Cultivating Conformity and Safeguarding Catholicism: The Christian Brothers and their Schools in Ontario, 1851-1962

by

Michael Wilcox

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of History
University of Toronto

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Abstract

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2015

This dissertation discusses the evolving educational apostolate of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Ontario from their 1851 arrival to the province through to the Second Vatican Council in 1962. Through a careful examination of the Brothers’ rulebooks, memorials, letters, and community annals, alongside Church, state, and school board records from archives in Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa, and Rome, this study explores the secular and sacred aims of this Roman Catholic teaching congregation – commonly referred to as the Christian Brothers – within the province’s social, educational, political, and religious contexts.

Successive generations of Brothers pragmatically transformed their membership, philosophy, and services in order to integrate into the larger social and educational world in which they lived and thereby live out their apostolic mission and perpetuate the faith to their all-male student body. They overwhelmingly advocated for English-language institutions and greater local control over congregational life; they underwent significant pedagogical training and recognized that improving their qualifications enhanced their professional standing; and they established a more comprehensive array of schooling options (i.e., commercial, secondary, and industrial schools) and altered the curricula therein to accommodate to Ontario’s increasingly
dynamic social and economic context. These strategies of conformity – anglicization, professionalization, and curricular adaptations – had the cumulative effect of firmly positioning their congregation in Ontario. Their history acts as a gateway to explore the vital connections between religious and secular society and challenges the often-accepted notion of antipathy between Catholic orders and modern life.

By complying with societal norms and the provincial government’s educational standards, the Christian Brothers built up their membership and expanded their educational reach. In so doing, they became crucial players in the consolidation and expansion of a controversial publically funded Catholic separate school system in Ontario that still endures today. Ironically, the greater the Brothers’ integration, the more they were concerned about their status and security in the face of moral, financial, administrative, and educative tensions and scandals. Numeric expansion and a growing confidence in their position as Catholic educators existed alongside deep uncertainty about the permanent viability of their mission. Put simply, conformity did not lead to comfortability.
Acknowledgements

Look not to the far-off future,
Do the work that nearest lies;
Sow thou must before thou reapest,
Rest at last will be labor’s prize.

- Brother Oswald of Jesus

Meant to inspire and motivate, this short poem was distributed to elementary school boys in Brother Oswald’s late-nineteenth century Toronto classrooms. Yet the words are equally applicable to the fulfillment of carrying out a Ph.D. in history in 2015. After seven years of focusing on “the work that nearest lies,” it is time for a rest. It is with great pleasure that I extend my thanks to those who helped see this project come to fruition along the way.

I am first and foremost grateful to the members of my dissertation committee. Mark McGowan has been a supervisor of remarkable charm, patience, and insight. He exhibited a keen commitment to me personally and a genuine enthusiasm for this topic. His perceptive comments made every chapter better and, coupled with his unfailing encouragement and joie-de-vivre, he has proven a model mentor. I also owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Liz Smyth and Jan Noel. From the earliest stages of research through to the final edits, they provided invaluable guidance and tremendous support: they pointed me to many relevant sources, asked poignant questions, imparted careful analysis, and offered astute advice. I would also like to thank the members of the defense committee, namely Tom O’Donoghue, Steve Penfold, and Nick Terpstra, for posing pointed questions and offering insightful suggestions.

For their assistance in facilitating access to all the primary documentation upon which this dissertation is based, I want to express my thanks to the many archivists and staff members at archives in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Rome. I am especially grateful to Brother Walter Farrell, archivist at the Brothers of the Christian Schools Archives in Toronto, who directed me
to countless documents and patiently answered each of my many questions. For providing financial support, I would like to thank the Department of History at the University of Toronto, the Jeanne Armour Graduate Scholarship in Canadian History, the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, and CUPE Local 3902.

I owe a monumental debt of gratitude to Vince Thomson, a man who has had an extraordinary impact on my entire life. As a teacher, tutor, donor, fundraiser, and tireless educational campaigner, Vince has a profound appreciation for the value of education and its ability to make the world a better place. I have benefited tremendously from his financial generosity and have been extremely blessed by his sincere friendship. At Vince’s prompting, I met the late Al Balawyder in 2001 when I first enrolled as an undergraduate student at St. Francis Xavier University. An ex-Brother and a historian, Al was a deeply caring man who, along with his wife Marty, genuinely welcomed me into their Antigonish home. Al provided the impetus for this dissertation because he recognized my interest in the history of the Christian Brothers and was the first person to suggest that I research them in graduate school. While he did not get the chance to read the final product, I am grateful for his early encouragement and know that he would be immensely proud.

I am deeply appreciative to have been immersed among such incredibly supportive, scholarly, and sociable environments at St. Francis Xavier University, the University of New Brunswick, and the University of Toronto. The graduate students at U of T have been a particularly positive force in the development and writing of this dissertation. I would especially like to thank Beth Jewett, Jon McQuarrie, Julia Rady-Shaw, and Laura Smith for their unfailing support. Each read various chapter drafts and offered perceptive critiques and thoughtful observations. More importantly, they have been absolutely wonderful friends. I am also grateful
to Véronique Church-Duplessis and Matthieu Vallières for providing French translation assistance when the need arose. In one way or another, many other friends and professors played a crucial role in this dissertation’s maturity and completion, including Seth Bernstein, Josh Brown, Stephanie Cavanaugh, Bret Edwards, Sandra Francescon, David Frank, Roger and Darcy Gillis, Steve Grainger, Rebeca Gutiérrez Estrada, Daniel Laxer, Brett Lintott, Noel Macdonald, Courtney MacIsaac, Peter McInnis, Don Nerbas, Lisa Pasolli, Rob Pringle, Andrew Robinson, Dan Rosenthal, Lindsay Sidders, and Laurie Stanley-Blackwell.

Stacy Hushion has probably learned more about the Christian Brothers than she ever wanted or cared to know. Nevertheless, her involvement in this dissertation has made it considerably better: she provided many crucial ideas and insights, improved the writing, and deftly handled most of the technological elements. More importantly though, she inspired me with her own scholarly dedication and showed consistent love and support. For all that, and more, I am exceedingly grateful.

For their incredible support of this project from beginning to end, this dissertation is dedicated to my family and their families. My siblings Brett, Casey, Christianne, and Daniel – along with their own families – provided me with employment, housed and fed me on research trips, made me laugh, and gave me regular respite from the long hours of research and writing. Their active encouragement, love, and support are all greatly cherished. My parents, Peter and Maureen Wilcox, have been exceptionally positive role models. Their generosity, encouragement, and dedication to hard work have all been amazing sources of inspiration. Since both are retired teachers and former members of religious teaching orders, I hope they recognize just how profound their influence has been on this dissertation’s subject matter.
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# Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAK</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Kingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abp.</td>
<td>Archbishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFÉCCF</td>
<td>Archives des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes du Canada francophone (Montréal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>Archives of the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Rome)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Archives of Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCAT</td>
<td>Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCSA</td>
<td>Brothers of the Christian Schools Archives (Toronto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNA Act</td>
<td>British North America Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bp.</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Br.</td>
<td>Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBCA</td>
<td>Christian Brothers Commercial Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCES</td>
<td>Catholic Church Extension Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCHA</td>
<td>Canadian Catholic Historical Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSB</td>
<td>Congregation of St. Basil (Basilians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSC</td>
<td>Congregatio a Sancta Cruce (Congregation of Holy Cross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSR</td>
<td>Congregatio Sanctissimi Redemptoris (Redemptorists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENA</td>
<td>District of Eastern North America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRLCDT</td>
<td>Documents Régionaux et Locaux, Canada, District de Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Frère</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSC</td>
<td>Fratres Scholarum Christianarum (Brothers of the Christian Schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GABF</td>
<td>General Archives of the Basilian Fathers (Toronto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Library and Archives Canada (Ottawa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.f.</td>
<td>Microfilm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mgr.</td>
<td>Monseigneur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECTA</td>
<td>Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHA</td>
<td>Ontario Hockey Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMI</td>
<td>Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Oblates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSSB</td>
<td>Ottawa Separate School Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTA</td>
<td>Ontario Teachers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTC</td>
<td>Ontario Teachers’ Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTF</td>
<td>Ontario Teachers’ Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAA</td>
<td>Prisoners’ Aid Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev.</td>
<td>Reverend</td>
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<td>ROSII</td>
<td>Religious Orders and Secular Institutes Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>Sisters of Charity of Halifax</td>
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<tr>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>Society of Jesus (Jesuits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCDSBA</td>
<td>Toronto Catholic District School Board Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THL</td>
<td>Toronto Hockey League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRCSSB</td>
<td>Toronto Roman Catholic Separate School Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSSB</td>
<td>Toronto Separate School Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U of A</td>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men’s Christian Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women’s Christian Association</td>
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Introduction

On 25 October 1928, P.J. Coleman, the editor at Toronto’s Catholic Register, considered Canada’s English-speaking Catholics to be unfortunately reticent in their attitude toward the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a religious order more commonly referred to as the Christian Brothers or the De La Salle Brothers.¹ Despite decades of excellent work in Catholic schools, particularly in Ontario, the Brothers were not getting their due: “Really, there should be a great many exalted things written about our teaching Brothers. For some reason or other the topic does not thrill the pen.”² The dearth of scholarship on Ontario’s Christian Brothers might give credence to the idea that their history is not compelling to students and scholars of Canadian history. This dissertation seeks to challenge that idea without resorting to idolization or reverence. The Christian Brothers have a rich history in Ontario that spans across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. An exploration of how they attempted to live out their educational mission provides valuable insights into the shifting dynamics of religious life, teaching, and social relations in Canadian Catholicism and Ontario education and society.

Beginning with the arrival of the first Christian Brothers to Ontario in 1851 and ending with the start of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 – when both Canadian society and its

¹ I use Christian Brothers throughout this dissertation, as that is how they were commonly known in Ontario. Note that the Institute was not technically a religious order, although they often referred to themselves and were widely regarded as such by Catholics and non-Catholics in Canada. As such, I use the terms ‘order’ and ‘congregation’ interchangeably throughout this dissertation. Only under the pontificate of Benedict XV, with the promulgation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, could members of congregations who took simple vows – such as the Christian Brothers – properly consider themselves as Religious, no longer officially called seculars. For more details on the discrepancy, see William H. Woestman, OMI, The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: A Clerical Religious Congregation With Brothers (Ottawa: St. Paul University, 1995), 126-9 and Luke Salm, The Work Is Yours: The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle (Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers Publications, 1989), 204.

² The Catholic Register and Canadian Extension, 25 October 1928. Coleman continued: “Possibly this is as it should be. But it would be most unfortunate if this muteness indicated a conviction held about that noble band of men whose vocation is both sublime and humble. No one expects emotional outpourings when a group of young men solemnly and in manly fashion dedicated themselves to God. … He is realist enough to know that his surrender lacks a certain picturesqueness. Over against the knowledge is the unshaken confidence that he has chosen the hard course that can make him more surely the partner of Christ. He is the coadjutor who is satisfied if the work of God be done, let the honors come as they may. He is content to be behind the scenes, glad if the stage produces the play that the Church wishes. Oh! It is not so hard to rhapsodize over the Brother.”
religious orders were rocked by many radical changes that had their origins in the 1950s – this study explores the collective and dynamic experiences of a revolving cast of Brothers. It places their evolving educational apostolate within the province’s social, educational, political, and religious contexts. This was a congregation that rarely tried to separate itself from mainstream society. Rather, the Brothers were open and hospitable to the world around them and were committed to integrating into the larger cultural, social, and educational world in which they lived. Though not without a degree of struggle, they accepted many of the societal shifts taking place in their midst: Ontario was to be an English-speaking province and its citizens were demanding that educators increasingly professionalize and prepare students for a wide variety of professions and socially acceptable attributes. The Christian Brothers were not immune from these demands and often insisted upon them with the same vigour as the Ontario majority.

Successive generations of Brothers were deeply invested in prospering in Ontario and pragmatically transformed the language of their membership, philosophy of professionalization, and curricular and extracurricular services to conform to the realities of living in a rapidly changing province. The congregation had both utilitarian and sacred considerations in mind when advocating this conformity, including an eagerness to perpetuate the faith, build up their membership, expand their educational reach, serve the Church hierarchy, and respond to the expectations of Ontario’s Catholic citizenry. Essentially, they insinuated that compliance with Ontario’s social and educational norms and standards was a gateway to entrench their congregation as the best choice for the province’s Catholic boys. They cultivated conformity without sacrificing their Catholicism; indeed, the practice of conformity was intended to safeguard and even bolster the Catholic faith in Ontario.
While engulfed in certain trials and tribulations, they never pushed the Christian Brothers to waiver on their commitment to prosper in Ontario. The cumulative effect of their continual adaptation, accommodation, and pragmatism was more members, a positive reputation among parents, school inspectors, and the Catholic hierarchy, and expansion in access to Roman Catholic schooling. Between 1851 and 1962, the Brothers made significant strides in illustrating that Catholic schools belonged, and were not just tolerated as a strange byproduct of mid-nineteenth century diplomatic bargaining. Alongside the Catholic hierarchy, women religious, and lay men and women, the Brothers were crucial in the consolidation of a functioning separate school system and solidification of the Catholic Church in Ontario. The Brothers are agents in this history, though they were not always masters of their own fate. Ontario was a world not of their own making, and they needed to adapt in order to see their mission reach its potential.

Between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1920s, Ontario’s Christian Brothers were part of a strong contingent of English-speaking Catholics whose relationship with Canada and whose sense of belonging in primarily Protestant environs was growing increasingly confident. As teachers and Catholic leaders, the Brothers looked for ways in which their congregation could intersect with society. It was at these crossroads – in language, professionalization, and curriculum – where they negotiated their identity and elucidated their commitment to promoting Catholic education in Ontario. In so doing, they played a key role in building a robust, Christian, and English-speaking society where Catholics were an integrated segment in provincial life. The Christian Brothers had both personal and institutional stakes in Ontario. Brothers – most of who were born in the province after the 1880s – were personally invested in seeing that their vocations could flourish in the region in which they lived and taught. As a collective, members
were invested in the success of their congregation as a whole and hoped that their institution could open more Catholic schools and thereby preserve and propagate the faith.

Ontario Brothers made their decisions based on an understanding of local issues and a familiarity with local conditions, inhabitants, and laws; if they considered superiors’ policies or their order’s constitution to be deficient or inappropriate for their apostolate in the province, they did what they could to adapt so that they could fit in while still clinging to the idea that they were responsive to the “spirit of the Institute” and keeping to their vow of obedience. For all intents and purposes, the Ontario Brothers suggested that accommodating did not mean an abandonment of their faith, but an opportunity to live out that faith in their communities and schools. This ensured that their order grew, that Catholic boys attended Catholic schools, and that the separate school system prevailed. Nevertheless, there is a strange twist to how conformity worked: while the Brothers’ membership strengthened and the number of schools grew from the 1920s to the 1960s and even as the existence of Ontario’s separate schools was placed on a more solid footing, the Brothers remained cautious that their accommodative efforts could all be undone and that they could be ousted at any time.

Historians of Catholicism in Canada have never accepted the idea that Catholics or Catholic orders were completely insulated from societal currents. In fact, scholarship on men’s and women’s orders has shown how deeply embedded they were in the societies in which they lived and worked. While many orders’ rituals and practices demanded isolation in separate quarters, living out their apostolate necessarily required inter-relationships and engagement with

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modern life. The Christian Brothers in Ontario were no exception. Their mission as teachers could not be achieved in complete isolation; in the towns and cities they lived in, the Brothers interacted with students, parents, lay teachers, provincial education officials, journalists, clergy, and a host of other individuals and groups. They became enmeshed with the culture that they lived in and came to understand the people, institutions, and structures with which they interacted. Their history acts as a gateway to explore the vital connections between religious and secular society and their struggle to flourish as a congregation in Ontario becomes intelligible only by analyzing their relationships with their social and cultural milieu. This dissertation, therefore, provides a resource to historians of religious orders for the way it describes how and why teaching religious negotiated their place in modern society and challenges the often-accepted notion of antipathy between Catholic orders and modern life.

This is a study focused on a Catholic religious institution, yet it does not deal with controversies over child sexual abuse, possibly the most predominant area of concern in recent investigations of male religious orders. Indeed, when the general Canadian population considers the history of Catholic orders, often coming to mind first are the abuse scandals that have rocked the Catholic Church since coming to light in the 1990s. The public has been exposed to countless examples of overly harsh discipline and sexual and physical abuse at the hands of priests, brothers, and women religious. Newspaper and journalistic coverage of these transgressions has been the most pervasive medium for exposing these crimes and scandals, though well-researched books, documentaries, and films have also honed in on the abuse.⁴ Although public and scholarly

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attention to this abuse is relatively recent, incidents of physical and sexual assault date back centuries, and the total number of victims will never be known. Much of the focus has been on Native residential schools and boys’ industrial or training schools, sites of widespread physical, sexual, and verbal violence against boys and girls. Accusations of cover-ups, particularly with superiors moving known abusers to new locations in order to avoid scandal, has contributed to a climate of distrust and decline in the Catholic Church’s moral authority to guide the faithful.

Since the early 1990s, Christian Brothers from Ontario and Quebec have come under scrutiny, particularly for the abuse of boys at their Ontario-based reformatories: St. John’s Industrial School in Uxbridge and St. Joseph’s Industrial School in Alfred. However, this dissertation does not explicitly focus on these scandals, in part due to constraints in the available source base. The silences in the archival record present a significant barrier to any institutional study of these crimes; not least, the moral and legal criminality of the actions ensured that few Brothers would have raised the issue in print, lest they implicate themselves and damage the order’s reputation. The documentation that did exist on this theme at Toronto’s Brothers of the Christian Schools Archive were removed by lawyers in the 1990s when congregation members (and former members) were being investigated for sexual and physical abuse, thus rendering


The English-language Brothers headquartered in Toronto administered St. John’s whereas French-speaking Brothers headquartered in Montreal ran St. Joseph’s. For a history of several cases of violence against children by Christian Brothers in these institutions, see Darcy Henton with David McCann, *Boys Don’t Cry: The Struggle for Justice and Healing in Canada’s Biggest Sex Abuse Scandal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995).
them inaccessible to historians. For these reasons, the abuse scandals of the Christian Brothers in Ontario remain largely outside the purview of this investigation, though attention is drawn to cases where the archival evidence suggests some form of sexual or physical misconduct.

This dissertation also shifts away from another trend in research on Catholic religious orders: the longstanding hagiographical traditions that glorify or celebrate these congregations and their institutions. Reflecting what scholars of female teaching religious have highlighted in regards to hagiography, history books published internally by the Christian Brothers are generally celebratory declarations marking significant anniversaries in the history of a given region, school, or event. These books often include congratulatory messages from politicians, clergy, religious superiors, and others who hail the Brothers for educating thousands and saving souls. Often presented chronologically and panoramically, these works discuss topics such as the early trials and tribulations of the founding era, the struggle to overcome obstacles, foundation dates for key institutions, accomplishments of both Brothers and students in their scholarly record, artistic achievements, sporting prowess, placement into religious vocations, and, finally, a list of their famous graduates. Databases of Brothers, communities, schools, and students taught are also common features, as are pictures of students and Brothers, at work and play, often accompanied by mini-biographies describing the benefit of a Brother’s life or a Lasallian education.

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6 Private correspondence with George Morgan, formerly Brother Andres, 29 June 2011.
7 Bart Hellinckx, Frank Simon, and Marc Depaepe, “The Forgotten Contribution of the Teaching Sisters: A Historiographical Essay on the Educational Work of Catholic Women Religious in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” Studia Paedagogica 44 (2009), 20-24. For a typical example of a celebratory and hagiographic survey from Ontario, see George Morgan, Lasallian Education: 150 Years in Toronto (Toronto: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 2001). The book’s intent, he claimed, was to act as “a step in the overall need to record our story” and to “bring back fond memories” for alumni. Yet, he also acknowledged the limitations of the work, and hoped that an historian would carry out a more rigorous investigation into the Brothers’ history in Ontario.
8 For just some examples of this trend, see Brother Angelus Gabriel, The Christian Brothers in the United States, 1848-1948: a Century of Catholic Education (New York: D.X. McMullen Co., 1948); Brothers of the Christian Schools, Mississippi Vista: The Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Mid-West, 1849-1949 (Winona, MN: Saint
This dissertation is neither laudatory nor festive in approach. Rather, it is part of a growing body of scholarship in Canadian religious history that has moved beyond internally oriented and often-nostalgic works on religious orders. Since the 1970s, historians, sociologists, theologians, and some members of religious orders themselves have provided many significant insights into religious life, often by placing the endeavours, experiences, and ideas of congregation members at the heart of their analyses. This new scholarship has integrated historical narratives of religious life into the broader context of Catholic, educational, and women’s history. In line with this trend, this study of the Christian Brothers is deeply connected to broader social and religious developments in Canada. It is an examination of the interactions and interplays of one particular order with various forces, communities, and interests across Ontario. In the process, it provides a richer perspective of the history of the Christian Brothers in the province by considering them not in the narrow confines of their spiritual aims but in the full light of their religious, civic, and educational activities.

Such an approach builds upon compelling recent work on Catholic religious orders. This wide-ranging literature has focused primarily on women, concentrating on such aspects as their positions in the Church, living situations, feminism, spirituality, and type of apostolate, such as education, social justice, charity, health care, or other social services. In Canada specifically,
historians have wisely chosen to concentrate on single orders (or at least a very limited number), specific geographical settings, and relatively short time periods in order to place the order in the context in which members lived.\(^\text{10}\) When considering the lives of teaching religious specifically, the historiography has also tended to concentrate on women; it is one of the few fields in which historians know more about women than men. Major themes in this literature include teaching sisters’ educational philosophy and practice, daily life in the school, and professionalization.\(^\text{11}\)

In contrast to the extensive scholarship on women religious, the English-language historiography of male Catholic orders in Canada – both brothers and priests, teachers and non-teachers – remains curiously under-examined. In fact, there is only one index reference to the

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Christian Brothers between the two largest works in the field.12 In general, much of the existing work is more celebratory than analytical and is usually self-published for internal recollection and commemoration, sometimes in anticipation of a famous anniversary.13 There are some notable exceptions, with the Sulpicians, Jesuits, Redemptorists, and Oblates all subjected to historians’ critical eyes; many scholars have admiringly focused on specific themes in these congregations’ apostolic work.14 Within the limited scholarship on male teaching religious historians have prioritized priests rather than brothers.15 Some teaching orders have received little or no scholarly attention whatsoever, including the Basilians and Irish Christian Brothers.

Overall, despite the leadership of Canadian scholars on women’s orders and education, there is little in the way of Canadian historiography of male Catholic orders and male teaching religious orders and education, and prioritized the study of philosophy, theology, and languages. The Society of Jesus has perhaps received more historiographical attention than any other teaching order of men. More commonly referred to as the Jesuits, they are renowned in the classroom, sometimes considered the “schoolmasters” of Europe and the New World. In the nineteenth-century United States, the Jesuits were the most well known, highly regarded, and influential Catholic teaching order. In addition to, or perhaps because of their long tradition of and dedication to scholarship, they had the most personnel and staffed the most colleges. Gerald O’Collins, Catholicism: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 40; Philip Gleason, Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.

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15 The Jesuits, Basilians, Benedictines, and Dominicans in particular have been key orders in the spread of Catholic education. In general, though, their schools were concentrated in higher education, and prioritized the study of philosophy, theology, and languages. The Society of Jesus has perhaps received more historiographical attention than any other teaching order of men. More commonly referred to as the Jesuits, they are renowned in the classroom, sometimes considered the “schoolmasters” of Europe and the New World. In the nineteenth-century United States, the Jesuits were the most well known, highly regarded, and influential Catholic teaching order. In addition to, or perhaps because of their long tradition of and dedication to scholarship, they had the most personnel and staffed the most colleges. Gerald O’Collins, Catholicism: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 40; Philip Gleason, Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.
in particular. In part, this reality is not unexpected, given that there were simply more women religious teaching in Canadian schools. But another factor is that congregations of male religious have themselves been reluctant to admit scholars into their archives, perhaps fearing that academics would only mine their archives for documentation connected to sexual and/or physical abuse.  

While there may be a dearth of scholarship on men’s orders in Canada, there is an extant international literature. Scholars in the United States, Ireland, and Australia have shaped the broader research questions and approaches to the understanding of male Catholic orders used in this dissertation. The scholarship of Christopher J. Kauffman has been particularly influential. As a historian of the Marianists, Sulpicians, and Alexians, Kauffman prioritizes these congregations’ involvement, integration, and impact in American society, rather than their separation from it. Most notably, in *Education and Transformation*, he examines Marianists’ religious spirituality and apostolic ministry, demonstrating how tensions between these two dynamics contributed to phases of integration and fragmentation from their 1849 arrival through to the 1990s. He argues that Marianists in America were largely successful in overcoming obstacles and divisions; they expanded across the nation by gradually becoming Americanized, opting for professionalization, accepting modernization, and promoting anglicization to help immigrants assimilate and integrate. Throughout, Kauffman notes that teaching infused their spirituality, and spirituality was at the root of their effective teaching. The experience of the Christian Brothers in Ontario follows a similar pattern to the American Marianists. The Brothers’ gradual growth in

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16 Note that no obstacles hindered the research carried out for this dissertation.
membership accelerated with the acceptance and adherence to local contingencies and became more consciously devoted to Ontario norms and expectations. In pushing for English-language institutions, accepting qualification standards, and adjusting and expanding their curriculum, Ontario’s Brothers sought to serve the Catholic hierarchy and laity while broadening their impact in the province’s separate schools.

The works of several historians on confraternities and Catholic teaching orders in Ireland have also been instrumental in framing this investigation’s focus on integration and educational aspirations. Colm Lennon, for instance, points out that nineteenth- and twentieth-century Catholic sodalities and confraternities helped to further state aims in education, literacy, health care, and moral and social reform. Their efforts contributed to both Catholics’ integration into modern Irish life and the cultivation of their faith. Dáire Keogh shows that Irish teaching orders played a particularly critical role in this process, and particularly the Congregation of Christian Brothers, founded by Edmund Rice in 1802. Much like the efforts of the Brothers of the


Christian Schools in nineteenth and twentieth-century Ontario, Keogh argues that Rice and his followers founded schools to address boys’ salvation, instill character formation, and further boys’ academic and vocational preparation to suit the needs of contemporary Irish society. Keogh concludes that the congregation’s efforts aimed to transform urban, working-class boys into upright, literate, and virtuous men. In so doing, he argues, the congregation and its graduates significantly contributed to the development of Irish society and entrenchment of Irish Catholicism and its devotional practices.22

Historians in Australia have also made excellent contributions in the field of men’s Catholic life, particularly with regard to teaching orders. John Braniff explores the Marist Brothers’ teaching tradition and how members responded to contemporary social relations – as religious, as teachers, and as men – in Australia from 1872 to 2000. He argues that despite the Marist Brothers’ willingness to accommodate on course curriculum, they maintained their commitment to founder Marcellin Champagnat’s vision and philosophy, even going so far as to “defend and deepen” the Marist character at their schools.23 Similarly, Tom O’Donoghue’s Upholding the Faith explores the complex relationship between the Irish Christian Brothers and state forces in Australia, asking how and why the order’s schools successfully expanded their

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22 Rice modeled his congregation’s religious life, daily practices, and pedagogy upon the efforts of Jean Baptiste De La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Indeed, the order was initially called the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Ireland, only changing its name to the Congregation of Christian Brothers in 1962. As early as the 1820s, the Irish Christian Brothers translated and used De La Salle’s The Conduct of the Schools in their classrooms. However, Rice ensured that his Brothers and their schools adapted the European Catholic pedagogy to the Irish context and the need to instill Catholic principles on a sometimes alienated and ignorant population. To that end, spirituality permeated the curriculum: Christianity inculcated all class work and reading lessons, specific time was allocated for prayer and formal catechesis, sacramental preparation was continually ongoing, and there was a concerted encouragement to join devotional confraternities that would promote members’ piety. Each of these were contributing factors to the vigorous Catholicism of the Irish in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Daire Keogh, “Evangelising the Faithful: Edmund Rice and the Reformation of Nineteenth-Century Irish Catholicism,” in Lennon, ed., Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland, 57-75 and Keogh, Edmund Rice and the first Christian Brothers, 15, 112-3, and 252.

operations independent from state aid. He suggests that although much of their curriculum was modeled on the state system, their authoritarian framework, the provision of religious instruction, the weaving of particular gender roles with faith and salvation, and the overt Irish influence all helped Irish Christian Brothers stay distinctive and enabled a solid reputation to emerge.\textsuperscript{24}

O’Donoghue’s \textit{Catholic Teaching Brothers} is the first comprehensive survey of male Catholic teaching congregations in English-speaking countries between 1891 and 1965, an era of numeric strength and unprecedented influence for Brothers in these regions. Not bound by traditional accounts that focus on individual orders, brief time periods, and single countries, O’Donoghue analyzes why and how different groups of teaching Brothers dealt with a wide range of issues, including recruitment, socialization, curriculum content, professionalization, and the construction and regulation of their religious life. He argues that, like teaching Sisters, teaching Brothers were “crucial to the church’s educational project.”\textsuperscript{25}

Ontario’s Christian Brothers add another dimension to this growing literature on male teaching religious and contributes to Canadian religious history more broadly. The literature devoted specifically to this congregation in Canada has to date concentrated entirely on the Quebec experience.\textsuperscript{26} Nive Voisine’s three-volume overview of the congregation’s Canadian history provides only a limited account of their Ontario experience, essentially glossing over and

downplaying this history and prioritizing the order’s history in Quebec instead.27 This is hardly surprising, given that Voisine is a historian of Quebec Catholicism and given that the Brothers in Quebec dwarfed those in Ontario in terms of membership from the moment they arrived in Canada through to today. They also operated far more schools, taught significantly more students, and wielded much more influence than Brothers in English Canada.

While the Christian Brothers were only ever a small minority of both the teaching religious and Catholic educators in Ontario separate schools, they were not insignificant. Significance is not tied to the number of Brothers, students, or schools – though that was an important measure of success – but in the way they related to and interacted with Ontario society. Unlike Quebec, which was an overwhelmingly Catholic province with a strong Church presence in education, Ontario was a largely Protestant province and Catholic schools and their teachers faced different challenges related to governance, curriculum, and professionalization, amongst other issues. The uneasy context in which English-speaking Christian Brothers found themselves immersed is precisely what makes their history so compelling. Exploring their relationships with a wide range of Church, government, and education actors as well as the measures they were willing to take to operate and to grow as a teaching order and sustain Catholic schools forms the basis for this investigation.

This dissertation further contributes to the history of education in Ontario. Scholars in this field have generally focused their analyses on specific themes, including social control, cultural conflict, racism, immigration, curriculum analysis, and gender.28 Surveys of education – whether

28 On social control, see Alison Prentice, The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977) and Bruce Curtis, Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871 (London: Althouse Press, 1988). On gender, see Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice, Gender and Education in Ontario: An Historical Reader (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 1991) and Johanne Selles, Methodists and Women’s Education in Ontario, 1836-1925 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University
of Canada generally or Ontario specifically – have generally omitted or relegated to the sidelines the work of teaching religious and the Christian Brothers in particular. This is somewhat surprising in Ontario’s context, given that most Catholic Sisters and Brothers taught in the public (albeit separate) system. Even scholars of Catholic education in Ontario have tended to overlook the Christian Brothers. Despite many books on the origins, operations, and distinct status of Ontario’s separate school system – much of it celebratory in nature – few books place Catholic teaching orders in the province’s social context. When the Brothers are mentioned, either in surveys of Catholic education or education in general, it is usually with reference to the qualifications crisis of the turn of the century. Whether willfully or not, doing so sets the Brothers up as a backward organization and anathema to educational norms. In contrast, this study adds valuable insight into the workings and rationales of Catholic educators by placing the congregation in its social and educational context and showcasing their willingness to accept


31 Wilson, Stamp, and Audet, eds., Canadian Education; Franklin A. Walker, Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario: A Documentary Study (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1964); Michael Power, A Promise Fulfilled: Highlights in the Political History of Catholic Separate Schools in Ontario (Toronto: Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association, 2002), especially 163-201. Power praises the noble piety and dedication of the teaching religious, and claims that Catholic separate schools would not exist in Ontario without their labours. Yet in fleshing out this story, he references the histories of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Loretto Sisters, and Grey Sisters, but highlights the Christian Brothers only in relation to the Teacher Certification Crisis.
societal customs and approaches to education. As such, it suggests the need for more comparative studies with other male and female teaching congregations and with lay teachers. Other scholars may find similar characteristics or trends in other regions and with other teaching bodies.

Finally, this dissertation may also contribute to the literature on community and identity in Canada. Many of these studies concentrate upon race, class, ethnicity, and gender as elements constituting and shaping group behaviour, ideology, and practices. This study seeks to build upon a rich strand of Canadian immigration and religious historiography, which employs elements of prosopography (group biography) as a means of exploring themes of adaptation and integration. Much of the early literature in these areas focused on the isolation, boundary-building, and conservative tendencies of specific communities. Since the 1970s, though, scholarship has tended to explore various immigrants and religious groups’ gradual assimilation into Canadian society, often focusing on strategies of adaptation while preserving distinctive social, cultural, and religious practices. Some of the best work in this vein has demonstrated why and how particular communities initiated deliberate interactions with those outside the community as well as the consequences of this strategy. Education has been an important sub-category in these works, as schools were often regarded as a means to elevate or consolidate various immigrants’ or religious groups’ social and economic status, as a means to preserve one’s faith, language, or social practices, or as a means to transition from outsider to insider.

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32 One of the best examples of this approach is found in Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
In line with this type of scholarship, this study aims to understand how the Christian Brothers operated within and immersed themselves inside Ontario society. The Brothers were tied together by common religious affiliation, gender, vows, employment, and residency. Their community life differed from the overwhelming majority of Ontario residents – Catholic and non-Catholic alike – in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Joining the Christian Brothers was a unique option for Ontario’s Catholic men, providing an alternative to marriage and fatherhood, the priesthood, or the single life. Focusing on a vowed, male, teaching congregation outside the priesthood enriches our understanding of Catholic consecrated life by exposing the plurality of that experience and expanding our knowledge of the positions, roles, and development of religious vocations. However, although the Brothers lived in their own separate communities, they did not seek to isolate themselves from the rest of society. They carried on a discerning, but active, interaction with the wider world and were willing to adapt and integrate into the larger body politic if it meant they could safeguard their Catholicism. The Brothers strategically interacted with mainstream society; by working to align their congregation with the language of the majority, by embracing provincial teaching qualifications, and by adjusting their curriculum to suit the province’s social and economic context, they were making their case for permanency in the province, and they helped to solidify separate Catholic schools.

At present, Ontario’s Christian Brothers have reached a critical moment in their history. There are only 12 elderly members living in what once was the Toronto District, a precipitous drop from a high point of 244 in 1964. Only one of these Brothers is connected in any tangible way with the day-to-day activities in a school. What’s more is that the congregation has not seen processes through which British-born elites in British Columbia used education to consolidate their economic dominance in their new society. Administrators in these private schools further attempted to instill proper behavioural roles for their sons in order to reproduce their social authority.

34 LAC, m.f. K211, reel # 150778, Statistiques des FEC au Canada, 1964.
a new member join since the 1970s. It will not be long before there are no Brothers remaining in the province.\textsuperscript{35} With their departure will go the last human remnants of what was once a major force in Ontario’s Catholic education system. Nevertheless, archives provide an opportunity to recapture their history and are crucial for scholars trying to understand how this teaching order struggled to live out their educational apostolate. Because this study reveals the need to see the Brothers as enmeshed in their larger social context, the major themes discussed throughout are reflected in the source base. On the one hand, the Brothers’ documents – including rulebooks, memorials and eulogies, letters, and community annals – provide a glimpse into members’ lives, experiences, and insights. But alongside the Brothers’ own archives, this dissertation also analyzes sources produced by the social actors and institutions with whom the Brothers interacted, including government files, school board records, bishops’ papers, court proceedings, and newspapers. The interplay of all these sources offers a more integrated history of the Brothers that highlights how members were very much a part of the world even as they tried to be detached from it.

The dissertation is divided into three key segments. Chapter One provides the lexicon and background information so readers can become familiar with who these men were, where and when they operated, and what their apostolate entailed. It analyzes the pedagogical and theological foundation of the Christian Brothers’ mission, highlighting the intersections between their internal spirituality and external teaching ministry. Further, it outlines a brief synopsis of

\textsuperscript{35} In 2001, the Toronto District was officially renamed a Delegation, meaning that superiors in Rome recognized the impossibility of sustaining an autonomous District with such limited numbers and restricted educational activities. Similar developments have transpired across North America. In 2007, the Toronto Delegation merged with their linguistic confreres of the New York District rather than their co-nationalists in Montreal. With numbers continuing to decline, the hierarchy founded the District of Eastern North America (DENA) in 2009, headquartered in Eatontown, New Jersey. The DENA incorporated the former Toronto, Baltimore, Long Island-New England, and New York Districts. While officially members of the DENA, the Brothers of the former Toronto District continue to live in Toronto. Owing to renovations at their retirement residence, the majority currently live at Loretto Abbey, a residence and motherhouse for the Canadian province of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loretto Sisters) in Canada.
the Institute’s founder, early history, development, and organization before turning its attention to the order’s training, aims, and educational philosophy, both in theory and in practice. It also discusses how norms of religious life formed, operated, and became routine. All of this information helps to situate the Christian Brothers contextually in the history of English Canada and to more fully grasp their position in the Canadian Catholic Church.

The second section, covering Chapters Two, Three, and Four, hones in on the fundamental elements of the Brothers’ pursuit of conformity with provincial norms: language, professionalization, and schools/curricula. This section illustrates why and how the Brothers accommodated and acclimatized to life in a rapidly changing province. Chapter Two explores the Brothers’ advocacy for anglicization and particularly an English-speaking novitiate during the second half of the nineteenth century. Recognizing that Ontario’s social, religious, and educational contexts were quite different than in Quebec, Ontario-based Brothers and their allies in the Church hierarchy presented various practically oriented arguments to the congregation’s superiors justifying why anglicization was fundamental to their educational apostolate. Principally, they argued that it would counter Protestantism, overcome the challenges of inadequately prepared Brothers from Quebec, and increase recruitment. The Brothers’ campaign was methodical and always pragmatic; if they expected to extend the scope of their operations and safeguard Catholic schools, it was imperative that they conform to the language, customs, and educational standards of the society in which they lived and taught. While meeting with some resistance from superiors in Montreal and Paris, their efforts culminated with a permanent English-language novitiate in 1913 and autonomous control over community life in 1914.

Chapter Three examines the congregation’s complicated relationship with professionalization and their status as teachers in Ontario. In particular, it explores their silent
engagement with the state’s attempt to institute a formal certification process for teachers who were also members of religious orders. Highlighting the fact that the Brothers did not necessarily determine their own fate, this chapter explores the many voices that inserted themselves into the discussion over the Brothers’ position as educators, suitable (or not) to teach in the province’s separate schools. Bishops were outspoken contributors to the discussion, but so too were a wide array of lay Catholics, including trustees, inspectors, judges, journalists, and parents. While the Brothers’ voices remained mostly muted, this silence was in itself a pragmatic tactic to illustrate accommodation. They tended to align with lay Catholic activists in supporting certification, even if that meant they were at odds with their religious superiors within their congregation and within their dioceses. Using four case studies from across the province, this chapter highlights the rewarding reputational enhancement that came with conforming to professional standards. In the one case where senior Brothers were unwilling to bend on certain elements of the professionalization question, they were ostracized and dismissed.

Chapter Four explores the ways in which the Brothers altered their curricula and founded a more comprehensive array of schooling options (i.e., commercial, secondary, and industrial schools) to accommodate to Ontario’s increasingly dynamic social and economic context. This chapter showcases that the Brothers’ educational mission reflected provincial expectations and mainstream practices in both the official and hidden curriculum. Their program of studies changed from one that emphasized Catholic catechism and rudimentary academics to one that provided an extensive program of industrial and commercial subjects, humanities and sciences, university training, and preparation for the religious life. Equally important, boys were also being prepared to become honest, hard-working, well-rounded, and moral men, fathers, Catholics, and Canadians. This educational program – including class work, sports and athletics, camps, cadets,
and religion – conducted in an eclectic mix of settings, underscored the type of boy they understood would best serve the Catholic population: ideally, it would help Catholic boys retain their faith while integrating them into the larger population. The Brothers’ multi-faceted educative purpose, one that reflected Ontario standards, served to affirm the Catholic school, and by extension, the Catholic faithful; the Brothers could feel secure in providing a beneficial service to the welfare of the nation and the Catholic Church.

Finally, the last section evaluates the benefits and pitfalls of the Brothers’ efforts to conform to provincial norms and standards for both Catholic education and for their congregation in Ontario. Chapter Five argues that the Brothers’ conformist ways enabled a significant growth in membership and schools and maximized their educational influence. The years between 1914 and 1964 were prosperous, facilitating the Brothers’ thorough immersion into Ontario society and entrenching separate schools as germane, not just tolerable, to life in the province. Yet the Brothers did not develop a sense of permanency and comfortability; ironically, the more they grew in numbers and stature, the more tensions were rampant. A wide variety of moral, financial, administrative, and educative problems persisted and the Brothers feared that each was potentially scandalous and could lead to their ouster. The legacy of adaptation and accommodation in pre-Vatican II Ontario, therefore, is certainly not clear-cut: expansion and a growing confidence in their position as Catholic educators for Ontario existed alongside deep anxiety and uncertainty about the permanent viability of their mission.
Chapter One

Internal Religiosity and External Apostolate:  
Jean Baptiste De La Salle, Community Living, and the Philosophy of Education

In 1892, the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Canada issued a promotional pamphlet advertising their two novitiates as key sites for developing young men as both model Christians and exemplary teachers. Presenting their congregation’s educational apostolate as embodying the spirit and message of Jesus Christ and their founder, the seventeenth-century priest Jean Baptiste De La Salle, the pamphlet insinuated that the Brothers’ multi-purpose educative role was a shining example of Christian service and was therefore deserving of the utmost praise:

Among vocations, one of the most perfect, of the most sublime, and of the most glorious to God is that of a Religious dedicated to the education of youth. In fact, educating children means teaching them to know God, to love Him, to serve Him; to instruct them in their duties to Jesus Christ our divine Redeemer, and to Mary our august Mother; to form virtuous and educated men for society, devoted citizens to their homeland and to recognized authority, Christians faithful to the Church, and saints for heaven. From the standpoint of faith and even of reason, is it not the most important, the highest, and most meritorious work that an ordinary Christian can accomplish on earth? 

The Christian Brothers designed promotional material such as this to convince parents that there was no greater earthly honour for them than to send their sons to the Brothers’ novitiate. Joining this global congregation would contribute to the moulding of boys into excellent citizens and faithful Christians, thereby showcasing the magnificence of the teaching vocation.

In Roman Catholic theology, the goal of a man or woman who lives as a religious is to gain greater unity with God and to bring others to Him. For many Canadian Catholics prior to the Second Vatican Council, there was a certain reverence for those who entered into the realm of the religious state because of the great responsibility associated with devoting one’s life to this particular task. By their example and instruction in the classroom, Christian Brothers would

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1 LAC, Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, Institut des frères des écoles chrétiennes, 1892, 17. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
impart knowledge and fashion character, thereby fulfilling their primary objective: the salvation of souls. The Christian Brothers were to fulfill their apostolate by following the two foundational principles of their Institute: faith and zeal. Faith meant to accept everything as the will of God and zeal meant to work diligently and to commit fully to the work assigned. Faith and zeal were intimately interconnected; each was a component of the same spirituality, with an outpouring of faith visible in an active zeal for teaching and that educational zeal rooting itself in faith.² The Brothers’ logo reflects this dual emphasis: it is a five-pointed star with the maxim Signum Fidei – the sign of the faith – written over top. It is designed to reflect the Old Testament scripture passage from Daniel: “Those who teach others unto justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.”³

This chapter introduces both the spiritual and apostolic mission of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Ontario from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. It offers a broad survey of the development and meaning of the Lasallian vocation by focusing on the comingling of their community life and educational purpose. The Brothers’ inner religious life – their spirituality and charism – was central to understanding their apostolic work. At the same time, they designed their vocation in the classroom to foster and perpetuate their religious spirit. An extraordinary effort was made through religious practices and rituals as well as pedagogical training to ensure that Brothers became esteemed teaching religious and competent religious teachers. This bifurcated relationship is highlighted in the ideas and philosophy of their founder, the structure of their organization and hierarchy, in the various stages of their formation, and in their daily life both in community and at school.

Nowhere was the ideal of a unity in spirituality and apostolate more easily pursued than

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³ Daniel 12:3. This passage is found in every different kind of source connected to the Christian Brothers, such as eulogies, community annals, newspapers, etc.
by carefully following the rules and guidelines of De La Salle himself. The congregation’s leaders instructed members to be very familiar with his life because they thought that this knowledge was a key avenue for comprehending the work of God, for understanding the rationale behind the rules of the congregation, and also to see how the workings of the Holy Spirit could be adapted in their own lives. They learned that De La Salle was born into a privileged family in Rheims, France on 30 April 1651. His mother, Nicolle Möet de Brouillet, came from a wealthy family, distinguished in the production of fine champagne. His father, Louis De La Salle, was a magistrate in Rheims’ Presidial Court. The eldest of seven children, De La Salle was captivated with all things religious from an early age, and knew as a teenager that he wanted to be a priest. As was characteristic of late seventeenth-century France, the family regularly attended church, and an atmosphere of piety pervaded the family home. De La Salle’s early education came from a private tutor. Throughout the 1660s, his education focused on grammar, composition, and elocution, and he employed his rhetorical skills to good effect in numerous public speeches and debates.

This training enabled De La Salle to attend the city’s Collège des Bons-Enfants, where his curriculum focused on classic languages and religion, philosophy, and ethics, earning him a Master of Arts in 1669. The following year, as a young aspirant to the priesthood, De La Salle enrolled in Paris’ famed Saint-Sulpice Seminary to begin spiritual training for his ordination while simultaneously taking courses in academic theology at the Sorbonne. He temporarily gave up his educational and theological pursuits when his mother died in July 1671 and his father less than a year later. As the eldest son and the legal guardian of his four brothers and two sisters, he left the seminary to ensure their welfare and attend to the family estate. Despite these trials, he soon returned to his educational and priestly pursuits. At the University of Rheims, he achieved a

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Bachelor of Theology in 1675, a Licentiate in Theology in 1678, and a Doctorate of Theology in 1680.\textsuperscript{5}

Ordained a priest in 1678, De La Salle quickly became cognizant of Paris’ widespread poverty, where the lives of the masses were marked by hardship and insecurity. Their suffering, according to De La Salle, stemmed in part from a lack of education. In late seventeenth-century France, there was little prospect for children of the poor to receive an education at a formal school.\textsuperscript{6} The school system that did exist served those that could afford it, and reinforced the stratification of France’s social classes. To challenge the notion that education was reserved only for elites and address what he perceived as a dire situation, De La Salle became involved with the opening of free schools in the late 1670s.

Still a young man, De La Salle revolutionized the teaching profession in France. He transformed the way teachers taught; to counteract private tutoring, he employed what he called ‘the simultaneous method’ whereby students of similar age and competency were grouped together in classrooms to be taught collectively. As someone devoted to practical education, he revamped the curriculum to focus on subjects such as mathematics and trade skills designed to help the underprivileged learn their choice of trade and gain a livelihood. De La Salle further instigated classroom reform by instituting the use of French – rather than the more traditional Latin – as the language of instruction. A sound knowledge of French, he reasoned, could be a useful tool to facilitate access to jobs in the trades, and would have the added benefit of furthering boys’ understanding of Church doctrine. Finally, he founded technical schools for

\textsuperscript{5} Salm, \textit{The Work Is Yours}, 4-30.
\textsuperscript{6} Salm, \textit{The Work Is Yours}, Chapter Four. There were four key ways in which some young children received an education: charity schools sponsored by Catholic parishes, schools operated by writing masters concentrating on calligraphy, schools run by religious orders, and petites écoles, where children of the wealthy received private tutoring in small classes. In these “little schools,” tutors emphasized Latin language learning and rote memory, preparing graduates for careers in the priesthood and learned professions.
boys deemed wayward or troubled and adult schools for labourers.  

De La Salle is widely credited as a pedagogical pioneer because of his role in modernizing teaching techniques and in turn expanding the French education system. Most of his biographies are written in hagiographical fashion, especially the volumes read by aspiring and fully professed Brothers alike. Ubiquitous in these accounts is praise for him as the “Father of Modern Pedagogy”, an “educational genius”, and a man “inspired by God.” These hagiographies often depict De La Salle’s heroic ability to overcome obstacles, his spiritual enlightenment, his great compassion – especially for the poor – and his emergence as a superb educational reformer. Ultimately, he is portrayed as a great follower and keen disciple of Christ himself, a man practically predestined for sainthood. However, due to their genre, these works undoubtedly downplay or ignore issues that might show him in a negative light or those that might be controversial, such as tensions he had with ecclesiastical authorities concerning the wearing of the habit, the control and/or closure of Lasallian schools, and his decision to spurn his brother because of his affinity for Jansenism.

De La Salle’s prominence in the educational field did not emerge in a void; several individuals and institutions warrant credit for his new apostolic activity. In an immediate sense, he took inspiration from a good friend and spiritual director, Nicholas Roland, who had established four girls’ schools and an orphanage in the 1670s. De La Salle saw in their creation a

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10 Salm, *The Work is Yours*, xii and 190.
model of education for the poor. Upon Roland’s death in 1678, he took the reins as overseer of these girls’ schools. Meanwhile, another friendship with a man named Adrian Nyel encouraged him to open his own parish school for poor boys in 1679. Nyel himself had been stirred into action by the work of Nicolas Barré, a priest belonging to the Clerics Regular Congregation of Minims, and was leading an effort to launch schools for poor boys and girls in Rouen. There was other more long-term models and educational pioneers who influenced De La Salle and his curriculum. Amongst the most prominent included Pierre Fourier, founder of the Congregation of Notre Dame in 1597, a group of Canonesses Regular dedicated to educating underprivileged girls.11 Another inspiration was Jacques de Batencour, who anonymously published the influential pedagogical treaty *L’Escole Paroissiale* in 1654. This book stressed the need for model Christian teachers, instructing groups rather than individuals, and the need to move beyond rote memorization, all of which De La Salle adopted and made more popular. De La Salle’s emphasis on vernacular instruction originated with the intellectuals who ran the petites écoles at Port-Royal-des-Champs Abbey and his focus on education as a means to alleviate social and economic hardship was stimulated by the 1660s writings of Charles Démia in Lyon.12

Evidently, De La Salle was not alone in seeing the need for educational reform and perhaps his revolutionary status has been overstated. Nevertheless, his effort to integrate many of his predecessors’ ideas were made much more popular and therefore effective when he established a community of consecrated laymen he called the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1680. Its foundation marks the first hinting at the powerful interplay of faith

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11 In similar fashion to Canons Regular, Canonesses Regular generally follow the Rule of St. Augustine, which covers areas such as chastity, poverty, obedience, hierarchy, labour, prayer, and common rules. Canonesses have historically taken on roles such as the recitation of the Divine Office, the care of church vestments, and education. Fourier’s Congregation of Notre Dame is not to be confused with the Congregation of Notre Dame of Montreal, founded by Marguerite Bourgeoys in New France in 1658.

and praxis. De La Salle envisioned that these men would manage schools, conduct classes, and live in religious communities as they devoted their lives to the Catholic Church through education. Teaching was not just a means to earn a livelihood. Excellent Christian teachers, in De La Salle’s view, could be instruments of God; they had to cultivate in themselves many exemplary qualities, including holiness, patience, piety, and zeal. In his *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*, De La Salle elaborated on the importance of being models of good behaviour: “Do you wish your disciples to do what is right? Do it yourselves. You will persuade them much more readily through your example of wise and prudent behavior than through all the words you could speak to them.”

In so doing, the Brothers would be heeding De La Salle’s call to act “in imitation of the apostles.”

