

Developing a Strong Roman Catholic Social Order in Late Nineteenth-Century Prince Edward Island¹

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The percentage of Prince Edward Islanders who consider themselves Roman Catholic has remained remarkably constant in the last century and a half at approximately 45 per cent.² This stability was made possible by the development of a strong system of Catholic social institutions in the late nineteenth century that continued into the late twentieth century. This paper will examine the development of the Catholic social order from the early history of PEI to the end of the nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the political, economic, and religious context in which the social order was created and the long term impact of key nineteenth-century social institutions.

A combination of many factors created the late nineteenth-century Prince Edward Island Roman Catholic community. While patterns of Irish, Acadian, and Scottish settlement divided the Catholic community, the Church, poverty, and anti-Catholic prejudice united it. A particularly long-serving and hardheaded bishop, Peter McIntyre (1818-1891), was motivated by these issues, as well as by his own Ultramontane beliefs, to stabilize the community by building specifically Roman Catholic social institutions, including schools, a university, and a hospital.

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² The percentage of PEI that was Roman Catholic ranges only very slightly from a low of 43.2 per cent in 1881 to a high of 47.3 per cent in 1991. (*Census of Canada*, 1881 to 1991.) PEI was the second most Roman Catholic province next to Quebec until 1931, when it was surpassed by New Brunswick. See also Edward MacDonald, *If You're Stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century* (Charlottetown: PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation, 2000), 17.

The strong Roman Catholic culture may seem surprising when one considers the settlement policy that the British implemented on the Island. Ignoring the several hundred Mi'kmaq and Acadians,³ in 1767 the British government divided the colony into sixty-seven lots and awarded them by lottery to petitioners to whom they were indebted.⁴ In order to exclude Catholics and recent immigrants to other parts of the New World, settlers were required to be Protestants and “not from Her majesty’s dominions,” unless they had lived in the New World two years.⁵

J. M. Bumsted explains that eighteenth-century emigrants to PEI were usually motivated by the hope of improving their economic plight or avoiding religious persecution:

the most likely sources for settlers willing to chance a territory as remote as the Island of St John were the poor and oppressed regions of the British Isles, where the Irish Catholics, Scottish Highlanders (often Catholic), urban artisans often converted to dissenting sectarianism, and displaced farm workers formed a potential population for an uninhabited island.⁶

³ John G. Reid, “1686-1720: Imperial Intrusions,” in John Reid and Phillip Buckner, eds., *The Atlantic Region to Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 79. The Mi'kmaq called the Island *Abegweit* (“cradle on the waves”) and the French called it *Isle St. Jean*. The English translated the name to St. John’s Island until 1798, when they renamed it Prince Edward Island. Frank MacKinnon, *The Government of Prince Edward Island* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), 20.

The French retained control of PEI and Cape Breton for three years after they lost control of the rest of Acadia in 1755. Estimates of the number of Acadians in PEI on the eve of the Deportation vary from 3,000 to 5,000, most of whom lived around Egmont Bay, Tignish, and Rustico. At the start of the British regime in 1763, only 300 Acadians, those who either hid or were forgotten during the Deportation, remained on Prince Edward Island. A.H.Clark, *Three Centuries and the Island: A Historical Geography of Settlement and Agriculture in Prince Edward Island, Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 40.

⁴ See Appendix A.

⁵The British government wanted to retain its own population for the labour force required in the new industrial economy, but they still wanted Protestants to populate the Island. Clark, 42-50. This hugely flawed settlement plan is the most discussed aspect of Prince Edward Island history; for a thorough summary of how numerous historians have approached it, see Matthew G. Hatvany, “Tenant, Landlord and Historian: A Thematic Review of the “Polarization” Process in the Writing of 19th-century Prince Edward Island History,” *Acadiensis* 27 (Autumn 1997), 109-32. A census of the colony taken at the end of the eighteenth century listed 669 Acadians, 1814 Highland Scots, 310 Lowland Scots, and 1579 others who were primarily English. Clark, 60-61.

⁶ J. M. Bumsted, *Land, Settlement, and Politics on Eighteenth-Century Prince Edward Island* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), 46.

So many early immigrants to PEI were Catholic, including many Scots who were not permitted to practise their Roman Catholic faith in their native Scotland. Although these new immigrants could practise their religion – the British did not enforce rules against Roman Catholic worship – they did not find themselves in improved economic circumstances. A year after his 1772 arrival, Father James MacDonald, who was part of one of the earliest migrations of Scottish Catholics, wrote that his flock was “in a most miserable condition.”⁷ Nevertheless, Prince Edward Island, along with Cape Breton Island and eastern Nova Scotia, and southeastern Upper Canada, remained the main settlement areas of Roman Catholic Scottish Highlanders into the early twentieth century.⁸

The population of Prince Edward Island grew steadily in the first half of the nineteenth century, increasing from about 7,000 in 1805, to 23,000 in 1827, and 47,000 in 1841. Most immigrants came from Southern Ireland and the Scottish Highlands with smaller numbers from other parts of the British Isles.⁹ By mid century, about half the population of PEI was Scottish, 10 per cent Acadian, and the remaining 40 per cent Irish and English. The Acadians, almost entirely Roman Catholic, had not assimilated with other ethnic groups; they were concentrated in Northern and Central Prince County and West-Central Queens County, where they engaged largely in the fishery.¹⁰ The Scots, of whom the Highlanders were predominantly Catholic and the Lowlanders predominantly Protestant, were chiefly farmers and were the foremost ethnic group in Kings and Queens Counties. The Irish, who tended to be Catholic, and the English, who tended to be Protestant, were more dispersed throughout the Island.¹¹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, natural increase reinforced the basic foundations in ethnicity. The population of almost 109,000 was more than 80 per cent native born in 1881, and divided by ethnic descent into approximately 45 per cent Scots, 23 per cent Irish, 20 per cent English, and 10 per cent French (Acadian). Despite significant out-migration, the ethnic proportion of the population as well as the ethnic homogeneity in

⁷ Father James MacDonald to John Grant, 9 June 1773, Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh, quoted in Bumsted, *Land*, 59.

