

Public Education and the Manufacture of Solidarity: Christopher Dunkin's Design for Lower Canada

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The organization of systems of public education tends not to figure in Foucauldian genealogies of the social, which focus especially on programs for social insurance that developed at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. An analysis of the plans for educational reconstruction in colonial Lower Canada in the mid-1800s, however, points to the foundational nature of the analysis of education for liberal political thought and practice.

On a tendance dans la littérature foucauldienne de la « gouvernementalité » de situer « la montée du social » dans la politique du « solidarisme » de la fin du XIX^e et du début du XX^e siècles. Nous proposons que la généalogie du social pourrait mieux se situer dans les tentatives du milieu du XIX^e siècle d'élaborer des machines éducatives. Le cas du bas-Canada nous sert d'exemple.

WHEN POULETT Thomson was despatched as governor general to sort out the rebellious Canadian colonies in 1839, he was instructed to pay “earnest attention” to “the promotion of Education among all classes of the people”. He was told he would find all necessary information on the subject in reports produced by the Gosford Commission and by Lord Durham, and he was assured that it would “afford Her Majesty’s Government the most sincere satisfaction to cooperate with you in any measures which you may adopt for the furtherance of this important object”.¹

It seemed a propitious moment for the pursuit of educational reform. One of the reports referred to had declared the educational field to be vacant, and it seemed unlikely that there would be effective colonial opposition. After the bloody suppression of the insurrection and cross-border incursions of 1837–1838, the radical wings of the colonial political parties were in disarray, their

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1 National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC], RG7 G1, vol. 43, Russell to Thomson, September 7, 1839.

leaders in exile. The colonial oligarchies were in large part discredited. The constitution of 1791 had been suspended in Lower Canada, and Thomson had dictatorial powers in the colony through his Special Council, while his chances of carrying a major reform of colonial government through the imperial Parliament were high. His Radical and Whig allies had produced a systematic analysis of the defects of colonial government and a recipe for its reconstruction through the creation of representative governmental institutions and a bureaucratic state system.

Thomson charged the editor of the *Morning Courier*, a 27-year-old former Greek and Latin tutor named Christopher Dunkin (1812–1881), with devising an ordinance for a school system in Lower Canada. Public instruction was the most important project for social government in the Canadian colonies in the 1840s, and the organizational structure of the school system was based in large part on the model proposed by Dunkin.

Christopher Dunkin appears almost nowhere in the current historiography of Canadian education: for those interested in educational history more narrowly considered, this discussion offers original material about his role in the production of the *School Act* of 1841.² Yet I am more interested in examining Dunkin's analytic work than in detailing his legislative designs. His analytic work is particularly interesting for a history of the social because of its abstract treatment of political systems and school systems as machines for producing subjectivities, commonalities, and solidarities. Both kinds of machines manufactured categories of persons with particular kinds of attributes, as well as relations and sentiments among them. These machines did so through a dynamic based both on their administrative organization and on their ideological content.

Public schooling — or “public instruction”, as many of its promoters preferred — has received relatively little attention in histories of the social. Such neglect is peculiar. The public schooling project commonly sought to create a new domain of solidarity that would transcend differences of religion and class. In Canada as elsewhere, attempts were made to group young people together in institutions which were to be managed by men of property in the locality, but which were staffed by teachers trained by political authorities in state “normal” schools and were subject to various forms of inspection, accounting, and examination. Categorizing some subjects of the state as “school children” and grouping them together in tutelary institutions made them into a population. Investigating this population encouraged the development of the forms and practices of knowledge associated with “the social science”. Educational administration was one area in the state system where statistical forms of knowledge developed relatively early. Here I underwrite

2 For an overview of the field in Quebec, see Jean-Pierre Charland, “Note critique : L'histoire de l'éducation au Québec. Regard sur la production récente”, *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 50 (1997), pp. 599–614. As this article was going to press, I discovered Heather Lysons, “Christopher Dunkin's Contribution to Education in Lower Canada, 1838–1841” (MA thesis, Department of History, University of Toronto, 1971), which contains much useful material.

Keith Hoskins's argument about the centrality of educational practices in the genealogy of liberal government, in a somewhat different form.³

For Dunkin, the school system in place in Lower Canada before 1837 was part of a patronage machine through which an aspiring French-Canadian petty bourgeoisie advanced its own interests by keeping the mass of the peasantry ignorant, credulous, and politically dependent. It was able to do so because of an historic error in English colony policy, which it was now past time to correct. The school system he proposed in its place would produce intelligent, responsible, self-governing, English-speaking citizens of a colony on the road to commercial development and economic improvement.

Christopher Dunkin analysed the condition of schooling in Lower Canada both in terms of the larger history of colonial policy and government and in terms of the history of educational initiatives themselves. He attempted to produce a detailed statistical inventory of all conditions in localities pertinent to educational matters for the period from 1829 to 1836. This effort aimed to profile the workings of the schooling machine, to objectify the consequences of past policy, and to render those consequences manipulable by making their developmental tendencies evident. From the perspective of a Foucauldian analysis of governmentality, Dunkin frequently treated Lower Canada as an abstract political space, a territory containing a distribution of population onto which it was necessary to map a distribution of educational machines. At a relatively high level of abstraction, he was concerned to calculate such things as the numbers of schools necessary for a given attendance level or the average distances between schools that would make it practical for a population of a given size to have easy access to them. His analysis was sophisticated, and Dunkin was located in the network of intellectuals that included the Buller brothers, Charles and Arthur, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, and J. S. Mill — the liberals.⁴

His abstract analysis, however, was subservient to more particular interests on Dunkin's part: the anglicization of French Canada and the creation of the infrastructural supports for capitalist accumulation. The assimilation of French Canadians demanded English-speaking immigration to the Eastern Townships, as well as the elimination of French civil law and the introduction of local representative government. Locally managed, tax-supported schools had salutary political consequences in their own right, both by creating solidarities and by encouraging political discipline. Schools placed in the Eastern Townships would attract immigrants, and the multiplication of

3 Keith Hoskin, "Education and the Genesis of Disciplinarity: The Unexpected Reversal", in Ellen Messer-Davidow *et al.*, eds., *Knowledges: Historical and Critical Studies in Disciplinarity* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), pp. 271–304.

4 See Michel Foucault, "La « gouvernementalité »", in *Dits et écrits*, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), pp. 635–657. For space rendered as abstract political space in the early social science, see Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830–1864* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For the network, see David A. Haury, *The Origins of the Liberal Party and Liberal Imperialism: The Career of Charles Buller, 1806–1848* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987).

schools there, in keeping with English economic advance, would serve as an object lesson to the French-speaking population.⁵ It was in pursuit of this specific project that Dunkin experimented intellectually with different mappings, costings, and organizational forms for schools intended to do the more general political work with which he was concerned.

