

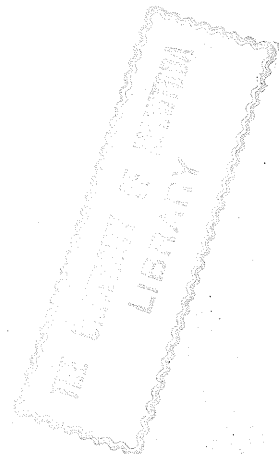
THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WORK OF THE  
TEACHING ORDERS OF WOMEN  
IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE COMMITTEE ON POST-GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to compile both a brief history of the teaching Orders of women in the Province of Quebec, and a concise record of their contribution to education, alluding to salient facts only, while spanning the bridge of time from the period of French colonization up to the present. As there are fifty Religious Congregations of women devoting themselves to the education of youth in that province, a detailed account of each, or even an equitable one, is of necessity curtailed by the confines of a thesis. Some of these communities were founded exclusively for the education of youth, such as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary; others distribute their personnel to undertake manifold works of mercy, while sharing in the magnificent work of instructing youth and inculcating Christian ideals, for example, the Institute of the Sisters of Charity or the Grey Nuns as they are usually called.

The Sisters who teach have as their Model, Christ the Divine Teacher. They endeavour to teach in His way the things He taught; that is, they aim primarily at the souls of children, who are not only mortal, but also immortal. Theirs is education in the broadest and deepest sense --- education of the soul as well as of the mind. At the same time they try to equip the young girls for their duties and

opportunities in this life, keeping in mind the words of their Leader, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Moreover, they are living examples of the principles they teach, because by giving up all the world clings to for personal love of Christ, they prove the importance of salvation. Not all profit by the Sisters' teaching and example, however. Just as there was a Judas among the chosen twelve, so also may be found some, among the hundreds and thousands the Sisters teach, who do not become imbued with the Christian spirit and high ideals of integrity, industry and morality they try to infuse into them.

Some definitions of education by leading Catholic educators may not be amiss here. Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical on the Christian Education of youth, declared that "education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created."<sup>1</sup> Bishop Kelley states that "education is the process by which the child is lifted out of the vegetative and animal nature proper to it at the beginning, and brought up to the dignity and greatness of the life of the intellect and spirit."<sup>2</sup> He also affirms that, "Perfect balance is the true objective of education.

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<sup>1</sup>Pope Pius XI, Christian Education, p. 62. New York: America Press, 1930.

<sup>2</sup>Bishop Kelley talks Education, p. 12. St. Louis, Missouri: Queen's Work, 1944.

Man has a will as well as a mind, and a soul which is the true center of the rod of his life. When you push the rod over to make it balance where there is no balance possible you not only move away from the will but put the rod itself on a false center. If the weight of instruction is all on the mental and physical with nothing or little on the spiritual end there never will be a balance. Then you are too often afraid to put on weights. A well-balanced man must carry them. Education is not a process of relieving the back of burdens but of imposing the right ones. The more the necessary developing burdens are lifted, the lighter and more useless becomes the rod of life. The scales of education were not made for trifles but to weigh the ponderable thing which is Eternal Destiny."<sup>3</sup> Bishop Spalding says briefly that "education is the stimulation of life, the rousing of endowments to the activity which produces faculty."<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate objective of Catholic education is given very skillfully in the encyclical previously mentioned. "The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by Baptism ....

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 13

<sup>4</sup>Bishop Spalding, Thoughts and Theories of Life and Education, p. 233. Chicago, Illinois: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910.

For precisely this reason, Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate, and perfect it, in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ.

Hence the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character. For, it is not every kind of consistency and firmness of conduct based on subjective principles that makes true character, but only constancy in following the eternal principles of justice.

The true Christian does not renounce the activities of this life, he does not stunt his natural faculties; but he develops and perfects them, by coordinating them with the supernatural. He thus ennobles what is merely natural in life and secures for it new strength in the material and temporal order, no less than in the spiritual and eternal. <sup>5</sup>

Down through the ages the Church has always maintained an active and solicitous interest in its schools, realizing their vast significance and importance for the inculcating and strengthening of the Faith in the souls of

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<sup>5</sup>Christian Education of Youth, op. cit. p. 88, 89, 90

the children, at the same time obeying Christ's command "Go ye, and teach..." To quote again that monumental work of Pope Pius XI, "It is the inalienable right as well as the indispensable duty of the Church, to watch over the entire education of her children, in all institutions, not merely in regard to the religious instruction given there, but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation insofar as religion and morality are concerned"<sup>6</sup> That is the reason why, at the cost of great sacrifice, a pastor and his flock try to maintain a school. The pastor will sacrifice anything to do so, because he knows his Church will suffer if he doesn't. The French Canadians in Quebec have shown this most admirable spirit. After the British conquest particularly, they grouped themselves about their pastors, who became for them not only the pivot of their Christian life, but also the impregnable fortress of their nationality, because their religion, language and customs were inseparable. By these means they were able to raise an insurmountable barrier against the invading wave that would engulf and strive to anglicize them.

This brief history of the religious communities of women who have become an integral and important part of the state system of education in the Province of Quebec and also in the work of the Church, is divided into six periods of growth for the purpose of simplification. The first

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 66

includes the period of French colonization (when the pioneer missionary nuns from France, the Ursulines, arrived in Quebec in 1639) until the British Conquest in 1763. The next period spans the struggle for existence until 1800, followed by a chapter showing how the two systems of Education evolved in Lower Canada by which the religious Orders were granted a permanency of position and therefore a means of expansion in the Province of Quebec. This chapter also includes a brief account of the work of the Orders of women until 1842. Chapters V, VI, VII, deal with the period 1842 to 1947 when, due to favorable education laws, the rise of forty-six new teaching communities in less than one hundred years, and the growth of the old Orders, were to result in great and lasting achievements.

Important primary sources of information for this topic written far from the origin are: Le Canada Ecclesiastique published annually and giving the aim, a very brief historical synopsis, and detailed statistics in many instances concerning each community; a questionnaire sent to each Order to gather more specific information concerning the number of teaching sisters and pupils for the different periods of growth, and which may be found in the Appendix. Information gleaned from these two sources was not tabulated in the footnotes in order to prevent a multiplicity of them and thereby overburden the thesis uselessly. There is, in addition, the writing of contemporaries including pertinent

pertinent correspondence with the Superintendent of Education for the Province of Quebec, and the Chairman of the Montreal Catholic Schools Commission. There are, as well, related legal documents covering the entire period since 1763, more especially following that of the National Schools Act of 1801.

The thesis demonstrates how, within a state comprising two national groups and religions, an educational philosophy based on the religious conceptions of a racial group maintained its position under conditions of great difficulty. It demonstrates, also, how the women folk of the majority group sacrificed worldly pleasures and ambitions to maintain national and religious ideals pertaining to the training of the children of their belief.

## CHAPTER II

### The French Regime

Following in the wake of the great French explorers, intrepid men who laid the foundations of the valuable colony, New France, and of future Canada, came the zealous missionaries eager to brave hardships and toil, fearless and dauntless in the face of danger, with one undeviating aim - that of bringing to the Indians the knowledge of the One True God. The missionary, carrying the crucifix, the soldier, carrying the fleur-de-lis knew no barrier of water, forest, or savage. Thus every missionary's outpost, every soldier's camp was a nucleus of French influence linking inseparably the Church and State in New France. The furtherance of one meant the growth of the other. Augmented to this was the influx of colonists, small at first and consisting mainly of officials of the government and the fur trading Company of New France, or its successors.

Hand in hand with the work of Christianizing the Indians went the work of civilizing them. To attain this aim, some instruction, even if it were only elementary, was a necessity. Moreover, as the population of Quebec City, founded in 1608, was increasing, some educational provision had to be made for the young girls and boys. The ones to interest themselves in this noble endeavor were the priests. One would expect that the government would have recognized the immense benefits to be derived from a skilled and instructed populace; but the fact remains that the government of France was content to extract the wealth from its



colony without aiding the material or intellectual welfare of its colonists. To the Church, then, is the credit due, not only for the moral and religious training of its members, which are all-important, but also for education in its restricted sense, the development of the intelligence. The Recollets in 1615, and the Jesuits about ten years later, with their missionary work and their schools for boys were important agencies for solidifying and extending French culture and influence wherever they went, at the same time trying to cultivate the Indians, and to teach them the most necessary arts of civilization.

As the education of the women of a country (most particularly true of a pioneer country) determines greatly the standard or the level of culture and refinement in their sphere of influence, the Church recognized the imperative need of attending to the instruction of young girls. Accordingly the superior of the Jesuits, Father Le Jeune, undertook to find educators in France. Naturally, his zeal directed him to convents, where women were devoting their whole lives to the intellectual and spiritual welfare of children with no thought of self or selfish interests. Established since the fifteenth century, the Ursuline Order was renowned in Europe for its system of education for girls. To these sisters, Father Le Jeune directed his steps. Nor was it in vain. The only difficulty was to choose from the many eager and devoted aspirants those who could bear the hardships and painful trials that accompany the founding of educational work in a pioneer country.

Therefore, "the first community to devote itself to the instruction and education of girls in Canada was that of the Ursulines of Quebec. From the time of their arrival in the country they divided their labours between the Indian and French girls. From 1639 to 1725 they employed themselves in civilizing, instructing and frenchifying as well as they could all the young Indians that the natives were willing to entrust to them but their principal work was destined to be the education and instruction of French-Canadian girls."<sup>1</sup>

The guiding star and inspiration of all who came in contact with her was the superior, Mother Mary of the Incarnation. She was born in Tours, France, in 1599. At the age of nineteen she was left a widow with a small son to care for. When he was twelve, she intrusted his education to the Jesuits, and felt free to enter a convent, thereby fulfilling her wish of years. "Then came the summons which was to change Marie's placid life into one of adventure and hardship, which was to turn the secluded nun, known only to the little city of Tours, into a pioneer whose name is a familiar and cherished one in the land of her adoption, and in the annals of her order."<sup>2</sup>

That most necessary material, money, was supplied by a young, wealthy widow, Madame de la Peltrie who, very

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<sup>1</sup>Abbe. A. E. Gosselin, Canada and Its Provinces. Toronto, Ontario: Brook & Co., 1914.

<sup>2</sup>Agnes Repplier, Mere Marie of the Ursuline, p. 37, New York; Sun Dial Press, Inc., 1937

generous and devout, was willing to finance the school in Quebec and to help in the work of instructing and civilizing the little savages. So, in 1639 there disembarked at Quebec, three Ursuline Religious and their benefactor. They were warmly welcomed at the wharf by the Governor, Charles Jacques Huault de Montmagny, accompanied by his troops. "This reception showed how much he appreciated the courage and sacrifice of these women who came solely for humanitarian purposes."<sup>3</sup> It was a gala day for the colonists: guns were fired, shops were closed, and all took a holiday to greet the new arrivals.

After a dinner served in their honor at the governor's house, the Ursulines were ceremoniously conducted to the hut that had been prepared for them under the shelter of the cliff, facing the beautiful St. Lawrence River. It was a humble dwelling place comprising two rooms, an attic and a tiny chapel.

The little French girls who were waiting to be taught had to wait longer while the Indian girls were being nursed, victims of that dread scourge of the savages - smallpox. Months later when the epidemic had spent itself and peace was restored to the colony, the exhausted nuns were urged by Pere Le Jeune to

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<sup>3</sup>J.A. Meilleur, Memorial de d'Education, p.17. Quebec: Leger Brousseau, 1876.

begin at once the study of the Indian languages. Mother Marie found it uphill work. She said the "Indian nouns and verbs that I'm learning by heart seem to roll like stones in my head, bruising it."<sup>4</sup>

The Ursulines really established two schools, one for the daughters of the French gentlemen, and one for the little Indians. The latter were taught in rude shelters or tents under the shade of the neighboring forests where they felt more at home. Apart from the time spent in trying to teach them, they mingled freely with the French girls for a numbers of years. The French children were taught in one of the rooms of the small convent.

An annalist of the monastery states that there were two French pupils boarding there immediately after the cessation of the epidemic, and six Indian girls.<sup>5</sup> Mother Mary of the Incarnation does not give the number of day scholars in her letters, but writes "We also have some little French girls as day pupils, there are already seven or eight of them. I believe that not more than eight days passed after our arrival when they were sent to us."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Abbe P. F. Richaudeau, Vie de la Mere Marie de l'Incarnation, p. 206. Paris, France: H. Casterman, 1874.

<sup>5</sup>Glimpses of the Monastery, Part I, p. 46. Quebec: C. Darveau, 1875.

<sup>6</sup>La correspondance de Marie de L'Incarnation, Vol. III, Letter LIX, p. 155. Edited by Dom A. Jamet Quebec: L'Action Sociale, 1935.

Under great difficulties the courageous nuns labored in the tenement by the wharf, until their new convent was finished for them in 1642. This was destroyed by fire in 1650. At the time of this calamity there were in the building "fifteen sisters, Madame de la Peltrie, a dozen or so little French girls and two score little Indians".<sup>7</sup> Even in the short time the convent was built, the nuns had what would have been a large boarding-school in those days. Beginning again, a new building was constructed on the ruins of the old. It took two years before the convent was ready for boarders. During this time, whenever it was possible, the nuns eager to continue their apostolate taught under the trees. Their pupils learned only the rudiments of knowledge, - reading and writing - including, of course, the essential knowledge of religion. The Indian girls were trained patiently and lovingly in the art of cleanliness, and learned how to sew their clothes. The French girls were taught "fine sewing, embroidery, lace making, and perhaps painting".<sup>8</sup> The Abbe Ferland says in his Cours D'Histoire du Canada that the

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<sup>7</sup>A. Repplier, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>8</sup>Abbe L. Groulx, L'Enseignement Francais au Canada, p.34. Montreal, Quebec: Librairie D'Action Canadienne-Francais, 1931.

Ursulines exercised a salutary influence upon the Christian family life of the little colony. Moreover, he says it was an "inestimable advantage for Quebec to have, even in her hard primitive days, a small group of women, who could train her children in their religious duties, and form the heart and the spirit of generations to come".<sup>9</sup>

Another authority, Sulte, in his Histoire des Canadiens-Francois, says much the same thing. He finds the Ursulines to have been sufficiently well-educated to keep intact the accent, the vocabulary, and the general tone of good society. He thinks it remarkable that, considering the rough work the men did in the grain fields or battle fields, they retained their agreeable manner. He continues:

"From civilized beings, we should have become semi-barbarians. But, no! The Ursulines were among us, and they inspired in our daughters, destined to become the Canadian women, the admirable virtues necessary to a Christian family, which hindered us from being carried away by political events, war, commerce, shabby interests and the spirit of adventure so strong among our people."<sup>10</sup>

Another historian, Colby, states that education received at the convent in Quebec, apart from the

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<sup>9</sup>Abbe, J.B.A. Ferland, Cour D'Histoire du Canada, Vol. II, p. 85. Quebec: Augustin Cote, 1865.

<sup>10</sup>Benjamin Sulte, Histoire des Canadiens-Francois, Vol. IV, p. 68. Montreal, Quebec: Wilson & Cie, 1882.

emphasis on religion, aimed at preserving purity of speech, at inculcating courage and at humanizing the pupil through the medium of such polite accomplishments as seemed best suited to the needs of the colony.<sup>11</sup>

While the Ursulines were continuing their good work with the young French and Indian girls in the town of Quebec and its environments, another educational establishment that was to have a wider sphere of influence and to reach the poorer people was that of the magnificent Marguerite Bourgeoys founded at Montreal. This heroic woman had been living in France with the sister of the great Maisonneuve, founder of Ville Marie. Listening raptly to his tales of New France, she resolved to do her small share in the colonization of the young settlement by teaching and educating the children and young girls in far-away Canada.

In spite of the many sacrifices entailed, and the fact that the prospect of crossing the ocean was not inviting, she embarked for her new field of labor arriving there in 1653. However, she was not to open her little school yet, as she found no French children old enough to be taught because those born in Ville

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<sup>11</sup>A. Repplier, Op. Cet., p. 139

Marie had nearly all died in infancy. At that time there were about fifty houses in the village. These she visited, counseling and instructing old and young alike in the fundamentals of their religion.

In 1657 Maisonneuve gave her a stone building that had been used as a stable. This was cleaned and transformed into an habitable dwelling for herself, her companion, and a few children, mostly Indians according to Meilleur.<sup>12</sup> As her was the only school in Ville Marie or anywhere near, both boys and girls attended numbering about fifteen to twenty.<sup>13</sup> It was called school, but was devoid of material equipment. Marguerite and her companions brought to it only the rich fruits of cultured minds, with zealous, devoted hearts and the will to spend their lives both for the red-skinned children of the forest and for those of the adventurous settlers. The burden of living in a primitive settlement and trying to teach at the same time proved very difficult without more assistance. Therefore Marguerite Bourgeoys left her companions in charge and sought help in France. Her horror of the disease-ridden ships, the tediousness of the long ocean voyages,

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<sup>12</sup>J. A. Meilleur, op. cit., p. 59

<sup>13</sup>Archives of the Sisters of the Congregation



her lack of money and the uncertainty of the success of her mission did not daunt this courageous woman. In 1659 she came back with three young girls, who banded together to form the Congregation of Notre Dame, with Marguerite as the first superior. Thus, theirs is the honor of being the first Sisterhood founded in Canada.

