

*The Problem of a Double Minority :
Some Reflections on the Development of
the English-speaking Catholic Church in Canada
in the Nineteenth Century*

by JOHN S. MOIR *

Two centuries ago the population of Canada was exclusively French and Roman Catholic, except for the pagan natives and the small English settlement, less than fifteen thousand strong, in the Atlantic seaboard colony of Nova Scotia. Today, after the large immigrations of English, German, Italian, Dutch, Russian and other non-French-speaking Europeans during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, slightly less than one half of all Canadians are Roman Catholics, and only a third of the total are members of the French part of that church. Where the French-speaking Catholic Church in Canada has passed from an early hagiographic and chronicle stage of historiography and is now advancing rapidly into an era of "scientific" historical research which takes account of the contributions that other disciplines can make to the study of religious history, it can be fairly said that the English Catholic Church in Canada has received considerably less attention from historians. Some biographies of bishops have been published, most of which are now generations old; a limited number of brief parish histories have appeared; a few, very few, jubilee histories of dioceses exist, and most of those few are of venerable vintage. Scholarly works on the English-speaking Roman Catholic Church are, however, virtually non-existent. In fact no single history has ever been attempted, and the main published resources consist of specialized papers of mixed quality printed since 1933 in the annual reports of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association. If, as Professor Savard suggested elsewhere, large tracts of fallow ground exist in the historiography of Canada's French-speaking Catholic Church, the challenge of the English-speaking Church resembles Canada's vast forested terrain where only a few isolated clearings have been made by the hands of pioneers. Perhaps the monumental size of the challenge has been a

* Scarborough College, West Hill, Ont. — This paper was originally prepared for submission to the Commission on Comparative Ecclesiastical History at the XIIIth International Congress of Historical Sciences in Moscow, August 1970.

factor in discouraging almost to this day the assault of the historians on an area of Canadian development which is qualitatively if not quantitatively as important as the history of the French-speaking Church.

The nineteenth century can conveniently be defined as identical in time with the *Pax Britannica*, extending from the end of the Napoleonic wars and the shorter war of 1812-14 with the United States, to the outbreak of the first World War. The first date marks almost precisely the separate organization of the English-speaking Church; the second the beginning of the period of deep social and economic changes which shaped the present-day Canada in a new form. Viewed retrospectively, the nineteenth century was for the Catholic Church in Canada an age of tremendous expansion and achievement, as indeed it was for all Christian denominations in the country. In 1814, the Catholic Church in British North America still consisted of the single diocese of Quebec, already 140 years old, containing two seminaries, some 300 priests and 450,000 members. At that date, the Church was primarily the French Canadian Church, for, although the Maritime colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island contained about 45,000 Catholics of Scottish and Irish origin and the frontier colony of Upper Canada had some 15,000 Catholics recently arrived from Scotland,¹ the vast majority (over 80 per cent) of Catholics in British North America were French-speaking residents of Lower Canada who could boast of two centuries of linguistic and religious existence in the New World. One hundred years later, the "French fact" was still dominant both in the Church and the Dominion of Canada, but the Church now comprised 8 archbishoprics, 23 bishoprics, and 6 vicariates apostolic, at least 17 seminaries, some 2,500 priests, and 3 million members of whom about 40 per cent (some 20 per cent of the Canadian population) belonged to the English-speaking section of the Church.²

Although the Roman Catholic Church has always been the largest Christian denomination in Canada, generally twice the size of the largest Protestant Church, the fact that Canadian Catholicism has been composed of French majority and an English minority (a minority actually com-

¹ *Census of Canada*, 1871, Vol. 4.

² Based on *Census of Canada*, 1911 and F. J. AUDET, *Canadian Historical Dates and Events* (Ottawa, 1917).

prising several distinct ethnic groups) has affected the role which the Church has played in Canadian life. On occasions, language has proved itself a more potent unifying force than religion. English-speaking Catholics shared the religious aspirations of French Canadian Catholics, but they often shared the political aspirations of English-speaking Protestants. The position of English Catholics may perhaps be described as a third solitude. They remained separated by language from their coreligionists and by religion from their colinguiists. The solitude of language was epitomized, for example, by the chasm which appeared between English and French Canadian bishops at the Eucharistic Congress of 1910 or in the controversy over Ontario's renowned Regulation XVII. The solitude of the English Catholic in relation to his Protestant neighbor was vividly expressed by G. M. Grant:

Even in cities where there is the closest association of Protestant and Romanist in commercial, industrial and political life, the two currents of religious life flow side by side as distinct from each other as the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa after their conjunction. But the rivers do eventually blend into one. The two currents of religious life do not.³

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the position and problems of the Church varied in the different colonies of British North America, but the early development of the English-speaking Church can be most easily dealt with by treating it as two separate regions — the Maritimes, and the rest of Canada west of Montreal. Between these two unequal regions lies the French-speaking Church of Quebec, inhibiting by its geographical intrusion the growth of a greater uniformity within the English-speaking Church as a whole, but testifying to the necessity of treating Canadian history in part as the collective experience of disparate regions.

Differences within the English-speaking Church were not, however, solely the result of geographical separation. Early settlement patterns in British North America had already by 1814 shaped the character of the Maritime colonies and, throughout the nineteenth century, the same factor of settlement influenced the pattern of development in the western region as the Canadian frontier marched unsteadily westward from the Great Lakes across the Prairies to the Pacific Ocean. However, neither in the Maritimes nor in Upper Canada (and even later in the Church's

³ *Ibid.*, 81.

expansion into western Canada) did Catholics from England play any distinguishable role. Thus, to speak of the English Catholic Church in Canada in the nineteenth century is to speak of national groups—Scottish, Irish, German and Eastern European—all of whom were non-English by origin but all of whom were or became English-speaking.

Recognition of post-Conquest cultural and linguistic pluralism within the Church came in 1819 with the appointment of two English-speaking suffragans to the Bishop of Quebec—Angus MacEachern for the Maritime colonies and his friend Alexander Macdonell for Upper Canada.⁴ In both these English-speaking regions the dominant national influence in the Church was in the beginning Scottish. As new bishoprics were successively carved out of MacEachern's original diocese, the appointment of bishops seems to have been dictated by the nationality of the majority of the Roman Catholics in those areas. Thus the diocese of New Brunswick had three Irish bishops in succession and four of the first five bishops of Halifax were also natives of Ireland, whereas Antigonish always maintained a strongly Scottish influence and MacEachern's four successors in Charlottetown were natives of Prince Edward Island, but all of Scottish ancestry.⁵ In both the Maritimes and Upper Canada, bishops tried to accommodate national interests of particular congregations when appointing priests. A notable exception to this practice seems to have been Bishop de Charbonnel who was accused of banishing Irish priests from his diocese and of preferring French-born priests who flew in the face of Irish voluntarist sentiment by attempting to enforce fixed fees for admission to the mass.⁶

The distinctive development of the English-speaking Catholics in the Maritimes is more difficult to trace than in central or western Canada.

⁴ This territorial devolution was completed when Macdonell was made bishop of Regiopolis in 1826 and MacEachern of Charlottetown in 1829. Kingston was thus the first Roman Catholic diocese established in the British Empire since the reformation, and its erection came a quarter-century before the "Papal Aggression" controversy was sparked by a similar development in Great Britain.

⁵ This analysis is based on AUDET, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-170. In Prince Edward Island, 52 priests of Scottish origin were appointed, of whom 30 belonged to the Clan Macdonald. Of the 52, 28 were trained at the Quebec seminary and 10 at Montreal (*Memorial Volume 1772-1922. The Arrival of the First Scottish Catholic Emigrants in Prince Edward Island and After*, Summerside, 1922, pp. 109-127).

⁶ "Legion", ASSOCIATION OF IRISH-GENTLEMEN, *A brief View of the State of the Catholic Church in Upper Canada, Shewing the Evil Results of an Undue Predominance of the French Foreign Element in the Administration of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and of the Advisableness of Petitioning the Sovereign Pontiff for a more Just Proportion of Bishops and Priests from the Old Country* (Toronto, Dec. 4, 1858).