There was thus a latent, abstract object in Dunkin's analysis of political and educational machines, for he considered the interaction of their components as producing consequences in the aggregate that were greater than the sum of their parts. This object was Lower Canadian "society", although Dunkin rarely used this term explicitly. Society's character was a product of the articulation of institutions, orders, and practices, themselves inscribed in the political subjectivities of individuals. Society's character was malleable and could be given a desired form by tinkering with what Dunkin's contemporaries were coming to know as the "social economy".

The Education Commission and Irish Schooling

Poulett Thomson's predecessor as Canadian governor, Lord Durham, had set a number of investigative commissions in motion in mid-1838, among them a Commission on Education. Christopher Dunkin had been recruited as the commission's secretary, and under his active direction it had attempted to produce a detailed statistical account of the past history and current condition of elementary schooling in the colony of Lower Canada. An appendix to Durham's *Report on the Affairs of British North America* outlined the uneven success of the commission's efforts, but declared nonetheless that there was nothing in the colony worth saving from past educational arrangements. The field was open, and a version of the Irish National school system, modified for the operation of local representative self-governmental institutions, was recommended.⁶

The Irish National system had been organized in the wake of the Catholic Emancipation of 1829 and in face of the failure of religious proselytism to convert the Irish peasantry. It sought to unite Catholics and Protestants of all denominations across their civil and religious differences in order to construct social solidarities more conducive to imperial rule. The effort to ground political allegiances in compulsory membership in a state church was largely abandoned. A civil religion was to take its place, and direct mutual acquaintance at school for children of all groups was meant to create durable sentiments of mutual sympathy and understanding.⁷

5 Many educational reformers in the early decades of the nineteenth century argued that adults, as well as infants, learned best by the detailed study of objects close to their experience: for example, Charles Mayo and Elizabeth Mayo, *Practical Remarks on Infant Education* (London, 1841); and the very popular Elizabeth Mayo, *Lessons on Objects* (London: Seeleys, 1851).

6 For an overview of the Commission's work, see Bruce Curtis, "The Buller Education Commission; or, the London Statistical Society Comes to Canada, 1838-42", in J.-P. Beaud and J.-G. Prévost, eds., *The Age of Numbers/L'ère du chiffre* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2000), pp. 278-297.

7 Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

The ideological substance of Irish schooling centred on a hybrid religious doctrine embodied in a set of “Scripture Lessons”, to which it was believed that all Christians could assent, and on the “diffusion of useful knowledge” through instruction in the sciences, including political economy. Yet the commonalities posited by Irish schooling were also underpinned and enforced through administrative practices. Regular school inspection by paid officials, graded collective instruction, normal school training for teachers and the creation of model schools, audit, and the generation of statistical information for monitoring the system’s development were among the novel features of Irish schooling. Both the administrative and ideological appeal of the Irish system were considerable to nineteenth-century “friends of education” in many countries, including Canada. Durham’s Education Commissioner, Arthur Buller, clearly hoped that Irish-style schooling would work to unite the “races” in Canada. He attempted to enlist the Catholic hierarchy in an Irish-like plan for non-sectarian common instruction.⁸ Common schooling was understood to be a machine for producing harmony and solidarity.

The consequences of such schooling on those who were to be its direct captives — occupants of the newly organized category “school children” — were doubled by the management of local schools through institutions of representative local government. Liberals like Thomson, Buller, and Dunkin took as commonsensical the analysis of Alexis de Tocqueville in this matter: the local management of institutions like schools by elected representatives was itself a form of schooling in democracy, or, as J. S. Mill liked to put it, a “great Normal School for training the people”. Indeed, earlier in the 1830s de Tocqueville had argued that the comparative backwardness of Lower Canada in relation to the New England states was due to a lack of representative institutions.⁹

In 1839 Poulett Thomson moved quickly to give effect to his instructions concerning education. The suspension of the 1791 Constitution allowed him to dictate ordinances for the government of Lower Canada through his appointed Special Council, and in November Christopher Dunkin was charged with drawing up such an ordinance for schooling. Early in 1840, Dunkin assembled all the remaining papers from the Education Commission

8 See his letter to the Bishop of Quebec in Archives de l’Archidiocèse de Québec [hereafter AAQ], 60CN, Govt. du Canada, vol. A:225; the complete text with commentary is also in Bruce Curtis, “Irish Schools for Canada: Arthur Buller to the Bishop of Quebec”, *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 13 (Spring 2001), pp. 49–58.

9 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Harper, 1952), p. 430n. See also Jean-Michel Leclercq, “Alexis de Tocqueville au Canada (du 24 août au 2 septembre 1831)”, *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française*, vol. 22 (1968), pp. 353–365; Jacques Vallée, ed., *Tocqueville au Bas-Canada* (Montreal: Éditions du Jour, 1973). On Mill, see Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), chap.1.

and planned to deliver them to Thomson to learn more clearly just what kind of legislation was being sought.¹⁰ Although the coming into force of the *Act of Union* of 1840 prevented the embodiment of Dunkin's proposals in the form of an ordinance, his legislation was presented to the newly united Canadian Parliament in its first session in 1841. By 1850, if not before, Dunkin's plan for the educational government of British North America had been largely enacted in the province of Canada West.¹¹

Christopher Dunkin

Many of the early details of Christopher Dunkin's biography remain to be uncovered, and different sources contain contradictory information. Born in London in 1812, he attended the University of Glasgow and took the class prize in logic in 1831, followed by a brief stint at the newly organized University of London. He joined his mother and her new husband in Boston and is said to have studied for a year at Harvard before becoming a tutor there in Greek and Latin. He was either the cause of or was unintentionally caught up in a student revolt that led to his removal as tutor, after which followed a face-saving year and the awarding of a degree. He married one of his stepfather's daughters and moved to Montreal in 1837, where he edited the *Morning Courier* and served as the Canadian correspondent to the London *Morning Chronicle*. Exactly how Dunkin came to be chosen secretary to the Education Commission remains obscure, as does the content of his early Canadian social networks. His politics in Canada were clearly on the loyalist side, although he was pragmatic in his attitude towards the Catholic Church. His attendance at Glasgow and London hints at a prior connection with or exposure to the Whig/Radical coterie sent to deal with Canada in 1838.

