An Ivory Tower?

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Bishop's University was founded as a defiantly Anglican transplant in an American-settled corner of a largely French-speaking province. This afternoon I propose to examine the interaction between the university and this alien but on the whole not unfriendly social and political environment, during several critical periods in the university's history.

We might begin by considering what degree of interaction is desirable. Among the university's traditional roles is that of privileged critic of society — the role of the court jester in medieval times. If this role is considered to be necessary to the health of the body politic, then there is surely a case for keeping society at a certain distance. If the university's criticism is to be disinterested, it must not become obligated to any party or faction in the community.

On the other hand, if the results of academic thought are to have value other than as entertainment for the academic community, there must be fruitful channels for communication with society at large. The university's graduates are, one hopes, the best and in the long run the most fruitful means of influencing that society. However, the university *as an institution* has often had to recognize and confront currents of public opinion, most painfully in the course of the never-ending search for financial support. During its 150-year history, Bishop's has been able to preserve its academic traditions and to extend their influence from the original group of ten students to the present enrolment of 1900; but as we shall see, the university has sometimes had to bend, though not to break, under the pressure of the political or religious enthusiasms of the moment.

In founding the university, Bishop Mountain sought to reinforce the established order of society. Up until that time, most English-speaking Quebeckers who wanted a college education for

their sons had sent them to New England, whence they returned, the Bishop feared, imbued with republican, even egalitarian, principles. He was persuaded that a sound and liberal education, obtained during residence in a community regulated on Anglican principles, would produce graduates who were well-equipped to counter American influence on the political development of the province.

American influence was certainly significant in the Townships at that time. Four years after the opening of the college, there was reckoned to be majority support in the region for the proposal of a number of Montreal merchants that Lower Canada should be annexed to the United States. However, when Mountain advanced this among other reasons why the college should be raised to university status by royal charter, the Governor General, Lord Elgin, was not persuaded. Elgin was a university man — he had been a fellow of an Oxford college before he succeeded to his peerage — but he did not believe that the Bishop's college would command the resources to exert significant influence. In his opinion, the Roman Catholic religion offered equally secure but much more powerful resistance against republican contamination. He believed that the most effective cordon sanitaire against American innovations would be obtained by generating massive immigration of French-speaking and Catholic farmers from the St. Lawrence valley into the Townships. Since this policy was attractive not only to the Church but also to the nationalists in the Assembly, it was followed with increasing enthusiasm by successive governments. By 1867, when Lower Canada became the province of Quebec, there was a clear French-speaking majority in the region — a majority much less accessible to Anglican influence than had been the Townships society of 1845.

But in truth Bishop's was not well-equipped for dialogue with even the English-speaking society of Quebec. From the beginning, the college curriculum had been rigorously classical in content, full-time residence had been compulsory and only students judged to be capable of achieving matriculation standard within a year had been admitted. The first principal, Jasper Hume Nicolls, a staunch British North American, deplored the influence of American egalitarianism on Canadian politics, and he hoped that the education which had produced a governing class in England would graduate young Canadians equipped to raise the level of political discourse. In a lecture on "The End and Object of Education," given in the city or Quebec in 1857, Nicolls expressed

his opinion that "retired railway makers or railway speculators, retired merchants, retired or fortunate gold-finders are not the men to legislate for a country that would be a great country, or to administer her laws — we want men devoting themselves to these high purposes and callings, and devoting themselves heart and soul to them from their youth — men fresh and vigorous, able and prepared. It is learning and character, not wealth or station, which make a great man."

Unhappily it was the railway makers and the merchants who controlled the funds, both public and private, which were available to finance higher education in the English language in Quebec. *They* were attracted, not by education in the humanities — to quote Nicolls again "those studies which give the student knowledge of man in his various relations in public and private life, as a complete and independent being and as a member of various bodies" — but rather by the proposition of William Dawson, appointed principal of McGill in 1855, that "studies in natural science — have in our day established a connection so intimate with every department of mechanical, manufacturing and agricultural art that without them the material welfare of nations cannot be sustained, much less advanced." Nineteenth-century Canadians, struggling to subdue their enormous and intractable land, were continuously and intimately concerned with their material welfare, and so the curriculum advocated by Dawson, which included natural history, political economy, applied science and career-oriented diplomas was hailed as progressive and closely related to the practical needs of North America. The merchants and railway builders supported McGill with remarkable generosity, and by the end of the century its influence extended to British Columbia and to a large part of the eastern United States.