A common old-world experience of landlordism and proselytizing may have been a bond between the Irish and Scots of the region, but the Gaelic language and clan traditions tended to keep the Scots separated. There, as in Upper Canada, the Scots gloried in their loyalty to Britain; they were also notable for their piety and poverty and for clannishness. Like the Scots, the Irish preserved elements of a closed culture, but the Irish were more aggressive.⁷ Lacking a frontier, the Maritimes enjoyed a more static society, and they also received a smaller proportion of immigrants than did the two colonies, Lower and Upper Canada, in the St. Lawrence Valley. Since the Maritimes did not share in the industrialism and rising standard of living enjoyed by those other colonies, it would seem that in religious development as in so many other aspects of the history of the seaboard, time seemed to pass that region by, and the Maritimes' political tradition of "moderation and harmony" had its religious counterpart in the mutual respect and generally good relations of Catholics and other Christians.

In so many aspects of its growth in the Canadas, the English Roman Catholic Church was the beneficiary of the peculiar religious freedoms accorded to the Church in the old province of Quebec, whereas in the Maritimes full political rights for Roman Catholics were granted only in the mid-1820's. In Upper Canada, at least until the Irish famine migration, the Catholic population was predominantly rural and widely scattered,⁸ the only block settlements being the Scots of Glengarry and the Irish in the neighbourhood of Peterborough and of the Rideau. Irish Catholics in the urban centres were well established in middle-class professions and mercantile pursuits. Scottish Catholics held senior positions in the civil administration from the earliest period of settlement out of all proportion to their small numbers.⁹ This Scottish influence in the two Canadas involved a clannishness that occasionally smacked of nepotism both in lay and Church circles, but the influence was rapidly dissipated in the 1830's and 1840's by an influx of Irish immigrants and Irish

⁷ *Memorial Volume 1772-1922*, p. 72.

⁸ H. J. SOMERS, *The Life and Times of the Hon. and Rt. Rev. Alexander Macdonell, D.D., First Bishop of Upper Canada, 1762-1840* (Washington, 1931), p. 42. Mrs. Joseph GREENE, "St. Vincent de Paul's Church", *Niagara Historical Society Publication No. 13*, (1905), p. 26, comments on the numerical prominence of Irish among early Roman Catholic settlers.

⁹ See, e.g., Bro. Alfred DOONER, *Catholic Pioneers in Upper Canada* (Toronto, 1947), pp. 20-21, n. 40 *et passim*.

priests.¹⁰ Unlike Macdonell and his Scots, whose ardent loyalism and respect for social aristocracy was conjoined to a form of Erastianism,¹¹ the Irish clergy and laity came from a background where the clan system had long since lost its effectiveness and where the historic repression of the Catholic Church had welded pastor and flock together in a distrust of the civil establishment and in a voluntarist tradition.¹² The Irish tended to reverse the priorities of Church and education held by Macdonell, viewing the Church as an extension of the school,¹³ and their propensity towards independence was a major bane of Macdonell's closing years.¹⁴ After the massive wave of refugees from the Irish potato famine arrived in the late 1840's, the various dioceses formed from Macdonell's original bishopric were preponderantly Irish in personnel and attitudes.¹⁵

Upper Canadian Catholics enjoyed satisfactory relations with their Protestant neighbours, relations that were polite if not always cordial. The exception to this condition was the period of the "Papal Aggression" controversy. In 1841, Upper and Lower Canada were joined in a legislative union which gave equal representation to both sections despite the large population of Lower Canada at that time. Within ten years, Upper-Canada's population had surpassed that of Lower Canada, yet sectional representation allowed the Catholic Church to exert its powers

¹⁰ J. R. TEEFY, ed., *The Archdiocese of Toronto and Archbishop Walsh: Jubilee Volume 1842-1892* (Toronto, 1892), p. 64, "The Irish Catholics [...] came in such numbers as soon to constitute the bone and sinew of the Church in this country."

¹¹ W. J. MACDONELL, *Reminiscences of the Late Hon. and Right Rev. Alexander Macdonell...* (Toronto, 1888), p. 6 *et passim*. Between 1824 and 1835, Macdonell received at least £3,550 and 1,600 acres from the government.

¹² Ontario Archives, Macdonell Papers, I, 79-80, Macdonell to J. J. Lartigue, 7 April 1821, "There are some Irish families [...] not being accustomed to pay *tythes* to Catholic clergymen in their own country do not consider themselves obligated to do so here..."