⁸ J.M. Bumsted, “Scottish Catholicism in Canada, 1770-1845,” in Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds., *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 79.

⁹ Clark, 66-7.

¹⁰ Clark, 126. These areas correspond with Lots 1, 2, 5, 6, 15, 23, and 24.

¹¹ Clark, 60-61.

districts and counties remained relatively constant in the late nineteenth century.¹²

Most nineteenth-century Islanders continued in the faith traditions of their ancestors.¹³ Virtually all the Irish, Highland Scots, and Acadians were Roman Catholic. Religion was insufficient, however, to draw these ethnic groups together. According to Bumsted, “Despite their common religion, Acadians, Highlanders, and Irish were divided by language and economic lifestyle.”¹⁴ These ethnic tensions within the Catholic population were expressed by each group’s strong desire for its own ethnic clergy.

Since their settlement of New France in the early seventeenth century, the French were the dominant Roman Catholic ethnic group in the New World. French religious orders, including the Recollects, Jesuits, Ursulines, and Hospitallers of St Augustine, ministered to the Aboriginal peoples and French immigrants. Propaganda Fide in Rome controlled the mission in New France beginning in 1622, but respected French traditions. The first Bishop of Quebec, François Laval, was appointed in 1674 and the French maintained a monopoly on clerical leadership for the next century and a half as Quebec remained the only diocese in Canada until 1817.¹⁵ At that time there were approximately 500,000 Catholics in British North America, including about 25,000 in the Maritimes. In the early nineteenth century, however, ethnic rivalry prompted the growing Scottish and Irish populations of Upper Canada and the Atlantic colonies to criticize French clerical authority. According to Roberto Perin, Rome appointed new bishops to appease these immigrant ethnic groups, and “gave the dioceses of Arichat and Charlottetown to Scots, and those of Halifax, Saint John and Chatham to Irish men.”¹⁶

¹² *Census of Canada, 1665-1871, IV* (Ottawa, 1876), 174, 360-61. Quoted in Ian Ross Robertson, “The Bible Question in Prince Edward Island from 1856 to 1860,” in P.A. Buckner and David Frank, eds., *Acadiensis Reader: Atlantic Canada Before Confederation*, vol 1 (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1985), 261. The population decreased from 108,891 to 103,259 between 1881 and 1901 but the ethnicity of the population did not change by more than 4.5 per cent in any county during this time. *Census of Canada, 1881-1901*.

¹³ MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 17.

¹⁴ Bumsted, “Scottish Catholics,” 88.

¹⁵ Terrence J. Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism, and Canadianism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 7-8. Propaganda Fide was created by the Curia in 1622 to direct world missions. Fay writes that in the mid eighteenth century, “the fragile Catholic church continued to look to Paris for financial support and Rome for spiritual direction.” Fay, 28.

¹⁶ Roberto Perin, *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 15.

In PEI, the Scots succeeded in obtaining a Scottish auxiliary bishop, Angus B. MacEachern, for Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick in 1819. He was formally appointed Bishop of Charlottetown a decade later.¹⁷ The Irish and Acadians, however, had become unhappy with Scottish clerical leadership by the mid-nineteenth century. An Acadian who wrote a letter to the editor of the *Summerside Journal* complained that such Anglophone domination prevented Acadians from progressing culturally, socially, and economically. In his words, “We have to borrow from others almost all our public figures ... even our priests are of foreign races, and if there are any small positions available in Acadian parishes, they are immediately filled by Englishmen.”¹⁸ French clergy also worried that the immigrant Irish would weaken the Catholic population. A French priest ministering in early nineteenth-century PEI “explained” that the Irish were not only financially poor, but also immoral: “The greater number of the Irish we have here bring with them nothing but vices, because they are the very dregs of Ireland and Newfoundland.”¹⁹

The PEI Irish were probably even more frustrated than the Acadians with the Scots monopoly in the PEI Church. Not only did they complain in the 1890s to the Archbishop of Halifax that their bishop, the Bishop of Charlottetown, failed to send enough “Irish boys” to be trained for the priesthood,²⁰ in 1907 the Irish clergy also made a formal complaint to the Vatican about the dominance of the Scots.²¹ Despite Irish and Acadian

¹⁷ Bumsted, “Scottish Catholicism,” 81 and Fay, 50-51. An auxiliary bishop was also appointed for Upper Canada at the time of MacEachern’s appointment and two more were appointed for Montreal and the Northwest the following year. New Brunswick was only part of the Diocese of Charlottetown until 1842, when the Diocese of Saint John was created.

¹⁸ Original letter in French. *Summerside Journal*, 14 April 1870, 2, in Georges Arsenault, *The Island Acadians, 1720-1980*, trans. Sally Ross, (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1989), 101-02.

¹⁹ Father De Calonne, quoted in the Rev. John MacMillan, *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island* (Quebec, 1905), 111-12.