Bishop's on the other hand had not even been able to develop a full curriculum in the humanities. Indeed, the decision of Corporation in 1860 to appropriate the larger part of the university's endowment for the expansion of Bishop's College School had led to a reduction of the full-time teaching staff from three to one, the Principal, and as he remarked to the College Council "Classical and English Literature and Composition, History, Logic, Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy and Divinity form a wide range of subjects for one mind to deal with successfully." Any hope of restoring the financial situation in the immediate future was destroyed when Corporation, in the vain hope of appeasing the wealthy evangelical Anglicans in Montreal, amended the statutes in 1870 so that a

majority of the trustees should be appointed by the synods (the legislative assemblies) of the dioceses of Montreal and Quebec. Jasper Nicolls had been an undergraduate at Oriel when John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman had been a tutor of that college. The evangelicals were deeply suspicious of his churchmanship, and wished him to be placed under tutelage. As a consequence of this abject surrender of the university's autonomy, most trustees would henceforward be chosen for their devotion to the interests of the synods rather than to those of the university.

In 1866, Henry Roe, who had been one of the first students in 1845, had come to Nicolls' rescue as unpaid professor of Divinity. In 1876, he circulated an open letter to Bishop Williams which included a vitriolic attack on the financial administration of the college and the school. As a result of the college's progressive loss of financial and academic autonomy, he lamented, Bishop's "stood before the people of the country as a sectarian institution, full of narrow prejudice, foreign in its tastes and feelings, animated by no generous sympathy with the great body of the people in their struggles and feeling no desire to come down among them, adapt itself to their wants and win them." If one made allowance for the heat of the moment, this judgment of one of the university's most loyal and hard-working alumni was probably not far from the mark.

Over the next 20 years, Nicolls and his successors Joseph Lobley and Thomas Adams carried most of the teaching and administrative load, until the interest of Robert Hamilton and several other wealthy residents of the city of Quebec stimulated enough financial support to enable the two lapsed chairs to be restored. A number of graduates in Arts of this period had distinguished careers, but it was the Medical Faculty, founded in Montreal in 1871, which kept the institution's name before the general public.

Like McGill's Faculty of Medicine, the Bishop's Faculty had been the initiative of a number of medical practitioners in Montreal. Convocation's role was limited to guaranteeing matriculation standards, approving the appointments of members of faculty, and conferring degrees. The new Faculty introduced several new subjects into the medical curriculum, founded the Western Hospital and several smaller maternity hospitals and initiated the study of dentistry to degree standard in the province. In 1890, it admitted the first women medical students in Quebec, Octavia Grace Ritchie and Maude Elizabeth Abbott. The McGill Faculty had refused their applications on account of their sex, and it now

attempted, through its control of the Executive of the Montreal General Hospital, to exclude them from clinical instruction in the only English-language hospital large enough to satisfy the licensing requirements in the province. The two pioneers managed to slip through the net, but the hospital refused to admit any more women. Though the Bishop's Faculty was able to provide clinical instruction in Medicine and Surgery at the Western Hospital, and it was particularly well-equipped to provide obstetrical attendances, it finally decided in 1897 to admit no more women until such clinical facilities as were required for a license to practice in Quebec could be made available to them. In all, the Faculty had graduated twelve women, most of whom subsequently practised their profession, several with distinction.