¹³ Unlike the French Canadian bishops, the English-speaking bishops were chronically short of funds until the post-Confederation years, a fact which several congregations exploited by opposing church building projects. As James Baby reported of St. Paul's parish, Toronto, in 1824, "None, hardly of the people [...] have paid their subscription money [...]" (Edward KELLY, *The Story of St. Paul's Parish, Toronto*, Toronto, 1922, p. 44). As late as 1891, that particular congregation was paying \$3,650 interest annually on the church debt (*ibid.*, 137-139).

¹⁴ Macdonell Papers, III, 268-269, Macdonell to Cardinal Weld, 6 May 1827, complaining that Irish priests bring their "politics and party feelings" to Canada; *ibid.*, II, 198, Macdonell to Major Hillier, 23 March 1823, has dismissed 4 Irish priests and others are "roaming through the country to the no small injury of religion and of the people over whom they wish to acquire influence."; *ibid.*, VIII, 1063-1066, Macdonell to the Rev. Angus Macdonald, 20 August 1832, "Some of my Irish clergy taking advantage of the reduced state of my mind have done and are still doing all they can to weaken and oppose my authority."

¹⁵ Of 48 priests ordained in London diocese between 1857 and 1884, at least 25 bore Irish surnames (see J. F. COFFEY, *The City and Diocese of London, Ontario, Canada. An Historical Sketch*, London, 1885, pp. 61.62).

through the solid bloc of French members in Parliament. Under these circumstances, religious controversies became political issues, and the "Papal Aggression" question, transported from Britain to Canada, bequeathed a legacy of suspicion and covert hostility to the next generation of Canadians, although it had no direct relevance to the constitution of the colony. The Irish immigrants could readily identify with radical Protestantism in its liberal and anti-establishment objectives, but such an alliance was strained by the separate school agitation wherein Catholic educational traditions overrode Irish Canadian nationalism, and by the contemporaneous "Papal Aggression" controversy without which the political history of Canada might have recorded the birth of a strong secular reform tradition generations before Laurier made Liberalism respectable for Canadian Catholics.¹⁶

Unacceptable as was the stand of the Liberal party leader, George Brown, on papal aggression and separate schools to the Church at large, Brown's reforming liberalism and his solution of "representation by population" for the sectional difficulties of the United Province attracted enough support among the laity and lower clergy to bring them into conflict with Church leaders who refused to see the political realism of Brown's proposals and condemned reformism out of hand because of its connection with the demand for an end to separate Roman Catholic schools.¹⁷ One further Irish influence, or at least the strong suspicion of such an influence, may be detected in the disruptive but far from infrequent appearance of a penchant for semi-autonomous congregationalism at the very time when the Catholic Church was moving towards increased episcopal supervision. This independence of spirit among the Irish in Upper Canada cannot be offered as proofs of the frontier thesis, since incidents, such as the William O'Grady affair in Toronto (where an Irish priest opposed his bishop's authority), invariably concerned urban congregations who challenged episcopally ordained priorities for the expenditure of limited financial resources.

¹⁶ The "Papal Aggression" controversy prevented the emergence of a Catholic-Protestant Reform alliance as surely as the growing Irish influence in the Church destroyed the earlier conservative alliance between Macdonell and the Orange Order. In the latter connection, it must have been common and unpleasant knowledge among Irish Catholics that their bishop owed much of his prestige with the Imperial and colonial governments to his role as chaplain of the Scottish Catholic troops who had helped to crush the Irish rebellion of 1798.

¹⁷ Arthur MONAHAN, "A Politico-Religious Incident in the Career of Thomas D'Arcy McGee", *Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report 1957*, pp. 39-51.

From its institutional inception the English-speaking Catholic Church had the advantage of growing within an institutional and legal framework already established by and for the French-speaking Church. Undoubtedly, this fact facilitated its development, yet the difference in language from the French Catholic majority created strains. Unlike the Scots whose relations with the French were reasonably happy, the Irish Catholics seemed to harbor some kind of natural antipathy towards the French. Despite the generous reception of sick, destitute or orphaned Irish by the French, antipathy was none the less real for being subterranean.¹⁸ At mid-century in Montreal, where Irish-French friction was endemic, the bishop prevented the creation of an Irish parish for a decade by refusing to acknowledge every request for such linguistic separation.¹⁹