²⁰ Bishop Peter McIntyre to Archbishop O’Brien (Archbishop of Halifax), 8 February 1890. “Bishop McIntyre Papers,” Roman Catholic Diocese of Charlottetown. In this letter, McIntyre is disturbed that O’Brien feels that he (McIntyre) has been holding back Irish candidates from attending seminary. McIntyre writes again to O’Brien, 24 February 1890, telling O’Brien he has not done anything to discourage Irish boys from attending St Dunstan’s. According to Father Art O’Shea, Archivist of the Diocese of Charlottetown, “It seems obvious that O’Brien was getting complaints from here and there from Irish people and that he was simply handing them on to Bishop McIntyre.” Correspondence with Father Art O’Shea, 12 December 2002, in my possession. I am very grateful for Father O’Shea for reviewing all of Bishop McIntyre’s papers for information on ethnic relations during McIntyre’s episcopate.

²¹ Perin, 230, note 7.

protests, an ethnic hierarchy clearly emerged in nineteenth-century PEI Catholicism with the Scots at the top. Not surprisingly, the first four Prince Edward Island bishops shared a Scottish heritage: Angus MacEachern (1829-1835), Bernard McDonald (1837-59), Peter McIntyre (1860-91), and Charles James MacDonald (1891-1912).

In addition to suffering from internal ethnic conflict, the Catholic community suffered from religious prejudice. Accounts of the degree of anti-Catholicism vary widely. At one extreme, the Reverend Dr. Wendall MacIntyre described the history of Prince Edward Island as “an ‘ad hoc’ but sometimes semi-rehearsed, game of hide and seek” as Protestants and Catholics watched and wondered what the other was plotting, “Protestants seemingly awaiting the arrival of the Pope to assume control of the Island.”²² At the other extreme, Edward MacDonald stated that Protestants and Catholics lived more harmoniously in PEI than in other provinces.²³ A view somewhere between these two extremes is surely more accurate.

Anti-Catholicism existed in PEI in the nineteenth century, as it did in every province at the time. Catholics could not vote in colonial elections, stand for election, or hold civil or military office in PEI until 1829, the same year the restrictions were also lifted in England.²⁴ By mid century, anti-Catholicism was at its height; several Orange Lodges were founded, Catholics and Protestants fought bitterly over Bible-reading in the schools, and Catholic and Protestant politicians hurled religious insults at each other. The Bishop of Charlottetown, Peter McIntyre, complained that, “the most intense prejudice had, for political purposes, been excited against our religion; we were ostracized – the press teemed with insults against us.”²⁵

²² Rev. Wendell MacIntyre, “The Longest Reign,” in Michael Hennessey, ed., *Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island, 1720-1979* (Charlottetown: Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation, 1979), 71.

²³ In his recently published book, MacDonald quotes a commercial traveller, W. S. Louison, whose account in a turn of the century issue of the *PEI Magazine* describes positive Protestant-Catholic relations:

[T]he people of Prince Edward Island are to be congratulated on the happy manner in which all denominations pull together. I have attended Catholic entertainments at which one half, at least, of those taking part in the programme were Protestant and vice versa. I have been to teas, concerts, bazaars, etc., where all gave a helping hand. I have seen Protestant ministers conversing pleasantly with Catholic clergymen on various occasions – a sight seldom seen in other provinces.

MacDonald, *Stronghearted*, 17. (No issue or year given.)

²⁴ MacKinnon, *Government*, 53.

²⁵ P. McIntyre to Archbishop O’Brien of Halifax, February 1890, quoted in G. Edward MacDonald, “‘And Christ Dwelt in the Heart of His House’: A History of St. Dunstan’s University, 1855-1955,” PhD dissertation, Queen’s University, 1984, 88. McIntyre is referring to the 1860s and concluded the above sentence by characterizing these press comments as “insults against us to an extent that seems

The Orange Lodge, founded in Armagh, Ireland, in 1776 to protect the interests of Protestant tenants, was soon established in British North America as well. In the mid nineteenth century, the Orange Lodge was responsible for many riots in New Brunswick where the Irish population was evenly split between Catholics and Protestants.²⁶ In Prince Edward Island, however, the Lodge had to focus on being anti-Catholic rather than pro-Irish because there were almost no Protestant Ulstermen.²⁷ According to Ian Ross Robertson, “Between 1859 and 1862 the number of primary lodges increased from one to fifteen, and in February 1862 the Grand Orange Lodge was founded to establish common policies for and coordinate the activities of the scattered primary lodges.”²⁸ Lodges remained active in Prince Edward Island well into the twentieth century, tangible bastions of anti-Catholicism.

In the mid-nineteenth century, anti-Catholic sentiments found expression in controversies over Bible reading in the public schools. While evangelical Protestants were adamant that the Bible should be read, Roman Catholics were wary of any Protestant interpretation. In 1856, the Bishop of Charlottetown, Bernard MacDonald, wrote to the Board of Education:

The introduction of religious matters into our public mixed schools is the Rock of Scandal. ... If the friends of education wish our mixed schools to prosper, their wish can only be realized by allowing these schools to be godless, under the present circumstances of the country. The Catholics, I am bound to say, will be satisfied with nothing less.²⁹

Evangelical Protestants organized two great Protestant meetings in 1857 and 1858, at which resolutions were passed to continue fighting for the inclusion of the Bible in the public school curriculum. The 1857 meeting was said to be the largest public meeting ever held in Charlottetown.³⁰ This controversy dominated Island politics for two decades, and led to the fall of the Liberal Party, which was replaced by an all Protestant Conservative government.³¹

incredible now.”

