

SYDNEY ARTHUR FISHER AND THE LIMITS OF SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION IN BROME COUNTY, 1901–1921*

Anne Drummond
University of Ottawa

Some men leave their riches to be squandered by their children, others give generously to their Church, and some perpetuate their names by founding colleges, universities or charitable institutions, but Sydney Fisher remembered the boys and girls in the little red schoolhouses of Brome.¹

Sydney Arthur Fisher's major initiatives on behalf of Protestant education in Brome County came at a time when school consolidation and pupil transportation were innovative ideas in Quebec. The Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction — the governing body of Quebec Protestant education — first debated the merits of consolidation reform in 1895.² The Committee adopted the policy that consolidation should replace dissent as the organizing principle of Protestant education, and emulate the school consolidation and pupil transportation networks of the townships of Massachusetts.³

The right to dissent had been held and exercised by Protestant rate-payers since 1846, as a means by which to create tax support for separate Protestant common schools. This right assured that common schools could be established if a minority of rate-payers so desired, but did not guarantee the establishment of public Protestant superior schools such as model schools, academies, and colleges. Superior schools were supported by either private trustees or public commissioners; both private and public boards were eligible for annual grants from the Protestant share of the Superior Education Fund.⁴

In the 1880s, when the first generation of male graduates from the McGill Normal School entered the Protestant school workplace, the Committee decided to use the right of dissent as the organizing principle of its professionalization of Protestant academies and model schools.⁵ The emphasis on dissent served to

encourage Protestant school commissioners who wanted to upgrade common schools to academies to challenge the right of the independently managed superior schools to be guaranteed annual Superior Education grants year after year. Once the autonomous schools were brought under the control of commissioners, the Committee would be able to govern the principals of these schools by regulating their credentials and their pedagogy. It hoped to place a formally trained male teacher at the head of each academy and a formally trained female teacher at the head of each model school.⁶

Of the twenty academies and two high schools outside of Montreal and Quebec City which received grants in 1885 from the Superior Education Fund, half were managed by public commissioners or trustees and half by private directors. Five years later, eighteen of twenty schools were under public control, and several had been demoted to model school status for failing to comply with all the new regulations.⁷ However, the male teachers who were no longer eligible to serve as academy principals soon found employment as principals of model schools, and both male and female principals of the model schools obtained better annual examination results from their pupils, and taught beyond the model grades in defiance of regulation. Their teaching not only showed up the academy principals but also assured a continued supply of teachers for the one room schools and pupils for the academies and model schools.⁸

Township boards were understandably reluctant to give up their one room schools as long as their pupils had access to model schools or academies within or outside of their own municipal boundaries. Thus in 1895 the township boards of Barnston, Bolton, Brome, Bury, Clarendon, Cleveland, Compton, Dunham, Eaton, Farnham East, Godmanchester, Grenville, Huntingdon, Inverness, Kingsey, Ormstown, Potton, Shipton, Stanstead, and Sutton — each supported ten or more one room schools. Argenteuil County maintained sixty one room schools; Brome, ninety-three; Huntingdon, sixty-two; Megantic, forty-seven; and Richmond, fifty-two.⁹ The township boards were especially troublesome to professional school reformers because they were content to maintain the established teacher and pupil supplies. As long as they could send pupils to, and receive teachers from, superior schools such as St. Francis College, Richmond, or Stanstead College, or such academies as Huntingdon, Inverness, Knowlton, or Lachute, there was little need for them to take on the financial

burden of supporting a single academy each instead of networks of one room schools, or the pedagogical problem of trying to match pupils of diverse ages and educational backgrounds to age-graded textbooks.¹⁰

Rather than admit that the boards which managed successful model schools and academies were not going to buy the idea of graded education, Protestant school officials focused on the small and scattered Protestant one room school pupils who no longer had easy access to academies and model schools and seized on the consolidation idea as a way of integrating them into new, graded schools and as a way of destroying the township networks of one room schools which hindered the diffusion of graded pedagogy. However, since school consolidation and pupil transportation were beyond the constitutional authority of the Protestant Committee, the Committee first negotiated the abolition of the local certification of elementary teachers, substituted the right to dissent for the right to consolidate as Committee policy, and waited for the opportunity to obtain enabling legislation.¹¹