The practice of medicine was changing very rapidly during this period, and by the end of the century the Bishop's Faculty could no longer compete with McGill's strength in the medical sciences and ability to control appointments to the medical and surgical staff of the major hospitals. In 1905, in return for an agreement by McGill to admit the current Bishop's medical students, Bishop's agreed to close down its medical Faculty. During its 34 years of teaching, the Faculty had trained 246 doctors to internationally recognized standards. Canada's population was growing rapidly at that the time, and because of the rigorous licensing standards in Ontario and Quebec the country was not, like the United States, oversupplied with medical men. In these circumstances, the Faculty had left an extremely valuable legacy to the country.

Professional schools in law and music had also functioned briefly in association with Bishop's, but both had succumbed in competition with McGill. Training in education had proved more viable. As early as 1884, Bishop's had collaborated with McGill in the supervision of the Associate in Arts examination which set the standard for graduation from the English-language secondary schools of the province. The need to increase the number of secondary school teachers who were university graduates had already led McGill and Bishop's to offer admission with advanced standing to holders of the Academy diploma, which was the qualification for secondary school teachers at the time. However, only the normal school under the direction of McGill offered the training in pedagogy and the lectures on the laws which governed education and the legal position of the teacher which were required for the diploma. To enable Bishop's graduates to qualify for certification, a course of lectures approved by the Protestant Committee of

the Council of Public Instruction was delivered at Bishop's during the 1898–99 session, and the undergraduates following the course were examined by the Committee's Central Board of Examiners. This marked the beginning of the long and fruitful engagement of the University in the battle to raise the standard of teaching in the province.

Since Quebec did not have a Minister of Education, the Protestant Committee represented the interest of the state, so this also marked the first occasion on which the Faculty of Arts recognized state authority over its curriculum and standards. Bishop's was already active in the work of the Committee, of which Chancellor Heneker was at that time the chairman. In 1899, he resigned in protest against the government's reduction by 50% of its grant to support the education in Arts of prospective teachers. This proved to be a serious tactical error. McGill took advantage of his absence to persuade the Committee to assign to the newly-constituted Matriculation Board of McGill University the complete control of the Associate in Arts examination. As a result, the headmasters of academies and secondary schools quite naturally studied the McGill courses in order that their graduating students might not find themselves at a disadvantage while writing their examinations. From the Sherbrooke Academy, in consequence, only three students matriculated at Bishop's during the next four years.

In 1904, Bishop's decided to counterattack. Corporation suggested to the Protestant Committee that it would be in the interest of education in the province if the examinations were placed under the direct control of the Committee. After three months of negotiations, it was agreed that the course of study and the texts to be used for the A.A. examination would be determined by the Committee, after consultation with a matriculation board on which McGill, Bishop's, the Committee and the teachers would be represented. Thus the state obtained a foothold in the determination of the goals of secondary education, which the evangelists of socializing education have been exploiting ever since.

Following the admission of women to the Faculty of Arts in 1903, teaching began to overtake the ministry as the professional goal of most undergraduates. It dawned on the faculty that graduate teachers would be promoters of the value of sound and liberal education in a wider society than that owing allegiance to the Anglican church. The Calendar was brought up to date, printed much earlier in the year, and circulated with a brochure contain-

ing pictures of the campus to all the secondary schools of the province. The principal and members of the faculty began to give public lectures designed to encourage teachers to complete their education. However, it was not until the advent of Arthur McGreer as principal in 1922 that public relations became a major concern for the administration.

McGreer believed wholeheartedly that sound and liberal education, obtained during residence in an academic community, provided a firm foundation for whatever career graduates might choose, and he carried this message into every corner of Quebec society. He organized a conference at the university for the principals of high schools and persuaded the Protestant Secretary of the Council of Public Instruction to come and speak to them at dinner. He invited the Rotary Club of Sherbrooke to a reception on campus. His establishment of a graduate year of training for teachers laid the foundation for the remarkable influence which Bishop's graduates have had on the development of secondary education in the province. He was active as a member of the Protestant Committee in promoting the consolidation of school districts, and he earned the respect of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers by his attempts to have the recommendations of the Hepburn committee implemented.