²⁶ See, Scott C., *Riots in New Brunswick : Orange Nativism and Social Violence in the 1840s* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1993).

²⁷ T. W. Acheson, “The Irish Community in Saint John, 1815-1850,” in P. M. Toner, ed., *New Ireland Remembered: Historical Essays on the Irish in New Brunswick* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1988), 106.

²⁸ Ian Ross Robertson, “Party Politics and Religious Controversialism in Prince Edward Island from 1860 to 1863,” *Acadiensis*, 7:2 (Spring 1978), 46.

²⁹ MacDonald to John MacNeill (Secretary to the Board of Education), 7 November 1856, in *Examiner* (Charlottetown), 23 February 1856, as quoted in Robertson, “Bible Question,” 265.

³⁰ Robertson, “Bible Question,” 267-8.

³¹ Robertson, “Bible Question,” 261, 282-3.

Largely because of the Bible Question, anti-Catholicism became a tenet of the Conservative Party in PEI. In 1861, the *Islander* published a series of anti-Catholic letters,³² and in 1863, James Pope, an unfortunately named Protestant Conservative, was accused of saying, “a Catholic woman going to confess to a priest was the same as taking a mare to a stallion.”³³ Though there are also many examples of toleration between Catholics and Protestants,³⁴ anti-Catholicism in mid nineteenth-century PEI was severe enough to strengthen the determination of Roman Catholic bishops to construct separate social institutions.

In addition to anti-Catholic prejudice, Bishop McIntyre was also motivated by the poverty of Island Catholics. In fact, he once referred to his diocese as “the poorest Diocese in the world.”³⁵ In the late 19th century, the Maritimes was the most cash-strapped region in Canada, and Prince Edward Island had both the largest per capita debt and the smallest per capita income in the country.³⁶

³² *Islander*, July 19, 26 and August 2 and 9, 1861. Reference found in MacDonald, “St Dunstan’s,” 104.

³³ PEI Assembly Debates, 1863, 51. As quoted in Robertson, “Party Politics,” 50.

³⁴ In late nineteenth-century PEI, Protestants and Catholics succeeded in establishing three extremely important “gentlemen’s agreements,” none of which would have been possible had anti-Catholicism been an overwhelming influence on the Island. The three agreements involved the appointment of both Catholics and Protestants in the judiciary, representation of both groups in every political riding for both the Liberal and Conservative Parties, and an agreement on funding Catholic and public schools. Moreover, while many more premiers of PEI have been Protestant, several Catholics have also been elected to the post, including the very influential W. W. Sullivan who served from 1879 to 1889. MacKinnon, *Government*, 215, 268, and 365; Arsenault, 114; and Brian Clarke, “English-Speaking Canada from 1854,” in Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford, 1996), 294.

³⁵ McIntyre to M. Certes, Treasurer, Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 8 January 1862. Reference found in MacDonald, “St Dunstan’s,” 113.

³⁶ At the turn of the century, Ontario’s per capita income was already 20 per cent above the national average, while Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were 25 per cent and 14 per cent below, respectively. Some areas of the Maritimes, such as eastern Nova Scotia and northern New Brunswick, had per capita incomes of only two thirds the national average, or half that of Ontario. See Kris Inwood and James Irwin, “Canadian Regional Commodity Income Differences at Confederation,” (Department of Economics, University of Guelph, Discussion Paper 1992-11), 34. Inwood had also illustrated that in the 1860s “average income was lower in the Maritimes than in the rest of the country on a per acre and per household basis.” Kris Inwood, “Introduction,” *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic-History of the Maritime Provinces* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993), i.

To argue that PEI Catholics were financially poorer than Protestants may be a moot point given that most nineteenth-century Islanders were relatively poor. Nevertheless, it has always been assumed that Catholics were more cash-poor, on average, than their Protestant counterparts. Although no systematic, quantitative study has proved this, several historians have agreed with the assumption. Writing about Maritime cities in the first half of the nineteenth century, Judith Fingard notes:

the indisputable fact [is] that the larger proportion of poor rates and voluntary contributions went toward the relief of the poor Catholics. Piqued Protestants did not tire of reminding their Roman Catholic neighbours that nine tenths of the inmates of the poorhouse in Halifax were Catholics, or that it was the Protestant citizenry in St. John's who supported the Catholic poor. To such an extent did the Catholics constitute the labouring and disabled poor in the towns that the more bigoted Protestants began to pronounce publicly that the Roman Catholics were impoverished because they were Catholics.³⁷

These Protestant perceptions were another spur to Bishop McIntyre's efforts to strengthen the Island Catholic community.

The Diocese of Charlottetown, unable to support itself financially, was a missionary diocese through most of the nineteenth century, a status that made it eligible for financial assistance from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in France.³⁸ Among PEI Catholics, the Irish and Acadians are thought to have endured a higher level of poverty, partly because their later arrival – in the case of the Acadians, their *return* after the Deportation – meant the best farming land was taken.³⁹ Most Acadians were forced into fishing, the alternative primary occupation, when they returned to PEI in the late eighteenth century. This industry, which employed 914 people and comprised 18 per cent of the colony's exports according to the 1891 census, was not lucrative, although it received a boost in the 1880s and 1890s when

³⁷ Judith Fingard, "Relief of the Unemployed Poor in Saint John, Halifax, and St John's, 1815-1860," in P. A. Buckner and David Frank, eds., *Acadiensis Reader*, vol 1, 2nd ed. (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990), 193-4.

