

# Catholic post-secondary education in English-speaking Canada, L. K. Shook, University of Toronto Press, 1971.

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What provokes and inspires the efforts, the raising of funds, the devotion of teachers, the endless worry of administrators, what provokes and inspires it in the seemingly unlikely circumstances of a newly settled country, of immigrant groups generally poor in this world's goods if rich in spirit, and of a religion which, if tolerated, was often by many feared, resented, and usually subtly, sometimes openly resisted? An old-fashioned historian, this reviewer likes to think that it was in some part a response to the new land and a new environment which lacked the full force of hostilities of the old and promised, if only by empty space and the need for labour, opportunity more or less equal for all. For each group of newcomers opportunity meant, not so much individual betterment, as the production by each group of the elite in politics and the professions, not to mention business. To achieve a standing in these, education was necessary beyond the elementary and secondary schools to the levels of the college and the university. For those people who had been stateless, as the Catholic Irish had been, or felt the state alien rather than their own, as most French-Canadians fundamentally had, the Church was the agent to create the necessary colleges and work towards the goal of university affiliation or status. For them Church had been not only the means of salvation, but the bond of social cohesion and the preservation of their culture. The colleges described and the problems of higher education analyzed in this admirable book are therefore not only Catholic but largely Irish with Scottish, French-Canadian, Acadian, Italian and other elements combined in varying degrees. They were therefore at once a most revealing exercise in the relations of church and state in education in an ever more liberal and pluralist society, and also, as the reviewer thinks, but the author properly does not stress, an extraordinary story of an ecumenism and reconciliation of new elements in evolving Canadian society, a story evident but not yet brought out in political and social history as heretofore written in Canada. It is to be hoped that the above exordium may be forgiven a practising historian, since it arose out of a strong and generous response to a study of the book, and since it suggests a merit in it beyond these Dr. Shook sought to develop in the discharge of his undertaking.

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Those intended merits are of the first order of excellence. In the first place, the history of thirty-two English-speaking Catholic colleges and universities, with the Pontifical Institute associated with St. Michael's in Toronto, are recorded with great historical skill, a generous feeling for the personalities involved, and often a serene and transcendent good humour. Shooting through the historical progression in time and from the Atlantic provinces to British Columbia are reflections on the educational and general issues at stake, all reviewed and, if one may put it so crudely, summed up in an epilogue entitled "Contemporary Directions." Nothing is said emphatically, nothing too much, but there emerges the thought, expressed in a passage of haunting diction, that the ecclesiastical world is passing out of the age of Tridentine sectarianism — might a reviewer classified, unwilling, as a Protestant, take this to mean also post-Reformation sectarianism? — and that post-secondary education must henceforth be supported and sponsored by the state, the Church to be concerned not with the support of institutions but with the meaning and relations of knowledge.

As the reader follows the histories of the various colleges traced in the book, however, the reaction is at first not to the great educational principles at work and in conflict, but to the sheer body of new information Dr. Shook has assembled and marshalled. The names, of course, are known to any academic reader, and some are famous; who does not know of St. Francis Xavier or of St. Michael's — even if only because Marshal McLuhan is a member of that college, or of the Pontifical Institute? The general patterns of the story also are familiar. The number and diversity of places of higher learning is notorious from the history of Protestant and secular colleges and universities. But they are filled out and etched more sharply when one finds the same, perhaps an even greater diversity among Catholic colleges. What is novel is to note how little, relatively at least, Catholic colleges sought this scattering of the costly apparatus of learning, buildings, teachers, etc., over a country not well endowed with material resources. The little known history of the University of Halifax, sketched here, reveals how from 1876 to 1881, if not longer, that legal body offered the colleges and universities of Nova Scotia the opportunity to combine their resources and efforts to some degree at least. It was an offer that came nowhere near success, but Catholic colleges seem to have been more aware of its possible benefits than their Protestant and secular colleagues. Until the 1962 Deutsch Report on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick, and even there only partly, and with the exception of the removal of King's College from Windsor to the Dalhousie campus, the Maritime colleges and universities have always settled for independence. A less hardy folk, less devoted to education, would not have done so.

When one comes to the histories of the colleges and universities of Central Canada and the western provinces — those of Quebec, it is true, have their own peculiar setting, and the question whether to affiliate with one another or with McGill, but even there the same responses to similar challenges are apparent — the theme is not so much that of independence as affiliation or federation. The theme is best illustrated by the history of the University of Toronto. Torn between the will of those who