Within a very short time after he was appointed, he had perceived that Corporation must be freed from the synods and given a broader base, and he set about rallying a number of the leaders of Quebec's English-speaking financial and industrial community to the university's cause. He held that the ultimate essence of education is the training of character, to be achieved by the *discipline* of the body, the will and the intelligence, and this gospel proved attractive to influential men in the Townships and in Montreal — many of them had adolescent children who were being affected by the general relaxation of social norms during the post-war period. By 1927, he had broken the control of the synods over Corporation and established an Executive Committee, the majority of whose members were willing and able to provide financial and moral support for his projects.

In thus breaking out of the financial straitjacket within which the university had struggled for eighty years, he had made no concessions to Mammon. He was determined that Bishop's graduates would not be among the majority of university men and women in Canada, who, he believed, were graduating with "little or no appreciation of the moral sanctions which are at once the cement

and the only sure foundation for the stability and the well-being of Canadian society." In spite of increasing pressure from within and without the Bishop's community, courses in Divinity and attendance at chapel services remained compulsory for all undergraduates, even though barely half of them declared adherence to the Anglican communion. One can easily imagine what many undergraduates thought of this regime. On the other hand, when one considers the disaggregated state of Canadian society today, one can hardly quarrel with McGreer's insistence on the need for cement!

During McGreer's reign of twenty-five years, enrolment doubled in spite of a decade-long economic depression and the lack of money for new buildings. Thanks to the influence of the new trustees, two successful financial campaigns had been mounted; but all the funds raised had gone to eliminate the operating deficit and to increase the endowment to permit an increase in the number of faculty. After the 1939–45 war, the need for new buildings became paramount. A majority of the trustees decided that the statutory denominational bias of Corporation must be eliminated, so that they could extend the scope of their canvass in the financial campaign they were planning. They attempted to persuade Archbishop Carrington to replace the bishops by a president and a vice-president of Corporation elected by and from the trustees. They were however willing to leave untouched the episcopal veto over all acts of Corporation, as a guarantee of the Christian character of the university. Carrington declined to abdicate as president, so the trustees pushed a private bill through the Legislative Assembly which replaced the bishops by an elected president and vice-president, eliminated the episcopal veto and placed the Faculty of Divinity under the authority of the principal. In the short term this did not diminish the importance of the Faculty in the life of the university, but it did lay the Faculty open to pressures which in the long run would lead to its closure.

Many of the trustees whom McGreer had recruited were vigorous advocates of his conservative views, and the principal who followed him, Arthur Jewitt, had to exercise considerable diplomatic skill in order to protect the university's academic autonomy and to eliminate the more anachronistic of McGreer's legacies. Latin was replaced as a compulsory subject by Dr. Preston's course in classical civilization, and with the support of Archbishop Carrington chapel attendance was left to the interest of the undergraduates. Jewitt nevertheless held the founders' view that the uni-

versity was a moral enterprise. Two courses in Divinity remained compulsory for undergraduates, and social behavior continued to be regulated closely. McGreer and many of the trustees had looked with disfavour on the steadily increasing enrolment of women, as tending to distract the male undergraduates from the business at hand. Jewitt managed, though with considerable difficulty, to persuade these trustees that the women undergraduates were not fatally weakening the fabric of undergraduate society and that a liberal education was bound to benefit from a reasonable amount of social and intellectual intercourse between the sexes.

By 1960, when Jewitt retired, enrolment had again doubled, reaching over 400, of whom one-third were women, and Bishop's was solidly connected with the conservative end of the spectrum of small Canadian universities — that is, the *English-language* universities. Surrounded by French-speaking Canadians, the university had nevertheless shown little interest in developing social or even intellectual contacts with its French-speaking counterparts. Financial negotiations with the provincial government, which as yet provided only a small fraction of the university's revenue, were conducted via the Corporation's connections with the ruling political party. To be fair, the lack of interest in communicating across the language barrier was mutual. In the absence of a Ministry of Education, university administrations were completely autonomous, though higher education in the French language was strongly influenced by the Roman Catholic church.