In the fall of 1898, the Committee recognized after the fact that the consolidation and transportation clauses in Premier Félix-Gabriel Marchand's comprehensive Education Bill of 1897 would have served its own agenda. After this Bill had been approved by the Liberal majority in the Legislative Assembly but defeated by the Conservative majority in the Legislative Council, Marchand retained the consolidation and transportation clauses in a second and less radical bill (although it is hard to confirm how or if any Committee members actively sought it).¹² In the same year, English Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction (also Secretary of the Committee), George Parmelee, reported visits to "the public" and the school commissioners of Barnston, Compton, Eaton, Newport, and Clifton and that there were:

splendid opportunities for securing more economical and efficient conduct of the schools by following what is known as the Concord system of centralization and conveyance.... The Commissioners in all cases have undertaken to consider the question with a serious intention to reduce the number of schools, to provide the conveyance of pupils and to lengthen the school term which is now eight months in duration.¹³

Parmelee's choice of the above municipalities may be interpreted as the first foray into the one room school networks via consolidation propaganda. Barnston municipality included Barnston

Academy, a resister since the 1880s of Committee professional policies, and Compton municipality included not only Compton, Eaton, Newport, and Clifton, but Compton Model School and Compton Ladies' College. It is likely but unproven, so far, that the meetings were held in order to encourage the establishment of consolidated schools at centres which would draw off the superior school grants and pupils from Barnston and Compton.

Although the Conservatives in the Assembly expressed disbelief that the "Concord system" was appropriate for Quebec Protestant rural school districts, this Bill was approved by both Assembly and Council in 1899, at which time the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Boucher de la Bruère, issued a circular of consolidation policy guidelines to Protestant school boards. Thus the Committee obtained from Marchand's Government laws which were designed only for Protestant school municipalities.¹⁴ In conjunction with the circular, the Committee approved regulations which extended its official course of study by one year and required pupils to qualify for entrance from one room to model schools in order to disrupt the flow of pupils which entered these schools without a training in graded textbook instruction and prevent model school principals from teaching their pupils the school leaving subjects.¹⁵ It then found a figurehead for the promotion of consolidation in the older Protestant school municipalities, in the person of Sydney Fisher, Member of Parliament for Brome County in the Eastern Townships and Minister of Agriculture in the Liberal Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

As a highly innovative Minister of Agriculture, as Member for Brome, owner of the technologically up-to-date Alva Farm in Brome Township, and promoter of English immigration to the Eastern Townships, Fisher could hardly refuse to be the natural spokesman in Quebec for a pro-consolidation campaign.¹⁶ As a member of the elitist and international Country Life Movement and liberal political economist, he could not eschew the opportunity to increase national productivity and improve, but retain control of, rural social institutions.¹⁷ As Sir William Macdonald and James Robertson planned to provide English Quebec with a "Macdonald Consolidated School" as they also planned for Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, Fisher seemed destined to be part of a vast pan-English Canadian rural regeneration initiative.¹⁸

It can be argued, however, that as a reformer, Fisher was vulnerable in that his political strength lay in Montreal rather than in

Brome County. Although he had held the seat of Brome County from 1882, with the exception of the years 1892 to 1896, and although Thomas Duffy sat for the Liberals in the Legislative Assembly, the County's provincial politics remained in the hands of the Conservative Party's old boys' network, while federal political favours were Laurier's prerogative.¹⁹ As 'Old Boy' and Knowlton-born Judge William Warren Lynch was the mentor and legal adviser of career educator, South Bolton-born Elson Rexford, and as both had laboured since the early 1880s to professionalize the rural schools, Fisher was caught between an elite, national agenda and a school reform initiative in which two Brome County boys were instrumental.²⁰ When he joined the Committee as an advocate of one room schools, however, he was almost immediately party to regulations designed to achieve the opposite effect.²¹

Although Sydney Fisher was born in Montreal and attended the High School of Montreal and McGill University, he chose Brome Township as the place for his farm and country home. The formative influences may have been his visits there as a child with his father, Dr. Arthur Fisher, to the home of Sir Christopher Dunkin, or his English experience as a student at Trinity College, Cambridge. Upon returning from his studies in 1872, he purchased two lots from Dunkin on Brome Lake and set himself up as a farmer on the model of the English gentry, raising "Guernsey cattle, Berkshire pigs, and Shropshire sheep." His entry into politics was as a Liberal candidate for the Brome County by-election of the Legislative Assembly in 1879, when he was defeated by 'old boy,' S.W. Foster. He then ran in the by-election of the House of Commons in 1880, when he was defeated by the Conservative candidate and 'old boy,' David Ames Manson. He ran successfully in 1882 in the federal election, defeating S.N. Boright, and was re-elected in February of 1887 on the Laurier ticket, defeating James Burnett.²²