The population of Ville Marie was ever increasing as the settlement spread and developed. When the children became more numerous, the priests of St. Sulpice undertook the instruction of boys in 1666. The work of this religious order in the village of Montreal became immediately successful and still flourishes to the present day. Although the sisters taught boys in the rural districts later on where theirs was the first and only school, in Montreal they attended solely to the education of girls.

Tessier affirms that our first teachers needed more devotedness than knowledge to accomplish their work.<sup>14</sup> For months at a time, the children would not be able to attend school, owing to distance in the rigors of winter, or because they were needed to help their parents drive back the

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<sup>14</sup>M. C. Tessier, Etude Critique, p.22.  
Montreal, Quebec: Bureau of the A. C. J. C., 1913.

forests and sow the first seeds in Canadian soil. Naturally the programme of studies was simple. It consisted of lessons in catechism, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Because of the lack of regular attendance, the teachers had to do a great deal of individual drill and tutoring by constant repetition. Thus the first teachers were more pupil-minded than matter-minded. Their work was the inculcating of moral character, language, and social traits and imparting the knowledge necessary to attain these, rather than covering sufficient material for final examinations.

The year 1663 marked the date of what might be called the first Industrial School in Canada, although the sisters called it the House of Providence. It was established by Sister Bourgeoys to teach the older girls how to work. They were taught to sew, to spin and to knit, to weave and make their simple garments.<sup>15</sup> This work was very successful. Bishop de Vallier stated that he saw there more than twenty big girls.<sup>16</sup> A letter to be found in the Marine Archives written in 1685 from the Marquis of Denouville to the Minister of the Colonies in France

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<sup>15</sup>The Life of Venerable Marguerite Bourgeoys, by a Sister of her Order, p. 71. New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1932.

<sup>16</sup>Archives of the Sisters of the Congregation.

is given in part by Francis Parkman. Much of it is a plea for many more parish priests. The part that pertains to education, and also to the Sisters' school is as follows:

It is a pity, Monseigneur, to see the ignorance of those who live at a great distance from a parish priest, and all the trouble that the missionaries and parish priests go to, even on foot, to remedy matters and do the little they can.

After discussing other business matters, he reports:

I found at Ville Marie on the isle of Montreal, an establishment of the Sisters of the Congregation, conducted by Sister Bourgeoys who does much good to the whole colony. They were burned out last year and lost everything. It is very necessary that they build again even though they haven't one penny. I also visited another establishment of girls at Providence who work together. They could begin to manufacture if you would be kind enough to send them money for wool, so that they could learn to knit.<sup>17</sup>

The letter is extremely interesting as it gives a picture of other phases of life in the colony, and shows the extent to which the writer had New France's best interests at heart.

Meanwhile the boarding and day school of the Ursulines in Quebec had been growing yearly. "If the census of 1667 can be relied upon the ladies of the convent must have had at that time between fifty and sixty pupils, more than half of whom were day scholars. We find in the Ursulines' annals from 1638

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<sup>17</sup>F. Parkman, Old Regime in Canada, p. 494 ff. Toronto, Ontario: George N. Morang & Co. Ltd., 1901.

to 1740, or in the space of one hundred years, the names of one thousand and six boarders coming from every part of the country. In 1668 Mother Mary of the Incarnation wrote that there were in the boarding school only sixteen French and three Indian girls. She says in the following year: 'We have ordinarily from twenty to thirty boarders, and as day pupils, all the girls both of upper and lower Town.' In 1668 seven nuns were employed to instruct the children, both day scholars and boarders."<sup>18</sup> This seems a large number of teachers in comparison to the number of pupils. However it must be remembered that besides teaching, these nuns also carried the heavy burdens of pioneer days. The food they ate, the clothes they wore, the repair and upkeep of their property, also demanded the time and energy of these women. The care and training of their little charges, especially the Indians, the learning of the Indian tongues, were a few of the many tasks included in their day's work.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation during these years had been far from idle. She had mastered with great difficulty the Huron and Algonquin tongues first, as most of the Indian girls who came to them were of these tribes. When the Iroquois became a little

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<sup>18</sup>A. E. Gosselin, op. cit., p. 353

peaceful, she learned their language also in order to help Christianize those who came to the convent. During the winter months and in the evenings she gathered the young nuns around her to teach them the Indian tongues. All the Sisters had to learn so that they could be more useful. For them and for her Indian girls she composed a catechism in Huron; three in Algonquin, and a large dictionary of French and Algonquin. She wrote rather naively that, "We are still more occupied in the classes for the French children; and, it is certain that if God had not sent the Ursulines to Canada, they would be left to the most deplorable ignorance. All the young girls in the country pass through our hands and this causes piety and religion to flourish everywhere. The French population, rapidly increasing, our employments must keep pace with that increase."<sup>19</sup> Whether this is exactly the picture or not, Mother Mary wrote it in good faith.

Although Marguerite Bourgeoys and her companions had banded themselves together in community life, they had not as yet any legal existence. This was most necessary then as today. The Church authorities were at first hesitant about approving the

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<sup>19</sup>Annals of the Ursuline Monastery, Part I,  
p. 58. Quebec: C. Dornean, 1875.

Order but finally Bishop Laval, realizing the good work the sisters were accomplishing gave them permission in 1669 to spread their schools throughout the extent of New France. Moreover, King Louis XIV's patronage was invoked. Sister Bourgeoys, who made another voyage to France for that particular reason, finally obtained permission to present her petition to the King. She was favorably received by both the King and his ministers who seemed to appreciate the work she and her companions were accomplishing in Ville Marie, as manifested by the document which follows:

"Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre, to all present and to come, Greeting!

Our beloved Marguerite Bourgeoys, a native of our own town of Troyes, in the province of Champagne, has most humbly represented that much time has elapsed since God inspired her with the desire to advance the Catholic Faith by the education of persons of her own sex, both French and Indian, in New France, whither she repaired for this purpose as early as the year 1653. Having settled on the Island of Montreal with several other maidens, she has there followed the calling of a school mistress, teaching young girls gratuitously all the trades by which they are enabled to earn their livelihood; and with such success, by the continual grace of Divine Providence that neither the aforesaid petitioner nor her Community is in any manner a burden to the country, having built at her own expense, on the aforesaid Island of Montreal, two structures suitable for her work and caused several concessions of land to be cultivated and a farm-house to be erected with all things necessary thereto. The establishment thus formed has since been approved by His Lordship, the Bishop of Petrea, Vicar Apostolic; by the Sieur de Courcelle, our Lieutenant-General in Canada, and by the Sieur de Talon, Intendant of

Justice, Police and Finance, as well as by the resolutions of an assembly held by the inhabitants of the aforesaid place; by reason of which the aforesaid petitioner has been advised, for the common good of the aforesaid Island, to request us to grant her our letters of confirmation for the aforesaid establishment under the title of Congregation de Notre Dame.

To these intents and purposes with the advice of our Council and the counter-sign of our Chancery, wishing to contribute on our part, as we shall always do as far as possible, to the right intentions of the aforesaid petitioner and her associates as well as to their successors in the aforesaid establishment by giving them means to extend and increase wherever it may be judged proper for the glory of God and the welfare of the aforesaid country: of our assured knowledge, special grace and full power, our own accord and royal authority--We do confirm by these presents, signed by our own hand, the establishment of the aforesaid Congregation de Notre Dame on the Island of Montreal under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary, nor shall they be exposed to molestation under any pretext whatever.

Given at Dunkerque in May the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and seventy-one, of our reign the twenty-eighth.

(Signed) Louis 20

The Church's approbation followed soon after. Bishop

Laval wrote:

Knowing that one of the greatest benefits that we can procure for our Church, and the most efficacious means for preserving and augmenting piety in Christian families, is the instruction and sound education of children; considering also the blessing that Our Lord has given up to the present to Sister Bourgeoys and her companions in the function of teaching elementary schools in which we have employed them, we have incorporated and do incorporate them permitting them to live in community. <sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Life of the Venerable Marguerite Bourgeoys, by a Sister of her Order, op. cit., pp. 83-85.

<sup>21</sup>A. E. Gosselin, op. cit., p. 355.

In 1680 two sisters sent by Mother Bourgeoys went to the Mountain Mission, where some Christian Indians lived. In a few huts built of bark the nuns lived and taught. Besides being given instruction in reading and writing the children were taught to spin, to knit and to sew; but above all they were trained in the rudiments of their religion and the basic principles of civilization. "One of Mother Bourgeoys' first endeavors was to instil into her pupils love of work and habits of industry, both thoroughly alien to the Indian nature, ease-loving and impatient of all restraint.

While writing or reading these things, how little we realize all that the words imply! A hut of bark was the school, with crucifix, statue, rough table and a few rude benches. Into it were led the first red-skinned pupils. In the beginning they were dirty, half-clothed, restless, shrinking in sullen timidity from the gentle teacher's advances, their bright eyes peeping through unkept locks of coarse black hair and roving from side to side like those of some caged wild thing. Little by little patience and love won the day, and a wonderful change took place. The matted hair was combed and tied, the frowsy blanket, their sole garment, was exchanged



for neat dresses, often cut and sewed by the nuns' skilful hands. The idle fingers after the first awkward attempts, learned to hold the needle and to ply it quickly and well. Soon they took pleasure in spinning wool into yarn and knitting stockings. Then they learned the meaning of the strange black marks on the white pages of the teacher's book, and how to copy the characters traced by her pen. They learned to love God, their Father, and the Mother whose statue smiled down so sweetly upon them, and to follow a rule other than their own passionate, wayward will. In 1685 there were about forty Indian girls at this little school." <sup>22</sup> In the archives of the Notre Dame Convent in Montreal, there are hand-written manuscripts that served as dictionaries, French to Iroquois, and French to Algonquin. Moreover, at Mountain Mission, now called Oka, the sisters are still teaching Iroquois Indian girls.

The sisters' devotion and hard work gained even the attention of the government officials. The Intendant de Meulles writing to Mr. de Seignelay, Minister of Marine in France, asserted in 1680:

You cannot imagine how much good has been done in Canada by the Sisters of the Congregation. Everywhere they teach girls with the greatest care and diligence. If their work could be more fully extended, they would do a world of good. They are most prudent and can be sent everywhere, thus instructing girls who would otherwise remain totally ignorant. This sort of life is truly admirable, far better than if the Community were cloistered. <sup>23</sup>

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M. M. Drummond, The Life and Times of Marguerite Bourgeoys, p. 185. Boston, Mass: Angel Guardian Press, 1907.

23

L. Groulx, La Maissance d'une Race, p. 265. Montreal, Quebec: L'Action Francaise, 1919.

However Groulx also states that "neither history nor geography, not even grammar were apparently taught except by the Ursulines,"<sup>24</sup> Of course this was in reference to the subject matter taught to the French girls and not to the Indians. Be that as it may, many young girls trained by Sister Bourgeois applied for admission to the congregation. As a result, more schools were opened wherever protection was provided from the plundering Iroquois. A school was established in the Lower Town of Quebec in 1685, where the workmen and artisans dwelled. Everywhere they went the zeal and self-sacrifice of the sisters was recognized and appreciated. In 1701 their statistics reveal that there were fifty-four sisters, but the record of the number of pupils at that time has been lost. In 1708 the Intendant Raudot made known "that, in rural districts where there were no Sisters<sup>25</sup> of the Congregation the children could not read." As there were only twelve of these convents distributed in rural New France during the French domination, only a few of the children must have attended school. The mothers of the others had to give what little time they could to instructing their offspring. The reasons, of course, why there weren't more schools directed by the Congregation Sisters are twofold:

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L'Enseignement Francais, Op. Cit., p. 19.

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A. E. Gosselin, Op. Cit., p. 347.

lack of nuns, and scarcity of money. Those that were established were dependent upon the financial resources of the parish priest or generous parishoners. Only two sisters labored in each of these rural schools: one for teaching, the other for housekeeping.

These Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame also materially benefited their adopted country by not only educating young girls but also training them how to teach. They knew that the expense of bringing subjects from France would prevent many willing but financially unable subjects from crossing the ocean. Because of this necessity of training their pupils to teach Meilleur says they were the first to have a Normal School in this country. <sup>26</sup>

In 1697 the Ursulines at Quebec had enough recruits to meet the needs of the district around Three Rivers. At first they also cared for the sick, besides teaching the girls. Later, however, as the school registration increased they engaged in the work of education solely. In 1739 there were fifteen teachers and one hundred twenty pupils at this convent.

Replier, in her book about Mere Marie of the Ursulines, remarked, when referring to Sister Bourgeoys, that "on her own initiative she opened a humble school in a disused stable, lodged with her little Indians in the loft and begged the money for their few necessities. Here was the noblest spirit of the pioneer. The success which crowned

her efforts proved their worth. Other schools followed in the wake of her modest venture. She was the good angel of the savages; but she could not give to the French children of Montreal the kind of education which the Ursulines gave to the children of Quebec."<sup>27</sup> Perhaps she was not exactly disinterested when making this statement.

A third religious community to take its place among the educators of young girls was that of the Hospital Sisters at Quebec. Although the General Hospital had been founded in 1673 for the care of the aged and infirm, in 1725 the founder, of the institution, Monseigneur de St. Vallier, having been informed that this task did not fully occupy the time of these Sisters of the Order of St. Augustine, permitted them to open a boarding school for the education and instruction of young girls. However, as the population of Quebec grew, so also did the demand on their time and space. This necessitated devoting every minute to care for the sick and infirm. As a result the boarding school was closed in 1868, and since then they cared for and taught only abandoned children. These sisters do not openly profess to be teachers, but, as they instruct the orphans, their community takes its rank among the educational institutions established in Quebec, according to J. B. Meilleur.<sup>28</sup>

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A. Repplier, Op. Cit., p. 164.

<sup>28</sup>

J. B. Meilleur, Op. Cit., p. 47.

In Montreal, the Sisters of Charity, or the Grey Nuns, as they are usually called, did the same type of work. Apart from taking care of the sick and the infirm in their hospital, in 1754 they were also caring for and teaching little children abandoned by their parents.

Thus, from 1639 till 1763 there were two communities of women devoting their lives entirely to the education of young girls, both French and Indian. In Quebec and Three Rivers the pupils came to board at the Ursuline Convents; in Montreal, Marguerite Bourgeoys sent her nuns out into the country establishing small schools here and there as a nucleus of learning. The fact that this period boasts of these two institutes only is due no doubt to lack of finances and religious vocations. Because of the hardships of pioneer life those who struggled against it had not had time to acquire the necessary education for the instruction of children. On the other hand, those who came from the social level that had offered them education and culture were unused to the hard labor required of them. Thus we see that the basic requirements of the beginning teacher at that time besides the spiritual love of religious life were (1) the physical ability to endure a hard life, (2) some knowledge to impart to her students. She had to have moral, intellectual and physical vitality.

Moreover, a further obstacle to religious vocations were the inducements offered by the King relating to marriage.

As the number of emigrants from France were all too few, Louis XIV and his ministers encouraged matrimony and large families among the colonizers of New France. According to DeCelles an edict of Louis XIV offered one hundred acres to each father of a dozen children; another time, he was granted a pension of four hundred livres: "ten children would bring a reward of three hundred livres, but if a girl entered a convent she was not counted in the number of children that entitled a family to the reward. According to Boucaut, an important official in Quebec, from 1726 to 1756, Louis XIV's opinion was that there were too many nuns in the convents. The French king went one step further in this matter. 'Preference should always be extended, when a distribution of honours or patronage takes place, to men with large progeny around them.' This was not all; in support of these enticements, and to give them additional force, hunting and trading privileges were denied to bachelors. Louis made it known also that it was his will that certain fines should be collected from fathers who did not marry their sons at twenty years of age and their daughters at sixteen. On the other hand, a premium of twenty livres was paid on their wedding day to young men marrying at or before twenty." <sup>29</sup> The general census of New France

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<sup>29</sup>  
A. D. De Celles, Canada and its Provinces, Vol. XV, p. 51.

in 1734 gave the number of Ursulines as eighty, and that  
of the Congregation of Notre Dame as ninety-six.<sup>30</sup>

It has been noted that the general trend of the curricula seemed to have two phases: one for the civilizing and Christianizing of the young Indians, and the other in preserving the French language, customs and culture of their Mother Country. Any institution contrary to these general aims was looked upon askance. "In New France, founded and peopled by Frenchmen, administered by a French government, it was natural that an effort should be made to reproduce, as faithfully as possible, manners, customs and institutions that were dear to the colonists. One may reasonably, therefore, expect to discover here, in due proportion, the same zeal for education, the same programmes, the same methods, and the same books as in the Mother Country. The reason is very simple. Everything in Canada was French - government, institutions, professors. French Canada could not be expected to invent new methods, elaborate new programmes, nor use other books than those that came from Old France, as there was no such thing as printing in the country, at that time. There is still preserved in the archives of the Quebec Seminary, a book entitled Methode pour faire les Ecoles, (Method of School Management). It is dated Lyons, 1676. According to this Methode: The knowledge of religion, as being the first, the most important and the only,

absolutely necessary, thing, formed the basis of instruction. Catechism was taught at least twice a week, and everything in these schools contributed to the implanting of religion firmly, in the minds of the children. Beyond this it was thought sufficient in general to teach the children reading, writing and simple arithmetic. To these were sometimes added the elements of grammar, and, to the boys, the elements of Latin. The books placed in the hands of the pupils were the Small Alphabet, the Great Alphabet, the Psaalter, Christian Thoughts, and the Introduction to the Devout Life. The most advanced read from the Pedagogue, Civility, Manuscripts and Contracts. General of these books were in use in Canada in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the library, of Laval University, contains some very old copies of them. These books or manuals, with few exceptions, served as well for the girls as for the boys. In communities of women, apart from these subjects, the children were taught different kinds of work suited to their sex. Attention was likewise paid to correctness of speech and to elocution. In certain boarding schools instruction was also given in various arts and accomplishments, such as embroidery on silk, gold, or bark, and occasionally, drawing and painting.

