

Editors' Foreword

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this selection of papers from the 1995 annual meeting of the English section of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association is that all but one of the seven papers deal with French-speaking Catholics, at least in part. This is not because of a predisposition or conspiracy on the part of the editors, but rather the end result of the process of putting together a program from papers that were volunteered, choosing from papers subsequently offered to the editors for possible inclusion in this volume, the winnowing out that is the natural result of assessment by expert scholars, and then, at the end, editorial decisions based partly on available space. Nevertheless, that so many of our papers are on topics relating to French-speaking Catholics is quite appropriate given the importance of the French fact in the history of Canada and in the history of Catholicism in Canada. In the life of the Church, as in the life of the country, transcendence of our "two solitudes" requires understanding of our individual histories. We hope that the papers in this volume will make a modest contribution to mutual comprehension. Chronologically, our papers range from the eighteenth century through the 1980's.

The one paper that deals with the eighteenth century, D. Peter MacLeod's essay on Amerindians as Catholic evangelists, explores the remarkable phenomena of the incorporation of captured New England Protestants into the families and religion of Catholic Iroquois communities near Montreal at the time of the Seven Years' War. MacLeod's conclusions stress Amerindian autonomy and initiative in the way these communities utilized Catholicism in both external relations and internal dynamics. The paper might also inspire reflection on the effectiveness of a "conversion strategy" that involved religion as lived communal rituals and practices rather than debate about dogma.

The only paper that treats a nineteenth-century topic is a study of convent schools in Acadian New Brunswick by Sheila Andrew. While focused on the education of women, the study inevitably touches on the broader issues of rural-urban tensions, linguistic issues, and the role of the Franco-phone minority within New Brunswick society.

Pasquale Fiorino's paper on the selection of Oblate Michael Fallon as bishop of London, Ontario, is a fascinating demonstration of the obliviousness of the papal nuncio (and Rome, apparently) to the importance of the French-English issue within the Church in Ontario in the early twentieth

century. Despite the fact that Fallon had already aroused resentment among French-speaking Catholics while teaching at the University of Ottawa, the nuncio recommended his appointment on other grounds (his presumed skill in dealing with Protestants), and thereby contributed to fuelling the fires of linguistic dispute within the Ontario Church.

Paul Laverdure's study of the way the federal Lord's Day Act was implemented in Quebec in the first three decades of this century demonstrates both similarities and differences between French Catholic Quebec and other Canadian provinces where English Protestants were the majority. Appropriate sabbath observance had its own peculiar meaning for Catholic Quebecers, but coping with understandable Jewish demands for exemption could evoke anti-semitic responses in both societies.

For an organization that has been so salient in the lives of Canadian Catholic women and the Canadian church, very little has been done on the history of the Catholic Women's League (C.W.L.). So we are most pleased to include Sheila Ross's pioneering study on the early days of the League. Begun almost entirely at the initiative of lay women, almost as soon as the C.W.L. attained national importance, it found itself in tension with episcopal authorities. According to Rome's vision of Catholic Action, the lay apostolate was defined as the participation of lay people in the apostolate of the hierarchy. The autonomous growth of organizations like the C.W.L. inevitably raised questions about how far a Catholic organization of lay people should be independent of the clergy.

Our last two papers deal with the background and circumstances of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960's. Nicole Neatby looks particularly at student leaders at the University of Montreal in the 1950's and shows, that while none contested the established authorities of Church and state, there were some whose readiness to question the rationale behind the status quo foreshadowed the reformist activities of the next decade. David Seljak's paper is more general, and aims at an explanation of why the Quiet Revolution, which so drastically affected the position of the Church in Quebec, was accepted by the Church with such apparent equanimity. Seljak points particularly to the external context of the reforms associated with the Second Vatican Council and the development of Liberation Theology in Latin America, but without denying the role of important internal changes within the Quebec Church in the immediately preceding decade or two. If an unfavourable conjuncture of circumstances in the French Revolution betrayed the French Church into identification with the forces of counter-revolution, in Quebec a unique conjuncture of circumstances helped the Church accept a radical change in its status with dignity and grace.

Jeanne R. Beck
Editor

Richard A. Lebrun
Associate Editor

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In submitting these manuscripts following their presentations at the CCHA Sessions, the authors knew their work would be assessed by at least two authorities in their field. The editors and the authors are very grateful to the large and anonymous band of scholars who gave unstintingly of their time and expertise. Their encouraging remarks were appreciated, and the articles in this volume testify that their advice was heeded. The editors were aided in their task by the cheerful cooperation of the authors who all met our editorial deadlines.

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We hope that those who read this issue will receive pleasure equal to that of the editors in working with this great team.