The Brothers were supposed to be driven to bring Jesus’ message to those boys impacted by poverty and ignorance and therefore, according to official Catholic dogma of the era, in danger of being outside the purview of salvation. In order to be most effective in the classroom and bring their pupils closer to God, Brothers were to lead students on the righteous path and instruct them to be devout, upright, and charitable young men, staunch defenders of God and country. Teaching was an integral channel through which to summon forth the Catholic faith

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13 De La Salle, *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*, Meditation for the Second Sunday After Easter, cited in Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., *John Baptist de la Salle: The Spirituality of Christian Education* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 90. He elaborated on this idea further in other meditations: “Example leaves a far stronger impression on the mind and heart than words, especially for children, because they do not yet have a mind sufficiently able to reflect and ordinarily model themselves on the example of their teachers. They are led more readily to do what they see done for them than what they hear told to them, above all when teachers’ words are not in harmony with teachers’ actions.” De La Salle, *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, Tenth Meditation, cited in Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., *John Baptist de la Salle*, 65.
15 De La Salle instructed his Brothers: “Recognize Jesus beneath the poor rags of the children you have to instruct. Adore him in them. Love poverty, and following the example of the Magi, honor the people who are poor for poverty should be dear to you who are responsible for their instruction. May faith lead you to do this with affection and zeal because these children are the members of Jesus Christ.” De La Salle, *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*, Meditation for the Adoration of the Kings, cited in Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., *John Baptist de la Salle*, 98.
16 De La Salle, *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, First, Second, Sixth, and Eighth Meditation, cited in Koch,
and every element of Lasallian education was to be infused by religion. As one Canadian
member, Brother Stanislaus (Alex Balawyder), noted in a 1956 Masters thesis on De La Salle’s
educational philosophy, the Brothers’ founder regarded teaching as “a mission in which every
teacher is a missionary and every classroom a mission field. The Christian teacher aims to mould
the character of each of his students to the likeness of Christ.” Teachers, then, are vital to the
successful operation of Lasallian schools.

Unlike their founder, Christian Brothers were not priests, nor were they ever to dream of
attaining the priesthood. While De La Salle recognized that saying mass, distributing the
Eucharist, and preaching the scriptures were all fundamental components of a Catholic priest’s
calling, he argued that his congregation had a different, yet complementary, function: they were
to be religiously motivated educational apostles tasked with the salvation of souls through the
Christian education of youth. They were brothers by design, and like priests, they were supposed
to be inspired by God, act as beacons of holiness, and bring people to God.

In the Catholic tradition, there are two key categories of brothers. First, there can be
entire congregations of brothers who consecrate themselves to God through devotion to specific
social apostolates, including education, social work, health care services, and missionary work.
Given their apostolic work in education, the Brothers of the Christian Schools fall into this
category. In Canada, the most well known communities of brothers have been involved in
education, including the Congregation of Xaverian Brothers, Marist Brothers, Patrician Brothers,
Presentation Brothers, and Congregation of Christian Brothers (Irish Christian Brothers), the last

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17 Alex Balawyder (Brother Stanislaus, FSC), *The Educational Philosophy of St. Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, The
19 In North America, the most famous congregation of Brothers not devoted to education is the Alexian Brothers.
They are involved in health care services.
two drawing many of their own rules and pedagogical methods from De La Salle and the
Brothers of the Christian Schools. Within these congregations, there often exists an internal
division of labour meaning that not every member participates in the apostolate itself. In many
ways, then, this latter group resembles the second category of brother designation, called
coadjutors. These are members of religious orders in clerical communities who do not have the
faculties to carry out the duties of a priest – or have chosen not to do so. Perhaps the most
famous of these types of congregations in Canada include the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), the
Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists), the Congregation of the Passion of
Jesus Christ (Passionists), and the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Oblates). Much like
priests, brothers in these orders take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, live in community
(though sometimes in separate quarters from the priests), engage in prayers and rituals, and abide
by the rules of their congregations. Yet they remain quite distinct from priests because they
cannot say mass, forgive sins, or administer most of the sacraments. Rather, brothers in clerical
communities have historically been responsible for manual labour such as cooking and
gardening, and generally held a subordinate place in their respective orders, working “for” rather
than “with” clerics.20

Regardless of category, all brothers are to be deeply invested in earthly concerns so as to
prepare themselves and others for the expected life hereafter. Yet some lay Catholics and clergy
have regarded the brother’s vocation as a “half-way” vocation and brothers themselves as failed
priests, stopped or prevented from fully pursuing the road to the altar because of a weak will or a
lack of rigour and dedication to God’s service.21 This is a misunderstanding of the brothers’

20 Brother William Modlin, CSC, “The Brother in Clerical Communities,” in Modlin, CSC, ed., The Brother in the
Church, 134-40.
21 Hogan, CSC, “Reflections on the Vocation,” in Modlin, CSC, ed., The Brother in the Church, 2-3. According to
religious scholar George L. Kane, a brother “is not a priest because God has not called him to the priesthood. He is a
position; while they are not priests, they are fully Religious. They are a special type of religious vocation, belonging to communities to serve not only fellow members but also to provide assistance to all in the service of the Church. As one Brother in the Congregation of the Holy Cross explained in 1967, “the life and work of a Brother is charity in action, for he makes Christ’s love for men present for their salvation.”

Wanting to ensure that the Christian Brothers were not distracted from their integral educational mission, De La Salle worked practically and diligently to make his early disciples an effective congregation, attempting to inspire them in both their religious and professional lives. Given the value placed on the role of the teacher itself, it is no surprise that in 1687 in the city of Rheims, he opened the first training-centre for teachers in Europe. Besides the Christian Brothers, lay Catholic teachers destined for careers in parish schools were trained at a facility adjacent to the community house. Together, they followed religious exercises and practiced liturgical music while simultaneously learning composition, arithmetic, and methods of teaching. De La Salle also established trades-oriented secondary and adult schools for artisans and their children. In 1705, he published The Conduct of the Schools, a full collection of the pedagogical methods he had been working on for decades that was designed to instil uniformity in training and proper methods of discipline. Seeking to clarify the aims of the Brothers’ mission and the expectations for conduct within the Institute, he distributed his Exercises of Piety for use in the Christian Schools (1697) and Meditations (published posthumously c. 1730) revealing that, in his estimation, teaching was a vocation and religious teachers ought to be apostles who work to extend salvation by bringing souls to Jesus. In Ontario two centuries later, individual

brother because God has called him to be a brother. The choice was God’s, not his own.” George L. Kane, ed., Why I Became a Brother (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1954), vii.

22 Hogan, CSC, “Reflections on the Vocation,” in Modlin, CSC, ed., The Brother in the Church, 6.

23 Salm, The Work is Yours, 44.
Brothers were supposed to read De La Salle’s writings daily to accomplish two ideals: first, increase in themselves the spirit of the Christian educator and second, remind themselves of their ongoing commitment to faith and zeal.

De La Salle’s emphasis on Christian education and willingness to provide free instruction for all, regardless of income, led to a substantial expansion in membership, communities, and schools across France. Such growth required an ever-diligent leader to oversee administrative affairs. De La Salle became the Institute’s first Superior General in 1694, and from then on was extraordinarily busy, simultaneously handling instructional writings, correspondence and visits with newly established communities, and negotiations with church authorities concerning property holdings. These tasks took their toll over the course of the first two decades of the eighteenth century, and De La Salle’s chronic rheumatism significantly worsened. He died on Good Friday, 7 April 1719, at the age of 68. In light of his contributions to education, documentation was prepared for his canonization in May 1840. After three miracles were attributed to his intercession, he was beatified in 1888. Two more miracles were attributed to him in the following decade, including a Canadian connection when a paralyzed Brother from Montreal was apparently cured of his paralysis during a mass. As such, the necessary fifth miracle for canonization was complete. Pope Leo XIII canonized De La Salle on 24 May 1900 and Pope Pius XII named him Patron Saint of Teachers in 1950. The Roman Catholic Church recognized 15 May as his Feast Day until 1969, when Pope Paul VI revised the Church Calendar and moved the Feast Day to 7 April to commemorate his death date.

At the time of De La Salle’s death in 1719, France was home to 274 Brothers living in 22

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25 Salm, The Work Is Yours, 206-7. Note that the process of canonization is not as onerous today. Fewer miracles are required, and the elapsing of several centuries is not mandatory.
communities teaching 9000 students. There was also a school in Rome, which opened in 1702. Membership grew when King Louis XV procured letters patent that secured their incorporation in 1724. This royal approval was buttressed by a papal blessing the following year when Pope Benedict XIII promulgated a Bull of Approbation, which approved both the Institute itself and the first edition of The Rule. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools thus became a legally recognized entity in France with canonical status as a lay institute of pontifical right in the Catholic Church. The desire for papal approval did not mean that Superiors or the wider membership desired losing control of their affairs. Despite some pressure from bishops, De La Salle himself had had a sincere desire to have the Institute remain outside their hands, believing internal control to be the only way to effectively manage the congregation’s administration and discipline, and to carry out their mission faithfully.

Communities flourished despite, or perhaps because of, this lack of interference from priests. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Institute opened 116 communities in France, and began operating schools in Ferrara, Italy in 1740; in Estavayer, Switzerland in 1750; in Martinique in 1774, and in Saint-Hubert-en-Ardenne in the Austrian Netherlands (encompassing most of what is modern-day Belgium) in 1791. The Legislative Assembly suppressed the Institute during the French Revolution, obligating the Brothers to scatter and vacate their schools. While they did lose some members to forced attrition during this revolutionary era, they persevered in two key ways: by living and teaching in secret because of public support for their

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27 The official title of the bull was In Apostolicae dignitatis solio, 1724. This is the first example in the history of the Catholic Church wherein papal approval of a congregation with simple vows was given to a society that has since maintained those simple vows. There have been 10 subsequent editions of The Rule: 1768, 1787, 1809, 1821, 1835, 1852, 1889, 1901, 1923, and 1947. In 1925, there was a verbatim reprint of the 1923 version; it is this edition that is used throughout this dissertation.
methods and services and by moving to other communities across Europe. They were allowed to return to France when Napoleon restored the Institute in 1802.²⁹

In the early nineteenth century, the Institute’s organizational structure was already well entrenched. Even at the time of De La Salle’s death, a hierarchy was in place with rules governing administration and appointments. In order to sustain and nourish community life, the Institute’s structure emphasized orderliness and obedience alongside a union of hearts and a unity of purpose. Of great importance was the idea that superiors constantly and vigilantly apply themselves to bolster the spirit in their respective communities while simultaneously attempting to ensure the welfare of the schools in which they taught. Overall, the congregation’s structural organization was designed to maximize the Brothers’ religious spirit and teaching success.

The men who took leadership positions within the congregation were all supposed to exemplify spiritual, practical, administrative, and educational talents. Regardless of their status in the hierarchical chain of command, each superior was supposed to exemplify the highest spiritual and pedagogical aims. The Superior General, elected for life, governed over the Brothers’ institutional administration.³⁰ He was expected to emulate as best as he was able the leadership, spirituality, communication, and pedagogical traits of the founder and first Superior General, De La Salle himself. Between 1851 and 1962, Superiors General had to have remarkable records as teachers, directors, Visitors, and Assistants and to have demonstrated sound administrative backgrounds alongside deep internal spirituality. Emphasizing the hierarchical nature of Catholic orders, everything from opening a new community house to approving which prayers were said to outlining which pedagogical texts would be used had to

²⁹ Battersby, History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Eighteenth Century, 100-44.
³⁰ In Apostolicae dignitatis solio, 1724 in The Rule, 1925. Though officially separate from later editions of The Rule, this Bull was always incorporated into it, and is the only official document spelling out the responsibilities of the order’s hierarchy.
Figure 1: Hierarchical Organization in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools
meet the Superior’s approval in order to be officially sanctioned by the Regime, the term the Brothers themselves used to refer to the hierarchy.  

In order to manage the increasingly global congregation, the Superior General was aided in “the proper administration of affairs” by several Assistants who oversaw specific regions. Because these areas occasionally encompassed entire countries or a whole continent, geographic control was subdivided into distinct areas they called ‘Districts’ that did not necessarily reflect national borders. Assistants were tasked with administrative control and mediation across several Districts and reported back to the Superior General of the goings-on therein. They were to regularly visit the regions under their jurisdiction, ideally in summer to enable them to preside over the annual retreat. Moving down the chain of command were the Visitors – sometimes referred to as Provincials – who presided over individual Districts and were responsible for the direction and administration of all Brothers under their purview. Visitors got their name because they were supposed to visit all the community houses within their jurisdiction annually to ensure that the rules and regulations were faithfully observed. Upon completion of each visit, they were to “report to the Superior General for the time being whatever may need reform in each house.” They were to have ample experience as both teachers and directors in order to fully understand the Brothers’ professional and religious status. Although appointed for three-year terms by the Superior General, their length of service could be extended. Together, Assistants and Visitors were responsible for electing the Superior General, which met about every decade and was called the General Chapter.

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31 The term does not have negative connotations or associations with political systems. The Regime headquarters were located in Paris from 1680-1904. Because of persecution of religious orders at this time, the headquarters were moved to Lembecq-lez-Hal, Belgium, where the Regime lived until 1936. That year, it was transferred to Rome, where it remains to this day. 
32 In Apostolicae dignitatis solio, 1724 in The Rule, 1925. 
33 In Apostolicae dignitatis solio, 1724 in The Rule, 1925. 
34 In Apostolicae dignitatis solio, 1724 in The Rule, 1925.
Further down the administrative line were directors. These men governed over individual communities, which were sometimes called houses because there could be several communities in a given city or town. They were responsible for individual Brothers’ religious life and were supposed to counsel, advise, facilitate, and ameliorate Brothers’ progress in the virtues of their vocation, guiding with paternal solicitude. All below him in rank were to humbly submit in a spirit of affection and cordiality as they endeavoured for perfection. For Brothers who violated the rules, the director had the authority to discipline them, but that discipline was supposed to be carried out judiciously and was expected to be received with an aim of becoming a more excellent religious and capable teacher. Directors were to maintain order and a union of camaraderie within the community, but also at the school attached to the community, where they were often tied to the position of principal. As such, they may be regarded as both spiritual guides and educational leaders.

The Christian Brothers did not arrive on North American shores until 1837, though not for a lack of trying. As early as 1717, prominent Montreal-based fur trade merchant turned humanitarian Jean-Francois de la Barre requested that the Brothers come to New France to assist the Charon Brothers, a charitable organization he founded in 1699. However, De La Salle himself advised against it. One of the Brothers’ most famous historians has hinted that De La Salle was moved by prophetic clairvoyance, meaning that he had experienced a vision or

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35 Directors were only to be spoken to with profound respect and veneration in both the community house and at school. “On the Communications of Brothers Directors with their Inferiors,” in A Collection of Various Short Treatises [hereafter Collection] (New York: La Salle Bureau, 1932), 193-4. See also “Chapter XII: Of the Manner in which the Brothers are to Behave Towards the Brother Director,” in The Rule, 1925.

36 “Ten Conditions that Correction should have, so that it may be to the purpose,” and “For Giving an Account of One’s Conduct,” in Collection, 16 and 30-2.

revelation that advised against extending their operations beyond Europe. A more likely reason for not departing for New France was because of the great distance between France and its colonial outpost and the cost of sending and maintaining Brothers. Despite being formally known as les Frères Hospitaliers de Saint-Joseph de la Croix, the Charon Brothers were more concerned with education than health care. They hoped to expand schooling options for children in New France and in 1737 again requested the services of the Christian Brothers. The Superior General, Brother Timothée, was amenable to the idea, and sent over Brothers Denis and Pacifique that summer to study the feasibility of such a venture. Negotiations produced an Act of Association in September 1737, but ultimately, nothing developed on the ground and the two Brothers returned to France. The Charon Brothers and the Christian Brothers continued to discuss the possibility of establishing a school for the following several months, but Brother Timothée officially rejected the idea in March 1738.

The Institute’s principal English-speaking historian, W.J. Battersby, suggests that the rationale for not sending Brothers to Montreal in the 1730s was due to “financial insecurity.” However, Brother Luke Salm argues that De La Salle did not send Brothers because Charon was intent on breaking up the community and placing the Brothers under the control of local priests. Whatever the case might be, it would be another 100 years before the Christian Brothers finally established a permanent presence in the region, now officially called Lower Canada and a British colony. At the behest of M. Joseph-Vincent Quiblier, Superior of the Sulpicians in Montreal in the late 1820s and throughout the 1830s, the Superior General Brother Anaclet decided to send

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40 LAC, m.f. K197, reel # 010012-15, Frère Timothée to “Mon très cher frère,” 8 March 1738.
Brothers Aidant (Director), Adalbertus, Rombaud and Euverte to the city in 1837. From their November 1837 arrival through to June 1838, these first four Brothers lived gratis at the Sulpicians’ seminary. They were the first religious congregation to arrive in Canada from France following the 1763 British Conquest, followed in quick succession by the Oblate Fathers in 1841 and the Jesuits in 1842. Before the 1840s came to a close, ten male Catholic teaching orders had settled in Lower Canada.

The Christian Brothers faced considerable challenges immediately upon arrival. In the first half of the nineteenth century, educational opportunities for youth in Quebec were very limited. Some girls had the opportunity to study under the tutelage of the Ursulines, Congregation of Notre Dame, or other Sisters.43 Many Anglo-Protestant boys living in urban areas studied a classical education as they aimed for positions in business, the liberal professions, and skilled trades. Franco-Catholic boys, though, were much more limited in access to formal schooling. In order to enter the professions, some attended Royal Schools administered by the colonial government or studied at parish schools under clerical control. On the whole, though, most boys went to work in the farms or forests as soon as they were able and illiteracy was high.44 In the context of political clashes between the English-Protestant Executive Council and the French-Catholic Legislative Assembly throughout the 1830s, funding for education waned and many schools closed their doors. Moreover, in the wake of the 1837-38 Rebellions and the Durham Report, many French Canadians feared the loss of Catholic schooling and resisted efforts at cultural assimilation through education. Given this context, many parents were anxious to send their children to École Saint-Laurent, the school the Brothers opened in 1837. Indeed, they immediately began teaching 200 primarily French-speaking boys, albeit with some English-

speakers as well. As such, an anonymous author in the De La Salle Auxiliary considered the school to be “the cradle of the Institute in North America.” By 1839, this small group of Brothers departed the Sulpicians’ seminary, establishing separate quarters in what they labelled the Saint-Laurent community.

In order to fulfill the Lower Canadian clergy’s growing demands for their services in the early 1840s and to counter what he considered to be an aggressive campaign by Protestants to establish more schools, the community Director, Brother Aidant, requested “Brothers, more Brothers, and still more Brothers” to teach both French and English-speaking children. More Brothers did arrive from France in the following few years, first establishing additional schools in Montreal, including Saint Patrick (1841), Collège de Montreal (1842), and École de l’Évêché (1843) before next settling in Quebec City (1843) and in Trois-Rivières (1844). In order to secure a native-born cohort of Brothers, a temporary novitiate was opened in Montreal in 1838 and moved to more permanent quarters in 1842. Such a development facilitated ongoing school establishments in Montreal. Other communities and schools followed in rapid succession, with varying degrees of longevity: Oka (1849), Beauharnois (1849), Sorel (1849), Saint-Thomas de Montmagny (1849), Kamouraska (1850), Yamachiche (1853), L’Islet (1853), Lévis (1853), and

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45 The school has the distinction of being the first in the world in which the Brothers taught in English, and therefore, according to the Toronto Brothers, those four men were regarded as their “spiritual progenitors … whose courage and spirit of faith made possible the work carried on to-day in our District.” For more information on the earliest Brothers in Montreal, including biographies of the first four arrivals, see Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle, 55-6 and 62-70 and Francois De Lagrave, “Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes au Canada, 1837-1904,” SCHÉC Études d’histoire religieuse 36 (1969), 32.

46 The De La Salle Auxiliary was a quarterly publication of the Auxiliary Association, an organization designed to raise money and pray for novices. LAC, m.f. K212, reel # 161943, De La Salle Auxiliary, Centenary Number, 1937, 12-13.

47 LAC, m.f. K213, reel # 171991, Frère Aidant to Frère Assistant, 12 April 1841. See also LAC, m.f. K213, reel # 171993-94, Frère Aidant to Frère Philippe, 26 April 1841 and LAC m.f. K213, reel # 171997-99, Frère Aidant to Frère Philippe, 2 September 1841.

48 The Collège de Montréal became Sainte-Anne in 1862 and the École de l’Évêché became Saint-Jacques in 1865. The Brothers established two other elementary schools in Quebec City in 1849 and a Commercial Academy in 1862.

49 These schools include: Sainte-Brigide (1845), Saint-Roch (1852), and Saint-Joseph (1858). Several others opened from the 1860s onward.
Saint-Jean de Dorchester (1855). Dozens of others followed suit in Canada East – later the province of Quebec – over the next century.\textsuperscript{50} Two other short-lived French-language communities and schools were also established in Saint-Boniface, Manitoba (1854-58) and in Arichat, Nova Scotia (1860-66).

The growing population of Irish Catholics in Lower Canada/Canada East from the 1820s to the 1860s, particularly in Montreal and Quebec City, meant a corresponding rise in an English-speaking clergy as well as a demand for English-language teachers in Catholic schools. The Irish population in the colony’s two urban centres each established a St. Patrick’s Church and a concomitant St. Patrick’s School. The Christian Brothers were tasked with teaching and administration in these schools, beginning in 1841 in Montreal and 1848 in Quebec City.\textsuperscript{51} Once firmly established in these cities, English-speaking Brothers soon began their numeric and geographic expansion, particularly to the large cities on America’s eastern seaboard. In 1845, they established a community and school in Baltimore. Two years later, Calvert Hall was opened as a novitiate to attract American-born vocations.\textsuperscript{52} In 1848, all Brothers’ communities in North America were located in Canada East (Quebec) and Baltimore. That year, Brother Facile was appointed Visitor and membership and institutional development grew rapidly. The Brothers established a community in New York City in 1848. Five years later, they opened a boarding

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{50}] For details on foundations, closures, and other key events between 1837 and 1937, see “Fondations Canadiennes des Frères des Écoles Chrétienes (Ordre Chronologique)” in Les Frères des Écoles Chrétienes, \textit{L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle}, 518-20.
\item[\textsuperscript{51}] Murray Nicolson, \textit{Catholics in English Canada: A Popular History, Volume I: 1790-1900} (Toronto: Ave Maria Press, 2000), 67-8. Nicolson posits that St. Patrick’s in Montreal did not open until 1846. However, although housed in a wing of École Saint-Laurent, St. Patrick’s School was a separate institution providing English-language instruction beginning 1 September 1841. Brothers Adelbertus, Paul, Laurent, and Cassien were teachers there, though all were of French background. For more details, see Antonio Caporicci, \textit{The Contribution of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to Education in Lower Canada, 1837-1847} (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1983), 126.
\item[\textsuperscript{52}] Brothers of the Christian Schools, \textit{Ten Decades of Education}, 38-40.
\end{itemize}
school, Manhattan College, in the New York suburb of Manhattanville.\textsuperscript{53} The Baltimore novitiate moved to New York in 1861, producing an even higher number of recruits. The Brothers were able to establish schools in St. Louis (1849), Troy (1850), Detroit (1851), Washington (1851), New Orleans (1853), Philadelphia (1853), Brooklyn (1854), Utica (1854), and Rochester (1857). Such progression resulted with a separate American District being established in 1864. Ongoing success in recruitment necessitated the American District’s own separation in 1874, establishing two districts headquartered in Baltimore and New York respectively.\textsuperscript{54}

Simultaneous to the rapid expansion in the United States, the Christian Brothers in Canada moved both east and west from the centre of operations in Montreal. In the Maritimes, communities were established in a few key urban hubs, including two in Halifax (1865-75 and 1868-76), Saint John (1866-77), Charlottetown (1870-78), and Chatham (1876-80).\textsuperscript{55} However, it was in the British colony of Upper Canada, later the Canadian province of Ontario, where a more permanent foothold emerged. The first community was established in Toronto in 1851 and two schools were immediately opened, namely St. Michael’s and St. Paul’s. A third school, St. Mary’s, opened in 1855. All three of these schools offered classes for boys only, a practice that continued throughout the duration of this study. The Brothers also established communities and schools in other cities across the colony as well, including Kingston (1853), Ottawa (1864), and St. Catharines (1876). When the Toronto District was founded in 1888, several communities and schools were instantly established, including Renfrew (1889), Hamilton (1891), Cleveland, Ohio (1893), and Toronto’s St. John’s Industrial School (1895).\textsuperscript{56} Toronto was the headquarters of all administrative operations in Ontario, and the city was home to the houses of formation. The

\textsuperscript{54} A new novitiate opened in Ammendale, Maryland in 1880 to serve the burgeoning Baltimore District.
\textsuperscript{55} Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, \textit{L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle}, 519.
\textsuperscript{56} The Brothers also began teaching at Toronto’s St. Helen’s School in 1890 and St. Francis School in 1894.
Toronto District was re-amalgamated with the Montreal District in 1896, and all communities outside of Toronto and Ottawa were closed. Only when the Toronto District was re-established in 1914 did development occur at a much more rapid pace.

The years 1880 and 1937 have been chosen to highlight specific moments in time in the congregation’s Canadian context, and to showcase the transformations in their administrative hierarchy, membership numbers, and geographic coverage between these years. In 1880, the Assistant responsible for all Brothers in North America was Brother Patrick (John Patrick Murphy). He was stationed at the Brothers’ Motherhouse in Paris, France, but made regular visits to Canada and the United States throughout his tenure.\footnote{Brother Patrick (1822-91), born John Patrick Murphy in County Tipperary, Ireland, moved to Canada very early in his life. He took the habit in 1844 in Montreal, where he taught for many years before becoming the city’s Inspector of Schools. He became Director of the important communities tied to St. Louis College in Missouri and to Manhattan College in New York, and was Visitor of the New York District from 1866 until 1873. He replaced Brother Facile as Assistant in 1873 becoming the first Assistant for North America born outside Quebec. For more details, see Nive Voisine, \textit{Les Frères des Écoles Chrétienes au Canada: Une Ère de Prospérité, 1880-1946, Tome II} (Sainte-Foy, Quebec: Éditions A. Sigier, 1987), 277-79.} The Visitor for the District was Brother Réticius (Louis Gonnet), who lived in Montreal. Like his superior, Brother Réticius made annual visits to all communities under his jurisdiction, including the three in Ontario, which, like all members of the order in Canada at this time, belonged to the Montreal District.\footnote{The Montreal District had previously included all communities in Canada and the United States. However, the district lost its authority to govern in the U.S. when the New York District was established in 1864.} A local Director headed each Ontario community: Brother Tobias (James O’Reilly) in Toronto, Brother Halward (Patrick Ennis) in Kingston, and Brother Christian (George Carroll) in St. Catharines. In these three cities, a total of 31 Brothers taught over 1000 children in seven schools.\footnote{Statistics compiled from information available in BCSA, 700 Series, Toronto District Communities, De La Salle Community, Kingston Community, St. Catharines Community, 1880. It is likely that some novices were actually teaching in the schools at this time.}

By 1937, the situation had changed significantly given the extensive growth in membership in the preceding six decades. There were now three districts in Canada: two headquartered in Quebec were for the massive number of French-speaking Brothers while the
English-speaking Communities of Christian Brothers outside Ontario, 1837-1962

Montreal, QC, 1841
Quebec City, QC, 1848
Halifax, NS, 1865
Saint John, NB, 1866
Charlottetown, PEI, 1870
Chatham, NB, 1876
Yokton, SK, 1919
Edmonton, AB, 1927
Lachine, QC, 1950
Thome Lake, QC, 1957
Not pictured
English-speaking Communities of Christian Brothers in Ontario, 1851-1962

Community and Foundation Dates

- Toronto, 1851
- Kingston, 1853
- St. Catharines, 1876
- Ottawa, 1877
- Renfrew, 1889
- Hamilton, 1891
- Aurora, 1915
- London, 1920
- Windsor, 1924
- Oshawa, 1944
- Pembroke, 1948
one headquartered in Toronto was for the country’s English-speaking Brothers. Combined, these three districts incorporated 920 Brothers teaching nearly 35,000 pupils in 79 schools; another 220 Brothers took on administrative or training positions while 485 boys and young men were in one of the three stages of formation. Under the Visitorship of Frère Paulin, the Montreal District incorporated 537 French-speaking Brothers and another 197 in the various stages of formation. The Quebec District was headed by Frère Germain, and included 453 Brothers in the region in and around Quebec City along with another 206 in training. Finally, at this time, the Toronto District was presided over by Brother Austin (Austin Dee). As Visitor, he was stationed in the city of Toronto, but was in charge of 150 Brothers and 82 boys in formation in an English-language District scattered into 17 distinct communities located across the country: four in Aurora, five in Toronto, and one each in London and Windsor; three English-speaking communities in Montreal and one in Quebec City; and one community each in Yorkton, Saskatchewan and Edmonton, Alberta. Together, these Brothers taught 4,730 boys in 16 different institutions. In Ontario proper, there were 11 communities each supervised by a director: Brothers Marcellus (Holy Family [for retirees]), Romuald (Juniorate), Mondolf of Mary (Novitiate), and Prudent (Scholasticate) in Aurora; Brothers Alfred (Oaklands), Sebastian Victor (De La Salle), Rogatian (St. Mary’s), Simplician Cyril (St. John’s), and Austin (Benildus Hall) in Toronto; Brother Camillus (Windsor); and Brother Ignatius (London). Before any boy could become a Brother – let alone tackle a leadership position in the

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60 In 1937, Canada was home to just three of the Institute’s 66 districts across 64 countries. At this time, the city of Halifax was home to one community of Brothers, but they were part of the New York District, and most were American-born and trained.
61 The Montreal District included the French-language communities and attached schools in Ottawa and Alfred, Ontario.
62 The four communities in Aurora all operated out of the same site at the District Motherhouse. These included one community for retirees, and one for each level of the novitiate.
63 Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle, 191-94.
64 Brother Austin was simultaneously Visitor for the District and Director of Benildus Hall.
hierarchy – he had to go through a process of discernment and novitiate training. While Vatican II insisted that all baptized Catholics make up the Church and are equally called to holiness and to participate in the Church’s mission, the division between laity and clergy was much more rigid before the 1960s. In Canada, those in the pews were subservient to those in the pulpit; becoming a religious – whether priest, brother, nun, or sister – was to enter the realm of a higher vocation. Catholic parents and the community of the faithful regarded having a son or daughter enter into a religious office with extraordinary esteem. The Brothers themselves reinforced such a viewpoint. One of their most cherished guidebooks noted that he who has entered the religious state and who has devoted himself to Christ “dies more confidently” and is “rewarded more abundantly” in the next world. Recruitment centred around engaging boys who they perceived to have a special interest in Catholicism or enticing those who had previously indicated they were interested in the religious life.

Between 1851 and 1962, Ontario boys were procured into the congregation through three key ways: recommendations from local priests, the everyday conduct of the Brothers in the schools they operated, and, after 1909, the visits from an officially assigned Brother Recruiter. At least some boys decided to enter the Brothers’ ranks because positive role models they saw in their teachers inspired them to do so. In the Brothers’ necrology, there is a first person account by an anonymous Brother from Kingston recounting the impact of his teacher, Brother Halward:

I shall never forget the deep impression made upon me by the look of this venerated Brother on the occasion of my first interview with him. He seemed to me to be the type of true religious dignity; in a word, a man of God, and an interior voice whispered to me: ‘Why not be like him?’ In fact, from that moment my vocation was decided.

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65 Gerald O’Collins, *Catholicism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87. This division lingers among both Catholics and non-Catholics, who often write or speak of the “Church” as referring to the pope, bishops, priests, and doctrine and not necessarily the congregation of believers.
67 Brother Walter Farrell, FSC, ed., *Deceased Brothers, Toronto, Volume I: 1869-1940*, 42. This fascinating collection of biographical sketches – some lifted from previously published obituaries and others compiled through research by the Brothers’ archivist, Brother Walter – provides several other examples of this type of narrative. See,
He was certainly not alone, and the trend of “Brothers’ boys” becoming Brothers themselves grew stronger into the twentieth century. Around 1952, one Brother estimated that about 80% of all Brothers in the Toronto District came from schools taught by Brothers. While exemplary conduct on a daily basis was supposed to encourage vocations, promoting the callings to the religious life also took place during visits from the novitiate director and, after 1909, from a Brother Recruiter. These Brothers travelled to schools and churches – often on an assigned Vocation Day – and spoke of the congregation’s dignified work. The first and longest serving Brother Recruiter in Ontario was Brother Simon Stock (Patrick Staunton), who, with an “unflagging good humour” and “amiable piety,” fulfilled this task from 1909 until 1936.

Table 1 indicates all those who received the Habit in Toronto after having trained at the various incarnations of the city’s novitiate between 1880 and 1964. It shows tremendous development, particularly in the number of Ontario-born candidates. The period between 1890 and 1895 is particularly intriguing because candidates were trained under the authority of the Toronto District, not – as had previously been the case – authorities in Montreal. Although operational for only five years, the evidence suggests that this brief stint of autonomous control contributed to significant numerical growth and a fruitful placement rate of novitiate graduates into several Ontario Catholic schools. Statistically, Ontario-born boys and young men dominated.

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68 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 170.1, District de Toronto, c. 1952.
69 Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle, 131. Brother Simon was born Patrick Staunton in Maidstone England in 1877. He entered the Toronto Juniorate in 1891, and the Novitiate in 1893, whereupon he received the Habit in August of that year. He then taught for the following 10 years at schools in Toronto and Montreal. Except for a brief tenure as Director of the Novitiate in Aurora from 1916 to 1918, Brother Simon was Recruiter from 1909 until 1936. He then moved to Rome to do secretarial work before taking on recruiting work in Australia. Finally, in the late 1940s, he returned to Toronto to work as Sub-Director at the Novitiate before retiring to the Motherhouse. His obituary notes that he was a “perfect gentleman” with whom “everyone felt at ease” because he was “respectful” and a “devout religious … known to never say a bad word about anyone.” For more details on his life, see LAC, m.f. K222, reel # 261854-58, Frère Simon Stock, 217-221 and Brother Walter Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Toronto, Volume III: 1941-1970, 113-15.
Of the 49 boys and young men who took the habit in Toronto during this period, 34 (70 per cent) were born in the province of Ontario.\(^7\) Rural areas were regarded as particularly fertile fields for recruitment. Statistics bear this out, with 25 (73.5 per cent) of the 34 Ontario-born members born in rural areas. Of those 25 rural-born Brothers, 14 (56 per cent) were from Renfrew or surrounding area. The Brothers particularly targeted the Ottawa Valley because of the large population of Catholics and their reputation as devout followers of the faith.\(^7\) It is plausible, though, that they also targeted this area because Catholic families were generally large and second and third sons would likely have been unable to inherit land.\(^7\)

For reasons to be discussed in Chapter Two, the Toronto novitiate and the entire Toronto District were closed in 1896. When the novitiate reformed in 1913 and the Toronto District re-established in 1914, the resulting expansion in vocations was dramatic with the overwhelming majority – 646 out of 705 (91.6 per cent) – of those who received the habit from Toronto doing so in the period between 1913 and 1964. Moreover, the boom in Ontario-born candidates in this era was particularly striking, with 432 boys and young men (66.8 per cent) joining the ranks from that province alone. Although on a smaller scale, such figures are comparable to the number of new priests at St. Augustine’s Seminary in Toronto, which also opened in 1913. Using the same date parameters of 1913-1964, St. Augustine’s ordained a total of 1469 priests, with just under 60 per cent of these men coming from Ontario-based dioceses.\(^7\)

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\(^7\) The other 15 include 5 from Ireland, 3 from Quebec, 3 from the United States, and 4 from elsewhere.
\(^7\) When the Toronto District opened in 1888, leaders in Toronto worked quickly to establish a school in Renfrew, hoping that they could provide an education and simultaneously work to recruit boys to join the order. In this they were successful, as “the boys took to the Brothers immediately” upon the opening of the De La Salle Institute on 7 January 1890. BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, *History of the Novitiate of Toronto*, 3.
\(^7\) If one were to rely entirely on the hagiographical sources available, it would seem that all boys and young men became Brothers for purely noble reasons. It is probable, though, that economic factors were at play and that the leaders and recruiters in Toronto knew this and consequently targeted the area for postulants.
\(^7\) For a record of all priests ordained at St. Augustine’s Seminary between 1913 and 1964, see Karen Marshall Booth, *The People Cry – ‘Send us Priests’: The First Seventy-Five Years of St. Augustine’s Seminary of Toronto, 1913-1988* (Toronto: St. Augustine’s Seminary Alumni Association, 1988), 41-57.
Table 1: Receiving the Habit in Toronto, 1880-1964

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TOTALS by #: 705 471 99 62 18 20 35
TOTALS by %: 100% 66.8% 14.0% 8.8% 2.6% 2.8% 5.0%

Source: Compiled from evidence of Novitiate statistics contained in LAC, m.f. K197, m.f. 012429-012476, Noviciat, 1880-1964.
Between 1913 and 1964, the numerical growth in the Brothers’ ranks went through various ebbs and flows, suggesting that social and economic factors also acted as key contributors to fluctuating numbers joining Catholic orders. Amidst the context of the war boom, the period from 1913-19 saw an average of 9.6 new Brothers every year. There was a slight rise to an average of 10.4 new Brothers annually from 1920-29. From 1930-39, there was a much larger pool with an average of 14.2 new Brothers per year, indicating that, perhaps, in the midst of the Great Depression, many boys (and their families) opted for the welfare and security that life in a Catholic order was supposed to guarantee. The 1940s were a decade of contrasts. There was an average of only 6.3 new Brothers per year amidst the context of full employment provided by the war years of 1940-5. However, 1946-9 witnessed a dramatic shift in the Brothers’ fortunes, with an average of 17.5 new Brothers per year joining during this period. The latter 1940s set in motion a period of constancy that would go unabated until the mid-1960s. Indeed, the 1950s averaged 14.4 and the first half of the 1960s averaged 16.2 new Brothers per year.

Local superiors fondly regarded any boy’s willingness to join the Institute, irrespective of decade, where a boy was from, and whether or not his teacher was a Brother. They expected to transform him from a worldly individual into a man of God with hopes of heavenly rewards. A 1947 recruitment pamphlet for the Toronto novitiate noted that joining the Christian Brothers was an “investment in immortality.” But simply because a boy – typically 16 or 17 years of age

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75 Heidi MacDonald has used the Census of Canada to show that, on the whole, religious brothers grew by an average of 13% in the 1920s and 13% in the 1930s. However, developments in the Christian Brothers in Ontario specifically illustrate the necessity to recognize regional and congregational differences. See Heidi MacDonald, “Entering the Convent as Coming of Age in the 1930s,” in Elizabeth M. Smyth, ed., Changing Habits: Women’s Religious Orders in Canada (Ottawa: Novalis, 2007), 99.

in the nineteenth century and 13 or 14 years of age in the twentieth century – entered the novitiate did not necessarily translate into a permanent place within its ranks.\(^{77}\) In other words, placement into the novitiate did not automatically equate with a vocation; teenage boys were not always sure if what they were thinking or feeling were true signs of a religious calling. Hence, the Christian Brothers, like other Catholic orders, created a system whereby boys would either be initiated into or rejected from the congregation following a training period. A brief synopsis of the life of James Peter O’Reilly – known in religion as Brother Tobias Josephus – provides insight into the process by which a boy developed in his religious and professional status as a postulant and then as a full-fledged Christian Brother in English Canada. Brother Tobias was a prominent teacher, school inspector, and director in late-nineteenth century Toronto and became the first Visitor of the short-lived Toronto District in 1888. While he may not be representative of all Brothers in the province, the developments in his life can illustrate the activities and practices of a boy’s life in the various stages of formation and a Brother’s life in community. Such an investigation into his life will shed light on the two-sided relationship between a Brother’s internal religiosity and his external apostolate.

James O’Reilly was born to Irish-Catholic immigrants in St. Catherine, Quebec in August of 1849. The specific rationale for O’Reilly’s decision to become a Christian Brother is unknown, but he entered the Montreal novitiate on 21 September 1866.\(^{78}\) The conditions for O’Reilly’s admission – and that of his confreres from Ontario or Quebec in the mid-nineteenth-century – were not overly rigorous, the only requirements being a recommendation from his pastor or confessor, a copy of his baptismal registry, and, if a minor, a letter providing his

\(^{77}\) These ages are based on an evaluation of the hundreds of Brothers who are listed in Farrell’s *Deceased Brothers*, Volumes I, II, and III.

\(^{78}\) O’Reilly was likely already aware of what was to be expected, having a brother who became a priest and a sister who became a member of the Congregation of Notre Dame. BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, O’N-O’SU, O’Reilly, James P. (Bro. Tobias Josephus).
parents’ consent. Boys like O’Reilly who were accepted into the novitiate were there to apprentice into the Brothers’ spiritual, professional, and community life. Boys and young men were trained to be model teachers and spiritual leaders in these internal training institutions. Here, they had to learn how to be good religious, but also how to incorporate their own faith and zeal into the classrooms and thereby keep youth engaged in their spirituality and deeply connected to the Catholic Church.

O’Reilly’s novitiate training occurred for only two months, a typical length of formation in an era when the congregation’s leadership was concentrating on getting Brothers into as many classrooms as possible. It seems as though the emphasis on and dedication to boys’ gradual spiritual growth in the novitiate was partly sacrificed for the more practical aim of getting Brothers teaching in the growing number of schools they were operating. Yet, as more boys and young men sought entry and as standards of professionalization rose in the 1870s and 1880s, a more thorough pedagogical and religious training period was introduced. The customary period of formation in Canada was extended in 1876, when a Preparatory or Junior Novitiate (often referred to as the Juniorate) was opened in Montreal as a condition for entry into the now-renamed Senior Novitiate. Both the Montreal Juniorate and its Toronto counterpart, which opened briefly from 1890-95 and permanently after 1908, admitted boys aged 13 to 16 for a mix of religious preparation and academic study appropriate for their age and mental capabilities. Boys only qualified if they had already earned their High School Entrance Certificate, since the four years would overlap with the High School program. Other key social, physical, biological,

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79 In the nineteenth century, novitiate directors rarely accepted boys younger than 16, though regularly allowed men in their 20s and 30s to train in the novitiate alongside the teenage boys.
80 BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, O’N-O’SU, O’Reilly, James P. (Bro. Tobias Josephus).
81 Most often, boys entered the Juniorate at age 14 if they were from Ontario and age 13 if they were from Quebec. Exceptions were made for slightly older teenage boys who decided they wanted to pursue formation as religious later than the norm. If they had been enrolled in a different secondary school, they simply entered the Juniorate in the corresponding year of their studies and were quickly initiated into the religious formation element of Juniorate
and moral characteristics now had to be met, and the following qualities were required in an application for admission:

1. To be at least thirteen years of age, and of a respect able family.
2. Good health and sound mind.
3. A good character and irreproachable conduct.
4. A docile and sociable disposition.
5. Genuine piety and inclination to virtue.
6. The capacity to complete the required studies.  

Further, boys and young men hopeful to become Christian Brothers were expected to show detachment from worldly goods and interests, an attraction to prayer and love for God, and a desire to steer clear from the temptation of sin. Impediments to admission included those who needed to provide for their parents, those who had an inability to pay personal debts, and those with “[b]odily deformity, deafness, or defective sight.” There is a clear relationship between a Christian Brother’s spirituality and his apostolate visible here. It was felt that if a young man could not hear or see properly, he could not teach. If he could not teach, he could never be a Brother of the Christian Schools.

If all of the above-mentioned characteristics and expectations were met, boys were accepted into the Juniorate and were called Juniors. In 1908, a pamphlet advertised that Toronto’s new St. Joseph Junior Novitiate “offers to those noble and generous souls who feel that Almighty God has called them to labor for His glory and the salvation of youth, an opportunity of following their vocation.” Boys resided separated from outside (and what was considered negative) influences under the guidance of specially-assigned Brothers tasked with

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82 LAC, m.f. K217, reel # 211063, Novitiate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1898, 4-5.
83 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, The Christian Brother, 31. See also LAC, m.f. K217, reel # 211065, Novitiate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1898, 8.
84 LAC, m.f. K217, reel # 211063, Novitiate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1898, 4-5.
85 It also seems likely that the Brothers were in line with the general discrimination against the disabled in nineteenth-century Canada.
86 LAC, m.f. K219, reel # 232383, Brothers of the Christian Schools, St. Joseph’s Junior Novitiate, 1908.
moulding the postulant into a new man and encouraging him to have a closer relationship with Jesus. This meant that there was an emphasis on prayer, daily mass and communion, and regular observance of the sacrament of confession. Juniors were assigned a boy from the novitiate to act as their “guardian angel” who would pray for them, answer any questions, and calm any anxieties that they might have. Academics, athletics, cultural activities, and other forms of recreation were not neglected. In parallel fashion to girls in convent boarding schools or in the novitiates of women religious, these boys led highly regulated lives. In addition to the demands of the high school curriculum, prayer, study, eating, group activities, and physical fitness were all carried out so that overseers could determine the young man’s fitness for the calling of a religious educator as well as their suitability for community living and preparation for “the strenuous life ahead.”

For those boys that wanted to continue, had achieved their high school diploma, and were deemed prepared in their religious formation, they then entered the Senior Novitiate and continued on their path of religious and professional formation. It was here where boys were first exposed to the dual currents of internal religiosity and external apostolate. The novitiate’s objective was two-fold: young men would be instructed in the obligations and practices of fraternal communal living while simultaneously being groomed for the rigours of their classroom

87 LAC, m.f. K217, reel # 211897-09, Annual of the Pupils of Mount Saint Louis Institute, 1895-96, 1-25; LAC, m.f. K217, reel # 211976-83, Mont-Saint-Louis, c. 1900, 1-12; Private correspondence with Vince Thomson, formerly Brother Ambrose, 31 March 2015.
89 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, The Christian Brother, 1947, 25. Since boys attended the juniorate year-round, it was sometimes necessary to travel offsite for a change of scenery and to build up camaraderie, though always in private and isolated locations. In Ontario, after 1926, juniors took their summer getaways at Goffett’s Island in the northern reaches of Lake Simcoe, near the village of Atherley, providing the chance for swimming and other outdoor activities.
vocation. In the minds of the Brothers’ hierarchy, the novitiate training enabled boys and young men to be raised in the spirit of the founder, trained in the highly-regarded pedagogical formation of the Institute, and encouraged by the hope of a rich heavenly reward. In fourteen months of intense religious training under the supervision of a Master of Novices or Novice Director, boys learned about personal piety (what the Brothers called the interior life) and good outward conduct.\textsuperscript{90} They prepared for and then participated in retreats whose themes coincided with the liturgical calendar. Daily mass was mandatory to instil a love of Church and to ensure the reception of the sacraments. Plus, they held daily novenas and benediction to foster prayer and engrain a sense of holiness. Conferences with the director or with the Visitor were common to ensure novices were progressing along a proper spiritual path. Even all social time – including skating, hiking, picnics, and pilgrimages – were designed to nurture a sense of brotherhood.\textsuperscript{91}

Alongside the spiritual element was the apostolic. All novices were encouraged to build up “a strong spiritual character” which would set them on the right path towards enlightenment and perfection and make them better teachers.\textsuperscript{92} In the nineteenth century, novices learnt effective teaching techniques and classroom management in six to eight weeks of concentrated seminar- and lecture-based education, usually in the summer. Essentially, they trained according to the standards they had set for themselves in order to be “efficient and successful teachers” placed into classrooms immediately following their novitiate.\textsuperscript{93} Pedagogical instruction continued at the novitiate into the middle decades of the twentieth century, though new standards meant that it was generally interspersed into the weekly routine and was more preliminary in

\textsuperscript{90} Masters of Novices were themselves supposed to be models of humility and piety. For instance, from 1914 to 1924, Brother Urban (Thomas Patrick Agnew) preached that solid training necessarily incorporated spiritual, academic, and behavioural exercises so as to inculcate the necessary resolve to intensify boys’ commitment and instil the means to flourish as a teaching Brother. Farrell, ed., \textit{Deceased Brothers, Vol. III}, 1-3.

\textsuperscript{91} BCSA, 700 Series, \textit{The Habit and Novitiate History, Taking the Habit – Novitiate Diary}, 37-50.

\textsuperscript{92} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, \textit{The Christian Brother}, 1947, 26.

\textsuperscript{93} BCSA, 700 Series, \textit{The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto}, 16.
nature. Novices were introduced to theories of education and lesson planning, but more intensive classroom preparation was saved for the scholasticate, discussed below.

A typical day in the Aurora Novitiate in 1947 saw novices rise at 5:00 in the morning to immediately begin an hour of set prayers. After a brief period of free time, mass began in the chapel at 6:45. A silent breakfast in the refectory followed thereafter, followed by the Rosary and another brief period of free time. Between 9:00 and noon, novices spent time studying Catechism, French, and spiritual readings and then either praying or attending consultations with superiors. Depending on the day of the week, the hours after lunch were spent first in prayer and then either performing various menial tasks or engaging in recreation. Most of the rest of the afternoon was spent doing homework or receiving instruction on effective pedagogy and classroom preparation. After 3:00, there was time for visiting with fellow novices, praying, or experiencing free time. After saying the Office and enjoying a snack between 3:30 and 4:00, novices again sat down to study their vows, learn the order’s rules, and absorb the various fine points of Catechism. At 5:15, they received another break period before again sitting down for silent spiritual reading and mental prayers. Depending on the day of the week, after dinner was spent in various activities, including “Catechism of formation” on Mondays and Wednesdays, “personal work and reflection” on Tuesdays, learning the History of the Institute on Thursdays, publicly advertising one’s shortcomings on Fridays, and singing practice on Saturdays. To close out the day, novices got some free time before evening prayers.94

Throughout the course of the day, as well as the entire duration of their novitiate, novices were instructed to avoid sin, embrace modesty, humility, and self-control, obey God and superiors, and practice penance and strict fidelity to their rules and vows.95 All of these efforts

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94 LAC, m.f. K233, reel #370097, Ordinary Days, 29 October 1947.
95 “Reflections which the Brothers may make on the Means of Becoming Interior,” and “Principal Virtues which the
were designed to mould young Brothers to seek the perfection demanded by the Gospels and would ideally lead to virtuous members. The novice was to earnestly apply himself to fulfill his dual commitments to the spiritual and professional sides of his vocation. His emphasis on studying and teaching, much like his commitment to prayer and his vows, were the essential building blocks of his vocation.⁹⁶ Sometimes, though, novices were dismissed for not living up to the desired ideal. In 1890s Toronto, novices were dismissed for a variety of reasons, including speaking disparagingly of the Brothers or their habit, improper conduct, impiety, poor manners, limited aptitude for study or prayer, and “troublesome and annoying” behaviour in general. Still others left of their own accord.⁹⁷

At the end of their novitiate, novices were required to take five vows to fulfill entry into the community and thereby satisfy all the requirements of their apostolate. All religious orders and congregations in the Catholic Church – male and female – take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and the Christian Brothers committed to them accordingly.⁹⁸ Two further vows were distinctive to them specifically and were entwined with their lives as teachers. First, Brothers took a vow of stability, promising to remain steadfast in their commitment to the congregation. No Brother could leave the Institute – either to depart to the priesthood, leave for another order, or “return to the world” – without the express permission of the Superior

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⁹⁷ Commenting upon Brother Sigefride Jerome’s departure from the Senior Novitiate in July 1894, for instance, the *History of the Novitiate of Toronto* noted no ill will toward him, remarking that he “possessed an agreeable disposition, gave fair satisfaction in the Novitiate, but gradually lost taste for the religious life, and concluded that he could not content himself to remain any longer.” For details, see BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, *History of the Novitiate of Toronto*, 19, 46, 50, and 58.
⁹⁸ Amongst these three, the vow of obedience was, for the Brothers, “the principal and most necessary virtue for religious and all persons living in community.” Indeed, the virtue of obedience was seen as so important that all Brothers were to observe the will, judgements, and orders of superiors as they would for God. For more details, see “The Nine Conditions of Obedience,” in *Collection*, 33-4. According to De La Salle, “The main benefit obedience produces in a religious person is that it procures for us the perfection proper to our state, fortifies us in it, and assures perseverance.” De La Salle, *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*, cited in Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., *John Baptist de la Salle*, 89.
Second, in what was essentially their vow of poverty transposed to the classroom, they vowed to teach the poor gratuitously, meaning that neither individual Brothers nor the community itself could receive payment or gifts of any kind in exchange for instruction. There was no specific vow to teach per se, perhaps because the congregation itself was entirely geared toward fulfilling an education-based apostolate.