Although language differences created strains the English-speaking Church depended heavily on the French for the theological education of its priests. The relative attractions for English ordinands and their bishops of the two seminaries of Quebec and Montreal seem to have been determined largely on the basis of propinquity. Bishop Macdonell always looked to the Sulpicians of Montreal, who operated that seminary, for assistance, although he was often made painfully aware of the traditional, and in his day increasingly bitter, ecclesiastical rivalry of the two cities. His loyalty to the bishop of Quebec was hard-pressed not only by force of circumstances, but also by the pride of the Sulpicians who in his words tended to equate their own ambitions with the will of God.²⁰ The Upper Canadian connection to the Sulpician seminary grew over decades to be something more than mere tradition or convenience.²¹ At the turn of the century, Archbishop O'Connor of Toronto was convinced that in the education of his clergy the Sulpicians should always have the last word.²²

¹⁸ J. A. GALLAGHER, "The Irish Emigration of 1847 and its Canadian Consequences", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, *Report 1935-6*, 43-57; G. R. C. KEEP, "The Irish Adjustment in Montreal", *Canadian Historical Review*, XXXI (1), March 1950, 39-46; W. P. BULL, *From Macdonell to McGuigan* (Toronto, 1939), p. 134.

¹⁹ J. J. CURRAN, ed. *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum*, (Montreal, 1902), p. 25 ff.

²⁰ Macdonell Papers, III, 268-269, Macdonell to Cardinal Weld, 6 May 1827.

²¹ L. K. SHOOK, "St. Michael's College, The Formative Years, 1850-1853", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, *Report 1950*, p. 43. When de Charbonnel's ambitious plans for a Little Seminary failed to develop for lack of money, teachers and pupils, educational energies were channelled into the classical college which became St. Michael's.

²² F. A. O'BRIEN, *Most Reverend Denis O'Connor, D.D., C.S.B., Archbishop of Toronto, Ontario. Life Work of a Sainly Prelate* (Kalamazoo, 1914), [no pagination]. "In the education of his clergy he took the stand that the Sulpician Fathers of Montreal Seminary should have the last word."

Although plans for a seminary to serve all parts of the English Church in Canada had been put on foot by his predecessor, it was not until 1910 that the Archbishop opened St. Augustine's seminary in Toronto to perform that function.

While the history of the English Church west of Montreal is marked by occasional and unsought involvement in the Montreal-Quebec rivalry, there is no public evidence that the English Church in the Maritimes found itself caught in that crossfire. For the Maritimes, the Quebec seminary seemed the preferred source of theological education, to judge from incomplete statistics regarding the registration of ordinands. All students in the two seminaries learned French, but at least in Montreal the language issue of French *versus* English was perpetuated by the segregation of Ontario students, who for residential purposes lived on a separate floor nicknamed the "Irish corridor" and characterized by the high spirits of its inhabitants.²³ Differences between French and English were more than linguistic — a difference in life-style and affluence was noted by Archbishop Lynch who contrasted his "Irish habit of poor living" with the French custom of taking wine thrice daily.²⁴

The Catholic Church in British North America shared with the rest of the world Church in the "great renewal" of the nineteenth century. In Upper Canada, the renewal began very modestly under Bishop Power during the 1840's. Early evidences of renewal in that decade are few, perhaps because of the relatively small and scattered Roman Catholic population and also because of the lack of any newspaper comparable to the *Mélanges Religieux* of Montreal.²⁵ This situation changed drastically at mid-century, coinciding closely with the arrival of the French count and bishop, de Charbonnel, and with the arrival of tens of thousands of Irish potato famine refugees. New religious communities were invited into the dioceses, a host of Church-centered lay associations, both charitable and devotional, were founded, and Catholic newspapers appeared

²³ F. J. O'SULLIVAN. *The Chronicles of Crofton* (Toronto, 1926), p. 174.

²⁴ C. B. SISSONS, ed. *My Dearest Sophie* (Toronto, 1955), p. 55.