In June 1960, the Liberals under Jean Lesage defeated a disintegrating Union Nationale government. During the election campaign Lesage had been careful to underline the clerical connections of each of the Liberal candidates; but after the election was over, it soon became evident that the goal of his government was to make the state dominant in economic, educational and social affairs in Quebec. In 1961, a Royal Commission was established under the presidency of Monseigneur Alphonse-Marie Parent, vice-recteur de l'Université Laval, and given a mandate to study the organization and financing of education in the province of Quebec, to report the results of their study and to make recommendations as to the measures to be taken to ensure *progress* in the system of education in the province.

In 1963, acting upon the first recommendation of the Parent Commission, the Lesage government created a Ministry of Education and Youth. Though the universities were not to be subject to the authority of the minister, his responsibility for coordi-

nating the programmes offered at the different levels of instruction would permit him to determine the conditions for admission to the universities. He would also control the allocation of grants from the government to the universities, which already amounted to half of their operating revenue and which, in the form of capital grants, would obviously influence their future growth. It had become necessary to take stock of Bishop's standing among the men who were driving the reform in education in Quebec.

Up until 1960, almost all the education available in Quebec to French-speaking students in the same age group as the undergraduates at Bishop's had been provided by the classical colleges. The programme leading to the "classical" B.A. was based upon an idea of the purpose of higher education which was remarkably similar to McGreer's, though cast in the more restricted mould dictated by the canons of the Roman Catholic church. The curriculum was based upon the "cursus studiorum," a study plan which had not changed in its essentials since the XVI century and had its roots in classical antiquity and in Roman Catholic philosophy and theology. It was designed to produce "l'homme bien pensant et bien parlant" — an elite trained in classical modes of thought and able to express themselves orally as well as in writing in French of the highest quality. Great importance was attached to residential life in college, which enabled academic instruction to be supplemented by a routine of living which developed "les bienséances" — civility and sound physical health—-important attributes of "l'honnête homme."

Unhappily, as the reform developed it became evident that it was being implemented by men and women who viewed education primarily as a machine for social engineering rather than as a means for training minds and developing talents. For them, the best system of education for a *progressive* society was one which kept the largest fraction of the population in school for the longest time. In order to achieve their social goals, they also insisted that as large a range of intellectual capability as possible be catered to in a given institution, in order to eliminate social divisions based upon level of education. Since the difficulty of coping with such a clientèle increased rapidly with increasing age, this philosophy led inevitably to very large and complex institutions at the secondary and especially at the post-secondary level.

By these people the classical colleges were regarded as elitist and retrogressive relics of a Quebec which needed to be transformed, and to transform them was a primary goal of the reformers.

Bishop's, viewed in these circles as an English-language classical college, could therefore not anticipate sympathetic treatment under the new dispensation.

The means chosen by the ministry's ideologues to eliminate the classical colleges was to introduce a new pre-university level of education, to be dispensed in what have become known as collèges d'enseignement général et professionel or CEGEPs. These new colleges would provide, for Grade XI graduates, a twelfth and thirteenth year of instruction, to be followed for the academically inclined by three years of instruction at university to the bachelor's degree level. The first cohort of these colleges was to be created by transforming the "collèges classiques" which were "invited" to become integral parts of "greater and truly comprehensive entities" in which the curriculum would be strongly influenced by the Ministry. In order to make sure that none of the classical colleges chose to decline the invitation, graduation from a CEGEP was henceforward to be the only criterion of admission to a university first degree programme.

Bishop's had responded to the Parent Commission's invitation and had submitted a cogent defence of the university's ethos and its curriculum and academic standards, and in its report the Commission had recognized the value of a more broadly-based education to first-degree level, as an alternative to the specialized degree which was being promoted in the French-language universities. However, the bureaucrats chose to ignore this section of the report. Noting that half of the undergraduates at Bishop's were following twelfth and thirteenth years of instruction, and that Bishop's had excellent facilities for residential life, a party at the Ministry began to exert pressure on Bishop's to relinquish its university charter and become the CEGEP for English-speaking students in mainland Quebec.