Strictly speaking the instruction given to girls under the French regime was neither extensive, nor profound, nor varied; on the other hand, the training was excellent,



and it was owing particularly to this that the early religious communities succeeded in disseminating among the people that affability, those gentle and polished manners, that most historians and travellers have remarked in Canadians of early days, and particularly women.

The programme of primary studies both for girls and for boys was, then, of the greatest simplicity. It was sufficient, however, for the time, and the Abbe Verreau had good reason for writing as follows: 'This programme did not perhap make savants, but it gave to Canada men of heart and energy, and infused into our race that vitality which all the science of today, if unaided by the same spirit, would be powerless to impart to it.'<sup>31</sup>

The types of schools at this period for girls were two: elementary and industrial. But the elementary schools of those days, although the range of subjects was meagre compared to ours today, stressed the domestic arts so necessary for those pioneer times. The industrial schools lacked that same scientific and logical development which only time-tested programmes can furnish and sufficient money produce. Yet they, like the elementary schools, tried to provide the child with those tools necessary to take his place among his fellow countrymen. Moreover, "the life of self-denial, energy and fearless resolution in their strenu-

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A. E. Gosselin, Op. Cit., pp.326, 359-360.

ous enterprise that these women led set an example that greatly helped to frame the mind of the pioneers of New France." <sup>32</sup>

Up to the close of the French Regime the Ursulines influenced principally the well-to-do French families whereas the Sisters of the Congregation contributed to the poorer classes in the town and a small portion of the rural districts. In these latter places the attendance of the pupils depended greatly upon the means of livelihood of the parents, who nevertheless did what they could to secure an education for their children. Although there were over one hundred twenty teachers in the sisterhoods just before the conquest, the number of pupils is difficult to affirm because fires destroyed the buildings and many precious records. Although they taught only a small per cent of the population, theirs was nevertheless a decided contribution to education during those dangerous, difficult pioneer days. From what has been said one can reasonably deduct that, apart from the clergy, the civil authorities (even the King of France), the lay people and the unlettered savage seemed convinced of the benefits these religious women could confer through the children on the Church, country and community.

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A. De Celles, Op. Cit., p. 93.

TABLE I  
PERIOD OF FRENCH REGIME

PERIOD OF FOUNDATION					END OF PERIOD			
Communities	Year of First School	No. of Teachers	No. of Pupils	Type of School	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers	No. of Pupils	Type of School
Ursulines	1639	2	8	Elementary Boarding & Day	2	60 38	128	Elementary
C. N. D.	1657	2	15	Elementary Boarding & Day	12	70		Elementary & Industrial
Augustine	1725			Elementary Boarding & Day	1			Elementary Boarding
Grey Nuns	1754			Orphanage	1			Orphanage

## CHAPTER III

### The British Conquest and Its Effects

The Seven Years' War, formally declared in Europe in 1756, swung westward to the colonies of France and England in North America. The great duel for colonial empire in which England was to be the victor at Louisburg and at Quebec was not a battle of two armies, but of two races. Nor was the fate of New France wholly decided by the sword. Even the military genius of the valiant and heroic Montcalm could not stem the tide of civil rottenness and the corruption of the intendant and his confederates. The enemies of New France within were more deadly than those besieging without. As fort after fort fell into the hands of the British, Quebec became the last stronghold. With the conquest of Quebec went the conquest of all Canada. When the war had passed, leaving in its wake devastation, burning, pillaging, inflation and famine, New France was gone, but not, so it was to prove, French Canada. After they had changed their allegiance, the French Canadians were numerous enough and so thoroughly devoted to their customs and institutions that they persisted in retaining them in the face of great opposition. The English, believing themselves to be actuated by credible motives, hoped to weld all French Canadians into homogeneity. They were to realize that two different races may become united into one people but never amalgamated into one homogeneous people, as they sought.

A new era commenced with the capitulation of Quebec and Montreal, an era that was to have portentous effects on education and on religious communities. For more than half of a century little or no progress was made from an educational standpoint. Everything centered on the struggle for existence of these sixty-five thousand colonists abandoned by their Mother Country and handed over by the Treaty of Paris to a race alien in speech, customs, government and religion. "Until an understanding, if not a feeling of sympathy, could be established, educational progress was not to be expected without the impetus that should have come, but did not come, from a liberal and enlightened policy of state aid and direction."<sup>1</sup>

The seige of Quebec and the vicissitudes of war were naturally exceedingly distressing times, both for the Ursulines and the sisters from Hotel Dieu. Both communities had to abandon their convents which were within range of the British cannons, and take shelter with the Hospital Sisters who were situated far enough away to escape bombardment. Their boarders had already left for their homes at the first sign of danger. During the seige, countless incidents chronicled in the annals of the communities, attested the charity, courage, and heroism of the nuns. An interesting one which shows

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George W. Parmelee, Canada and Its Provinces.  
Vol. XVI. p. 446. Toronto, Ontario: Glasgow, Brook & Co.,  
1914.

that their charity was regardless of race or creed follows:

Most of the English officers who took part in the seige of Quebec in 1757, under the command of General Wolfe, had never heard of cloistered nuns. They simply couldn't understand that a young girl of eighteen or twenty would voluntarily shut herself within a cloister. Some of the soldiers candidly remarked that they believed the cloistered sisters were held by force in their monastery. They changed their opinion when they saw the joy, peace and contentment that illumined the faces of all the religious they supposed were compulsory recluses. One of these was Mother St. Henry at the General Hospital, who because of her bravery became very popular with the wounded English officers cared for at the hospital.

During the battle of 13th of September 1759 or that of the 28th of April 1760 (the annals of the monastery are not precise about this date) a savage had taken an English officer prisoner. After having tightly bound him, he dragged him brutally into the entrance of the hospital. This fierce savage of the forests gloated over the thought of the terrible tortures the pale face would undergo. At this period, the French and the English had so little authority over their savage allies that they could not always make them refrain from torturing their prisoners.

Everyone present when the savage arrived was moved with pity for the poor captive. Mother St. Henry was there with some other nuns. Determined to save the prisoner she quickly formed a plan. Telling her companions to amuse the Indian, she hurriedly cut the soldier's bonds and motioned him towards a door leading to the cloister. An instant after, when the Indian noticed the disappearance of his prisoner, his rage knew no bounds. Without showing any emotion, Mother St. Henry motioned towards the Hospital door. He dashed outside in pursuit of the Officer. The annalist states that this Englishman always remembered with profound gratitude, the nun who had saved his life.<sup>2</sup>

After the fall of Quebec, the Ursulines were made prisoners of war. It was a time of great anxiety for them as they did not know whether they would be sent back to France or not, and if they werent, just what their role

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<sup>2</sup>  
P.G. Roy, Toutes Petites Choses du Regime Francais,  
p. 133. Quebec, Quebec: Garneau, 1944.

would be under the new regime. Their convent had been bombed and pillaged, In their chapel, Montcalm had been buried and a funeral service for General Wolfe read later by his officers. General Murray, now in command, visited the convent as he wished to find refuge for his wounded soldiers. The Mother Superior declared that, "Witnessing himself how poor we were, that we had no means of paying workmen and no means of procuring our livelihood, our illustrious General was good enough to see that our convent was made habitable."<sup>3</sup> Also, every day food was sent to the nuns, to the workmen, to their one small four-year-old boarder, and of course, the wounded soldiers, who were being cared for and nursed by the Ursuline. Once before they had put aside teaching to devote themselves to the little Indian children during a terrible smallpox epidemic; now, due to the exigencies of the times, their convent was again transformed into a hospital for ten months. The French request in the treaty concerning the sisterhoods was granted in full. The request and its terse reply follow:

British Treaty Obligations 1759 - 1763

Article XXXII

French Request

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<sup>3</sup>Mother Superior, Les Ursulines de Quebec, Vol.III, P. 16, Quebec, Quebec: C. Darveau, 1866.

The communities of Nuns shall be preserved in their constitutions and privileges; they shall continue to observe their rules, they shall be exempted from lodging any military; and it shall be forbidden to molest them in their religious exercises, or to enter their monasteries: safe-guards shall even be given them, if they desire them.

British Reply

Granted.<sup>4</sup>

"In every society disturbed by war or political dissensions the education of the girls is less susceptible to the shock of events than that of boys. Further, it has been very rightly pointed out that under the French regime and during the first years of English rule, girls were better educated than boys, though the facilities for recruiting sisters to teach, so great about 1750, were decreased in the succeeding years. Thanks to the sixty Ursulines of Quebec and Three Rivers, the elementary and higher instruction of girls received much attention and care. The uncloistered Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame resumed their work in the small country schools; while in 1769 their school in the Lower Town of Quebec was reopened after an interruption of ten years."<sup>5</sup>

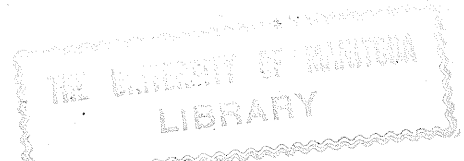
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<sup>4</sup>R. Coupland, The Quebec Act, p. 200. Toronto, Ontario: Oxford Press, 1925.

<sup>5</sup>A. Desrosiers, op. cit., p. 404.



In 1784, at least twenty-four Sisters of Notre Dame were teaching in twelve schools in the rural districts. For a time the existence of the society seemed to be threatened by the governor, Sir Guy Carleton, who forbade them to accept any candidate less than thirty years old, or to admit anyone to profession without his permission. Although this restriction was removed in two years, it was obvious to far-seeing Canadians that there was danger of the general level of instruction continuing to decline. Every branch of education was affected by the British conquest. "Suddenly deprived of their aristocracy, their men of wealth, the regular army, even the clergy of French birth, and of their western trade, the people along the banks of the St. Lawrence had none left to act in their interests but the national clergy, men sprung from their own ranks, whose lives had long been identified with their own. The alliance of Church and colonists, cemented by two centuries of common struggle for the Christian Faith and French civilization, became to all appearances the one safeguard of the young colony abandoned by the Mother Country to England. This is a fact of which no one must lose sight who wishes to follow the different phases of the education question after 1763. No situation could have been more critical - ruin everywhere, French law abolished, the liberty of the citizens threatened, public



office forbidden to Canadians, their leaders without authority, their clergy weakened, and most of their schools closed, the whole population of sixty thousand poor and scattered over an immense area."<sup>6</sup>

The clergy were there, however, to watch over the instruction of the children. As in the first days of the colony, each presbytery again became a school where the little French Canadians went to acquire the elementary principles of catechism, of writing and of reading. Many mothers of families, those above all, who had been trained by the Sisters of the Congregation became the teachers of their own children, and thus helped preserve in the midst of an alien society, their religion, and the customs dear to every French Canadian.

In 1790, the statistics of the sisterhoods revealed a decrease in membership. For ten years the Ursuline novitiate at Quebec had been closed. There were twenty-eight professed sisters in 1759 and only eighteen in 1770. Two sisters died in the spring of 1760, their deaths being attributed to over-exertion during the winter in taking care of the sick soldiers. There had been fifteen deaths and but nine professions from 1753 to 1763. Uncertain of their own fate, prudence forbade the nuns to admit any new members to share the possi-

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.p. 398, 404.

bilities of ill fate in store for themselves. During these same ten years the Ursulines at Three Rivers received only two recruits. Finally, the worst days over and peace established, the doors were once again opened for the reception of new members.

The war having likewise depleted the two principal sources of income of the religious communities (voluntary contributions of the laity or the clergy) in most places they fared badly. A great sorrow for the Ursulines was the cessation of revenue granted by the King of France for the education of young girls of good families. Obligated by the state of penury to which they were reduced, the Ursulines embroidered what is called bark-wood, which was much admired and sought after by English ladies and gentlemen. As soon as possible the nuns again pursued their occupation of teaching. In 1775 they had well filled classes, there being often as many as sixty boarders, French and English. They acknowledged their great indebtedness to General Murray for his aid and unflinching kindness to them, and his name will go down in their annals as a benefactor to the community during those troublous times.<sup>7</sup> According to Drummond "Religious communities of women played an important part in the history of the colony. Many of the annals and letters of cloistered convents are still

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<sup>7</sup>Les Ursulines de Quebec, op. cit., Vol. III  
p. 44.

among the documents most valuable for giving an insight into the current opinion of the time." <sup>8</sup>

The colonists, wishing Murray to intercede for them when he left Quebec, urged him to carry their grievances to the foot of the throne. That part of their petition pertaining to convents was couched as follows: "These latter are destined to care for the sick and to instruct young girls. His excellence, who understands both the usefulness and the need of these different societies in a country where means of education are rare, and who knows the wisdom with which these convents have been established and administered, is most humbly prayed to protect them and to support our petition in their favour as well as for the preservation of their order and of their modest possessions." <sup>9</sup>

Although in 1760 and later, attempts were made by the British government to Anglicize the new colony in language and religion both General Murray and later General Carleton, realizing that religion to the French Canadians was the most important part of their nationality gave them every liberty to exercise it. Under their

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<sup>8</sup>Lewis Drummond, Canada and Its Provinces, Vol. II, p.p. 437-8

<sup>9</sup>A. Desrosiers, op. cit., p. 401.

strong administration of law and justice, most of the tyranny, corruption and misdirection that had flourished under the old regime disappeared. Murray particularly was very sympathetic towards the French Canadians and tried to assuage the feelings of hostility and suspiciousness natural to a conquered race. Although they showed by their treatment of the religious question that they wished to conciliate the French Canadians, many serious blunders were made in connection with the whole fabric of Canadian law especially with regard to property. Naturally this affected religious communities. For ten years French Canada remained uncertain of its destiny. Many petitions were sent to England which proclaimed the allegiance of a conquered people to their conquerors, which deplored the dismissal of their judges and that all offices were closed to them. They also implored the restoration of their law and of the civic privileges they had once enjoyed. With Carleton in London quietly and persistently pleading for them, the uncertain status of the French Canadians was brought to a close by the Quebec Act in 1774. This bill, friendly to the King's Catholic subjects in Canada, stated:

And for the more perfect security and Ease of Mind of the Inhabitants of the said Province, it is hereby declared, That His Majesty's Subjects professing Religion of the Church of Rome, of, and in the said Province of Quebec, may have, hold and enjoy the free

Exercise of the Religion of the Church of Rome, subject to the King's Supremacy, declared and established by an Act made in the First Year of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, over all the Dominions and Countries which then did, or thereafter should, belong to the Imperial Crown of this Realm; and that the Clergy of the said Church may hold, receive, and enjoy their accustomed Dues and Rights, with respect to such Persons only as shall profess the said Religion.<sup>10</sup>

The instructions Carleton received concerning religious communities also showed a tolerant spirit except where the Jesuits were concerned. All other communities of men and women were given their property back and allowed to continue their work of education and of caring for the sick and aged, at least until a survey could be made to decide their usefulness.