²⁵ P. F. CRONIN, "Early Catholic Journalism in Canada", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, *Report 1935-6*, 31-42; Agnes COFFEY, "The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle: Sixty Years of Catholic Journalistic Action", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, *Report 1937-8*, 33-46. On the role of the *Mélanges religieux*, see Jacques MONET, "French-Canadian Nationalism and the Challenge of Ultramontanism", Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Paper 1966*, 41-55.

that emphasized the political liberalism and the Irishness of the English-speaking Church.²⁶

The "great renewal" reached Upper Canada at the same time as the industrial revolution and its related revolutions in transportation, communications and agriculture so that the Church shared in the general upsurge of piety and of affluence. New churches were built and old ones replaced or extended; church and charitable givings increased at an unprecedented rate. In the area of the later diocese of Hamilton, only seven parishes and missions had been founded between 1820 and 1850, yet nineteen new ones were created in the 1850's alone — as many as were established there in the next half century.²⁷ These figures reflect the rapid economic expansion of the colony in the 1850's, despite the major depression during the later years of that decade. But they concern only one limited area and cannot reveal two basic factors in the history of Canada in the nineteenth century, namely that the frontier continued to unfold as population moved westward, and that in the second half of the century Canada was beset by recurrent and prolonged depressions which certainly slowed the growth of all Christian denominations in the Dominion.

The onset of industrialism and consequently of urbanization in Upper Canada at mid-century and the general lack of capital and skills on the part of the Irish famine immigrants combined to make their Church an urban institution to a degree unknown to the contemporary French-speaking Catholic Church in Canada. Furthermore, the fact that the English Church ministered to a large, low-income group concentrated in urban ghettos produced two further consequences. Lack of education among the bulk of the laity undoubtedly sharply curtailed the recruiting of priests from among the first and probably the second generation of these immigrants, and this, in turn, must account for the large number of clergy who, beginning about 1850, were received either directly from Ireland or from Ireland via the United States or France and who, in

²⁶ See Sister MAURA, *The Sisters of Charity, Halifax* (Toronto, 1956), pp. 2, 6-7; ANON., *Life and Letters of Rev. Mother Teresa Dease, Foundress and Superior General of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Toronto, 1916), p. 11; Sister Mary AGNES, *The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph*, (Toronto, 1921); MARY HOSKIN, *History of St. Basil's Parish*, (Toronto, 1912), p. 52 *et passim*; Marion BELL, "The History of the Catholic Welfare Bureau", unpublished M.S.W. thesis, University of Toronto, 1949, p. 14 *et passim*.

²⁷ Theobald SPETZ, *The Catholic Church in Waterloo County* (Kingston, 1916), pp. 226-238.

achieving positions of eminence in the Church's administrative structure, stamped the English-speaking Church with an Irish character.

Yet, the Irish influence in the Church did not so much replace as overlay older ethnic elements in the English Church. In Ontario, German Catholics had settled in Waterloo county during the early decades of the century and had retained, through the medium of the Church, much of German culture²⁸ or, as a Protestant writer observed, "a freedom of tone" unlike the French and Irish Catholic expression.²⁹ At least ten separate schools in the county used German as the language of instruction. At the outbreak of the first World War, records of 213 of the 317 priests who had worked or visited in the county showed that 84 were Ontario-born, 36 were Irish, and 34 from Germany and Austria.³⁰ Similarly, among Highland Scottish settlers in Eastern Ontario, Gaelic continued to be used in homes and in the pulpit, if not in the schools. Irish immigrants, however, seem to have spoken English only and this no doubt accelerated the process of their Canadianization. By the 1860's, the Irish Catholics were among the most vocal exponents of a Canadian nationalism, thus following the example of the Irish clergy who identified easily and quickly with their new homeland.

This indigenization, when combined with political liberalism, produced at times a Canadianism that was anti-England and which dwelt on the past and present sufferings of Mother Ireland. But, unlike the Irish of Boston and New York, the Canadian Irish preserved no articulated tradition about the potato famine. It remained an episode that was neither historicized nor mythologized in Canada. One explanation of this omission may lie in the fact that their lay leaders, the few men of considerable substance, seem to have traced their emigration to a period before the Great Hunger, just as their Irish priests were a product of a later migration. Those immigrants who were immediate sufferers in the late forties, however, simply failed to preserve any strong group or individual recollection of their tragic experience.³¹ Another consequence of

²⁸ J. A. LENHARD, "German Catholics in Ontario", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, *Report 1936-7*. 41-45.

²⁹ *Anno Domini MDCCCI*, 2 Vols. (Toronto, 1902), I, 81.