Unsuccessful in electoral politics in the early 1840s, Dunkin served as secretary to the Postal Commission and then worked in the office of the Provincial Secretary (East) from 1842 to 1847. He was admitted to the bar in 1846 and in 1857 re-entered provincial politics as MPP for Drummond and Arthabaska (1857–1861) and then as MPP and MP for Brome (1862–1880). In the same period, he was Treasurer for the Province of Quebec (1867–1869), federal Minister of Agriculture and Statistics (1869–1871), and

10 NAC, RG4 A1, vol. 603, Dunkin to Murdoch, January 4, 1840, *inter alia* "I lose no time in addressing to you by letter a report of the progress I have made in the execution of the task assigned me by His Excellency, in November last."

11 For the history of schooling here, see Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836–1871* (London, Ont., and Sussex, England: Althouse Press and Falmer Press, 1988). It was not clear to me that Christopher Dunkin was the author of the original 1841 act, and most other contributors to the literature have similarly attributed it to Charles Dewey Day, the person who introduced it to Parliament. One exception is Andrée Dufour, *Tous à l'école : État, communautés rurales et scolarisation au Québec de 1826 à 1859* (Ville La Salle: Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 1996). The 1850 *Canada West School Act* is a very close copy of draft suggestions made by Dunkin in 1839.

finally puisne judge of the Quebec superior court.¹² Dunkin's work for the Education Commission was his introduction to state administration. In this venue he developed the investigative and analytic powers that would serve him in a long career centred on the production of political and financial intelligence.

The Political History of Canada

Dunkin's reworking of educational government was set against a broader analysis of imperial-colonial history from the conquest of Quebec to 1840, which he published in the *North American Review* for an American audience and which the London *Morning Chronicle* reprinted in extenso for an English one.¹³ The piece publicized and popularized Lord Durham's *Report on the Affairs of British North America*, describing it as "one of the most interesting state papers ever published" (p. 377) and claiming that Durham was "recommending all that the more temperate reformers ever called for" in Lower Canada (p. 428). He was concerned to explain the causes of the recent insurrection and to highlight the governmental reforms demanded by them. Much of what Dunkin wrote repeated an analysis that had been elaborated by the colonial Legislative Council and by groups such as the loyalist Montreal Constitutional Association in the period leading up to the insurrection. He repeated the Association's criticisms of the Executive Council, some of which were shared by the *patriote* party.¹⁴ He gave these arguments both clear expression and wide publicity while developing their implications for educational reform.

As far as Dunkin was concerned, the Lower Canadian insurrection resulted ultimately from the fundamental strategic error on the part of the English Crown of attempting to preserve the French fact in the Quebec territory as a prophylactic against American republicanism to the south. Once this strategic error was recognized for what it was, "it will not be difficult to account for all that has taken place, if we direct our attention to two points; the radical defects of the constitutional system which has been in operation in the colonies under consideration; and the natural tendency of the state of things in England, and of the ignorance which has there always prevailed on all merely colonial affairs" (p. 388).

The constitutional defects were the ones indicated by Durham, with some nuances. The act of 1791 which divided the Quebec territory into Upper and

12 There are three accounts which are somewhat contradictory: the matriculation register from the Glasgow University Archives at <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/Archives/arcbrc.htm>; L.-P. Audet, *Histoire du Conseil de l'instruction publique de la province de Québec 1856-1964* (Montreal: Éditions Leméac, 1964), p. 45; and Pierre Corbeil, "Dunkin, Christopher", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 286-288.

13 Christopher Dunkin, "British American Politics", *The North American Review*, vol. 39, no. 105 (1839), pp. 373-431; NAC, RG4 A1, vol. 604, Dunkin to Sydenham, March 25, 1840.

14 For instance, consider the analysis and the set of resolutions published by the Montreal Constitutional Association in the *Montreal Gazette*, December 8, 1835.

Lower Canada created an elective House of Assembly and appointive Legislative and Executive Councils. The Assembly controlled the public purse and could introduce money bills; the Legislative Council, the governor, and the Colonial Office could veto its legislation. The councils were meant to allow the governor to be advised by a landed aristocracy, but, since there was no natural colonial aristocracy, the governor surrounded himself with “*quasi* peers, from the *quasi* aristocracy of office”, men set on enriching themselves by jobbing in public resources. The imperial government made the tactical error of appointing military men as colonial governors: “men whose profession almost of course unfitted them” for the delicate work of managing a representative body like the Assembly (p. 391).

While the act of 1791 made the members of the Assembly the representatives of counties of nearly equal population, no provision was made for any change in representation in keeping with population growth and development. The counties most distant from the seat of government where later development took place — the English-speaking ones — were increasingly disadvantaged, and this added bitterness and frustration to what Dunkin called “the controversy of the races” (p. 392). But this was a minor evil in comparison to the division of function and the structure of power that existed among the Assembly, the councils, and the governor.

Dunkin followed Durham in regarding the members of the appointed councils and the officers dependent upon the Crown as generally corrupt, and more lavish and corrupt the more they faced popular opposition. Opposition to the councils inevitably focused on the person of the governor, which made his dependence on the councils all the more complete, and, at least until the unseating of the Tories in England after 1830, the imperial government got all its information about colonial events through the governor and his councillors. This meant that governors remained in office until popular opposition became sufficiently strong to effect their recall, but then each new governor found himself dependent on the same councillors and the cycle repeated itself.

Anticipating Max Weber’s analysis of “negative politics” — the moderating effects on opposition parties of the possibility of actually achieving office — Dunkin contrasted Canadian party politics with those in England. In the latter, the chance of office caused party leaders to feel “that success may at any time expose the insincerity of their professions; and they keep them, therefore, within some bounds”. In Canada, “there is none of this. The agitator cannot go too far or too fast for the object before him.” Because he could never hope to form part of the executive branch, “he is a chartered fault-finder” (pp. 395–396); under the existing division of powers, any MLA could attempt to join his fellow members and enlist the public purse in pursuit of his projects. The Assembly spent public revenues to curry local favour. Dunkin pointed to instances of the granting of subsidies for people to buy grain and potatoes and noted that, while members could propose bills for spending money locally, the blame for the failure of such bills could be

placed on the Legislative Council.¹⁵ This dynamic meant that “agitation has become a trade; and the agitator sees the loss of his capital in the redress of grievances” (p. 399).

A particularly obnoxious consequence of this political machine was that it prevented all parties from “struggling for that invaluable boon to any country, the multiplication of corporate or municipal bodies, vested with powers of local taxation and administration for local objects”. The officials in the councils were opposed to local government in the nature of the case. The members of the Assembly discovered that their individual political and electoral advantage lay in making local communities as dependent as possible upon the patronage they could dispense: the Assembly became in consequence “the one great corporation of all the lands” (pp. 396–397).