The success of the revolution in the United States brought an influx of population into Canada, which not only changed the racial balance but also had important political consequences. The outcome was the Constitutional Act of 1791 dividing the dissatisfied province into Upper and Lower Canada. This left the French Canadians with the privileges they had gained under the Quebec Act, and released the English from the seignorial system and from French civil law. Moreover, with this Act, politics for the first time entered the sphere of the school. Statistics sent by the Bishop of Quebec to the government gave the state of the clergy and

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<sup>10</sup>

R. Coupland, Op. Cit., p. 211

religious communities in 1784.<sup>11</sup> Those referring to  
Orders of women may be found in Table II which follows:

TABLE II  
ORDERS OF WOMEN IN 1784

	Ursulines	Hotel Dieu	Hospital General	Congregation of Notre Dame
Quebec	39	32	33	12
Three Rivers	21	--	--	--
Montreal	--	32	17	48
	60	64	50	60

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<sup>11</sup>  
p. 23. H. A. Scott, Canada and Its Provinces, Vol. XI,

## CHAPTER IV

### Growth of the School System

Education had not yet received any encouragement or impetus. Little provision had been made for the scattered farmers or habitants. In 1801 the government passed an act known as the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning; it was "a badly conceived effort to nationalize the schools of Lower Canada. The act of that year provided for the organization of either parish or township schools. The local authority was to be appointed by and responsible to the provincial authority. Neither the French Canadians nor English settlers of the Eastern Townships would accept this provision for complete central control. The measure failed but fear and suspicion remained."<sup>1</sup> This act was an instance of British nationalism and imperialism. Parmelee states that: "While it must be insisted that the Royal Institution was correct in its attitude towards the religious convictions of the French Canadians, it must be admitted that there was a well-known and a general belief on the part of the English that their language should and would be eventually adopted by all. This gave offence to the French element which even then had at least a feeling that their language, their religion and their customs were inseparable."<sup>2</sup> The Royal Institution was never officially

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<sup>1</sup> D. S. Woods, Traditional Handicaps in Canadian Education. Radio Talk, January 19, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Parmelee, Op. Cit., p. 453.



revoked, but the Fabrique Act was substituted in 1824. This law had a certain popularity being a step leading to the realization of formerly existing educational aims and agencies. "When approached as a state enterprise under British Rule, the Fabrique Act expressed the viewpoint of the French Canadian. That act made the Fabrique or parish government *en* temporal affairs the local authority in education. The Fabrique was given power to spend up to one fourth of the parish revenue in elementary schools. Religious supervision and local control were accepted as principles governing school administration and finance. Although this legislation was permissive, sixty-eight Fabrique schools were in operation in the year 1830."<sup>3</sup> During these years the sisterhoods had increased their personnel, especially the Sisters of the Congregation who numbered seventy-two teachers in 1824; in the same year the Ursulines of Quebec had forty-three and the Ursulines of Three Rivers, twenty-six teachers.

In spite of the many difficulties, the Sisters of the Congregation in Montreal were teaching two hundred young girls in 1824. Apart from the seventeen classes they taught in Montreal and its suburbs, they took charge of as many little schools in the rural districts as their limited personnel would allow. The Ursuline Convent in Quebec had more than

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<sup>3</sup>

D. S. Woods, op. cit.

eighty boarders in 1822. In 1831 there were only forty-five boarders, but there were sixty half-boarders and four hundred fifty-nine day scholars. A number of these girls were daughters of the English settlers and the Irish immigrants. Times were very hard during this period. After teaching all day the Sisters had to do the manual labor necessary for the upkeep of the buildings and property as their source of income from France had been cut off completely since the Revolution in that country. In 1825 there were thirty schools functioning under the Royal Institution, but this number gradually decreased.

In 1829 another elementary school Act was passed which helped the French Canadians. It provided a grant of eighty (\$80) dollars a year for three years to each school teacher who taught twenty pupils or more. An additional payment of two (\$2) dollars per pupil was made for a certain number of free pupils. A few schools taught by the sisters profited by this law; but most of the schools continued to be supported by the clergy and laity. The laws and statutes passed yearly from 1829 to 1836, although all such were temporary, gave impetus and encouragement to education. Parmlee asserted that all those bills introduced in the legislature before the Act of 1841 were generally tentative, ineffective, and are of no interest except as they show the growth and development of the ideas that found expression in the later years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>

G. W. Parmelee, op. cit., p. 465.

Lord Durham, in his masterly report, which led to the Act of Union in 1840 and the Municipal Act in 1841 describes the French Canadians thus:

They are mild and kindly, frugal, industrious and honest, very sociable, cheerful and hospitable, and distinguished for a courtesy and real politeness, which pervades every class of society.<sup>5</sup>

He blames the government for the lack of education among the poorer people but goes on to say that:

The common assertion, however, that all classes of Canadians are equally ignorant, is perfectly erroneous; for I know of no people among whom a larger provision exists for the higher kinds of elementary education, or among whom such education is really extended to a larger proportion of the population. The piety and benevolence of the early possessors of the country, founded, in the seminaries that exist in different parts of the province, institutions, of which the funds and activity have long been directed to the promotion of education. Seminaries and colleges have been, by these bodies, established in the cities, and in other central points. The education given in these establishments greatly resembles the kind given in the English public schools, though it is rather more varied.<sup>6</sup>

Charles Buller, the commissioner whom Lord Durham had appointed to help inquire into the state of education in Lower Canada, advocated, as strongly as Lord Durham himself, the anglifying of Lower Canada. He reported that: "Until Canada is nationalized and Anglified, it is idle for England to be devising schemes for her improvement. In this great work of nationalization, education is at once the most convenient and powerful instrument."<sup>7</sup> The French Canadians, however, were convinced that they needed

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C. P. Lucas, Lord Durham's Report, Vol. II, p. 30. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.

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Ibid., p. 32.

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Ibid., Vol. III, p. 273.

an educational system to preserve their own nationalism, in other words, their language, customs and religion. Lucas mentions that it is interesting to note how Buller contrasts the character of the two sexes among the French Canadians, as the result of the better education which the girls received. He continues by quoting Buller, "The difference in the character of the two sexes is remarkable. The women are really the men of Lower Canada. They are the active, bustling, business portion of the habitants, and this results from the much better education which they get gratuitously, or at a very cheap rate, at the nunneries which are dispersed over the province."<sup>8</sup>

After the union of the two provinces the united legislature passed the Education Act of 1841. Although unacceptable in several respects, it was a great advance on what had previously been accomplished and was, moreover, the forerunner of much that was to follow in Canadian education, if not the beginning of the educational system. In recommending this act to the favourable consideration of the first Parliament of United Canada, Lord Sydenham announced:

A due provision for the education of the people is one of the first duties of the State, and, in this province especially, the want of it is grievously felt. The establishment of an efficient system, by which the blessings of instruction may be placed within the reach of all, is a work of difficulty, but its overwhelming importance demands that it should be undertaken. I recommend the consideration

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Ibid., Vol. II, p. 241.

of that subject to your best attention, and I shall be most anxious to afford you, in your labors, all the cooperation in my power. It if should be found impossible so to reconcile conflicting opinions as to obtain a measure which may meet the approbation of all, I trust that, at least, steps may be taken by which an advance to a more perfect system may be made, and the difficulty under which the people of this province now labor may be greatly diminished, subject to such improvements hereafter as time and experience may point out.<sup>9</sup>

Pertinent selections from the original Education Act are:

V:- And be it enacted, That the District Council of each District, shall be a Board of Education of such District, and their duties as such Board shall be:

Firstly:- To divide the several Townships and Parishes within their District into School Districts ... .

Secondly:- To apportion and distribute to each of the said School Districts its share of the School Fund, which share shall be proportionate to the number of children, between the ages of five and sixteen, resident in such school districts respectively.

Thirdly:- To apportion and cause to be assessed on the inhabitants of such School District a sum not exceeding fifty pounds for the erection of a schoolhouse in each school district in which none exists.

XI :- Provided always, and be in enacted, That whenever any number of the inhabitants of any Township or Parish, professing a Religious Faith different from that of the majority of the inhabitants of such Township, or Parish, shall dissent from the regulations, arrangements, or proceedings, of the Common School Commissioners, with reference to any Common School in such Township; or Parish, it shall be lawful for the Inhabitants, so dissenting, collectively to signify such dissent in writing to the Clerk of the District Council with the name or names of one or more persons elected by them, as their Trustee, or Trustees for the purpose of this Act: and the said District Clerk shall forthwith furnish a certified copy thereof to the District Treasurer; and it shall be lawful for such dissenting inhabitants, by and through such Trustees, or authorities, and be subject to the obligations and liabilities hereinbefore assigned to, and imposed upon the Common School Commissioners, to establish and maintain one or more Common Schools in the manner and subject to the visitation, conditions, rules and obligations in this Act provided, with reference to other

Common Schools and to receive from the District Treasurer their due proportion, according to their number, of the monies appropriated by law and raised by assessment for the support of Common Schools, in the School District or Districts in which the said Inhabitants reside ... .<sup>10</sup>

The law also decreed that a Superintendent of education for each province would be appointed and that School Commissioners, whose duties were stipulated by law, would be elected in each parish or township. The first superintendent chosen in Lower Canada was Dr. J. B. Meilleur, a man with sincerity and courage, who had been the co-founder of a classical college, who had written educational manuals, and who diligently and persistently fought with tongue and pen to secure liberty of education. His work as an executive and a legislator has left its imprint on the educational system of Lower Canada.

In 1843 the leaders of Upper and Lower Canada agreed that the representatives from each province should determine their own school legislation. The School Act of 1846, which improved upon that of 1841, laid the foundation of the present system. This important legislation chose the parish or the township as the basis of the system which gave, not only the government, but also the people and the clergy a large share in the control of their schools. Parmelee says that: "This school law of 1846 is based upon, or at any rate tacitly accepts, the common school principle, a most admirable

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J. G. Hodgins, Documentary History, Vol. IV, pp. 41-55, Toronto, Ontario: Warwick Bro's. & Rutter, 1897.

and most patriotic one when applied to a people having the same religion, or no religion at all, but absolutely impracticable with such fundamental differences as prevail in Quebec. Inasmuch as the French were Roman Catholics and the English were practically all Protestants, a separation on the lines of either language or religion followed the same course. The legislature of 1846 assumed the common school principle very distinctly by enacting that the commissioners might be of either religious faith; at the same time provision was made for special cases .....

From this clear recognition of the necessity, in the interests of both harmony and of efficiency, to give the right of separate action, the freedom of control has gradually extended until the Protestant population finds itself in an enviable position in this regard.<sup>11</sup> This clearly shows how two systems of education originated in Lower Canada and why the law of 1846 was looked upon favorably by the French Canadians, who, formerly and with reason, had looked askance at any new educational legislation. Desrosiers states that in Quebec from 1763 to 1824 popular instruction remained dependent upon private initiative, the religious corporations and the secular clergy. Between 1824 and 1846 the problem of school legislation was worked out and numerous educational establishments sprang up throughout the province.

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G. W. Parmelee, op. cit., pp. 473,474.

"In the years between 1846 and 1876 the educational system was developed and improved, and many religious societies of teachers, both men and women arrived from Europe or were founded in the province. Lastly, in 1876, public instruction took a definite and independent place in the sphere of active politics and from that time has continued to adopt itself to the requirements of a growing population."<sup>12</sup>

During the period 1763 to 1842 the course of study was simple; until higher schools were provided, it consisted of catechism, reading, writing and arithmetic. One reason for this very elementary instruction was the difficulty of obtaining textbooks. Any book coming from France was forbidden and confiscated. In the early eighteenth century at least, many school children were obliged to copy by hand the most indispensable books. In most of the convents the sisters found it necessary to copy the books in order to preserve their contents as they couldn't be replaced. In the Ursuline convent at Three Rivers, a French Grammar was deemed so valuable that it was placed on a stand in the centre of the classroom and only the teacher turned the pages for the pupils.<sup>13</sup> However, in 1828 the Ursulines added two new subjects to the curriculum: history and

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<sup>12</sup>

A. Desrosiers, op. cit., p. 397.

<sup>13</sup>

Les Ursuline des Trois Rivieres. Trois Rivieres, Quebec: B. V. Ayotte, 1888.



French and English translation. The Sisters of the Congregation also enlarged their simple programme of studies.

They taught geography and the English language, and in their boarding schools, music, drawing, painting and different kinds of embroidery. Those were trying and unsettled times for the religious orders, but those who survived were to see an élan giving to education and matters pertaining to education, an era of progress and steady advancement towards the modern conception of educating the "wholechild"; and especially a remarkable growth of other religious communities to help in the laudable work of Christian instruction.

By the law of 1849 the compulsory school tax on all landed property, which had been severely criticized in the legislation of 1841, was now accepted, due in great measure to the influence of the bishops and the clergy. Moreover, the law of 1849 was modified by allowing the Catholic clergy to become School commissioners. This last greatly pleased the people and helped restore their confidence, because, with the clergy at the helm they felt secure. In 1851 another law was passed which considerably ameliorated the situation; it decreed that a certain number of inspectors would be nominated; and provided for the foundation of normal schools. These latter, however, did not commence operating until 1857. Twenty-four inspectors, responsible to the superintendents were named in 1852. The rural districts were repartitioned so that the schools under their

jurisdiction would be of their religious belief. In the cities, two inspectors were named. These inspectors, by their surveillance and encouragement helped raise the standard of instruction; their reports helped remove those unfitted for teaching; the school statistics became more complete and regular. In other words, their work contributed much to the progress of education. With the resignation of Dr. Meilleur in 1855, P. J. O. Chauveau was appointed superintendent of Public Instruction, a man renowned in politics, and a distinguished scholar and orator, who worked zealously and indefatigably to improve the working of the existing educational system. In his first annual report (February 25, 1856) which seems to give a picture of educational matters at that time, after praising the efforts of his predecessor, he stated:

In a few words, I wish to point out some of the most essential matters to be deduced from this report. I believe that we ought:

1. To secure for Public Instruction in Lower Canada an invariable minimum budget.
2. To form a different fund from the one destined to be divided among the offices of the school trustee; this fund would be at the disposal of the superintendent to be distributed with the approbation of the executive in favor of the following: (1) An ordinary allowance for colleges; (2) establishment of academies or transitory secondary schools; (3) establishment of normal schools; (4) scholarships for poor children of those schools; (5) scholarships to colleges for poor children from secondary schools; (6) graded premium, progressive and annual for school teachers; (7) a pension for the aged and infirm teachers; (8) publication of the Journal Public Instruction; (9) buying of maps, globes and other objects and books to be given as prizes; (10) forming parish libraries; (11) help for the construction of schools; (12) special allowances for municipalities whose share of the grant is too small; (13) prosecution of the department against refractory officers; (14) library for the department.

3. To give the superintendent the right: (1) to discharge school teachers who are incapable, negligent or immoral; (2) to keep from each municipality's share of the grant an amount to establish a model school; (3) to assess the other districts of a municipality for the share of the one that will have contributed nothing or nearly nothing to the common fund; (4) to regulate the choice of books for all the schools.

4. To give to the Governor-in-Council on the recommendation of the superintendent the right; (1) to make all regulations necessary for the establishment and the administration of normal schools; (2) to fix the minimum salary for school teachers; (3) to confiscate the share of the grant of every refractory municipality ..; (4) to make all the necessary regulations for the interior administration of schools, the conduct of those officers charged with the execution of the law and, in general, for all cases not foreseen by the law; all these powers must be shared, as soon as they will be constituted, by the Council of the Public Instruction of which my predecessor has already recommended the establishment.

5. To give the municipalities the right to assess themselves for an amount more than their share of the grant; to oblige women teachers to be qualified as well as the men; to make the decisions of the superintendent executory on the pleas set before him and to impose strong penalties for all infractions against the regulations approved by the Governor-in-Council.

6. To determine upon the pecuniary qualifications of school trustees ... to raise the remuneration of the secretary-treasurers ...

7. To exact from the trustees that they read and write their oath of office, and to give the superintendent the power to replace them when they are unable to do so by others who are more competent ...<sup>14</sup>

It is interesting to note that nearly all Chauveau's recommendations were covered by the laws of 1856. The most important of those that were not, were: the establishing of a minimum salary for teachers, and that school commissioners should know how to read and write before being elected. This

report also shows Chauveau's keen insight into the educational problems of the times and his determination to better existing conditions. His devotedness to the cause of education has earned for him the esteem and admiration of those who are cognizant of his work.

The beginning of his administration was ushered in by the creation of the Council of Public Instruction by legislation in 1856 although it was only organized three years later, and the establishment of three normal schools, the Jacques Cartier Normal School and the McGill Normal School at Montreal, and at Quebec, the Laval Normal School comprising two departments: one for the men teachers, and one for the women teachers which was placed under the supervision and instruction of the Ursuline Sisters. In 1857 there were thirty-three Normal students in their boarding-school and twenty-four others - making a total of fifty-seven young girls. Due to lack of equipment, the scientific and literary part of the students' training was taken over by the professors at the Laval Normal School. The department for women teachers at the Jacques Cartier Normal School was offered to the Sisters of the Congregation in Montreal, but they refused due to the lack of funds. These were not the first normal schools that had been established in the Province. "Until 1836 the teaching of religious communities had given pedagogical information to most of the rural school teachers. When the government interested itself in 1836 in the trend towards normal schools, it defrayed the costs of

six young girls at the Ursuline Convent of Quebec; five at the Ursuline Convent at Three Rivers; and seven in Montreal at the Convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Their course of study was three years.<sup>15</sup> Because of the turbulent next two years, for political reasons no other young girls were assisted by the government. The teaching communities continued to help those of their students who intended to teach until in 1842 when Bishop Bourget of Montreal petitioned the Christian Brothers to teach others their pedagogical methods. Several colleges in other towns followed this precedent and likewise gave courses in methods. However, not until 1859 were there established national, denominational normal schools assisted by government grant. According to Magnan, from 1857 to 1887, one hundred eighty normal school students from the Ursuline's department in Quebec became nuns; that is to say about ten percent of these students enter religious communities every year. Moreover the new methods and ideas they had absorbed were discussed with the other sisters with whom they lived.<sup>16</sup> In this way the teaching sisterhoods were always in touch with the new methods introduced in the normal schools.

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A. Desrosiers, Les Ecoles Normales Primaires, p. 72, Montreal, Quebec: Arbour and Dupont, 1909.

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C. J. Magnan, L'Enseignement Primaire, p. 38. Trois Rivieres, Quebec: Compagnie D'Imprimerie des Trois Rivieres, 1888.