³⁰ SPETZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-261.

³¹ In "Catholicism and Secular Culture: Australia and Canada Compared" (*Culture*, XXX, No. 2 [juin 1969], 93-113), Timothy Suttor points to several historical factors which have blunted the "racial memory" of English Canadian Catholicism.

urbanization and poverty was the remarkable response to the challenge of charity and the Church's inevitable need for funds. Poorer Church members gave generously in support of religion, and a traditional reliance on and promotion of the ideal of the "widow's mite" is still in evidence. But such self-sacrifice by poor laity and devoted clergy does not sufficiently explain the impressive rise of the Church from a state of proud poverty in Macdonell's day to a condition of undeniably extensive wealth, if not opulence, by the end of the century.³² Capital expansion came from the profits of the sale of city-centre properties bequeathed to the Church in earlier years and from large donations by the few wealthy Church members. Many bazaars and general subscription campaigns would be required to match such gifts as the half-million dollars given by one Toronto brewer to cover the cost of building and furnishing St. Augustine's seminary.³³

The fact that at least a significant part of the Catholic Church's activities was increasingly concerned with this poorer class of city dwellers, in a country steadily becoming more urbanized and more industrialized, underlies the sympathetic or at least neutral attitude of the English-speaking hierarchy towards trade unionism at a time when their agricultural-minded French-speaking brother bishops in Quebec were publicly condemning the Knights of Labor as a threat to the Catholic faith.³⁴ That so much of the available energy and resources of the English-speaking Church had to be channelled into essential parochial and social services before the first World War explains not only the monopoly role of the French Church in western Canadian missions, but also the belated participation of the English Church in the great nineteenth-century movement of foreign missions.

Since education in Canada is constitutionally within exclusively provincial jurisdiction, the history of Catholic education must be examined within the separate context of each province. Hence it is difficult to state simply and succinctly the nature and traditions of Catholic education in Canada, but some common elements may be identified

³² See, e.g., SHOOK, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³³ *Fifty Golden Years 1913-1963, St. Augustine's Seminary* (Toronto, 1963), p. 1; Bro. Alfred DOONER, *op. cit.*, 212, 215-216.

³⁴ George BOYLE, *Pioneer in Purple, The Life and Work of Archbishop Neil McNeil* (Montreal, 1951), pp. 33, 70.

as having a nation-wide application, at least for the English-speaking Church. One such tradition has been an emphasis on separate education of the sexes, although this is obviously in no way unique to the English Church. Another, probably of American or even Irish origin, is the stress laid on team sports and the general encouragement of participation in athletics, a tradition occasionally criticized as derogating from academic achievement.

Except for the successful demand for separate Catholic schools in Upper Canada (first voiced about 1850, and blamed by supporters of nondenominational education on the influence of Bishop de Charbonnel and his French Jesuit advisers), there seems to be no other evidence in the English Church of the political ultramontanism which had been fostered in the French Canadian Church by Bishop Bourget of Montreal since the 1840's. A public letter from the Irish and liberal Archbishop Lynch of Toronto to the federal Liberal party leader, Alexander MacKenzie, in 1876, declared that "in Ontario the priests are forbidden to turn the altar into a tribune from which to deliver political harangues or to menace electors on account of the votes they may give at political elections".³⁵ This pronouncement brought down on his head the ire of the extreme ultramontanes of Quebec where the "Catholic Programme" identified the interests of the Church with the Conservative party, and where sacramental terrorism was used to enforce the ultramontane will on Catholic electors. In Ontario, the same objectives of the Church were achieved by Lynch through quiet diplomacy and co-operation with Oliver Mowat, Liberal prime minister of the province from 1872 to 1896.³⁶

Religious ultramontanism found a warm reception among English-speaking Catholics and especially among the Irish, but political ultramontanism of the *nationaliste* brand that distressed the French Canadian Church was entirely foreign to the transplanted liberal and voluntarist traditions, which thrived as well in Canada as in Ireland.³⁷ The Papal Zouaves are not an organization, not even a memory, in Canada's English-speaking Catholic Church. Irish pastors and their flocks were at heart

³⁵ Toronto *Globe*, 29 January, 1876.