For most of the nineteenth century, once a Brother successfully finished his novitiate, he was considered prepared for his duties as a teacher and responsibilities as a religious and so entered into his active apostolate. Having clearly proclaimed his intent to abide by these vows, passed through the required training, and deemed worthy by his superiors, James O’Reilly received the Holy Habit and became Brother Tobias Josephus. He was now expected to live in close association with other men of kindred intellectual vision and sense of purpose and was deemed prepared to tackle the important work of “saving souls.” Every thought and deed was supposed to be infused by a belief that he was working toward becoming a more holy Brother and adept teacher. Brother Tobias immediately started teaching in Toronto, but in the summer of 1869, and just three years removed from receiving the habit, he was sent to Saint John, New Brunswick to teach in the first form class. In August of that year, he participated in a vow renewal ceremony, pledging to commit to the order for another year. He soon established

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99 If a Brother left the Institute, they were said to have “returned to the world.” The ‘world’ referred to the non-religious state and was a phrase members of religious orders used to distinguish their life from one who had not made that commitment to the Church.

100 For details on the obligations associated with each vow, see Chapter XVII: Of the Vows; Chapter XVIII: Of the Obligations of the Vows; Chapter XIX: Of Poverty; Chapter XX: Of Chastity; Chapter XXI: Of Obedience, all found in The Rule, 1925.

101 There was no universal organization of instruction in nineteenth-century English Canada. Programs were generally divided into elementary and secondary schools with each of these sub-divided into smaller components so that children could be grouped together by age and/or capabilities. In New Brunswick at this time, elementary schools consisted of four forms each lasting two years; the first form was a term referring to the youngest children in the school. In reference to today’s terminology, the first form would apply loosely to Grades 1-2. For details, see R.D. Gidney and W.P. J. Millar, How Schools Worked: Public Education in English Canada, 1900-1940 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 198-99.

102 O’Reilly’s vow renewal ceremony took place with four confreres on the morning of 1 August 1869 in Saint John.
himself as a vaunted teacher and tireless advocate of the faith, establishing a Catholic Young Men’s Association in the city in addition to his class work.

After six years of teaching in Saint John, Brother Tobias was named director of the community in 1875. When it closed the following year, he was transferred to Toronto. After only one year, he was chosen as director of the Brothers’ high school, the De La Salle Institute, in 1877. Over the following decade, he served as Inspector of Schools, principal, and director, and even wrote elementary and intermediate-level course readers titled *Lessons in English*. Such experience made him the natural and unanimous choice to be the first Visitor of the Toronto District when it was created in 1888. He held this position until 1894, when he moved briefly to Manhattan College in New York before becoming the Director of Scholastics at Ammendale, Maryland in 1896. Finally, in 1898, Brother Tobias was sent to Marseilles as an English teacher, and he died there from pneumonia the following year.

Until the famous Grattan Case and subsequent 1907 passage of *An Act respecting the Qualification of Certain Teachers* (Seath Act) – discussed in detail in Chapter Three – the internal training Brothers received in the novitiate was permissible to begin teaching in Catholic schools. The transformation in standards ushered in by the Seath Act coupled with the expanding English-language Catholic school system in twentieth-century Ontario necessitated that the

Dressed in their long black robes, the Brothers had Mass before walking back to their community house on Orange Street. Presiding over the ceremony was Brother Hoséa, the Visitor and Brother Tobias’ former Novice Director. Brother Leo, the community’s director, assisted with the officiating. The ceremony began with the *Veni Creator* and *Deus qui corda*. Brother Tobias was the first one to approach the altar. He held a lighted taper and knelt before Brother Hoséa. He then made the sign of the cross and proceeded to read aloud his testimony, promising to consecrate himself to God and to uphold his vows. He then kissed the hand of the Visitor as a sign of obedience, thus concluding his rite of passage. Each Brother in the community then followed suit and received the accolade in turn. The ceremony concluded with the singing of the *Te Deum*. Cited in LAC, m.f. 218, # 221334-5, No. 241, Canada Communautés, St. John, Nouveau-Brunswick, Canada, *Historique*. Note that the duration that a Brother committed himself to was dependent upon his status and age – making annual, triennial, or perpetual vows. Vows were renewed annually until the age 22, triennially between the age of 22 and 25, and perpetually after the age of 25. For more details on this process, see AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, *The Christian Brother*, 1947, 26.

Brothers attend provincially-run pedagogy classes. In 1918, the Ontario Brothers introduced a scholasticate, the third and last stage of the formation process. Essentially, these Brothers re-crafted the teacher professionalization program in their imaging because they could not separate the teacher training from the religious training; each was needed in harmony to benefit the Brother’s development.

In the first year, scholastics in the Toronto District were supposed to concentrate on keeping up the intense religious formation begun in the novitiate through regular prayer and catechism study along with reading the *Collection* and *The Rule*. Inspiration was supposed to emerge from spiritual readings such as De La Salle’s *Meditations*, the Brothers’ own internally-produced publications, the lives of the saints, histories of the church, as well as from key Catholic theologians from Thomas Aquinas’ celebrated classics to Hans Küng’s earliest writings, such as *The Council and Reunion* (1960) and *Structures of the Church* (1962). The second year of the scholasticate was focused on picking up the academic work left off after the juniorate, either at the Provincial Normal School in Toronto or at St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto. Essentially, the program of studies embraced pedagogical training for the unseasoned teacher’s development, enabling them to finish their teacher training in a provincially sanctioned environment while living with their confreres in a religious community. While in the scholasticate, it was every Brother’s task “to develop himself into an appealing teacher and leader of youth.” As such, extra-curricular activities were not neglected. There was plenty of time for athletics, drama, debating, public speaking, and journalism, among other activities. These were necessary aspects in the training of Brothers for their life in the school, since they would no doubt conduct such extracurriculars once they were living in their respective

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105 De La Salle initially designed the *Collection* as a shorter commentary on or companion piece to *The Rule*.
communities and associated with a given school.

By 1918, then, a Brother in the Toronto District had to have finished his juniorate, spent a year in the novitiate, a year in the scholasticate, and a year in attendance at the Toronto Normal School before being considered prepared for his classroom apostolate. This preparation was even deemed worthy to immediately tackle positions of significant responsibility. For instance, at the age of 20, Brother Damian, recently graduated from the Toronto Normal School, took on the role of Fourth Form (Entrance Class) teacher and principal at St. Mary’s School in Toronto, then probably the largest Catholic elementary school in the city. He held the position for the following seven years before being transferred to become principal at St. Francis School.  

At the same time as receiving the habit and proclaiming vows incorporated men into the church and into the worldwide collective of Brothers, it also distinguished the life of a religious with a life “in the world.” De La Salle wrote that upon entering the religious state, Brothers ought to practice “a piety that is more than ordinary. It should distinguish you from other people; otherwise, it will be difficult for you to carry out your ministry successfully.” One of the most obvious differentiating factors was the new name one received upon joining the congregation. At the end of the novitiate, boys left their names behind, adopting new names and were henceforth identified only as such. To give one example, in 1948, after five years in the Aurora juniorate and novitiate, a Toronto native by the name of Vince Thomson became Brother Senan Ambrose – though he was only ever referred to by the latter appellation. Senan was his ‘district name’ while Ambrose was his ‘religious name.’ The double designation was necessary to avoid confusion with Brothers of the same name around the world. There may have been another Brother Ambrose, for instance, but there could not have been another Brother Senan Ambrose. In

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the Toronto District, boys such as the young Thomson had some choice in their second name; they were presented with a couple of pages of names from which to choose, and were to let the Holy Spirit guide them to a particular designation.\textsuperscript{110} There was, however, no choice in the first appellation. In the Toronto District between 1888 and 1896 and again from 1914 to at least the 1950s, the first name of every novice trained through the Toronto novitiate had to begin with either the letter “S” or “T” as these were the letters associated with the District. Why these two letters were specifically assigned to Toronto remains a mystery, but every District had particular letters for the members trained in those regions. Take note, for instance, of the names of those Brothers of the Pembroke, Ontario community between 1948 and 1954: Servian Norman, Theodorick Basil, Simon Oliver, Servilian Osmund, Sylvian Berchmans, Stanislaus Joseph, Thillo Benedict, Thaddeus of Jesus, Salvator Joseph, Theodorus Eugene, and Salvian Mark.\textsuperscript{111} Not all Brothers in the Toronto District had names beginning with “S” or “T” though, probably because they were trained outside of Toronto. By the 1950s, this lettering system was no longer in operation, perhaps because numbers had grown so high that the system was no longer sustainable, or perhaps because this tradition had simply fallen out of favour. Making matters more confusing is that Christian Brothers in the Toronto District reverted back to their birth name in the wake of Vatican II reforms. Brother Ambrose, therefore, changed his name to Brother Vince Thomson.

Another means to differentiate the religious life from life “in the world” was through members’ distinctive clothing. A Christian Brother’s clothes were meant to distinguish him from both lay-people and from priests. Brothers’ clothing consisted of a long black robe accentuated by the addition of a white rabat – a piece of cloth that rested on the upper chest below the Roman

\textsuperscript{110} Private correspondence with Vince Thomson, formerly Brother Senan Ambrose, 4 October 2014.
\textsuperscript{111} AGR, Supplements Historiques, Pembroke Community, “Facts Regarding Community and School,” 1961, 11.
collar – which distinguished them from the more common black rabat that priests traditionally wore.\textsuperscript{112} In the \textit{Memorandum on the Habit}, De La Salle wrote that the habit was a tangible way for the men to unite and follow their vows; the habit’s simplicity and uniformity would help Brothers to recognize “membership in the community, to draw them to it, to retain their allegiance once they join, and to lead them to observe its Rule.” At the same time, the habit was worn for laypeople to “look upon those who belong to this community as persons separated and withdrawn from worldly concerns.”\textsuperscript{113} A Brother’s clothing was also meant to symbolize a break with the past and an adherence to a new life. It was designed to be “wholly foreign to the vanities of the world” and was meant to be an outward reflection of a Brother’s vow of poverty.\textsuperscript{114}

Canadian Brothers tried to adopt this understanding of their clothing in practice, both inside and outside the classroom. In Catholic teaching, the “cloth” was an impressive indicator of one’s qualification to teach the word of God, and therefore, a Brother’s clothing was designed to command respect in the classroom. Brother Raphael Claudius, born in Toronto but trained in Quebec, taught in Ontario in the early twentieth century. He reflected that wearing the habit faithfully was integral to his own understanding of self and also of how others would regard him. The habit, he intimated, was a sign of modesty, and modesty was “the sign of a noble and strong soul. Through respect for the Habit that I wear, I shall, therefore, be modest, grave, and dignified in my deportment, and restrained in my looks.”\textsuperscript{115} In particular, he feared that if he failed to meet his own standard, his students would quickly notice and he would therefore be unable to guide them along the righteous path.

Outside the classroom, the choice of clothing was not as straightforward. Around 1875,

\textsuperscript{112} Brothers’ clothing sometimes included a black tricorne hat. LAC, m.f. K211, reel # 151168, \textit{Vêtements}, c. 1875.
\textsuperscript{113} De La Salle, \textit{Memorandum on the Habit}, cited in Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., \textit{John Baptist de la Salle}, 125.
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{In Apostolicae dignitatis solio}, 1724 in \textit{The Rule}, 1925.
for instance, the Brothers’ leadership deemed secular clothing “entirely unnecessary” except for travel, an exception that also applied to some women religious. However, this was difficult to enforce and sometimes impractical to follow. Indeed, Ontario-based Brothers did not always wear the habit and there seemed to be a conscious strategy and a practicality to not wearing it. While habits were always worn in school and at church, it was common practice from the 1860s through to the 1890s to not wear them in other capacities and instead opt for secular clothes. This practice caused some controversy. In 1890, for instance, Brother Rhodian-Patrick wrote to the Superior General expressing his frustration about the abuse of secular clothing in the Toronto District. While he admitted that “secular clothing in Ontario is necessary” owing to the verbal abuse hurled at members of religious orders from some anti-Catholics, he was upset that superiors wore them openly while they “denounce its reasonable use by the inferiors.” He claimed to have counted “as many as six secular suits in the wardrobes of some directors” and that the Visitor, Brother Tobias, “is always in secular of the best quality and make. … On account of his dress the Visitor is known among the Brothers as the dude, the dandy, and the pop.” Evidently, Brother Rhodian-Patrick feared that his superiors were too integrated into mainstream society and not as detached from the world as good religious ought to be.

Yet another way to differentiate the life of the Brothers with that of non-Brothers was in their living arrangements and accommodations. While most white Canadian men between the 1850s and 1960s lived as heterosexual married couples in lodgings separate from their relations, Christian Brothers lived in shared residential units called communities, generally houses attached to or near the associated school(s). Community living is a hallmark of nearly all religious orders, and each finds distinct biblical passages for inspiration. In the Brothers’ Institute, the words of

116 LAC, m.f. K211, reel # 151168, Vêtements, c. 1875.
117 LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 200197-98, Brother Rhodian-Patrick to the Superior General, 18 May 1890.
the Bible’s Psalm 133 are paramount: “How good it is, how pleasant,/ where the people dwell as one.”\textsuperscript{118} This Psalm stresses the joys of brotherly love and is essentially a blessing for those who live in community. In fact, the Latin phrase for the first line of the psalm – \textit{Ecce quam bonum} – was a common phrase of goodwill used by Ontario’s Brothers in prayer and song throughout the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{119}

To foster a spirit of fraternity, Brothers were encouraged to develop key characteristics of community building, including being devout, charitable, rule abiding, patient, and affable. However, given that communities included several men living in close proximity, not all members always got along well with each other and there were many opportunities to stray from such kindly characteristics. At Edmonton’s St. Joseph’s Community in early 1943, for instance, the director, Brother Ansbert, raised his concerns with the Visitor over Brother Patrick’s lack of work ethic, weak commitment to his spiritual obligations, and inability to get along with his confreres. Despite living in close quarters, they had not spoken for months, and Brother Ansbert found the intolerable situation to be rapidly deteriorating:

\begin{quote}
About a month ago, I got thoroughly fed up, so I called him in here and told him politely but firmly that I found him impossible, and that I had taken all the dirt I proposed taking. Since that time I have consistently ignored him, and when anything concerning his work is to be done, I go and do it myself. … So for heaven’s sake try to get me someone who won’t be a washout, and at the same time someone who is likely to show up for morning prayer with me. I know that is a big order, but I am sure you can fill it.
\end{quote}

While admitting that Brother Patrick had “become almost human in his relations with others” Brother Ansbert noted that it was “too late” for them to attempt to work together and requested Brother Patrick’s immediate removal.\textsuperscript{120}

Another element of community life was the physical space in which the Brothers lived.

\textsuperscript{118} Psalm 133, cited in \textit{The New American Bible}, 647.
\textsuperscript{119} Private correspondence with Vince Thomson, formerly Brother Senan Ambrose, 4 October 2014.
\textsuperscript{120} BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, POW-SUT, Sheehay, Maurice (Brother Ansbert), Brother Ansbert to Brother Visitor, 13 April 1943.
Community houses needed to meet some strict conditions in order to be appropriate for religious life. They had to at the very least have a chapel and sacristy, recreation room, library, parlour, individual bedrooms, infirmary, refectory, kitchen, pantry, and appropriate washing facilities.121 Yet controversies over proper accommodations in separate communities sometimes erupted amongst Ontario Brothers. Much of the early years in Kingston, for instance, were spent struggling to get a community house established. Though arriving in the city in February 1853, the four Brothers were still living in Bishop Patrick Phelan’s Episcopal Palace three years later. By early July 1856, negotiations between Brother Facile, the Visitor in Montreal, and Bishop Phelan were so fraught that the former was considering withdrawing the Brothers if they were not provided with the basic necessities mandatory for a community.122 The divide continued to intensify and Brother Facile assigned Brother Turibe, a Director in Montreal, to resolve the impasse. He wrote to the Archbishop and explained the importance of detached living quarters:

> Everyone acknowledges that a religious community must live in their own house for the sake of the highest propriety ... [The Brothers] must have lodgings that are entirely for themselves so that they may be free to peacefully commit to their community exercises according to our holy Rules. ... It is both fair and reasonable that our dear Brothers, after having spent a painful day with children, might come home to recover from their exhaustion.123

Constant pressure from the Superior General and the Kingston Brothers themselves finally paid off in 1858 when they moved into separate quarters next to St. Joseph’s School.

While community life often revolved around the school, and though the Christian Brothers were founded to exercise a special educational ministry, the congregation reserved a place for members who were not teachers. This small minority of non-teaching Brothers were officially categorized as Serving Brothers. In similar fashion to communities of women religious,

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121 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2, No. 16, Prospectus pour l’érection d’un Établissement, c. 1890.
122 AAK, Bishop Phelan Correspondence, Box 1, CI 1 C 40, Frère Facile to Bishop Phelan, 26 June 1856, 24 July 1856, and 2 August 1856.
123 AAK, Bishop Phelan Correspondence, Box 3, CI 3 C 33, Frère Turibe to Bishop Phelan, 3 July 1856.
they primarily performed domestic tasks on behalf of the Institute and the Church.\textsuperscript{124} In Ontario, they more often than not took on the roles of cooks, gardeners, handy-men, or dorm supervisors. While often not possessing either the faculties or the educational background to be able to teach, they nevertheless lived with the Teaching Brothers, abided by The Rule, and fulfilled all the duties of the religious life, including prayers, retreats, and common exercises, sometimes to great appreciation. For example, Brother Ralph Dominic (Hugh McCaughey) was responsible for making the Habits for the entire personnel of the Toronto District from 1914 to 1934, a task for which his confreres were quite thankful.\textsuperscript{125} Similarly, Brother Basil (Michael O’Sullivan) was an “eminently useful” and “highly appreciated” member of the congregation in Toronto, according to his obituary writer, not only for his services as cook, farmer, shoemaker, and tailor, but for the “spirit of cheerfulness with which he accepted and fulfilled every office entrusted to him.”\textsuperscript{126} One former Brother in Ontario recounted that each serving Brother found a place in the community, because “the Brothers were not operating as a corporation, but as a family.” Members that were cooks or gardeners were not considered second-class Brothers, but were of equal status and were often “very good men and very highly regarded” by the rest of the community.\textsuperscript{127} In regarding the Serving Brothers with due gratitude, the Toronto Brothers were trying to live according to The Rule, which was explicit in dictating how non-teaching Brothers were to be viewed: “All the Brothers shall have as much respect for the serving Brothers as for the school Brothers, and no one shall say anything to them or to any person about them but what is proper and becoming; and they shall show, on every occasion, that they are truly united with


\textsuperscript{126} BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, O’N – O’SU/ O’Sullivan, Michael (Br. T. Basil).

\textsuperscript{127} Private correspondence with George Morgan, formerly Brother Andres, 29 June 2011.
them and very grateful for their services.”

Serving Brothers were valued by their fellow members and followed the same rules, but they were not entirely equal members within the congregation. In an imbalanced relationship also common in communities of women religious, serving Brothers were unable to become directors or take on any other senior positions in the hierarchy. Moreover, it seems plausible that serving Brothers felt secondary within the community, given that they were to “take care to fulfil their exterior duties with great charity, having in view that the service they render to their Brothers is rendered to our Lord Himself, and that, for this reason, they should endeavour to do it with as much care and affection as if they were serving Jesus Christ Himself.” Nevertheless, these Brothers also had distinct advantages, at least in the Ontario context; for instance, with the director’s permission, serving Brothers could go out alone into the towns and cities in which they lived if the needs of the house required it.

The number of Brothers living together in a community varied according to the needs of the school or schools associated with it. In Ontario from the 1850s to the 1960s, the number generally ranged between three and 15 members. In these communities, virtually everything was performed in common; Brothers prayed, ate, travelled, and socialized together on a daily basis.

As director of the De La Salle Community and Visitor for the Toronto District in 1892, Brother

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128 “Chapter XIII: Of the Manner in which the Brothers are to Behave Towards One Another, and of the Union that is to Exist Among Them,” in The Rule, 1925.
129 This may stem in part from the idea that, in Catholic religious orders, a Superior of any kind should not only “be talented, prayerful, filled with apostolic zeal, a good administrator, have good judgement, [and be] skilled in dealing with other persons” but must also “be permeated with the particular spirit of the institute – must understand and treasure its spiritual patrimony. The particular charism must be incarnated in him/her. Otherwise there is the danger of having a good manager, who is appreciated and like[d], but who does not really contribute to the development and flourishing of the institute according to the spirit of the founder and its sound traditions.” For the Christian Brothers this would mean that a non-teacher would have a difficult task understanding the special charism of education. They would not have the education, formation, nor personal charism to prepare them for leadership positions. See Woestman, The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 239. There may be one exception to this trend. Brother Mondolf of Mary served as engineer for the Aurora Mother House from 1916-28, responsible for heating, water supply, and house repairs. Yet he went on to become Director of the Novitiate, serving in this capacity for the following twenty years. For more details, see Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. III, 11.
130 “Chapter XV: Of the Manner in which the Serving Brothers are to Behave,” in The Rule, 1925.
Tobias was in charge of all Brothers working in the attached De La Salle Institute and at St. Paul’s School. In many respects, his description of a typical school day for the Brothers under his purview echoed the rigid structure, devotion to piety, and quest for perfection that permeated the life of the novice described above.

Table 2: *Coûtumier*, 1892

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Wake up in order to meet for morning prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Private Meditation and Recitation of The Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Preparation of Class Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>Preparation of Catechism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15</td>
<td>Breakfast, Offerings, [Rosary] Beads, Preparation of Class Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Brothers of St. Paul’s leave for class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20</td>
<td>The Brothers who have charge of the boys who lunch in the Institute, say the last 3 decades of the Rosary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Brothers of the House leave for Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>School begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>Dismissal of pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Particular Examen, Dinner, Quicumque, last 3 decades of the Rosary, Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Brothers leave for Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45</td>
<td>Dismissal of pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>After the Brothers return from School – Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>According to Rule till 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>According to Rule&lt;sup&gt;131&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 200257, *Coûtumier*, 17 February 1892.

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<sup>131</sup> While unstated here, living “According to Rule” meant different functions at different times and in different regions. For the Brothers in Toronto in 1892, it could have meant school-based extracurricular work, marking assignments, spiritual readings and Mental Prayer, a communal supper, and some recreation.
While daily patterns varied by community, region, and/or country, a general portrait is visible. A Christian Brother’s life was stiffly regulated with distinct times associated for specific tasks. This was justified because of historical precedent and by what they considered the success of their methods. Every activity was designed to further the Brother’s vocation; his own spirituality was supposed to flourish through prayers, mass, and catechism study. But these seemingly inward activities were also designed to augment a Brother’s utility in the classroom. For example, the discipline required for regularly waking at 5:00 a.m., saying the rosary, and meditating were part of the training one needed to be disciplined and focussed in school. On another note, the litanies they prayed were overt efforts to instil an aura of serenity and holiness in a Brother’s whole being, which would, they hoped, have positive ramifications for teaching and earning children’s respect. As Christian educators, their faith was to drive them in the scholarly sphere. It was to pervade every aspect of their teaching, and they believed that God’s providence would control the outcome. In general, then, an outline of daily life showcases the entwining of religious obligations with teaching duties.

Community living in any religious order requires rules and regulations to make the assemblage run smoothly. Amongst the Christian Brothers, the Collection and The Rule were two of the guiding books designed to encourage a spiritually-healthy and properly-functioning society. These books proclaimed that strict observance of their instructions nourished the mind, body, and soul, and encouraged Brothers to work toward religious piety.132 For instance, The Rule cautioned against any close contact with women. Even speaking to a woman could be disruptive and had the “potential for unsavoury possibilities.” If necessity dictated that speaking

132 “The Brothers must be persuaded that the observance of these rules and practices constitute for the members of their community, the first means appointed by God to work for their salvation. They should look upon the articles contained in this little book as the brief of essentials they must practise to sustain piety and regularity, and to animate their whole religious life.” Cited in “Preface,” in Collection, 8.
to a woman was unavoidable, Brothers were instructed to “always keep some steps from them, and never look them steadily in the face. They shall never speak to them but in a very reserved manner, far from the least liberty or familiarity.”

Exercises in piety were central in the full apostolic life of a Brother living in community and a central part in their constant aim for perfection and improved classroom management. They were expected to love prayer, to take communion and recite the rosary daily, to fast on Fridays and on church-sanctioned holidays, and to regularly read the writings of De La Salle and the Bible.

While preaching goodness and a commitment to a sin-free life, Brothers knew full well they were subject to failure and sin. To address their faults, all Brothers – Teaching and Serving Brothers alike – went to confession regularly and had a weekly public voicing of their sins called The Reddition. Another effort to work toward perfection included the annual late-summer retreat. Attendance was mandatory, providing an opportunity for Brothers to gather in solidarity and re-energize for the upcoming academic year. The retreat’s daily religious exercises included an examination of conscience and confession, Holy Mass, pious exhortations, and spiritual reading, all of which afforded Brothers the chance to reflect on their behaviour, explore what was preventing them from living more excellent lives, and renew their commitment to the religious life. Moreover, there were conferences on a wide number of religious and pedagogical subjects including prayer, Holy Communion, cooperation, time management, and effective teaching skills, clearly exemplifying the intersection of faith and action.

While the Brothers interacted in the world around them through their involvement in the

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133 “Chapter XX: Of Chastity,” in The Rule, 1925.
134 During this rite, individual Brothers provided a general account of their conduct. Presided over by the Brother Director, penitents announced their sins, resolved not to sin in the future, and asked for prayers from the other members as a public act of reconciliation. They were to listen to advice or exhortation humbly and with a spirit of faith and were supposed to consider the Director’s comments as coming from the authority of God. All of this was designed to lead to a lasting change of heart and challenged them to be more perfect, which, of course, was the ultimate aim in the life of a committed religious. For more details, see The Rule, 1925, 9-10.
135 “Reflections,” in Collection, 147-82. Except in very rare circumstances, retreats were held at the Motherhouse.
schools, this did not necessarily mean they fully embraced that world. A significant part of their community life was spent only amongst themselves, with explicit guidelines on how to behave with their confreres both inside and outside of the school. In an effort to foster unity and piety, *The Rule* prescribed how Brothers were to act with each other and upon which subjects they could converse.\textsuperscript{136} They were encouraged to have “a cordial affection for one another” but at the same time “not give any sign or token of particular affection for any one” because they were supposed to regard each other as being animated by God.\textsuperscript{137} Further, they were regularly taught to eschew conversing with laypersons and to avoid “curiosity about worldly affairs.”\textsuperscript{138} The Brothers were encouraged to keep the topics of conversation and their letters with family and friends focused on God and items of a spiritual nature. Having such subjects as the focus of their communication was rationalized:

so as to keep up their dread of the world, by making their conversation totally different from that of seculars [...] and likewise, that they may not extinguish the sacred fire enkindled in their hearts by the Holy Ghost [...] by conversing on topics, which, tainted with the corruption of the age, would only distract their minds, withdraw them from God, and tarnish the purity of their hearts.\textsuperscript{139}

Despite this negative view of people outside the cloister, different political, social, and religious contexts ensured that complete separation was impossible, and often undesirable. Ontario’s Christian Brothers, for instance, regularly fraternized with parents, school officials, inspectors, and neighbours. In fact, when examined closely, the ideals preached in *The Rule* and *Collection* and other guidebooks often contrasted with the reality on the ground. Ontario’s Brothers were very much engaged in secular affairs, often wanting their communities, their schools, and their lives to change so as to suit the conditions of life in the province.

\textsuperscript{136} *The Rule*, 1925, Chapters VI, IX, and XIII.
\textsuperscript{137} *The Rule*, 1925, Chapter XIII.
\textsuperscript{138} “A Collection of Subjects on which the Brothers shall Converse in Recreation,” in *Collection*, 45.
\textsuperscript{139} “A Collection of Subjects on which the Brothers shall Converse in Recreation,” in *Collection*, 46.
Nowhere was the pursuit of adaptability to life in the province more visible than in the schools in which they taught. The Catholic school provided the model site for the Christian Brothers to channel their internal religiosity and ways of living into their exterior teaching lives. It was there that they lived out their educational mission and helped to maintain a vigorous Catholic populace. They were expected to be models of good behaviour in order to draw students to God. Their schools were where they purported to carry out what they believed to be their most crucial task of imbuing education with religion and, to use De La Salle’s own words, “to procure the salvation of souls … with all possible zeal, imitating to a certain degree the charity of God Himself.”140 This process was supposed to have the desired effect of reinforcing the Brothers’ own spirituality and commitment to holiness. It was hoped that there would be inseparability in a Brother’s love of God and his teaching vocation; this unity would help achieve the Brothers’ and the Church’s crowning goal of salvation for both themselves and their pupils.

The Catholic school was deemed absolutely essential to the success of the Church. In the 1929 papal encyclical On The Christian Education of Youth, Pope Pius XI suggested that the status of a “good Catholic school” was only achieved under certain conditions, including the necessity “that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and textbooks and every branch, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church.”141 More than 200 years earlier, De La Salle had attempted to invoke these very goals. He noted that “Christian education is not only the foundation and support of piety, but besides, it is the principle of every other good done in the

141 The Christian Education of Youth, Papal Encyclical, 1929. The official title was in Latin, Divini Illius Magistri. This form of guidance was particularly useful to those who feared that nineteenth- and twentieth-century forces of evil – particularly materialism, decadence, socialism, communism, liberalism, and atheism – were driving Christ out of the classroom.
Although his writings prioritized a detailed body of rules governing conduct and behaviour within the Institute, he also wrote extensively on precisely why, what, and how Brothers were to teach. The two most famous of his pedagogical writings, *Conduct of the Schools* and *Meditations*, were based on his own educational experience and spiritual reflection. These works provided the guiding policies and practices for their apostolate and is where the interplay of faith and praxis is most vividly seen.

De La Salle had grand ambitions for the men chosen to join his congregation and instruct impoverished boys. Calling the Brothers “ambassadors of Jesus Christ,” “ministers of God,” and “guardian angels in the education of youth,” he highlighted the integration of a spiritual and practical vision for the Brothers in their community and in the classroom. The faith and zeal a Brother possessed was fruitless unless used for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. According to De La Salle, the Brothers’ regular spiritual exercises served a dual function. While they obviously helped to usher forth the Brother’s own sanctification, they also had the potential to draw students to God inside the classroom and thereby contribute to their salvation too. But how precisely were Brothers supposed to accomplish this goal in the classroom? Essentially, it came down to the idea that the Brothers ought to be models of good behaviour. De La Salle stressed this idea in his *Meditations*, suggesting that Brothers’ actions must reflect their words and comportment: “Example leaves a far stronger impression on the mind and heart than words, especially for children, because they do not yet have a mind sufficiently able to reflect and ordinarily model themselves on the example of their teachers.”

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Following in the tradition of their founder, *The Rule* reflected De La Salle’s vision with the stated goal of Brothers having a potent holy presence in their classes. Brothers were expected to stay “very serious, reserved and dignified” and to “be to their pupils a continual example of modesty.” As good models, Brothers had to be careful to avoid unbecoming or improper actions at school.\(^{146}\) In order to exemplify the humility befitting their vocation, Brothers were to stand erect, manifest cheerfulness, avoid wrinkling the forehead or nose, keep clothes neat and tidy, and always maintain silence so as to create an aura of respect.\(^{147}\) To keep both Brothers and students in the proper mindset, no women or girls were allowed to enter the school unless accompanied by a priest.\(^{148}\) All of these efforts were signs of good outward behaviour, which itself was often a sign of a healthy inward demeanour. If they modelled themselves honourably, they were, according to De La Salle, worthy of God’s praise thus assuring a place in heaven for both themselves and those that they were called to instruct.

Through their educational mission, the Christian Brothers were tasked with regenerating society. The Brothers claimed that they were well-prepared to adapt to new situations and meet changing demands and contexts, always with a mind “to gear their educational endeavors in a manner best to assist God’s little ones, whatever their needs.”\(^{149}\) The Brothers aimed to cultivate human reason at the same time as promote God’s gift of faith. He instructed his congregation that their chief priority was “to instruct perfectly in the truths of faith and the practical maxims of the holy gospel those who are entrusted to you.”\(^{150}\) Despite their willingness to adapt their rules

\(^{146}\) “Chapter IX: Of the Manner in which the Brothers are to Behave in School with Regard to Themselves, Their Brothers and Outsiders,” in *The Rule*, 1925.

\(^{147}\) “Chapter VII: Of the Manner in which the Brothers are to Behave in School Towards their Pupils” and “Chapter XXIII: Of Modesty,” in *The Rule*, 1925.

\(^{148}\) “Chapter IX: Of the Manner in Which the Brothers are to Behave in School with Regard to Themselves, their Brothers and Outsiders,” in *The Rule*, 1925.


\(^{150}\) De La Salle, “Meditations for the Time of Retreat,” Second, Third, and Sixth Meditation, cited in Koch, Calligan,
and constitutions and work toward greater accommodation in the province’s separate schools, Ontario’s Brothers carried out their apostolate in a manner they believed honoured the legacy of their founder and supported the aims of the clergy. They taught the entirety of the academic curriculum; as will be elucidated later, their course offerings changed over time as the province itself weathered incessant transformations in industry, technology, politics, and education. But while the academic curriculum was important, their chief task was the formation of character. Their schools across Ontario placed a great deal of emphasis on forming boys who were respectful, obedient, studious, and caring.

Character formation was intrinsically tied to Christian formation, meaning that Brothers were to imbue students’ minds with the precepts of the Gospels. Furthermore, Ontario Brothers were required to teach boys their catechism, morning and evening prayers, and how to provide assistance at Mass and Vespers. In the late nineteenth century, Brothers in Toronto even congregated with many of their students at their respective schools every Sunday before proceeding to walk to their corresponding Churches together.151 Essentially, Brothers were to impress upon their students “the commandments of God, the laws of the Church, and all other things necessary for salvation.”152 This meant that Brothers ought to uphold De La Salle’s key goals: they were to help their boys in becoming virtuous, patient, gentle, kind, and loving young men, embodying “all the conduct proper to a Christian child and that our religion demands of them.”153 De La Salle argued that this form of education would be extremely beneficial to youth because it would deliver children away from the lure of evil and bring them closer to Jesus, God,

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151 See AGR, Montreal District Communities, Personnel de l’Institut, 1873-88; AGR, Toronto District Communities, Personnel de l’Institut, 1888-96. This practice seems to have petered off around 1895.

152 In Apostolicae dignitatis solio, 1724 in The Rule, 1925.

and one another. In *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*, he states that Brothers are called to “help those you teach to look upon sin as a shameful sickness that infects their souls and makes them unworthy to draw near to God and appear before him. Inspire them with love for virtue; impress upon them sentiments of piety, and see to it that God does not cease to reign in them.”

Such an educational vision went hand-in-hand with the vision of Catholic leaders. For centuries, popes and other members of the Church hierarchy envisioned education to be a powerful force for good, and men who devoted themselves to the Church through their educational endeavours were to be regarded particularly fondly. In 1893, for instance, Pope Leo XIII noted that the Christian Brothers played an integral role in the Church’s mission to spread the word of God. They were not to be secondary or subsidiary to the clergy, but front-line soldiers for the Church: “By the ministry you exercise in the Church I place you in the first rank, not as simple soldiers but as valiant captains in the militia of Jesus Christ.”

Jesuit priest Daniel A. Lord pointed out that the services provided by the Christian Brothers were nothing short of extraordinary, even in spite of not being clergy:

> About their life there is none of the glamour of the priesthood. … Instead they take up the hard life of a teacher. They walk the apparent treadmill of the classroom. They present unwelcome knowledge to reluctant boys. They struggle daily and heroically with human ignorance and that still worse enemy, human apathy. But who except Christ, the Great Teacher, can begin to know what they do for human souls?

Highlighting the specific religious importance of their ministry, Pope Pius X explained the role of the Christian Brothers as apostles of youth in their educational mission: “Today, that which is most important for the Church and society is the school. A Brother can do certain and immense

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156 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, *The Christian Brother*, 1947, 27. The priesthood might be more alluring, Lord claimed, because it offered “tangible recompenses – the joy of saying Mass, the privilege of forgiving sin, the unquestionable thrill of speaking to an audience from the pulpit.”
good. The action of a good master on souls is irresistible; his teaching, repeating itself day after
day, makes a definite impression on youth; one may say, he can fashion souls as he wishes.”\(^{157}\)

Evidently, the Catholic hierarchy was grateful for the Brothers’ labours.

The history of the order in Ontario provides some illustrative examples of Brothers
striving for this impeccable ideal. Brother Raphael Claudius (Dennis Coffey) was, according to
one biographer, a pious and engaging man, always taking the rules of the Church as a guide and
attempting to keep goodwill in the communities in which he lived. As a teacher, both during the
regular academic year and in summer sessions, he sought order and diligence, and took class
work and written tasks seriously, for this is what he understood God and his superiors expected
from a good Brother. He went further still. While visiting Belgium in 1912, he described
“ideal” religious educators were supposed to act and what they were expected to undertake in
their ministry. He noted that the “perfect” Christian Brother:

> ... is the apostle, who wishes to build up Christ in souls; who instructs, exhorts, urges, in
season and out of season, till sin is exterminated and grace has regained its sway ... [He]
is the scholarly and prudent teacher, who is thoroughly conversant with every phase of
the subjects he teaches, questions unceasingly, confounds the petty vanity of superficial
minds, implants right principles and just ideas, encourages, stimulates, and corrects
unwearingly and uncomplainingly. All this is what I must force myself to be.\(^{158}\)

In another example, an anonymous biographer noted that Brother Odo Baldwin (Edward Kelly)
embodied De La Salle’s vision in terms of pressing religious instruction over all other subjects.
While his book-keeping and stenography classes were valuable in that they secured for his pupils
“some of the best positions in the commercial world” Brother Odo was not satisfied, regarding
that success “as secondary compared to the training of his young charges in the principles and
practice of their religion. This he had most at heart and to it he gave greatest attention.”\(^ {159}\)

that end, he prepped lessons in Christian doctrine, offered catechism class, and led recitals of the Rosary. Finally, Brother Malachy Edward (James Murphy), the second Visitor of the Toronto District from 1894-96 and Assistant Visitor of the Montreal District from 1896-1908, noted that “The educator who has a high idea of his calling, who does not look on it simply as a means of making a living, but who realizes that he has in his hands the men of the future, should leave nothing undone to form these young souls so as to ensure firmness of character.”

The Christian Brothers, in Ontario and elsewhere, undoubtedly struggled to attain this perfection. But they invariably presented themselves as men who constantly achieved the aims of their mission with remarkable success. In their promotional material and internally-produced histories, the Brothers considered themselves to be teachers extraordinaire. They claimed that they were models of good behaviour, agents of socialization and sanctification, as well as fountains of inspiration and bastions of knowledge. Many of these sources praise Brothers’ piety, diligence, respect for others and superiors, and particular talents in music, languages, math, or athletics. They are often presented as men of profound character, kind, hospitable, charitable, patient, and filled with equanimity, all giving the strong impression that each Brother to pass through the province of Ontario was a worthy son of St. La Salle. Even when evidence indicates that they were rough or prone to harsh discipline and corporal punishment, these are sometimes framed as public over-reactions or unfortunate missteps in the otherwise worthy effort to impart proper discipline.

In one of his many letters, De La Salle declared that “a good rule of life is to make no

162 See, for instance, m.f. K214, reel # 181859-60, Frère Gémel to Napoleon Champagne, 20 November 1891; BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 51.
distinction at all between the work of our vocation in life and the work of our salvation and perfection." As religious educators, the Christian Brothers took this idea seriously, nurturing their personal spirituality as a means to fulfill their apostolic mission and understanding their teaching ministry as the source of that spirituality in the first place. This vision would be put to the test when the Brothers settled into their apostolate in Ontario schools in the 1850s and as ethnic tensions within the congregation began to take hold. Over the following fifty years, English-speaking Brothers teaching in Ontario, primarily of Irish descent, stressed that their spirituality was markedly different from French-speaking Brothers. In order for the former to faithfully carry out their public mission, they had to divest themselves of any vestige of the latter.

Chapter Two

The Process of Anglicization, 1850-1915

When the first Christian Brothers arrived in Ontario in 1851, they faced an uncertain future. They were French-speakers in an English-dominated society, Catholics in a bastion of Protestantism, and Catholic teachers in an unfamiliar and still nascent separate school system. By 1875, these problems were exacerbated by new difficulties: their professional status encountered criticism; their own members were divided along linguistic lines; there was only limited growth in membership; and their schools wrestled with closure. The order was at a crossroads. They had to adapt or face dissolution. Rather than depart when the future did not look bright, Ontario’s English-speaking Brothers fought to secure their place in the province. Between the 1870s and 1910s, they presented numerous arguments in favour of anglicization – broadly conceived as conforming to the language, customs, norms, and practices of the society in which they lived and taught – because they understood this transition to be imperative for the success of their educational apostolate in Ontario.¹

This chapter explores how the Brothers negotiated their identity in the Anglo-Protestant context of southern Ontario from the 1850s to the 1910s. More specifically, it examines why and how their social, linguistic, religious, and political environment motivated them into action and why they felt it was their communal responsibility to establish local institutions. In particular, the Brothers and their clerical allies advocated for a new English-language novitiate. Aligning their membership with the language of their students seemed a practical means of meeting local educational standards. Ideally, the decision to start a novitiate would be essential to the process

¹ Some of the material presented in this chapter is found in Michael Wilcox, “‘To meet more perfectly the wants of our people here:’ The Christian Brothers and the Process of Anglicization in Ontario, 1850-1925,” CCHA Historical Studies 79 (2013), 57-78. Permission to re-publish some of that material here has been granted by the Canadian Catholic Historical Association.
of securing stronger local control of community life; Brothers could increase recruitment, expand their educational reach, counter Protestant influence, and respond to inadequate training in Quebec. Further, constructing an English-language novitiate was part of a distinct strategy to do what they figured would best help build up and legitimize the Catholic school system and, in so doing, valorize their own position within that system. The discourses and themes mobilized in the Brothers’ advocacy for anglicization and an English-speaking novitiate demonstrate that they not only extolled the practical and sacred benefits of anglicization, but also used their platform to articulate a deep-seated prejudice against French-speaking Brothers. While their continual advocacy for a novitiate stirred up discord, this was an unanticipated consequence of their desire to honour their founder, see their Institute prosper, and to serve the Church faithfully. In the end, their effort brought them more in line with the expectations of Ontario’s Catholic parents, the Church hierarchy, education promoters, government officials, and several other religious orders, all of whom voiced concerns about the necessity of anglicization as a constituent part of living in the province’s changing social landscape.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario, conflict over language divided French and English speakers within the Catholic Church. Education was at the heart of this polarization. Both the contentious Manitoba Schools Question and the Bilingual Schools Question in Ontario served as a warning that the mixing of language and religion were fraught with politics. Surprisingly, given the prominent role of language concerns amongst the Christian Brothers in Ontario, direct evidence of correspondence between them and their superiors on the matter of Manitoba’s schools is lacking. On the other hand, the Bilingual Schools Question –

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2 The Manitoba Schools Question was a controversy in the 1890s that saw the English-speaking Protestant majority in that province eliminate public funding for French-Catholic schools. The controversy had national implications, particularly in Ontario where the Catholic hierarchy feared that the Protestant majority would take the Manitoba decision a step further and eliminate Catholic schools altogether. Given the weight of this dispute, it seems very
with its origins dating back to at least the 1880s and lasting until the late 1920s – dominated the social and educational context in which the Brothers vied for anglicization and a new novitiate. Historians have generally understood this controversy as a struggle between English- and French-speaking Catholics over the use of the French language in the province’s schools. The historiography on this topic has correctly pointed to the prominent role of the French-speaking Christian Brothers in Ottawa; their inefficiencies – real or imagined – in teaching methods, their struggles with discipline, their stubbornness on the question of qualifications, and their high profile exit from the city were all covered widely in the press and highlight the contentious nature of combining language, religion, and education. This chapter, however, will delve deeper into the place of one significant subset of Catholics – Ontario’s English-speaking Christian Brothers – who also held a meaningful stake in the educational questions of this era and are important for understanding this ethno-linguistic tension and the means to rectify it. As such, this history provides a useful window for illuminating previously unexamined cultural and linguistic

likely that Ontario’s Christian Brothers were aware of its developments. For more details on this subject, see Manoly R. Lupul, *The Roman Catholic Church and the North-West School Question: A Study in Church-State Relations in Western Canada, 1875-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974); Lovell Clarke, ed., *The Manitoba School Question: Majority Rule or Minority Rights?* (Toronto: Copp Clarke, 1968); Paul Crunican, *The Manitoba Schools Question and Canadian Federal Politics, 1890-1896: A Study in Church-State Relations* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1968).


tensions in Ontario and in Canadian Catholicism.

In mid-nineteenth-century Canada West (now Ontario), the Catholic clergy regarded separate schools for Catholic children as essential to preserving religious and minority rights. The clergy and its supporters argued that the Church ought to direct its own educational facilities in a system that worked alongside, but was distinct from, a public school system. This vocal religious minority especially feared that teachers in a single system of public schools under the aegis of the state would not teach Christianity in a way they deemed acceptable, meaning that Catholic children might lose their faith. This was a legitimate fear given that religious intolerance was prevalent in the colony; the relationship between Catholics and Protestants was at best uncomfortable and at worst violent. The clergy and its allies further pressed that the proposed separate faith-based education system deserved to be granted state resources. They suggested that some degree of denominational factionalism was tolerable, if not necessary, to foster religious harmony and nation-building given the heightened political and religious tension surrounding the 1837-38 Rebellions, the Durham Report, and the 1841 union of Upper and

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6 For an overview on this topic, see Mark G. McGowan, “What did Michael Power Really Want? Questions Regarding the Origins of Catholic Separate Schools in Canada West,” CCHA Historical Studies 68 (2002), 85-104. For a detailed examination of this issue in one particular region, see Michael F. Murphy, “‘Catholic Schools for Catholic Children’: The Making of a Roman Catholic School System in London, Ontario, 1850-1871,” CCHA Historical Studies 63 (1997), 59-79. Murphy notes that in the city of London and its environs before 1850, few Roman Catholics took steps to segregate their children in schools. However, a plummeting economy in the 1850s meant that wealthier Catholics were removing their children from private institutions and began to demand that the state pay for separate Catholic schools in Canada West. The arrival of thousands of Irish Catholics in the 1840s and 1850s meant that the pressure for separate schools only increased.

7 Sissons, Church and State in Canadian Education, 19-20.

Lower Canada into the United Province of Canada. To help address fears of religious assimilation, the assembly of the newly-united colony passed the Common School Act (Day Act) in 1841 ensuring that religious minorities – Protestants in Canada East and Catholics in Canada West – could attend publicly-funded separate denominational schools.

Despite this legislation, few Catholic schools were immediately established in Canada West, in part because of its unwieldy administrative apparatus. As such, many Catholics continued to send their children to common schools. This reality began to change with the emergence of another school law in 1843. Titled An Act for the establishment and maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada (Hincks Act), it allowed parents in Canada West’s common schools to exempt their children from religious classes or from reading religious books they did not find appropriate. More importantly, the Act established the right of inhabitants to apply for and establish a separate school with a teacher of their own religious persuasion if 10 or more parents desired it. Further, it granted these parents the right to elect trustees and to secure government funds based on the number of students attending these schools.

Given this legislation, the short-lived first bishop of the newly created Diocese of Toronto, Michael Power, actively supported the expansion of separate schools and encouraged Catholic parents to send their children to them whenever it was feasible. In a manner typical of the era, Power supported a wide variety of ways and means to deliver Catholic education. In whatever method chosen, Power recognized the significance of communicating effectively. He

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9 For details, see Moir, Church and State in Canada West, 132-4.
10 Robert T. Dixon, We Remember, We Believe: A History of Toronto’s Catholic Separate School Boards, 1841 to 1997 (Toronto: Toronto Catholic District School Board, 2007), 27-8; Walker, Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada, 47-9; Moir, Church and State in Canada West, 134.
11 McGowan, “What did Michael Power Really Want?”, 85-104. See also Mark McGowan, Michael Power: The Struggle to Build the Catholic Church on the Canadian Frontier (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 214-22. McGowan suggests that these include “common schools employing Catholic teachers in which Catholics dominated in numbers; mixed common schools supplemented by parish-based catechetical programs; publicly funded Catholic separate schools; publicly-funded separate schools operated by members of religious orders; and tuition-based schools.” McGowan, Michael Power, 214.
therefore worked to ensure that members of religious orders as well as senior officials in the
clergy spoke the language of those they would be serving. To this end, he recruited the Jesuits
– widely known to learn Native languages for communication and conversion purposes – to
serve and teach in the diocese’s Native missions in 1843. Four years later, he secured the
services of five Loretto Sisters from Ireland to staff schools in Toronto for the growing
population of Irish Catholics who were fleeing the famine. Power even planned to recruit more
religious orders via a “recruitment venture” in Europe but died of typhus in October 1847.

Power’s successor was Armand de Charbonnel, consecrated as the second bishop of the
Diocese of Toronto in 1850. Coincidentally, that same year saw the enactment of the Common
Schools Act. These two developments signalled the beginning of protracted controversy on the
educational front in the colony. The Common Schools Act re-emphasized much of the 1843 law
but allowed for, amongst other items, a government grant to pay for teachers’ salaries and
taxation to pay for building and maintaining schools. Yet these elements did not apply to
separate schools, an omission that greatly annoyed Bishop de Charbonnel, who had hoped to
more firmly capitalize on the 1840s education laws, particularly the subsection which allowed
for the right to establish more than one separate school in a given city or town. Further revisions
to the Separate School Act (Taché Act) in 1855 did little to assuage the bishop’s frustrations. The
new law gave separate school trustees the power to collect school rates from parents who
supported separate schools and reversed their prior exclusion from receiving government funds

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12 When debates swirled over the forthcoming appointment of the new bishop of Bytown (Ottawa) in the late 1840s
for instance, Power wrote to Rome suggesting that the new bishop be able to speak in English “so as to be able to
communicate with a great many of his flock.” See ARCAT, Power Papers, P AA10.10, Bishop Power to “someone
in Rome,” 12 April 1847. Power was probably not content to see that by 1847, 12 of the 28 priests in his diocese
were native French speakers. However, it is plausible that most of these men were bilingual. For more details on
Power and language issues, see Robert Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français du dix-neuvième
siècle (Ottawa: Éditions de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1984), 99.

13 Robert Choquette, “POWER, MICHAEL,” in DCB Online, accessed 30 October 2014,

14 McGowan, Michael Power, 222.
to pay for teachers’ salaries and school maintenance. Yet de Charbonnel posited that the law did not go far enough in terms of taxation, school boundaries, and control over curriculum and textbooks, and that actually acquiring government funds was an onerous process. He railed against the common school system and so bitterly protested the Taché Act that he resigned his membership on the Council of Public Instruction. Furthermore, he demanded Catholics vote for candidates who supported separate schools, and even threatened parents with penalty of mortal sin if they opted not to send their children to these schools when they were available. For de Charbonnel and many in the Catholic fold, the rationale for separate schools began to shift from “a means of protection from insult” to an “inalienable and sacred right.”

De Charbonnel’s enthusiasm for education embodied an ultramontanist ideal: he supported a strict religious hierarchy and demanded ecclesiastical authority in all respects, including education, politics, and morals. Such a vision and the Catholic philosophy of education in the mid-nineteenth century were in marked contrast to those of Methodist minister Egerton Ryerson, who rose to prominence as Canada West’s Chief Superintendent of Education in 1844, a position he held until 1876. It was in the 1850s that he emerged as a force to be reckoned with. Inspired by the educational systems and ideas he discovered on his journeys through Ireland, Great Britain, and several European countries in the late 1840s, Ryerson

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15 Walker, Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada, 163-80; Moir, Church and State in Canada West, 161-2; Dixon, We Remember We Believe, 29-30. The taxation issue was threefold: the first problem was that separate school supporters had to annually report to the municipality their desire to have their taxes pay for separate schools and not the common schools; the second was that separate school boards were barred from collecting taxes from Catholic parents who chose to send their children to separate schools beyond the boundaries that they lived in; and third, unlike the common school boards, separate school boards could not use municipal governments to administer its tax-collating system.