Another means conceived by Chauveau to encourage and assist teachers was the founding of the Journal of Public Instruction which appeared monthly in two languages, French and English, although one was not a translation of the other. Because its grant was discontinued in 1879, it ceased publication, but others who were interested in education realizing the efficacy of such a periodical, hastened to fill the gap, and since 1880 there has always been at least one Journal sent out to teachers.

By the legislation of the British North America Act in 1867, education became a provincial affair exclusively. Article 93 pertaining to education is as follows:

In and for each Province the Legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education, subject and according to the following provisions:-

1. Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law in the Province at the union.

2. All the powers, privileges, and duties at the union by law conferred and imposed in Upper Canada on the separate schools and school trustees of the Queen's Roman Catholic subjects shall be and the same are hereby extended to the dissentient schools of the Queen's Protestant and Roman Catholic subjects in Quebec.

3. Where in any Province a system of separate or dissentient school exists by law at the Union or is thereafter established by the Legislature of the Province, an appeal shall lie to the Governor-General-in-Council from any Act or decision of any Provincial authority affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to education.

4. In case any such Provincial law as from time to time seems to the Governor-General in Council requisite for the due execution of the provisions of this section is not made, or in case any decision of the Governor-General in Council on any appeal under this section is not duly executed by the proper Provincial authority in that behalf, then and in every such case, and as far only as the circumstances

of each case require, the Parliament of Canada may make remedial laws for the due execution of the provisions of this section and of any decision of the Governor-General in Council under this section.<sup>17</sup>

The B. N. A. Act simply ratified the educational organization then existing in Quebec. It was the law of 1875, a monument of religious toleration, that gave complete liberty to all in the Province.

When the Council of Public Instruction was organized in 1859 it was composed of eleven Catholics and four Protestants. It continued to operate in this manner until 1869, when a law was passed dividing the Council into two committees, the one Catholic, the other Protestant, but final decisions were reserved for the whole council. Also, the maximum of fifteen members was raised to twenty-one, one third of whom were to be Protestant. This legislation existed until 1875 when a last and remarkable law assigned to the committees such perfect autonomy that each functioned as a distinct council of Public Instruction independent of the other. This gave Protestants, who form the minority, the most complete control over their schools. It also decreed that the Catholic Bishops of Quebec were to become members of the Council with an equal number of laymen. Moreover, and extremely important, education by this law of 1875 was completely divorced from politics. The superintendent, the chief executive, became independent of political influence, and hence could devote his

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W. P. M. Kennedy, The Constitution of Canada, p. 477, Toronto, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1922.

time and energy towards the work of education. Roy asserts that since this law went into effect in 1876 there has never been a school problem in the Province of Quebec.<sup>18</sup> This law brings to a close educational legislation in that Province. Since the foregoing date there have been improvements brought about within the system to keep pace with the ever-increasing population. Therefore, today in Quebec, there is a general body whose work is concerned with the administration of funds and other temporal affairs, and two independent committees, one Catholic and one Protestant, under a superintendent named by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, to regulate all questions pertaining to education. Within the Catholic system of education the Religious Orders have been granted a permanency of position which has not only ensured their status as influential and highly satisfactory teaching bodies, but also assured them of expansion as well as making them an integral part of a state system of education.

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E. M. Roy, La Formation du Regime Scolaire Canadien-Francais, p. 120, Quebec: Imprimerie La Flamme, 1924.



## CHAPTER V

### Growth of Religious Communities from 1842 to 1850

The important educational laws beginning with the Act of 1841 stimulated the ever-growing realization for the necessity of instruction. As the greater number of French Canadians were in the rural districts of Quebec, the need for schools to which they could send their children was greater than that of the cities. With governmental aid these schools could now be built.

The next problem, not less arduous, was to find enough competent teachers for these schools. For the education and training of their daughters the French Canadians hoped to have the assistance of religious communities. However, the already existing sisterhoods found it impossible to satisfy all the appeals due to their depleted ranks. One priest, who wrote to his Bishop asking for Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame to teach in his school, was told that at the moment it was impossible, that there were many parishes, larger, older, with more financial security that had been begging for sisters for years but hadn't yet been successful.<sup>1</sup> Some parish priests, determined to have the whole-time devotedness of nuns for their pupils, resolved to canvas their parishes for devoted and unselfish young ladies who

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<sup>1</sup> Abbe E. Dubois, Le Petit Seminaire, p. 18. Montreal, Quebec: Devoir Press, 1925.

would be willing to embark upon this most necessary work and thereby found new communities of teaching sisters. Others went over or appealed to Convents in France for volunteers for this noble undertaking. As early as 1783 part of a petition stated:

Education is only neglected in this province through the lack of masters and professors of every kind. The province is in desperate need of outside assistance.<sup>2</sup>

If this were true of 1783, how much more so sixty years after, since during that period the French had been striving to preserve their language, customs and religion against the strenuous efforts made to Anglicize them. They realized that the only means of safeguarding their national life was to procure for their children a system of education both French and Catholic. One, who by his indomitable and ardent zeal, fostered education and brought it within the reach of thousands, was the great and worthy Bishop Bourget. As soon as the authorities became more conciliatory, as soon as they slackened their hold on elementary instruction and allowed freedom of teaching in Quebec, that is, the denominational principle of education, there was a simultaneous development of education throughout the province. Moreover, the remarkable growth beginning in 1842 of religious teaching communities of women is ample proof that the previous neglect of education was not due to indifference or negligence but to the

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<sup>2</sup>A. Des Rosiers, Canada and Its Provinces, Op. Cit., p. 403.

necessity of freedom of religion and language in their schools.

Bishop Bourget, the second Bishop of Montreal, was an indefatigable worker in the cause of education. From the beginning of his episcopate he strove to multiply the educational institutions wherein Catholic youth might be equipped intellectually and spiritually for their role in life. With this motive in mind, in ten years, from 1843 to 1853 he established eight communities of teaching sisters, four of whom he invited from France, and four whom he founded in Quebec.<sup>3</sup> During his ministry, he also sought the help of a number of Religious Orders of men including the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Jesuits, the Clerics of St. Viator and the Fathers of the Holy Cross. When the government without any undue hesitation granted these religious Orders civil recognition it vindicated their right to a freedom that had been withheld since the conquest. This tolerance on the part of the legislature was partly instrumental in bringing about the expansion and intensifying of the vitality of the religious Orders of women. During his episcopacy Bishop Bourget established twenty Orders of women devoted to education and charitable works.<sup>4</sup> This is a remarkable achievement for any one man to accomplish and will always redound to his credit

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<sup>3</sup>F. Langevin, Mgr. Ignace Bourget, p. 89. Montreal, Quebec: Messenger, 1932.

<sup>4</sup>L.O. David, Mgr. Ignace Bourget, p. 31. Montreal, Quebec: Beauchemin Ltd., 1912.

as a truly Catholic educator and philanthropist.

The first order of women to whom the Bishop appealed on one of his journeys to France was that of the Religious of the Sacred Heart founded in 1800 by St. Sophie Barat. The objective of this order is "Christian culture and not mere secular information". Their general curriculum includes "religious instruction, moral formation, domestic training, social accomplishments, intellectual enjoyment, mental discipline, and even health hygiene; all were given consideration and all found a place in the program, which aimed at preparing the pupils for that special sphere which was to be theirs as Christian homemakers, Catholic wives and mothers."<sup>5</sup> The four sisters who came from the Sacred Heart Convent in New York to found a school for girls in 1842 at St. Jacques de l'Achigan about thirty-six miles from Montreal were imbued with these ideals. Nearly two hundred years before, the heroic Marguerite Bourgeoys had arrived at the small fort, Ville Marie, desirous to instruct the ignorant. Now the Religious of the Sacred Heart, the next community of women to come to Canada from France after the Ursulines in 1639, endeavored to contribute their share to the noble work of education. Having been given a new convent, and three

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<sup>5</sup> Louise Callan. The Society of the Sacred Heart in North America, p. 727, New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1937

hundred sixty arpents of land, they realized how glad the people were to have teachers for their children. Two schools were to be opened, a free day school for poor children, and a boarding school for the daughters of the wealthy. The boarding school increased from three pupils in January, 1843, to sixty the following September. In 1844 the day school registered one hundred fifty children.<sup>6</sup> The latter were found to be very ignorant, and also their parents, even with regard to religion. To combat this ignorance, one of the Sisters opened a class for the neighboring women who met once a week. During the first year about fifty attended. These were not the first adult classes. Marguerite Bourgeoys and her companions had instructed many young women. The Ursulines also taught the parents of their Indian pupils who would practically camp in their parlors for days at a time and would expect to be fed, too.

In September, 1843, two Canadian girls asked permission to enter the Society and help carry on the good work begun but a few months before. Due to the bad roads, and the twelve-hour distance from Montreal, a number of boarders failed to return in September. Therefore the Sisters decided to move the boarding school closer to Montreal. This was accomplished in 1846 in the town of St. Vincent de Paul, nine miles from Montreal. As a result of this move, the annalist states

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 398.

there was a marked increase of boarders, sixty-four of them, practically all from the city, and fifty day scholars.<sup>7</sup>

Thus in 1850 the Religious of the Sacred Heart were teaching in two schools of the Province of Quebec, devoting themselves solely to the work of education.

One who realized the deplorable state of elementary education among the French Canadians who would not send their children to non-sectarian schools was Miss Eulalie Durocher. Wishing to devote her life to helping these children, twice she entered the Congregation of Notre Dame, both times to be sent home extremely ill. Later her thoughts turned towards helping the unfortunate orphans and she considered presenting herself at the General Hospital of Quebec, but again illness intervened. Once again having regained her health, the plight of the children and young people continued to move her. She herself, under the watchful eyes of her mother, a former student of the Ursulines, had been taught to read and write, and taught as well the history of her country by her grandfather who had been well educated and was a veteran of many wars in Canada. He devoted himself to her education until his death when she was ten years old. The next year she was sent to a boarding school taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame. There she remained for two years. In 1827 when she wished to become a Sister she was placed in a boarding school for two more years to complete her studies. This was necessary as she

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 402.

hoped to belong to an institute whose primary purpose was to educate. The schooling she had received before had not been adequate. However, ill health made her abandon the hope of becoming a Religious. Eulalie's dream was to see a convent in each parish for the Christian education of young girls. Once when she expressed her wish to a parish priest, he told her of his intended trip to France and he promised to bring back some sisters who would open a school in a nearby parish. Eulalie begged to be their first Canadian subject.

Any project to bring education within the reach of members of his flock naturally received the whole-hearted approbation of Bishop Bourget. Therefore plans were made for the foundation of a school. The Fabrique at Longueill offered a house and the land for this purpose. All was in readiness for the arrival of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary from France. To everyone's dismay the parish priest returned alone. The Sisters had accepted other schools in France instead, as they thought the distance was too great to found a school in Canada at that time.<sup>8</sup> It was suggested instead that some capable, virtuous and willing young girls should begin the foundation in Canada, that perhaps some Sisters would come from France later. Accordingly in 1843 with Bishop Bourget's consent, Eulalie then thirty-two years old, and two of her friends embarked upon their noble venture,

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<sup>8</sup>Mere Marie-Rose, by a Sister of the same Order, p. 9. Montreal, Quebec: L'Action Paroissiale, 1922.

adopting the title, the religious habit, and the Rules of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in France. Thus, this Congregation became the first of those that originated in this country, and the fourth in the Province of Quebec whose purpose was exclusively that of educating.

The little convent at Longueill under the direction of the three foundresses soon became the centre of learning for sixty-three pupils, seventeen of whom were boarders.<sup>9</sup> Soon four young women joined the sisters. These Sisters were not only given instruction as to their religious duties every day, but also methods of teaching grammar, history, geography, literature, arithmetic, geometry and singing.<sup>10</sup> Father Allard, trained in France, was their zealous instructor for six years. Moreover, he proposed to Bishop Bourget that the Sisters would become more proficient if they attended the courses in methods given by the best teachers available in Canada; these were the Brothers of the Christian Schools who had come to Canada in 1837. The Educational Act of 1841 recognized their teaching ability, as a proviso in the Seventh Article of the Law stated:

Thirdly: - To agree with and appoint, from time to time, Teachers in the said common schools, and to remove such Teachers, when they shall find just cause for so doing.

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<sup>9</sup>J. M. Melancon, La Vie de Mere Marie-Rose, p. 45. Montreal, Quebec: A. Menard, 1928.

<sup>10</sup>P. Duchaussois, Rose of Canada, p. 136, Montreal, Quebec: Mother House of the Sisters of the Holy Names, 1934.



Provided always, that no person except he be one of the persons known as les freres de la Doctrine Chritienne shall be appointed a Teacher in any of the said Schools unless he be a subject of Her Majesty by birth, or naturalization, of good moral character, and shall have been examined before the said Commissioners as to learning and ability.<sup>11</sup>

Hence to their school, the St. Jacques Institute, two Sisters went every week for several months. On Sundays they would impart at Longueuill a summarized account of the methods they had learned that week for the benefit of those sisters who were working at home. That tradition of coupling instruction in the obligations required of them as religious with pedagogical methods is still carried out to this day in the novitiate.

The little group to their great satisfaction received legal recognition in March, 1845. Mr. Louis Lecoste wrote:

Requested by these Sisters to present their "bill of Incorporation" to Parliament, it gave me great pleasure to accept this work. I devoted myself to the undertaking against the wishes of my friends who thought me foolish because I was encouraging a society which, according to all appearances, would not long exist, being composed only of over-enthusiastic persons who possessed no funds for their support. In spite of all, I persisted in presenting the bill which passed without difficulty on the seventeenth of March, to my satisfaction and the great astonishment of those who opposed the foundation of the institution.<sup>12</sup>

Even before civil recognition was granted them, their boarding school had increased so quickly that the Sisters were obliged to move to a larger house nearby.<sup>13</sup> From three boarders when the school opened in 1843, the number increased to eighty in

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<sup>11</sup> Historical Education Papers and Documents, Op. Cit. p. 140.

<sup>12</sup> P. Duchaussois, Op. Cit., p. 167.

<sup>13</sup> Sister M. Gilbert, Mother Mary Rose, p. 63. Montreal, Quebec: The Messenger Press, 1911.

1845 and eighty-nine in 1847 when it was found necessary to turn away many more because of lack of space and equipment. The exact number of day-scholars is not known, but it exceeded that of the boarders. In February, 1845, when the public was invited to the school, a Montreal daily newspaper wrote as follows:

Many of our readers, no doubt, have asked themselves what sort of Community this is whose name appears in our daily papers. A little monthly examination furnished us the occasion to visit this new institution. We were astonished that a school so advanced and destined, by its great usefulness, to work a new epoch in our country, should have attracted so little attention, and should be so little known.

Its method of teaching corresponds to that of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, which, in itself, is a sufficient recommendation and assurance of success. We were agreeably surprised at the pupils' progress. The new school has been opened scarcely six months, and already has thirty-five boarders and a greater number of day students.

Many answered with ease on the first part of French and of English Grammar, in Arithmetic, in Sacred History, etc., The pupils are also taught Drawing and Painting, Embroidery and Music. But what impresses us most is the manner in which the practical is combined with the cultural. The pupils are instructed in household management, sewing, knitting, the preparation of butter and cheese, etc. One cannot sufficiently appreciate so practical an education. We hope that our people will recognize its worth.<sup>14</sup>

Five months later another article appeared in the daily newspaper, part of which is quoted here:

The friends of education should be satisfied. The public examinations which were held at Longueill this week have proved to be a true source of joy.....We believe that now it would be difficult to say that Canadians have neither the taste nor the aptitude for sciences.

We have had the privilege of attending two of these examinations. We must say that up to the present time the advancement of the Community in Longueill has gone far beyond our expectation. We have been witness to the accuracy and precision of the answers given in Sacred History, Canadian

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<sup>14</sup>P. Duchaussois, Op. Cit., p. 179.

History, Geography, arithmetic, Grammar, Spelling and Rhetoric. One would suppose it to be a school of several years existence. The English language is also made a subject of special study. Music, designing, embroidery, and even domestic science are taught.<sup>15</sup>

This commentary is particularly interesting because it mentions seven subjects in which oral examinations were given for all the pupils. This was over one hundred years ago.

The little convent founded in 1843 by three Sisters, was able in 1846 to found another school in a nearby parish, two more in 1845, and one in 1850, due to the rapidly increasing personnel. Therefore in the first period of growth from 1843 to 1850, thirty-two Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary were teaching four hundred forty-eight students in five schools in the Province of Quebec. This remarkable development and expansion was but an indication of what the future would bring.