³⁸ The Society for the Propagation of the Faith was founded by Pauline Jaricot (1799-1862) in 1818 as a "single collecting agency for all Catholic missions everywhere." Much of its annual budget went to North America in its first decade. "Society for the Propagation of the Faith," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11 (New York, 1967), 844-55. I have been unable to determine when Charlottetown ceased to be a mission diocese, but Father Art O'Shea, the Archivist of the Diocese of Charlottetown, thinks that the SPF stopped funding the diocese around 1900. Letter of 12 December 2002, in my possession.

³⁹ Significantly more Catholics than Protestants participated in the fishery, which was dominated by the Acadians of West Prince, East Prince, and East Kings. Georges Arseneault, 78. See also Clark, 133-4.

the European demand for lobsters soared.⁴⁰ Farming was by far the most common wage-earning occupation in PEI with 22,000 Island Catholics and Protestants engaged in it in 1891.⁴¹

Poverty among Island Catholics, prejudice against them, and a lack of cohesion among the Catholic community created a need for specifically Roman Catholic social institutions. Impetus for such institutions was also provided by Ultramontanism. The early Catholic Church in North America had been Gallican, and dominated by French clergy who disapproved of Rome's control of certain matters, and appreciated some cooperation between church and state, including the British government's provision of a stipend to Quebec bishops.⁴² In sharp contrast, Ultramontanists, who were increasingly in the ascendancy in mid nineteenth-century Canadian Catholicism, insisted that "cross and crown" be completely separate. Ultramontanists lobbied provincial and colonial governments to relinquish social institutions, such as schools and hospitals, to the control of the Church. The Church could thus strengthen its relationship with its flock through social institutions that operated independently of secular institutions. Ultramontanists also tried to strengthen the church through religious renewal, fostered by parish missions and devotional practices.⁴³ For advocates of Ultramontanism, membership in the Roman Catholic Church required joining a subculture set apart from Protestant, British society. Ultramontanists argued that the state's *only* role in the Roman Catholic order was to provide funding for social institutions. Protestants vigorously

⁴⁰ In 1897, lobsters represented 52 per cent of the value of fish products, and by 1901, there were 227 lobster canneries that employed mostly farm women and children. Larry McCann, "The 1890s: Fragmentation and the New Social Order," in E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 137 and A. H. Clark, 148.

⁴¹ *Census of Canada, 1891*, Table XIII. 914 fishermen listed. Potatoes, mostly grown for seed, were the largest late nineteenth-century agricultural crop; seven million bushels were grown in 1891. In the same year three million bushels of oats and two million bushels of turnips were grown. Comparatively, New Brunswick's biggest export continued to be forest products at two thirds of exports while Nova Scotia counted on the fishery for 40 per cent of exports. See S. A. Saunders, *Economic History* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1984), 103.

⁴² Fay, 31. Fay provides an excellent overview of the shift from a Gallican to an Ultramontane-dominated church in "Chapter 4: Ultramontane Catholicism," in *History of Canadian Catholics*, 69-96.

⁴³ Parish missions consisted of several days of intense worship under the direction of a visiting priest or members of a religious order such as the Jesuits. Brian Clarke explains that at these missions, "preachers liberally invoked the fires of hell and used all sorts of dramatic devices, including open coffins, to remind their audiences of human morality and bring them to the moment of decision, following which the faithful would confess their sins and receive communion." Clarke, 280.

objected to this position, arguing that public institutions were not, specifically, Protestant. The Ultramontane view, however, was that government-funded public institutions were Protestant, even if not officially so, and thus separate Roman Catholic institutions should, likewise, receive public funding.⁴⁴

Peter McIntyre, Bishop of Charlottetown from 1860 to 1891, was a fervent Ultramontane. In 1864, soon after McIntyre's consecration, Pope Pius IX published the "Syllabus of Errors," which included nineteen statements on the errors of the secular world and the Church's rights. The Pope was adamant that the Church's rights should supersede those of the state.⁴⁵ Bishop McIntyre, needless to say, supported Pius IX's argument in the "Syllabus of Errors" that "The Roman pontiff need not reconcile himself to 'progress, liberalism, and modern civilization.'" The nineteenth-century papacy feared that modernism would weaken the Roman Catholic faith.⁴⁶ The "Syllabus" "condemned all the movements [that secular] contemporaries thought forward thinking."⁴⁷ It may also be noted that McIntyre was the only Maritime bishop to support the infallibility of the Pope at the Vatican Council of 1869-70.⁴⁸

The papacy confirmed the pronouncements in the "Syllabus of Errors" in "Rerum Novarum," Pope Leo XIII's 1891 papal encyclical that became the "flagship of Catholic social doctrine" and the "standard against which Christian social action would be measured."⁴⁹ "Rerum Novarum" responded to the late nineteenth-century international socioeconomic conditions in a variety of countries "as it tried to minister to the new poor."⁵⁰ In particular, the encyclical addressed the importance of the family, the church's role in society, private property, a living wage, and fair

⁴⁴ Clarke, 271.

⁴⁵ To understand the Pope's teaching, each of the errors should be prefaced with "It is not true that ...". Thus error 45, "The state has the exclusive right to decide all questions in schools in which Christian youth are educated," should be prefaced with "It is not true that the state has the exclusive right ...". *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol 13, 854-5.