17 Moir, Church and State in Canada West, 152.

18 For information on the history of ultramontanism in Canada, see Jean Hamelin and Nive Voisine, eds., Les Ultramontains canadiens-français (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1985).
initiated a series of measures to provide a more uniform classroom experience and govern a more bureaucratized and centralized system of education.\textsuperscript{19} His vision for the colonial (and later provincial) education system was one that would contribute to a moral, honest, civilized, and innovative people. Further, it was designed to promote reading and writing skills, prepare young people for employment and civic responsibilities, encourage discipline and sociability, and foster class and religious harmony.\textsuperscript{20} This last point was especially significant for Ryerson. While he considered that Christianity played a central role in the classroom, he thought that separating children by denomination was undesirable. He wanted a way for facilities to accommodate everyone, sometimes suggesting that local religious leaders come into schools at designated times. In essence, Ryerson wanted Catholic schools to be exceptional, not the norm, arguing that they should only be built where tensions between Irish Catholics and Protestants were especially strained. Most politicians in Canada West agreed with Ryerson, and few were eager or willing to grant extra concessions to Catholics beyond their schools’ right to exist. Debates about education were exacerbated by additional tensions in urban environments where providing relief for thousands of poverty-stricken and unemployed Irish Catholics stressed the resources of Toronto’s Catholics and its institutional leaders to their limit.

Given these challenges, the drive to expand Catholic education in Canada West took a concerted and sustained effort from Catholic bishops, priests, religious orders, and the laity. At the forefront of this work stood Bishop de Charbonnel, whose determination to educate the


\textsuperscript{20} Ryerson elaborated upon this vision in one of his many letters to Armand De Charbonnel, Bishop of the Diocese of Toronto in the 1850s. “I think education and schools fail to fulfill a vital part of their mission if they do not develop all the intellectual powers of man, teach him self-reliance as well as dependence on God, excite him to industry and enterprise, and instruct him in the rights as well as duties of man.” AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1/1, \textit{Correspondance échangée entre l’Évêque Catholique Romain de Toronto et le Surintendant en chef des Écoles au Sujet des Écoles Séparées, dans le Haut-Canada} (Québec: Imprimé par John Lovell, Rue la Montagne, 1852), Ryerson to Bishop de Charbonnel, 24 April 1852.
faithful was matched by his eagerness to expand the number of priests and parishes in the region. To achieve these aims, de Charbonnel sent a letter in July 1850 – probably to every bishop and religious order in France – requesting priests and teaching brothers and sisters.\textsuperscript{21} He wanted them to come and serve the expansive diocese, located in the most Protestant region in all of British North America where Catholics made up only 20 per cent of the population in the mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{22} De Charbonnel hoped to build up an efficient and talented contingent of Catholic teachers for and strengthen the religious life of Toronto’s roughly 8000 Catholics and the Diocese of Toronto’s estimated 80000 Catholics.\textsuperscript{23} To show this commitment, he wrote that “the first and greatest good I can do for the diocese ... consists in providing an education based in the Catholic faith and the purity of morals, for children, for those aspiring to professional activities, and especially for those aiming at the ecclesiastical life.”\textsuperscript{24}

The fact that Bishop de Charbonnel was taught by Basilians at their college in Annonay, France, was himself a Sulpician, and was well acquainted with the Christian Brothers since he had been chaplain to their novitiate in Montreal meant that he was undoubtedly familiar with religious orders. He assumed that the teaching religious were well suited to provide instruction in what he considered most important to Catholic boys and girls: proper morality, deference to authority, character formation, and a reverence for God.\textsuperscript{25} More specifically, he sought teachers who could “inculcate by example and precept ... the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred

\textsuperscript{21} GABF, Tourvieille, Pierre, Superior General, 1839-1859 – Letters, Fond A.3112, Box A.3112 1852, Bishop Armand de Charbonnel to Superior General Tourvieille, 6 July 1850.
\textsuperscript{22} For more demographic details, see Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, Canada: A National History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pearson, 2007), 163-5.
\textsuperscript{24} GABF, St. Michael’s College, Toronto – Documents, 1850, A.313 1852 .01-.39, Concordat between Archbishop Armand de Charbonnel and M. Pierre Tourvieille, 28 January 1855.
\textsuperscript{25} GABF, St. Michael’s College, Toronto – Documents, 1850, A.313 1852 .01-.39, Concordat between Archbishop Armand de Charbonnel and M. Pierre Tourvieille, 28 January 1855.
regard to truth, love of their country, humanity and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, chastity, moderation, and temperance, and those other virtues, which are the ornament of society and on which a free constitution of government is founded.”

De Charbonnel, therefore, supposed that the teaching religious served a higher calling in that they acted as vanguards of the faith; they could be distinguished auxiliary servants of the Church that would help prevent religious assimilation by the dominant Protestants while raising children up to be well-rounded, conscientious, Catholic citizens. While left unstated in his circular, religious orders were also in demand because of the financial difficulty of funding Catholic schools; with their vows of poverty, they would accept lower wages and thus would help secure the ability of separate schools to function. De Charbonnel’s letter-writing campaign resulted in the arrival of the Christian Brothers and Sisters of St. Joseph in 1851 and the Basilian Fathers in 1852.

Unlike his predecessor, de Charbonnel appears more concerned about actually getting priests and teachers on the ground and less about how they would fare as French speakers in this English-speaking milieu. Although the Catholic population of Toronto was overwhelmingly of Irish heritage and therefore English speaking, de Charbonnel looked particularly to French orders such as the Christian Brothers, as well as the Capuchins, Basilians, Jesuits, Marists, Oblates, and Sisters of St. Joseph to satisfy the diocese’s needs and vacancies. Possible reasons for this

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27 Note that for the important role of educating youth, de Charbonnel preferred women over men: “To select good teachers, and principally females, who though not reading in the stars, nor understanding Newton’s theorems, are generally more economical and better able to attend even young boys and teach them prayers, Catechism, piety, modesty, good manners, reading, writing, cyphering, etc.” TCDSBA, 1855 Folder, De Charbonnel, “Circular of His Lordship the Bishop of Toronto, on the Separate School Act of 1855.”

28 Dixon, *We Remember, We Believe*, 58.

approach include his personal connections in France itself but also a dearth of English-speaking priests and teaching religious. Whatever the case, the question of language differences between some members of religious orders and the majority of the city’s Catholic population became an increasingly heated topic and proved problematic for the new bishop.  

De Charbonnel’s aim to bring in the Christian Brothers was based in part on his own observations of their educational work in Montreal, where he had been chaplain to their novitiate from 1839-41 and Inspector of their schools throughout the 1840s. Upon his consecration, he immediately began to correspond with Brother Philippe (Mathieu Bransiet), the Institute’s Superior General in Paris, and Brother Facile (Benoît Rabut), Visitor of the Montreal District, to send Brothers to Toronto for “the great cause of education.” By September 1850, Brother Facile committed to launching a Toronto community, and was already negotiating about what types of furniture and other amenities would be needed to facilitate its opening. However, he noted that no Brothers could be sent until the following spring because of the cold weather and to ensure an open passageway along the St. Lawrence River. Five Brothers finally arrived in Toronto by boat following the spring thaw in 1851, becoming, after the Jesuits, the second male teaching order in Ontario.

The Christian Brothers soon established themselves as a forceful presence not only in

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30 John S. Moir, ed., Church and Society: Documents on the Religious and Social History of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (Toronto: The Archdiocese of Toronto, 1991), 25-6. Note that according to the 1851 census, the number of people of French origin in Toronto was only 467 out of 30775 residents, equal to 1.5 per cent. These statistics were likely a major contributing factor behind de Charbonnel’s initial hesitation to accept the post of bishop of Toronto in the first place. Indeed, in 1847, he wrote to Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal outlining many reasons for why he was not the man for the job. Among them was his lack of fluency in English, which he knew was essential to living in Toronto. For details, see Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français, 99-101.

31 LAC, m.f. K213, reel # 172003-04, Frère Aidant to Frère Philippe, 21 May 1845. While de Charbonnel was generally favourable in his inspections of the Brothers’ classes, he did not shy away from criticizing them either. An 1846 report condemned their methods, particularly their attention to the many rather than a gifted or selected few. For details, see Dominique Deslandres, John A. Dickinson, and Ollivier Hubert, eds., The Sulpicians of Montreal: A History of Power and Discretion, 1647-2007 (Montreal: Wilson & Lafleur Ltée, 2013), 426.

32 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1, Archbishop Armand de Charbonnel to Frère Philippe, 8 October 1850.

33 ARCAT, ROSII, Brothers of the Christian Schools, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1850-1859, Frère Facile to Armand de Charbonnel, 19 September 1850.
educating Catholic boys in the city but also in securing and strengthening the separate school system. On 1 May 1851, they established St. Michael’s School on the north side of Richmond Street, a few doors east of York Street. This is where the Brothers lived and taught some 200 boys. Father Thomas Fitzhenry, then pastor at St. Paul’s, saw that their work was successful, and thus petitioned for two Brothers to open a school in his parish as soon as possible. Arrangements were made, and St. Paul’s School opened in September 1851 with Brothers Rodolphus and Frank overseeing the boys’ classes. The Brothers also established a school for secondary-level boys, called St. Michael’s College, in 1852. In August of that year, the Toronto Mirror reported that the college offered Catholic boys “the advantages of a Christian education, and at the same time, a sound academic course to prepare them for a business career and the liberal professions.”

Very early into his episcopate, de Charbonnel recognized that the state of education in his diocese was improving. He was particularly pleased with the steady growth in numbers attending Catholic schools run by religious orders and hoped that many children would “join these most useful communities.” In an 1853 letter to Cardinal Giacomo Filippo Fransoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, de Charbonnel commented that despite “the sad state of the diocese” in general, the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of St. Joseph were

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34 The Toronto Brothers immediately developed a good relationship with de Charbonnel. Besides offering accommodations for the first year, it was he who helped alleviate some of the stress, unsteadiness, and lack of confidence facing the first director, Brother Cassian, as he struggled to manage the other Brothers and set up operations in a new city and communicate in a foreign tongue. Although Brother Cassian was the community’s first Director and had a good relationship with the bishop, Brother Joachim of Mary replaced him before the year was out. ARCAT, ROSII, Brothers of the Christian Schools, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1850-1859, Frère Facile to Armand de Charbonnel, 10 March 1852.
35 By 1853, Brother Rodolphus was asked to be Director of the Kingston community. This was followed by directorships in a variety of places, including Rochester, Baltimore, and Yonkers. He died in 1868. For more details, see Brother Alfred, “The Brothers of the Christian Schools in St. Paul’s Parish, 1851-1922,” in Kelly, ed., The Story of St. Paul’s Parish, 240-2.
36 Toronto Mirror, 20 August 1852.
37 ARCAT, Charbonnel Papers, AA04.09 a-c, Bishop de Charbonnel Circular re. Decrees of the First Provincial Council of Quebec, 28 December 1852.
“teaching with success.” Not mentioned in this particular letter were the Loretto Sisters, who taught at their Academy on Bathurst Street, nor the Basilian Fathers, who operated St. Mary’s Little Seminary. This is surprising, given that De Charbonnel was especially impressed with the work of the Basilians and developed a good rapport with local superior Father Jean Matthieu Soulerin. When the order experienced financial problems in 1853, de Charbonnel worked to unite St. Mary’s with the Brothers’ St. Michael’s College. The Basilians quickly took over its name and direction, and, by 1854, it became both a classical college and seminary, operating out of a wing in the Bishop’s palace. This decision left the work of boys’ elementary education in the city to the Christian Brothers.

Word of the Brothers’ positive impression travelled fast, as requests for their employment began to arrive from other Catholic schools in the city and from as far away as Hamilton and Guelph as early as 1853. Throughout their first 30 years in Ontario, the Christian Brothers received plenty of high praise for their teaching endeavours from the likes of bishops, inspectors, trustees, and parents. By 1861, even Egerton Ryerson noted that the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Christian Brothers teaching at St. Paul’s School provided “good training” and “a good system of education” and therefore deserved public gratitude: “They are a blessing to the city of Toronto. They are pointing out to the youthful mind the way to virtue, religion, morality, and useful knowledge.” Echoing this sentiment two decades later, by which time Ontario was a province of Canada, Archbishop John Joseph Lynch was deeply appreciative of the Brothers’

38 ARCAT, Charbonnel Papers, LB03.054, Bishop Charbonnel to Cardinal Fransoni, 30 May 1853.
39 The school is sometimes referred to as St. Mary’s Lesser Seminary.
41 See the correspondence between Brother Facile and Bishop de Charbonnel from 1853-55 in ARCAT, ROSII, Brothers of the Christian Schools, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1850-1859.
43 Egerton Ryerson, Journal of Education for Upper Canada 14, no. 9, September 1861.
pedagogical and spiritual efforts. On the occasion of the beatification of Jean Baptiste De La Salle in February 1888, Lynch waxed poetic on the Brothers’ virtues: “They have taught the children admirably…” he claimed, “for they are true servants of God, and they never relinquish their task nor lessen their ardor in their holy and self-sacrificing work.”

This early chorus of praise was tempered by a healthy dose of condemnation from many of these very same proponents. While Catholic schools themselves were safe following the enactment of the 1863 Separate School Act (Scott Act) – later entrenched in Section 93 of the 1867 British North America Act – it did not mean that teachers therein were free from reproach. Language issues were the focus of much of the criticism over the following five decades. The fact that teaching certificates secured in Quebec were valid in Ontario’s separate schools from 1863 onward meant that instructors whose first language was French were teaching in English-language Ontario schools. Despite the number of positive accolades the Brothers received, the quality of their teaching was also called into question. Many parents, inspectors, and Boards of Trustees were particularly hostile to and frustrated by some Brothers’ limited competency for reading, writing, speaking, and teaching in the English language.

Complaints were so vehement that the Visitor in Montreal, Brother Hoséa (Ephrem Gagnon), moved Brothers in Toronto and Kingston under the English-language New York District’s authority in 1874. Novices were to travel south to Amawalk, New York to fulfill their training in an English environment before moving back to Ontario to carry out their teaching responsibilities and community living. However, this situation only lasted until 1875, when

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44 ARCAT, Lynch Papers, L AA1117, “Pastoral Letter of His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto, on the Beatification, by His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII., of the Holy Servant of God, John Baptist De La Salle, on the 19th of February, 1888, In the Great Canonization Hall, over the Loggia of St. Peter’s,” 1888.
45 BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, Brother Tobias Josephus, History of the District of Toronto, 1891, 1. This source is actually divided into several sections. Brother Tobias completed the first section, to page 48, in May 1891. At least two other Brothers, names unknown, carried on with the book and the final entry was in 1914.
Brother Armin-Victor (Victor-Nicolas Vigneulle) arrived from France to take over as Visitor of the Montreal District and Provincial Visitor for all of the Americas. Conveying a common problem in the administration of religious orders, Brother Armin-Victor preferred districts be divided along national boundaries and not linguistic lines. Once again, any Ontario boy desiring to enter the Christian Brothers, regardless of language, would be sent to Montreal for his training. The Brothers in Ontario regarded this decision with disdain, claiming that it would negatively impact their recruitment efforts.

When Ontario communities returned to the Montreal District in 1875, so too did the criticisms. At a Kingston Separate School Board of Trustees meeting on 1 February 1876, school officials vented their frustration to Brother Halward (Patrick Ennis), the newly-established director of the Kingston community, about the number of French Brothers, “who, at various times, were sent to them and could not speak ... English.” In Toronto in 1879, the Toronto Separate School Board’s (TSSB) Committee of the Whole requested that Brother Tobias Josephus be named Inspector of Separate Schools, but demanded that he “obtain as teachers Brothers who speak English well.” Language difficulties continued to frustrate the trustees in both towns in the years thereafter, reflecting wider prejudice against French speakers generally in Ontario society.

Language concerns within the Brothers’ Institute were not new. In the seventeenth century, De La Salle had stressed learning in the vernacular in lieu of Latin, going so far as to

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46 The General Chapter created this latter position in 1875 to establish greater consistency in administration. They were tasked with visiting the houses of formation, District administration communities, and all other community houses at least once per year. For more details, see Nive Voisine, Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada: La conquête de l’Amérique, 1837-1880, Tome I (Sainte-Foy, Québec: Éditions Anne Sigier, 1987), 225.
47 LAC, m.f. K211, reel # 151892-93, Brother Armin-Victor to Brother Irlide, 25 September 1875.
50 TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 3 June 1879.
ban any speaking or teaching of Latin amongst members of the congregation. De La Salle considered Latin impractical for the presumed futures of the poor boys the Brothers would be teaching and because he wanted pupils’ minds to be enlightened by what he called “the light of faith.” In the 1718 version of The Rule, the final format of the guiding principles written in his own hand, De La Salle stressed the utmost importance on the vernacular by including the rather aptly-titled Memorandum on Not Using Latin to Teach Reading. He argued that teaching in the vernacular would enable students to learn more quickly and was crucial for their success in terms of acquiring a trade and understanding Christian doctrine. Given these reasons, he wrote: “It is, therefore, completely useless to waste time teaching people to read a language that they will never use.”

More than a century and a half later, language concerns remained critical to the development and transformation of Ontario’s Christian Brothers as they attempted to fulfill De La Salle’s vision of serving the universal Church. In the 1870s and 1880s, the number of English-speaking Brothers climbed as the Institute recruited boys of Irish descent from Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes and accepted an influx of Brothers from Ireland itself. By 1888, of the 311 Brothers in the Montreal District, a region encompassing all of Canada at the time, a solid 66 (21.2 percent) were of Irish descent and thus English-speaking. A similar, though slightly higher, percentage (26.8 percent) of Brothers in formation in the juniorate, novitiate, and scholasticate were of Irish heritage. So important were the Irish to the Brothers’ expansion that superiors came to consider all English-speaking members as “Irish.”

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53 For more details on nationality and language of Brothers teaching in Canada before 1880, see Voisine, Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada, Tome I, 267-73.
Brothers’ necrology highlight those members who came from “good old Irish stock” implying they arrived or were born with a deep piety supposedly characteristic of Irish Catholics. In the late nineteenth century, the Brothers actually teaching in Ontario were nearly all of Irish background and English speaking, fostering an ethno-religious identity. Irish-Catholic surnames such as Breen, Ennis, Flynn, Kelly, McGrath, Murphy, O’Farrell, and O’Reilly dominated the membership of the Canadian-born Brothers. Several Irish-born Brothers joined them when they volunteered for what was called the Canadian Mission. Moreover, history and geography classes incorporated Irish content, and commencement exercises sometimes ended with the playing of God Save Ireland. Boys at St. Joseph’s School in Kingston regularly marched in the St. Patrick’s Day processions. Finally, when famous Irishmen came to Canada in order to raise funds for the Irish independence movement, they were sometimes invited to speak at the Brothers’ schools. The Irish nationalist and Land League leader Charles Stewart Parnell was warmly received when he spoke at Montreal’s English-language St. Ann’s School in 1880. He had come at the invitation of Brother Arnold, the Irish-born community director who some children called the “Mayor of Griffintown.” Another Irish nationalist and Home Rule supporter, William O’Brien, came to speak at Toronto’s De La Salle Institute in May 1887 at the

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54 For just two examples, see entries on Brother Azades Raphael (Patrick Flynn) and Brother Malachy Edward (James Murphy) in Brother Walter Farrell, FSC, ed., Deceased Brothers, Toronto, Volume I: 1860-1940, 45 and 124.
55 These Brothers generally had completed their novitiates in Castletown and finished their studies at the De La Salle Training College in Waterford. See, for instance, the biographies of Brother Hubert Edward (James Daly) and Brother Mathias James (James Norris) in Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. I, 35-8 and 133-8 and Brother David Edwin (Joseph Cleary) in Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. II, 8-11. Canada was an unsurprising destination for these Irish members, given that many of the Masters of Novices at that time in Ireland were actually Canadian born, such as Brother Abban and Brother Presidius of Mary. For more details, see Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. III, 44.
behest of Brother Tobias, although this event took place much to Archbishop Lynch’s dismay.\textsuperscript{58}

Ontario Brothers’ conscious ethno-religious identity set them apart from their Quebecois neighbours and by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the language question only exacerbated the tensions. Their fears reflected those of the province’s overwhelmingly English-speaking citizenry, especially politicians of all stripes who felt anxious about rising francophone immigration and the perceived inferiority of Quebec institutions.\textsuperscript{59} The fact that the overwhelming majority of these francophone immigrants were Catholic aggravated the linguistic divisions and sparked parochialism and bigotry from many Protestants. The Orange Order in particular were outraged with the intensifying French Canadian nationalism and messianism of this period, especially the Quebecois’ commitment to preserve their faith, language, and customs in their new province.\textsuperscript{60} The hitherto accommodative stance for French-speaking students and teachers began to wane.\textsuperscript{61} Any faith allegiance Ontario’s Irish Catholics had with their co-religionists also began to vanish; between the 1880s and 1920s, the Irish increasingly absorbed into mainstream Ontario society and the Catholic-Protestant conflict morphed into an ethno-

\textsuperscript{58} According to Mark McGowan, Lynch and several other Catholic leaders did not want O’Brien to publicly shame the Governor General, Lord Lansdowne (an absentee Irish landlord who was also in Toronto at the same time) because the latter’s status as a Crown representative deserved reverence. Uneasy Catholics did not want to have to “choose sides between Irish political activists and the representative of Canada’s head of state.” Brother Tobias, the local superior, was forced to apologize though continued to refer to O’Brien as an “eminent Irish Patriot.” See ARCAT, ROSII, Brothers of the Christian Schools, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1870-1888, Brother Tobias to Lynch, 30 May 1887 and Mark G. McGowan, \textit{The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922} (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 4.

\textsuperscript{59} Many French-speaking Catholic Quebeccers moved to Ontario in the latter half of the nineteenth century amidst great economic uncertainty, in part caused by too many people for the available arable land. They arrived in Ontario at the same time as (or slightly later than) English-speaking Irish Catholics fleeing Ireland for many of the same reasons. See Choquette, \textit{Language and Religion}, 1-2.

\textsuperscript{60} According to Robert Choquette, messianism “was simultaneously a religious and nationalistic conviction. It was the result of the Catholic ultramontane mood merged with nationalistic ambition. Messianism consisted in the conviction not only that Catholics were the chosen people of God as opposed to Protestants and others, but that even among the Catholics the French Canadian was the providential apostle of all nations. The English-speaking Catholic was a second-class member of Christ’s Church. Such a view was in direct contradiction to that of Canada’s Irish Catholics whose own messianism could be described in identical terms, providing the terms French and English are exchanged.” Choquette, \textit{Language and Religion}, 2.

\textsuperscript{61} Gaffield, \textit{Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict}, 31-61.
linguistic-cultural one.\textsuperscript{62} In Toronto specifically during this period, Roman Catholics – most of whom were of Irish background – became increasingly integrated into the city’s social, economic, and political fabric.\textsuperscript{63} Although Catholics remained a minority Christian denomination, socially and linguistically they were part of a growing anglo-conformism. English-speaking Catholics, including the Christian Brothers, demonstrated a growing allegiance to Canadian norms and institutions, meaning that they were increasingly allied with their Protestant neighbours in the belief that Ontario’s future – and that of Canada as a whole – would be English-based.

The fact that the Brothers’ Ontario institutions remained under the direction of authorities in Montreal and that French was the language of governance and formation grew ever more frustrating and they began campaigning for reforms to suit their English-language surroundings. They constantly complained that the training they received in Quebec as well as the distinct features and habits of their French confreres were incongruous in Ontario, discouraged recruitment, did not enrich community life, and limited expansion of schools.\textsuperscript{64} These English-speaking Brothers suggested that their congregation would flourish in the province if an English-language novitiate were established. From the 1870s to the 1910s, the Brothers’ concerted effort for a novitiate in Ontario reflected the fact that their hierarchy’s goals (and initiatives to achieve them) to that point had been largely unsuccessful. They lobbied their superiors in Montreal and Paris for “a Novitiate of our own” which would please God and “do much to extend His greater

\textsuperscript{62} Choquette, \textit{Language and Religion}, 2.
\textsuperscript{63} According to Mark McGowan, the Irish experienced greater participation in the burgeoning industrial and cultural landscape after the 1890s than they had in the previous half century. See McGowan, \textit{The Waning of the Green}, 3-15.
\textsuperscript{64} Plans for expansion in the number of schools and Brothers did not meet expectations. From the 1850s to the 1870s, the Brothers only opened ten schools in Ontario: six in Toronto, two in Ottawa (1864 and 1877), and one each in Kingston (1853) and St. Catharines (1876). For a list of all openings in Ontario, and other regions across Canada, as well their educational institutions in other countries missioned from Toronto, see the booklet \textit{One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of Lasallian Education in Toronto, 1851-2001} commemorating the arrival of the Brothers in Toronto. This was issued at the Eucharistic Liturgy of Thanksgiving on 12 May 2001 and is in possession of the author.
The Brothers argued that Toronto, the province’s capital, its most populous city and the seat of the Archdiocese, was the logical choice for an English-language novitiate. These Brothers regarded the success of Catholic schools as an all-important component in accelerating the triumph of the English-speaking Catholic Church in Canada, and they wanted to play a key role in seeing this reality come to fruition.

In petitioning their superiors for the greater inclusion of English-language services and cultural adaptation, Ontario’s Brothers appealed to reason, logic, practicality, and good sense. Perhaps their most persuasive argument in favour of anglicization was the idea that greater assimilation into the language of the masses would secure more vocations from an untapped population of rural Irish Catholics. A novitiate in Toronto, they reasoned, would be well placed to capitalize on this base of Catholics and train them for the life of the Christian educator. For Brother Michael (Patrick O’Hanlon), establishing such a novitiate was intimately connected with the aim of recruitment, and recruitment was itself tied to language: “Its necessity,” he argued, “was beyond all doubt.”

In a country in which the English language was alone spoken, teachers professing any other, as their maternal tongue, would be altogether unsuited. But the limited number of English speaking subjects furnished by our Novitiate of Montreal could not supply the wants of the province of Quebec, and, at the same time, satisfy the numerous demands made by their Lordships the Bishops and others in different parts of the province of Ontario. Hence the utility and importance of a Novitiate in which teachers would be recruited, and trained up, who would devote themselves to the Christian Education of Youth, throughout the Catholic element of Ontario.

Brother Michael captured the sentiment of many of his confreres in suggesting a willingness to conform to linguistic expectations in order to maximize recruitment and teach in the province’s separate schools.

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To support their case and carry out the envisioned transformation, the Brothers sought the help of local bishops and priests because their status added significant weight to the chorus of Brothers vying for change. Ontario’s English-speaking clergy were all too willing to help out. Most notably, Toronto Archbishop John Joseph Lynch wrote several letters in the 1870s and 1880s to the Superiors-General of the Brothers in Paris requesting that a novitiate be built in Toronto. Lynch was a strong proponent of English-language interests, and assumed that the future of his archdiocese, indeed all of Ontario, would be English-oriented. As historian Gerald Stortz has noted, Lynch may not have been as blatantly anti-French Canadian as some other Irish Catholic clergymen or laymen, but “it is clear that he agreed that French and Irish Catholicism were incompatible.” At the same time, a new novitiate for the Christian Brothers was an especially enticing proposal because Lynch, unlike de Charbonnel, had a contentious relationship with the Basilians, the congregation of priests operating St. Michael’s College and the only other male order operating a separate school in the archdiocese. Lynch questioned their English proficiency and whether they were the ideal choice to prepare young men for the priesthood.

Lynch’s advocacy for the Christian Brothers began with an October 1873 letter to

67 Lynch had been de Charbonnel’s coadjutor in 1859, but took the reins as Bishop when de Charbonnel resigned his See the following year. Bishop Lynch became Archbishop Lynch in 1870 when the diocese of Toronto became an Archdiocese. Throughout his tenure, Lynch had a difficult relationship with the French-Canadian hierarchy. As an Irishman and the leading Catholic in the English-speaking Church, he sometimes unwisely intervened in Quebecois affairs, particularly on questions of education, politics, and ecclesiastical administration. See Gerald Stortz, John Joseph Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto: A Biographical Study of Religious, Political, and Social Commitment (Ph.D. diss., University of Guelph, 1980), 40-75.


69 These tensions were exacerbated by a clash of personality with local Basilian superior and principal of St. Michael’s College Jean-Matthieu Soulerin. Lynch even went so far as to have some seminarians act as spies informing him of all goings-on in their community in order to raise doubts about their place in Toronto. When Soulerin eventually became Superior General in 1865 and moved to Annonay, France, his relationship with Lynch continued to be fraught: isolated problems were interpreted as the norm; there was interference on school discipline and supervision; ongoing espionage; censure for over-emphasizing secular subjects and not prioritizing religion and Latin; and claims that the Basilians challenged episcopal authority. For more details, see Kirley, The Community of Priests of St. Basil in France 45-50 and James Hanrahan, CSB, ed., The Basilian Fathers (1822-1972): A Documentary Study of One Hundred and Fifty Years of the History of The Congregation of Priests of St. Basil (Toronto: The Basilian Press, 1973), 68-73.
Brother Philippe, the Superior General, in which he praised the Brothers for “doing truly good work” in the city, and wanted it to continue. The best and most efficient means to achieve that end, he reasoned, was to establish a novitiate to recruit English-speaking Irish Catholics from the province’s rural areas. Ultimately, Lynch’s justification hinged on the language question, suggesting that the current practice of sending English-speaking Catholics to Quebec was impractical and dissuaded young men from joining the order. Because the province’s Catholic population was primarily of Irish origin, with significant numbers of English and Scottish Catholics as well, he noted “The English language is therefore the language of the country.” He continued with a poignant and carefully-crafted logic:

If you build a novitiate in Toronto, you’d receive these rural young men. They do not want to go to Montreal; it’s too far. Judge for yourself just how advantageous it would be to have Brothers who all speak the same language, have the same habits and share common feelings as the locals. Many of the Brothers currently teaching in our schools are of French origin, born in Lower Canada. Are they capable of honourably directing an English school? ... With your current system, you’re always short on candidates. But if you were to have a novitiate in Toronto, you’d quickly receive many young men who would make excellent Brothers. You could then extend your work and open new Communities in more of our larger towns ... where you’ve been unable to break into as yet. Hamilton, London, Saint Catharines, Guelph, Lindsay and many others are of this kind.70

Lynch, a powerful voice working alongside the English-speaking Brothers, hoped that a new novitiate would enable them to open new communities and schools across his archdiocese.

Seeking advice on how to respond to Lynch, the Superior General turned to the Brothers’ Assistant for North America, Brother Patrick, who was more familiar with the situation. Aware that the Brothers had experienced little growth in the province, Brother Patrick advised that a novitiate should indeed be built in Toronto. He rationalized that it would foster Ontario-born vocations, because, “apart from the difficulties of language, there are national sensitivities that

70 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/1, Toronto [Noviciat]/Canada Communautés, No. 1, Archbishop Lynch to Frère Philippe, 28 October 1873.
are difficult to bear during the early stressful months in the religious life.”

However, the Superior General was restricted by a recent decision of the General Chapter to limit the creation of new communities that could not guarantee recruitment success. In responding to the Archbishop, Brother Philippe recognized valid reasons for a novitiate, but was concerned about financing it since the Ontario Brothers would “need a house, the funds to furnish it, and resources to maintain this novitiate’s personnel because it presumed that novices can not pay dues sufficient to cover their expenses.” Ultimately, the Superior General was unwilling to implement Lynch’s request for the foreseeable future. However, he could not easily refuse the Archbishop or dismiss his concerns, and he ordered the Visitor in Montreal, Brother Hoséa, to go to Toronto to further discuss the matter with the Archbishop. When the two finally met along with a few of the congregation’s Toronto representatives, the Visitor refused to consent to a Toronto novitiate citing the same reasons as the Superior General.

Meanwhile, English-speaking Brothers in the Maritimes also argued that the establishment of an English-language novitiate and a separate linguistically-defined district would procure recruits, develop their schools, and solidify the Catholic Church and faith-based education in that region. To help accomplish this goal, in April 1875 Brother Victorian requested that Brother Patrick establish a Maritime District, to be headquartered in Halifax. He noted the Brothers’ strong record in graduating boys into the seminary and desperately wanted that work to continue. He acknowledged that a separate district would require more residences, novices, and communities, but suggested that the combined support of the Regime and the Archbishop would

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71 AGR, DRLCDT, 290.2/1, No. 2, Arrêté du Conseil du Régime établissant un Noviciat à Toronto, 24 November 1873.
72 AGR, DRLCDT, 290.2/1, No. 3, Réponse à Mgr que le Régime est disposé à l’érection d’un Noviciat à Toronto, Frère Philippe to J.J. Lynch, 26 November 1873.
not only make this feasible, but desirable.\(^{73}\) Brother Victorian, along with his colleague Brother Christian, also pleaded with the Assistant for immediate action on the erection of a novitiate in Halifax. They proposed that its creation would be an opportunity “to do good and to honour our Institute” and hoped that the Regime “won’t let pass this opportunity to establish ourselves in these provinces of the Dominion.”\(^{74}\) These arguments failed to persuade the Assistant.\(^{75}\) Aggravating the existing tension were disputes between the Brothers’ Montreal superiors and Maritime bishops over the French language of many teachers, financial problems, and control over school direction, each of which contributed to the closure of all five of the Brothers’ Maritime communities between 1875 and 1880.\(^{76}\)

Just as was the case in the Maritimes, Ontario’s English-speaking Brothers believed that the order’s superiors would have to face the reality that an English novitiate would best suit the province’s linguistic, religious, and social conditions and would help build up the flock. Throughout the 1870s, they continued to emphasize that preaching the Gospel in their classrooms in the English language was a practical and efficient way of communicating the Church’s message to a young and captive audience. Much like De La Salle’s own warning that teaching in a language that students did not understand would yield little in the way of results, the Ontario Brothers believed it necessary for teachers to be fluent in English so that students

\(^{73}\) LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221785-93, Brother Victorian to Brother Assistant, c. late April 1875.

\(^{74}\) LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221653-59, Brother Victorian and Brother Christian to Brother Assistant, 3 May 1875.

\(^{75}\) While the Brother Assistant agreed in principle, he noted that financial considerations needed to be heeded for the time being, meaning that purchasing property in Halifax was not in the Institute’s current plans. Moreover, he would have to wait until the establishment of the new Visitor for Montreal before coming to any decisions regarding the property. See LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221793-94, Brother Patrick, Assistant to Brother Victorian, 16 July 1875.

\(^{76}\) One Halifax community closed in 1875 and the other in 1876. These were followed in rapid succession by closures in Saint John in 1877, Charlottetown in 1878, and Chatham in 1880. Brother Maetalius recounted some of the specific frustrations between Halifax Archbishop Thomas Louis Connolly and Brother Armin Victor, the Montreal District Visitor in a small history book. He noted that the great hope for the Maritime region was “shattered” by the dispute between these two “fiery tempered men. Each had his own fixed ideas about what should be and was determined to carry them through. Neither one nor the other was the least inclined to make any concession.” BCSA, 700 Series, Halifax and The Maritimes, Brother Maetalius, \textit{A Short History of the English Schools of the Christian Brothers}, 85.
could learn their daily prayers and Catholic doctrine. The clergy echoed this sentiment, believing educators – especially those donning religious garb – should act as ambassadors of Christ. Archbishop Lynch, for instance, promoted a novitiate where “candidates will be carefully prepared in all that appertains to the instruction of youth.” With the financial help of parishioners, a Christian Brother-operated training centre would be a site for novices to learn how to be competent teachers and fully carry out the mission of Catholic education. Its graduates were expected to direct schools “where children will be taught not only their duty to God and their parents, but also to be good citizens and exemplary members of society.”\textsuperscript{77} Spreading the “good news” to Ontario’s Catholics through the education system was one sure-fire way to spread the church’s message and help build up the English Catholic Church in Canada.

But it was not linguistic, religious, or practical rationales that changed the minds of superiors and enabled the opening of a novitiate in Toronto. Rather, it was the Brothers’ improved financial condition in the late 1870s. When Brother Tobias Josephus replaced Brother Arnold (William Frewin) as director in January 1878, he was able to rein in spending and reduce debts and liabilities. He even reached an agreement with the federal government on the purchase of land and buildings on Duke Street, which housed the De La Salle Institute, the Brothers’ secondary school. These developments assured superiors that Toronto’s uncertain financial situation was on the mend, leading the Superior General to grant his approbation for a novitiate in early 1880. Toronto secular priest and financial secretary and treasurer of the TSSB Father William Bergin praised the decision and noted that the new training school would be built “in order to meet more perfectly the wants of our people here. That this may be as successful as their other undertakings will be our constant prayer, and we have no doubt about it as long as the

\textsuperscript{77} ARCAT, ROSII, Brothers of the Christian Schools, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1870-1888, “De La Salle Novitiate and Training School, Toronto,” 1 June 1876. This document may have been a circular passed out to parishes across the Diocese.
Community continues to walk in the footsteps of their pious Founder.”

On 25 August 1880, the De La Salle Novitiate and Training School opened at 273 Sumach Street on a secluded and “somewhat romantic” 11-acre property backing the “placid waters” of the Don River in what was then Toronto’s eastern edge. Brother Michael, the first Director of Novices in charge of preparing the boys for their vocation, called the seven young men who moved from Montreal to Toronto a “little band of religious pioneers.” The first postulant trained entirely in Toronto was a “very pious young Brother” named William Culliton. Entering 18 September 1880, he was vested with the habit in De La Salle College Chapel on 15 December 1880, thereby becoming Brother Tobias Stephen. The Toronto Tribune pronounced that this ceremony “marks a new era in the history of the “Brothers of the Christian Schools,” not only in the city of Toronto but in the Province of Ontario.” This occasion was viewed as so integral to the future of Catholic education in the province that Archbishop Lynch presided over the ceremony and mass, and Auxiliary Bishop Timothy O’Mahoney, several members of the clergy (including the Vicars General F.P. Rooney and J.M. Laurent), and all 23 Brothers from across Ontario attended.

78 BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, The Establishment of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Toronto and their Early History (Transcribed by Brother Walter Farrell, from the Original Handwritten text by Early Brothers in Toronto), 34-5. Father Bergin was born in County Tipperary, Ireland in 1847. He came to Canada in 1866 and attended the Grand Seminary in Montreal in 1869. He was ordained 9 July 1870 at Mt. Hope Convent in London, Ontario and was then placed in various communities around southern Ontario over the course of the following few years. In 1877, he came to Toronto where he was simultaneously Rector of St. Michael’s Cathedral and treasurer of the TSSB. For details on his life, see ARCAT, Clergy Biographical and Ministry Database, Biographical Information, William Bergin (Berrigan) and Jubilee Volume, the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1842-1892, and Archbishop Walsh (Toronto: George T. Dixon, 1892), 342 and 347.

79 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/1, Annals of the De La Salle Novitiate, undated. According to the necrology, Culliton [sometimes Culleton] was born in Melancton, Grey County Ontario in 1859 where local teachers educated him. Surprisingly, he held a university degree before entering the novitiate after having been “struck by the virtuous life” of a Brother that he met. Perhaps it was his university education that secured his placement as a teacher of the higher classes in Quebec City and Montreal. Known as the “joyful Brother” amongst his confreres, Brother Stephen was a pious man who reveled in the hierarchy and discipline of the religious life. His excellent record as both a religious and teacher got him the attention of superiors, who named him Director of several communities in those two cities. When visiting his sick brother in Toronto in the summer of 1924, he himself became sick and died on 5 August 1924. Brother Walter Farrell, FSC, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. II, 12-14.

Notably absent was Brother Réticius – the new District Visitor based in Montreal – who had been hesitant about the novitiate’s opening. Brother Réticius was an exemplary ultramontanist and a staunch defender of a centralized French-language administration centred in Montreal.81 While he considered the Irish Brothers to be “our most intelligent and most devoted teachers,” he nonetheless regarded them as “too isolated, too separated” and complained that they formed “a community within the community.”82 He preferred to mix the English-speaking Irish and French-speaking Canadien novices in Montreal to foster community spirit. Despite his misgivings, on his first official visit to the Toronto novitiate in July 1881, he commented favourably on virtually every facet of its operation. The novices, he wrote to the Superior General, are “pious, simple, generous” and “regularity was perfectly observed; prayers are agreeably recited ... With time and by the grace of God, this nursery will provide good subjects...”83 However, pecuniary and linguistic considerations tempered his optimism about the novitiate’s future. He noted that prosperity would only arise if there were a successful resolution to a new round of financial uncertainty in the Toronto community.84 Moreover, Brother Réticius inherited a colossal debt from his predecessor, the greatest portion of which was accrued in Toronto, and he thought it unwise to spend additional funds on Toronto affairs under such circumstances. His reservations also centred on the lack of French instruction: “I had projected that French and English would be taught concurrently, [as] these two languages [are]

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81 Brother Réticius was born in La Rochepot, France in 1837. He entered the Brothers’ novitiate in 1857, and soon established himself as competent but authoritarian in his early years as a teacher in Dôle, France. At 28 years old, he was named Director of the Novitiate at Saint-Claude-lès-Besançon, France and over the following fifteen years he gained a sound reputation as an administrator and educator. He was named visitor of District of Canada in 1880. For more details about his early life and subsequent controversies concerning his ultramontanism in Quebec, see Francois De Lagrave, “Le mandat tumultueux d’un Visiteur provincial: le frère Réticius, f.e.c. (1880-1886),” in Hamelin and Voisine, eds., Les Ultramontains canadiens-français, 241-53.

82 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1/2, Brother Réticius to Brother Irlide, 30 October 1880.

83 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/1, No. 4, Frère Réticius, Débuts du Noviciat de Toronto, 2 July 1881.

84 For details on the financial trouble associated with the purchase of the Duke Street building, see AFÉCCF, Montreal, 501605, Organisation Administrative, Maisons et Institutions, D.A. O’Sullivan to Archbishop Lynch, 6 February 1883.
indispensably necessary.” He thus proposed appointing a French-Canadian sub-Director for Toronto’s novitiate, and an equivalent “Irish” Brother for its Montreal counterpart.  

Between 1881 and 1883, Brother Réticius grew increasingly dismayed with the novitiate’s problems, including the small number of Ontario-born candidates, his belief that the English-only policy strayed from the novitiate’s original intent, and the increasingly precarious financial situation of the Toronto communities in general. He was reticent to provide more funds, arguing that the cost of the operating the Toronto novitiate outweighed any gains it made. Consequently, he proposed merging the Toronto and Montreal operations. When the proprietor threatened to sell the property if the Brothers did not purchase it, the novitiate’s fate was sealed. The Brothers’ Montreal District Council unanimously agreed to close the Toronto novitiate “pending a more conducive time to secure more vocations.” The novitiate officially shut its doors 20 September 1883. Under the vow of obedience, the Ontario Brothers continued to tolerate Ontario-born and English-speaking boys travelling to Montreal for their formation, but they nevertheless lived “in hopes of having our own Novitiate some day.”

Having invested much time and effort in this enterprise, the Ontario Brothers were frustrated and saddened by its closing. They suggested that the novitiate needed more time and resources to become recognizable and thus build up recruitment. During the three years in which it was opened, 14 postulants made their novitiate, and 10 eventually took the habit. But it was the opinion of both the Brothers and their chaplain that bright prospects were available and that

85 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/1, No. 4, Frère Réticius, Debuts du Noviciat de Toronto, 2 July 1881.
86 Brother Patrick, who made his first official visit in September 1882, echoed these sentiments. He was “highly delighted with the place, but was much surprised to find but two novices.” Quoted in AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/1, Annals of the De La Salle Novitiate, undated.
87 AFÉCCF, 501605.72, Organisation Administrative, Maisons et Institutions, Frère Réticius to D.A. O’Sullivan, 5 April 1883.
88 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/1, No. 5, Warning that the Novitiate would be closing, 15 September 1883 and No. 6, Frère Réticius, Décision de fermer le Noviciat, 15 September 1883.
89 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 84.
many young men would join the congregation if there were more active recruiting.\textsuperscript{90} Brother Tobias was arguably the most frustrated of all by the novitiate’s closure, for he had been its loudest campaigner. He was particularly dismayed by the unwillingness of his superiors to take concrete action for its prosperity: “This looked like a death-blow to the progress of our Congregation in Ontario ... We had great hope in this Novitiate. However, no active measures were taken to bring subjects to it, and there was no preparatory department [Juniorate] which is now considered absolutely necessary for the success of a Novitiate.”\textsuperscript{91} Ontario’s English-speaking Brothers were not particularly optimistic about the idea of sending English-speaking novices to Montreal, nor of starting their advocacy campaign all over again. Yet, in spite of their frustration, or perhaps because of it, they redoubled their efforts in a push for a new novitiate, certain in their belief that they were working for the glory of God and the salvation of souls in the province.

Another key aspect of the logic favouring anglicization and a new novitiate rested in its perception as an important tool in creating a defensive stronghold in a province with an influential Protestant majority. Historians John Zucchi and Murray Nicolson have noted that, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, Catholic schools run by English-speaking and primarily Irish men and women were established in Toronto and elsewhere as part of a campaign to care for Catholic children, integrate immigrant Catholics into the English-speaking Church, resist Protestant assimilation, and match public schools in terms of quality of teachers and students.\textsuperscript{92} The rising population of Irish Catholics in the Brothers’ ranks in the late nineteenth century had transformed them into a primarily English-language congregation in the province. With a

\textsuperscript{90} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No. 5, Brother Michael to Brother Assistant, 14 September 1883.
\textsuperscript{91} BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, Brother Tobias Josephus, History of the District of Toronto, 2.
stronger ethno-religious identity, their schools were increasingly sites of significance because they acted as bulwarks against Protestant and Orange Order prejudice.

Religious tensions were apparent across Ontario throughout the nineteenth century, especially in Ottawa and Toronto, the two largest cities in which the Christian Brothers operated. Antagonistic Protestant-Catholic relations hit the Brothers particularly hard. Easily recognizable by their long black robes, the Brothers faced public insults beginning with their arrival in 1851 and continuing throughout the 1850s. Tensions came to a head during the 12 July festivities in 1857 as Orange Order rioters smashed windows at St. Joseph’s Convent and St. Michael’s Cathedral, and fired shots into the Brothers’ residence and threatened to burn it down. Efforts from some Orangemen to replace drinking, violence, and other indulgences with music, reading, and more socially respectable activities from the 1850s onward were not entirely successful. As Gregory Kealey has shown, processions, picnics, and parades were often the locus for Orange-Green clashes despite civic leaders’ pleading. While riots were rare and the violence itself generally restrained, clashes nevertheless happened on a near-annual basis throughout the late nineteenth century, peaking during the Fenian crisis of the mid-1860s and with the Jubilee Riots in 1875. Tensions persisted into the 1880s and 1890s. The day after St.

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93 In Toronto, the way Protestants and Catholics clashed, often violently, led some to label the city the “Belfast of North America.” John Moir has pointed out that this kind of terminology may be overstating the frequency of and extent to which violent confrontation happened and may obscure the fact that Protestants’ concern was not with Catholics themselves or their faith, but rather with apparent papal interference into Canada’s domestic affairs. John S. Moir, “Toronto’s Protestants and Their Perceptions of Their Roman Catholic Neighbours,” in Mark McGowan and Brian P. Clarke, eds., Catholics at the “Gathering Place”: Historical Essays on the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1841-1991 (Toronto: Canadian Catholic Historical Association, 1993), 313 and 324.

94 Dixon, We Remember, We Believe, 17-8 and 38-42. The Globe reported that there had been a riot on Stanley Street, close to the cathedral, but focused their reporting on Catholic attacks on Protestants. The Globe, 14 July 1857.

95 Unsurprisingly, most clashes coincided with important religious and political dates such as the Battle of the Boyne, St. Patrick’s Day, and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot.

96 For details on these and other clashes, see Gregory S. Kealey, Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 98-123; Ian Radforth, “Collective Rights, Liberal Discourse, and Public Order: The Clash over Catholic Processions in Mid-Victorian Toronto,” Canadian Historical Review 95, no. 4 (December 2014), 511-44; Moir, “Toronto’s Protestants and their Perceptions of Their Roman
Patrick’s Day, 1889, *The Globe* reported that a group of “Young Rowdies” caused an ugly disturbance, playing loud music and throwing stones at various places around the city.\(^97\)

Evidently, one of their targets was St. Patrick’s School and Church, where, according to the TSSB, a “mob” had broken several windows.\(^98\) The Brothers’ superiors in Toronto tried to limit the abuse they faced by attempting to secure an exemption from wearing the habit when not inside the school or church. Brother Tobias wrote to the Superior General to justify this request, alluding to the terrible sufferings he and his community faced each day:

> It is not because we are ashamed of the habit we go in secular sometimes here. It is simply a matter of prudence. It is reverence really for our habit that prevents us from going out in it on all occasions. We do not wish to have God offended by the blasphemies of Protestants in this city, which is believed to be the most bigoted city in the world. ... We have been stoned often, struck at, cursed, and God’s name has been blasphemed in this city when we were going out in our religious habit. To go out on the weekly promenade in the religious habit would be for us here more a torture than a recreation. ... Our Novices and young Brothers would, then, be very much discouraged if they would have to expose themselves to the insults of the vile rabble of this Protestant section of the country by going out in the religious habit.\(^99\)

In his effort to showcase Protestants’ hatred of Catholics, Brother Tobias highlighted the spirit of enmity between the two major Christian groupings in the city. Protestants became increasingly nationalistic in the second half of the nineteenth century, and aimed to manoeuvre the country’s path away from French-Catholic ultramontanism. While the Brothers sympathized with the vision that Canada, outside Quebec, ought to move toward its English-speaking destiny, they

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\(^{97}\) The Globe, 18 March 1889.

\(^{98}\) The TSSB hoped to reclaim the costs for the damages from the municipality. See TCDSBA, Minutes of the September, October, and November Meetings, 1889.

denied that the future must necessarily discount a Catholic presence.

Given this context, it is not surprising that the Brothers advocated English-language institutions as a means of protecting Catholics from the dangers of Protestantism. They argued that a novitiate in Toronto could train staunchly Roman Catholic teachers who would be motivated to keep boys committed to their faith. Brother Tobias pleaded with his superiors for action, stressing that a novitiate would be a significant riposte to Protestantism’s strength: “We are praying every day that we may have a Novitiate, if it would tend to promote God’s glory here in this bigoted Protestant Province where Catholic education is so much needed.”

The Brothers’ allies in the clergy echoed this call. From the 1870s through to the 1910s, senior members of Church hierarchy advocated for more English-speaking Brothers to teach in their schools in order to preserve the Catholic faith and repudiate Protestant influence. Writing to the Superior General in 1885, Archbishop Lynch put forth the idea that he, along with the bishops of London, Hamilton, and Peterborough, unanimously supported an English-language novitiate because they were anxious to counteract “a strong spirit of antagonism” that apparently pervaded the public school system. For these bishops, no order was better suited to teach in the province’s Catholic schools: “Your good Brothers are excellent auxiliaries to the clergy in laying a deep foundation of religion in the hearts of youth, hence we are so anxious, that they may be able to continue this great work of laboring for the salvation of souls.”

The Brothers and their clerical allies were optimistic that logic would prevail and that superiors in Paris and Montreal would bend to the will of their members. The continuance of the Faith was at stake.