Fisher established his connection with Protestant education with a brief speech at the annual convention of the PAPT, held in 1884 in Cowansville. It was at this convention that Rexford, as English Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, Lynch, as Conservative Member of the Legislative Assembly for Brome County, and John William Dawson, Principal of McGill University, announced to the academy principals of the Eastern Townships that the McGill Normal School, the Protestant Committee and the Protestant Central Board of Examiners would assume these principals' rights to train and certify academy and

model school teachers.²³ Three years later, the newly re-elected Fisher presided as President of the PAPT Convention at Waterloo. In his Presidential address, he endorsed the changes in teacher certification by telling the Convention that the “educated men in the House [of Commons]” were those who were members of the professions.²⁴

Defeated by ‘old boy,’ E.A. Dyer, in the election of 1892, Fisher was elected in 1896 and appointed Federal Minister of Agriculture. As Minister he travelled extensively and increased his contacts worldwide, and also introduced a number of innovations such as the Patent branch of the Department of Agriculture and the Dominion Cold Storage Plant.²⁵ A bachelor, he wrote to his parents and aunt several times a week when the House was sitting and when travelling in Quebec, North America, and abroad, and discussed every detail with them of the management of his Ottawa residence and of the house and garden of Alva Farm. If his commitments as Minister in these years were any indication, he may have been out of touch with developments in Protestant education until the turn of the century and the opportunity to participate directly in the school garden phase of the Macdonald-Robertson movement.

To demonstrate his support of this movement, Fisher collaborated with G.D. Fuller, a teacher with a model school diploma who had been decertified by the 1889 regulations and who had been hired as Demonstrator and Inspector of the Macdonald school gardens. Of the six gardens in the Eastern Townships, three were in Brome Township: at Number One ‘West Brome,’ Number Seven ‘Vernal’s/Brome Centre,’ and Number Eight ‘Iron Hill,’ where “the individual plots...were neatly kept and remarkably free from weeds.” Each school received grants of twenty dollars each and teacher bonuses of thirty dollars each.²⁶

If we take the commissioners of the township of Brome as models of one room school management, fragmentary evidence suggests that they preferred to hire local teachers, paid the same salaries whether or not teachers had been trained at the McGill Normal School, and arranged the school year to suit local needs. The usual school year extended from August to June, with an extended break for the mud month of April, although Number Two Gilman’s Corners, was open for eleven months. In the Township, the pupils ranged in age from five to sixteen years; and in Number One district, ‘West Brome,’ a ‘Specimen Timetable for an Ungraded Elementary School’ co-existed peacefully with the

'Official Course of Study for Protestant Elementary Schools.'²⁷

The school networks in Brome County in the 1890s of which such schools were a part were surprisingly stable considering the post-railway boom population drain of the 1880s.²⁸ Between 1890 and 1900, the enrolment of Knowlton Academy dropped only from 138 to 126 pupils, of Mansonville Academy, from 90 to 86 pupils, while the enrolment of Sutton Model School/Academy increased from 90 to 95 pupils. While it is hard to prove that the three superior schools consistently generated their model and academy grade pupils inside and outside of their boundaries, there are certainly scattered references to outside pupils. Sutton Township had an academy and seventeen one room schools. Knowlton village had been forced to separate from Brome Township in 1888 in order to take over the management of the (private) academy and one graded, elementary school, but Brome Township had a healthy tax base and some of the pupils from its two dozen one room schools must have attended Knowlton Academy. In the rest of the County, the Townships of East Bolton and Potton had fifteen one room schools each, and the Township of East Farnham, eleven. West Bolton had nine one room schools; Sutton Flat village, one; and Eastman, two dissentient schools. There were seven Catholic and (Catholic) dissentient municipalities.²⁹

If these schools survived the 1890s, then it may have been despite the Protestant Committee reforms rather than because of them. If the graded academies cut off their own immediate supplies of pupils and, to support their higher status, cast a wider net, these may have been the schools which forced the closing of one room schools. If this were the case, then Committee policies between 1889 and 1899 had failed to create a successful system of secondary schools. It is perhaps in this context that the Committee commissioned and Macdonald paid for a survey of Protestant schools in 1902 by Professor John Adams of London University. Adams, a professional teacher and trainer of teachers, and a believer in consolidation and the 'New Education,' endorsed the Committee's reform agenda, noting, however, that the female model school principals were superior teachers to the male academy principals.³⁰ On the basis of Adams' report, the Committee fired its Inspector of Superior Schools, John Murdoch Harper, in May of 1903. Having made Harper the scapegoat for the rural teacher and pupil shortages, the Committee in the same meeting proposed the granting of teacher permits to untrained teachers to