Meanwhile, Bishop Bourget was exceedingly concerned about the poor unfortunates in his city. A widow, Madame Gamelin, whose charity was soon to embrace many, began housing old and infirm ladies whom she had met while distributing alms to the poor. This was the beginning of the great and charitable organization which in 1843 became the Institute of the Sisters of Providence, and which embraced any and every deed of mercy. The thousands of immigrants from Ireland were particularly unfortunate. Struck by the dread diseases of typhus and cholera, they perished by the hundreds. Places of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-180.

refuge, food, and clothing were necessary for the survivors of the epidemics. Among the most forlorn were those who were orphaned. The Sisters of Providence at the request of Bishop Bourget opened an orphanage, and also taught all the children of age to learn.<sup>16</sup> This was in 1844. In 1846, two sisters opened a bilingual school close to Montreal, where one sister taught forty pupils in the first to the seventh years, the other sister being the housekeeper. Three more convents were opened in the years 1847, 1849 and 1850. This Institute compiled statistics every twenty-five years, and recorded them in that manner in the Questionnaire submitted by the writer. As so recorded, in 1868, fifty sisters were teaching nine hundred sixty-seven boys and girls in twelve schools.

The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame also expanded under the encouragement and assistance of Bishop Bourget. In 1800 there were only sixty-three Sisters living; in 1845 there were one hundred three, and in 1849, one hundred thirty-nine. Bishop Bourget in 1843 suppressed their regulation which limited the number of Sisters to eighty; rather they were to accept all who applied for admission if they were suitable. In 1845, the Sisters were teaching one thousand four hundred forty-two pupils in Montreal and its suburbs, and one thousand seven hundred eighty-seven pupils

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<sup>16</sup>F. Langevin, Op. Cit., p. 92.

in the rural schools. There were, moreover, nine young ladies teaching in their schools due to lack of religious personnel. Thus, the Sisters of Notre Dame were reaching more pupils than any other Community; but, there were thousands more who still had not the advantage of attending school due to lack of teachers.

Another community which responded to Bishop Bourget's plea for teachers was that of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, four of whom arrived in Canada from France in May, 1847, to take up their teaching duties in St. Laurent, near Montreal. Within two months, three Canadian girls presented themselves, asking admission to the Community.<sup>17</sup> In 1849 there were eight Canadian Sisters in the Institute. This perhaps is the reason why the Sisters of the Holy Cross were able to open three schools the year they arrived from France. In 1850 another school was opened, making a total of four schools in three years. This propitious beginning, moreover, is symbolic of the Community's expansion, not only in Quebec, but also in North America.

Two hundred years after the arrival of the Ursulines in New France, a little group, composed of five Sisters, travelled from their convent in Montreal to take up their new duties in Quebec City. The Sisters of Charity, or the Grey Nuns as they are usually called, founded in 1773 by Madame

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

d'Youville to care for the sick and aged, had been offered an orphanage-school formerly managed by some charitable ladies of Quebec. The terrible epidemic of cholera that was sweeping the old fortress city in 1849 left in its wake numerous orphans.<sup>18</sup> Two years before, the dread typhus had struck the city and had deprived many of their parents. Awaiting the Sisters' care and devotedness were two hundred children.

Soon after their arrival the epidemic abated and classes re-opened. The Sisters taught their pupils Religion, French, English, Arithmetic, History, Geography and Natural Science; the grades were the first four. The Grey Nuns were the fourth Community to establish themselves in Quebec City. The first Sisters were the Hospital Nuns in 1637, two years later the Ursulines arrived; then in 1685 the Sisters of Notre Dame from Montreal opened a school for the poor children in the Lower Town of Quebec. These communities were able to care for the educational needs of Quebec and its environments until the devastating epidemics of the 1840's. In 1850 the Ursulines, who numbered thirty-seven, were educating seven hundred girls in their convent at Quebec.

Not far from Montreal at Vaudreuil a new Institute was canonically erected in 1850. The foundress of the Sisters of St. Anne was Marie-Ester Blondin, who had taught in the little village school for fifteen years. She, like Eulalie Durocher the foundress of the Sisters of the Holy

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<sup>18</sup>  
Dans le Sillage de la Charite, p. 15. Quebec: Imprimerie Mallet, 1933.

Names of Jesus and Mary, had been a pupil of the Congregation of Notre Dame, and had likewise entered that order but had to leave because of ill-health. The deplorable state of illiteracy, prevalent among the young people in her village and the surrounding country due to the great lack of teachers, influenced her decision to devote her life to teaching.<sup>19</sup> Four companions joined her in her noble enterprise, and with the fatherly consent and blessing of Bishop Bourget they founded the Order of the Sisters of St. Anne in 1850. Eighty pupils were taught that first year; some of them hoping to be allowed to enroll with their zealous teachers in their self-sacrificing work. This Community brings to a close the first period of the vigorous growth of Religious Teaching Orders of Women in the Province of Quebec.

Around Montreal the Congregation of Notre Dame, with its thirteen convents in 1841, was doing its utmost to stem the rising tide of illiteracy with little success, because of the ever-increasing population. Other eager and ardent Institutes were pitting their small strength to bring instruction not only of the mind but also of the heart to those who were confided to their care. Although these new Orders added only seventeen convents, a very small number compared to those that were needed, nevertheless most of these congrega-

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<sup>19</sup> F. Langevin, Mere Marie Anne Foundatrice de L'Institut des Soeurs de Sainte-Anne, p. 85. Montreal, Quebec: Granger Freres, 1935.

tions were to expand far and wide thus becoming the alma Mater of hundreds of thousands of young girls in the not-too-far-distant future.



## CHAPTER VI

### Growth from 1851 to 1900

The remarkable achievement evinced by the fact that in eight years six Religious Orders of women were dedicating themselves to the cause of education in the Province of Quebec, where formerly there had been but two devoted exclusively to education is further illustrated, moreover, when one considers that the Community founded previously was that of the Grey Nuns of Montreal in 1738. The forethought and ardent zeal of Bishop Bourget as manifested in these foundations, and the inherent desire of the French Canadians for at least the elementary rudiments of knowledge must be accepted as a fact. These ten congregations were augmented by twelve more founded during the years 1851 to 1900, thus making a total of twenty-two teaching Orders of women during this period.

The first Order to open a school during the latter period was that of the Good Shepherd Sisters in 1851. This community, the first founded in Quebec City itself, aimed at rehabilitating young girls. The degradation of the women in prison, and their social ostracism when freed, motivated Bishop Turgeon to open a place of refuge for them in 1850. Madame Roy undertook the task of keeping these unfortunates and was soon assisted by six other devoted women. The necessity of educating indigent girls as a prevention impelled them to open a school in the poorer section of Quebec, where

they stressed housekeeping and other domestic arts.<sup>1</sup> Hand in hand with their work of reformation went the work of preservation by means of education. From 1851 to 1900, because of a continually increasing personnel the Sisters of the Good Shepherd opened fourteen more schools in the Province of Quebec.

A memorable date for the Sisters of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is 1853, for it was then that Bishop Cooke of Three Rivers installed three devoted, outstanding, young girls in a small school transformed into a convent where they were to study the obligations of the religious life and to teach the children in his parish. The three of them had been pupils of the Ursuline Sisters of Three Rivers and wished to consecrate their lives to education. Forty-seven boarders were registered the first year, and were taught by two of the Sisters; the other Sister taught the sixty day scholars from the village. Three years later the number of boarders increased to ninety-three. At the end of the school year twenty-four of these young girls from the boarding school were given a teaching certificate enabling them to spread knowledge and instruction to the children in the surrounding country

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<sup>1</sup>Notes on the Good Shepherd Convent of Quebec.  
Mother House, 1942.

schools.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the subjects taught, mentioned by the other communities, these Sisters added to their curriculum, algebra, geometry, agriculture, hygiene and cosmography. The little community grew slowly. In 1865 there were fifteen Sisters, three of whom opened a school in a nearby parish. Later, as the number of Sisters increased, other schools were opened. In 1885 there were sixteen convents housing one hundred eighteen nuns in the community.<sup>3</sup> In 1900, one hundred twenty Sisters of the Assumption were teaching in twenty schools in the Province of Quebec. Their records of the number of pupils taught in 1900 were lost in a fire that destroyed the building in 1906.

Another order in France that responded to Bishop Bourget's appeal was that of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. Five Sisters left France in 1853 to found a school near St. Hyacinthe. Not long before, in 1796, while the French Revolution was devastating the country and existing institutions, a young girl, Anne-Marie Rivier, and three companions consecrated themselves to the task of teaching the young children victims of "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality". When the foundress died in 1838, the community had already

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<sup>2</sup> Sur les Pas de Marthe et de Marie, p. 210. Montreal, Quebec: Imprimerie du Messager, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> L'Institut des Soeurs de L'Assomption de la St. Vierge, p. 6. Nicolet, Quebec, 1946.

expanded so rapidly that she left one hundred thirty-two foundations.<sup>4</sup> That is a wonderful record for forty-two years. In Canada, they had registered one hundred one pupils at the end of the first year and not long after opened a Normal School to train teachers for the Primary Schools.<sup>5</sup> The Sisters of the Presentation opened nineteen schools in the Province of Quebec from 1853 to 1900. According to the Questionnaire submitted by the writer, they have no record of the number of Sisters or the number of pupils at the end of this period.

Another young girl who grew up amidst the terrors of the French Revolution was the foundress of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. As most of the Religious Communities had disappeared during the Reign of Terror she decided to dedicate her life to teaching the ignorant. With one helper she began her work of education in 1818.<sup>6</sup> The little Institute expanded so rapidly that Sisters left for India in 1842, Spain in 1850, and Canada in 1855. Seven Sisters arrived that memorable year and opened a boarding school at St. Joseph de Levis,

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<sup>4</sup>Sur les Pas, Op. Cit., p. 227.

<sup>5</sup>J. B. Meilleur, Op. Cit., p. 230.

<sup>6</sup>Apres Cent Ans, Soeurs de Jesus-Marie, p. 5. Rome, Italy, 1937.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

near Quebec City. In this country also the community grew, as a college for young girls affiliated with Laval University was opened in 1870, and from 1855 to 1900, six establishments were founded each one including teachers who taught in the boarding school, the day school, and the parochial school, making a total of eighteen schools in the Province of Quebec, but only six convents.

Groulx, in his outstanding book on education in Quebec, gives statistics that are of pertinent interest for the years 1853 to 1866. In 1853, ten thousand four hundred twenty-nine pupils had already been taught in convents. For the same year, 1853, there were forty-four convent schools with an enrollment of two thousand seven hundred ninety-six pupils. The total number of schools for 1853 was one thousand three hundred thirty-eight. In 1855 there were fifty-two convents with eight thousand five hundred thirty pupils in attendance. Eleven years later, in 1866, there one hundred three convents where eighteen thousand ninety-eight pupils were being educated.<sup>8</sup> These figures outline the remarkable growth, in a short span of time, of the enrollment of girls and the work of the new teaching Orders of women.

The Grey Nuns of the Cross from Ottawa, another

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<sup>8</sup>L'Enseignement Francais au Canada, Op. Cit., pp. 252, 254.

independent branch of Madame d'Youville's foundation, opened their first school in the Province of Quebec in 1867. In 1845, Mother Elizabeth Bruyere and three other sisters, responding to an appeal for teachers to found a school for the little French Canadians of Bytown, left Montreal to embark upon a venture that would yield a harvest undreamed of. Aylmer, six miles from Hull, was the scene of their first labours in the Province of Quebec. Seventy boys and girls registered the first day of school. The parish priest, not satisfied with that registration, so effectively induced his negligent parishioners to send their children to the Sisters' school that within four months the registration had leaped to one hundred fifty.<sup>9</sup> From 1867 to 1900, sixty-three Grey Nuns from Ottawa were teaching one thousand eight hundred forty-two pupils in ten schools - nine Primary Schools, and one Boarding School - in the Province of Quebec.

Included in the ever-growing record of Teaching Orders in the Province is another Canadian foundation - the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. The first Bishop of Rimouski, while making his pastoral visit, was moved by the plight of his flock in many districts. Realizing that education is the basis of all spiritual and moral melioration, he confided his project in 1874 to a virtuous and experienced teacher,

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<sup>8</sup>Soeur Paul Emile. Mere Elizabeth Bruyere and son Oeuvre, p. 320. Ottawa, Canada; Maison Mere des Soeurs Grices de la Croix, 1945.

Miss Elizabeth Turgeon. Two other young ladies equally willing and devoted joined her to form a teachers' lay Association, at the express desire of the Bishop.<sup>10</sup> This is a most unusual occurrence. Invariably all Bishops desire the teachers in their diocese to be Religious women by profession as well as in practice. It is the life of thoughtful prayer joined to educated and trained minds and wills always ready to see truth and guide the young along its paths, that constitutes the Religious Teacher. Miss Turgeon and her two companions gave proof as being such teachers but despite their pleadings to unite under the banner of religion, Bishop Langevin remained inflexible. Matters remained thus until 1879 when the Bishop was finally persuaded that the group now composed of thirteen young ladies, would be happier and therefore more efficient if they were consecrated to God. They were then canonically established as a Religious Teaching Order.<sup>11</sup> Almost immediately three parishes petitioned the Sisters for teachers in their schools. In 1895 there were twenty-seven Sisters of the Holy Rosary; during the years 1874 to 1900 they opened eleven schools in the Province of Quebec.

The Bishop of St. Hyacinthe was convinced that if there were Sisters teaching the children in his diocese, the

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<sup>10</sup> Sur les Pas, Op. Cit., p. 270.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 272.

Christian outlook and spirit would be enormously improved. In order to carry out his project of having teachers consecrated to God in all the primary schools of his diocese, he decided to assume the responsibility of founding a community. For this purpose he selected Elizabeth Bergeron, a willing and devoted young girl and three of her companions, who took charge of a school registering eighty pupils in the first six grades. This new Institute founded in 1877 was that of the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Hyacinthe. An interesting contrast between this Order and the others is that these Sisters do not conduct boarding schools. However they have a Juniorate, that is, they accept girls twelve years old or more who feel inclined towards the Religious Life. Besides studying until they have completed their Normal training, including courses in music, painting and domestic science, they study their aptitudes for the duties and responsibilities demanded of them as a member of that Order.<sup>12</sup> This plan is not only a means of recruitment but also a method of forming good subjects for the Institute. They have no record of the number of pupils for this period, but from 1877 to 1900 they opened twelve schools in which forty-eight Sisters taught, yielding an average of four sisters to a school. One kindergarten was opened; the other eleven

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<sup>12</sup> Notice Historique de L'Institut des Soeurs de St. Joseph, p. 9. St. Hyacinthe, Quebec: Imprimerie de St. Joseph, 1947.



foundations were primary schools.

A Congregation founded in France in 1703 that has spread to four continents, whose educational and charitable works include every type needed in every country is that of the Daughters of Wisdom.<sup>13</sup> They were invited to Canada by the Bishop of Ottawa in 1884. In 1890 they opened a boarding school at St. Jovite in Quebec; in 1894 they were able to open another one. These were the only educational houses they opened in Quebec before 1900. Their work of instruction in the Province is a very minute part of their work as a whole, but serves as an indication of their zeal and spirit of self-sacrifice.

Despite the laws passed many years previously that were favorable to education from the French point of view, despite the splendid progress made by the already existing Teaching Orders, many districts in the Province of Quebec were without the selfless devotedness of nuns in 1892 with regard to both educational and charitable works. Such was the case of the village and the surrounding country of St. Damien in Quebec. Besides schools, an orphanage and an Old Folks' Home were needed. The parish priest, Cure Brousseau, petitioned some of the existing Orders without any success. Cardinal Tashereau, when appealed to, counseled him to begin his own Order of nuns. With the Cardinal's

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<sup>13</sup>The Congregation of the Daughters of Wisdom, p. 9.  
Hull, Quebec: Leclerc, 1938.

encouragement and blessing, with hours spent in prayer as preparation, he invited several young ladies whom he judged to be earnest and well-disposed for such an enterprise. Four of them responded to his invitation and on August, 28, 1892, formed the nucleus of the Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In September, two Sisters opened a school for forty-five pupils at a salary of fifty (\$50.00) dollars a year.<sup>14</sup> The generosity of the villagers supplied them with most of their provisions. By November, the little Community had already increased to seven. The Sisters who did not teach cared for an old man, four orphans, and an old lady who had come seeking a place of refuge, where they knew kindness and sympathy awaited them. From 1892 until 1900 the Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help taught in sixteen elementary schools in the villages and country districts of the parish of St. Damien. There were thirty-four sisters teaching, an average of two in a school, and they taught one thousand one hundred fifty-eight pupils, or an average of thirty-four pupils to a teacher which was a heavy class registration in those days. When one considers that other deeds of Christian mercy were undertaken by these Sisters, such as orphanages, Old Folks Homes, caring for the sick and even aiding the doctors in an Institution for

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<sup>14</sup>Vie Admirable du Chanoine J. O. Brousseau, p. 57.  
Quebec: L'Action Sociale Limitee, 1932.

alcoholics,<sup>15</sup> the outstanding feature of this congregation seems to be the rapidly increasing personnel in the first eight years of its initial growth.

The tenth new community to devote itself to education in the Province of Quebec from 1851-1900 was that of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary founded in France in 1860 by Father Delaplace to care for and instruct the orphans and poor children in large towns.<sup>16</sup> Invited to the United States in 1889, they responded to a call from Canada in 1892, opening a school at St. Ephrem in Quebec. Four Sisters came to teach one hundred twenty-five children in the first four grades. In 1899 they branched out to include two other schools, registering two hundred thirty pupils, thus making a total of three schools for this period of growth.