Yet another argument the Brothers employed in advocating for a new novitiate was the idea of quality control in the classroom. Brothers stressed that there was a direct and significant

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100 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No. 2, Brother Tobias to Brother Aimarus, 2 December 1889.
101 ARCAT, Lynch Papers, L A028.01, Archbishop Lynch to Brother Joseph, 21 September 1885.
correlation between the language of the instructor and the efficacy of his teaching. In Ottawa, Brother Malachy Edward relayed to the Assistant that Inspector J.F. White had poorly reviewed the Brothers’ schools in a recent evaluation. A novitiate in Toronto, he reasoned, would not only be more suitable for novices’ religious formation, but it would also better prepare them in their pedagogical formation since teacher education appropriate for Ontario schools would be conducted therein. Essentially, Brother Malachy Edward argued that a Toronto-based novitiate would advance pedagogy and improve boys’ academic learning, and therefore would serve the best interest of the Institute in Canada. Archbishop Lynch echoed these concerns. He wrote to the Superior General, Brother Joseph (Joseph Josserand), stressing that, under his watch, the schools operated by the Christian Brothers would not be inferior in any regard to other schools in the province. In order to carry out their crucial work, Lynch correlated the quality of the education given with the language of the instructor, using that connection as a springboard for the implementation of an English-language novitiate or re-annexation to the New York District:

The great want is suitable English-speaking subjects for the schools that your Brothers teach and for the Schools that are waiting for them. I feel that the French Province of Quebec cannot supply us with subjects suitable for our schools here. Quebec is not a good school for our candidates to the novitiate to learn English. Both School Trustees and parents complain that some of the Brothers do not speak good English. I have to listen to such complaints, and to combat them as well as I can. … Some years ago your houses of Ontario were annexed to the New York District. We began to feel the effect of your Brothers’ forming part of a Province rich in English-speaking subjects. Unfortunately, Ontario was withdrawn from New York and re-annexed to Montreal. It appears to me and to the other Bishops of the Province, most desirable that your Brothers here be again annexed to New York. There you have a large Novitiate of English-speaking subjects, and we could, consequently, rely upon a better supply of teachers that would suit Ontario.

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102 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No. 6, Brother Malachy Edward to Reverend Brother Patrick, Assistant to the Superior General, 22 March 1890.
103 ARCAT, Lynch Papers, L A028.01, Archbishop Lynch to Brother Joseph, 21 September 1885. Lynch had a very cordial relationship with the American Catholic Church hierarchy, most of whom were Irish. His familiarity with the American context perhaps explains why he thought it more beneficial for English-speaking Brothers to be annexed to the New York District rather than to continue on as members in the Montreal District. For details on Lynch’s relationship with American bishops, see Stortz, John Joseph Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto, 43-4.
Brother Joseph responded by emphasizing that he, on behalf of his Institute, desired the same end. He wrote that the Brothers in Quebec would now be adequately ensuring the educational and religious well-being of English-speaking Brothers because they had formed “a special section” for them in the Montreal novitiate. Further, the Regime affirmed that a novitiate might re-open in Toronto when financial conditions became more favourable.

The necessity of English-language training to teach effectively in Catholic schools was not only advanced by Brothers and bishops in Ontario, but in the Maritime Provinces as well. When the Brothers arrived in Halifax in 1865, many difficulties erupted centring on their professional qualifications, finances, and language. This last contentious point played out in a similar fashion to the way it did in Ontario. Brothers and their supporters in the clergy insisted that since English was the dominant language of the student populace they would be serving, it was essential to have English-speaking Brothers and English-language institutions to have any chance at a successful outcome. In Halifax, one Brother remarked that many of his colleagues were young and had insufficient English-language skills to teach at St. Mary’s College, a school offering a classical curriculum which the Brothers had taken over in 1868. Of the seven Brothers in the community, six “were of French design and the other was poorly posted up in the English tongue.” The implication was that if this trend continued, failure was inevitable in Nova Scotia. These Brothers therefore conducted their own campaign for anglicization and hoped that the creation of a Halifax novitiate would recruit Maritime boys.

The connection between language and effective teaching and administration also arose as

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104 ARCAT, ROSII, Brothers of the Christian Schools, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1870-1888, Brother Joseph to Archbishop Lynch, 16 October 1885.

105 LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221736, cited in Historical Sketch of St. Mary’s College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1871. The full volume is found from reel # 221655-221809. St. Mary’s College – the precursor to today’s St. Mary’s University – was opened in 1841 and was run by members of the clergy. The Brothers, who initially lived in a wing of the College when they arrived in 1865, took over its direction and teaching in 1868 at the request of Archbishop Connolly. However, financial considerations and a clash of personality between Connolly and the Brothers’ superiors in Montreal contributed to the Brothers’ departure in 1876.
a key issue in Saint John, New Brunswick, exacerbating an already palpable crisis over Catholic school funding. During the 1870 school year, tensions surged between the Brothers and Bishop John Sweeney over the Bishop’s request to have the French-speaking Brother Leo removed from the city. According to an anonymous Brother in that province, the bishop felt Brother Leo “was far from being competent enough to direct the establishment, not knowing the English language well enough.” The Bishop further stated that although Brother Leo “was an excellent religious” he was “ashamed to bring gentlemen to visit the schools as Bro. Leo was a man of such poor address and worse language that it would be a shame to introduce him to any one as Director of the Christian Brothers and Inspector of their Schools.” 

Essentially, the Bishop did not want to let the schools in which he oversaw fall into disrepute. Much like the argument raised in Ontario, he felt there was a direct connection between the language of the Brother, the quality of his teaching ability, and his suitability as a religious and professional in this English milieu.

Concurrent with the Ontario Brothers’ campaign for a novitiate was a movement for an autonomous district, separate from superiors in Montreal, which they saw as a means of expanding their own institutions and ensuring the future success of separate schools in the province. They argued that the vast size of the Montreal District coupled with its Franco-centric nature had its limitations, particularly with regards to the over-extended role of the Visitor. The current situation meant that the Visitor, based in Montreal, could only perform his visits once a year. While this technically met the minimum number of visits required by The Rule, Ontario’s Brothers suggested he was ineffectual in carrying out his central functions, such as mediating disputes, gauging the quality of the schools, and assessing the piety of community members. The Visitor, they complained, was not in a great position to evaluate accurately their particular

106 LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221377, cited in History of the Establishment of the B.C.S., St. John, N.B., 1877. The full volume is found from reel # 221365-221460.
strengths and weaknesses, had limited familiarity with Ontario politics or educational trends, and
could therefore not carry out his duties in a judicious fashion. Brother Tobias remarked that
“most of our Brothers would feel really more at home under a different regime from that which
holds sway in the Lower Province … They cannot examine the classes. They really do not know
in what condition our schools are. Moreover, they cannot supply us the Brothers we want
here.”107 The Ontario Brothers argued that stronger local control of the life of their community
would ease governance and give a local English-speaking superior greater knowledge of the
Brothers and schools within his realm.108

In an initiative thought to be a sign from superiors of investment in the province, the
Brothers were rewarded with the opening of the Toronto District on 26 May 1889, only one year
following the death of their great ally Archbishop Lynch. Brother Tobias was appointed the first
Visitor. However, his new district lacked the necessary funds to actually build a novitiate, and
with only three communities at its outset, the Brothers’ prospects for success were limited.109
“We are only nominally a ‘District’,” he complained to the Superior General after four months in
his new position. “If you want us to remain separated, we expect you to provide the means for us
to prosper.”110 The Brothers rationalized that the only chance they had to remain a distinct
district and to expand their membership and services was the establishment of their own
novitiate. Otherwise, re-annexation to the New York District was the only alternative.111

The Brothers pleaded with superiors for action, and, following the protocol of hierarchy
in their congregation, left it to superiors to advocate on their behalf. While language concerns

107 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1, Brother Tobias to Rev. Br. Patrick, 26 September 1885.
108 This was a long-standing argument, and is voiced most clearly in AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2, No. 6, Brother
Malachy Edward to Reverend Brother Patrick, Assistant to the Superior General, 22 March 1890.
109 This region encompassed communities in Toronto, Kingston, and St. Catharines.
110 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, Brother Tobias Josephus to Superior General Frère Joseph, 6 September 1889.
111 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, Brother Tobias to Brother Aimarus, 9 March 1890; BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. +
were never far from the surface, they began to push an agenda that focussed on more practical concerns such as improved organizational and fiscal management. During a six-month period from January to July 1890, Brother Tobias, the new Visitor, wrote constantly to the Assistant, Brother Aimarus (Jules-Édouard Gaussin), requesting an English-language novitiate. Brother Tobias articulated many different arguments simultaneously. Each new argument, it seems, weaved in with the others. At times he pressed that it was economically unsound to send boys hundreds of miles away to Montreal, Baltimore, or New York. Plus, these institutions were already overcrowded as it was and their distance from Toronto mitigated interest from potential recruits. He further warned of the costs of train fare, food, and other living expenses and suggested that having a novitiate in Toronto would partly alleviate the new District’s impoverishment. The financial angle was pushed even further when he advocated the idea that owning a novitiate outright maximized its worth, meaning that the congregation would be in a much better financial position since the land and property value would only increase. However, he stressed that they needed the money from the institutional hierarchy to purchase the property in the first place. Offering one final incentive, Brother Tobias noted that about a dozen boys from Toronto wanted to join the order, but only if they did not have to travel too far. He also suggested attaching the Ottawa communities to the Toronto District, thereby incorporating five new houses and 30 new Brothers, and hopefully new recruits.

Language concerns, however, remained the central focus of the Ontario Brothers’ agitation for a new novitiate because there was a widespread feeling that the pedagogical training and basic linguistic competency in Quebec was inferior. While they had consistently deemed their Quebecois confreres to be poorly suited to teach in Ontario’s English milieu, they

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112 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No. 8, Notes for Report in Favor of a Novitiate in Ontario, 23 March 1890.
113 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No. 7, Brother Tobias to Brother Aimarus, 9 March 1890.
increasingly argued that English-language novices trained in Quebec were equally unsuitable and undesirable because the academic program was conducted primarily in French. In March 1890, Brother Malachy Edward, a senior teacher and administrator in Toronto, argued that there was a widespread public perception that educational standards were lower in Quebec and even mentioned a few examples of “considerable bad feeling” against Brothers who had transferred from Quebec to Ontario and who were unprepared for differences in the relationship between school boards and religious orders. Tying language to professionalization, he suggested that the Brothers should receive training in Ontario where “the system of teaching, the curriculum of studies, [and] the methods of the local and government inspection are all so widely different from that of the Province of Quebec. … Before long we will be compelled if not by law at least by public opinion to pass our examination and as they are so difficult it will be impossible to prepare our young Brothers in Montreal where so much time has to be given to a French education.”

Perhaps he was responding to concerns raised by Ontario’s first inspector of separate schools, J.F. White, who had consistently criticized Quebec’s teacher training centres for graduating teachers according to a lower standard than the Normal Schools of Ontario. It also seems reasonable to assume that Brother Malachy positioned his congregation as sympathetic to English-language interests and frosty with French Canadians in order to downplay rising tensions precipitated by the Jesuit Estates Act controversy.

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114 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No. 6, Brother Malachy Edward to Reverend Brother Patrick, Assistant to the Superior-General, 22 March 1890.
116 In 1888, Quebec premier Honoré Mercier proposed the Jesuit Estates Act as legislation designed to financially compensate Jesuits whose lands had been confiscated by the British following the 1759 Conquest and the subsequent suppression of their Society in 1774. Beginning in the 1830s, Catholic Bishops began agitating the Lower Canadian government for re-appropriation of these estates. The Jesuits’ return to Canada in the 1840s only added more vigor to the campaign. In 1871, the Jesuits began negotiating with the government of Quebec to deal with the issue, but it took the intervention of Archbishop of Quebec Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau and Pope Leo XIII to help finalize a resolution. In 1888, Quebec’s Legislative Assembly unanimously passed the Act, which provided the Jesuits with $160 000, the Université de Laval with $140 000, selected dioceses in Quebec with $100
Echoing these sentiments, Brother Tobias emphasized that English-speaking boys suffered at the hands of the French-speaking Brothers in the Montreal novitiate. Not only was it impractical to send English-speaking novices to Montreal, but leaders there were altogether unfit because of their natural disposition as French-Canadians: “The exercises, conferences, etc. are all in French and this, together with the spirit, manner of training, mentality, etc. peculiar to the French temperament and customs, militated against the proper formation of English-speaking subjects.” Based on his observations and experiences teaching and directing communities around Ontario, Brother Tobias noted that “young men here think they are going to a foreign Country when going to Quebec, as most of them do not understand the language of the bulk of the people, and the manners are quite different from the manners and customs of Ontario.” Moreover, he reasoned that in Toronto they would receive higher quality English-language training than in Quebec and be better prepared for the standards and expectations of teaching in Ontario. Ultimately, Brother Tobias suggested that an English-language novitiate in Toronto would be ideal for novices of both languages since it would give French-Canadian Brothers an opportunity to learn English. He added that it would further prepare French Brothers to respond to the 1885 Public School Act, a law that dictated English as the primary language of instruction and which mandated English fluency and translation skills for all candidates for teachers’ certification in all of Ontario’s French schools.

000, and the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction with $60 000. The involvement of the Pope proved extremely controversial to the Orange Order and many other Protestants, including the Conservative Members of Parliament Dalton McCarthy and John Augustus Barron, who asked the federal Parliament to repeal the law. In the end, it was not overturned, but the controversy strained relations between many English Protestants in Ontario and French Catholics in Quebec. It further contributed to the creation of the Equal Rights Association, the notorious anti-Catholic and anti-French organization fronted by McCarthy. For details, see J.R. Miller, Equal Rights: The Jesuit Estates Act Controversy (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1979).

117 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 84.


119 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No. 8, Notes for Report in favor of a Novitiate in Ontario, 23 March 1890. For
Similar fears over the suitability of French-speakers in English milieux were taking place in the Maritimes in the late nineteenth century. When the Archbishop of Halifax, Cornelius O’Brien, expressed interest in opening an industrial school for Catholic boys in December 1884, language was to play a key role in which religious order secured its direction. Not just any congregation would do; Archbishop O’Brien had very specific requirements in mind before granting his approbation to the eventual overseers. Significantly in his view was having a religious order that understood the practices, priorities, and inclinations of the people of Nova Scotia. For all intents and purposes, this idea excluded French-speaking Christian Brothers. In a letter to Brother Justin, Visitor of the New York District, O’Brien was quite explicit in this regard:

Owing to the language and national characteristics of our people in Halifax, I address myself to you, and not to the Brothers of Montreal. It is not from any unworthy prejudice that I desire to get Brothers dependent directly on the U. States, but from a conviction that since our manners and modes of life are similar to those of Catholics in the U. States, and very different from those of Catholics in the Province of Quebec, Brothers dependent on the U. States would be similar to our special wants, whilst those from Montreal would not understand us, nor us them. Will you, therefore, please lay this request before the proper authorities: you can assure them that I do not mean to insinuate anything against the Province of Canada [Quebec]; but simply that our ways being so different success could not attend the efforts of their Brothers here; whereas there is every reason to believe that Brothers dependent on the U. States would do a great work in our midst.120

On no account did he desire that the Brothers be connected with French-speakers in the Montreal District. The Superior General, Brother Joseph, must have understood O’Brien’s trepidation because he consented, sending English-speaking Brothers from New York in the manner requested. They opened St. Patrick’s School in October 1885 and, thanks in large part to a common language and outlook, a positive rapport developed between the Archbishop and these

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120 LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221826-28, Demande de frères pour une École Industrielle, Archbishop O’Brien to Brother Justin, 21 December 1884.
American Brothers. It is likely that a precedent of securing religious orders from the United States rather than from Canada East (Quebec) had been set decades earlier, since the first Sisters of Charity in Halifax were also from New York, arriving in 1849 at the behest of then Bishop William Walsh.

The sentiments of their Ontario confreres resonated with the Brothers in Halifax, who proposed that their presence in the Maritimes could not last without a novitiate and that definite preparations needed to be made to secure good Catholic teachers. Local director Brother Alexander pressed his superiors to establish a novitiate as a way to “form the novices, teach them, educate them, and licence them” for this was what the Sisters of Charity were successfully doing at the time. Indeed, the Council of Public Instruction in Nova Scotia recognized the Sisters’ motherhouse, Mount Saint Vincent, as a provincial Normal School in November 1895. Other Catholic Maritimers, such as Halifax city councillor and lawyer Alexander McNeil, concurred with Brother Alexander. He considered Nova Scotia a good field for religious vocations and suggested that the Brothers would be excellent candidates for preparing Nova Scotia’s boys for positions as educators and priests, as well as miners and labourers of every sort. McNeil wrote to Brother Alexander reasoning that a novitiate would undoubtedly “get subjects who would bring honor to the Community.”

121 Halifax’s St. Patrick’s School remained part of the New York District until the school closed in 1955.
122 The Sisters of Charity of Halifax separated from New York authority in 1855. They soon opened their own motherhouse, house of formation, and several schools. Over the next few decades, they established an orphanage and an infirmary. In 1887, they opened a school in Massachusetts, setting in motion a process that would see them expand to New Brunswick, Bermuda, and elsewhere in Nova Scotia. For details, see Sister Maura, The Sisters of Charity, Halifax (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1956), 1-38 and Sister Marianna O’Gallagher, SCH, “The Sisters of Charity of Halifax – The Early and Middle Years,” CCHA Study Sessions 47 (1980), 57-68.
123 LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221902-06, No. 15, Suggestion d’établir un Noviciat à Halifax, Brother Alexander to Brother Assistant, 30 September 1900.
125 Alexander McNeil was the brother of the Bishop of Sandy Point Newfoundland and future Archbishop of Toronto Neil McNeil, who himself also developed a very good relationship with the Christian Brothers while heading that archdiocese from 1913-1934.
126 LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221888-90, No. 10: “Renseignements donner au sujet des Écoles d’Halifax,” Alexander
Paris that there was “an opportunity for your Brothers to do much good here” and referred to the novitiate of the city’s Sisters of Charity as a model example. Their strong record as teachers in the Catholic girls schools of the city stemmed in part from the fact that they were “from among our own people” though they also had postulants from the schools they ran in the United States.

He continued:

If your work were carried on [along] somewhat similar lines I do not see why you would not be equally successful. … There are difficulties in the way, but the followers of La Salle should not fear them. This is bound to be an important section of this Country and it is highly desirable that we should have our boys carefully prepared for important duties.¹²⁷

Much like their English-speaking confreres in Ontario, Brothers and their supporters in Nova Scotia saw anglicization and a local novitiate as a means of their own institutional expansion. Further, they argued that a novitiate would cement Catholic schools, which had been allowed to operate under a “gentleman’s agreement,” and thereby ideally help to stabilize Catholicism in an era of anti-Catholic sentiment.¹²⁸

Besides insisting that Quebec-based institutions were inferior for novices’ pedagogical training, English-speaking Brothers in the Maritimes and Ontario asserted that novices trained in Quebec lacked the proper preparation for the rigours of religious life. Ontario-born Brothers, for instance, sometimes claimed that they left the province as novices but returned unsure of what they had learned. Brother Michael, an important advocate on behalf of English-language

Brothers in Ontario, wrote on precisely this matter:

¹²⁷ McNeil to Brother Alexander, 4 September 1900.
¹²⁸ LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221891-93, No. 11: “Ce que les Soeurs font aux Écoles de Filles et ce que les Frères devraient faire aux Écoles de Garçons,” Alexander McNeil to Rev. Brother Clementine, 18 September 1900.

¹²⁸ To meet Catholics’ educational demands, Archbishop Thomas Louis Connolly negotiated a “gentlemen’s agreement” with Charles Tupper whereby elementary schools would be denominationally based, essentially guaranteeing that Catholic schools would be able to operate with government financial support. For details, see David Sutherland, “‘Father’ Chiniquy Comes to Halifax: Sectarian Conflict in 1870s Nova Scotia,” Journal of the Nova Scotia Royal Historical Society 10 (2007), 76. For a similar discussion on the Prince Edward Island context, see Heidi MacDonald, “Developing a strong Roman Catholic social order in late nineteenth-century Prince Edward Island,” CCHA Historical Studies 69 (2003), 34-51.
It is the opinion of many of our dear Brothers that a Novitiate for the English-speaking subjects is absolutely necessary. I have known many young men that came from Ireland and after making their Novitiate in Montreal knew absolutely nothing about the religious life, as the exercises were performed in French, and then after spending a few years in community where they found some knowledge of the religious life, more or less indifferent, at last came to the conclusion that it was about the same to live in the world as in religion and so abandoned their holy state. ... In fact it is only since I came here [to Toronto] that I began to understand the beauty of the religious life, as I had but a faint idea of it before. When I entered the order fifteen years ago, I only remained four months in the Novitiate, and as the exercises were performed in French, you may imagine what kind of Novitiate I made. Is it to be wondered at then, that so many abandon their holy state? It is rather a miracle that so many have persevered. 129

In petitioning their superiors for a new Toronto-based English-language novitiate, Brothers suggested that members’ religiosity was at stake. Because their religious formation was crucial to their identity as teaching Brothers, anglicization was deemed essential if their educational mission was to be fully realized.

Brother Aimarus, the Assistant for North America and Ireland, had some misgivings about organizing and financing a proposed novitiate and feared that the failure of the first novitiate would be repeated. During the summer of 1890, he regularly corresponded with Brother Tobias about the District’s financial situation and the likelihood of procuring recruits. Finally securing Brother Aimarus’ blessing for a novitiate was Brother Tobias’ success in procuring a $50/year increase for the 19 Christian Brothers teaching in the Toronto Separate School Board, a significant jump from the $200/year they were currently making. 130 He argued that this new income would help alleviate costs associated with opening a novitiate. 131

With approbation to establish the novitiate finally secured, the initial plan was to erect a new building on a large property on the outskirts of Streetsville, not far from Toronto proper.

129 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/1, No. 5, Brother Michael to Brother Assistant, 14 September 1883. 130 Brother Tobias asked for a raise of $50/Brother in February. The Board’s Committee on Finance studied the matter over the following weeks, and recommended a raise of $25/Brother at the next Board meeting. However, upon presentation to the Committee of the Whole, the proposal was amended and raised to the full amount of $50/Brother initially requested. See TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 4 February 1890 and 4 March 1890. 131 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.2/2, No 7, Brother Tobias Josephus to Brother Aimarus, 9 March 1890.
However, likely in an effort to save money, the Brothers and the TSSB eventually decided that the top floor of the De La Salle Institute would be the ideal location. The Sisters of St. Joseph occupied this space for their Girls High Class and did not wish to leave. The TSSB’s School Management Committee recommended that the Sisters be transferred to the Notre Dame Institute “where suitable accommodation will be provided.” Many Sisters were frustrated with the decision because priority went to the Brothers instead of them. According to the District Annals, some Sisters tried to disrupt the transition, much to Brother Tobias’ chagrin. In one case, a few Sisters apparently delayed renovations at Notre Dame by sending away the carpenters, thwarting the Sisters timely move. What was more annoying to Brother Tobias was that the headmistress and several female High School students occupied De La Salle Institute and refused the Brothers’ entry. Although he considered the Mother Superior to be generally kind and fair, he remarked that there were “some wirepullers among the inferiors, who were neither fair, just, nor charitable towards us. … The head mistress all along showed herself everything but a religious or a lady. The Mother Superior was not against us; but, a weak woman, she was led by her wirepullers.” In the end, the influence of Archbishop John Walsh, Lynch’s successor in Toronto, and the intervention of Reverend Father Rooney, Chairman of the Separate School Board, secured the deal. The Sisters were ousted and the Brothers got what they wanted.

The Brothers’ novitiate opened 27 December 1890 in a remodelled wing of the De La Salle Institute under the direction of Brother Halward. Besides the new classrooms, the site was

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132 TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 2 December 1890.
133 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 4-6.
135 BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, Brother Tobias Josephus, History of the District of Toronto, 22. The Mother Superior at this time was Mother de Pazzi Kennedy. In regards to the “wirepullers” that were supposedly leading her astray, Brother Tobias made no explicit mention of any names.
also renovated to include a refectory, dormitory, infirmary, and procure. Archbishop Walsh was especially excited by its potential in furthering Catholic education in the province. Walsh was a long-time advocate for the Brothers’ novitiate and echoed much of Lynch’s passion and enthusiasm. He reasoned that since the Brothers were to be distinguished auxiliary servants of the Church, they had to be familiar with the language of the students if they were to carry out their vocation effectively. When given the tour on its opening day, one Brother remarked that Walsh’s enthusiasm was palpable, for he had indicated “the great amount of good that was expected to result from their labors, the necessity of qualifying themselves for the efficient discharge of the important work intrusted [sic] to them, and hoped that blessings and success would attend their efforts in the cause of Catholic education.” Walsh was likely even more pleased when a juniorate was added in 1891 and a scholasticate in 1892. By the beginning of 1893, Toronto was home to 22 juniors, 15 novices, and four scholastics. With these numbers, the congregation staffed more schools in Toronto and opened new communities and schools in Renfrew (1890), Hamilton (1891), Cleveland, Ohio (1893), and the St. John’s Industrial School in Toronto (1895). As Table 3 indicates, there were more Brothers, schools, and communities in Ontario in 1895 than at any other point between 1851 and 1915.

While the Toronto District seemed to be functioning well and the novitiate added more numbers, developments in the congregation’s hierarchy and Canadian society contributed to the quick demise of both the district and its novitiate. In 1891, Brother Réticius, who had been unable to establish good relations with English-speaking Brothers while Visitor from 1880-86,

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136 Brother Halward, the first Director of Novices, argued that a proper – meaning separate and isolated – facility was still lacking.
138 The two English-speaking communities in Ottawa were also annexed to the Toronto District in 1891.
139 In the Brothers’ necrology, the entry for Brother Halward notes that the success of the novitiate was a testament to the work of its only Master of Novices. Despite the novitiate being open for only 5 years, “the number of pious, zealous, and devoted Brothers who were trained there is proof that God blessed his work.” Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Volume 1, 41-2.
Table 3: Brothers, Communities, and Schools in Ontario, 1851-1915*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Brothers</th>
<th>Number of Communities</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from statistical information contained in AGR, No. 171.1, Toronto: Détaché du District de Montréal, Maintenant du District de Toronto, entry for 1 May 1851; AGR, Personnel de l’Institut, Montreal District Communities and Toronto District Communities, 1873-1905; LAC, m.f. 223, reel # 270292-93, “État du Personnel des Maisons,” 1915. * These statistics exclude Ottawa, even though two English-speaking communities in Ottawa were part of the Toronto District briefly in the 1890s. The statistics also do not account for the number of novices employed as teachers in the nineteenth century.

replaced Brother Aimarus as the Assistant for North America. Brother Réticius’ position on the language question was clear: the goal must be to work “by all possible means to destroy the eternal and foolish ideas of nationality, and strive to make all of our novices members of one family, that of the children of the Venerable De La Salle.”\(^\text{140}\) In 1896, he closed the novitiate and dismantled the District. He did so under the pretence of meagre finances in the Toronto District and unsuitable accommodations at the De La Salle Institute, which violated the rules governing community living.\(^\text{141}\) Given that questions of national identity were prominent in this time of controversy surrounding the hanging of Louis Riel, the Manitoba Schools Question, and growing French Canadian nationalism, it is telling that Brother Réticius sought to diminish ethnic tension within his congregation by concentrating operations in Quebec and thereby reassert French-language authority. On the other hand, perhaps more pragmatic reasons were at the root of his decision. Historian Nive Voisine suggests that not only did Brother Réticius question the

\(^{141}\) BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 59-60.
viability of the Toronto District and an English-language novitiate because of its financial instability and supposed poor recruitment record but that he also considered the closure of communities sometimes necessary for districts to survive, let alone progress.\textsuperscript{142}

As a tacit way to acknowledge that English-speaking Brothers were to be integral members in the Montreal District, and to help soften the blow of their loss of autonomy, Brother Réticius added a second Auxiliary-Visitor in 1896.\textsuperscript{143} This man had to be English-speaking and he had to reside in Toronto. The first one chosen was Brother Malachy Edward, an unsurprising choice given that he had been Toronto District Visitor at the time of its closure. At the same time, though, English-speaking novices were again sent to Montreal to attend the Mont-de-La-Salle novitiate on Sherbrooke Street. Brother Réticius insisted that English-speaking novices would be well formed in Montreal. They would preserve their language under an English-speaking director while simultaneously learning French. He hoped that this new arrangement would help to achieve a “union of hearts” among the congregation.\textsuperscript{144} The Ontario Brothers were frustrated with the new state of affairs and were disheartened when the Montreal District closed every one of the Ontario-based communities by the end of 1896, except for those in Toronto.

Intra-congregational developments coupled with the social, political, religious, and educational context in early twentieth-century Ontario eventually proved favourable for the Ontario Brothers’ procurement of a revived novitiate and district. In the religious context, the protracted wane in anti-Catholic sentiment in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ontario was of crucial importance to the Brothers’ changing fortunes. Historian J.R. Miller has noted the general decline in outward hostility: Catholics’ increasing willingness to integrate in the

\textsuperscript{142} Voisine, \textit{Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada, Tome II}, 74-85.
\textsuperscript{143} The position of Auxiliary Visitor was already established in the Montreal District in 1880, but it had always been a French-speaking Brother who resided in Montreal.
\textsuperscript{144} Cited in Voisine, \textit{Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada, Tome II}, 112.
province’s civic affairs; the success of Irish immigrants in adapting to the province’s social, economic, and cultural life; a shift in Protestants’ angst away from local Catholics and towards non-Anglophone immigrants in the booming west and nationalist, ultramontanist, and French-speaking Catholics in Quebec; and, finally, a growing ecumenism among Canadian Christians.  

By the end of the First World War, Ontario Protestants were becoming increasingly open to the presence of Catholics in their midst and Catholics themselves felt increasingly more comfortable living in what appeared to be more affable surroundings. Nevertheless, anti-Catholic sentiment was never eliminated entirely, varying greatly depending on specific times and places, and sometimes shaping the Brothers’ approach to handling tensions within their ranks.

Political developments also facilitated the Brothers’ procurement of a novitiate and autonomous district. First, the Ontario Legislature passed An Act respecting the Qualification of Certain Teachers (Seath Act) in 1907. This law, discussed in detail in Chapter Three, meant that all teachers in the province’s separate schools, including members of religious orders – the target of the law in the first place – were required to secure teaching certificates recognized by the Ontario Department of Education. In the wake of this controversy, St. Joseph’s Junior Novitiate was opened in 1908. It was here where boys would follow the Ontario Department of Education’s authorized secondary school program in expectation of eventually acquiring their Teacher’s Certificate. Second, there was heated animosity stirring in what was called the Bilingual Schools Question, which dominated Ontario’s educational context for much of the first

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146 Most notably, a few pockets of fervent Orange Order crusaders and editorialists at Toronto’s The Sentinel remained vigorous in their anti-Catholicism.
two decades of the twentieth century. The most contentious element of the era was the passing of Regulation 17 in 1912. This law dramatically restricted the use of French in the province’s schools, forcing a province-wide ban on all teaching in French after the second grade. Ottawa’s French-speaking Brothers reacted to Regulation 17 by holding demonstrations, protest parades, and even withdrawing themselves and their students from their schools. But outside of the nation’s capital, English-speaking Catholics argued that Protestants would fight to eliminate Catholic schools altogether if they did not abide by the law. Neil McNeil, the Archbishop of Toronto and a tireless advocate on behalf of the Christian Brothers in Ontario, further pointed out that because Protestants associated the French language with the Catholic Church, English Catholics needed to ally with Protestants on questions of language in order to safeguard their right to separate schools. The future of separate school education in Ontario was at stake:

This province is over eighty per cent Protestant, and the majority is even more anti-French than it is Protestant. This province has a Separate School system which the Catholics of Ontario regard as of vital necessity. This system is guaranteed by the Constitution, but the case of Manitoba greatly lessens the sense of security which such guarantee was supposed to give. No Separate School system in Canada can today be held to be secure when a determined majority in any province is actively opposed to it. This places the Catholics of Ontario in a very difficult position. ... The real reason why the English-speaking Catholics of Ontario do not unite with their French brethren on the language question is the conviction that they would thereby expose their school system to dangerous attack. The Orangemen would then have their opportunity to inaugurate a real campaign against the whole Separate School system.147

English-speaking Catholics in Ontario, including many Christian Brothers, wanted their religious right to separate schools to have priority over the language rights of French Canadians, and so sided with Protestants against French Catholics on education questions.148 The Brothers’

147 ARCAT, Education Papers, ED BI, 01.01 a, Archbishop McNeil to R. Whalen, 6 December 1913, and ED BI, 01.01 b, R. Whalen to Abp. McNeil, 17 December 1913. Whalen’s response was written from North Sydney, Nova Scotia and he might have had a connection to the Antigonish newspaper, The Casket. Given the signature on the latter file, Whalen’s first name was likely Robert. The relationship between these two men is unclear from the archival record.
148 For details, see Choquette, Language and Religion, 161-73.
willingness to side with Protestants, their traditional nemeses, rather than their co-religionists, helped to showcase to Ontarians that they were loyal and patriotic teachers, eager to stay in the province.

New faces at the highest administrative level of the congregation also helped facilitate the Ontario Brothers’ push for a permanent novitiate and administrative autonomy. Brother Édouard de Marie (Francis Belanger) replaced Brother Réticius as Visitor in 1886 and held the position until 1907. During that time, he endeavoured to make all of the Brothers’ communities as pious and charitable as possible, softening the harsh spiritual direction of his predecessor, who had actually moved up in the hierarchy to become Assistant but who was not involved in the day-to-day operations of running the District. In Ontario, much to the satisfaction of communities there, Brother Édouard left the duty of dealing with religious, civil, and educational authorities to Brother Malachy Edward, his English-speaking auxiliary. Further up the hierarchy saw more changes. In May 1913, Brother Imier de Jésus (Jean-Antoine Lafabrèque) replaced Brother Gabriel-Marie (Edmond Brunhes) as Superior General. This news was fortunate for Ontario’s English-speaking Brothers, as he was well aware of the limitations inherent in having an English-speaking region subject to French authority. One anonymous Brother in Toronto remarked that Brother Imier’s election “came as a great blessing to us. We felt that the misunderstandings and difficulties and oppositions of the past were at an end. The future never looked brighter.”149 Among his first orders of business was appointing a new Assistant for Canada. Brother Allais-Charles (Jean Petiot) replaced the oft-controversial and staunchly pro-French Brother Réticius. The former was chosen in part because he was familiar with the frustration between the English and French Brothers and was desirous of putting an end to that

149 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 87.
internal division.\textsuperscript{150}

Given the new social climate in the province and internal changes in the order, the unanimous entreaties from Ontario’s Brothers and their clerical allies over the preceding decades were finally realized. To complement the juniorate, which opened in 1908, the new leaders granted their permission to open a novitiate in Toronto. With this decision, it was now possible “to give the young men the training which the mentality of the people demanded and the exigencies of Departmental routine exacted.”\textsuperscript{151} The novitiate was opened 6 January 1914 to coincide with the Feast of the Epiphany, and Brother Stanislaus Bernard (Thomas Joseph Breen) was appointed the first Director. Nine postulants were promoted from the Juniorate, joining the five who had returned from Montreal. These 14 young men became the “pioneers” of the new novitiate. “This was,” the chronicler of the order’s novitiate wrote at the time, “a red-letter day in our history.”\textsuperscript{152}

Given these developments, the new Assistant, Brother Allais-Charles, formally announced the creation of an English language District for Canada, to be headquartered in Toronto. The Ontario Brothers were once again surprised to hear such good news after so many years of effort. An anonymous Brother remarked, “We knew that it was a necessity if we were to succeed in Ontario and we knew therefore that it was bound to come some time but we had not expected such good news so soon.”\textsuperscript{153} The Toronto District officially opened 2 July 1914 and the festivities – including High Mass, dinner, and celebratory speeches – took place at St. John’s Industrial School.\textsuperscript{154}

Between the 1870s and 1920s, ethno-linguistic divisions and an impulse for greater local

\textsuperscript{151}LAC, m.f. K212, reel # 161957, De La Salle Auxiliary, \textit{Centenary Number}, 1937, 15.
\textsuperscript{152}BCSA, 700 Series, \textit{History of the Novitiate of Toronto}, 91.
\textsuperscript{153}BCSA, 700 Series, \textit{History of the Novitiate of Toronto}, 93.
control within Canada’s Catholic religious orders were fairly widespread, a logical consequence given the heightened ethno-nationalist tensions in the Canadian Catholic Church writ large. Throughout this period, both French- and English-speaking Catholic populations were growing and leaders in both linguistic communities struggled over the Church’s future in Canada. The Christian Brothers were certainly not alone amongst Catholic religious orders in their aim of accelerating the triumph of the English-Catholic Church outside Quebec. Many different congregations experienced internal strife, particularly on questions of language, boundaries, administration, and novitiate building, including the Jesuits, Basilians, Redemptorists, Oblates, and the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (Grey Nuns). These orders generally followed a similar trajectory to the Christian Brothers. In English Canada, they demonstrated steady growth in recruitment, autonomy based on linguistic rather than geographic lines, an upward rise in the number of institutions they owned or operated, and westward expansion. Fleshing out some of that history helps to place the Brothers not only within the framework of their own internal dynamics or wider socio-political context, but also in their religious and Religious milieu.

Simultaneous to the linguistic disunity in the Church were divisions within religious congregations, and particularly Franco-Catholic orders of priests and communities of women religious.155 The most senior authorities governing the Redemptorists, Basilians, Oblates, Jesuits, and Grey Nuns were French speaking and resided outside of Ontario, contributing to linguistic and administrative discord within their ranks. In an effort to recognize Canada’s linguistic divide, foster more English vocations from a growing population of English-speaking Catholics,

and to proselytize more competently to immigrants in the booming west, English-speaking members in these congregations pushed for autonomy. Much like the Christian Brothers, English-speaking members in these orders pressed for permanent houses of formation, improved administration, and greater local control over congregational and institutional life. In a comparable transformation to the Brothers’ experience, each of these congregations ended up dividing membership and authority along linguistic lines – sometimes exacerbated by national tensions – and experiencing significant expansion in membership and institution building, particularly with regard to houses of formation.

Frustrated by their relationship with Belgian, Quebecois, and American superiors, the growing number of English-speaking Canadian-born Redemptorists fought for autonomy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. While granted a degree of self-government from

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156 Laverdure, Redemption and Renewal, 29-140; Macdougall et al., Dictionary of Jesuit Biography, xv-xvi; Kirley, The Community of Priests of St. Basil in France, 239-58;

157 Having arrived in North America in 1832, the Redemptorist Fathers immediately set up small mission communities to evangelize Native Americans in the continental interior while also serving the ministerial needs of German, Irish, and Slavic immigrants on the eastern seaboard. Until 1850, these priests operated under the authority of the Belgian Province. That year, an American Province was formed stemming from the recruitment of a growing number of English-speaking Catholics in the United States. Headquartered in Baltimore, the American Province grew dramatically from the 1850s to the 1870s, necessitating its own split. The St. Louis Province was established in 1875, with authority over missions in all areas west of the Mississippi River. The now-renamed Baltimore Province controlled all areas to the river’s east. At the request of Archbishop Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau, the first Redemptorists in Canada arrived in Quebec City in 1874, immediately taking over St. Patrick’s Church. These men, primarily Irish- or American-born and English speaking, were missioned from Baltimore. Their limited proficiency in French negated missionary work in Quebec. While the Baltimore Province took over Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré in 1878, it was soon annexed to the Belgian Province who hoped to use the famed shrine as a base through which to expand the order’s French-speaking missions in North America. The Baltimore Province continued to lay claim to English-language missions in Canada and soon established parishes from which to branch out their missionary operations. Besides Quebec City, they also established parishes in Toronto (St. Patrick’s, 1881), Saint John, New Brunswick (St. Peter’s, 1884) and Montreal (St. Ann’s, 1884). Yet the Americans soon began to back off their missionary work in English Canada citing the need to concentrate on parish life in the United States as well as some resentment about differing customs, weather, and politics. At the same time, Belgian Redemptorists and their superiors trusted neither English nor French Canadian novices and priests and little money was invested in Canada proper. While they created a French-based Vice-Province of Canada in 1893, headquartered in the bilingual St. Ann’s in Montreal, Canadian-born men who wished to join the order had to travel to Belgium for their novitiate; many English speakers simply joined the American Province and travelled to Baltimore instead. By the 1890s, there was a growing recognition from American and Canadian Redemptorists that native-born English speakers were integral to foster vocations and ensure that missionary activity in the Canadian west was not entirely monopolized by French speakers. Moreover, criticisms began to mount about the size of the Province and ability of superiors in Baltimore to run it effectively. Laverdure, Redemption and Renewal, 29-43 and 61-5.
1898-1901 and 1912-18, outsiders always determined their fate. Only with the context of the First World War, new leadership, rising numbers of novices, and improved financial management did English-speaking Redemptorists eventually secure the erection of the Toronto Province in 1918. That year, they established St. Mary’s College in Brockville as a new minor seminary and three years later erected a novitiate in Saint John, New Brunswick. In 1925, they opened a temporary seminary in Montreal and five years later set up a permanent seminary in Woodstock, Ontario. Dissatisfaction with national and linguistic administration and differing visions for what the future held contributed to similar demands for autonomy amongst the Basilians in Ontario. After “two decades of dissension” between the 1890s and 1910s, the General Chapter met in Geneva in 1910 and established one Province for France and another for America. To ensure that the French in America - which numbered 19 and included those born in Quebec and France – had some autonomy, a Vice-Province of Detroit was also established. In 1922, a Decree of Separation completely split the North American and French Basilian Provinces, establishing independent and distinct congregations each with their own constitutions.

A parallel story transpired amongst the Jesuits. After much pressure in the English-

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158 Between 1898 and 1901, the Toronto Vice-Province was still technically under Baltimore Province authority. It was concentrated geographically around the Great Lakes, including Redemptorists in Quebec City, Saint John, and Toronto as well as community houses from Buffalo, Rochester, Detroit, and Grand Rapids. Administrative difficulties and the desire of some American houses to re-join St. Louis Province contributed to the Toronto Vice-Province’s closure in 1901, and English-speaking Redemptorists in Canada again operated under the full control of the Baltimore Province. When the Toronto Vice-Province was again formed in 1912, it included English-speaking houses in Canada only. Throughout the 1910s, English Canadian members petitioned for a completely autonomous Toronto Province, citing differences with Americans in political loyalty, personnel choices, and education; they argued that control of Redemptorist parishes and missions in Canada ought to be handled by Canadians, who knew best how to procure the salvation of souls in their own country. Laverdure, Redemption and Renewal, 75-111.

159 Laverdure, Redemption and Renewal, 75-82, 113-40.

160 Platt, Dictionary of Basilian Biography, xviii.


162 For details on the split, and especially the role of Henry Carr in the process, see Edmund J. McCorkell, Henry Carr – Revolutionary (Toronto: Griffin House, 1969), Chapter 6; see also Kirley, The Community of Priests of St. Basil in France, 247-58.
speaking ranks, St. Stanislaus Novitiate was erected in Guelph Ontario in 1907, meaning that English-speaking novices no longer had to travel to Montreal. By 1924, English-speaking Jesuits broke off from their French confreres and formed the Vice-Province of Upper Canada. This separation contributed to significant growth in members, schools, parishes, and training facilities, including Regis College, built in 1930 as the first Jesuit Seminary in Canada outside Quebec. The Grey Nuns also made administrative and linguistic adaptations to suit their expanding network of ministries in Quebec, the United States, and Western Canada. After setting up French-language missions throughout the Canadian west in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Grey Nuns in that region recognized the difficulties of long-distance communication problems as well as a growing recognition that Western Canada would be English based. To address these concerns, superiors in Montreal established the Vicariate of Saint Albert in 1897. Primarily English-language institutions of a wide variety opened across the west in the decades thereafter, including residential and industrial schools, asylums, nursing homes, hospitals, and a novitiate. Meanwhile, demands for their services were coming from the United States as well. Communities were established in Ohio, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New Jersey in the decades around the turn of the century and an independent congregation called the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart was established in Buffalo in 1921.

The transition to English-language authority in these orders allowed for missionary, educative, parish, and apostolic work to be greatly extended in the following decades. Their

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163 St. Stanislaus Novitiate was renamed St. Ignatius College in 1958.
165 Castonguay, *A Leap in Faith*, 20-64.
166 The Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception in New Brunswick experienced a similar story of ethnic divisions, although in this case it was the minority French Sisters who broke away from the majority English. The fact that the order concentrated authority in Irish and English-speaking women and the reality of limited opportunity for advancement among Acadian Sisters aggravated ethnic tensions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1914 and 1915, Acadian Sisters tried to open a French-language novitiate citing difficulties in recruitment and the exclusive use of English at the Motherhouse and in most communities. By 1922, both Irish and
experiences followed Ontario’s Christian Brothers’ own advocacy for an English-speaking novitiate and push for administration over their own affairs. Given that the Brothers were the first male congregation to split along linguistic lines, it is surprising that their history is not known more widely as a crucial segment in the history of Canada’s fragmented Catholic Church. Indeed, the Brothers’ anglicization campaign offers insight into why and how a Catholic religious order adjusted and accommodated to the realities of life in an Anglo-Protestant context.

The arrival of the first French-speaking Christian Brothers in Toronto in 1851 animated debates about language, an issue that intensified over time. These Brothers were immersed in a society in which English and Protestantism dominated, where French-Canadian immigration contributed to mounting linguistic intolerance, and where there was a developing professionalization in the government-run education system. The Ontario Brothers argued that these conditions were fundamentally different than in Quebec, where the French language dominated and the Catholic Church controlled education. Essentially, they wanted the hierarchy to understand that the preparation for a Brother’s apostolate – both in a religious and professional sense – could no longer be done effectively if they had to send their young men to Quebec.

The Brothers’ decision to proceed with a protracted campaign for an English-language novitiate from the 1870s to the 1910s shows a willingness to conform to linguistic norms in Ontario; they recognized that being alert to their surroundings would facilitate security and growth. This advocacy took many forms: to boost recruitment, to counter Protestantism’s strength, to respond to inadequate religious and professional preparation in Quebec, to show financial and administrative responsibility, and to convey the Church’s message in the language

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Acadian members were asking for separation based on language, a request that was eventually secured in 1924. For details, see Elizabeth W. McGahan, “The Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception: A Canadian Case Study,” *CCHA Historical Studies* 61 (1995), 99-133. For an insider perspective on these developments, see Erin Dwyer, *Whose Leaves Never Fade: The Story of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception* (Rothesay, NB: Sisters of Charity, 2003), 26-8.
of the masses. Whatever path was chosen, each argument was forwarded as a means of meeting Ontario circumstances and was designed for their own future success in the province as well as the success of separate schools more generally. They calculated the distinct advantages that could result from a novitiate: gaining acceptance, expanding membership, honouring their founder, and widening their educational reach. Doing so, they argued, would work to the advantage of the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls in this region. Moreover, each rationalization was not so much a series of distinct demands but rather part of a long continuum in which accusations of French inadequacy were common. The Brothers and their allies framed their anglicization campaign based on an informed awareness of Ontario’s social and religious conditions and an understanding of differences with Quebec. Their deep-seated desire to conform to their anglophone surroundings was a central means through which to see Catholicism flourish in the province.
Chapter Three

Accommodation for Accreditation: The Qualifications Question and Professionalization, 1870-1910

In his 1890 Report, Separate School Inspector James F. White noted that the teaching religious in Ontario’s Western Division generally possessed sound qualifications.¹ Their skills stemmed not from the educational wisdom found in the provincially operated training institutes, but through “long experience in their work” with some having taught for more than twenty years, training which White found to be “of inestimable advantage to them.” Generally, he found that religious teachers were “capable and faithful; many have had brilliant success, while the number of incompetents is happily small.”² But White did not always regard the teaching religious with such high esteem. Only two years later, he controversially reported that the Ottawa schools run by the Christian Brothers were inefficient in many respects, including poor pupil attendance, frequent changing of teachers, “inadequate” school infrastructure, and “unsuitable” textbooks. Moreover, there was “considerable room for improvement” in the teaching of English, and most importantly, “no attempt to secure … uniformity” in teaching methods, examinations, and promotions.³ White harshly criticized Quebec’s teacher-training system, arguing that that province approved unqualified Brothers and then placed them in Ottawa. The Inspector soon became a leading voice in the campaign to introduce mandatory certification for members of religious orders. Through it all, Ontario’s Christian Brothers stayed curiously mum.

Inspector White’s commendation and condemnation – as well as the Brothers’ silence – are emblematic of this entire chapter, one that focuses on debates about the Brothers’ teaching...

¹ According to his count, Religious teachers made up “nearly 200” of the 284 teachers in the separate schools of Ontario’s Western Division, a region encompassing the area between Toronto and Windsor.
³ AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG 2-42-0-6144, re. Inspector’s Report, White’s Report for Ontario’s Eastern Division, 1892. This report was incorporated into the 1895 report of a provincial commission on Ottawa’s separate schools.
qualifications and their standing as educators in Ontario. The chapter showcases the complicated meanings of professionalization and why certification mattered by honing in on the expectations and assessments of inspectors, bishops, politicians, trustees, parents, and the press. While these individuals and groups were all independent of the Brothers, they were central in how debates about their qualifications were framed and why the Brothers responded to concerns about professionalization in the way they did.

No controversy engulfed Ontario’s Catholic school system between the 1870s and 1910s like the one centred on the professional status of teachers who were members of religious orders. During this contentious era, Ontario’s Christian Brothers were at the centre of public discussions about the status of religious teachers and whether or not they were capable and qualified to teach in Ontario schools. Despite the critical role of the Brothers in shaping the debate about teaching qualifications and professionalism in general, the loudest voices that emerge are not their own. There are only scant references to the qualifications controversy in the order’s own archives in Toronto, Montreal, and Rome. As such, this chapter shifts the perspective away from the Brothers actually teaching in Kingston, St. Catharines, Toronto, or Ottawa and toward a cacophony of other interested parties, especially lay Catholic activists. Indeed, this chapter builds upon Brian Clarke’s pioneering work on lay initiative amongst Toronto’s Irish Catholics from 1850-95.\(^4\) Clarke concentrated on lay voluntary associations’ nationalist agendas, devotional life, and charitable works and showed that, depending on the area of concern, lay Catholic activists either advanced or challenged clergy interests. Education was one forum in which many lay Catholics exercised their voice independently from the clergy and strayed from Church authority. Why did lay Catholics advocate for the Brothers’ certification? In what ways did this advocacy

reflect or stray from the Brothers’ own interests? How and why did their encouragement of qualifications conflict with ultramontanists in the Catholic hierarchy and among the Brothers’ senior leadership in Montreal? These questions provide the framework for highlighting the complex situation within which the Brothers found themselves and illustrates the idea that the congregation did not necessarily determine their own future in the province.

Clearly, the Brothers were not an isolated institution as bishops, trustees, politicians, school inspectors, newspaper editors, lay teachers, judges, and parents each had a vested interest in the qualifications question and all inserted themselves or their groups into the debate about the status of teaching religious and the future of Catholic education in the province. Each had their own interests at stake when considering how best to handle the turmoil surrounding teacher training and teachers’ credentials. They raised their concerns in government reports, private correspondence, the press, and, importantly for this discussion, the courts. All tried to further their own agendas by manipulating the Brothers’ concerns, a sometimes-difficult endeavour amidst the ultramontane context in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, an era of Catholic ‘restoration’ and ‘integralism’. On education questions and the status of Teaching Brothers, Catholic bishops and the laity sometimes clashed. Indeed, Catholic leaders faced significant resistance from lay activists who were more willing to accommodate and compromise with government officials, particularly on the issue of

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5 In an effort to keep Catholics tied to their faith and to the Church, Pope Pius X insisted that Catholic bishops institute a rigorous Catholicism and a consistent application of canon law; where the faithful failed to absolutely adhere to the clergy’s expectations, a fanatical movement to disparage them ensued in order to entrench and defend the hierarchy’s authority and the ‘integrity’ of the faith. Nevertheless, the laity, according to historian Mark McGowan, engaged in both subtle and active disobedience and Archbishop Denis O’Connor’s efforts for a Catholic restoration in the Archdiocese of Toronto were only superficially successful as many regulations and practices were ignored or returned immediately after his departure. For details, see Mark G. McGowan, “Rethinking Catholic-Protestant Relations in Canada: The Episcopal Reports of 1900-1901,” CCHA Historical Studies 59 (1992), 11-32 and Mark G. McGowan, “The Catholic ‘Restoration’: Pope Pius X, Archbishop Denis O’Connor and Popular Catholicism in Toronto, 1899-1908,” CCHA Historical Studies 54 (1987), 69-91. For more details on integralism, see James C. Livingston, Modern Christian Thought From the Enlightenment to the Present (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1971), 292.
certification. They challenged the bishops, noting that refusal to push for provincially recognized qualifications would contribute to isolation rather than greater integration into the body politic. As historian Mark McGowan notes, most Ontario Catholics, both English and French speaking, were Canadian-born by 1900 and had grown accustomed to living in a primarily Protestant province. While the lay Catholic activists among them stressed the need to stay vigilant in their support for separate schools, most were willing to accommodate on qualifications for fear that not doing so might re-ghettoize their increasingly acculturated population. In so doing, they played a pivotal role in bringing mandatory certification to fruition.