bolster the rural school teacher supply.³¹ Fisher, a supporter of both professionalization and the needs of rural schools, voted against the introduction of permits for teachers without diplomas, and incurred the wrath of the Conservative rural press by refusing to help the rural districts solve their teacher shortage.³² As a further complication of the consolidation agenda, James Robertson chose the farming community of Ormstown, in the Chateauguay Valley southwest of Montreal, as the site for the [Quebec] "Macdonald Consolidated School." There had been a Protestant model school in Ormstown since the early 1880s; the school Municipality of Ormstown village had been established in 1896, and the model school raised to academy status in 1897. Despite local approval for the project, and before the ground could be broken at Ormstown, however, a rate-payer, Edwin Booker, sued the commissioners of Ormstown because of the proposed consolidation.³³ During the wait for a decision, Macdonald grew impatient and asked Robertson to look for another site, which gave the members of the Committee representing McGill University and the McGill Normal School the opportunity to suggest that a School for Teachers be situated at Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue with the School of Agriculture which Macdonald also planned to fund. While the full story of the debate over the re-location of the Normal School as the School for Teachers remains behind closed doors, in January of 1905, Fisher did tell his "dear old folks" at Alva Farm, "I go [to Quebec City] for the meeting of the Prot. Com. of Council of Pub. Instruction but I also want to see [deputy for Brome J.C.] McCorkill about the crisis there."³⁴

By the fall of 1905, Macdonald had not settled on the conditions under which to fund to transfer the McGill Normal School to Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue; and a second school consolidation, at Kingsey Model Consolidated School, was before the courts.³⁵ In March of 1906, P.S.G. Mackenzie, Liberal deputy for Richmond County in the government of Lomer Gouin, broke the protocol according to which the English Protestant members did not criticize the Protestant Committee in the Assembly. On May 11, 1906, the motion to authorize teacher permits was again put to the Committee. This time it was approved, and with the support of Fisher, who was then accused, with Rexford, Whyte, and J.C. McCorkill of "swallow[ing] themselves...by voting for what they had steadily opposed...on previous occasions."³⁶

With the location of the Normal School as yet undecided, Fisher and the Committee chose nevertheless to plan a series of

“political picnics” to sell the idea of school consolidation as the most efficient way to maintain the schools of Quebec’s English Protestant minority. As a demonstration of solidarity, Fisher called a meeting at his Liberal Party office at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal of George Parmelee, English Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, Dougall, William Weir, Liberal Member of the Assembly for Argenteuil County, Mackenzie, and G.S. Stephens, deputy for Montreal, Ward Five, and Protestant Committee members, Rexford, Principal of the Montreal Diocesan College since 1903, William Shurtleff, owner of the *Coaticook Observer*, and J.C. Sutherland, editor of the *Educational Record*.³⁷ “Educational picnics” were then planned for August for Richmond, Huntingdon, Knowlton, Inverness, Lachute, and Coaticook.

The first five above-mentioned locations each had strong superior schools and one room school networks, while Coaticook had supported a single (Protestant) academy with a formally trained male principal and a graded curriculum since the early 1880s. The probable strategy of drawing an unfavourable contrast between Coaticook Academy and the schools of the other municipalities backfired when the Coaticook meeting was postponed due to bad weather and held in the middle of the competing distractions of the Ayer’s Cliff annual agricultural fair. However, the other picnics were also held in a festive atmosphere, with red, white, and blue banners on the platforms put in place by school garden expert Fuller, companies of local notables, and picnic hampers for sale.

In the scheduled addresses, Fisher had the distasteful task — except at the picnic in Knowlton in his own constituency — of suggesting increased school taxes to pay for consolidated schools. James Robertson suggested to his country audiences that the Board of Protestant commissioners for Montreal should contribute to the support of the rural schools. Either Rexford or Parmelee was present at each meeting to criticize “the cheap, inexperienced young minds in charge of the pupils,” a criticism which was not only provocative but inaccurate in the municipalities in which it was levelled.³⁸

Six years passed before the Committee went again to the commissioners with such determination. In January of 1907, the School for Teachers opened on the Macdonald College campus. The Released Normal School Fund passed into the hands of the Committee, which meant that the one room schools lost their last chance at unconditional subsidization. With the teacher training

issue settled, the Protestant Committee did little to promote consolidation except to fortify the enabling legislation, and provide the Kingsey and Ulverton boards of commissioners with fifty dollars each for two years for pupil conveyance to the Kingsey Consolidated Model School. In January of 1908, in the midst of his problems with the Liberal party nomination for Brome County, the bovine tuberculosis scare and falling dairy prices, Fisher managed a whirlwind educational campaign with Parmelee to Barnston Corner, Sutton, and Newport.³⁹ The choice of sites suggests that the Committee remained determined to set the wheels of consolidation in motion not where rural schools were dying out but where they were surviving. It was not until after Fisher was defeated by Brome County favourite son, Harry Baker, in the election of 1911 that the educational campaign was revived and Fisher resumed active duty on the Committee.