⁴⁶ The Pope saw his teaching authority as Vicar of Christ as necessary to the well-being of the Church of Christ. His concern about modernism had to do with false teaching – materialism, socialism, liberalism, and capitalism – that promoted values which would undermine the faith of ordinary Catholics, threaten their souls, and destroy the mission of the Church.

⁴⁷ Stephen Happel and David Tracy, *A Catholic Vision* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 114.

⁴⁸ Robertson, "Party Politics," 33.

⁴⁹ George Weigel and Robert Royal, eds., *A Century of Catholic Social Thought: Essays on 'Rerum Novarum' and Nine other Key Documents* (Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Centre, 1991), 23, 13.

⁵⁰ Weigel and Royal, 8.

labour practices overseen by the state. It criticized all the major political and economic currents of the time, capitalism, liberalism and socialism, for failing to recognize human dignity.⁵¹ “Rerum Novarum” justified the work of the Church in the secular sphere, especially in education and health care.

Both to stabilize the PEI Catholic community and to put Ultramontan-ism into practise, McIntyre strove to create a strong Catholic subculture in PEI. He planned to bond Prince Edward Island Roman Catholics to a specifically Catholic social culture, and, concurrently, to elevate that culture to a level of political and intellectual strength equal to that of the Protestants. To this end, he more than doubled the number of priests in PEI, from a ratio of priests to parishioners of one to 2,500 to one to 1,200,⁵² and oversaw the building of twenty-five churches, twenty-one presbyteries, eight convents, a hospital, and a bishop’s “palace.” McIntyre then successfully solicited several well known and respected religious congregations to staff these institutions: the Christian Brothers, the Congregation of Notre Dame, the Grey Nuns of Montreal, and the Jesuits. He also acquired substantial financial support for his campaign from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in France.⁵³

McIntyre was determined to provide separate Roman Catholic education for Island Catholics. He explained this need in an 1873 pastoral letter:

Education consists in the perfection of our faculties; it is therefore a developing of the intelligence to enable it to follow truth. Education, then, has for its object the cultivation of the spiritual powers of man, and consequently it is a spiritual function. Hence there is no such thing as a secular education.⁵⁴

⁵¹ The encyclical also condemned the dependence of capitalism and liberalism on state intervention to guarantee workers' safety, to protect children, and to ensure men's wages were adequate to support a family. Similarly, Leo XIII criticized socialism for failing to value private property as an essential aspect of human dignity, and for insisting that class conflict is inevitable. Weigel and Royal, 13-25.

⁵² He started his episcopate with fourteen priests serving 38,852 Catholics and ended it with forty priests serving 47,837 Catholics. He was able to accomplish this significant increase primarily through St Dunstan’s University, the Roman Catholic diocesan university where Island men with vocations obtained their first degrees before proceeding to the seminary and later being ordained. Lawrence Landrigan, “Peter McIntyre, Bishop of Charlottetown, PEI,” *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report*, 1951-55, 87. The first figure includes the province of PEI and the Magdalen Islands. See also McIntyre, “Longest Reign,” 99, and *Census of Canada, 1891*.

⁵³ G. Edward MacDonald, “Peter McIntyre,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12, 638. According to Father Art O’Shea, the Diocese of Charlottetown received an average of 24,000 francs annually in the 1860s. Correspondence with Father Art O’Shea, 5 December 2002, in my possession.

⁵⁴ Diocese of Charlottetown Pastoral letter, quoted in MacIntyre, 88.

Even before McIntyre became bishop, he engaged the services of the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND), one of the most prestigious teaching congregations in Canada, to found a convent school for girls, Notre Dame Academy in Charlottetown.⁵⁵ He encouraged the sisters' expansion of their Island work during his episcopate, and they subsequently opened a day school primarily for girls in Charlottetown in 1863, and soon took responsibility for district schools in Miscouche (1864), Tignish (1868), Summerside (1868), Souris (1881), and South Rustico (1882). The sisters raised the level of education, both in rural areas and the City of Charlottetown, by providing well-qualified teachers for academic subjects, as well as religious education, etiquette, culture, and the "womanly arts" of music, painting, and handicrafts.⁵⁶ In their work in Acadian communities, the sisters undoubtedly raised the social status of Francophone identity and culture, which, as discussed earlier, lagged behind Scottish Catholic culture. The six schools run by the Congregation of Notre Dame strengthened Catholic culture by reminding its students of the importance of religious vocations and by making many women more "cultured" and thus, perhaps, more appealing marriage partners.⁵⁷

McIntyre was also determined to obtain provincial government funding for these separate schools. He dominated the provincial legislature's Roman Catholic members, supporting any political leader who might agree to his educational demands for separate Roman Catholic and Protestant schools funded by the provincial government. McIntyre endorsed Confederation, for example, because he hoped a denominational schools system could be entrenched in an agreement with the new nation. In 1873, he pressured Roman Catholic representatives to back the pro-Confederate Conservative government. When that new government failed to implement denominational schools, McIntyre quickly shifted his support to the Liberals, although they, too, refused to make separate school concessions.⁵⁸ Finally, McIntyre obtained a "gentleman's agreement" whereby most CND convent schools were accredited as public schools. Their rural schools were already established in overwhelmingly Catholic areas and the provincial government agreed that they become the district schools for their particular area. CND schools in Charlottetown were part of a larger city system in which parents could choose a Catholic or Protestant school where both were provincially funded. Five of the six CND schools received salaries from the

⁵⁵ McIntyre represented Bishop Bernard McDonald in these negotiations with the Congregation in 1857.