Even while demonstrating that Ontario’s Christian Brothers were essentially pawns in the debate over certification, subject to manipulation by external forces, they nevertheless have their own history in this era. In contradistinction to their enthusiastic push for linguistic acculturation, the Brothers responded to the qualifications question in remarkably muted fashion. Even at the peak of the controversy – during the court battles of 1904 and 1906 – Ontario’s Brothers were not especially vocal contributors. Essentially, as historian Michael Power has pointed out, the Brothers opted for the role of “passive participants.” But while Power suggests that their lack of activity is indicative of an unwillingness to work in their own self-interest, it seems equally plausible that quite the opposite is true: their silence is an indication of acceptance, not rejection, of professional certification and their passivity was not a sign of indolence or indifference, but rather a conscious strategy of not wanting to offend their superiors in Quebec. In the end, they tended to work in concert with the province and with lay Catholic

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6 McGowan posits that Toronto’s Catholics joined Canadian-oriented organizations, supported the British Empire, and were increasingly socially and economically upwardly mobile. In general, they were integrated into Toronto life. McGowan, “The Catholic ‘Restoration’,” 71-6 and his The Waning of the Green: Catholics, The Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999).
activists, even if that meant they were at odds with their religious superiors within their congregation and within their dioceses.

Ontario’s Christian Brothers long recognized the need for professional competence as a means of fulfilling their mission to teach their students the curriculum and the means to salvation. But while they were not outspoken supporters of government intervention and they certainly did not initiate the push for mandatory accreditation, most were nevertheless attentive and even receptive to it and actively welcomed the consequences. Following the certification crisis between 1904 and 1907, Ontario’s Christian Brothers attended Normal Schools without difficulty or complaint and accepted a provincially regulated form of evaluation and certification along the same lines as every other teacher in the province. By 1908, they had adapted themselves to provincial regulations and met their students’ needs within the bounds of their pedagogical and philosophical principles. The Brothers were keen to enhance their professional credentials and had internalized the need for provincially regulated evaluation of their teaching methods. They did not lament the past but looked confidently to the future, trusting that their rationale of accepting greater provincial intervention into their teaching qualifications would have both strategic and rewarding consequences and would best enable them to carry out their large-scale mission of permanently cementing – and expanding – separate schools. Complying with the provincial government would also solidify their positions as teachers of high repute, thereby settling any fears about quality assurance, especially when compared to the public system. It would also achieve the more practical aim of gaining the trust, acceptance, and legitimacy of Catholic parents and ensuring funding from school boards. In this sense, they sang a different tune than many in the Church hierarchy, who loudly voiced their anxieties about the ramifications inherent in imposing provincial regulations on the training and certifying of the
teaching religious.

Beginning with a broad overview of teacher professionalization in nineteenth century Ontario, this chapter illustrates what was expected of teachers and how training and certification developed in the province. It then details the Brothers’ internal professionalization by concentrating first on their religious training and second on their professional training. The crux of the chapter lies in four key moments that highlight the tensions surrounding the qualifications question. Three of the four cases are drawn from Toronto and Ottawa, two urban areas home to the largest communities of Christian Brothers, and therefore subjected to intense scrutiny. These cities were also home to several Catholic schools under the control of Separate School Boards, as well as vocal and passionate archbishops and plenty of lay Catholic activists that acted as crucial public voices in dealing with concerns and anxieties related to the Brothers’ employment. The other example is drawn from the towns of Kingston and St. Catharines, where the number of Catholic schools was much lower, and as such, the stakes much higher. Each case provides a rich window through which to investigate the complex issues over teaching qualifications.

Debates about the status of the Christian Brothers in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ontario must be placed in historical context in order to understand the supposed implications of the qualifications question. Three developments are central in that history: the rise of formal schooling, educational bureaucratization, and teachers’ transformation into a life-long career. The origins of formal schooling in Ontario dates back to well before the first Brothers arrived in 1851. Following the creation of Upper Canada in 1791, schools were erected and supported primarily at the local or municipal level. By 1816, the origins of a common

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8 For sources on the history of education and teacher preparation in Upper Canada, see: J. George Hodgins, The Establishment of Schools and Colleges in Ontario, 1792-1910, Volume III (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1910); George Spragge, “Elementary Education in Upper Canada, 1820-1840,” Ontario History 43 (July 1951), 107-22; J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, eds., Canadian Education: A History (Scarborough: Prentice-
school system — with public funding — emerged in Upper Canada through the Common School Act. Six years later, a General Board of Education was set up to administer this system. Yet for most of the first half of the nineteenth century, there was little in the way of an organized and regulated state-run system of schools and teacher preparation. Rather, citizens initiated and provided instruction on an ad hoc basis in homes, workplaces, churches, neighbourhood schools, and grammar schools, paid for through voluntary tuition fees. Sometimes a contract was signed between parents and teachers outlining the curriculum and how much they would be paid. If a child went to school at all, the parents controlled how often, for how long, and for what reason. In fact, as historians Douglas Lawr and Robert Gidney pointed out four decades ago, the state’s role in the educational sphere was fairly narrow, primarily devoted to supporting local initiative. There were no official rules on what a teacher had to teach, what books to use, how to organize a school, or how to handle student promotions, all of which speaks to why education got to be a messy affair and why there were so many vested interests.

Such limited state involvement included the realm of teacher education. In Upper Canada during the first half of the nineteenth century, there was no strict rule on what qualifications a teacher ought to have in order to successfully manage and instruct pupils in the classroom. Complaints of itinerancy, illiteracy, and imposterism arose, as did objections to the number of

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11 For one specific example, see “The Establishment of an Upper Canadian Common School, 1826: Contract between teacher and subscribers, 2 October 1826,” in Lawr and Gidney, Educating Canadians, 27.
12 Lawr and Gidney, Educating Canadians, 16-17.
American teachers roaming the colony. The lack of a regulatory body discouragingly combined with low wages and difficult conditions. As a result, talented educators were difficult to find and the status of a teacher was quite low. It was not necessary to have any formal certification, and many teachers simply learned through observation and practice.¹³

With the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841, education became much more prominent and visible in the public sphere. Historians working prior to the 1960s generally understood this heightened focus on education as a progressive and triumphant achievement; they emphasized that the benefits of compulsory education in a state-supported school system were integral to the social enlightenment, economic opportunity, and spiritual welfare of children – and of Canada writ large.¹⁴ By the 1970s, critics pointed out the Whiggish nature of this interpretation, suggesting that this earlier school of historians presented educational developments as an inexorable and teleological story of improvement toward greater societal freedom while also neglecting racial, regional, class, and gender variations and discrepancies. A new school of historians started asking different questions about the motives for expanding educational opportunities and experiences. They concluded that schools were key sites not only for instilling boys and girls with intellectual stimulation, but also character traits and skills that social and political leaders believed were necessary for regenerating a society in their interest. Most notably, Alison Prentice suggested that in the context of industrializing and urbanizing

¹⁴ These historians have tended to highlight the role of renowned educational specialists such as John Strachan and Egerton Ryerson for the way they developed a curriculum that promoted literacy, equality, class harmony, and democratization, in the process contributing to the nation-building mission and an enlightened population. Nation building was an especially enticing project given the rebellions in both Upper and Lower Canada only half a decade earlier. See, for instance, Nathanael Burwash, Egerton Ryerson (Toronto: G.N. Morang, 1903); J. Harold Putnam, Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912); C.B. Sissons, Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters, Volumes 1-2 (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, and Company, 1937-47); George W. Spragge, “John Strachan’s Contribution to Education, 1800-1823,” Canadian Historical Review 22 (1941), 147-58; C.E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1957).
Ontario, the educational project of “school promoters” was designed to instill deference and discipline, thereby securing political hegemony for the ruling elite.\textsuperscript{15}

Whether because the colonial administration recognized the mounting value of schooling or sought to entrench its privileged position, the government of mid-nineteenth century Canada West began to take a more active involvement in the educational sphere.\textsuperscript{16} Beginning in the early 1840s, officials in the Canadas sought a viable education system wherein key leaders and policies would help to organize and maintain common schools. But a uniform act suiting both Canada East and Canada West was, according to C.B. Sissons, “palpably doomed to failure” owing to cultural and religious differences.\textsuperscript{17} While the French Catholic clergy in Canada East demanded clerical control over education, Canada West proceeded along non-denominational lines and developed a centralized and bureaucratized education administration through the 1841 \textit{Common School Act} and 1843 Hincks Act.

As the state took on greater responsibilities in regulating educational delivery and content throughout the 1840s, there was growing concern about professionalism amongst teachers. The pattern of increased state intervention into the realm of teacher certification was predicated on the logic that since schools were constructed and operated for the benefit of all, it was the duty of the state to ensure uniform standards of quality and efficiency. The Protestant clergy seemed to spearhead this movement, contributing greatly toward positions such as inspectors and superintendents. Clergy such as John Strachan (Anglican), Robert Murray (Presbyterian), and

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\textsuperscript{17} C.B. Sissons, Church and State in Canadian Education: An Historical Study (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959), 16.
Egerton Ryerson (Methodist) were pivotal players in this regard. For instance, during his brief tenure as the colony’s first Superintendent of Education, Robert Murray argued that the central means of advancing the education system lay in the professionalization of teachers. Having received many complaints from parents about the status of teachers and quality of schools, Murray attempted to alleviate concerns:

Be assured that my greatest earthly ambition is to make Teachers respectable, efficient & independent ... Much of the civil & religious peace of this great country must depend on the education of the young, and therefore every effort I make to advance the status of the Teachers of youth is tending directly to advance the Standard of Education, and the best interests both civil & religious of this Province.\(^{18}\)

Despite the candid rhetoric, no concrete developments in teachers’ professionalization occurred under his watch.

Conversely, when Ryerson took over as Chief Superintendent, a position he held from 1844 to 1876, the administrative structure became quite pronounced. He established a system of electing trustees for local districts, approved textbooks, and ushered in free compulsory schooling for children aged seven to twelve. Moreover, he established a Normal School and encouraged teachers to undertake professional training therein. He also promoted teachers’ organizations such as the Ontario Teachers’ Association (OTA), and he oversaw the publication of the *Journal of Education for Upper Canada*, which helped to spread new ideas and innovations in education. Finally, Ryerson appointed inspectors to oversee, critique, and improve teacher training and licencing and to circulate Department of Education information and apply its policy.\(^{19}\) On the whole, then, after the mid-nineteenth century, Ontario’s Department of


Education continually emphasized professional training for the province’s teachers. Concurrently, teachers themselves began to acknowledge their rising status and sought recognition of their employment as a profession, a designation previously reserved for the likes of lawyers, doctors, and ministers.\(^{20}\) To that end, organizations such as the OTA became increasingly vocal advocates on a wide array of topics. They promoted formal training and certification, pressed for greater control over curriculum content and professional examining bodies, and fought for higher salaries and better working conditions.\(^{21}\)

In nineteenth-century Ontario, arguably the most important development in transforming teaching into a profession and teachers into professionals was the establishment of the Normal School in Toronto in 1847 and in Ottawa in 1875. According to Ryerson, the Normal School was designed “to train teachers, both theoretically and practically, for conducting schools” throughout Canada West, and later Ontario, and to teach them “how to do the work of [their] profession.”\(^{22}\) Normal Schools were training institutions for teachers’ professional advancement and pedagogical formation, run under the aegis of the Department of Education. They were designed to standardize the preparation process needed for interested men and women to

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\(^{21}\) The OTA was created in 1861 to represent the concerns of members, namely the headmasters and their assistants in the most prestigious grammar schools and urban common schools in the colony. By the 1871 School Act – officially called *An Act to Improve the Common Schools and Grammar Schools of Ontario* – the OTA attained much of their reform goals: the highest public-school certification was needed to become an inspector; membership on examining boards was reserved only for inspectors and those with teaching certificates; and a three-tiered certification of teachers remained, but with higher standards and years of service acting as benchmarks. Gidney and Millar note that, by the early 1880s, “virtually the whole of the administrative apparatus had been professionalized, entry requirements had been rigorously tightened, and standards of preliminary education raised for all certification categories.” Gidney and Millar, *Professional Gentlemen*, 235.

\(^{22}\) The *Annual Report of the Chief Superintendent of Education for the year 1867*, 18. Emphasis in the original. More specifically, according to Hodgins, Normal Schools were designed to prepare teachers “in the theory and the art of organizing, governing, and instructing the pupils of the Public and the Separate Schools; and to improve the general culture of such Teachers and, in particular, their academic preparation for teaching the subjects prescribed in the Programme of Studies. … The Normal Model Schools, the Model School, attached Public Schools, and the attached Rural Schools, are used, as required, to afford the Teachers-in-training adequate means of observing well-conducted Schools, and of securing practice in Teaching, Discipline, and Management.” See Hodgins, *The Establishment of Schools and Colleges in Ontario*, 228-9 and 234-7.
transition into professional educators. Historian Paul Axelrod has underscored that the Normal School subjected would-be teachers to an arduous and highly structured program. Indeed, the course of studies was wide ranging, including courses in pedagogy training and best methods of instruction, school organization and management, the history of education, and school law and regulations in Ontario. Along the way, there was supervised observation of practice teaching in a plethora of academic subjects. Furthermore, proper character development was constantly being imparted; traits such as hard work, punctuality, diplomacy, and good manners were deemed necessary for teachers to carry out their vocation with professionalism. Normal Schools also had mandatory examinations to ensure a suitable level of qualification was met and to allow for school boards to measure a teacher’s preparedness and competency for a particular subject or grade. Certification was performed in a ranked system according to one’s education, professional training, and length of experience. Graduates of the Normal School were deemed qualified to teach anywhere in the province and did not have to follow the usual process of sitting in various county examinations when applying to teach in new locales.

Model Schools also provided practical experience for those wishing to join the teaching ranks. According to long-time Deputy Minister of Education and unofficial historian of the Department of Education, J.G. Hodgins, these training centres, sometimes called County Model

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23 Training for secondary school teachers followed a similar trajectory to that experienced by elementary school teachers. Collegiate Institutes were established in 1885 for potential high school teachers to observe and practice their craft under the supervision of experienced teachers as well as complete a four-month long course for teaching certification. In 1890, a School of Pedagogy was added to Toronto’s Normal School, though it was transferred to Hamilton in 1897 and renamed the Ontario Normal College. By 1907, the University of Toronto and Queen’s University established faculties of education. Finally, in 1920, the Ontario College of Education was founded and financed by the Department of Education and took over many of the functions of the University faculties. Hodgins, The Establishment of Schools and Colleges in Ontario, 272. See also Robert M. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 44.

24 Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling, 46.

25 In Ontario, First Class certification was reserved for those with a High School Diploma and a full year of training in the Normal School. Second Class certification normally required some combination of High School education and Normal School work. Finally, a Third Class certificate usually required some combination of High School work with some experience in professional training, though this was not always the case. There was also the designation of temporary certification, which was normally valid for one to three years.
Schools or District Model Schools, essentially acted as “Normal Schools in miniature.” They were designed as instructive training centres for established teachers to gain Third Class certificates – the most basic form of recognition – while also responding to the need to keep education local and not force teachers to travel long distances for further training. Only between one-quarter and one-third of all candidates went on to attain First or Second Class certificates from either provincial normal or county model schools as late as the 1870s. Transiency remained a problem, with many teachers acquiring only high school credentials or third-class certificates before getting married or moving on to new careers. Given these issues, the Department of Education decided that a longer duration of training coupled with the conferring of a permanent certificate upon completion would encourage professionalization and lengthier service. Several new Normal Schools were constructed, including London (1900), Hamilton, Peterborough, and Stratford (1908), and North Bay (1909), which the overwhelming majority of new Ontario teachers attended.

While there appeared to be near unanimity in determining how to assess the professional qualifications of teachers in late nineteenth-century Ontario public schools, this was not the case in the province’s Catholic schools. Despite some pressure from government representatives, teachers who were members of religious orders were not required to attend the Normal School or to take secular teachers’ examinations in order to teach in separate schools. The French-Canadian leadership of the Christian Brothers, for one, resisted enrollment in either the Toronto or Ottawa Normal Schools. This decision had little to do with whether or not members could successfully

26 Hodgins, *The Establishment of Schools and Colleges in Ontario*, 214.
28 Their See Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling*, 47.
30 There were some exceptions to attendance at Normal School, including attendance at one of the few remaining provincial model schools, which operated from 1900-1924.
achieve professional qualifications. Rather, they framed their refusal in two key ways. First, they interpreted the BNA Act to mean that recognized pre-Confederation qualifications ought to remain lawful. This meant that teaching religious were exempt from provincial certification standards because those qualified to teach in Quebec were simultaneously eligible and authorized to teach in Ontario. Second, they contended that meeting provincial standards went contrary to the religious directives of the congregation. By its very nature, enrollment in the Normal School necessitated interaction with all teachers-in-training as well as a significant time commitment. But in order to ensure that Brothers remained modest and dignified and that they participated in all of their spiritual exercises, their Rule forbade co-mingling with lay teachers and prohibited interaction with women unless necessity dictated. Indeed, becoming a religious meant that one had to “break off all the connections they had in the world … even under the pretext of promoting the welfare of their house or the Institute.”

31 Even if a Brother might think that attending the Normal School was a good idea for pedagogical reasons, for his personal status, or for the Institute’s reputation in the province, he was forbidden from attending by his superiors. All these reasons for not meeting provincial qualification standards gave the Brothers’ critics grave cause for concern about quality assurance in the classrooms of Ontario separate schools.

It is difficult to prove conclusively if the Christian Brothers were any more or less prepared than lay Catholic teachers or those in the public schools in the latter half of the nineteenth century. While they did not attend the provincial Normal Schools until the summer of 1907, they were nevertheless committed to their own version of professionalization. They wanted to solidify what they thought was an already positive reputation and wanted to assure

31 Chapter XIV: Of the Manner in which the Brothers are to Behave Towards Secular Persons,” in The Rule, 1925. See also “Chapter III: Of the Spirit of Community of this Institute and of the Exercises that are Therein to be Performed in Common” and “Chapter IX: Of the Manner in which the Brothers are to Behave in School with Regard to Themselves, Their Brothers and Outsiders.”
parents of their dedication, competency, and credentials. These men were not planning on entering the teaching profession for a limited duration before departing for marriage or other employment. Rather, this was their vocation. By entering the congregation and taking vows, they committed themselves to a life devoted to education. The Brothers’ pedagogical instruction can be divided into two streams, or what Elizabeth Smyth has called “dual formation”: their religious or vocational preparation and their practical or professional training. In many ways, the following section on Brothers’ formation complements Smyth’s examination of how vowed life intersected with professional responsibilities in communities of women religious in Canada.32

In terms of their training for the classroom, Christian Brothers around the world regarded their founder as the greatest source of inspiration and guidance for their vocation as teachers. Because he envisioned all vowed Brothers making a lifelong commitment to the order and its concomitant ministry, De La Salle wanted to ensure that they were fully prepared and properly trained for the road ahead. For De La Salle, Christian education was a powerful tool to teach young souls, in the process “making them true children of God and citizens of heaven.”33 As such, a Brother was expected to regard his teaching vocation “as one of the most important and the most excellent in the Church, for it is one most suited to sustain it and give it a solid foundation.”34 In the eyes of the founder, it was the Brothers’ spiritual formation – their willingness to practice holiness and piety – that would best prepare them for exercising their educational ministry as “the ambassadors and the ministers of Jesus Christ.”35 Of course, training

32 Elizabeth Smyth, “Professionalization among the Professed: The Case of Roman Catholic Women Religious,” in Elizabeth Smyth et al., eds., Challenging Professions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Women’s Professional Work (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 238.
34 Jean Baptiste De La Salle, cited in Midgley, John Baptist De La Salle, 40.
for a Brother’s teaching vocation went beyond the spiritual transcendence offered in religious community. In their published literature, disciples and devotees applauded De La Salle for his didactic guidance and note how he often directly connected a Brother’s spirituality with his pedagogy, associating apt Gospel passages with reflections for his classroom apostolate.36

In addition to the study of Lasallian treatises and its religious undertones, professional preparation for Ontario Brothers was also based in observing the conduct and teaching of established teachers and gaining real-world experience in what might be called applied training. These educational exercises relied in large measure upon De La Salle’s own emphasis on gaining practical skills. In 1698, De La Salle opened a small school for poor children attached to the Grand Maison novitiate in Paris. Here, young Brothers were provided with a unique teacher-training opportunity in what was then called a “demonstration school.” In this institution, De La Salle introduced Brothers to what they should expect from the classroom, how they should conduct themselves, and how they ought to realize the ultimate goal of imparting the necessary knowledge for a child’s education and salvation.37 Two centuries later, Ontario Brothers continued to emphasize the necessity of observing older teachers and learning what worked in terms of classroom management. New Brothers were not necessarily expected to jump right into

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37 Although in many respects a pioneer in education, De La Salle was also a man of his time, and tried to follow what was then considered appropriate: he stressed that teachers’ behaviour and demeanour ought to be “modest and serious” and that the keeping of silence was a crucial way to maintain order, discipline, and respect. Furthermore, he expected his teachers to know their pupils on an individual basis, and thereby discern how to interact with each one. Clear and precise prose was needed to explain concepts and ideas so that every pupil in the class could understand. According to the expectations of the early eighteenth century, Brothers were to use the system of question and answer, whereby teachers would ask questions to provoke pupils to use their knowledge and insight, to form their own judgments, and to explain their answers. For more details on behaviour and the classroom, see De La Salle, The Conduct of the Christian Schools, in Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., John Baptist de la Salle, 131-45.
the classroom without teaching experience – though this sometimes occurred. Rather, they were to have ample time garnering substantial knowledge through practice teaching and receiving feedback from more experienced teachers.

Practical preparation was meant to blend effortlessly with sound pedagogical training. Ontario’s Brothers were to undertake a comprehensive approach with this didactic instruction, theoretically combining the best ideas of their founder and the most current educational practices in the province. First and foremost, Brothers assigned to teach in Ontario regarded De La Salle as the ‘father of modern pedagogy’ both for his writings on the subject and for establishing the first known teacher’s college in Reims, France, in 1687. Teachers’ preparation was absolutely crucial to De La Salle’s vision of running efficient classrooms and procuring student advancement. His most famous works, including The Conduct of the Christian Schools (1695), Exercises of Piety to be Performed During the Day in the Christian Schools (c. 1700), The Rule (1718), Meditations for the Time of Retreat (c. 1730), and Meditations for Sundays and Feasts (c. 1731) include several recommendations that contributed to teachers’ professionalization. More specifically, these texts provided some instructions for sound classroom management and best practices in teaching methods, self-reflection and review of classroom performance, and evaluations for planning future lessons. These methods and ideas would help to assure the successful operation of their schools and the legitimacy of the Brothers as teachers over the following three centuries.

The Canadian beginnings of the Brothers’ emphasis on in-house pedagogical training

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began with the opening of a novitiate in Montreal in 1838. This novitiate, along with its two equivalent institutions established in Toronto in the late nineteenth century, provided postulants with both spiritual and professional formation for their vocation as teaching Brothers. In terms of their preparation for teaching, young men were generally introduced into their ministry through an introduction to the writings and teachings of the founder. Training to be “efficient and successful teachers” meant prayer, regularity, and perhaps most importantly, rigorous study in order to successfully complete all high school work. The third and highest level of the novitiate was called the Scholasticate, with one erected in Montreal in 1840 and another in Toronto in 1892. The scholasticate was where Brothers, having successfully completed high school and made their vows, would now focus their energy principally toward training for the classroom and would prepare for their future vocation as model Christian educators. A veteran Brother, specifically chosen by the Visitor because of his expertise, conducted the lessons. Scholastics undertook courses on pedagogy and received practical experience in demonstration schools under the guidance of more experienced teachers. They pursued this course all while faithfully pursuing their religious formation because instituting cordiality, piety, and spirituality into one’s professional development was of vital importance to Lasallian education.

A Brother’s pedagogical instruction did not end when he moved up the ranks of the order and was officially placed in a classroom setting. Indeed, like other teaching orders in the province, Brothers held regular in-house courses and conferences on pedagogy and methodology.

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39 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 16.
40 The first director of the Toronto scholasticate was Brother Malachy Edward, who had moved to the city following a decade of teaching in the Maritimes. Brother Malachy Edward was born Edward Murphy in Scott Township, Ontario on 4 August 1853. He entered the Montreal Novitiate in 1872 and received the Holy Habit later that year. After a successful career in teaching and following his stint as Director of the Scholasticate, he became Visitor of the District of Toronto from 1894-96. When that District was re-integrated into the District of Montreal, he became the auxiliary Visitor responsible for the English-speaking Brothers. For details and biographical information, see BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, LEG-MUR, Murphy, Edward (Br. Malachy Edward) and Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle, 122-3.
both after school hours and in the summer time.\textsuperscript{41} Here they learned about topics as diverse as classroom management, appropriate subjects per grade levels, and child development. Their achievement in this field did not go unnoticed. When the question of a new Roman Catholic Model School was being considered for Toronto in 1886, the city’s Separate School Board turned to the Brothers as a potential source of instruction for training future Catholic teachers.\textsuperscript{42}

Having “carefully considered” the idea, the Board’s Standing Committee on School Management recommended that Brother Tobias, Director of the Brothers’ community and Head Master at the De La Salle Institute, be charged with the task at hand.\textsuperscript{43} Even though he was himself not a graduate of the Toronto Normal School, Brother Tobias would be responsible for running a wide variety of lessons on topics such as school management, discipline, methods of teaching, and school laws and regulations. Moreover, he was to be the one tasked with keeping “the various records required by the Education Department and perform all duties pertaining to the position of Head Master of a Model School.”\textsuperscript{44} The Board’s preference for Brother Tobias to instruct other teachers on pedagogy and best practices rather than one of the many teaching sisters in communities of women religious who were already Normal School graduates is indicative of the high degree with which they regarded the Brothers as teachers, pedagogues, and professionals.


\textsuperscript{42} TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 6 October 1886. According to the Board, the “length of a term in the Toronto City Roman Catholic Model School shall be one school year, beginning in September and ending in the July following.” Moreover, upon completion of a full term “with the necessary training and practice, and passing a satisfactory examination in the prescribed professional work for third class certificates, the Teachers in training shall be allowed to attend the provincial Normal School to receive the necessary training for professional Second Class Certificates, provided they have the requisite non professional rank.”

\textsuperscript{43} While he would be primarily responsible for the male candidates, he would also assist the Head Teacher of the “female Department” at the De La Salle Institute, who would be responsible for the female candidates.

\textsuperscript{44} TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 6 October 1886.
At the same time, it speaks to the patriarchal nature of both the Catholic Church and Ontario society in the late nineteenth century.

The Board’s confidence in Brother Tobias was not surprising, given that he was also the local School Inspector, a position he held from its creation in 1878 through to 1888 when he became District Visitor. The Inspector’s duties included overseeing everything from attendance to infrastructure, from teachers’ best practices to fidelity to the curriculum, from preparing examination papers to the pedagogical formation of young Brothers. Jennifer Goldberg has pointed out that local Inspectors were intricately tied to the communities in which they lived.45 From 1878 to at least 1912, the local School Inspector for the Toronto Separate School Board was always a Christian Brother, namely Brothers Tobias, Odo, and Lawrence.46 This is indicative of the high esteem with which the Board regarded the congregation’s experience and expertise in the educational field. For instance, in the first meeting of the 1887 school year, the Board thanked Brother Tobias “for the faithful and diligent manner in which he conducted his duties as Inspector” over the previous year.47 Moreover, upon notice of the death of Inspector Brother Odo in 1909, the Board felt that they had lost an “esteemed and worthy friend” who attentively served the city’s Catholic youth: “Under his supervision the schools have made rapid progress and the high state of efficiency to which they have attained is in a great measure due to his untiring efforts and wise administration.”48

As the twentieth century drew closer, the Brothers continued to demonstrate a firm commitment to professionalization; they were regularly attending lectures, seminars, and

45 Goldberg notes that inspectors “were assumed to be more familiar with the community expectations and, as a ‘known quantity’ more easily assessed and trusted.” Jennifer Goldberg, “‘I thought the people wanted to get rid of the teacher:’ Educational Authority in Late-Nineteenth Century Ontario,” Historical Studies in Education 23, no. 1 (Spring 2011), 44.
46 Except for the year 1889, when Reverend Father Hand held the position.
47 TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 7 January 1887.
48 For the full and glowing testimonial to Brother Odo, see TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 4 May 1909.
conferences from education specialists, Normal School masters, and school board officials.

Although he was unable to attend the professional conventions conducted by and for the Christian Brothers in Toronto in the summer of 1891, Inspector Cornelius Donovan noted that their meeting happened “according to their annual custom” and cited a journal that “pronounced it eminently successful.” Donovan, a man with many years of experience in the classroom, academic qualifications, and administrative experience, was generous in his compliments for the Brothers, noting that they were “industrious, earnest and capable” and therefore deserving of greater remuneration.49 The following summer, Donovan attended six Teachers’ Conventions put on by religious orders.50 He remarked that these Brothers and Sisters conducted well-organized and professional seminars:

In general, the business consisted of practical teaching lessons, essays, discussions, readings and lectures. Nearly the whole of this interesting work was done by the teachers themselves, and at most of the conventions every teacher present performed some part in the programme. Besides being also remarkable for a full attendance in every case, these conventions made themselves admirable by the whole-souled interests that the teachers took in the work they had in hand. The exercises were performed as they would be every day in a well regulated school, and there was no attempt at mere display, or, in popular language, no “playing for the grand stand.” The interchange of thoughts and ideas, the observation of the methods of others, and the kindly criticisms timely offered, must make conventions like those above mentioned, prolific in good results, inasmuch as they are capable of increasing the teachers’ knowledge, sharpening his professional skill, and strengthening his devotion to the noble cause of education. There is no teacher so

50 These conventions were hosted by the Christian Brothers in Toronto, the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Walkerton, the Sisters of the Holy Name in Amherstburg, and three each by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Toronto, Hamilton, and London. The Sisters of St. Joseph’s teaching conventions were perhaps the most prominent, and they regularly received praise from the Separate School Inspectors. In August 1895, for instance, the Sisters in London, Hamilton, and Toronto invited several prominent politicians, inspectors, and school officials to speak about school management, curriculum content, and pedagogy. Inspector J.F. White reported that these conventions were very enlightening for all attendees. The teachers in London were “all deeply interested” in the topics discussed, and in Hamilton, all present “evinced a most lively interest throughout.” Given the success of these conventions, White requested that the Sisters continue to be funded “the usual grant” allotment from the Department of Education. For more information on the professional development of the Sisters of St. Joseph in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Toronto, see Elizabeth M. Smyth, The Lessons of Religion and Science: The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph and St. Joseph’s Academy, Toronto, 1854-1911 (Ed.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1989), 162-5.
efficient that his efficiency can not be increased.\textsuperscript{51}

Inspectors’ reports were designed in part to encourage and advise teachers on their pedagogical methods, so Donovan need not have been so generous in his commendation.\textsuperscript{52}

He was not alone in his admiration of the Christian Brothers. Their reputation was remarkable enough in the Department of Education that some were even working on its behalf. One of these men was Brother Maxentius Martyr. Born Louis Laberge in 1856 in St. Thomas, Quebec, and taught by Brothers there and in Montreal, Laberge decided that he would follow the path of his teachers. After attending the Montreal novitiate, he received the habit in 1874 and taught in Quebec until his arrival in Toronto around 1880. Known as particularly pedagogically astute, and with an expertise in art and music, Brother Maxentius became a friend and advisor to the New Education advocate James L. Hughes. In addition to his class work with high school boys, Brother Maxentius organized adult classes in mechanical and architectural drawing. He became the Supervisor of Art in the Toronto Separate School Board, and the Department of Education asked him to help organize and plan the Ontario Educational Exhibit for the 1893 Columbian Exhibition (World’s Fair) in Chicago. The Exhibit collected 21 prizes and received high praise from the judges, which contributed to domestic acclaim for both the province’s education system and the Brothers themselves. By the end of his career, he had received “every certificate, or honour, given by the Department of Education for Professors of Art in the Province.”\textsuperscript{53}


\textsuperscript{52} An Inspector’s mandate was not “to raise morale or individual self-esteem” but rather “to ensure accountability – to assess and report on the ability of the teacher to offer effective instruction in return for the investment of public funds.” R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, \textit{How Schools Worked: Public Education in English Canada, 1900-1940} (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 329.

Overall then, the Christian Brothers assigned to teach in Ontario schools thought of themselves as well prepared for the classroom, trained in the best religious, pedagogical, and practical traditions of their founder and the beneficiaries of centuries of experience. When assessing the Brothers’ credentials, outsiders sometimes concurred and offered hearty praise. In particular, ultramontanist clergy were grateful for the Brothers’ teaching because they understood the importance of education to their vision of a society in which the Catholic Church triumphed over all opposition. As historian Nive Voisine has noted, education was “the cornerstone of the ultramontane system” in nineteenth-century Canada.54 Even well into the twentieth century, religious congregations were admired as the most qualified to instill Church doctrine and entrench Catholic orthodoxy among the young. Further, they were dictating appropriate literature and encouraging participation in Church-sanctioned sodalities, both important components of ultramontanists’ emphasis on mobilizing popular piety. In so doing, teaching orders such as the Christian Brothers were playing a significant part in showcasing the efficiency and autonomy of the Catholic Church – a core element of the ultramontanist agenda – while opposing liberals’ push for the separation of church and state in areas such as law, politics, and education.55

Catholics did not unanimously accept the ultramontane movement towards religious conformity and expanding clergy control over social, cultural, and educational institutions. Historian Michael Gauvreau has discussed how Canadian Catholic historiography has tended to downplay the agency of the laity in in the late nineteenth century. While often portrayed “as rather passive recipients of the religious messages and strategies promulgated by the clergy”

Gauvreau posits that “many areas of the clergy’s control remained contested.” In line with his assertion, the rest of this chapter points to four key examples which helps to illuminate the idea that the majority of Brothers in Ontario were subject to robust criticisms from a dedicated cohort of lay Catholics bent on assuring strong separate schools. Indeed, the Brothers were regularly criticized by the likes of inspectors, parents, and the press on issues such as English-language competency, frequent changing of teachers, and textbook choices; still others complained that they were only hired because their cheap labour was what sustained separate school boards.

Perhaps cutting most deeply, a frustration that was particularly prevalent among inspectors and separate school trustees was the fact that Catholic teachers who were members of religious orders did not unequivocally have to meet provincial certification standards. Overall, those outside of the Brothers’ congregation and independent from the Church were central players in decisions surrounding provincial certification regulations for the teaching religious. The Brothers, conversely, were essentially pawns in these debates and stayed tightlipped. Even in the one example where they were vocal participants in discussions about professionalization – in Kingston and St. Catharines in the early 1890s – leaders were not always in touch with what the wider membership really wanted.

The first example comes from Toronto in 1878. While the Brothers had been teaching in Toronto since 1851, grievances grew especially fraught in the late 1870s. This tension stemmed in large part from the 1876 Report of Toronto School Inspector J.M. Buchan. His annual year-end appraisal denounced the pitiable buildings, pathetic equipment, overcrowding, and, most importantly of all, unqualified teachers in the city’s separate schools. “I have a strong conviction,” Buchan reported, “that the majority of the teachers are so deficient in knowledge

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that they would fail to take third class certificates if they were to present themselves before a board of examiners.”\textsuperscript{58} The weakness of the teachers was reflected in the ignorance of the pupils, who, according to Buchan, “do not begin to compare in point of scholarship, and mental training with pupils of the same age in average town Public Schools.”\textsuperscript{59} The report contributed to a significant commotion in the city, with parents, trustees, religious leaders, and editorialists all voicing concerns over the Christian Brothers’ status.

The Buchan Report spurred several TSSB trustees to question the Brothers’ qualifications. According to historian Franklin Walker, the Board was divided between a lay radical minority and a clerical majority.\textsuperscript{60} Walker, though, was reiterating the hierarchy’s position; simply put, the clergy supposed that the dissident minority of trustees were “radical” because they found suspect any version of lay initiative that clashed with their own aspirations. The so-called radicals were anything but anti-clerical. Rather, they were deeply invested Catholics and devout supporters of Catholic schools – as taxpayers, parents, and trustees. In questioning the Brothers’ qualifications, they merely acted in a manner they understood would best advance the pupils under their care. Representative of the supposedly “radical” viewpoint was trustee J.E. Robertson, who, at a 27 December 1877 Board meeting at St. John’s Hall, suggested that the only way trustees could legitimately confirm that their teachers were qualified was through provincially-recognized certification. Another trustee, George Evans, pointed to a passage in the Buchan Report that found that simple tasks such as the spelling of names were not

\textsuperscript{58} BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, Br. Tobias Josephus, \textit{History of the District of Toronto}, 1-2; TCDSBA, 1876 Folder, “Report of Official Inspection in Oct. 1875.” Congregations of women religious were in communication with the Normal Schools about admission of potential postulants at this time, noting a concern for provincially-sanctioned professionalization despite the lack of legal obligation to do so. By 1882, for instance, some members of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Toronto had begun obtaining Teaching Certificates. For details, see Smyth, \textit{The Lessons of Religion and Science}, 166-72.


carried out effectively in the Brothers’ Toronto schools. Evans’ critique led to a chorus of denials from the clergy on the board. Brother Arnold, not usually one to attend Board meetings, was present on this evening and, according to the *Globe* report, said “they had thirteen thousand members of their brotherhood teaching, and more noise had been made in Toronto over their teaching than anywhere else.” The raucous meeting closed without endorsing mandatory certification.

Tense trustee meetings followed for the next several months, and reached a fever pitch in June 1878 when another dissident trustee, Joseph Power, put forward a motion demanding reform. He attempted to have the Brothers, like secular teachers, submit to provincial standards and examinations for certification. Power stressed that “male teachers of the first classes after the long vacation be required to procure first class certificates.” At this time, all of the Brothers under investigation were legitimately qualified to teach in Ontario according to the BNA Act’s exemption for teaching religious. Each had been trained at the congregation’s Montreal Novitiate. Power’s proposal, therefore, would have meant that the Toronto Brothers would have to choose to either attain the necessary Ontario qualifications or resign from the board. These options again proved unacceptable to the clergy on the board, including Fathers Conway, Morris and the board’s chairman, Vicar General F.P. Rooney. These priests understood the dissident trustees’ efforts as a threat to clerical leadership at the board and as an affront to the laity’s obligation to obey their superiors.

The clergy outlined two central rationales – both of which speak more to their own concerns and interests than it does the trustees or the Brothers – for exactly why certification was objectionable. First, they suggested that religious orders’ in-house training already went above

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61 *Toronto Globe*, 27 December 1877.
62 For more details on this episode at the TSSB, see Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 216-20.
63 TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 18 June 1878.
and beyond the provincial regulations. They posited that teaching orders were not only devout religious but also committed professionals, well trained in the art of elementary education. The Brothers in particular had an aura of professionalism with their own readers and textbooks, methods, and training facilities. The cleric-trustees thought it expedient that the Brothers continue to operate their own institutions because they considered them exceptionally good, proffering a sense of credibility in Toronto’s Catholic schools. Second, the clergy argued that Power’s request would mean the Board’s financial collapse and the Brothers’ inevitable departure from Toronto.64 The clergy on the Board would have understood that the Brothers’ withdrawal would necessitate considerably higher salaries to employ lay teachers, something they were neither prepared nor capable of providing.

Possibly seeking to appease the clergy, Power explained that he did not want to dismiss the Brothers or the Sisters outright, but rather wished that they proved their aptitude to Catholic parents and Protestant critics.65 To reiterate Brian Clarke’s apt observation, none of the dissident trustees called for the immediate dismissal of the teaching religious nor did they wish to strip the clergy’s obligation to oversee Catholic children’s religious development. Rather, they expressed a demand for a greater lay voice in the control of the TSSB, in part to assure Catholic ratepayers that qualified teachers instructed their children.66 In the end, Power’s original proposal was considerably watered down. The amended statement – which carried after a majority vote – simply requested that the Brother Director annually provide the Board with the qualification

64 As historians R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar point out, “Ultimately, the edifice of public education rests on dollars and cents … financial resources are the final arbiter of the quantity and quality of schooling.” Gidney and Millar, How Schools Worked, 151.
66 Clarke, Piety and Nationalism, 221-2.
status of the Brothers teaching in Toronto so long as this did not conflict with the Brothers’ rules.\textsuperscript{67}

This moment is crucial to the qualifications question for the way it stimulated fierce discussion about religious teachers’ certification in the public sphere, an issue that would not abate for thirty more years. Some newspaper editorialists picked up on the TSSB’s internal turmoil and began to advocate for certified teachers in separate schools. For instance, an editorial from \textit{The Evening Telegram} pointed out that if Catholic parents were paying taxes to support these schools, then they had every right to demand high-quality teachers: “‘There can be no reasonable objection made to the taking out of school certificates. If the teachers are not qualified to take out certificates, they are not qualified to teach.’”\textsuperscript{68} But the Catholic hierarchy continued to expound the idea that the Brothers met or exceeded all provincial qualification regulations and Normal School standards. Archbishop Lynch, who was simultaneously Local Superintendent for the TSSB, went so far as to issue a Circular on the controversy, one he labeled the Toronto Separate School Question.\textsuperscript{69} After suggesting that “irreligious” and “miserable” trustees were the ones leading the complaints against the teaching religious, he turned his attention to defending the Brothers and Sisters in the city’s separate schools.

Lynch outlined three justifications for why they ought to remain exempted from provincial regulations regarding teachers’ certification. First, he stressed that, in a spirit of “noble self-sacrifice,” teaching orders were providing a remarkable religious service in Toronto’s

\textsuperscript{67} TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 18 June 1878. There is no evidence in the Board Minutes in the succeeding years that this was actually carried out, suggesting that it may indeed have been against the Brothers’ rules to provide this information.

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{The Evening Telegram}, 14 June 1878.

\textsuperscript{69} TCDSBA, 1878 Folder, Archbishop Lynch to the Right Rev Bishops of Ontario, on the Toronto Separate School Question, c. November 1878. The letter was to be a “Circular” that the Bishops would then relay to priests in their respective dioceses. This did in fact occur. See \textit{Circular of His Lordship the Bishop of London to the clergy of his diocese December 2, 1878} and \textit{Circular of His Lordship the Bishop of Hamilton to the clergy of his diocese, December 9, 1878} from same folder.
separate schools. The teaching religious, he claimed, were the best agents to safeguard and promote Catholicism in the classroom. Because these men and women were committed to their vocation for life, and because God sanctioned it, no amount of training in a non-Catholic environment would improve their preparation. Next, Lynch sympathized with the board members who had suggested that religious orders conduct their own teacher-training programs as a practical means to save money. He claimed that, as of 1877, the average salary of the 16 Brothers employed by the Board was $200, whereas the average salary for a lay teacher in the public board was about $8-900. This amounted, he argued, to the Board saving about $11000 per year. Finally, Lynch emphasized that the debate was all a moot point anyway since religious orders were exempt from provincial qualifications. To prove his case, he cited Article XIII of the 1863 Separate School Act. Essentially, the circular emphasized that the Brothers’ internal training was superior to that provided in the government-run Normal School while simultaneously eschewing any obligation to attend said system. In taking such an approach, he hoped to assuage fears about quality assurance from some parents, politicians, and trustees.

Through it all, the Toronto Brothers stayed relatively quiet in response to the criticisms leveled against them. Nothing was stated publicly, and only privately did one narrator note that Inspector Buchan “deplored the Schools very much.” Yet their reservation to voice their position openly is not indicative of an unwillingness to accommodate on their qualifications. Their public silence belies an evident concern about their professionalization. Tellingly, the Ontario Brothers used Buchan’s denunciations to pressure superiors in Quebec to establish a

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70 Article XIII of the 1863 Separate School Act reads: “The teachers of the Separate School under this Act shall be subject to the same examinations, and receive their certificate of qualification in the same manner, as Common School Teachers generally; Provided that persons qualified by law as teachers, either in Upper or Lower Canada, shall be considered qualified teachers for the purposes of this Act.”

novitiate in Toronto, a location they believed was more amenable to producing qualified and competent teachers for the congregation. In the wake of the Buchan Report and subsequent controversy, the Superior General in Paris granted his approbation to open a novitiate in 1880. Unfortunately for the Brothers who had erected the novitiate both as a form of professionalization and to suit Ontario’s dominant language, it was closed due to financial problems only three years later.

A different aspect of the qualifications question was cause for concern in the Christian Brothers’ Kingston and St. Catharines schools in the early 1890s.\textsuperscript{72} Separate School Board trustees in these towns bitterly complained about the Brothers’ refusal to prepare students for the high school entrance examination. Aligning themselves with Catholic parents, separate school trustees wanted to ensure that Catholic boys would be afforded the same educational opportunities for advancement as boys in the public school system. While the expectations of local Catholic parents and lay leaders aligned with the beliefs and practices of the majority of the Christian Brothers actually teaching in these communities, they clashed with the visions of the Visitor, Brother Tobias, who refused to grant his permission allowing Brothers under his direction to prepare their pupils for the entrance exam. He argued that complete control over the training, examination, and promotion was necessary both to fulfill the obligations of their congregation and to ensure a robust Catholicism amongst their students.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{72} The Brothers opened St. Joseph’s School in Kingston in 1853 and St. Nicholas School in St. Catharines in 1876.\textsuperscript{73} In taking this approach, Brother Tobias echoed the anxieties of some Catholic bishops in late nineteenth-century southern Ontario, who noted the underlying dangers of co-mingling with Protestants in schools, as well as in other daily interactions, which – if left unchecked – could lead to mixed marriages and a loss in faith. In the 1901 Falconio Report on the status of Catholic-Protestant relations in Canada, for instance, Bishop Richard O’Connor of Peterborough reported the dangers of attending Protestant high schools and stressed the need to stay vigilant to keep Catholics committed to their faith. Many bishops noted that Canadian Catholics could solidify their faith by recruiting more priests, building more Catholic schools, and building up institutional networks. The Archbishop of Toronto, Denis O’Connor, went so far as to suggest completely isolated neighbourhoods centred around the parish church. For more details, see McGowan, “Rethinking Catholic-Protestant Relations in Canada,” 11-32.
St. Joseph’s School in Kingston and St. Nicholas School in St. Catharines garnered solid reputations in the second half of the nineteenth century, contributing to a strong relationship between the Brothers, trustees, and Catholic parents.\(^{74}\) One of the chief factors accounting for this upstanding status was the successful placement rate of Catholic boys into the local high schools, a measure that was made mandatory after 1871 in Ontario by passing an entrance exam. All of the local Brother Directors from at least the 1860s to the 1880s were supportive of their members preparing boys for this exam, noting both legal and pragmatic reasons, such as their duty to follow provincial regulations as well as to meet the practical expectations of local Catholics. In the Kingston community, Brother Arnold was “indefatigable” in his support of Brothers preparing pupils for public examinations throughout his tenure as Director from 1863-1867.\(^{75}\) His successor, Brother Cassian, elaborated on why public exams were so important in an 1869 note on the history of the Kingston community: “It cannot be denied that an examination before the public has a double advantage in giving the master an object to work for and in keeping up the good name of the school. Whether obligatory, or not, they should be made every year.”\(^{76}\) These examinations were indeed made every year in both St. Catharines and Kingston, often to very gratifying results. An 1882 St. Catharines newspaper reporter noted the students’ proficiency at St. Nicholas School, which he attributed to the quality of instruction and preparation provided. Pupils provided “prompt and precise answers” which “proved how careful and exhaustive is the training given by the teachers.”\(^{77}\) The Kingston and St. Catharines Brothers accepted the examination as a technique to put their Catholic school on the same footing with the

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\(^{77}\) *The Evening Star*, St. Catharines, 31 March 1882.
public non-denominational ones. These Brothers valued the positive reputation of their school and wanted that progressive image to continue.

The Kingston and St. Catharines Brothers continued to conduct the High School Entrance Examinations through to 1889, when tensions arose over the issue. That year, many boys in Kingston failed the test, and frustration ensued. Exacerbating the tension was the fallout from the administrative restructuring in 1888 that saw the Kingston and St. Catharines Brothers join the newly created Toronto District. The new Visitor, Brother Tobias, installed staunch allies as Directors and prohibited the Brothers from preparing the boys for these examinations. He argued that boys’ Catholic faith was at stake: training with non-Catholic textbooks was not only inappropriate and irreligious, but successfully passing the exam would mean entry into “evil” non-Catholic High Schools. For Brother Tobias, this was a distressing outcome:

No Brother should encourage a boy to go to that examination, because it may be a trap to ensnare him into the High School, and God knows if that may not be the first step towards the loss of his morality and even his faith. Our schools were not founded to prepare boys to go to Protestant High Schools. God does not bless the Community in which such work is done. … Protestant boys and girls are always bad company for Catholic boys. This endangers the Catholic boys’ faith and morals. A Brother of the Christian Schools should never be accessory to this.

In spite of the fact that the Kingston and St. Catharines Brothers had long been preparing boys for the exam, they held steadfast to their vow of obedience and refused to continue with the practice for the next few years.

The Catholic School Board trustees in these towns were discouraged by this development, arguing that it hindered intelligent students from progressing in their future

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78 AGR, *Personnel de L’Institut*, Montreal District Communities, 1880, 1885; Toronto District Communities, 1890, 1895.

79 BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, Br. Tobias Josephus, *History of the District of Toronto*, 29 and 42. Brother Tobias’ position seems especially ridiculous, given that their superior, the Assistant for all of North America, Brother Aimarus, was strongly in favour of submitting to the entrance examinations. Moreover, one anonymous Brother wrote that Archbishop Walsh “frequently told us [that] unless we prepared for certificates we could not hold our own in this province.” See BCSA, 700 Series, Hamilton London Ottawa Histories, *Brothers in Ottawa – 1894-95*, 17.
academic careers and their chances at competing with non-Catholics for employment in professional positions. In St. Catharines, trustee M.Y. Keating argued that Brother Tobias’ decision was disastrous for St. Nicholas’ reputation because he considered the number of pupils entering into the Collegiate Institute – the town’s only secondary school – as “one of the best means of judging as to the efficiency of its teacher.” Adding to his dissatisfaction with the Brothers’ teaching and professionalism were frustrations over textbook choices, their lack of provincially recognized teaching certificates, and the arbitrary nature in which they changed teachers, all of which he considered harmful to the students’ best interests and the school’s status.  

Keating suggested that the Brothers were not as competent as the public school teachers or the Sisters of St. Joseph, who were teaching girls in the neighbouring Catholic school.

Given this context and with Brother Tobias unwilling to show any flexibility, the Kingston trustees asked the Brothers to leave. In July 1893, the Brothers left the school and the Kingston community disbanded. In St. Catharines, the process of their departure was more drawn out. By 1895, the trustees were nearly unanimous in their determination to oust the Brothers from the school or else pressure them enough to resign of their own accord. Either option would allow the trustees to replace the Brothers with new lay teachers who would have no qualms about preparing the boys for the exam, and thereby, as one Trustee claimed, put St. Nicholas “on an equal footing” with the city’s public schools. It was left to Brother Tobias’ successor as Visitor, Brother Malachy Edward, to deal with the situation.