In August of 1912, Fisher and Rexford organized a sweep of four counties, visited the school municipalities of Inverness, Richmond, Ayer's Cliff, Cookshire, Lachute, and Cowansville, and planned a visit to Huntingdon. These towns were chosen because there was no crack in the armour of Inverness, Richmond, Lachute, or Huntingdon but also because resistance to consolidation had weakened at Ayer's Cliff. Although these meetings were well publicized as in 1906, the public did not turn out and attendance was confined to school board members. When Parmelee's 1899 meetings paid off in a consolidation at Bulwer in Eaton Township, the 1912 speakers — Parmelee, Sinclair Laird, Principal of the School for Teachers, Fisher, Rexford, and Inspectors John Parker and J.C. Sutherland — adopted the strategy of seeking out commissioners who might be persuaded to consolidate and maintain graded consolidated model schools in competition with the older model schools and academies. Ayer's Cliff then separated from Stanstead Township and invested in a costly superior school project.⁴⁰

In 1913, Fisher contested the federal by-election in Chateauguay County against a local marble cutter named Morris who had strong support from both English- and French-speaking voters. Morris' victory was contested by Fisher, but there was no final ruling because of a war-time truce between the Liberal and Conservative parties.⁴¹ In his own backyard of Brome County, he meanwhile subsidized the school board of West Bolton (adjacent to Brome Township) for a consolidation at Brill's of the Gidding's, Hall's, Duboyce, and Brill's one room schools. Although there is

some question as to whether Fisher paid the salary of the second teacher for the Brill's consolidation, gave a grant for the improvement of the school grounds, or both, the consolidation materialized with two teachers and some transportation for the pupils. The Brill's School did not attain the rank of model school and was therefore, strictly speaking, an amalgamation rather than a consolidation.⁴²

There were also amalgamations of Potton and Prince Hill at Prince Hill in Potton Township, and of twelve one room schools at Glen Sutton with transportation for pupils provided. The consolidation of Millington and East Bolton was disconsolidated as too small, so the school at East Bolton was re-opened. The Protestant tax base of Brome Township was diminished with the creation of St. Henri-de-Brome, and that of Knowlton with the creation of St. Eduouard-de-Knowlton Catholic municipality, suggesting the strength, not the weakness, of the tax base of both. There were educational meetings at Mansonville and Knowlton in which Fisher was not included: at Mansonville, to force the commissioners to re-name their academy 'Mansonville Intermediate School,' and at Knowlton to discuss the principalship of Miss Flora Bryant, M.A.⁴³

By 1916, Fisher was disillusioned with the consolidation process and, perhaps as a result of his meetings with commissioners, came out in favour of an association of five large Protestant school boards. Whether it was the imposition of consolidation on one room school teachers or the intimidation of superior school principals which he found to be the more disheartening, he did not participate in the fall educational meetings at Shawville, Lachute, Cowansville, and Lennoxville.⁴⁴ On the Protestant Committee, he served on the sub-committee for compulsory school attendance, and gave his support to the call for legislation from the Executive Committee of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers of Quebec. When educational meetings were scheduled for 1919, he avoided Brome County, and met at Cowansville, and at Shawville and Wakefield in the Ottawa Valley. Parmelee and teachers Bedford-Jones, Brittain, Kneeland, and Lockhart took charge at Foster, Knowlton, Mansonville, and Sutton.⁴⁵

On April 2, 1919, Fisher wrote a Will by which a trust fund would, in part:

supplement the expenditure of the Province under the School Law and the Regulations of the Protestant Committee by strengthening the system of school inspection... [and] help

in consolidating the small elementary rural schools rather than the schools for higher education.⁴⁶

To administer this fund Fisher named seven trustees, but after a heart attack suffered in the fall of 1920, he added two codicils which reduced the board of trustees to four members: A.R. McMaster, Elson Rexford, nephew Eric Roswell Fisher, and farmer and Liberal Party faithful, Edward Caldwell. The fund held a portfolio of stock, bonds, and mortgages worth \$100,000, for an annual revenue of approximately \$4,000. Fisher died at his Ottawa residence on April 9, after a second heart attack, and his funeral service was held at Christ Church in Montreal on April 13.⁴⁷

Before his appointed Trustees could hold their first meeting, the Duboyce school re-opened, breaking up the consolidation at Brill's. Shortly thereafter, a meeting was held at Foster with the idea of making two consolidations from the municipalities of Foster, Brome, West Bolton, and Knowlton and uniting them with Knowlton Academy. When the trustees did meet, on January 30, 1922, they ignored the consolidation proposals and instead set themselves up to create a strong network of one room schools for Brome County.⁴⁸