³⁶ H. C. McKEOWN, *The Life and Labors of Most Rev. John Joseph Lynch, D.D., Cong. Miss., First Archbishop of Toronto* (Montreal, 1886), pp. 308-309.

³⁷ D. A. O'SULLIVAN, *Essays on the Church in Canada* (Toronto, 1890), p. 17, "Every Catholic is [...] an ultramontane Catholic, and [...] whoever is not ultramontane is no Catholic."

nineteenth-century liberals. Archbishop Lynch was described in his own lifetime as “a devout Catholic, and a sincere advocate of Papal infallibility, he is willing to accord [...] full liberty of conscience to those who differ from him”,³⁸ a description that must have seemed self-contradictory to some of his brother bishops in Quebec.

In western Canada, for most of the nineteenth century, the Church must be viewed as an extension of the French Canadian Church. Missionary work among the native tribes was exclusively in the hands of French Oblates, and even in the three decades following Confederation in 1867, parish clergy and parish life in the region mirrored familiar French Canadian patterns. It was confidently assumed that the Canadian West would be Catholic and French, but instead it became, after 1867, first an extension of the English and Protestant ethos of Ontario and then, in the last generation before the first World War, a region of ethnic, linguistic and religious pluralism, thanks to thousands of Eastern Europeans who entered in Canada’s second Great Migration. The pattern of development in the west was towards the integration of these New Canadians into the English Canadian way-of-life and, ironically, the Catholic Church in the West became predominantly English, although the French had sowed the seeds of faith in earlier days.

As the “last, best West” grew at a phenomenal rate in the twenty years before the First World War, the Church grew proportionately. A federal minister of the Interior commented on the sudden change from “paltry sheds” to “real cathedrals, houses, convents, schools and hospitals” which marked “the very top of progress”.³⁹ Local finances provided the physical structures but the priests and institutions of the faith were imported from the East. As the West was a mission monopoly of the Oblates until the coming of Franciscans in 1895, so, too, early female orders were offshoots of French Canadian foundations. Tensions between the early French and later English settlers arose when later groups proposed to move churches closer to the transcontinental C.P.R., a suggestion resisted strongly by the more rural-minded French parishioners.

The decisive role of transportation routes in Church growth was again exemplified in the West by the opening of thirteen parishes in

³⁸ J. C. DENT, *Canadian Portrait Gallery*, 4 vols. (Toronto, 1880), I, 145.

³⁹ E. J. LEGAL, *Short Sketches of the History of the Catholic Churches in Central Alberta*, ([n. p.], 1915), p. 27.

central Alberta immediately after the arrival of the C.P.R. and this pattern was repeated in the same area by the establishment of six more parishes when the Canadian Northern line was completed in 1906 and of four more when the Grand Trunk Pacific arrived soon after.⁴⁰ For both English and French-speaking Churches in the West problems were increased during the last decade before the War by the arrival of thousands of Eastern Europeans. In those ten years, seven Polish missions and two Greek Uniate Ruthenian parishes were created in the central area of Alberta alone. After sharing in the long incubation of the West, the Church had suddenly begun to flourish in the hot-house climate of the second Great Migration to Canada, but its character altered from French to English pattern, an English pattern that included ethnic pluralism reflecting the modern Canadian immigration experience and paralleling more closely developments in Canadian Protestant Churches than in the French Catholic Church.

Through the nineteenth century, the English Catholic Church had grown in Canada and with Canada. By 1914, the Church mirrored territorially the expansion of the ambitious young Dominion; physically, it reflected the affluence of the increasingly industrialized nation; spiritually, it shared in the "renewed" life of a militant Christendom and in the piety of the Victorian age of Western European civilization. Although dominated institutionally and perhaps psychologically by the "Irish fact", the English-speaking Church was accommodating to the ethnic and cultural pluralism of the modern period more easily than its French-Canadian counterpart. At the close of the nineteenth century, the English-Canadian Church was characterized by urbanism, "English Canadian" nationalism, and an overt loyalty to Britain shared by most Protestant Canadians. Such generalizations are admittedly of a most tentative nature. So little scholarly research on the English-speaking Catholic Church in Canada has been undertaken or published that, until a new generation of historians can probe those questions through the use of basic documentation, the interpretations offered here must remain open to reservations not only about their specific accuracy but about their validity in principle.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-113.