To this point, Dunkin had concentrated his analysis on the colonial “contest with the office holders ... or, as the Lower Canadian opposition not inaptly styled them, the ‘*Bureaucrats*’”, a contest made more severe by inattention to colonial affairs by a distracted and ill-informed imperial government. Yet this contest was not by itself responsible for the Canadian insurrection, because in similar conditions in the New Brunswick colony the bureaucrats had lost quietly, and it appeared that they would do so in Nova Scotia as well.

Policy with respect to religion was one major difference in the Canadian colonies. The attempt was made under the *Constitutional Act* of 1791 to establish the Church of England and to some extent the Scottish Kirk. The policy not only offended the voluntary religious allegiances of American settlers, but led to an “intimate alliance between the church and the Bureaucracy” which increased the power, but not the popularity, of the latter. At the same time, from 1774 the Crown continued the establishment of the Catholic Church, guaranteeing its right to tithes in its parishes. Dunkin claimed that it was in an attempt to balance the power of the Catholic Church that the 1791 act sought to establish and endow the Church of England by reserving an eighth of all lands granted for its support as well as a further portion as Crown reserves for revenue purposes.¹⁶ Colonial policy institutionalized religious conflict.

Then Clergy and Crown Reserves became barriers to settlement and issues of conflict in Lower Canada because there were “three millions of acres, cut up into these fractional nuisances” in the form of two undeveloped lots out of every seven. The reserves were seen as a source of patronage and profiteering for the Executive Council, whose members managed to subvert rules governing the distribution of lands and to concentrate holdings in their own hands.

15 The conservative press contained similar claims. For instance, the *Montreal Gazette* of July 23, 1835, in a review of the financial dealings of the Legislative Assembly, reported that £45,000 had been spent for the purchase of seed wheat in the Quebec District for which no accounts had been kept.

16 Dunkin, “British American Politics”, pp. 403–404. An eighth, rather than the seventh usually cited in the literature, because Dunkin held that Crown land was granted in seven parts plus a seventh.

The presence of undeveloped lots made it impossible to have anything resembling a rational road system.¹⁷ The Council blocked road building and jobbed in lands, while the members of the Assembly voted huge amounts of money for local jobbing in roads which were useless because of the barriers posed by the reserves. Local development or “improvement” was further blocked by the “want of provision for local municipal government; for example, for a rural magistracy, for the judiciary, and, more than all perhaps, for popular education” (pp. 410–411). In sum, the Crown and Clergy Reserves made the obnoxious character of the political machine perfectly visible. As Dunkin concluded sarcastically, land policy was “a luminous device, to make settlers loyal and religious, by putting Crown and clergy at every turn before their eyes, in the shape of woods and marshes, to plague and pauperize them” (p. 409).

The clear sub-text in all of this for Dunkin was that Canadian improvement was dependent upon the reform of the colonial state and the creation of local organs of representative self-government possessed of powers of taxation and capable of managing local affairs. For this to be done, however, it was necessary to eliminate the powers of the Catholic Church and French language and law and to marginalize the French-speaking population. The habitants were poor materials for political work, and the village notables were interested only in political agitation.

As far as Dunkin was concerned, the English Conquest of Quebec had clearly been a good thing for the French Canadians. It rid the colony of arbitrary French military despotism, introduced *habeas corpus*, and, through the Proclamation of 1763, abrogated French law and promised the colonists the enjoyment of English liberties. These initiatives were broadly welcomed by the newly conquered population, and the governor, empowered to call together a representative assembly, was hindered from pursuing serious reform only by the thorny question of administering the oath to the king to potential representatives who were Catholic. The project for a representative assembly was delayed over this issue long enough for the policy of anglicizing Quebec to be caught up in the struggles between the Crown and its American colonies to the south, with disastrous results. “The occasion was before long embraced, by the Crown and its infatuated advisers, to attempt to carry to a successful issue their own long-standing controversy with the colonies on the subject of popular rights. The French Canadian system, in its leading, odious features, political and religious, was now to be kept in operation and guaranteed by the British Crown” (p. 384). French civil law was reintroduced while English criminal law remained in force; the seigneurial system was preserved; and the Catholic Church became an establishment.

This might seem to be a statesman-like policy, argued Dunkin, but it merely delayed an inevitable “collision of the races” and produced a state of

17 See the letter signed “Curtius”, *Montreal Gazette*, July 2, 1835.

things “far worse for both parties than the collision itself, had it taken place at its natural time, would have been”. So much was obvious from the experience of the Americans with respect to Louisiana, where statesmen appreciated that

in an extensive country, where a popular government is to prevail, it is an object of the last importance to have for the whole a common language; and an object only second in importance to this, to have a general similarity in the laws, institutions, and usages throughout even its most remote districts.... The simple process of extending the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States over the new Territory, requiring that the language of the United States should be that of its constitution and public acts, and throwing open its rich lands for settlement on equal terms to all comers, was enough.... The collision, in a word, was brought on at once, by the simplest and yet most efficacious means. (p. 413)

According to Dunkin, England had repeatedly thrown away occasions to execute the inevitable task of assimilation. It would have been relatively painless in the eighteenth century, when the French numbered only 70,000; now, in 1839, they were at least “400,000 strong, perhaps more.... At each successive period the difficulty has been growing. And it has to be met at last” (p. 414).

We may pass over Dunkin’s recitation of the defects of French civil law with respect to the possibilities for economic “improvement” by noting his remark that what was regarded as an amusing pastime for legal antiquaries in France was a matter of serious study for lawyers in Lower Canada.¹⁸ He was content to conclude that the defective character of pre-revolutionary French law was obvious in the comparative condition of Montreal and New York or New Orleans. He claimed that both mercantile and political development depended upon English hegemony: “Merchants, as a class, must be English, for the French were not and would not be merchants, either to the extent or in the mode required” and “the French majority were not the material for displaying political activity” (pp. 421–424). Dunkin lauded Durham’s solution, which was to unite Lower Canada in a larger federation, “so as to throw the French race into a minority; securing them, at the same time, from every thing like oppression” and which, “by committing to every locality the utmost extent of power, for local government, that can be safely delegated to it, would, in fact, place *their own concerns* after all in their own hands” (p. 429).¹⁹

In short, the Canadian political machine generated a state of perpetual internal strife and agitation by creating and empowering political groups

18 Again, part of the Constitutionalist position; see *Montreal Gazette*, September 12, 1835.

19 Actually, as Haury shows in *The Origins of the Liberal Party*, it was Buller who was in favour of a federation of the colonies; Durham preferred the union of the two Canadas. Perhaps Dunkin was attempting to influence the English debate at this moment.

whose interests were necessarily opposed and who were capable of blocking each other's initiatives. The political struggle was over-determined by a similar institutionalization of religious oppositions and exacerbated further by economic conditions. The machine worked to stupefy and render dependent the bulk of the French Canadian population while preventing "British improvement". A new machine, based on local representative self-government and capable of producing French-Canadian assimilation, should take the place of the old. Dunkin's examination of the operations of Lower Canadian schooling embodied the same propositions.