The trustees organized two annual inspections of the one room schools, annual Teachers' Institutes, and incentives for teachers in the form of teaching prizes, salary bonuses, and an annual essay contest also with prizes. The inspections focused on the condition of the schoolhouses inside and outside, on the schoolgrounds, and the age and grade classification of pupils. Superior school scholarships were for pupils qualified by virtue of six grades of elementary education to enter the eleven grade academies. The prizes and bonuses were incentives to commissioners to hire teachers for a full, ten month school year. And the essay contests served to internalize the value of teacher service and dedication. Each school was equipped with a portrait of King George V and Queen Mary and a portrait of Sydney Arthur Fisher.⁴⁹

The issue of consolidation was raised again on August, 1923, when Eric Roswell Fisher invited the commissioners of East Bolton and West Bolton to a trustees' meeting at his home in East Bolton. A proposed consolidation between West Bolton, Brome, Knowlton, and Foster, did not materialize.⁵⁰ The Trustees left intact the status of the one room schools, Mansonville Intermediate School, Knowlton Academy, and Sutton Academy. The busing of Highwater pupils to Mansonville Intermediate School did not change the configuration of Brome County

schools. In 1924, the Trustees approved a six point policy for the "Standard [Elementary] Teacher," a seven point policy for the "Approved School House," and a five point policy for the "Approved School."⁵¹

Extra supervision was the price Brome County commissioners paid in order to avoid the added costs of consolidation and pupil transportation. If the Brome County schools were fixed in time and space, elsewhere in the Province these policies gained momentum. After Fisher's death, the Protestant Committee's "sub-committee for educational propaganda" was reconstituted with Shurtleff as convenor. Although the half dozen existing consolidations struggled for survival, this sub-committee targetted twenty eight municipalities for consolidation (including the resisting Brome County schools).

Although Sydney Fisher the politician seemed more comfortable in the Canadian or international rather than in the local scene, his bequest to "the little red schoolhouses of Brome" was made in the spirit of local autonomy and after personal experience with the problems of school consolidation. If the executors of the Fisher Trust Fund followed almost to the letter the contemporaneous North American design for rural elementary school supervision, this may have been because career educator Rexford was ever present in Protestant school outcomes. It is a commentary on rural school reform ideology that the Montreal-born Fisher sought to preserve what the South Bolton-born Rexford sought to destroy.

NOTES

- * This paper is part of "From the Constitution to the Classroom: Quebec Protestant Superior and Secondary Education, 1889 to 1926," Ph.D. dissertation in progress, History Department, University of Ottawa. I am indebted to Professor Chad Gaffield, my thesis supervisor, Miss Marion Phelps, Curator, Brome County Historical Society, and Mr. Edward Fisher, great-nephew of the Honourable Sydney Arthur Fisher, for all their contributions to this project.
- 1 H.D. Wells, "Brome County's Legacy," *Educational Record of the Province of Quebec*, hereafter referred to as *Record*, (Old Series) 56(1937): 182.
- 2 *Record* 16(1896): 257.
- 3 Quebec. *Sessional Papers*, 61 Vict., A.D. 1897, 335; *Record* 18(1898): 8-10. At this early stage of policy formulation in Quebec, the model seems to have been the example of mid-nineteenth century Concord via the Columbian Exposition.