⁵⁶ MacDonald, "Peter McIntyre," 639.

⁵⁷ For more information on how convent schools taught the womanly arts, see Eileen Mary Brewer, *Nuns and the Education of American Catholic Women, 1860-1920* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1987), 59-60.

⁵⁸ MacDonald, "Peter McIntyre," 639.

provincial government, beginning in the mid 1870s.⁵⁹ Only the CND school in Summerside did not receive such government funding. Certainly a significant aspect of McIntyre's success and legacy was obtaining such a reputable teaching congregation as the CND to serve in PEI Catholic schools and then having the schools deemed acceptable to receive public school funding.

Bishop McIntyre was even more dedicated to providing post-secondary education to Catholic men, and he gave untiring support to St. Dunstan's College, which was in many ways the lynchpin of Island Catholic social institutions. St. Dunstan's opened in 1855 to educate Catholic men, and especially potential clergy. In fact, largely because of the fostering and encouraging of potential aspirants at St. Dunstan's, McIntyre was able to increase the number of clergy in the Diocese from fourteen to forty.⁶⁰ McIntyre's passion for the college was illustrated when, during a period of financial difficulty that threatened to close the College, he said, "Close my eyes first, then close the college."⁶¹ The undergraduate institution also raised the level of education available to Roman Catholic men who were seeking entry into the professions, and thus allowed them to stand on more equal footing with Protestant leaders of the province.

In addition to fighting for Catholic education in PEI, Bishop McIntyre also threw himself into providing separate Catholic health care for his flock. He believed it crucial to provide a specifically Roman Catholic hospital because, as one of his biographers explained, "The human body is a receptacle of the soul, the instrument of public worship, the medium of sacramental activity, prayer and good works. The body, then, is sacred for

⁵⁹ MacDonald, "Peter McIntyre," 639. According to MacDonald, McIntyre spent the first seventeen years of his episcopate lobbying the provincial government to subsidize the unofficial Catholic school system which had been growing since the 1860s. MacDonald, "Peter McIntyre," 637-8.

⁶⁰ Lawrence Landrigan, "Peter McIntyre, Bishop of Charlottetown, PEI," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report, 1951-55*, 87. Writing in 1971, Lawrence Shook notes that St Dunstan's "had been founded to assure the diocese a supply of priests and it had done so rather well. It had placed its students in the seminaries of Quebec, Montreal, and Rome, and some 80 of them had been ordained, two of these having already been consecrated bishops." Lawrence Shook, *Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada: A History* (Toronto, 1971), 45.

⁶¹ Sister Carmel MacDonald, CSM, *Remembering 1829-1979, Diocese of Charlottetown* (Charlottetown, 1979), 60. St Dunstan's remained the lynchpin social institution, as well as the province's only university, until its closure in 1968. Similar to other Catholic institutions, the college was partly able to remain open because of the virtually unpaid priest-professors and sister-servants who staffed it.

these reasons, but also because it has been created directly by God.”⁶² The sacredness of the human body necessitated that care be administered by people not only with medical skills, but also with human compassion and an understanding of Roman Catholic ethics. Thus, in the second decade of his episcopate, Bishop McIntyre converted the former episcopal residence into a hospital and engaged a second Quebec congregation, the Sisters of Charity of Quebec to administer the institution.⁶³ Just as the Congregation of Notre Dame was one of the most prestigious teaching congregations in Canada, so the Sisters of Charity had come to be regarded as one of the most prestigious congregations of nursing-sisters. The hospital opened in 1879, under the care of eight sisters. In the year of its founding, the Charlottetown Hospital admitted 61 patients whose origins were equally divided between Charlottetown and rural areas, treated 170 outpatients, and filled 300 prescriptions.⁶⁴ Those able to pay their hospital bills were expected to do so, but the hospital also served many nonpaying patients. The Charlottetown Hospital remained one of the Island’s two main referral hospitals until the 1980s.

Because of Bishop McIntyre’s initiatives, many Prince Edward Island Catholics had access to some of the highest quality health care and education available in Canada in the nineteenth century. The founding of the Catholic health and educational institutions had not lagged behind other provinces in any way: St. Andrew’s College, the predecessor to St. Dunstan’s, opened in 1831, and was the first English Catholic college in the country; the Congregation of Notre Dame schools were established beginning in 1857, as early as those in any Anglophone province; and the Charlottetown Hospital opened at the very beginning of the wave of modern Canadian hospital construction.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Bishop McIntyre supplied the institutions he created with the best staff he could obtain: the Sisters of Charity for the Charlottetown Hospital, the Congregation of Notre Dame for primary schools, and les Petites Soeurs de la Sainte-Famille de Sherbrooke for domestic work at St. Dunstan’s. Prince Edward Island Catholicism revealed how relative poverty and anti-Catholicism could be overcome by a strong Ultramontane bishop.

⁶² MacIntyre, 94.

⁶³ Several publications relating to the Diocese of Charlottetown refer to the first sisters at the hospital as “the Grey Nuns,” but the Quebec congregation is more accurately referred to as Les Filles de la Charité. See for example Mildred MacIsaac, CSM, et al, *The Story of the Sisters of St Martha* (Charlottetown: self published, 1991), 6, and correspondence to Bishop O’Leary from Sister, Ste Christine, Superior General, Quebec [City], 8 May 1924, Sisters of St Martha Archives, Charlottetown.