The Education Commission Report

Dunkin authored a detailed analysis of past educational initiatives and necessary reforms for his report on the work of the Education Commission. The report was sent to Arthur Buller, the Education Commissioner then in England, on June 10, 1839 and formed the bulk of the material included as the appendix to Durham's main report signed by Buller.²⁰ Dunkin explained that he had been unable to generate statistics on school matters for the period of 1829 to 1836 because of "the unsatisfactory character of most of the documents which have to be consulted in preparing such a summary". In fact, the attempt to invest educational relations in statistical forms failed from logistical difficulties and, especially, from the refusal of the Catholic hierarchy to instruct the priests to cooperate.²¹ Nonetheless, Dunkin presented a detailed analysis of Lower Canadian school policy and practice, with particular attention to the period after the passage of the 1829 *School Act*. His more general political sociology of Lower Canada shaped his educational history.

The *Trustees School Act* of 1829 (9 Geo. IV c.46) was passed by the Lower Canadian Parliament and accepted by the Colonial Office in a brief lull in colonial political struggle following the election of the *patriote* leader L.-J. Papineau as speaker of the Assembly. The act wrested control of local schooling away from the *fabrique*. Dunkin could have read it as part of a more general strategy of the new *patriote* party, which initially had the support of many English-speaking reformers, towards the secularization of Lower Canadian society and towards the regularization of methods of selection of local administrators.²² It created a new local administrative body in the form of elected school trustees, something one would expect Dunkin to have appreciated. Five trustees, elected by resident landholders, were to

20 There are two versions extant in the National Archives: NAC, RG4 B30, vol.15, Dunkin to Buller June 10, 1839; and the autograph version of the above in RG4 A1, vol. 586, June 10, 1839. The cover letter to the first is headed "New Haven Connt U.S." For Buller's reworking of this material, see Sir C. P. Lucas, ed., *Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), vol. 3.

21 See Curtis, "The Buller Education Commission".

22 Christian Dessureault and Christine Hudon, "Conflits sociaux et élites locales au Bas-Canada : le clergé, les notables, la paysannerie et le contrôle de la fabrique", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 80 (1999), pp. 413-439.

have exclusive management over the schools they established. The law offered matching grants for funds raised locally for schoolhouse construction to a maximum of £50 and, more importantly, it created a legislative school fund to subsidize the schooling of poor children. Any rural teacher with a trustees' school which had at least 20 students was to get a grant of £20 a year for three years, and 10s a year for three years for each poor child in attendance (to a maximum of £50) provided the trustees or a proprietor certified there were not fewer than 20 poor students in attendance being instructed free. With the exception of the funds for schoolhouse construction, local schooling could be subsidized entirely by the colonial Assembly. Yet there were no clear reporting provisions and no right of the central authority to inspect or audit the schools. There was initially no administrative body charged with the oversight of local schooling.

Costs ballooned, and the colonial assembly almost immediately began modifying the legislation, establishing its own Permanent Committee on Education and Schools in 1831 to monitor the administration of the school acts. New legislation passed in 1831 (1 Will. IV c. 7) and supplemented in 1832 (2 Will. IV c. 26), 1833 (3 Will. IV c. 4), and again in 1834 (4 Will. IV c. 9) divided Lower Canadian counties into a specified number of school districts and introduced detailed regulations for local record-keeping and for school visitation.²³

Dunkin's treatment of the 1829 act, as it was initially passed and subsequently modified, sought to show that it was inescapably flawed. All attempted reforms, no matter how progressive they might seem, were ultimately useless because of the intellectual and political character of the French Canadian population and because the act was caught up in colonial power struggles. In the educational field, political struggles created a dynamic in which the most powerful groups in the countryside had an interest in maintaining those around them in a state of ignorance. Attempts to graft elements even of representative government onto school administration were bound to fail without the resolution of the larger political questions and the establishment of the hegemony of English liberalism.

Thus the 1829 act had a fundamental flaw, despite the fact that it allowed the local election of trustees, because it did not place adequate limits on suffrage. The criticism points to one of the internal tensions in the liberal governmental thinking of which Dunkin was a partisan. Participation in representative government was said to make men rational and intelligent in and outside politics. Yet only men prepared to be rational and intelligent in their respect for representative government could be allowed to participate in it. In practice, of course, the resolution of this tension was to be worked out by

23 For the pre-revisionist narrative account and the text of the various acts, see L.-P. Audet, *Le système scolaire de la Province de Québec*, vol. 6: *La situation scolaire à la veille de l'Union 1836-1840* (Québec: Les Éditions de l'Érable, 1956), and vol. 1: *Aperçu général* (Québec: Éditions de l'Érable, 1950).

ensuring that the operations of local government bodies were guided and supervised by responsible authorities.

Dunkin claimed that, when the principle of representative local government in education had first been suggested in the colony in 1814, it would have been difficult to find even a few competent rural men able to judge in educational matters. By 1829 the state of affairs was worse because “the introduction or excitement of national and party feeling” had rendered most men morally incapable of fulfilling duties in educational administration. Instead of limiting who could vote in local school elections, the 1829 act called for “yearly elections by a Suffrage in effect universal, of a board having unlimited control of the Schools under its charge, and subjected to no supervision that could be said to bear the semblance of being effective” (pp. 117–118).

The habitants in the French parts of the colony were completely incapable of judging in local educational matters, and the most ambitious of their sons were the local doctors, notaries, and lawyers. The latter were eager to be recognized as village notables and to keep everyone else around them in a state of ignorance to preserve their power. Attributing political power to such men in educational matters meant local agitation, against which the clergy alone could stand as a moderating influence. Members of the Catholic clergy were invaluable allies for any educational reform because of the “especially strong hold they have on the minds of the female sex and consequently on the movements of the younger part of the Community”. The 1829 act had excluded them from educational government (pp. 120–123). Dunkin did not discuss the adamant refusal of the Lower Canadian bishops to entertain the notion of non-sectarian schooling.²⁴

The other major flaw in the 1829 act was that the school trustees were not a corporation with the power to hold property in mort main. While conceding that the executive branch of government was suspicious of any legislation that extended the power of local bodies, Dunkin argued that this flaw in the act was due to the Assembly’s concern to maintain its political dominance in the countryside. As in his *Review* article, Dunkin claimed that the Assembly was “the one great popular Corporation of the Province” and it was “no part of their System to endure, much less to create, rival Institutions.... The School-boards are to be made the dependent creatures of the House and their constant subserviency secured by their having to look to its votes, continually renewed for short periods as their only source of revenue” (pp. 126–127).