- 4 For a wonderful study of a public and a private school under one roof, see Marie-Paule Malouin, *Ma soeur, a quelle école allez-vous? Deux écoles de filles à la fin du XIX^e siècle* (Montréal, 1985); see also Micheline Dumont, *Girls' Schooling in Quebec, 1639–1960* (Ottawa, 1990).
- 5 *Record* 5(1885): 226-30, especially III-Grants and Taxes, 228.
- 6 For the origins of Quebec Protestant professional, graded, secondary education, see George Flower, "A Study of the Contributions of Dr. E.I. Rexford to Education in the Province of Quebec," M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1949; Anne Drummond, "From Autonomous Academy to Public 'High School': Quebec Protestant Secondary Education, 1829 to 1889," M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1986; "Gender, Profession, and Principals: Quebec Protestant Academies, 1875–1900," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 2, 1(Spring/printemps 1990): 59–72.
- 7 *Record* 5(1885): 312-15; *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, hereafter referred to as *Report*, 1889–1890, 236-41.
- 8 See *Record*, "Directory of Superior Schools" for the years 1890 to 1897 in combination with *Report*, "Protestant Superior Education," for the same years. For the difficulties of academy principals and the successes of model school principals see, for example, *Record* 9(1889): 22; *Report*, 1890–1892, 295; *Record* 12(1892): 275.
- 9 For the numbers of schoolhouses maintained and superior school grants received, by county and municipality, see *Report*, "General Statistics of the Cost of Education...", 1894–1895, 120-59.
- 10 One kind of arrangement between clienteles and private boards entailed low tuition fees for all with the major financial burden as the responsibility of the trustees. See Esther Healy, "St. Francis College: A Legacy of Private Initiative in the Formation, Development, and Decline of a Classical College, 1854–1898," M.A. thesis, Bishop's University, 1992, and Robert Hill, "Robert Sellar and the *Huntingdon Gleaner*: The Conscience of Rural Quebec, 1863–1919," Ph.D. thesis, McGill University, 1970, ch. 2–3. For the initial diffusion of the classification of pupils according to graded instruction, see *Record* 4(1884): 271-72; 7(1887): 188; *Report*, 1887–1888, 260. For the use by the Argenteuil County Teachers' Association of graded instruction to maintain a network of feeder schools for Lachute Academy, see "Memoirs of Argenteuil County Teachers," *Teachers' Magazine*, 14(1964): 41, 44–52.
- 11 Hill, "Conscience," 681; *Record* 18(1898): 113; Quebec. *Sessional Papers*, 61 Vict. A.D. 1897, 335, "Minutes of the Protestant Committee," August 27, 1896.

- 12 *Statuts de la Province de Québec*, 1899, 117. The author of the consolidation and transportation clauses has not yet been identified; Quebec. *Débats de l'Assemblée législative*, hereafter referred to as *Débats*, 9^e législature, Première Session, 1897–1898, vii; *Record* 18(1898): 8–10. For the details and broader implications of the 1897 Education Act, see Louis-Phillippe Audet, “Le projet du Ministère de l’Instruction publique,” Marcel Lajeunesse, ed., *L’éducation au Québec au 19^e – 20^e siècles* (Québec, 1971), 77–114; Ruby Heap, “L’Église, l’Etat, et l’enseignement primaire publique catholique au Québec, 1897–1920,” thèse de doctorat, Université de Montréal, 1986.
- 13 *Record* 19(1899): 223-24.
- 14 Elizabeth Rapley, *A Century of Schools: Protestant Education in Wakefield, Masham, and Low* (Wakefield, Quebec, 1985), 45–46; *Report*, 1899–1900, 400-07.
- 15 G.W. Parmelee, *The Regulations of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction, with School Law in the Province of Quebec* (Quebec, 1899), 11, 46; *Record* 20(1900): 243.
- 16 There is no full-length biography of Fisher. For entries in biographical dictionaries see, for example, Henry Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Times* (Toronto, 1912); Charles G.D. Roberts and Arthur Tunnell, eds., *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography: The Canadian Who Was Who* (Toronto, 1934), Vol.1, 189-90. See also, Ernest Taylor, *History of Brome County Quebec* (Montreal, 1908), Vol.1, 181, and the file of newspaper clippings in the Archives of the Brome County Historical Society, hereafter referred to as BCHS, Knowlton, Quebec, and the history of the Fisher family written by Philip Fisher and in the possession of Edward Fisher.
- 17 In one letter to his mother dated July 15, 1898, Fisher mentions dinner with Lord Strathcona, a meeting with Prime Minister Joseph Chamberlain, meeting arrangements by Dominion Dairy Commissioner, James Robertson, and a plan to meet with Horace Plunkett, Irish landowner and exponent of the entry into farming of a higher class of young men; Sydney Fisher, Hotel Metropole, London, England, to Mrs. Arthur Fisher, Alva Farm, Knowlton, Quebec, letter in the possession of Mr. Edward Fisher. For Robertson’s international country life associates, see Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Toronto, 1976), ch. 12. For Plunkett’s views of rural reform, see *The Problem of Rural Life in America* (New York, 1911).
- 18 “Ormstown Academy,” *Teachers’ Magazine*, 10 (September, 1928): 17; Sutherland, *Children*, ch.11; M. Colleen Lewis, “The