The new Visitor’s approach was quite different from his predecessor, as he was much more amenable to government intervention. In St. Catharines, Brother Malachy Edward was

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80 ARCAT, Walsh Papers, SC AB12.02 a-c, M.Y. Keating to Archbishop Walsh, 26 February 1895.
82 ARCAT, Walsh Papers, SC AB12.02 a-c, M.Y. Keating to Archbishop Walsh, 26 February 1895.
amiable, but not yet totally inclined to the idea of having Brothers prepare their boys for the entrance exam. He explained that they would only do so if it fit the order’s narrow guidelines. Brothers would not outright encourage boys to attend the Collegiate Institute, but would not deny them the opportunity to attend either; Brothers would prepare boys for the entrance examination should “they wish to go there to study Latin.” Brother Malachy Edward, therefore, stressed that refusal to prepare boys for the exam was not a strict policy but a typical custom with some room for negotiation. He suggested that the Trustees were frustrated not in the fact that the Brothers failed to prepare the boys for the exam, but rather that a greater proportion of the pupils was not prepared. The trustees were not impressed with this rationale. In March 1895, the Visitor suggested that they were “quite willing to retire if the trustees who demand our dismissal truly voice the sentiments of the majority of the Catholics of St. Catharines.” The fact that they left a few weeks later indicates what those sentiments were.

What transpired in Kingston and St. Catharines suggests that there was no singular Catholic vision on educational questions in the late nineteenth century. Catholic parents, Separate School Board trustees, and even most Brothers favoured prepping students for the entrance examination as a form of professionalization. However, Brother Tobias certainly did not. His refusal to submit to the demands of Kingston and St. Catharines’ trustees coupled with Brother Malachy Edward’s inability to rectify this earlier precedent did not transpire without severe consequences. The most obvious change was that the 10 Christian Brothers teaching in the two schools in 1890 was reduced to zero only five years later. Moreover, perhaps owing to

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83 He responded to the trustees’ complaint regarding the order’s frequent changing of teachers by claiming that “no religious Order can relinquish its rights in this matter” but wanted to assure the Trustees that “it has always been our aim to make changes as seldom as possible, and to the best possible advantage.” Concerning the qualifications question, Brother Malachy tried to strike a balance. While he would not require his Brothers to go out and get Ontario teachers’ certificates because they were not mandated to do so, he also stressed that this in no way implied that the Brothers were not capable of holding such certificates. ARCAT, Walsh Papers, SC AB12.03, Brother Malachy Edward to Archbishop Walsh, 25 March 1895.

84 ARCAT, Walsh Papers, SC AB12.03, Brother Malachy Edward to Archbishop Walsh, 25 March 1895.
the mismanagement of these two cases, the congregation’s highest superiors in Montreal rescinded the Toronto leaders’ decision-making authority and closed the Toronto District in 1896. All of the order’s Ontario-based communities were closed, except for those in Toronto, which were re-integrated into the Montreal District. Brother Tobias had been in a position to help shore up the reputation of Catholic schools and the Christian Brothers’ place in them. Instead, he demanded those under his command refuse to prepare students for the entrance exam based on the idea that it would lead to entry into non-Catholic high schools and would jeopardize the faith. This was a misguided gamble, as the Trustees did not bend. In this sense, Brother Tobias demonstrated a remarkable lack of awareness of the educational priorities of Ontario Catholics and what was in the Brothers’ own self-interest. In a deeply ironic twist, the Brothers were forced to depart from both towns ensuring that they would not be the ones to impart Catholicism in these schools or help contribute to the development and prosperity of separate schools in these regions. While seeking to defend the Catholic faith, his decisions actually eliminated the Brothers’ capacity to conduct their educational apostolate.

While the Brothers’ leadership sought to isolate their members and their senior students from potential evils of “Protestant” high schools, the majority of the members did not fear this acculturation and wished to carry on with the practice of preparing the boys for the entrance exam. As one anonymous Brother recounted in 1895, “some of our dear Brothers wished to make a trial, but we were not allowed to make the attempt.”

Perhaps these more accommodationist Brothers felt that they had prepared their boys well enough in the soundness of their faith that there was nothing for them to fear in entering into this non-Catholic world. Even Brother Malachy seems to have learned from his mishandling of the St. Catharines situation. When controversy again erupted on the question of entrance exams in Hamilton in

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1896, he was much more amenable to allowing the Brothers to conduct preparations. Writing to a colleague on the matter in April 1896, Brother Malachy explained that “Sometimes it is necessary to stand side by side with outside schools and stand the public test, and in the combat ‘stand or fall.’”\(^{86}\)

Ontario’s Christian Brothers grappled with issues over their qualifications, teaching methods, textbook choices, and classroom conditions throughout the late nineteenth century. Nowhere were these anxieties more spectacularly evident than in Ottawa, a city with a protracted history of ethnic tension and therefore rich for exploring the interconnections of religion, education, and language in Ontario. The city was fraught with tension from its inception as Bytown in 1826; major clashes between Irish Protestants, Irish Catholics, and French Canadian Catholics were common in both the city and surrounding valley until mid-century.\(^{87}\) After 1855, Bytown was known as Ottawa. A bilingual city, it became the national capital in 1867. In the wake of the Red River and North-West Rebellions, the hanging of Louis Riel, ongoing questions over education, immigration, and minority rights, and a growing French-Canadian nationalism clashing with a fervent English-Canadian connection to the British Empire, language and identity politics in the 1890s were particularly fraught. As tens of thousands of Quebecois Catholics moved into the Ottawa Valley in the second half of the nineteenth century, their numbers were beginning to upend the linguistic balance in the diocese.\(^{88}\) As a result, ethnic tensions intensified and were manifest in workplaces, public spaces, and most especially in church and school


\(^{87}\) This ethnic tension peaked with ‘The Shiners’ War’ in the 1830s. See Michael S. Cross, “The Shiners’ War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s,” \textit{Canadian Historical Review} 54, no. 1 (1973), 1-26.

\(^{88}\) By 1850, the Diocese of Ottawa included the city of Ottawa, the counties of Prescott, Russell, Carleton, Renfrew, Lanark-North, all areas east of Lake Nipissing along the Ottawa River, and Argenteuil and Outaouais in Quebec. By 1900, the Archdiocese of Ottawa had three more counties in Quebec: Wright, Labelle, and parts of Terrebonne.
The expansion in the number of French-speaking clergy, religious orders, and lay Catholics only intensified the linguistic conflict. Long struggles ensued, playing themselves out in disputes over diocesan boundaries, westward expansion and settlement, administration in Ontario's Catholic Church for decades to come. One effort English-speaking bishops undertook was to create new dioceses and archdioceses and stack them with English speaking bishops to drown out the French voice. They were successful in creating the Diocese of Peterborough in 1882, the Archdiocese of Kingston in 1889, the Diocese of Alexandria in 1890, and the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in 1904. English-speaking clergy and bishops also increasingly nominated English-speaking and Canadian-born men to fill vacant sees. Attempts to annex English-speaking Catholics from Prescott and Russell counties in the Archdiocese of Ottawa into the Diocese of Alexandria’s jurisdiction were unsuccessful. For more details, see Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français (Ottawa: Éditions de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1984), 169-92 and 231-7.

Perhaps the most heated battle in the Ottawa Catholic Church involved divisions over diocesan boundaries. While the city of Ottawa was within Ontario’s provincial borders, the diocese traversed provincial lines and was part of the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec. As such, one of the most divisive ethno-linguistic battles in the Ontario Catholic Church involved the English-speaking hierarchy’s effort to divide the Ottawa diocese so that the portion that was physically in Ontario was incorporated into the Ecclesiastical Province of Toronto, itself established out of linguistic conflict in 1870. Led by Archbishop J.J. Lynch of Toronto, the English-language contingent wanted to unite civil and ecclesiastical boundaries, arguing that both English- and French-speaking Catholics would be better served by bishops in their own tongue, that customs and practices were different in the two provinces, and that English-speaking bishops made better diplomats with politicians in the fight for Catholic rights in Ontario. In the midst of this strife stood Bishop Duhamel, who stressed that it was actually the French Catholic population that was growing in Ontario, and thereby dismissed the English bishops’ proposal as illogical. Joining the fray was Archbishop Taschereau of Quebec, who noted the specialty of Ottawa as the nation’s capital and argued that the city deserved its own ecclesiastical province. Though Taschereau’s envisioned development occurred when the diocese of Ottawa was raised to the status of a metropolitan See in 1886, English bishops continued the fight to impose unilingual administration in Ontario’s Catholic Church for decades to come. One effort English-speaking Bishops undertook was to create new dioceses and archdioceses and stack them with English speaking bishops to drown out the French voice. They were successful in creating the Diocese of Peterborough in 1882, the Archdiocese of Kingston in 1889, the Diocese of Alexandria in 1890, and the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in 1904. English-speaking clergy and bishops also increasingly nominated English-speaking and Canadian-born men to fill vacant sees. Attempts to annex English-speaking Catholics from Prescott and Russell counties in the Archdiocese of Ottawa into the Diocese of Alexandria’s jurisdiction were unsuccessful. For more details, see Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français, 225-31 and Robert Choquette, Language and Religion: A History of English-French Conflict in Ontario (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1975), 45-52.

In the late nineteenth century, most Quebecers had grown frustrated with the status quo and with decisions which had not favoured French or Catholic interests, such as the hanging of Louis Riel, the loss of separate schools in New Brunswick, and the controversies over education in Manitoba. They regarded the outcomes in these cases as attacks on their culture and on the bilingual promise of Confederation. The rise of and intolerance in the Protestant Protective Association, the Equal Rights Association, and the Orange Order exacerbated tension. As a means of survivance of their faith, language, and customs in what they perceived to be a hostile environment, French Canadians turned to nationalism and supported colonization efforts into Ontario and the region that would become Western Canada. The growing nationalism in Quebecois society was reflected in its religious hierarchy, who actively supported this expansion by sending missionaries and teaching religious to serve the native and francophone population in the west and thereby protect their culture. This vision conflicted with English-speaking Catholics’ confidence that the future of the west would be English-based. For details, see Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français, Chapter 8.

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89 Within the Catholic Church, the laity regularly complained about the language skills of local priests. Often, they would not donate money or attend Mass if the priest’s language did not match those in the pews. This context contributed to the blessing of St. Patrick’s Church in Ottawa in 1875 for the exclusive use of English-speaking Catholics. The clergy also sometimes complained about their superiors if they were of a different language. The first bishop of the diocese, Joseph-Eugène-Bruno Guigues (1848-74), did little to stem the tide of nationalism, instead prioritizing greater uniformity and strict religious discipline amongst both priests and laity in his diocese, particularly on social life, marriage and the sacraments, sex, alcohol, secret societies, and feast days. For details, see Robert Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français du dix-neuvième siècle (Ottawa: Éditions de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1984), 169-92 and 231-7.

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91 In the late nineteenth century, most Quebecers had grown frustrated with the status quo and with decisions which had not favoured French or Catholic interests, such as the hanging of Louis Riel, the loss of separate schools in New Brunswick, and the controversies over education in Manitoba. They regarded the outcomes in these cases as attacks on their culture and on the bilingual promise of Confederation. The rise of and intolerance in the Protestant Protective Association, the Equal Rights Association, and the Orange Order exacerbated tension. As a means of survivance of their faith, language, and customs in what they perceived to be a hostile environment, French Canadians turned to nationalism and supported colonization efforts into Ontario and the region that would become Western Canada. The growing nationalism in Quebecois society was reflected in its religious hierarchy, who actively supported this expansion by sending missionaries and teaching religious to serve the native and francophone population in the west and thereby protect their culture. This vision conflicted with English-speaking Catholics’ confidence that the future of the west would be English-based. For details, see Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français, Chapter 8.
the University of Ottawa, control over the Ottawa Separate School Board, and the certification of teaching religious.

Personal battles exacerbated the strife, with the second bishop of Ottawa, Joseph-Thomas Duhamel and Reverend Michael Francis Fallon at the forefront. Duhamel led the diocese from 1874 until 1909. At the outset, he was a staunch defender of the bilingual nature of his diocese; most of the parishes were bilingual and he therefore supported a bilingual clergy. However, overseeing a period of rapid expansion in the number of parishes, priests, and primarily French-speaking parishioners – and to defend his Church in the face of perceived anglophone ethnocentrism – he increasingly became a defender of French rights. Education was one area of special concern for Duhamel. He demanded that all Catholic parents – French or English

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92 The Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate founded the University of Ottawa as a bilingual institution in 1848. There was only limited linguistic tension until the late 1860s, when English-speaking Oblates and some allies in the order from France sought to transform the university into an English-only institution. While French-Canadian Oblates and Archbishop Duhamel himself wished to continue with a bilingual policy, English did become the university’s official language in 1874. However, constant internal battles in the Oblate hierarchy and the social and educational context in Ottawa and in Ontario writ large eventually contributed to a return to bilingualism in 1901. The first volume of Roger Guindon’s four-part French-language history of the linguistic duality at the University of Ottawa, covering the period from 1848 to 1898, is aptly titled Coexistence Difficile. Language tensions at the university only exacerbated in the following decades, a period Guindon refers to in the title of his second volume: Coexistence Menacée. For a thorough overview of the linguistic controversy from 1848 through to 1998, see Roger Guindon, La dualité linguistique à l’Université d’Ottawa, Volumes 1-4 (Ottawa: Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1989-98).

93 After decades of frustration connected to administration, in 1886, the Ottawa Separate School Board was divided by language into two separate committees, with French-speaking trustees controlling French schools and English-speaking trustees responsible for English schools. According to Michael Power, these committees “were in effect two school boards disguised as one, but it was a workable fiction as long as the committees remained separate solitudes in their own spheres of influence and kept the local Church hierarchy and the government at arm’s length.” Many French-speaking parents sent their children to English schools, much to the dismay of English trustees who felt that French-speaking students were impeding the progress of the majority. See Power, A Promise Fulfilled, 189.

94 Choquette, Language and Religion, 9-40.

95 In 1874, there were around 60 parishes, 80 priests, and 100 000 Catholics in the diocese. By the time of Duhamel’s death in 1909, there were more than 140 parishes, 250 priests, and 150 000 Catholics. In addition, many new churches were built under his administration, and the growth in the number of and membership in religious orders grew significantly, particularly among French orders such as the Grey Nuns, Oblates, Capuchins, Montfortains, Redemptorists, and the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Choquette suggests that Lynch, along with most of his fellow English-speaking bishops, were on the frontlines of fanning the flames of ethnocentrism among the English-Catholic faithful in Ontario. It was their militancy, he argues, that forced Duhamel to become a leading force for Franco-Canadian interests in Ontario and put French ecclesiastics on the defensive. For details, see Choquette, L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français, 199-204 and 279-80.
speaking – send their children to separate schools or else face the danger of eternal damnation. Like Duhamel, Fallon was a staunch defender of the Christian Brothers. But Fallon differed from Duhamel in virtually every other way, and most especially in his vocal advocacy for English-language interests. During his time in Ottawa from 1894 to 1901, he was pitted against anyone who was not in accordance with his views, including H.A. Constantineau, his Oblate superior. When he was appointed Bishop of London in 1909, the controversies only increased in ferocity as he sought to limit Franco-Ontarian educational rights. Given his outspoken candour, historian Robert Choquette identifies Fallon as “the agitator par excellence” of Irish-French tension in Ontario.

Ethno-linguistic tensions in Ontario were most evident in debates over the use and quality of education provided in the French-language schools of the province’s eastern-most areas. Ottawa’s schools were particularly subject to intense criticism given that it had the largest number of French speakers of any Ontario city and a large and linguistically divided separate school board. The controversy contributed to impassioned English condemnation and ardent French commendation of these schools from the 1880s to the 1920s. Denunciations of French schools cut across Christian denominations and was initially tied to language; English-speaking Catholics and Protestants in Ontario associated the French-language schools as backwards and

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inefficient. An 1889 Commission tasked with investigating conditions in these French schools found them wanting in many regards, only exacerbating tensions further as their report was publicized widely in the press.\textsuperscript{99} But because the French were overwhelmingly Catholic and sending their children to separate schools, most Protestants regarded French schools and separate schools as one and the same. Fearing criticisms of the former would overshadow the benefits of the latter, English Catholics sided with Protestants in order to safeguard their historic right to attend separate schools.

If Ottawa was at the heart of the English-French schools controversy, the Christian Brothers were the key participants. So begins the third case study of the qualifications question. Much like what was experienced in Toronto during the late 1870s and in St. Catharines and Kingston in the early 1890s, the Brothers’ Ottawa congregation had to deal with a myriad of outsiders all trying to influence developments in order to further their own agendas. The first of a series of grave concerns in the Brothers’ Ottawa schools surfaced in 1894 over textbooks, methods, and personnel choices. A Committee was appointed by the Ottawa Separate School Board (OSSB) to investigate, and on the whole, found the primary level De La Salle Series of readers had “no redeeming features” and was “deficient both in arrangement and in the selection of the words, which were in many cases too difficult and unfamiliar.” Similarly, J.F. White, Inspector for the region, was particularly concerned by the “defects” within the De La Salle Series English Readers. White wanted to assure Catholic parents that their sons and daughters were receiving the best possible education and argued that the primary means to achieve that end was to get rid of “useless text books” and enforce certification for teaching religious.\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{99} Choquette, \textit{L’Église catholique dans l’Ontario français}, 299-308.
Intensifying the tension was Flavien Moffett, French-speaking OSSB member and editor of *Le Temps*, Ottawa’s most popular daily French-language newspaper. Moffett claimed that he wanted to improve the Brothers’ teaching, not oust them completely. Nevertheless, he forcefully condemned the French-speaking Brothers’ inept methods and for mandating that pupils only buy the Brothers’ own books. Both White and Moffett were Catholics who desperately wanted to improve separate school education. Their advocacy work showcased lay Catholic independence from Church officials, and for the rest of the 1890s, they were pitted against several individuals and organizations, including the ultramontane Archbishop Duhamel and Brother Flamien, the Visitor of the Montreal District and Superior of the French-speaking Brothers in Ottawa.

While Ottawa’s Christian Brothers remained silent, the growing tension spurred the involvement of a group of alumni from the various Brothers’ schools in Ottawa. In March 1895, they gathered together to show appreciation for the education they received and defend their former teachers. In an official report presented to Minister of Education George Ross, the

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101 At this time, Moffett was both editor and OSSB member. In 1893, he campaigned on the promise to introduce secret ballots for school board elections, greater uniformity in methods and textbooks, and lower property taxes to pay for education. Facing opposition from the likes of Duhamel and several priests, Moffett lost a close race, but was elected the following year. For details, see Choquette, *Language and Religion*, 59-61.


103 Brother Flamien was particularly furious with the criticisms of his order and their methods. In February 1895, he demanded Moffet and other adversaries respect the conditions “under which we take to conserve the direction of our schools, conditions that we request wholly in Ottawa as we have elsewhere.” Brother Flamien, *Le Temps*, 12 February 1895. Cited in Nive Voisine, *Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada: Un Ére de Prospérité, 1880-1946, Tome II* (Sainte-Foy, Québec: Anne Sigier, 1991), 137.

104 When Egerton Ryerson retired in 1876, the position of Superintendent of Education was dismantled and his responsibilities were moved under direct government authority through a Department of Education. The first Minister for this portfolio was Adam Crooks, former Vice-Chancellor at the University of Toronto. Robert Stamp suggests that Catholic schools made significant advances under Crooks’ watch, in part because of Archbishop of Toronto J.J. Lynch’s quiet advocacy. Among the developments included the emergence of “Roman Catholic model schools, easier transfer of Quebec teaching certificates to Ontario, less complicated machinery for Catholic ratepayers to place their names on the separate school tax roll, and the appointment of a Roman Catholic as separate school inspector.” Crooks’ successor was George W. Ross, who took over in 1883. Ross had been a public school teacher, superintendent, inspector, editor of *The Ontario Teacher*, and member of the Department of Education’s Central Committee of Examiners, responsible for certifying teachers and preparing model school syllabi. Crooks and Ross carried out many of the functions formerly reserved for the Superintendent: curriculum development, textbook authorization, administering examinations, supervising the inspectorate, and training and certifying teachers. Stamp,
alumni’s representative J.B. St. Laurent praised “the superiority of the Christian Brothers over lay teachers as regards religious training” and also “as regards secular training.” He applauded the Brothers’ “unalterable devotion[sic] … in the instruction and education of youth” and noted the financial benefit to the board in not substituting them for lay teachers. The alumni encouraged Ross not to intervene in the Brothers’ affairs and demanded ongoing clergy control over all instruction in Catholic schools. In a striking distinction from the likes of White and Moffett, here was a body of lay Catholics fervently accepting absolute obedience to episcopal authority.

A few months later, Minister of Education George Ross announced that a Commission would be struck to examine the city’s separate schools. William Scott, recently transferred from his position as Math Master at the Ottawa Normal School to become Vice-Principal of the Toronto Normal School, was named head of the three-man investigating committee. The Scott Commission, as it was subsequently referred to, was tasked with “making a full and careful enquiry … into the methods of teaching in the said schools; the training of pupils in the various subjects prescribed in the course of study; the text books used by the pupils and the extent to which the English language is taught in the schools where the French language prevails.” Once the Commissioners began their task, they were immediately met with resistance from both the Catholic hierarchy and Brother Flamien. Archbishop Duhamel considered the idea of an investigative Commission as an intrusion into the clergy’s right to control education and “an

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105 AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG 2-42-0-6110, J.B. St. Laurent to Ross, 27 March 1895.
106 Scott was born in 1845 in Scotland, but moved to Canada in 1854. His early career was as a public school teacher and private tutor before joining the staff at the Boys’ Model School from 1869 to 1874, when he became head master. In 1882, he became the math master at the Ottawa Normal School, a teaching position he held until 1894 when he was transferred to the Toronto Normal School. He became Principal of the Normal School in 1899, holding the position til his retirement in 1918. Scott was a Presbyterian, and cannot therefore be included amongst the contingent of lay Catholics who initiated much of the reform on certifying the teaching religious in Ontario.
107 AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG 2-42-0-6110, Announcement of Commission, 30 May 1895.
attack on the Christian Brothers.” Evidently, the Brothers were once again subjects of critical importance to a wide variety of interested parties, each with their own objectives.

What was the response of the Brothers actually teaching in Ottawa to the supposed “attack” and intervention into their pedagogical methods and textbooks? Perhaps it is impossible to state definitively, but the actions of at least some members are telling for the way they highlight a commitment to professionalization and an inclination to accommodate government intervention. When the Commissioners first tried to enter the schools, local directors (and principals) Brothers Mark and Philadelphus informed them that they had orders from their superiors to refuse authorization for their schools’ examination.109 According to Commissioner Scott, the refusal was to be one of “passive resistance.”110 The fact that Brothers Mark and Philadelphus stressed that they were acting on orders from superiors indicates that at least some of the Brothers’ leaders were opposed to intervention into their affairs. However, it does not automatically prove that they and their communities were necessarily of the same viewpoint. Indeed, the silence of the majority of the Brothers is not necessarily proof of a rejection of government intrusion, and is likely quite the opposite.

In trying to figure out a rationale for the Brothers’ refusal to let them enter, Commissioner Scott put forward the idea that the “root of the trouble is that they are ruled from Quebec.”111 Scott’s interpretation, though, was not entirely accurate. Only Ottawa’s French-speaking Brothers, communities, and schools operated under the authority of Brother Flamien in

108 AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG 2-42-0-6110, J.S. Foley to G.W. Ross, 5 June 1895.
109 Brother Mark was the director of the community responsible for St. Patrick’s School and the Catholic Lyceum and Brother Philadelphus was the director for the community responsible for the La Salle Institute.
110 Scott interpreted “passive resistance” to mean that: “The teachers will leave the room when the Commissioners enter. The classes will be at our disposal to be examined if we see fit. Nothing will be said to the pupils to set them against us but they will be entirely in our charge. They (the teachers) will give us no information regarding their work. They will teach no lessons for us. They will answer no questions regarding textbooks, school organization, or other matters upon which we may desire information. “In fact the resistance meant everything short of using force.””
111 AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG 2-42-0-6110, Scott to Ross, 12 June 1895.
Montreal. The city’s English-speaking Brothers, communities, and schools were part of the Toronto District under the authority of Brother Malachy Edward, widely known as an advocate for English-language causes and as someone willing to bend to government intrusion. He was not alone; many Ontario Brothers argued that the particular political, educational, and religious circumstances of life in Ontario necessitated adaptations to the seemingly illogical ban on Normal School attendance. What’s more is that the Brothers had already established a precedent to accept government-run training in the United States. As early as 1893, the New York District Visitor, Brother Justin, acknowledged that the Brothers were taking State Certificates for teaching, and that “no more of our Brothers would go out from our Scholasticate until they had the Certificates.” Surely Brother Malachy Edward would have been familiar with that American development, and, when combined with his personal history, it is probable that he diverged with Brother Flamien on what ought to happen in Ottawa.

Only three days after the initial repudiation of the Commissioners, the Ottawa Brothers acquiesced. Scott speculated that this might have something to do with the Brothers’ “absurd position” becoming public. This interpretation seems plausible. The Brothers on the ground would undoubtedly give the appearance that they had something to hide. Brother Malachy Edward likely agreed and consented to the commissioners’ entry, in defiance of his French-language counterpart. The Commissioners performed their evaluation and found that, unlike the Sisters, the Brothers were not up to the expected standards; the quality of the De La Salle Readers were weak, there was an over-emphasis on rote memory rather than comprehension, and

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112 For instance, while serving as director of the community house in Charlottetown in the 1870s, he hoped to assuage fears about the Brothers’ qualifications from Protestant members of the PEI government. He agreed to submit to the exams then in use in the province. Despite the Brothers successfully showcasing their abilities, the government still dismissed them from the Island.
113 LAC, m.f. K218, reel # 221872-75, No. 4, Brother Justin to Brother Assistant, 17 February 1893.
114 AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG 2-42-0-6110, Scott to Ross, 13 June 1895.
precedence was given to select students while others were neglected. They demanded that the Brothers get certified if they wished to remain teaching in Ottawa’s schools. Inspector White seconded this view, recommending either that the Brothers be banished from Ottawa’s schools or that the OSSB be withheld funding until changes were made. Unhappy with the results of the investigation, the English trustees dismissed the Brothers from their schools that autumn.

Frustrated with the intrusion into their schools and methods, and suggesting that English-speaking commissioners were themselves unqualified to evaluate French-speaking pupils, Brother Flamien withdrew the French contingent shortly thereafter.115 Amidst the fallout, both French and English-speaking Brothers had a strong ally in Michael Fallon, the recently ordained Oblate, vice-Rector at the University of Ottawa, and emerging leader of the Irish in the city. Fallon, who had been taught by the Brothers in Kingston, argued that the Brothers’ methods were sound and their results spoke for themselves. He lamented their departure, contending that the Commissioners were prejudiced and their report was a “farce.”116

While there is no known correspondence between Brothers Malachy Edward and Flamien on the controversies in Ottawa, the fact that the former had not condemned the Scott Commission in the vociferous way that the latter had undoubtedly angered the Montreal Visitor, and perhaps helps to explain why the Toronto District, operational since 1888, was closed in the aftermath of the Ottawa problems. It is perhaps also no coincidence that this crisis took its toll on

115 Their departure led to a new round of concerns from Inspector White about the qualifications of the new lay teachers and the “new way of things” in Ottawa. Writing to the Minister of Education, he noted that there has been “improvement...in the methods of instruction and government” and that “there has been a gratifying advance in the work of the pupils...” particularly in reading, writing, arithmetic, and English. Nevertheless, he noted that parents have protested the lay teachers by sending their boys only irregularly to school, students not doing their homework in protest, and [there is] a general push to have the Christian Brothers return to the school.” All in all, White was suggesting that these kinds of actions were problematic both for effective teaching and learning in Ottawa. As such, he believed that the new lay French teachers and the schools in which they taught would not improve until the “teachers are made to follow a longer and better course of literary study and especially until they have had more thorough professional training.” AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG-2-42-0-4202, “Report on Boys’ French Schools, Ottawa,” White to Ross, 14 December 1895.

116 The Brothers must have prepared Fallon for the High School Entrance Exam in the late 1870s, because he graduated from Kingston’s Collegiate Institute in 1883. Choquette, Language and Religion, 12 and 62.
Brother Flamien, who was himself replaced as Visitor by Brother Édouard de Marie (Augustin Bélanger) in 1897. What was arguably the final nail in the coffin for Brother Flamien’s departure was the fact that these events had forced Minister Ross to change his tune on the qualifications question for teaching orders. In 1897, he was adamant that if the Brothers wished to return to teach in Ottawa’s separate schools, they had to “comply with the regulations as to the text books to be used, the courses of study and all other matters required by the School Law in the administration of Separate Schools.”¹¹⁷ The Brothers returned to Ottawa in 1899, agreeing to teach at the new Notre Dame School (later known as Guigues School) under the OSSB’s authority.¹¹⁸ However, tensions surrounding qualifications and methods quickly returned.

The fourth moment chosen to illustrate the contentious debates about the Christian Brothers’ qualifications was the teaching certification crisis of 1904-07. While centred in Ottawa, it had provincial ramifications and is certainly the most famous of the examples provided, in part because it involved many well-known individuals and organizations. Yet again, the historian is mindful that lay Catholics actively engaged in decisions with profound consequences for Catholic education and the Christian Brothers in the province. The crisis began in June 1904, when the OSSB tried to erect a residence for the Christian Brothers who were hired to teach at Notre Dame School. Local lay Catholic teacher J.D. Grattan protested the decision and quickly brought forth a court challenge in Ottawa’s High Court of Justice. The main point of dispute was the fact that the Brothers were trained in Quebec, and therefore not in possession of Ontario teaching certificates. The case soon devolved into a question of whether or not teaching religious who did not have provincial qualifications had the right to teach in Ottawa’s separate schools.

¹¹⁷ AO, m.f. reel MS5670/RG 2-42-0-6110, George W. Ross to Moffett, Separate School Trustee, 3 June 1897.
¹¹⁸ The Brothers also opened a private school – De La Salle Academy – that same year, though it was not subject to the OSSB. Three years later, the Brothers came back to teach at Sainte-Anne and at Saint-Jean-Baptiste schools. For details, see Brother L-S [Louis-Symphorian], Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes au Canada, 1837-1900 (Montréal: Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, 1921), 262-3.
schools.

Presiding over the case was Judge Hugh MacMahon, a Catholic and proud Irishman, having co-founded the Irish Benevolent Society in London, Ontario in 1877 and serving as its president in 1878. MacMahon was a well-respected judge who valued the rule of law and British traditions and did not bow down to clerical pressure. He listened while N.A. Belcourt, lawyer for the OSSB and the Brothers, employed a well-worn line of reasoning used by the Catholic hierarchy for a generation: he interpreted Section 93 of the BNA Act to mean that teachers trained and approved in Quebec were legally and automatically also certified to teach in Ontario. However, MacMahon read the BNA Act very differently. His verdict, given 11 July 1904, ruled that only those religious who had been teaching prior to 1867 were deemed exempt from examination according to the laws in Ontario, a ruling that meant that only the most ancient of religious teachers fit the bill. Essentially, those who had not qualified according to the regulations of Ontario’s Education Department could not be legally employed as teachers in the province’s separate schools. The Christian Brothers would now be forced to obtain a licence in order to teach.

The MacMahon judgement only temporarily resolved the question of whether or not the Brothers were allowed to continue teaching Ontario’s Catholic boys. Frustrated that they would no longer be able to dictate eligibility for the classroom, the Brothers’ superiors in Montreal

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119 MacMahon was born in Guelph in 1836. He was called to the bar in 1864 and began his law career in Brantford before moving to London. He became Queen’s Counsel in 1876, and was immediately thrust into several high profile court cases. In 1877, he represented the dominion government in arbitration with Ontario over the province’s western and northern boundaries. When the case moved before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1884, he worked alongside D’Alton McCarthy and Christopher Robinson, successfully negotiating the Ontario-Manitoba boundary dispute in a manner favourable to Ottawa. In 1880 and 1881, he served as a lawyer for the defence at the preliminary examination in the mysterious murders of the Black Donnellys. He got the prisoner, James Carroll, acquitted. MacMahon was named a Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature for Ontario, Common Pleas Division, in 1887. For details on his life until 1888, see George MacLean Rose, ed., Representative Canadians: A Cyclopedia of Canadian Biography (Toronto: Rose Publishing Company, 1888), 733-6.

120 The ruling also impacted the Grey Nuns, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Ladies of Loretto, and all other teaching orders in the Catholic Church then teaching in Ontario.
appealed the decision to the Ontario Court of Appeal. They continued to stress that their rules forbade members from attending the Normal School, citing the need for seclusion from women. They further emphasized that their novitiate training, long experience, and annual pedagogy conventions unconditionally qualified them to teach in the province. Also resenting the MacMahon decision were members of Ontario’s Catholic hierarchy and its English-language Catholic media, including the London-based *Catholic Record* and the Toronto-based *Catholic Register*. At some points the bishops and their public organs suggested that religious orders were not subject to the BNA Act while at other times, they posited that the Brothers were already competent and that their internal training matched or bettered provincial standards.  

121 *The Register*, for instance, asked its readers to “Compare a good conscientious religious who is devoting his or her life to the work of teaching, who ... asks no reward ... who has the highest motives possible; ... compare such a teacher with a certificated one and then answer to which of these the young generation may be most profitably entrusted.”  

122 Always lingering in the background were fears that certification meant salary increases, the financial ramifications of which would inhibit or negate outright the hierarchy’s ability to operate separate schools.  

Following the recent crisis over access to separate schools in Manitoba, Catholic spokesmen feared another blow to minority rights if teaching orders were forced to follow provincial regulations. Much to the chagrin of the Brothers’ leadership, their lawyers, and the Ontario and

121 Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario, Vol. II*, 192-207. In 1904, one Catholic paper defended the rights of religious orders to follow their own way, suggesting that “the Christian Brothers and Nuns train their members to teach more thoroughly and for a longer period than do the Model and Normal schools.”  


123 Dixon, *We Remember We Believe*, 56-8; Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario*, 192. Interestingly, some communities of women religious, such as the Sisters of St. Joseph in Toronto, already sent many of their members to Normal Schools and as such met the standards of both their own order and the state. Nevertheless, as Elizabeth Smyth has noted, these teaching sisters “were highly sought after by local school boards and parishes, for they were ‘teachers plus.’ Sometimes they worked for less pay than lay teachers. Even more significant, they also gave fully of themselves to prepare pupils for reception of the sacraments and to serve the parish community in other roles.”  

Quebec hierarchy, the Appeals Court confirmed MacMahon’s decision in November 1904. With no resolution on the home front, Brother Édouard de Marie, the Brothers’ most senior authority in Canada, decided to take their case all the way to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England, then Canada’s highest court of appeal. Since an appeal to the Privy Council was a lengthy process, it meant that the Brothers’ status as teachers in Ontario was officially in limbo; depending on one’s viewpoint, it was argued that they were either completely qualified or utterly unqualified pending the outcome of the Privy Council decision. Aware of this indeterminate status, Ottawa’s Archbishop Duhamel alongside Inspector of Separate Schools Telesphore Rochon requested that the Department of Education grant temporary certificates to the Brothers. Resisting this idea was Louis P. Charlebois, a clerk in the Ottawa Post Office and arguably the Brothers’ most vocal opponent in Ottawa. Between May and August 1905, Charlebois chastised the OSSB and complained to R.A. Pyne, the new Minister of Education, about the Brothers’ lack of qualifications, textbook choices, resistance to the provincial

125 The Brothers had the moral support of the Ontario bishops, but complained about the sorry state of their finances. Ottawa’s Archbishop Duhamel pleaded with Toronto Archbishop O’Connor to visit with the former Minister of Education and now Premier George Ross and inquire if he would be willing to help cover the costs of the appeal. While Duhamel acknowledged that Ross would not likely come through, he believed that all available methods ought to be open in order “to have the right of the Brothers and Sisters upheld by every means.” TCDSBA, 1904 Folder, J. Thomas Duhamel to O’Connor, 12 December 1904. The bishops successfully obtained a guarantee that the provincial government would cover the legal costs of appealing the decision.
126 These men supported the Brothers’ position and considered a one-year extension appropriate because, according to Rochon, the Brothers “have given full satisfaction and have taught successfully.” As such, pending the appeal, “none can mightily say the Brothers are not legally qualified.” He added that there were only a handful of lay teachers with official qualifications, but even they would make unsuitable substitutes when compared to the Brothers. Besides, employing lay men at the Brothers’ expense would pose “a hardship on the Board” and “would be certainly detrimental to the Ottawa School boys.” AO, Whitney Papers, Archbishop Duhamel to J.P. Whitney, 23 May 1905; AO, m.f. reel MS5652/RG 2-42-0-4177, “1) Judgment of the Privy Council re. Qualifications of Christian Brothers and Grey Nuns, 1906. Order of His Majesty re. Judgment, 1906. 2) Resolution by Bilingual Teachers’ Association re. Qualifications of Christian Brothers, 1904,” Rochon to Pyne, Minister of Education, 22 June 1905; AO, m.f. reel MS5652/RG 2-42-0-4180, “Temporary Certificates for Christian Brothers, Ottawa. Includes Letters of Opposition from L.P. Charlebois (M.P.) 1905,” Rochon to Pyne, 29 August 1905.
127 AO, m.f. reel MS5652/RG 2-42-0-4179, “Gratton vs. OSSB (1905-06),” Report to the Lieutenant Governor, date unknown.
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Consequently, he pressed the OSSB and Pyne to either force the Brothers to attain the provincial qualifications or to dismiss them from the schools. Pyne was not swayed by Charlebois’ appeal. Whether the joint advocacy of Duhamel and Rochon persuaded Pyne remains unclear from the documentary evidence, but, on 14 September 1905, the Brothers acquired temporary teaching certificates.

Despite the temporary certification, the fact remained that the Privy Council had yet to officially decide on the fate of teaching religious in Ontario. Separate school politics was an explosive issue and the next two years were as raucous and strife-ridden as the one immediately following the MacMahon ruling. Both supporters and opponents championed their causes, echoing the arguments discussed above. The province’s position on the qualifications question ultimately prevailed. On 2 November 1906, having taken both sides into account, the Privy Council unanimously agreed that the Brothers’ appeal “ought to be dismissed.” Instead, they upheld what both MacMahon and the Ontario Court of Appeal had initially found and ruled upon, determining that exemption from examination was reserved only for those individuals who were already teaching in 1867.

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128 These issues were especially concerning to Charlebois given that his four children attended separate schools in the city. Charlebois pointed to Brother Isidore at Guigues School for particular condemnation, as he taught English despite his first language being French. In response, Inspector Rochon visited Guigues School to evaluate Brother Isidore’s classes. Rochon considered Charlebois’ complaints unjustified: “With all honesty I must say that Brother Isidore does not have perfect pronunciation in English, but he teaches in a very satisfying and very practical manner.” Charlebois was dumbfounded that Rochon would admit that Brother Isidore’s pronunciation was not perfect, but still find his teaching acceptable and even worthy of re-certification. For details, see Ottawa Evening Journal, “The Crusade Against Christian Brothers,” 4 August 1905; AO, m.f. reel MS5652/RG 2-42-0-4177, Charlebois to Rochon, 15 June 1905 and Charlebois to Pyne, 12 June 1905; AO, m.f. reel MS5652/RG 2-42-0-4180, Rochon to Charlebois, 5 June 1905; Charlebois to Pyne, 28 June 1905; Charlebois to Pyne, 21 August 1905.

129 Charlebois further asked that the Department of Education launch an investigation into the manner that the Inspector had chosen to take it upon himself to “promise and grant [temporary] permits to improper persons.” However, these options seemed out of the question. Both the Inspector of Separate Schools for the region – Rochon – and the OSSB agreed that the Brothers were the best teachers. Moreover, it seems that the Department of Education would be unwilling to investigate their own Inspector since he was hired by them with all the requisite qualifications to pass judgment on whether or not the Brothers were capable to teach. For details, see AO, m.f. reel MS5652/RG 2-42-0-4180, Charlebois to Pyne, 21 August 1905.

130 AO, m.f. reel MS5652/RG 2-42-0-4177, Privy Council: copy of Judgment, 1906.
When Archbishop Duhamel was informed of the news, he immediately turned to Archbishop O’Connor for advice. Duhamel was clearly frustrated, and espoused a strong sense of urgency as to how to proceed:

What is to be done in view of that Judgment? Will or ought the Hierarchy of Ontario approach the Provincial Government to inquire what they intend to do in the actual circumstances under which our [religious] Communities are placed? Ought we try to obtain that the privileges enjoyed by them during more than forty years be recognized by a special act of the Legislature? Has there been or should there be a meeting of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ontario to discuss the whole matter so that our Religious Communities may be told what is expected from them? I am anxious to know what Your Grace thinks should be done.\(^{131}\)

Duhamel was particularly fretful that the Brothers would return to Quebec, thereby abandoning Ottawa’s separate schools and causing financial distress for himself and the OSSB. Seeking to quell Duhamel’s fears, O’Connor organized a meeting of the Bishops of Peterborough and London and the Archbishops of Toronto, Ottawa, and Kingston.\(^{132}\) They met at the Bishop’s residence in Peterborough to draft a unanimous response to the Privy Council decision and carve out a path forward. While they acknowledged that the decision on the status of the qualifications of the teaching religious in Ontario was in fact legal, they claimed it lacked legitimacy. In the end, though, they were prepared to accept the imposed conditions, save for two key exceptions. First, they sought to omit the designation of “Third Class” for religious teachers with ten or more years experience and insisted instead that they “be granted permanent professional certificates.” Second, with regard to those religious teachers with less than ten years experience, the bishops stressed that “we do not see our way to insist on their compliance” with the new regulations that mandated their attendance at a Normal School. Presumably, the implication was that religious orders could attend the Normal School if they so desired. Their statement, then, sought a middle

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\(^{131}\) ARCAT, O’Connor Papers, O’C AB13.06, J. Thomas Duhamel to D. O’Connor, 20 November 1906.

\(^{132}\) Letters of condolence were sent by the Bishops of Hamilton, Alexandria, and Sault Ste. Marie expressing their regret “that they could not be present but were willing to accept any conclusions that would be reached.” The Bishop of Pembroke could not make it because of illness.
path in that it tried to appease the teaching orders while simultaneously acceding to the Privy Council decision.\textsuperscript{133}

Other Catholic leaders also entered the fray. Bishops D.J. Scollard of Sault Ste. Marie and Fergus P. McEvay of London were particularly invested in the discussions over professionalization since the majority of the separate schools in their dioceses were staffed by religious orders. Scollard wrote to Premier Whitney claiming that teaching Religious were “qualified for their work by reason of their long and tried experience. Why oblige by law such teachers to qualify technically, when they are already qualified by efficient experience?”\textsuperscript{134} Characteristic of his attitude and method of negotiation, McEvay took a less confrontational approach. He attempted to compromise, knowing full well that the Catholic faithful generally supported the measure while also acknowledging the financial repercussions it would cause. In a letter to Premier Whitney, he tried to negotiate some concessions for the teaching religious:

No doubt the end of the proposed legislation is to secure good teachers and if the present teachers are giving satisfaction to the inspectors, trustees and ratepayers, why not legislate accordingly and make permanent these teachers who acted in good faith and have always been obedient to the rules and regulations of the Education Department?\textsuperscript{135}

McEvay believed that certification would undoubtedly cultivate and advance pedagogy amongst the religious orders. Moreover, he understood that mandatory certification would be a veritable certainty, and was not prepared – as Duhamel seemed to be – to challenge the Privy Council decision by drawing out the process with another long and arduous court battle.\textsuperscript{136}

With this knowledge, the longtime former separate school inspector J.F. White – now

\textsuperscript{133} ARCAT, O’Connor Papers, O’C AB13.14, Minutes of the Meeting of the Bishops of Ontario of the Province of Ontario, 15 January 1907.


Principal at the Ottawa Normal School – wrote to Whitney offering his insights. White claimed to have discussed teachers’ qualifications extensively with Catholic parents and the clergy over the previous twenty years. He asserted that such widespread consultation showed that “at least nine-tenths of the Catholics of the province wish to have only qualified and capable teachers placed in charge of their schools.” The marked discrepancy between the Bishops and the Catholic masses was noteworthy for its connection to language divisions. White suggested that the English bishops were probably reluctant to support Archbishop Duhamel, and so pressured Whitney to not give in to their request. In White’s opinion, the best possible idea for the government “would be to do everything to advance the best interests of Separate schools, as they do to advance the best interests of Public schools, by requiring efficient and qualified teachers to be in charge of every school. … Then, if no qualification is to be demanded of them, no qualification should be asked either of the teachers of small rural schools.”

Since White and McEvay appeared to be on the same page, the former was likely thrilled when the latter was named Archbishop of Toronto following O’Connor’s resignation in May 1908. White’s correspondence is also remarkable for highlighting the failure of the Catholic restoration. Clearly, when it came to the issue of certification, there was a substantial gap between the aims of the hierarchy and those of the Catholic masses.

The final legislation dealing with Grattan’s original complaint was An Act Respecting the Qualifications of Certain Teachers. Commonly referred to as the Seath Act, named after its architect, the Superintendent of Education and former headmaster of the St. Catharines Collegiate Institute John Seath, it was passed on 20 April 1907. The Act illustrates that the

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138 Born in 1844, Seath moved from his native Scotland first to Ireland, where he earned a B.A. in 1861, and then to Upper Canada later that year. Between 1861 and 1874, he was head master at high schools in Brampton, Oshawa, and Dundas before tackling the more prestigious position in St. Catharines. During this time, he became a vocal
Bishops’ appeals did not have a major impact, for it ensured that all members of religious orders teaching in Catholic schools must acquire the same qualifications and be judged according to the same standards as teachers in the public schools. For teaching religious with seven years of experience (five of which took place in Ontario), permanent professional certificates could be obtained by attending a four-week long Summer Session put on by the Department of Education. Religious teachers with five or more years of experience also had to attend a summer course and pass an examination in order to be granted Second Class certificates. Finally, those with three or more years of experience could obtain Third Class certificates under the same conditions.  

For the Christian Brothers in Ontario, the fallout from the Privy Council decision depended upon one’s position on the qualifications question. In Ottawa, where the Archbishop, clergy, and certain members of the OSSB fought vigorously to retain the Brothers’ services, this was a huge defeat. Another bitter, but short-lived, battle began. In 1907, Brother Réticius, now Assistant for North America, along with Brothers Édouard de Marie (Visitor) and Gemel-Martyr (Auxiliary Visitor) continued to threaten the Brothers’ departure from Ottawa if forced to submit to any qualification tests. As Quebec-based ultramontanists, these Brothers were concerned about the dangers of losing control over the education of Catholic children and exposing their faith and morality to the world’s many evils. However, the vehement opposition from these leaders faded when a new and more accommodating superior named Brother Bernard Louis rose to the role of Visitor in Montreal in early 1908. The new Visitor concluded that there was no alternative to the Seath Act and consequently engaged in negotiations with R.A. Pyne, Minister

commentator on Ontario schooling, vigorously advocating for technical education wherein students’ learning was tied to their future careers. His growing notoriety earned him the position of Inspector of high schools in 1884 and Superintendent of Education in 1906, a position he held until his death in 1919. For more details on his life, see Ian Dowbiggin, “SEATH, JOHN,“ in DCB Online, accessed 26 April 2015, http://biographi.ca/en/bio/seath_john_14E.html.

141 For a detailed biography, see Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. I, 61-78.
of Education, to determine how and when the qualifications courses would be conducted in Ottawa. They reached a formal agreement in April, determining that Ottawa’s Christian Brothers would attend the Ottawa English-French Model School, divided into two sessions. Brothers would be trained “in the theory and practice of teaching” and, upon the successful completion of an examination, they would be awarded Third Class Certificates valid in the English-French Schools for five years. Ideally, all Brothers would technically qualify to teach by June 1909.\textsuperscript{142} The Visitor also wrote to Seath, assuring him that he had encouraged the Ottawa Brothers and some novices to enter the training course “as a proof of our good will to meet the intentions of the government” so long as they could do so in a “special class exclusively for males.”\textsuperscript{143} Finally, on 25 June 1908, Brother Bernard Louis formally accepted the inclusion of the Brothers in the all-male training course of the Ottawa Model School, a development that was designed to legalize their status as teachers in Ontario and would enable them to hold on to their positions in the separate schools. The provincial government was pleased that the Brothers accepted the provisions for legalizing their status as teachers and hoped “that this troublesome question has been finally settled.”\textsuperscript{144}

Brother Bernard Louis’ accommodative position stood in stark contrast with the steadfast opposition of his predecessors, Brothers Flamien and Édouard de Marie, over the previous twenty years. It also deeply annoyed Brother Réticius, Assistant for North America and thus the most powerful Brother on the continent. As an ultramontanist, Réticius maintained that Catholic schools ought not to bow to anyone; no government intervention was desired unless it was

\textsuperscript{142} AO, m.f. reel MS5637/RG-2-42-0-2590, “English-French, Ottawa Normal M – Christian Brothers will attend, 1908-09,” Brother Bernard Louis to Dr. Pyne, 7 April 1908.

\textsuperscript{143} AO, m.f. reel MS5637/RG-2-42-0-2590, Brother Bernard Louis to Dr. John Seath, Superintendent of Education, 9 April 1908 and 23 April 1908.

\textsuperscript{144} AO, m.f. reel MS5637/RG-2-42-0-2590, Unknown to Brother Bernard-Louis, 7 July 1908.
completely devoted to papal administration. When he had been Visitor of the District between 1880 and 1886, Brother Réticius was a combative and uncompromising figure on anything he considered liberal or opposed to Catholic doctrine, a position that only solidified in the decades thereafter. From his position as Assistant, he decided to take matters into his own hands. Believing that the new Visitor’s plan was “rushed and regrettable,” he closed the Ottawa juniorate and had Brother Bernard Louis immediately dispatched to Paris. Brother Philadelphus was put in charge, tasked with upending what his predecessor had put in place. He refused, unwilling to accept the Assistant’s “cruel, disastrous, and unjust” decision making, and left the order. Brother Narcisse-Denis recounted that Brother Réticius’ measures were “as disastrous as they were draconian” and that he “slowed by 20 to 30 years the development of our schools.”

For the Brothers who had always wanted a greater sense of submergence with provincial standards, the Seath Act was a blessing. This included those in Toronto, such as Brothers Tatian Edward (Edward O’Farrell) and Malachy Edward, who quickly began working to ensure their members adapted to the new certification requirements by organizing the summer courses at Toronto’s De La Salle Institute, a facility specifically selected by the Minister of Education in June 1907 for the Special Summer Schools for male teaching religious. It was here that Toronto-based Brothers trained for their certification and prepared for the Departmental

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145 As Visitor of the District of Canada from 1880-86, Brother Réticius attempted to impose a more militant ultramontane spirit amongst his inferiors. While he considered them to be generally pious, they were not on the same level as their confrères in France, from whence he came. Thus, Brother Réticius instituted “les Grands Exercises” to introduce a more vigorous sense of unity and piety and organized lectures and conferences on religious life and good pedagogy. Such efforts helped raise the Brothers’ sense of purpose and organization and their prestige in French Canada began to grow. Indeed, the beginning of his arrival precipitated an era of prosperity for the Christian Brothers in Canada. Nevertheless, he was not without his critics and he engaged in heated public spats with contemporaries such as l’abbé Hospice-Anthelme Verreau, Director of the Jacques-Cartier Normal School, about the quality of education given in schools run by the Brothers and those run by lay teachers. For details, see François De Lagrange, “Le mandat tumultueux d’un Visiteur provincial: le frère Réticius, f.e.c. (1880-1886),” in Jean Hamelin and Nive Voisine, eds., Les Ultramontains canadiens-français (Montreal: Boréal Express), 241-53.
146 Cited in Voisine, Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes au Canada, Tome II, 149.
147 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 100.
Examinations.¹⁴⁸ The Brothers’ *Historique* for Toronto notes that “all the religious teachers throughout the Province came through the trying ordeal with very gratifying results, and thus proved to the public their ability and efficiency. What looked like a calamity proved a great blessing. … By September 1907 the storm had passed. A new order of things had arisen.”¹⁴⁹

While Brother Malachy Edward worked alongside the government in accommodating the new provincial rules, he simultaneously worked with his religious superiors to ensure that they knew what was expected for planning the congregation’s future in Ontario. To that end, he and Archbishop O’Connor pushed for the establishment of a Juniorate in Toronto, which was established as St. Joseph’s Junior Novitiate in 1908.¹⁵⁰ This institution allowed high school boys to work toward completing their provincially mandated educational training while simultaneously fulfilling their obligations as juniors training for the religious life. Upon successful completion, they would be sent to the novitiate to continue their vocational training and then to the Normal School to attain their professional teaching qualifications. In September 1910, the first four candidates from the Juniorate wrote the Examination for entrance into the Toronto Normal School.¹⁵¹ Three were admitted, and from the outset attempted to demonstrate the Juniorate’s efficacy. According to the *Historique*, the success of these boys “was a thorough vindication of the plan that had been outlined for our Juniorate here. In entering upon their work,

¹⁴⁸ TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, 2 July 1907. The sessions lasted from 3 July until 3 August. Unlike the Brothers, the Sisters of St. Joseph’s attempt to meet the new regulations by hosting summer sessions at their convent in Toronto were unsuccessful. Instead, both they and the Loretto Sisters were assigned by the Department of Education to classrooms at the University of Toronto. For details, see Smyth, *The Lessons of Religion and Science*, 172.
¹⁵⁰ In recognition of his “sincere friendship and generous assistance” in helping to erect a Juniorate and during the difficulties connected to the qualifications crisis, Archbishop O’Connor was granted a Diploma of Affiliation to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools by the Superior General. He was one of only a few men in the province who was bestowed with such an honour, which meant that his name was revered with “loving benediction” during the Brothers’ prayers. BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, *History of the Novitiate of Toronto*, 83.
¹⁵¹ Their names were William Overend, William Kelly, J.B. O’Reilly, and William Maloney. Of these four, only Maloney failed to pass the exam.
our three Normalites were followed by the prayers of all and it is a pleasure to record that they fully responded to all expectations.”