The 1829 act was amended in 1830 to allow the clergy to serve as school visitors, although this did nothing to palliate Dunkin’s criticism of it. In an interesting hermeneutic, he used the Assembly’s own self-critical assess-

24 For more on this question, see Bruce Curtis, “State of the Nation or Community of Spirit? Schooling for Civic and Ethnic-Religious Nationalism in Insurrectionary Lower Canada”, *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 43 (2003), in press.

ments of the workings of the act to criticize both the act itself and the Assembly's own proceedings. The Permanent Committee on Education of 1831 had reviewed the reports of the school visitors before introducing amendments intended to control burgeoning educational expenditure. The 19 school visitors were all members of the Assembly and, for Buller's benefit, Dunkin identified them politically and read their reports in keeping with his own analysis. The views of John Neilson, a member of the Special Council when Dunkin was writing, were privileged, and his printed 1832 visitor's report was used to detail the patronage practices encouraged by the 1829 act.

On the basis of an investigation by the Permanent Committee, amendments in 1832 divided Lower Canadian counties into a specified number of school districts with trustee boards in each and introduced detailed regulations for local record-keeping, for school visitation, and for teacher certification, while also envisaging the creation of superior schools. As far as Dunkin was concerned, the amendments made things worse. The province was not mapped systematically into school districts with fixed boundaries according to a principle of population distribution. The 19 senior MLAs who were the school visitors could decide the boundaries of districts within their counties with no consultation and so could gerrymander boundaries for their own purposes. He used the results of the 1831 census to claim that, while the average number of inhabitants per school district was about 345, allowing the MLAs to decide district boundaries meant there were 831 inhabitants per district in Terrebonne County but only 95 in Sherbrooke. The MLAs also controlled a school prize fund. The number of school trustees was multiplied dramatically from one board per township to one per school district: in Ste Marie de Beauce, this produced 33 three-man boards, but there had not been enough literate men to serve as trustees under the previous act. The act had created voluntary county school visitors to supplement the activities of the MLAs, but Dunkin denounced the fact that they were unpaid and that no literary qualifications were demanded of them. Teachers could be certified as competent by the visitors, or in rural areas by the senior militia officer or the senior justice of the peace, but these men were often illiterate. Dunkin cited the case of a teacher's certificate in his possession from Ancienne Lorette: of the five visitors signing, two made their mark, a third spelled his name incorrectly, and a fourth produced an illegible scrawl.²⁵

Both the 1832 act and the act of 1834 which continued it extended the patronage powers of parliamentary deputies. School visitors were to certify the results of their visits on a standard form, which was to be sent to the senior county member. In principle, the MLA would then make a list on a

25 In response to an enquiry from William Kennedy, his opposite number on the Municipal Commission, Dunkin delivered another critique of these acts, stressing that "no approach to Rural Municipal government, as respects the management of Schools, has been made in Lower Canada" beyond them, and their provisions were in any case not enforced. McGill University Rare Book Library [hereafter MURBL], MSS BD214, Protestant Education in the Province of Quebec, c. 18.

standard form of all the eligible schools in his district and send it to the Civil Secretary. The list would include the names of schoolmasters, and it would serve as the basis for the issuance of payments to them by the Receiver-General. Dunkin claimed that the school acts made the assembly members the embodiment of government in the habitants' eyes, and, like popular leaders everywhere in North America, they were quick to employ their patronage power as a political tactic. He launched into a long excursus on the political psychology of the habitant population, habitually subservient to visible authority.

What Dunkin did not discuss was the fact that these school acts multiplied the textual instruments that were meant to make the conduct of local schooling visible to those in the locality. They called for the keeping of standard registers of attendance and progress in each school, while detailed financial records of all the dealings between teacher and trustees were to be entered into a special book, kept open for inspection by local property holders. The 1832 act specified that students were to be instructed in classes graded according to ability and a close record was to be kept of each student's progress, including the date at which students began which schoolbook. These records were in addition to the standard report forms completed by visitors and the MLAs, and the act implied that the legislature would print such forms in adequate numbers to distribute them to local militia officers and trustees.

At the same time, the great bulk of this textual material remained in the locality, either in individual schoolhouses or in the hands of local elites. This meant that most of it disappeared with the ending of school funding in 1836 and so was not available to Dunkin. The record-keeping practices were meant to enable residents of local school districts to monitor local schooling: they did not sustain a centralized project of educational administration. Yet such record-keeping was usually seen by educational reformers as a key element in sound administrative practice. The requirements for record-keeping may well have been evaded in Lower Canada, but had Dunkin not been so thoroughly set on dismantling the existing machine, he could have suggested that they be reformed. For instance, simply requiring that local trustee boards submit copies of school registers certified by the school visitors before payments from the school grant were made could have given the Permanent Committee a better view of, and leverage over, the conduct of schooling at the local level. Dunkin wanted none of such reform.

One of the most contentious events in the politics of schooling in Lower Canada had been the rejection by the Legislative Council of the Assembly's 1836 school bill. The bill continued the 1834 act until 1840, thereby establishing greater continuity in school finance, and among its provisions were clauses to apportion grants to the qualifications of teachers; to define a hierarchy of schools; further to regulate the activities of school trustees, visitors, examiners, and administrators; to establish funds for poor scholars and school buildings; and, for the first time, to grant limited powers of taxation

to school trustees under certain conditions. Two other educational bills, which the Legislative Council accepted, provided for continuing financial support of the colony's colleges, academies, and urban school societies and proposed the establishment of three Normal Schools for the training of male teachers and for subsidizing the training of female teachers in a number of convents. The acceptance of these two bills, claimed the Council, showed that it was in favour of encouraging education in the colony.²⁶

According to the Legislative Council, the proposed school bill needlessly multiplied the numbers of rural elementary schools and placed unacceptable patronage powers over the conduct of local schooling in the hands of the MLAs. The Council complained of rising educational expenditures and refused in principle to sanction any Parliamentary appropriation without the Assembly first guaranteeing the Civil List and the expense of the administration of justice, for which the colonial treasury was heavily in arrears. As one of its resolutions read,

it is expedient in any future measures which may be adopted by the Legislature for the encouragement of Elementary Schools, that a permanent and efficient system of regulation should be adopted, either by the organization of a Central Board or by Boards in the several districts; or by some other mode of general, uniform and steady superintendance, by which the course of instruction may be more effectually ascertained and directed, and the expenditure of the public money be more usefully applied, and more effectually checked, than by the plan hitherto pursued.²⁷