Another community which came from France in 1844 at the pressing request of Bishop Bourget was that of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Four sisters arrived in Montreal to care for young delinquents, and the women in prisons. Besides this, they also taught young girls. In 1853 they had fifty-one pupils, according to Meilleur.<sup>17</sup> In 1878 they opened a boarding school in Montreal for the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> Sur les Pas, Op. Cit., p. 368.

<sup>17</sup> J. B. Meilleur, Op. Cit., p. 205.

young girls of well-to-do families some of whom later entered the Community. In this way the Good Shepherd Sisters were able to increase their personnel. In 1900 they were teaching girls in three schools.

The last Order instituted during this period was at the request of the Bishop of Chicoutimi. Because of his ever-increasing diocese, he needed more and more workers, especially some to teach the poor.<sup>18</sup> For this purpose he founded in 1894 the Institute of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The immediate success of this Institute led to invitations to teach in schools in other parishes, so that by 1900, or six years from their date of foundation, the sisters were conducting seven elementary schools, and in this way were helping to raise the standard of education in the province.

#### Progress of Early Establishments

Meanwhile, the Orders founded prior to 1851 were continuing to contribute greatly to the intellectual and moral advancement of the young girls entrusted to them. In 1853, the Ursulines of Quebec and Three Rivers, pioneers in the field of education, had taught around 16,000 pupils, of whom one hundred-fifty were Indian girls. At the Convent of Three Rivers there were two hundred five pupils registered in the year 1853. Meilleur records in full the

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<sup>18</sup>Sur les Pas, Op. Cit., p. 377.

Prospectus of the Ursulines for the year 1859. The course of study for this Convent is given as follows:

Reading in French and English, orthography, lexicography, arithmetic, writing, grammar both French and English, French and English Composition, geography, use of maps and globes; sacred and profane history, both ancient and modern, chronology, synchronism and mythology; rhetoric both French and English, astronomy with the aid of a new planetary system according to Copernicus, and of the armillary sphere of Ptolemy; instrumental and vocal music, drawing, including perspective drawing, painting, sewing according to taste (without additional charge) and embroidery of every kind. The advantage of knowing how to cut out and make clothes being generally recognized, this art, when parents desire it, is taught by experienced persons. 19

The high-sounding terms applied to the teaching of history might confuse many students today. The complete Prospectus is very interesting, and affords an excellent idea of the boarding schools ninety years ago. At that time, according to Meilleur, the library of the Ursulines at Quebec consisted of five thousand very well-chosen books. The instrumental music taught both by the Ursulines and the Congregation of Notre-Dame included piano, harp, violin and guitar. Before 1900 the Ursulines were also teaching their students, algebra, geometry and trigonometry. Besides enlarging their curriculum, they opened two new convents in 1882, and 1884; these were the first since 1697, and make a total of four large convents. Rather than open numerous schools, they concentrated their staff and students in one convent. In the convent at Quebec, for example, in 1900 there were one hundred nineteen Ursulines

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<sup>19</sup>J. B. Meilleur, op. cit., p. 55

<sup>20</sup>Groulx, op. cit., p. 255

teaching seven hundred fifty girls from well-to-do families of both English and French living in the surrounding districts.

The Hospital Sisters of Quebec who, besides their nursing duties, had begun to teach young girls in 1725, enrolled eighty-two pupils in their classes in 1853. In 1868, when their boarding school had enlarged to include nearly two hundred pupils, they suppressed the classes to offer a refuge and to care for the poor and aged who were becoming more and more numerous.<sup>21</sup> As other communities were devoting themselves to the instruction of young girls in old Quebec City, this left the Hospital Sisters free to pursue their charitable works.

Meanwhile the Congregation of Notre Dame in Montreal was flourishing, and expanding steadily. In 1853, these Sisters were teaching five thousand six hundred six pupils, according to the records of the Superintendent of Education, J. B. Meilleur. In 1876, in thirty-eight convents they were teaching twelve thousand pupils. Their curriculum was greatly similar to that of the Ursulines. In 1889, the Sisters of the Congregation opened the women's department of the Jacques-<sup>22</sup>Cartier Normal School in Montreal. This event greatly furthered the rapid advancement of education in the Province,

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<sup>21</sup> Sur les Pas, op. cit., p. 21

<sup>22</sup> Desrosiers, Canada and Its Provinces, op. cit., p. 438

and led the way for the foundation of similar institutions after the turn of the Century. A former principal of the Jacques Cartier Normal School declared: "The Congregation of Notre-Dame," says he, "is a truly national institution, whose ramifications extend beyond the limits of Canada.

Marguerite Bourgeoys took in hand the education of the women of the People, the basis of society. She taught young women to become what they ought to be, especially at this period, women full of moral force, of modesty, of courage in the face of the dangers in the midst of which they lived. If the French-Canadians have preserved a certain character of politeness and urbanity, which strangers are not slow in admitting, they owe it in a great measure to the work of

<sup>23</sup> Marguerite Bourgeoys." In 1900, the Congregation Sisters were conducting one hundred fifteen centres of learning for more than twenty-seven thousand pupils. They have no exact record of the number of Sisters teaching at that time, but there were one thousand eleven hundred two Sisters of that Order helping some way in the vital work of education.

Although the principal work of the Grey Nuns of Montreal is hospital work, their magnificent charity embraces whatever will benefit their fellowmen. In 1860 they opened a school for blind children of both sexes. Besides being instructed, the children are taught a profession, according to their aptitudes, that will help them earn a livelihood later on.

In addition to this school, the Grey Nuns also opened ten elementary schools and a kindergarten in the Province of Quebec during the period 1851 to 1900. Successive fires destroyed records of the number of pupils and teachers during this time.

The only Order that did not expand was that of the Religious of the Sacred Heart founded in 1842. Their free school at St. Jacques de l'Achigan was turned over in 1851 to the Sisters of St. Anne who were specially equipped for teaching in the rural districts.<sup>24</sup> This move united all the Sisters in their one large convent boarding-school which registered one hundred five pupils. A plan to erect a convent in a more accessible locality was fulfilled in 1856, and the other convent was turned over to the Sisters of Providence.<sup>25</sup> A day school was founded in Montreal in 1862 where fifty students came for the opening term to the academy, and one hundred twenty children to the free school attached to the convent.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, for the period 1851 to 1900 the Religious of the Sacred Heart conducted the same number of schools as they had previously, although the number of students had increased.

On the other hand, the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary were rapidly increasing their personnel and

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<sup>24</sup>M. Williams, Second Sowing, p. 299. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942.

<sup>25</sup>L. Callan, op. cit., p. 408

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 412



establishing schools in numerous districts in the Province of Quebec and elsewhere. In 1900, two hundred forty-five Sisters were teaching six thousand six hundred sixty-five pupils in sixty-three schools in the Province. This is a prodigious feat, and one which will always redound to their eternal credit. No other Community in the Province of Quebec increased so astonishingly in so short a time. Not only were schools opened in Quebec, but in Oregon, California, and Florida as well. In the short space of twenty years after the Foundress's death, the banner of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary was set up in the four extremities of America, some of them almost inaccessible regions. By 1874, schools and convents of the Sisters of the Holy Names had stretched as far west as Winnipeg, Manitoba, when St. Mary's Academy was founded. The training the Sisters received, not only in pedagogy but also in psychology, before they went out teaching in the schools, merited for them unstinted praise as educators. Individuality, not regimentation, was the keynote to the Sisters' teaching. Coupled to that was the character training they gave their pupils and the instilling of those virtues needed to bring their students to the flowering of Christian womanhood. Many of their pupils, attracted by the noble ideals and joyous self-sacrificing of the Sisters, asked for the privilege of working with them either as teachers or as housekeepers.

From 1868 to 1893 the Sisters of Providence opened fifteen more schools, two of which were later closed. There were one

thousand eighty-seven boys and girls in these schools, many of them being taught in the orphanages conducted by the Sisters of Providence. One hundred ten Sisters were engaged in teaching these children. It must be remembered that these Sisters did not devote themselves entirely to teaching, as did the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Like the Grey Nuns and other communities they managed hospitals and homes for the aged and the infirm besides visiting the poor and the sick in their homes.

The Sisters of the Holy Cross, who had founded five schools three years after their arrival in Quebec, established nine only during the years 1851 to 1900. It must be remembered, however, that each boarding school, also had a day school, yet the two schools were separately taught. This Order did not expand rapidly after the foundress of the Order returned to France. The great distance from the Mother House in France to which all administrative questions were referred necessitated a separation for the Canadian branch. This was accomplished in 1883, and in the following period of growth, giant strides were made by this community.

In Quebec City, the Grey Nuns, who had come there in 1849, had also accepted hospital work and refuges for the aged, true to the spirit of their Institute. A double ministry is the ideal of this Community: a Grey Nun is to teach children how to live; a Grey Nun is to teach the aged and the sick how to die. In the Province of Quebec, these

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<sup>27</sup> Dans le Sillage de la Charite, op. cit., p. 34.

Sisters, from 1851 to 1900 were teaching in thirty-three schools. The one hundred sixty-three nuns, teaching seven thousand six hundred thirty children, were augmented by fifty-five secular teachers. Many of the latter had been pupils from the Ursulines' Normal School in Quebec City.

During this time, the Sisters of St. Anne, the last community founded prior to 1850, were making good progress. In 1853 they were teaching two hundred thirty-two pupils. In 1878 there were two hundred eighty-five Sisters in twenty-six houses of the Institute.<sup>28</sup> Not all these were schools, as the Sisters also conducted hospitals. Their boarding schools were usually crowned with success. For instance, in one convent fifty pupils registered the first day in September, but by the end of October there were ninety girls in attendance.<sup>29</sup> In 1900, the Sisters of St. Anne were teaching in twenty-four schools in the Province of Quebec. Two hundred forty-seven Sisters had the education of five thousand seven hundred seventy-one children entrusted to their care.

Meilleur states that in 1854 the total number of pupils taught in convents reached ten thousand, four hundred and twenty-nine.<sup>30</sup> Magnan specifies that there were six hundred and forty-eight teaching nuns in the Province of Quebec in

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28

F. Langevin, Mere Marie-Anne, op. cit., p. 275.

29

E. J. Auclair, Histoire des Soeurs de St. Anne, p. 138, Montreal, Quebec: Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes, 1922

30

J. B. Meilleur, op. cit., p. 250

1867. In 1877, there were one thousand and twenty-eight, and in 1911, three thousand, eight hundred and eighty-six<sup>31</sup> Sisters teaching in Primary Schools. These figures portray the large increase in the personnel of the different communities, and, at the same time give evidence of the self-sacrificing devotedness of young girls who wished to engage in the noble task of educating. In 1855 there were fifty-two convents established, twenty-eight only of whom were aided by the government. The others received help from the clergy and the laity, or by the paltry sums brought in by the boarders. Thus, during the period 1851 to 1900, there were twelve new Orders teaching in the Province of Quebec, uniting their splendid efforts with those of their predecessors for the laudatory cause of Christian, moral and intellectual education. Perhaps their classrooms were not scientifically or modernly equipped, but the spirit of culture and devotedness which emanated from those religious educators who looked upon teaching as a permanent vocation and not a transitory one, left an indelible mark in the area of primary education particularly.

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31

M. Magnan, op. cit., p. 69

## CHAPTER VII

### Growth of Religious Orders of Women in the Province of Quebec from 1901 to 1947

The history of the work of the sisterhoods during this period of growth is most effectively expressed in figures. The extraordinary development of these Orders, both old and new, that swept principally over the rural areas of Quebec, played an important and integral part in the progress of education in the Province. Not only was elementary education made accessible to thousands of children in the country, but regional Domestic Science and Normal Schools were established to service the schooling in these districts. Moreover, although all the Orders had schools in the suburban and country places, some Congregations were instituted to teach just in rural areas, such as the Sisters of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the Sisters of the Assumption, The Religious of the Infant Jesus, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary - to mention a few.

The Orders founded prior to 1900 were able to accept more schools due to their ever-increasing personnel. All the Communities by this time were conducting Secondary Schools which furnished many of the new members for the different Orders. Particularly is this true of those Orders that opened schools in the rural areas where there had previously been no parish school.

Table III which follows, demonstrates in figures the work of the teaching Orders of women instituted prior to 1900.

TABLE III

SHOWING THE GROWTH OF ORDERS ESTABLISHED BEFORE 1900  
TOGETHER WITH THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND PUPILS FOR  
THE YEAR 1900

The Congregations	No. of Schools	No. of Elem. Schools	No. of Teachers	No. of Pupils
Ursulines	13	12	588	6538
Sisters of Notre Dame	141	100	1917	40063
Sisters of Charity of Montreal	17	16		1941
Religious of the Sacred Heart	2	2	30	635
Holy Names of Jesus and Mary	99	68	1181	24930
Sisters of Providence	44	35	321	3744
Sisters of the Holy Cross	63	56	546	10926
Sisters of Charity of Quebec (Grey Nuns)	47	40	216 plus 97 seculars	10386
Sisters of St. Anne	65	25	516	15770
Good Shepherd of Quebec	25	17	238	
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin	83	39	750	18012
Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	70	60	624	10667
Sisters of Jesus and Mary	8	6	164	
Grey Nuns of Ottawa	48	29	214	9567
Holy Rosary	55	53		
St. Joseph of St. Hyacinthe	40	38	160	No record
Daughters of Wisdom	7	6	64	5787
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	40	38	174	4040
Servants of the Heart of Mary	32	22	180	5500
Good Shepherd of Montreal	2	2	110	840
Our Lady of Good Counsel	23	19	143	4000

# The Augustinian Sisters in Quebec City relinquished their  
classes to do just hospital work in 1868.

The Congregation of Notre Dame, which had always preferred to go out to the pupils rather than have the pupils come to them as did the Ursulines, has one hundred forty-one schools in the Province from a total of two hundred two establishments. Next are the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary; they have altogether two hundred three establishments in Canada, the United States and Africa. Several Institutes like those of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, and the Daughters of Wisdom, expanded in other provinces of Canada, and in the United States, rather than in Quebec. Moreover, it must be remembered that most of these communities also conduct hospitals, refuges, and orphanages. All the Orders except the Religious of the Sacred Heart, increased the number of their schools during this period, some by a few, others by many.

The years 1901 to 1940 saw twenty-eight Orders found schools for the first time in the Province of Quebec. Seven of these Orders, as may be seen in Table IV, originated in Quebec; most of the others came from France to find refuge in Canada, particularly in the Province of Quebec, because in 1901, in France, a law was passed prohibiting the teaching of religion in all the schools. This nefarious law marked the beginning of a religious persecution which was culminated in 1904 by legislation against religious Orders --- they had to either give up their schools or become secularized. Table IV which follows gives specific information concerning these coadjutant Orders:

**TABLE IV**  
**SHOWING THE ORDERS OF WOMEN WHO FOUNDED SCHOOLS IN QUEBEC SINCE 1900**  
**TOGETHER WITH THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND PUPILS FOR THE YEAR 1947.**

Order	Name of Order	Year Founded	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers	No. of Pupils
1	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1902	1	2	100
2	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
3	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
4	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
5	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
6	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
7	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
8	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
9	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
10	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
11	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
12	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
13	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
14	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
15	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
16	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
17	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
18	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
19	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
20	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
21	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
22	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
23	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
24	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
25	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
26	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
27	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
28	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
29	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100
30	Order of the Holy Heart of Mary	1903	1	2	100

COLLEGE WITH THE ORDER OF SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND PUPILS FOR THE YEAR 1947.  
 SHOWING THE ORDERS OF WOMEN WHO FOUNDED SCHOOLS IN QUEBEC SINCE 1900

TABLE IV



TABLE IV

SHOWING THE ORDERS OF WOMEN WHO FOUNDED SCHOOLS IN QUEBEC SINCE 1900  
TOGETHER WITH THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND PUPILS FOR THE YEAR 1947.

The Congrégation of	First Sch. in Quebec	Order Founded in	Year of Foundation	No. of Schools	No. of Elem. Sch.	No. of Teachers	No. of Pupils
Franciscan Missionaries of Mary	1901	Brittany	1877	8	5	30	1,000
Notre Dame of Namur	1902	Belgium	1819	2	2	13	365
Sacred Heart of Jesus	1902	France	1816	17	15	140	3,500
Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception	1902	Quebec	1902	6	5		
Daughters of Jesus	1903	Brittany	1821	38	34	241	4,800
St. Joseph of St. Vallier	1903	France	1683	18	13	127	2,250
Charity of St. Louis	1903	France	1803	37	35	248	7,890
St. Francis of Assisi	1905	France	1838	15	12	80	2,136
Sisters of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary	1905	France	1853	25	25	190	3,096
Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	1907	France	1823	35	25	160	3,800
Dominicans of the Rosary	1910	Quebec	1902	6	4	65	805
Little Franciscans of Mary	1912	Quebec	1889	20	16	104	3,135

Religious of the Infant Jesus	1912	France	1859	7	7	46	920
Franciscan Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception	1912	U.S.A.	1873	2	2	30	600
Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary	1913	France	1818	8	8	34	900
St. Chretienne	1914	France	1807	2	2	10	262
Notre Dame of Mont Laurier	1921	Quebec	1920	6	6	29	423
Notre Dame Auxiliatrice	1921	Quebec	1921	6	6	24	484
St. Joseph	1921	France	1650	6	5	30 plus 4 seculars	848
Our Lady of Good Counsel	1923	Quebec	1923	2			
Dominicans of the Third Order Teaching	1925	France	1853	3	3		
Servants of the Immaculate Conception	1925	Ukraine	1892	3	2	10	270
Compassionist Servites of Mary	1926	Italy	1869	2	2	8	155
St. Paul from Chartres	1930	France	1694	10	8	42	865
Mary of the Presentation	1934	France	1826	1	1	9	262
Religious of the Sacred Heart and Perpetual Adoration	1934	France	1792	2	1	6	135
Sisters of Charity	1935	U.S.A.	1809	3	2	24	612
Franciscan Oblates of St. Joseph	1940	Quebec	1929	1	1	5	112

Although all the French Orders teach the English language to the French-speaking girls, most of their convents have classes for English girls. The Sisters of Charity from the United States conduct English schools only. The Compassionist Servites of Mary care for Italian children in a school and an orphanage in Montreal. Another Order, the Servants of the Immaculate Conception, have three schools for the Ukrainian pupils in Montreal and its vicinity. Several of the Institutes, founded since 1900, have only a few schools, but all contribute to the great work of educating and instructing. Perhaps in the years to come, some of these may become flourishing educational Orders.