believed higher education should take place under religious auspices and those who thought it should be secular, with religious observances left to private conscience, it had become non-sectarian in 1849 and in 1854 the secular University of Toronto of University College. In Toronto was the Anglican University of Trinity College, in Cobourg the Methodist University of Victoria College, and in Kingston the Presbyterian Queen's University. In Toronto the Catholic St. Michael's College was founded as a seminary in 1852, affiliated to the University of Toronto in 1881, federated in 1887, became an arts college in 1910, and a University in 1957. As compared with the Protestant theological and university colleges, federated with the University of Toronto since 1887, St. Michael's experienced the whole gamut of college development from seminary to university college and indeed had a cubit added to its stature by the founding of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in 1929. That history elaborates the problem of any college, and especially one which is both a religious seminary and an arts college. It cannot fully serve its constituency and its two kinds of students without university status. Yet that status necessarily carries with it the costs of increased staff, library and buildings if the resultant university degrees are to be respected. The struggle to finance the Catholic colleges was obviously very great, except in the remarkable Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax, and was largely made possible by the devoted work of the teaching orders and by private benefactors such as John Elmsley and Eugene O'Keefe. The faithful may be properly expected to support a religious seminary, but an arts college may be equally properly looked to to find its own funds from student fees or from the state. Affiliation and federation were ways evolved to enable colleges, while preserving their religious autonomy and internal governance, to share in the state-support of university grants and to receive respectable degrees. The University of Toronto, governed by the unyielding outcome of Ontario history since 1867. That there should be no support from public taxes for secondary or post-secondary, is the best and fullest example of federation and St. Michael's the best known example of a marked readiness of most Catholic colleges to affiliate.

Not all did of course. The University of Regiopolis at Kingston, affiliated with the University of Toronto failing attempted independence and had to close down in 1869. The University of Ottawa, resolutely bi-lingual from the first, as its French and Irish constituency in Ottawa required, began as and remained an autonomous university with Catholic affiliates of its own, such as Atholl Murray's remarkable Notre Dame of Canada in Saskatchewan. In western Ontario Assumption, after trying affiliation with the University of Western Ontario, became independent again with its own affiliates, including the Anglican Canterbury College, to become the University of Windsor in 1954-1957.

Affiliation or federation might strengthen the college, as it did as affiliation was worked out in the western provinces between the various Catholic colleges and the provincial universities, despite the prolonged difficulties in British Columbia, in which the doctrine of one publicly supported university was firmly entrenched. The coming of a rapidly increasing enrolment in the 1950's, the increase of university costs with the

growth of graduate study, the beginning of first federal, then provincial aid to universities, federally to all, provisionally in Ontario only to secular colleges, however, made affiliation, for most colleges, quite insufficient and raised new problems. Increased revenues became imperative. At the same time the development of the sciences and the decline of denominationalism, raised both new issues and new possibilities. The old ways were clearly insufficient, or led to contortions of organization for which there was little justification, as in the changes forced on the University of Ottawa to be eligible for provincial grants. But in any event, state support was indispensable.

Dr. Shook with sure lightness of touch, in casual observations through his history, and then in his summary 'Directions' explicitly, sketches the new possibilities. Must a state-supported university or college be secular? Why not 'civil' to use the term he so happily drops? Are not all citizens and taxpayers, believers and unbelievers alike? Are men to be penalized for their faith for the sake of a principle which, meant not to discriminate, may in fact do so. This question leads very deep. Are not the clergy a profession, as much as any other, of social utility, and accepted as part of and agents of society? Why should not even seminaries be 'state-supported'? To ask that question, however, is to carry Dr. Shook's lightly tossed line of logic further than he thought fit.

For the above reasons, Dr. Shook found the experience of St. Paul's College, Winnipeg, in entering into a new and as yet untried relationship with the University of Manitoba (as did the Anglican St. John's College) of considerable interest. From being an affiliated college in downtown Winnipeg, the college first moved to the Fort Garry Campus of the University of Manitoba, then in 1969 entered into a relationship which integrates the college into the University and its departments, but leaves its internal governance and religious life its own affair. What underlies this new relationship is the assurance that public funds enable the college to do what only the best off could do in the past, ensure a faculty of university quality. Thus public funds, may be a solution in the current difficulties to which affiliation and federation were only part and dubious answers.

The new relationship may do more, however, if it includes not only acceptance of college teachers but also the acceptance of religious worship and colleges which are church colleges at the core of their life on the campus of the state university. This surely makes it a 'civil' university, one which is equally open to all citizens, whatever their beliefs and observances.

How profound a change is present in this evolving relationship of Catholic college and civil university, Dr. Shook states in the passage early referred to, in concluding that in the new conditions Catholic colleges should "probably be preserved." Only quotation may convey its full meaning and suggestive quality:—

"Perhaps this continuance could be tied to a puzzling statement of Jesus recorded by Luke (8:18) "So take care *how* you hear" Jesus did not say *what* you hear. He was concerned with what Marshall McLuhan likes to call percepts or the medium, rather than with concept. Concepts too are valid, but imperfectly so until rightly learned, that is, until learned in relation to God. Only those who learn in the fully human medium, the

*how* medium, the God-context, having learning. In fact, it is they who make it to be true learning. For those who grasp this fact, the rest of Jesus's text contains no enigma. "For anyone who has will be given more; from any one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away." The Catholic college and university are not to be praised where they fail, but only where they in some small way succeed, only where they possess the integrity of learning. For what they achieve, the desire survival, which is open to as many forms as man's ingenuity can propose."

It is a thought-provoking ending to the story of the struggle of Catholic colleges and universities to be, to survive and to improve, thought-provoking in universities where the old divisions, like the old ways, are rapidly failing. With specialization within the universities, which is essentially an emphasis on content, and with the degree of government control necessarily involved in government grants, which necessarily leads to an emphasis on output, the great question of the future is all too likely to be, how is the integrity, the wholeness and the not specifically directed university life as it was to be preserved?

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