provision of the best possible system of university education) to join with them in pursuing their goal – a single university for Prince Edward Island.¹⁵⁰

The realization of that educational dream in the brief span of three to four years was an accomplishment few philosophers of education enjoy – a record, to be sure, in the history of education in the Province of Prince Edward Island and, indeed, in the entire history of education.

¹⁴⁸ P.A., P.E.I., Cl-1/7, "A Single University for Prince Edward Island," May 28, 1965.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.