⁶⁴ MacIntyre, 95.

⁶⁵ Earlier hospitals were much like poorhouses because the middle classes were nursed at home.

The strong Catholic foundation of late nineteenth-century social institutions was still visible more than a century after Bishop McIntyre's death. In the 1991 census, 47 per cent of Islanders reported being Roman Catholic. Although a far smaller percentage actually attend church at least once a week, there are many other indicators of the strength of Catholicism in the late twentieth century. In particular, the two most significant Catholic social institutions, St Dunstan's University and the Charlottetown Hospital, amalgamated with parallel Protestant institutions in 1968 and 1982 respectively, but only after arrangements were made that guaranteed the continuation of Catholic medical and educational values.

In the case of St Dunstan's University, which amalgamated with the Protestant Prince of Wales College and became the University of Prince Edward Island in 1968, many people agree that Catholics' interests were well served. Not only was the new campus located on the site of St. Dunstan's University, but the university hired several former St. Dunstan's priest and sister-professors. In fact, the principal of the former Protestant college, Frank MacKinnon, published a scathing account of the process of amalgamation, writing that the provincial government, "gave the Roman Catholic Church everything it wanted and more. It let the Bishop's wishes and St. Dunstan's standards push Prince of Wales and its much higher standards right out of the subsequent politics and into oblivion."⁶⁶ If MacKinnon is correct (and there is evidence of some exaggeration) the Roman Catholic social order was not significantly weakened by the amalgamation.

Like St. Dunstan's University, the Charlottetown Hospital, PEI's Roman Catholic referral hospital since 1879, was pressured by the provincial government to amalgamate with its Protestant equivalent, the Prince Edward Island Hospital. Unlike the Catholic university, however, the Catholic hospital refused to amalgamate for two decades. The board of directors' ability to resist for so long reveals the strength of the Catholic Church in PEI. Even greater evidence of the Church's influence is its success in having the new amalgamated provincial hospital accept, in practise, the Catholic Hospital Moral Code, which, most notably, does not allow the performance of therapeutic abortions. Pressure from the Catholic Church, as well as other anti-abortionists, forced the board of directors at the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital to avoid selecting a therapeutic abortions committee. In the 1980s, such a committee was required under the Criminal code, section 251, in order for an accredited hospital to perform an abortion. Lacking such a committee, no abortions could be performed at the new hospital. Today, PEI is the only province which does not perform therapeutic abortions in hospitals or have any free standing abortion clinics.

⁶⁶ MacKinnon, p.110.

The nineteenth-century PEI Roman Catholic Church was threatened by ethnic tension, poverty, and anti-Catholicism. Scottish Highlanders, Irish, and Acadians fought for clerical and episcopal control of the Church. In addition, PEI was Canada's most impoverished province and there are indications that Catholics were more cash strapped than their Protestant neighbours. Finally, the Bible Question aroused potent anti-Catholicism in the 1850s and 1860s. In the late nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church in PEI, in response to these threats and strengthened by the tenets of Ultramontanism, created highly successful, independent Catholic social institutions whose influence has lasted to the present day.

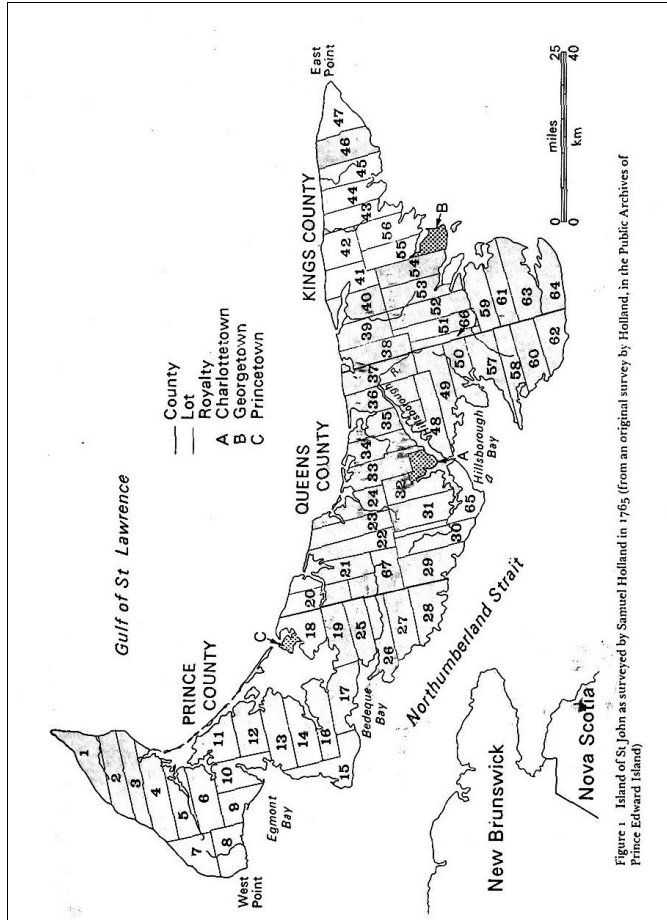


Figure 1. Island of St. John as surveyed by Samuel Holland in 1765, (from an original survey by Holland, in the Public Archives of Prince Edward Island)

Island of St. John as surveyed by Samuel Holland, in 1765
 Source: J.M. Bumsted, *Land, Settlement and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Prince Edward Island* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), xiii