Dunkin sought to justify the Legislative Council's action, and his criticisms of the corruption of the "Bureaucrats" were nowhere visible in this effort. Instead, he argued that, because the reforms contained in the Assembly's bill "were partial & insufficient while in others of its provisions its tendency was to make matters worse than ever, its rejection may be shown to have been not merely justifiable but even absolutely necessary" (p. 290). It was easy to show that this was the case: there were now to be more than 300 school districts, more was to be spent on them, but the powers of the MLAs remained the same. Their bill accorded trustees the power to tax property in the locality to support the schools under certain conditions, the sort of thing

26 On the normal schools, see Thérèse Hamel, *Une siècle de formation des maîtres au Québec, 1836–1939* (LaSalle: Éditions Hurtubise HMM, 1996).

27 The full text of the report of the Legislative Council Committee, chaired by Peter McGill, on the School Bill and the resolutions voted by the Council as a whole are given in *Montreal Gazette*, March 24, 1836. The committee used the past reports of the Assembly's Special Committee on Education and Schools to show that the Assembly was acting expressly against recommendations it had itself endorsed. Since 1829 £150,000 had been expended on elementary schools; the Permanent Committee had repeatedly urged the reduction of the grant and a limitation on the number of schools funded in reports that the Assembly had voted to accept, but the 1836 bill raised the annual grant to about £40,000 and added perhaps another 300 schools to the total subsidized.

Dunkin praised elsewhere as the “invaluable boon” to improvement that was local corporate power. “But here as in other points the temper of the House was to be deferred to,” or so the chair of the Permanent Committee had informed Dunkin. “On no other point was the French Canadian prejudice of constituent & representative alike, stronger than on this direct taxation. To draw from the public chest for their local uses, was the object of all others to be desired; to limit these drafts by direct local taxation, the last object to be thought of” (pp. 300–301). The taxation clause was optional and thus useless.

Dunkin treated what one might have expected him to see as other progressive dimensions of the bill in the same light. The bill tied the distribution of school districts to population distribution as determined by the 1831 census; district boundaries were no longer subject to the whim of the MLA. Yet Dunkin claimed in this way the bill only institutionalized existing inequities in which the older settled and predominantly French counties received more than their share of school monies. The question of the articulation of the distributions of schools and population is an essential matter for public education as social government. It was especially important for Dunkin’s vision of social government as a means to French-Canadian assimilation. He argued that a major flaw in the 1836 bill was that the 1831 census returns used to calculate the distribution of school monies and the location of districts were already outdated. He made a forward calculation of natural population increase and increase from immigration and compared projected populations for the English-speaking Eastern Townships, the site of English immigration, and neighbouring French counties. The calculations were meant to show that schools were or would be closer together in the French than in the English school districts. He presented this material in tabular form, concluding that “the grants under the new bill to the English Counties, and perhaps, to the new settlements everywhere, were very nearly as large as before. A great & most unnecessary increase was made in favor of the older settlements, where the bulk of the voters (the partisans of the assembly more especially) were, to share in it” (p. 319). Seven English counties, where population increase was to be rapid, had 250 schools under the 1834 act and 234 under the 1836 bill; 14 stagnant French counties had 455 schools in 1832 (82 of them with a double grant for separate boys’ and girls’ divisions) and 655 under the 1836 bill (with 82 still having a double grant).²⁸

Alternative readings of educational legislation and administration in Lower Canada in the 1830s were certainly possible. Even accepting Dunkin’s

28 The rough scratch sheets for these calculations are likely MURB, MSS BD214, Protestant Education in the Province of Quebec, c. 1/17, including population by county; population figures for English and French in Lower Canada; an attempt to calculate how far apart the schools were in various districts; rough attempts to calculate number of school districts and population per county. Because of space limitations, I leave Dunkin’s report without following his analysis of the work done under the 1836 *Normal School Act* and of the condition of academies and incorporated schools. He also elaborated a plan for the Jesuit Estates.

criticisms of patronage politics — which, after all, he based on the self-critical reports of the Legislative Assembly's own Permanent Committee — one could flesh out Dunkin's narrative to see a process of educational development whose direction was, in contemporary terms, not only progressive but also precocious. After all, the organization of a hierarchy of graded schools in which collective instruction was meant to reign, which were to produce detailed, public textual records, which were supplied with trained teachers through a set of Normal Schools, and which were subjected to regular visitation approximated the educational innovations of Prussia, Holland, Scotland, and Ireland that liberals held up as models of educational government.

It is true that Lower Canadian development was skewed by the absence of local representative self-government, by the struggles between the branches of the colonial state, and by semi-feudal relations of production. It is also true that rural male literacy rates were unusually low. But even educational activists like John Neilson, whom Dunkin cited favourably and who sat on the Special Council in 1839, had proposed school legislation that sharply limited the power of the central authority to intervene in local school matters.²⁹ The extension of taxation powers to trustees could easily have created leverage for local political transformation towards representative self-government. For Dunkin, however, public education was to be a centrally organized governmental project subservient to an interrelated set of political purposes: French-Canadian assimilation, the encouragement of English-speaking immigration to and the economic development of the Eastern Townships region, and the creation of a state system in which local representative self-government would be the motor force of political culture. His arguments about colonial political history generally and educational history specifically redefined the existing domain of the education of the people as an empty space for the disposition of his own projects.

Configuring the Educational Field

In his investigation of the knowledge/power relations involved in English imperial government in India, Bernard Cohn coined the term “investigative modality” and constructed a typology of the practices of knowledge production through which the English sought to make “India” into a knowable and governable object.³⁰ The two texts with which I have been concerned so far participated in what Cohn called the “historiographic” modality. This form of knowledge production centres on the ideological reconstruction of histories of settlement and civilization. It yields explanations of current conditions in terms of their historical development and typically also serves either to point the way forward or to justify some policy initiative. Having gener-

²⁹ Audet, *Aperçu général*, pp. 247–252.

³⁰ Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). See also C. A. Bayly, *Empire & Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

ated an historical account that emptied the educational field of any worthwhile features and that defined the essential tasks of Lower Canadian government, Dunkin set about designing a new educational machine.