The curriculum expanded during this period of growth to include Domestic Science Schools, many of which are separate establishments such as that of the Sisters of St. Anne at St. Jacques de Montcalm.<sup>1</sup> These Regional Domestic Science Schools, approved by the Council of Public Instruction, affiliated with the University of Montreal, are recognized as institutions specializing in domestic instruction and practical experience. The regular course of three years leads to a diploma enabling the possessor to teach. Further study leads to a Bachelor's Degree. Another course of two years is offered to girls who are not successful in academic subjects. They may obtain a certificate proving that they have domestic science ability,

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<sup>1</sup>  
Prospectus de l' Ecole Menagere Regionale des Soeurs de Ste. Anne.

but, of course, it does not allow them to teach. The curriculum for the regular course, besides religion, is composed of: French; English; psychology and family pedagogy; methods; the administration and upkeep of a home, also family budgeting; physics, chemistry, botany and zoology; horticulture, floriculture, apiculture, aviculture, rural economy; preparation for marriage including prenatal and postnatal care, home nursing; sewing, dressmaking, needlework, making of hats; laundering; cooking; dietetics; anatomy, physiology, hygiene; music, drawing and weaving. This program of studies leaves little to be desired and attracts many girls every year. The Sisters who have been specially trained, teach all the subjects except hygiene, anatomy and the psychology of sex. For the latter courses outside teachers and specialists are called in.<sup>2</sup> The pedagogical institute for religious and seculars is under the guidance and instruction of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in Outremont.

Although the curriculum has grown to keep pace with the needs of the day, religion and its insistence on honesty, courtesy, diligence and all Christian virtues, holds foremost place. However, it is inseparably linked with all subjects to develop in the students the best qualities of mind and heart, as Catholic educators are convinced that what a pupil is, is more important than what he knows, and that education

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1

M. Cronenberg, School for Brides, p. 88. Catholic Digest, St. Paul, Minn. (condensed from Magazine Digest)

is not knowledge; knowledge is but one product of education.

The Questionnaire, found in Appendix I, did not differentiate between schools and establishments. Therefore some Orders, who gave the number of their establishments, considered a College, a Normal School, a Secondary School, and an Elementary School as one, if they were part of one residence. Others totaled the different types of schools as outlined in Part II of the Questionnaire. Moreover, some of the early Orders who came from France, for example the Sisters of Jesus and Mary, continued their custom of conducting boarding schools and day schools separately in each convent. This would give them twice the number of schools compared to the number of establishments. Another deficiency found in the Questionnaire pertained to the number of teachers. Many of the Orders, due to lack of personnel, not only require the assistance of seculars as class teachers, but are requested to engage them by the Bishops in order to give young girls from the Normal Schools an opportunity to teach, as most of the schools are staffed by Sisters. As the Questionnaire neglected to take this matter into consideration, the ratio, for some Orders, of the number of teachers to the number of pupils would not give the complete picture. A further point noted when the returns of the Questionnaire were tabulated was the misunderstanding concerning the term "private schools"; "independent schools" would perhaps have been more relevant. As it was, this item was, on the whole, not checked, or simply

marked zero; whereas in the List of Independent Schools<sup>3</sup> for Quebec, the names of several Orders are recorded. Another article in the Questionnaire referred to the types of schools not included in the given list. Besides those already mentioned, Commercial schools, training schools for Sisters and some for nurses were tabulated by most Communities. The Sisters of Providence enumerated a Deaf and Dumb Institute, and a school for mentally retarded boys and girls. The Dominican Sisters of the Rosary specified a Trade School for boys twelve to eighteen years; the Servants of the Immaculate Conception, three evening schools for adults; the Congregation of Notre Dame, a Music Normal School, and a School of Beaux Arts; the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, a Business College and a Superior School of Music affiliated to the University of Montreal.

Correspondence carried on by the writer with the Superintendent of Education for the Province of Quebec, Mr. J. P. Labarre, revealed the following information which is quoted from a letter dated December 24, 1947.

All public schools in this Province, run by religious or lay personnel, receive grants from this Department. Private secondary schools, run by Sisters or Brothers, also receive grants, if they have at least six pupils in the High School grades and are recognized by the Catholic Committee. They follow the official programme of studies in basic subjects but do not receive the school inspector unless they want to do so. The number of these private, complementary and primary superior schools is now 226.

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3

List of the Independent Schools. Quebec: Bureau of Statistics, Department of Municipal Affairs, 1935.

Table V, which follows, records statistics for the current year kindly submitted to the writer by Mr. E. Simard, General Chairman of the Montreal Catholic School Commission.

TABLE V

SHOWING THE SCHOOLS DIRECTED BY  
THE TEACHING ORDERS OF WOMEN AND  
ENROLLMENT OF PUPILS FOR THE CUR-  
RENT YEAR, 1947 - 1948

SCHOOLS	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	Government Grants	
			Yes	No
Colleges	31	4,383	24	7
10, 11, 12 years	223	49,343	207	16
8, 9 years	539	92,838	522	17
Elementary Schools	1,414	72,911	1,384	30
Kindergartens	43	5,144	11	32
Elementary Boarding Schools	60	5,337	32	28
Matriculation Boarding Schools	66	12,754	53	13

Without the Sisterhoods' singleness and tenacity of purpose, education would not have been given such impetus and range in the last hundred years. Their acceptance of a negligible salary - half that paid to secular teachers - has been one of the chief factors for the prolific growth of their institutions -- approximately eleven hundred establishments, which provide a great variety of types of courses and learning privileges to approximately two hundred and forty-two thousand pupils.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Conclusion

Since the founders of Quebec were concerned with the instruction and the conversion of the Indians, in French Canada education followed on the very heels of colonization. Consequently, the first Canadian schools were missions to teach religion to the Indians. In 1639 in the wake of the missionaries came the first teaching Order of women, the Ursulines, led by Mother Mary of the Incarnation. Their rude shack near the wharf where only a pot of sagamite held the rations for both nuns and savages has expanded to the present flourishing institution in the heart of old Quebec where six hundred people now dine daily. The close alignment existing between the Church and the State during the French Regime helped the sisters to further pioneer education. Later, during the war-torn years, their convents became hospitals, their services given day and night to friend and foe alike. During the following period of rehabilitation, theirs was the task of preserving intact the French language and customs and instilling these in the children confided to their care, while at the same time fighting for survival. The hundreds of Christian schools that today dot the Province of Quebec stand as a lasting memorial to the work of these noble women who dedicated their lives to Christian education.

Inextricably interwoven with its laws is education in the Province of Quebec; so, too, is the history of its religious Orders. For nearly two hundred years, only four



Orders, all founded before the British Conquest, tended to the intellectual needs of the few who could remain at school. Only two of these Orders were exclusively teaching ones, but with the advent of favorable legislation in the 1840's new communities launched forth and by degrees succeeded in overcoming the ignorance of the French Canadians, who, rather than become Anglicized, had remained away from the schools provided by their conquerors. With indelible strokes must be inscribed the names of Bishop Laval, founder of higher education in Quebec, and Bishop Bourget, the father of elementary education. Without their encouragement and indefatigable zeal, knowledge would not have been disseminated so rapidly and with such far-reaching results. In 1842 under Bishop Bourget's guidance, the rise of the teaching Orders commenced. From four in 1841 to ten in 1850, twenty-two in 1900, and fifty in 1947 is pictured the growth and the success of the sisterhoods. The foregoing information is shown in Figure I, page 113.

Part of the success of the work of the various Orders may be attributed to the Sisters themselves, who bring to their task a devotedness and a pedagogical skill, combined with a love of teaching and of the children they teach. When young girls enter a convent their aptitudes are observed and studied, so that the new sisters-to-be may do the work best suited to them. Most communities engage in a variety of work, so that many fields of labor are open to the new members. Moreover, should the Sisters' health give way, or if teaching should become a drudgery, they may turn to other work less fatiguing.

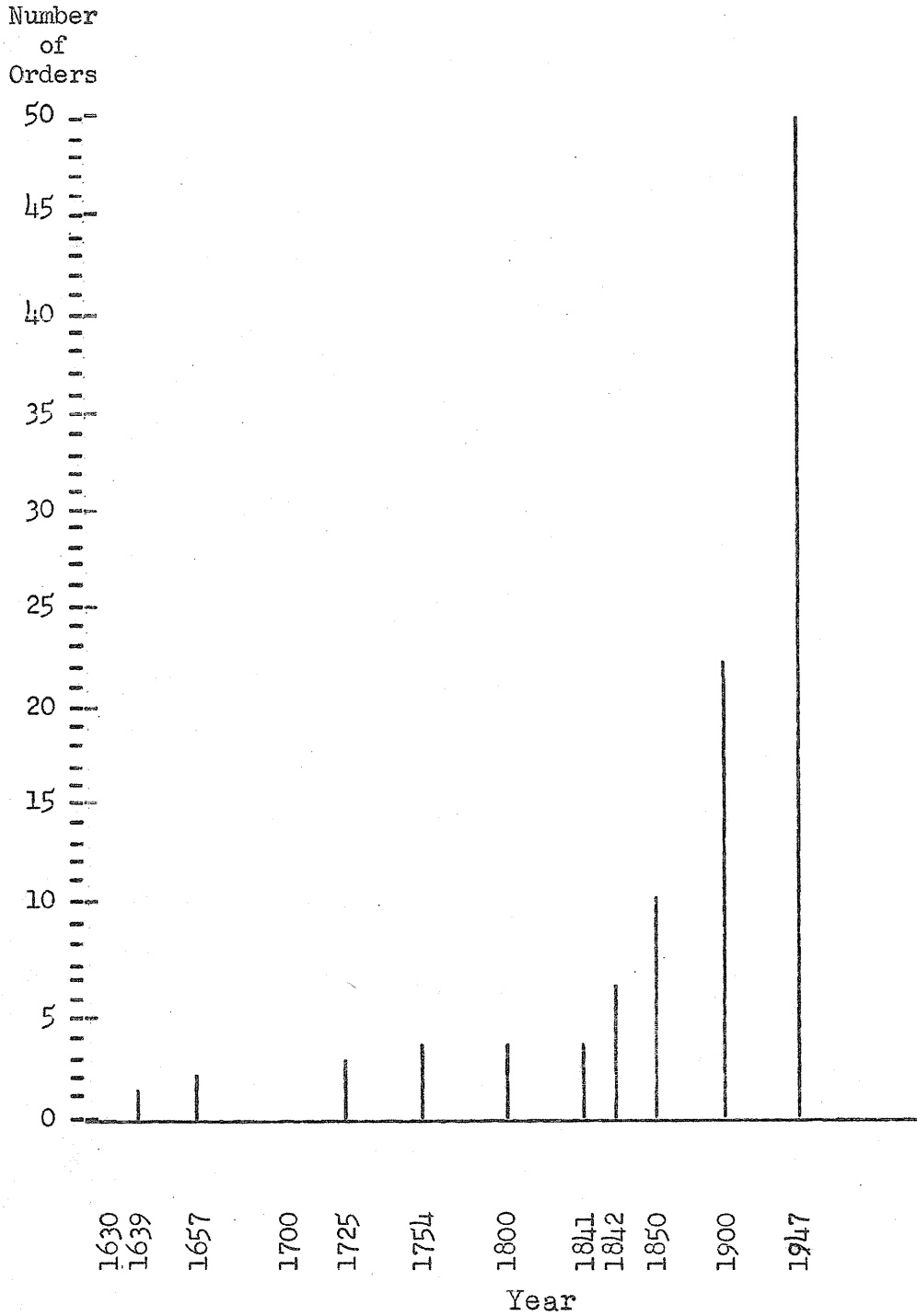


Figure 1 - Showing the increase in the number of teaching Orders of Women over the period 1639 to 1947.

Each Order, if it has a large enough personnel, has its own subject supervisors. All, however, have a Sister who is called the Mistress of Studies, whose duty it is to superintend the training of the young sisters, placing before them their Community's ideals and standards, and to arrange courses for them leading to degrees. This in-service training may also take the form of conferences or brush-up summer school classes. Study is obligatory in all teaching Orders. Moreover, the Encyclical on Christian Education inspires them to seek perfection in all things. "Perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well-grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required of their important office; who cherish a pure and holy love for the children confided to them, because they love Jesus Christ and His Church, of which these are the children of predilection; and who have therefore sincerely at heart the true good of family and country."<sup>1</sup> This attitude impels them to appreciate the individual worth of each child, and thereby to stress the education of the whole child. An average of twenty some pupils in each class facilitates matters and fosters individual instruction and guidance. Their greatest contribution consists in the importance they attach to the instilling of Christian ideals. They realize that incalcu-

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<sup>1</sup>  
Encyclical, op. cit., p. 87

lable good can be done by a truly Christian wife and mother; that the home is a significant factor in education supplemented by the Church and the school. Therefore, the Sisters realize that the noblest qualities of mind and heart, and a deep sense of true values must be infused into their pupils if the resulting influence is to be imperishable. Contacts with their pupils who have left school are established by Alumnae organizations. The Congregation of Notre Dame, for example, has eighty-four of these groups composed of fifteen thousand active alumnae.

Another great contribution of the sisterhoods is their proficiency in the field of fine arts. Painting, drawing, singing, piano, violin and organ are taught in almost all convents. Moreover, the sisters excel in teaching weaving, and handwork, such as embroidery, crocheting and any practical art needed in the home. The Questionnaire revealed that some Orders teach the following: harp, guitar, mandolin, china painting, tooling leather, embossing copper pewter, and carving. A great advantage for students who study with Orders founded in Europe, is the winning of scholarships enabling them to complete their education in convents belonging to these Orders in the United States, France or Belgium. The Notre Dame de Namur Sisters, for example, offer scholarships in England and in America to their Belgian pupils and vice versa. This system is extensively practised<sup>2</sup> between France and England.

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<sup>2</sup>La Revue Generale, p. 14, Bruxelles, Belgium: J. J. A. Valenpint, 1913.

An objective achieved, that of bringing education within the reach of thousands of young girls, and maintaining their national and religious ideals, demonstrates part of the Sisterhoods' material contribution to their fellow-men. The contribution to the children by way of trained personnel, and to the Province where education walks hand in hand with religion, should elicit unstinted praise and admiration from both the recipients of the Sisters' zeal and devotedness and from onlookers. Although the sweep and scope of this thesis is of necessity curtailed by limitations of brevity and of distance, there is no doubt that the Teaching Orders of Women have rendered and do render valuable service to education in the Province of Quebec.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE  
ALL the following items concern  
the Province of Quebec,  
ONLY

I Period of foundation

Foundress of Community \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
of the first school \_\_\_\_\_ Where founded in Quebec \_\_\_\_\_ Number  
of Sisters \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pupils \_\_\_\_\_ Type of school \_\_\_\_\_  
Grades taught \_\_\_\_\_ Subjects  
taught \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Languages taught \_\_\_\_\_

II Present status

Number of schools in 1946 \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE OF SCHOOLS: Number of  
kindergartens \_\_\_\_\_; of Elementary Schools \_\_\_\_\_; of Secondary  
Schools \_\_\_\_\_; of Domestic Science Schools \_\_\_\_\_; of Colleges  
or Ecoles Pedagogiques \_\_\_\_\_; Types of Schools not included  
herein \_\_\_\_\_

Number of boarding schools \_\_\_\_\_ Number of private schools \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of pupils now registered in all these schools \_\_\_\_\_  
Subjects taught in Elementary School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ in High School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ in College \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects taught in other divisions or levels not included  
herein: \_\_\_\_\_



III History of Growth

Kindly supply the following information:

Period of growth after foundation.	No. of foundations per period.	No. of Teachers employed at end of each period.	No. of Pupils at end of each period.	Types of Schools at end of each period.	State new subjects added to the Curricula during each period.
Prior to 1763					
1763 to 1800					
1800 to 1850					
1850 to 1900					
1900 to 1946					