During the period of transition to the new regime, Bishop's had been teaching the CEGEP academic curriculum to undergraduates in the corresponding years, but when the university showed no interest in becoming a CEGEP, the Ministry abruptly transferred those students to the jurisdiction of the newly-constituted Champlain Regional CEGEP. Enrolment was thus cut in half, and the Ministry notified the university that for the 1972–73 session it would fund only 45 of the 72 positions which had been authorized as the faculty establishment for 1971–72. Evidently the ideologues were not yet persuaded of the value of liberal education on the Bishop's model.

Fortunately, in 1971 the autonomous Conseil des Universités had been given the responsibility of defining the missions and orientations of the several universities of the province. Bishop's vigorously defended its liberal traditions before the Conseil, and in 1973 the Conseil recommended that Bishop's be recognized as a university offering broadly-based liberal education in the Arts and Sciences to an undergraduate enrolment which, it was anticipated would settle down at around 1200 students. The Ministry accepted this recommendation, and the Bishop's community was thus relieved of the fear that radical change would be imposed.

Nevertheless, the shock had been very severe, and its effects were long-lasting. Enrolment was slow to recover. English-speaking Quebeckers were not yet convinced of the quality of the education offered by the CEGEPs, and many students left the province for universities in the Maritimes or qualifying years in Ontario. The passage of Bill 101 in 1977 led to the emigration of a large fraction of the English-speaking population of the Montreal conurbation. It was 1986 before the full-time student enrolment reached 1200. On the other hand, relations with the Ministry improved steadily during this period. Our anomalous graduate year in education programme was thoroughly evaluated and re-accredited. No objection was raised to our expansion into major and honours programmes in Drama, Fine Arts and Music, and grants per capita kept pace with those given to the other English-language universities. More recently it seems that the Ministry has even begun to recognize that excessive specialization of many first-degree programmes in the French-language universities has placed their graduates at a disadvantage in today's job market. The university's standing with the Ministry seems, for the moment, secure.

A further reason for optimism is that the degree of fluency in French at all levels of the university community has improved to the point where its members can participate more effectively in the life of the region. One thinks for example of the close links which the Department of Music has established with the newly-founded School of Music at the Université de Sherbrooke, and the valiant efforts of the stadium announcer to communicate with the numerous French-speaking fans of the Gaiters.

Thus we have seen that, far from the image of the ivory tower, Bishop's has been in continual contact and occasional collision with its social and political environment. On an intellectual level, I think it is fair to say that both the university and its environ-

ment have benefitted from these contacts. On a moral plane, however, the environment has triumphed and it has become evident that the founders' idea of the university as a moral enterprise is no longer viable. The modern university has proved ill-adapted to provide moral guidance to undergraduates. It must guarantee to its faculty the right to teach without deference to prescribed doctrine, and the degree of specialisation of most members of faculty is nowadays so great that the academic community seems unable to develop coherent views on the increasingly awesome moral problems which confront us. To the extent that these may yield to rational analysis, we must hope that in teaching undergraduates to think we are at least providing them with the means to make wise choices.

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RESUME

L'Université Bishop's est née d'un défi de l'anglicanisme de s'implanter dans une région colonisée par des Américains dans une province en majeure partie francophone. L'auteur examine l'interaction entre l'université et ce milieu, à la fois étranger et généralement amical, au cours des 150 années dont Bishop's célèbre cette année l'accomplissement.

Au cours des quatre-vingt premières années, les caractéristiques anglicanes du collège et la philosophie pédagogique résolument anti-utilitaire ont restreint l'interaction avec la population de la région. Le principal McGreer (1922–47) a élargi les bases de la corporation et amené un nombre important de Québécois anglophones à accepter les vues de l'Université à l'effet qu'une solide formation en humanités constitue une excellente base pour ceux qui aspirent à servir dans un sens autre que celui purement technique. Toutefois, ce n'est qu'à la suite des pressions exercées par le ministère de l'Éducation à partir de 1962 que l'on atteint un certain degré de compréhension mutuelle avec la collectivité francophone.