Dunkin's surviving papers contain several working drafts of an educational law and a variety of related material, ranging from formal memoranda to rough scratchings and calculations. I see them as both rough sketches and more polished engineering drawings of the new schooling machine. The finished drawings show that Dunkin had a remarkably systematic vision of the possibilities of the education of the people as a whole. His sketches allow us to see how he developed individual pieces of the machine and transmission devices and how they were joined together into a functioning whole. Thus, for instance, in one document Dunkin reflected that there needed to be a hierarchy of schools and that it would be the task of school inspectors to divide the colony into convenient school districts. The physical size of districts was more important than their population; they should neither be too small to support a teacher, nor so large that children could not walk to school. Wherever possible, inspectors should define "first class districts", which would have 1,000 inhabitants within 1.5 miles or 1,400 within 2 miles of some central point.³¹

Dunkin thought through mechanisms to make competition among teachers into an engine for their mutual improvement. Teachers had to be presented with the prospect of earning a comfortable living, but for the prospect to work, grants had to be unevenly distributed. The hope of gaining a superior school and the higher salary that went with it would stimulate emulation, and the school grant had to be distributed in keeping with this possibility. "Many districts must pay poor," Dunkin noted; "some must be made to pay *well*. The very worst possible distribution of a limited fund, is that which divides it into *equal* portions, every one of them inadequate to its intended object."³²

Again, we can see Dunkin calculating the costs of running the machine, assuming the existence of certain parameters. There were 1,202 elementary schools in Lower Canada in November 1835, and together they had cost £14,305.79 over the preceding six months or, say, £23.15.6 each a year. Comparison with the number of schools in the exemplary school system of New York state showed there really should be more than 1,200 in Lower Canada, but suppose one settled on 1,200 to start. Teachers should be guaranteed an average of at least £30 annually, but half of it should come from local taxation, so the grant would have to be £18,000 plus a discretionary fund of £2,500, plus £2,000 for school buildings, so £20,500 for rural schools, plus say £2,000 for city schools and £5,000 for all institutions of

31 NAC, RG4 A1, vol. 603, February 1840, draft school legislation.

32 MURBL, MSS BD214, Protestant Education in the Province of Quebec, c. 1/4, "Memorandum on Grants for Education ca 1838".

higher education, for a total of £29,500.³³ The 1841 *School Act* would allocate £30,000 to Lower Canada.

We can see Dunkin sketching out a scenario in which the machine would be built in successive annual stages, and calculating expenditures on that basis. Given the size of the colonial population and the physical area of the colonial territory, one could start modestly, but still have a complete system up and working at the end of four years. In 1840–1841, one could take the money left over from the past schooling appropriations and use it to fund urban elementary and secondary schools, to support teacher training and the medical school, and to appoint a superintendent of education and provide him with a contingencies fund: a cost of £6,702. One could start funding rural schools and school construction again in 1841–1842, add a provincial school inspector, and create a supervisory provincial school board: £16,250. In 1842–1843 one could add another inspector and expand the number of schools: £25,500. To complete the system in 1843–1844, one could add a third inspector and increase the level of expenditure in all categories, except for the medical school: £34,000.³⁴

Conclusion

I do not propose here to consider the translation of Dunkin's diagram of schooling into a working model via the draft 1841 school bill, nor to trace the machine's individual components to the systems in Ireland, New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, which Dunkin raided for parts. The fate of the working model, both in the short term, as it was rebuilt in the newly united provincial Parliament in 1841, and in the longer term, as efforts were undertaken to use it actually to remake political subjectivities and social solidarities in local communities, is also the subject for a different study.³⁵

It is clear, nonetheless, that Dunkin was an active participant in a liberal "governmentality" which used statistical knowledge of population in the effort to design and to set in motion efficient and more or less completely self-regulating governmental machines. Inefficient machines kept men ignorant, venal, corrupt, and interested only in agitation. They produced solidarities based on slavish dependence, and the political materials that resulted were unworkable. In the Lower Canadian case, at least as Arthur Buller claimed, they disrupted proper gender relations. They unmanned most men

33 MURBL, MSS BD214, Protestant Education in the Province of Quebec, c. 1/4, "Memorandum on Grants for Education ca 1838".

34 NAC, RG4 A1, vol. 610, "S" series, appendix to Dunkin's report entitled "Estimated Expense of School System proposed for Lower Canada from May 15/40 to May 15/44". See also MURBL, MSS BD214, Protestant Education in the Province of Quebec, c. 1/16, scratch sheets with some of these calculations in rough; and c. 1/19, estimates of population of Lower Canada and area in square miles copied by Dunkin from a report by Bouchette.

35 But see Bruce Curtis, "The State of Tutelage in Lower Canada, 1835–51", *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 37 (1997), pp. 25–43; Wendie Nelson, "'Rage against the Dying of the Light': Interpreting the Guerre des Éteignoirs", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 81 (December 2000), pp. 551–581.

and made women into men in their turn.³⁶ Efficient machines worked harmoniously to stimulate continual improvement. The inner workings of efficient machines spun off local leaders and ensured that the supervision of machines themselves would be in the hands of the enlightened. They yielded men able to govern themselves. Solidarity was created among them by their mutual association at school, by cooperation in local government, and by their respect for the tenets of a civil religion. In Dunkin's design, such men spoke the same language — English — and enjoyed the advantages of English liberty. Working away steadily and silently, schooling in Lower Canada would assimilate the French and promote British "improvement".

The field of operation of the new educational machine was a hybrid domain that both cut across and remained distinct from existing domains. The machine's workings were dependent upon the establishment of governmental infrastructures in the form of representative local self-government generally and representative educational government specifically. Education was to be "above politics", not in the sense of having no political consequences, but in the sense that the successful establishment of governmental infrastructures would resolve the big political question of the nature of relations of political association. If the machine worked, it would create sentiments of solidarity in a new domain of association, "the social".

Much of the Foucauldian literature on the social has focused on the organization of national insurance schemes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as constitutive of social solidarity.³⁷ Durkheim's *Division of Labour* has been touted as the key text for the enunciation of the doctrine of *solidarisme*. Historians of education will recall, however, that Durkheim was also author of *Moral Education*, a work which distilled almost a century of work in the politics and techniques of forming political subjects and citizens. Fifty-five years before Durkheim, public instruction was already well articulated as a field for the construction of solidarities that might surmount differences of class, ethnicity, language, and religion. Educational practice must figure centrally in any adequate genealogy of the social.

36 Buller's remarks about the women of Lower Canada being its men are discussed in Curtis, "The State of Tutelage".

37 See my introduction to this collection, "Surveying the Social: Techniques, Practices, Power", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 35, no. 69 (May 2002), pp. 83–108.