- Macdonald Consolidated School: An Interpretation Using the Havelock Model," M.Ed. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1991; James Miller, *Rural Schools in Canada* (New York, 1913), 100-16.
- 19 Blair Neatby, *Laurier and a Liberal Quebec* (Toronto, 1973); Ron Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: A History of English-speaking Quebec 1759–1980* (Quebec, 1985, especially ch.10); Taylor, *Brome County*, Vol.1, 179–180; BCBS, "A Reunion of Old Boys at Knowlton, Monday, September 4, 1905"; Public Archives of Canada, *Laurier Correspondence*, C773 42639, Laurier to Fisher, February 20, 1900.
- 20 Flower, "E.I. Rexford," documents Lynch's teamwork on the Protestant Committee and the PAPT but does not summarize the results of this association; see also McGill University Archives, RG 2 C27 "Protestant Committee, 1871–1908," Lynch to Rexford, September 18, 1893, with a legal opinion on how to continue the superior school grant to St. Francis College but not to academies and superior schools which did not conform to Committee regulations.
- 21 On October 1, 1901, Fisher's motion to reclaim the whole Poor Municipality Fund for one room schools was defeated; *Débats*, 9^e législature, 1906, 117.
- 22 Taylor, *Brome County*, Vol.1, 181; BCBS. *Collection Roll of the Municipality of the Township of Brome*, 1874–1875; Orrin B. Rexford, *The Fisher Trust Fund 1922–1972*, n.p. 1974, 2.
- 23 *Record* 4(1884): 286-89; Drummond, "Autonomous," ch. 4.
- 24 *Record* 8(1888): 279.
- 25 J. Castell Hopkins, ed., *Canada: An Encyclopedia of the Country*, Vol.6, 367.
- 26 Fuller was Principal of Stanbridge Model School from 1892 to 1894, and Clarenceville Model School from 1894–95 to 1897; *Record* 12(1892): 320; 13(1893): 329; 14(1894): 303; 15(1895): 320; 16(1896): 285. For references to the school gardens, see BCBS, *Fisher Trust Fund*, "Annual Report," 1934–35, 60–61.
- 27 BCBS. *School Journals of Brome Township*, 1886–1906.
- 28 J. Derek Booth, "An Historical Geography of Brome County, 1800–1911," M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1966, 147-67.
- 29 *Report*, "General Statistics," 1894–1895, 126–127; M.L. Phelps, "Mansonville Academies," *Yesterdays of Brome County*, Vol. 8 (Knowlton, Quebec, 1991), 58.
- 30 John Adams, *The Protestant School System in the Province of Quebec* (London and Montreal, 1902).
- 31 *Report*, 1902–1903, 395, 398.
- 32 See, for example, *Waterloo Advertiser*, Friday, March 25, 1904,

- which defended Fisher against his 'traducers' in the *Richmond Guardian*.
- 33 "Ormstown Academy," *Teachers' Magazine*, 10 (September, 1928): 17-18; *Montreal Daily Witness*, March 1, 1906.
- 34 Stanley Frost, *McGill University*, Vol. 1, 1895-1971, 61-66; Fisher to "My dear old folks," Ottawa, February 22, 1905; *Report*, 1904-1905, 446-51.
- 35 *Report*, 1905-1906; W.P. Percival, *Life in School* (Montreal, 1939), 97-98.
- 36 *Débats*, 15^e législature, 1906, 7 février, 1906, 110-118; *Record* 26(1906): 191-96; *Richmond Guardian*, May 18, 1906.
- 37 This idea of a single English Protestant minority now had Canadian, national, and imperial overtones, perhaps best expressed in the deliberations of the Dominion Educational Association which favoured the establishment of one public education system for Canada; Flower, "E.I. Rexford," 133; *Record* 41(1921): 100.
- 38 There is full coverage of the meetings in the *Sherbrooke Daily Record*, Wednesday, August 15, Thursday, August 16, Friday, August 17, Saturday, August 18, Monday, August 20, Friday, August 24, and Friday, August 31, 1906.
- 39 Fisher to "my dear old folks," January 21, 1908.
- 40 *Journal of Agriculture and Horticulture*, 16(1912): 39.
- 41 Hill, "Conscience," 813.
- 42 BCHS. *Fisher Trust Fund*, "Annual Report," 1933-34, 116; *Report*, 1915-16, 236; 1916-17, 187-92.
- 43 *Report*, 1912-13, 293; 1914-15, 102-08, 224-28; Phelps, "Mansonville," 58.
- 44 *Report*, 1916-17, 236.
- 45 *Record* 40(1920): 296.
- 46 BCHS. Sydney Arthur Fisher, "Last Will and Testament."
- 47 Roberts, *Standard Dictionary*, 190; *Montreal Herald*, April 21, 1921; Rexford, *Fisher Trust*, 2, 66-67.
- 48 *Record* 43(1923): 262.
- 49 See, for example, BCHS. *Fisher Trust Fund*, "Annual Report," 1925-26.
- 50 BCHS. *Fisher Trust Fund*, "Minutes," June 2, 1923, August 30, 1923.
- 51 Rexford, *Fisher Trust*, 13.