More than 25 years later, the Assistant for all of North America, Brother Abban-Philippe, wrote to the Superior General concerning a recent trip he had taken to Toronto. While there were problems with infighting, there seemed to be no problems with their teaching. Brother Abban-Philippe commented that the Toronto District’s “chief quality” was “its good system of intellectual and pedagogical formation of young Brothers. In this regard, they far surpass the two other districts in Canada.”

This chapter illustrated that the majority of Brothers actually teaching in the province’s schools were rarely completely at odds with government expectations. While the Brothers’ superiors in Montreal framed the qualifications question as a challenge, it was simultaneously seen as an opportunity by the wider membership. It seems that the Brothers in Ontario actually considered government intrusion in the area of certification as a boon for their cause. As part of their unyielding commitment to build up and legitimize the Catholic school system and valorize their own position within that system, the Brothers accommodated on the qualifications question. While these Brothers may have already considered their training to be exceptionally good, they recognized that the trend toward mandatory certification was absolutely necessary if they wanted to heighten their reputation and solidify their place in the Catholic school system. This last point was especially crucial; the Brothers felt assured that their accommodative approach on the qualifications question would be of great advantage to preserving and protecting the faith of the province’s Catholics. Ironically, when superiors refused to budge on the qualifications question – as they did in St. Catharines, Kingston, and Ottawa in the 1890s – it actually weakened the Brothers’ ability to act as defenders of the faith because their reputation was tarnished and they

152 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit and Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 81.
either left of their own accord or were removed from the schools by an increasingly confident contingent of lay Catholic activists. Only when the Brothers strayed from their ultramontane leaders in Quebec and became better acquainted with the customs and expectations of Ontario’s Catholic citizens, school boards, and the provincial government did they begin to realize that more could be gained through compromise than through confrontation.

Any consideration of the Brothers in the history of teacher professionalization in Ontario illustrates the complicated and sometimes-contradictory way in which developments played out. In the end, the Ontario Brothers were more aligned to the modern and progressive idea of possessing teaching qualifications than historians have been prepared to admit. This might seem strange given the fierce campaign against mandatory certification, an account widely known in Ontario Catholic historiography. Yet that history has prioritized the activism of the church hierarchy and the congregation’s Quebec superiors, both of which claimed to be fighting on the Brothers’ behalf: The Ontario Brothers likely struggled to determine where their allegiances lay: were they bound to follow the religious community to which they had vowed obedience? Or did they attempt to prove that their loyalties were to the province in which they hoped and prayed to flourish? It seems that they took a middling road, choosing to remain silent until superiors themselves sanctioned the idea to accept provincial certification. Their silence throughout this entire period though, was a sign of a willingness to adapt. Accommodation, after all, has different meanings and there are various methods to showcase it: sometimes it can be represented through active and energetic support while other times it may be denoted through passivity. In this case, they chose the latter route.
Chapter Four

“To make them good children, useful citizens, and saints for Heaven”: Curricular Objectives and Educational Changes, 1851-1962

In December 1932, the De La Salle Auxiliary – a fundraising organization whose members included Old Boys, their wives, and other Catholics with an interest in education – issued a pamphlet to Catholic churchgoers across Toronto encouraging them to donate money for the education of young men preparing to become Christian Brothers. Financial investment in the Brothers, the Auxiliary suggested, would have concrete and far-reaching consequences for Ontario’s Catholic boys, including assurances that they would be well prepared for their futures as reputable men, upright citizens, and devout Catholics. In case their audience was not sure of the merits of donating, the Auxiliary explained precisely who these Brothers were as well as the benefits of edification in their schools:

The work of a Christian Brother is to teach school, to educate boys and young men; to train good citizens for heaven; to form good citizens for country. He has no higher aspiration than to do good for others in the work of the school room and he devotes himself exclusively to this work. A teacher in our Catholic Schools should possess a great amount of saintliness and a vast store of knowledge.¹

Essentially, donors were encouraged to feel comfortable, knowing that their donations would be contributing to the progress and esteemed mission of Catholic education in Ontario while also helping to place young Catholic men into a wide variety of professions.

The Auxiliary’s description captures many of the various themes that the Christian Brothers promoted in the classrooms, hallways, courtyards, and sports fields of their schools in the century following their 1851 arrival in Canada West (Ontario). With their characteristic

¹ ARCAT, ROSII, Brothers of the Christian Schools, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), De La Salle (Oaklands) Booklets, pamphlets – History & newspaper clippings, Bulletin of the St. De La Salle Auxiliary, Volume III, No. 1, December 1932. The rationale they adopted for recruiting funds was simple: “During [Brothers’] period of preparation, they must be supplied with food, clothes, desks, chairs, beds and all the other things that the ordinary man finds essential to right living. The St. De La Salle Auxiliary aims to provide the money to purchase these essentials and to pay for the costs that are a necessay [sic] part of school life.”
flexibility, the Brothers customized their program of studies and adapted their schools and curricula to conform to the political, religious, technological, economic, cultural, and educational changes that swept across Ontario from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. In exploring the Brothers’ responses to these transformations, this chapter analyzes their evolution as a congregation of educators.

Some historians have pointed out that the Catholic Church adopted a “fortress mentality” in culture and education in response to liberalism and modernity throughout the nineteenth century. However, the case of the Christian Brothers in Ontario illustrates an ever-increasing acceptance of modernism – albeit one that was uneven, gradual, and sometimes difficult – while simultaneously maintaining a commitment to their Catholic faith. Ontario’s Brothers were not absolutely fixed in their ways and their schools were not unchanging enterprises. Instead, the Brothers and their schools were responsive to their surroundings. Ecclesiastical and parental expectations coupled with commercial and state interests all influenced them to varying degrees. Because of the impossibility of showing every adaptation over the course of an entire century, this chapter concentrates on broad changes taking place in Ontario education and how the

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Brothers responded, particularly in their elementary and secondary schools, but also at their reformatory, university, and camp.

Over the course of the 1851-1962 era, the Brothers’ educational endeavours and scope of course offerings expanded dramatically. They moved from religiously focused elementary school teachers to educators with a well-rounded program of studies that addressed the increasingly industrializing, business-oriented, academically inclined, and multicultural province. By the end of the Second World War, they were educators in the widest possible sense, teaching in industrial and training schools, elementary and secondary schools, a university, and were hopeful to establish a military academy. The Brothers’ expansion – their willingness to extend access to Catholic schooling and various curricula therein – was part of a distinct strategy to do what they felt would best help build up and legitimize the Catholic school system and, in so doing, valorize their own position within that system. In each of their institutions, they initiated a curriculum that brought them more in line with the expectations of Catholic parents, the Church hierarchy, education promoters, and the provincial government, all of whom voiced concerns about the necessity of teachers adjusting to the needs of a changing socio-economic landscape. These transformations and broadening of their program of studies ensured that the Christian Brothers served the educational needs of many classes of Catholic boys. Although they used their own prudence and discretion when negotiating changes to their educational philosophy, curriculum, teaching styles, and practices, they never proceeded if they considered their faith, or their students’ faith, to be in jeopardy. This chapter, therefore, also highlights why and how the Brothers vowed to safeguard the Catholic life of their students.

Ontario’s teachers have always taught more than the prescribed curriculum. Extending beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge, the province’s schools have also been ideal
locations for instituting morals and moulding character. For all intents and purposes, teachers were instrumental forces in the inculcation of the hidden curriculum. Whether by emphasizing athletics, disciplinary techniques, or citizenship training, the Christian Brothers made every effort to show that they embodied the same educational vision as those in the public school system. The Brothers sought to prove to Catholics and Protestants alike that they were model educators, well prepared to teach boys the necessary skills to help them enter every kind of profession while also carrying out their responsibilities as Catholics and as Canadians. In undertaking these initiatives, the Brothers were able to procure positive public appraisals, raise the status of separate schools, and more indelibly tie their schools to the larger Ontario society.

It was in elementary schools that the Christian Brothers made their most significant contribution to education in Ontario. Between the 1850s and 1960s, most of the congregation’s pedagogical training was geared toward younger boys and, to that end, the majority of their members taught in urban-based elementary schools run by separate school boards. In the 1850s, there was nearly unanimous support for an education that emphasized a small core of classic subjects such as Latin, English, grammar, mathematics, and a common Christianity. At this point in Ontario history (then called Canada West), schooling was regarded as a means to address various social ills and ensure that children learned basic knowledge and Christian principles. The most important element of one’s education was mental discipline: to train the mind and to learn to reason. The classic curriculum also had hidden undertones; it could teach perseverance, self-control, hard work, honesty, punctuality, and obedience, characteristics that were applicable to all boys and girls, rich or poor, urban or rural. Teachers were to play an especially integral role in

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3 Hidden curriculum is a common term in the history of education. Generally, it refers to how norms and values are conveyed and what unspoken messages or characteristics pupils learn outside the formal curriculum, such as socialization or appropriate behaviour. For details, see Benson R. Snyder, *The Hidden Curriculum* (New York: Knopf, 1970); Philip W. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968); and Robert Dreeben, *On What is Learned in School* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publication Company, 1968).
carrying out these aims, as they were to provide high educational standards and practices that would lead to good citizenship and a place in heaven. Textbooks were used to present the curriculum, and there was a series of school readers for a variety of courses, including English, history, geography, and science.⁴

In this period, schools operated by the Christian Brothers were remarkably similar to public schools across the province in terms of curriculum content and objectives, the values they espoused, the organization of instruction, and how progress was measured. One of the best means to showcase their commitment to these ideals was aligning their course of studies in their schools with those in the common schools. When deciding on whether to send Brothers to Toronto in March 1851, the Montreal Visitor, Brother Facile, demanded that Bishop de Charbonnel provide at a minimum textbooks covering catechism, reading, grammar, and arithmetic for “these are what seem to me indispensable for starting a school.”⁵ While Brother Facile quite rightly pointed out that the three Rs and religion were most essential, mid-nineteenth century teachers in Canada West also taught a wide variety of courses. In 1847, the Superintendent of Education Egerton Ryerson suggested that “every good common school” ought to include “reading and the principles of the English language; arithmetic; elementary geometry or Knowledge of Forms, geography and the elements of history; natural history and agricultural chemistry; writing, drawing, and vocal music; bookkeeping [and] religion and morals.”⁶ While the Christian Brothers could not claim to offer such an extensive program of studies, few teachers could, especially given the great diversity in educational institutions.⁷

In 1855, the Brothers provided a mixture of religious, commercial, academic, and

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⁵ ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1850-1859, Frère Facile to Bp. of Toronto, 7 March 1851.
behavioural classes at their schools. In Toronto, the Brothers at St. Paul’s, St. Patrick’s, and St. Mary’s Schools catered primarily to a working-class Irish-Catholic population, many of whom had recently arrived in the city as famine migrants. Despite some real gains in home ownership and successful attunement to the urban-industrial labour market, the majority of the city’s Irish Catholics lived precariously, dependent upon subsistence wages as unskilled labourers working in fluctuating employment cycles and where few had achieved significant political or socio-economic power. Yet some sent their sons to school, hoping that they might become clerks or artisans. To appeal to these parents, classes in these schools were practically oriented, including courses in mechanical drawing, bookkeeping, and penmanship. Nevertheless, standard lessons in Christian Doctrine, mathematics, and English were available. Despite the “fatiguing task of teaching the whole day long,” the Brothers also added evening classes for older boys who were unable to attend regular hours because they worked in various trades by day. The Brothers hoped that their boys at the night school and those that attended in the regular hours might obtain enough rudimentary knowledge to render them competent enough to effectively discharge their duties in their future employment.

The Brothers’ Richmond Street School, St. Michael’s, offered a much wider breadth of courses in 1855, including Reading, Writing, History, Geography, and Arithmetic in addition to

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9 Catholics were not a homogenous population in Toronto. While the majority of the Catholic population was of Irish descent, pockets of Scottish and French Catholics existed alongside them. Even amongst the Irish Catholics, there was variety, as some were distinctly middle class, already well established in the city as lawyers, bar owners, small businessmen, and merchants. Skilled and semi-skilled workers were also prevalent, with tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, painters, butchers, and printers accounting for about 30 per cent of all Irish-Catholic occupations in the city. See Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 280-2, 290; Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 14-30; Murray W. Nicolson, “Irish Catholic Education in Victorian Toronto: An Ethnic Response to Urban Conformity,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 17, no. 34 (November 1984), 287-306.

Religious Instruction. Moreover, for the senior boys, there were courses on Philosophy and Grammar as well as more business-oriented courses in Orthography and Bookkeeping. They even offered specialized math classes dealing with Geometry, Mensuration, and Algebra.

Importantly, the Brothers also focused their attention on the realm of comportment, offering courses on “Assiduity,” “Application,” and “Good Conduct.”¹¹ This curricular program was designed to fulfill one of the chief aims of separate schools: to raise Catholics’ status so that they would not necessarily be destined for careers as menial labourers but could instead aspire to stable middle-class respectability.¹² Such rhetoric was not espoused by the Brothers alone. By offering a program of studies geared toward entering the professions, the Christian Brothers’ St. Michael’s was in concert with the more prestigious Basilian-run St. Michael’s College, which provided an education to boys and young men from more privileged Catholic families from Toronto and elsewhere who were hoping to enter the professions or aiming for the ecclesiastical life.¹³ Moreover, the Sisters of St. Joseph at St. Joseph’s Academy and the Ladies of Loretto at Loretto Academy, Hamilton, pushed a classical and liberal curriculum that catered to raising ‘young lady pupils’ into careers such as public servants, teachers, nuns, and mothers all while ensuring they were formed with the proper character attributes befitting nineteenth-century

¹¹ TCDSBA, 1855 Folder, *Distribution of Premiums*, 1855. It is unclear what the specific course content in these classes was, but it is likely that Assiduity class taught students to pay constant attention to their work habits and effort, instilling traits such as industry and diligence while Application class likely taught students how to apply these habits in specific contexts.


¹³ The idea that the Basilians were preparing boys for the professions and the priesthood is evident in the fact that the school became affiliated with the University of Toronto in 1881. This merger allowed St. Michael’s the right to prepare students for University exams in philosophy and history. Although most students did not immediately jump at the opportunity and register for the university stream, the school’s curriculum was gradually arranged to harmonize with the University requirements, and student enrollment at grew substantially, particularly after the arrival of Father Henry Carr in 1906. For details, see A.F. Page, *A History of the Basilian Order in Canada* (Toronto: The Catholic Truth Society of Canada, 1924), 12-13 and Mark G. McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 145-7.
middle-class femininity, such as decency, modesty, politeness, and amiability.\textsuperscript{14}

Another way that the Christian Brothers aligned with common standards and practices in 1850s Canada West was through public examinations of their students. Exams had long been practiced in the colony’s public and private institutions as a means to evaluate boys and girls and secure externally recognized certification and/or accolades. If students were successful, exams also provided a chance to celebrate their accomplishments while also reinforcing teachers’ reputations. Catholic schools run by the Loretto Sisters, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and the Basilians also conducted public examinations in nineteenth-century Ontario, in the process showing their commitment to suit provincial education norms.\textsuperscript{15} The Christian Brothers logically followed suit. Very quickly after their arrival in Toronto, Archbishop Armand de Charbonnel persuaded the Director, Brother Joakim (Dennis O’Donohue), to have public examinations in the newly built Cathedral. This practice soon became customary and “a necessity amongst the Brothers” in Ontario, despite the fact that it was typically unusual and infrequent for Brothers elsewhere in the world.\textsuperscript{16} Sometimes these events were covered in the press, giving the schools – and by extension the Brothers who ran them – prominence in the public eye. Indeed, as early as January 1852, in front of Fathers Patrick Moloney, Thomas Fitzhenry, and Michael McLaughlin, as well as the editor of \textit{The Mirror}, students under the Brothers’ charge from St. Paul’s and St. Michael’s Schools were examined on “every subject of primary instruction” including reading, spelling, mathematics, grammar, geography, history, and bookkeeping. Upon completion, \textit{The


\textsuperscript{15} Smyth, \textit{The Lessons of Religion and Science}, Chapters 4 and 5; Lei, \textit{The History of a Catholic Girls’ Day and Boarding School}, 110; Page, \textit{The Basilian Order in Canada}, 12.

\textsuperscript{16} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1, Toronto: Détaché du District de Montréal, Maintenant du District de Toronto, 8 June 1851. Public examinations continued in Toronto under Brother Edwin, local superior from 1853-57.
Mirror reported that the boys “have given great satisfaction to the hearers.” Similarly, at St. Joseph’s School in Kingston, the school principals in the 1850s and 1860s, Brothers Rodolphus of Mary (Henry McGee), Romuald (Jean-Pierre Lentz), and Arnold (William Frewen), worked to advance their classes by including a wide-ranging program of studies – including subjects as diverse as catechism and accounting – and preparing their pupils for public examinations.

One feature of the Brothers’ modern and adaptable program that strayed from the 1850s norm was in textbook choice. This was not a decision that the Brothers took lightly, as it meant defying the wishes of colonial school board officials. Throughout the 1850s, the Toronto Brothers followed the directives of their congregation’s constitutions, which stressed that they had to use internally produced texts. The Brothers, like other communities of teaching religious from the 1750s to the 1960s, generated a diverse and wide-ranging set of textbooks for use in their own schools.

In his study of the history of Catholic education in Toronto, historian Robert Dixon points out that in the pre-Confederation period, the religious orders teaching in the separate schools used Irish readers, many of which were written and published by the Christian Brothers, despite school promoters’ pleas for textbook uniformity. Even in the early 1860s, the Brothers did not use the same books – the popular National Readers series – that were used throughout the rest of common schools of the city.

Yet, based on the records of local Boards of Trustees and local Superintendents, it seems as though the Brothers tried to tread carefully through the tumultuous textbook wars. By 1862, for example, there were 15 Christian Brothers teaching in Toronto and Kingston. They ended up

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making a decision to use their own internally produced readers only for religion (*The Duty of Christians*) and reading classes (*Christian Brothers’ Reading Book* series). The Brothers’ decision to employ some books prepared exclusively by and for their congregation was taken to assure Catholic parents and the church hierarchy that they need not fret about material that might challenge Catholic tenets.21 Their manuals helped to convey the learning of basic skills within a religiously-inspired framework, in the process promoting the Brothers’ mission of fashioning well-rounded, learned, and devout Catholic children, mitigating children’s ignorance of the faith.22 In fact, the *Christian Brothers’ Reading Book* series was in wide usage across the colony’s Catholic schools in 1862, including those in Waterloo, Amherstburg, Belleville, Picton, Paris, and London. At the same time, the Toronto and Kingston Brothers were also willing to incorporate mostly government-certified books in their schools, including the widely-used Carpenter’s for spelling, Sangster’s for math, Lonnie’s for grammar, and Hodgins for Canadian geography.23 Adopting such texts meant that the Brothers were willing to expose their boys to the popular mindsets dominating the colony. The Brothers continued to employ textbooks and offer courses that dovetailed with the one prescribed by the Department of Education for the following century.

Beyond the curriculum and textbooks, the congregation’s objective to ingratiate themselves and their students into mainstream Ontario life also involved proper character formation. Education promoters of all stripes emphasized character formation as a means to strengthen Canadian society, inculcate proper socialization and values, and develop children into

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21 AO, m.f. MS3545, RG2-17, Department of Education Records, “Annual Reports of Local Superintendents and Local Boards of Trustees, 1850-70,” 1859.
22 For details on how and why the Brothers’ school texts were chosen in the same era in Lower Canada, see Antonio Caporicci, *The Contribution of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to Education in Lower Canada, 1837-1847* (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1983), 140-1.
23 See AO, Department of Education Records, RG2-19, Series F-3-F, Box 1, Trustee’s Annual Reports (Roman Catholic), *Annual Report of the Trustees*, 1862. See also AO, m.f. MS3545, RG2-17, Department of Education Records, “Annual Reports of Local Superintendents and Local Boards of Trustees, 1850-70,” 1863.
noble and upright citizens. Good habits such as honesty, hard work, deference, self-control, kindness, and loyalty were regarded as esteemed virtues, able to make boys into leaders.24 It was widely agreed that extracurriculars helped boys’ transition into men, into productive workers, and into socially conscious and engaged Canadian citizens.25 Ontario’s Christian Brothers were perfectly in line with this kind of promotion in the boys they taught. They aimed to induce good behaviour, toughness, fairness, and discipline and endeavoured to raise respectable, yet rugged, gentlemen. Much like their counterparts in the public school system, they trained boys to be breadwinners, supportive to wives and family. Virtually every endeavour was designed to develop a boy’s character since their schools were sites of social and cultural training intended to guide boys on why and how to use their leisure time profitably. Various elements in a boy’s education collided in order to achieve character formation in an ideal fashion, including athletics, patriotism, masculinity, discipline, and, of course, the ever-lingering presence of Christ’s shining example.

Nowhere was the attempt to instill character formation more evident in the Brothers’ elementary schools than in the emphasis on loyalty and patriotism to Canada. Echoing the sentiments of generations of Canadian Catholic bishops dating back to the 1759 Conquest, they maintained that the Catholic school was the ideal site to foster allegiance to the nation while simultaneously promoting the faith.26 The Brothers argued that to be a ‘good’ Canadian and

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26 The fall of New France placed British Protestant King George as sovereign over a largely Francophone Catholic population. Recognizing the need to adopt a conciliatory and tactful attitude if Catholics were to maintain their rights, the new Bishop, Jean-Olivier Briand, pledged his allegiance to the new British authorities and expected that all Catholics would follow suit. His approach yielded positive results for French-Canadian Catholics, as British administrators regularly consulted with Church leaders on religious matters until confederation. Similarly, when
‘good’ Catholic was not mutually exclusive; the better a boy was able to nurture his Catholic faith, the greater his character formation and his likelihood of fulfilling the obligations of citizenship. Of course, the concept of citizenship was never static and always contextually derived. In Ontario before the First World War, it was chiefly defined in Anglo-Canadian terms. This meant recognizing Canada as a country of British heritage, prioritizing the use of the English language, feeling honoured by Canada’s inclusion in the British Empire, and pledging loyalty to the crown. Catholic education came under particularly intense scrutiny by some members of the Orange Order and other ‘no-papery’ crusaders, who suggested that Catholics were automatically disloyal because they adhered to the Pope on all matters, not only spiritual ones. Their efforts caused plenty of fear amongst the Catholic hierarchy that provincial authorities would upend Ontario’s constitutional right to separate schools.

The Christian Brothers dismissed allegations of disloyalty and sought to quell accusations that Catholic educators fomented division and dissent. They claimed that their schools were not a threat to social unity, but working toward ameliorating Catholics’ integration into Ontario society and immigrants’ integration into Canadian society. Seeking to prove their case through

Alexander Macdonell was appointed bishop of the new Diocese of Kingston in 1826, he sought to carry forward many strategies he had long been practicing to secure and extend Catholics’ welfare in the overwhelmingly Protestant colony of Upper Canada. He stressed Catholics’ loyalty and deference when petitioning the colonial government for aid. Furthering his efforts to secure colonial beneficence, Macdonell noted that Catholicism’s hierarchical structure helped to thwart American republicanism. For details on Briand, see André Vachon, “BRIAND, JEAN-OLIVIER,” in DCB Online, accessed 3 December 2014, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/briand_jean_olivier_4E.html. For details on Macdonell, see Brandon S. Corcoran and Laura J. Smith, “Bishop Macdonell and the Friends of Ireland: Mixing Politics and Religion in Upper Canada,” CCHA Historical Studies 79 (2013), 7-23.

27 The Orange Order was a Protestant fraternal and mutual-aid organization with an affinity for British traditions and Protestantism. Some Orange Order members sought to undermine the rights of Catholics and French speakers, often conflating the two and supposing them to be anathema to their vision for Canada. The most radical anti-Catholics of this era belonged to the Equal Rights Association, which formed in Toronto in 1889 as a response to the Jesuit Estates Act. As part of their ‘no-popery’ crusade, they accused Catholics and particularly Catholic politicians of unquestioningly following a foreign leader in the Pope rather than the Canadian government. For details see Brian Clarke, “Religious riot as pastime: Orange Young Britons, parades and public life in Victorian Toronto,” in David A. Wilson, ed., The Orange Order in Canada (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 113-4 and 125; William Jenkins, “Views from ‘the Hub of the Empire’: Loyal Orange Lodges in early twentieth-century Toronto,” in Wilson, ed., The Orange Order in Canada, 137-8; Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 144-6.
the formal curriculum, the Brothers expanded the number of courses offered in Canadian and British history, focusing on political achievements and social progress under the British flag. As early as 1874, one of their internally generated publications suggested that sacred and national history were intertwined. The author, probably Brother Adelbertus, noted that “as it would be shameful for any Christian to ignore the History of the People of God, so it is disgraceful for a Canadian to be ignorant concerning the History of his own country. … The study of our National History is, as it were, inseparable from that of Sacred History, the former being the logical sequel of the latter.”\(^{28}\) The Brothers also sought to match the efforts of public school teachers with regard to the Canadianization of new immigrants, particularly in Toronto, where so many European arrivals were Catholic. At all of the Brothers’ schools, boys from the Ukraine, Italy, and Poland (amongst others) were taught rudimentary literacy alongside patriotic values and proper citizenship, essential components of the hidden curriculum.\(^{29}\)

Extra-curricular initiatives were also encouraged as a means to showcase their loyalty. The Brothers’ schools began to engage with festivities that celebrated the connection with the nation and the British Empire, much like other schools across the province. From the 1880s onward, they ensured that their pupils took part in Dominion Day processions, marched in parades in honour of the Queen, and sang national songs as part of the public entertainment for Royal arrivals.\(^{30}\) The ‘Maple Leaf Forever’ quickly became a staple at such ceremonies. The Brothers wanted their pupils to love being Canadian while simultaneously staying true to their faith, and as such, Catholic iconography continued to permeate their schools. Their efforts to promote both aspects in their schools was done in order to show that the Catholic Church and

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\(^{30}\) For several examples, see TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting of the Toronto Separate School Board, 24 June 1889; 6 April 1897; 16 June 1897; and 11 September 1901.
Catholic schools were not de facto anti-Canadian nor anti-British but rather fully committed to the nation-building project. In this way, the Brothers were seeking to guarantee to Catholic Ontarians that their schools were worthy of full funding allotments and had the right to continuing operation.

Discipline provided yet another means by which Ontario Brothers aimed to conform to provincial standards and train boys to achieve their maximum potential. Dating back to the earliest establishment of Upper Canada, employers, politicians, and school reformers rationalized a push for discipline in public education as a fitting characteristic for respectful sons and daughters who would grow up to be loyal citizens and productive workers. The Christian Brothers aligned with mainstream thinking related to the encouragement of children’s compliance, particularly through the use of corporal punishment, which was highly regarded as a reforming tool in Ontario schools. While some departmental authorities and New Education advocates pushed for constructive criticism or highlighted positive or moral means of persuasion as a disciplinary procedure, the reality was that corporal punishment – especially the strap – continued to be the main form of classroom control and student discipline until well into the twentieth century.\(^{31}\)

While the Ontario Brothers’ disciplinary measures were informed by the context in which they lived and worked, they were theoretically also built upon the instructions of their founder. According to De La Salle’s most famous text, *The Conduct of the Schools*, Christian Brothers had to make every effort “to make correction timely and beneficial both for those who receive it and for those who witness it.” They needed to be careful to ensure that “firmness does not degenerate into harshness and that gentleness does not degenerate into languor and weakness.” In

other words, punishments could neither be too harsh nor too light and had to be proportionate to the fault committed, or else students would not respond appropriately. There had to be a charitable motive for dispensing punishment, as Brothers were supposed to be concerned with boys’ eternal salvation.32

Around the First World War, an unidentified Brother attempted to provide a guiding framework for his fellow Brothers on the question of how to correctly address children’s faults. The author was not particularly concerned with the rather trivial blunders “which may be objectionable but which will vanish in a very short time.” Rather, he asked his audience to “concentrate your energies on the overcoming of such tendencies as may in time develop into permanent evils.” In order to accomplish this goal of ridding the child of practices and thoughts that may worsen, Brothers were to emphasize the idea that a child must correct himself out of a desire to do good rather than a fear of punishment. The Brothers, therefore, were to:

train the child’s own will, because no one can force another person into virtue against his will. The chief object of all training is to lead the child to love right-doing – to prefer the right way to the wrong way. Therefore in all talks with the child old enough to understand, an effort should be made to convince the child of the ugliness and painfulness of wrong-doing. The punishment of any fault should be, as nearly as possible, the natural result of the child’s action. For the object is not to make the child bend his will to the will of another, but to make him see the fault itself as an undesirable thing.33

Some Brothers evidently made good use of this advice. One of Brother Thilbert’s former pupils recalled that as a student, there were widespread rumours that this particular teacher was a stern man, noted for a “foreboding” atmosphere in class and producing young men of “serious and determined bearing.” However, the anonymous student noted that his fears were unwarranted, for Brother Thilbert achieved positive results not by “harsh commands and painful sanctions” but

33 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1900-1920, The Faults of Children, c. 1916.
by “paternal vigilance” and “firm gentleness.”\textsuperscript{34} Such was the strategy through which to bring souls to Jesus and form character amongst the boys.

While these altruistic motives may have been the ideal, there is no denying that strong use of corporal punishment pervaded the Brothers’ schools. Much like the Irish Christian Brothers around the world, Ontario’s Christian Brothers were widely known as particularly adept disciplinarians, willing to use physical punishments to enforce classroom discipline or to correct perceived misbehaviour.\textsuperscript{35} In the nineteenth century especially, these disciplinary measures often yielded positive reviews from provincial school inspectors.\textsuperscript{36} Yet sometimes the emphasis on discipline crossed a line with some parents and/or school officials. For example, in Ottawa in May 1891, a Brother struck two boys at La Salle School so hard that they were left with bruises on their hands, arms, ears, and around their eyes. The following September, the father of one of the boys, Alexandre Reeves, voiced his displeasure over the “most brutal treatment” the Brothers used in the classroom: “If the resident Brothers are Christian as their name indicates, they ought to at least show kindness to the children entrusted to their care. … [A]ll children have their little faults which the reverend Brothers should try to correct by their good example, humanity, and Christian charity.”\textsuperscript{37} Because of Reeves’ pressure and his threat to report the incident to the police, the OSSB considered proceeding with a legal case against the school and tried to get the Brother in question removed. In response, Brother Director Gemel-Martyr suggested that such an action was completely unwarranted and that the accusations were blown out of proportion. He stated that the two boys had used improper language to the scandal of the class, and therefore deserved punishment. Further, the Director was upset that the Board seemed willing to condemn

\textsuperscript{34} Brother Walter Farrell, FSC, ed., \textit{Deceased Brothers, Toronto: Volume I, 1869-1940}, 59.
\textsuperscript{35} O’Donoghue, \textit{Catholic Teaching Brothers}, 139.
\textsuperscript{36} Robert Stamp has noted that nineteenth-century school inspectors often regarded those schools taught by religious orders to be amongst the best for “pupil discipline and progress.” Stamp, \textit{The Schools of Ontario}, 26.
\textsuperscript{37} LAC, m.f. K214, reel # 181863-64, Alexandre Reeves to the OSSB, 18 September 1891.
the Brother in question without hearing his side of the story. His explanation seemed to have quelled any further action because in December, the board voted to drop the issue.

Moving into the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, the Christian Brothers teaching in Ontario continued to offer virtually the same program as their public school compatriots. And like those teachers in the public system, the Brothers and their curriculum changed with the times. In the 1930s, pressure from many progressive-minded educational stakeholders – including school inspectors, Department of Education officials, and teachers – contributed to school reforms that sought to foster greater links between the school and contemporary life. In response, Mitchell Hepburn’s provincial Liberal Government initiated a series of education reforms. Under the guiding hand of Duncan MacArthur, Minister of Education, the government published a Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools in 1937. Of principal importance in this program was English class so that the immigrant and native-born children would learn to speak and write the English language “clearly, accurately, and gracefully.” Having already established a reputation for assimilating immigrants, the Christian Brothers adopted these changes to showcase their flexibility while illustrating that they remained effective teachers in modern classrooms. Superiors such as the Visitor, Brother Nicholas Austin, recognized that “classroom work is very demanding [and] there are very few books that take the

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38 LAC, m.f. K214, reel # 181859, Frère Gemel-Martyr to the OSSB, 20 November 1891.
39 Reports about severe disciplinary measures surfaced in the Brothers’ Toronto schools as well. In October 1892, the Director of St. Mary’s Community removed Brother Salvian Stephen, a novice teacher employed at St. Mary’s School, because of the severity in which he inflicted corporal punishment on his pupils. Several angry parents threatened to summon him before the courts for his actions, and only “with very great difficulty was one father prevented from carrying out his threat.” The young Brother was reprimanded and was not allowed to return to resume teaching until he promised, in writing, that he would no longer inflict corporal punishment without the Director’s permission. BCSA, Series 700, The Habit + Novitiate History, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 51.
new program of studies into account. As such, extra preparation was allotted for lesson planning and new books were purchased so as to ensure the Brothers effectively aligned with the new curriculum. For example, in 1938, the Brothers took significant strides to address English inadequacies at St. Mary’s and St. Paul’s Schools in Toronto, home to many Polish, Ukrainian, and Italian immigrants. The boys in these classrooms were encouraged to read often and write with clarity and precision.

In the annual year-end evaluations of community and school life, directors took great pride in noting that their schools followed the prescribed programme of studies as dictated by the Department of Education, gleefully noting the success rate of their students at the provincial examinations. The Brothers also thought that they were doing an admirable job in their teaching work and in meeting the provincial expectations in this period because they regularly secured positive reviews in Inspectors’ Reports. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Directors at London’s St. Peter’s School relayed to his superiors that the provincial school inspector’s reports were invariably positive. In describing the reports, Directors used words such as “excellent,” “very gratifying,” “very favourable,” “very good,” and “quite flattering.” Such positive accolades, coupled with a significant growth in numbers and low salaries meant that requests for Brothers spread across the province. Between the 1920s and 1950s, the Brothers opened or took over elementary schools in Windsor, London, and several more in Toronto.

While the Christian Brothers accommodated to provincial standards and expectations in curriculum, patriotism, and discipline from the 1850s to the 1960s, their schools remained

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42 AGR, Supplements Historique, St. Mary’s Community, 1938.
43 To cite only a few examples of this trend, see AGR, Supplements Historique, Brendan Hall London Community, 1931, 1933, 1934, 1935; De La Salle Community, 1931, 1933; St. Mary’s Community, 1931, 1933, 1934.
Catholic institutions. The Catholic faith was at the crux of the Brothers’ entire educational activity.\(^{45}\) Nowhere was the dedication to a distinctly Catholic program more visible than in course content. From the 1850s onward, catechism classes were provided as a means to instill the faith.\(^{46}\) Beginning in the 1860s, scripture history was taught, using the Brothers’ own *A New Compendium of Sacred History* and *A new treatise of the duties of a Christian towards God*. The former was designed for elementary-age children to help ensure that they would love and revere “their Creator whose all-wise providence and omnipotent power, so strikingly manifest in every episode of biblical history, can not fail to elicit the admiration of their mind and the homage of their heart.”\(^{47}\) In a Question and Answer format, students would also learn about the labours of the apostles along with a chronology of the principal events recorded in the Bible. The latter focused on the “truths which a Christian must believe; the duties he is obliged to practise; and of the means he has in his power to obtain the grace to persevere in virtue and to attain the end for which he has been created.” Using historical examples and Questions and Answers, the author hoped that students would reflect upon and internalize the science of religion and thereby avoid ignorance and sin.\(^{48}\)

In the 1880s, the Catholic School Inspector for Ontario’s Western Division, Cornelius Donovan, remarked that it was “only in the Brothers classes [that] I find Catechism properly

\(^{45}\) They did so in part to honour their founder’s wishes. De La Salle proposed that his Brothers make every effort to cultivate the faith, inspire students with piety, and instill in them “the innocence and humility that our Lord recommends so strongly in the gospel. Do not forget to help them acquire gentleness, patience, love, respect for their parents, and, finally, all the conduct proper to a Christian child and that our religion demands of them.” De La Salle, “Meditations for the Time of Retreat,” Eighth Meditation, cited in in Koch, Calligan, and Gros, eds., *John Baptist de la Salle*, 59.

\(^{46}\) AO, m.f. reel MS3545, RG2-17, Department of Education Records, “Annual Reports of Local Superintendents and Local Boards of Trustees, 1850-70,” 1861.

\(^{47}\) Christian Brothers, *A New Compendium of Sacred History* (Quebec: C. Darveau, 1869), Preface.

By the turn of the century, catechism class at the Brothers’ Toronto schools often used Butler’s *Catechism* and Gilmour’s *Bible History* though they were supplemented by the Brothers’ internally produced works as well, including De La Salle’s *Duties of a Christian*. The Brothers’ catechism lessons habitually obtained accolades from priests, parents, and Diocesan inspectors. The students in Brother Symphorian Pius’ class at Toronto’s St. Michael’s School, for instance, regularly won distinction in the Christian Doctrine Examinations in the early twentieth century. These students also regularly participated in Diocesan Examinations in these fields, often achieving laudatory results. In June 1904, for instance, the Brothers’ students outperformed all others in the Fourth Form and the boys’ section at St. Mary’s, St. Paul’s, and St. Patrick’s were the top three schools in the entire Archdiocese of Toronto. The Brothers’ religious commitments to their students’ Catholic life also took place outside of the regular school week. In fact, the Brothers would congregate with many of their youngest boys at their respective schools on Sunday mornings and all walk to mass together.

While the Brothers tried to inculcate religiosity in their pupils though classroom instruction, other elements of school life were designed to foster a strong sense of Catholic identity. Brothers’ schools were blessed and consecrated by clergy members, often at large gatherings. The schools were host to regular masses, ceremonies and celebrations for feast days, and devotions such as those to the Virgin Mary in October and to De La Salle in May. They were also training grounds in boys’ preparation for the sacraments of First Communion and


50 Statistics of the Higher Educational Institutions of the Provinces of Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, St. Boniface [hereafter Falconio Survey, 1901], in possession of the author. The original is found in the *Archivo Segreto Vaticano* /Vatican Secret Archives, Correspondence of the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, DAC Box 179, Msgr. D. Falconio, 20 July 1901.


52 TCDSBA, 1904 Folder, *Results of the Diocesan Examinations On Christian Doctrine and Bible History*.

53 AGR, Personnel de l’Institut, Montreal District Communities, 1880 and 1885; Toronto District Communities, 1890 and 1895.
Confirmation. As the Brothers’ schools were often adjacent to the Parish Church or had a resident priest for the students’ chapel, the practice of confession was held regularly.  

As part of their obligation to instruct youth with as much holy zeal as possible, Ontario’s Christian Brothers got their elementary aged pupils involved in a host of religious celebrations and activities. One congregation member, Brother Mondolf of Mary (John Patrick Cassidy), was in charge of the Choir boys at St. Michael’s Cathedral through much of his duration in Toronto between 1896-1914. Another member, Brother Jarlath, inaugurated the first Junior Holy Name Society at St. Paul’s School in Toronto. Indeed, at every one of the Brothers’ elementary schools, students were encouraged to join various Catholic organizations to perform charitable work or to promote piety within the membership. Amongst the most prominent sodalities in their schools were the Confraternity of the Living Rosary, the Holy Name of Jesus Society, the Society of the Sacred Heart, the Sanctuary Society, Choral Unions, and the Knights of the Altar for the training of altar boys. Membership in the various sodalities often involved fundraising activities, marching in parades, planning and participating in church ceremonies, spiritual readings and reflection, and acts of compassion and generosity. While the Brothers’ preparation for and participation in these religious endeavours necessitated a lot of hours of commitment, they felt it was worthwhile to carry out the aim of their founder and honour the Church.

It was not just the religious classes, associations, and events that made the Brothers’ elementary schools Catholic institutions. Rather, in a similar vein with all Catholic schools and particularly those administered by religious orders, the entirety of the school was to foster a sense of the Holy Spirit and inspire the young to noble and heavenly pursuits. A sacred

atmosphere was to pervade the classrooms, hallways, and auditoriums. Crosses appeared at the front of the classrooms and paintings of the saints often lined the hallway walls. For instance, in the 1880s and 1890s, Brother Theobald of Jesus (Thomas O’Reilly) adorned his St. Catharines classroom with pictures of De La Salle looking skyward. Similarly, to encourage his students’ piety, Brother Pius adorned his Toronto classroom with a small altar that he adjusted according to seasonal devotions. In 1891, Inspector Donovan contended that the Brothers were doing an excellent job in providing a Catholic atmosphere and he wanted that element of their educational provision to continue. Indeed, he wanted “more holy-water fonts at the doors of our class-rooms, more crucifixes, more pictures of the Saints, more beads and prayer-books in the hands of our children … What an excellent means to make children good!”

Another means by which Ontario’s Christian Brothers nurtured the faith and in the process served the Church hierarchy’s interest was through devoting considerable time and energy to the cultivation of vocations for both the religious life and the priesthood. The Catholic elementary school was considered a particularly fruitful environment for fostering vocations because pupils were at an impressionable age, with boys and girls alike supposedly susceptible to God’s calling but needing religious teachers to guide them along, prodding them to read, pray, and cherish all that was considered good and holy. In 1933, the Brothers in London noted that “successful” students were not only those who distinguished themselves by performing well in examinations, but also those who decided to enter the seminary. The Brothers in Toronto’s St. Mary’s, St. Helen’s, and St. Clare’s Schools in the 1930s made a concerted effort to recruit from amongst their own boys. There was a monthly Vocation Day as well as a daily prayer for

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57 BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, O’N - O’SU, O’Reilly, Thomas (Br. Theobald of Jesus).
vocations.\textsuperscript{61} Their other schools across the province also sometimes held a Vocation Week wherein the Brother Recruiter would visit the schools to discuss the joys of life in the order.

Some of the most senior members of the clergy appreciated the way in which the Brothers imparted the faith to elementary aged boys. Fondly recalling his time under the Brothers’ tutelage at St. Francis School in Toronto, the Bishop of Calgary, Francis Carroll considered himself fortunate to have been taught by “beneficent” Brothers: “Under their charitable care I spent the most formative and impressionable period of my life, and I carry from them certain Christian and Catholic principles that have many a time proven their worth.”\textsuperscript{62}

Cardinal James McGuigan was not concerned about the education boys received if Christian Brothers taught them for nowhere was ‘a truly Catholic education’ more evident than in the Brothers’ schools. Around 1950, he wrote:

No more flattery is intended when I say that the Archdiocese of Toronto owes a debt to the Christian Brothers for the magnificent work they have done in the field of education and training of Catholic youth in our Archdiocese. Nowhere will we find a community whose members have devoted themselves so unselfishly to the forming in knowledge and virtue of our boys, not only in the arts and sciences, but also, and especially, in the teaching of the Catholic faith and of Christian moral values.\textsuperscript{63}

For these senior members of the Catholic clergy, the Christian Brothers were instrumental players in providing religious instruction to Catholic children.

Branching out into secondary schools provided yet another forum through which the Christian Brothers expanded their educational reach to Ontario’s Catholic boys. The rise in secondary schooling was one of the most significant developments taking place in the province

\textsuperscript{61} AGR, Supplements Historique, St. Mary’s Community, Toronto, 1933.
\textsuperscript{62} LAC, m.f. K212, reel # 161946, Centenary Number, 6.
\textsuperscript{63} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1950-1958, untitled document, but recognizable as a McGuigan speech on the occasion of Brother Michael’s Golden Jubilee, c. 1950.
during the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{64} No longer reserved only for the economically advantaged or for those preparing for university entrance and professional careers, a changing economic and social climate played a direct role in this expansion.\textsuperscript{65} The growth in high school attendance to new and more varied types of students contributed to a re-evaluation of the school’s purpose and priorities. Educators were deeply split. Many teachers and educational philosophers continued to prioritize a classical curriculum, where students would be prepared in traditional courses such as English, history, geography, arithmetic, and languages. Indeed, these ‘classical’ subjects remained more prestigious and grew in popularity across the province.\textsuperscript{66} Yet, inspired by reformers such as Johann Pestalozzi in Switzerland, Friedrich Froebel in Germany, and John Dewey in the United States, New Education advocates argued that schools ought to be better interconnected with contemporary society. The importance of being industrious, contributing members of society was essential to the movement’s vision and contributed to manual training at school. Courses in domestic science, needlework, and cooking for girls and agricultural instruction, mechanical arts, and woodworking for boys acted as preparation for future positions in the home or workplace and were introduced to improve the quality of the workforce and instill gender roles.\textsuperscript{67} Whether in rural or urban contexts, many people with a stake in education argued that manual training could also develop character. Ideally, boys and girls would learn to persist

\textsuperscript{64} In 1871, only five per cent of Ontario elementary school graduates went on to pursue secondary school. By 1901, that number had doubled to 10 per cent. Much of the increase took place in urban centres. Toronto, for one, saw an eight-fold jump in the secondary student body between 1871 and 1901 and a 165 per cent increase between 1900 and 1910 and a jump from three to eight collegiates. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 40-41 and 80.

\textsuperscript{65} The provincial government pushed for more secondary schools in order to prepare boys (and some girls) for new professions in a flourishing industrial context. Moreover, industry demanded high schools as a cost-reducing initiative; capitalist workplaces could take advantage of ready-made employees and no longer had to invest in their own vocational training. Many parents were also opting to send their children to high school knowing that there would be greater employment opportunities thereafter. Finally, the rising rates of attendance was also attributable to mounting urbanization; more students could actually attend high school since cities provided closer proximity between home and school. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 40-3 and 110.

\textsuperscript{66} Gidney and Millar, Inventing Secondary Education, 198-200.

\textsuperscript{67} Paul Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 107-8.
through adversity, appreciate the honesty of a job well done, and develop orderly routine, all
essential attributes in future technical occupations.68

In nineteenth-century Toronto, the Catholic Church and its affiliated religious orders
were prominent and vocal supporters of the trend toward secondary education. To serve girls’
educational needs, the Loretto Sisters opened Loretto Academy in 1847 and the Sisters of St.
Joseph established St. Joseph’s Academy in 1854. These convent schools, according to Elizabeth
Smyth, provided a “systematic and sustained secondary education for young women” and their
success played a key role in motivating the founding of Protestant denominational schools.69 In
addition, young men had the opportunity to attend the Basilian-run St. Michael’s College. They
offered Catholic families with the ability to pay a program of studies geared toward their sons
entering the professions or the priesthood. Though limited by low membership and poor
finances, Ontario’s Christian Brothers also established a secondary school in Toronto. In that
school’s three incarnations between 1863 and the First World War, the Brothers recognized the
divergent trends between the traditional curriculum and the New Education and tried to reflect
both currents in their program of studies.

Such a broad investment was one way to show their willingness to adapt to life in a
changing province and place various classes of Catholic boys in a diverse range of professions.
By the first decades of the twentieth century, the Brothers had gradually shifted towards a
classically oriented curriculum at the secondary level, a process that became entrenched between

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68 New Education supporters hoped that the revamped curriculum would immeasurably help both urban and rural children by offering courses geared toward their supposed futures. In urban areas, many secondary schools provided courses to build skills needed for commercial and mercantile businesses. In rural areas, it was hoped that the introduction of continuation schools would provide courses that would befit farm labourers. Reformers thought that such training showed an appreciation for rural dwellers’ practical skills and intelligence. In so doing, they hoped to defuse rural dissatisfaction and prevent rural depopulation. Robert M. Stamp, “The New Education Movement – Those ‘Yankee Frills’,” in Michael J. Piva, ed., A History of Ontario: Selected Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1988), 164-7. Critics at the time, and many historians since, suggest that these reformers were rather idealistic. See Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling, 111.
69 Smyth, The Lessons of Religion and Science, 123.
1914 and 1962. While still providing a limited number of commercial courses, the Brothers recognized that most Catholic boys were not automatically destined for working-class positions and thus built high schools that prioritized the aims of the Church hierarchy and the growing number of middle-class Catholic parents who increasingly regarded separate schools as breeding grounds for future Catholic teachers, priests, and professionals. A detailed examination of the Brothers’ Ontario-based secondary schools, especially Toronto’s De La Salle Institute and De La Salle Oaklands, provides a window into educational reforms and the Brothers’ willingness to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions.

The Ontario Brothers’ commitment to broadening the number of students they could reach contributed to their push to open secondary schools. This ambition became a reality in 1863 when the Christian Brothers Commercial Academy (CBCA) opened in downtown Toronto under the authority of Brother Anselm. Despite its name, the school was not reserved for commercial classes alone. Divided into two classes, that first year saw 73 students take classical courses in line with traditional grammar schools as well as commercial courses analogous to those in the public schools.\textsuperscript{70} At this time, classes were “well-attended and prosperous” and public examinations were held annually at St. Lawrence Hall.\textsuperscript{71} Because new courses were regularly added, it is difficult to label the Brothers as favouring one path over the other. The arrival of Brother Arnold in 1867 as director of the Toronto Brothers and principal of CBCA coincided with broader societal and educational changes, including an expansion of extracurricular activities and student-centred pedagogy. At the same time, Toronto itself was booming: alongside rapid industrialization, the population doubled from 30775 in 1851 to almost

\textsuperscript{70} Dixon, \textit{We Remember, We Believe}, 61.
\textsuperscript{71} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1, Toronto: Déchaché du District de Montréal, Maintenant du District de Toronto, 11 February 1866.
60000 in 1871.\textsuperscript{72} Student numbers rose accordingly and more space was needed to accommodate all the boys wishing to attend the school. Such developments moved Brother Arnold to buy the former Bank of Upper Canada building at the corner of Duke and George Streets in 1870. When renovations were completed in 1871, the school changed its name to the De La Salle Institute.

While the Christian Brothers hoped to continue to serve the needs of both middle- and working-class Catholic boys, the name change hinted at their shifting priorities for Toronto’s Catholic boys. Through the 1871 \textit{Common School Act}, the province created two high school streams: one for collegiate institutes where students would be prepared for university admission via a classical education and the other for commercially-oriented high schools training boys and girls for the workplace.\textsuperscript{73} In the immediate aftermath of the legislation, the Brothers focused their endeavours on building up the school’s prestige, and therefore catered more to upper- and middle-class Catholic boys and downplayed their association with a commercial program. In doing so, they channeled the ‘little worlds’ established in Ontario’s Protestant private boys’ schools, including the ‘Little Big Four’ of Upper Canada College (Toronto), Trinity College School (Weston), Ridley College (St. Catharines), and St. Andrew’s College (Toronto [later Aurora]).\textsuperscript{74} Like the men who ran those schools, the Brothers hoped to shape and/or reinforce specific social identities based on class, gender, race, and religion. Unsurprisingly, De La Salle Institute was to be a home for upper and middle-class, white, Catholic boys. Put another way, the school would be “for the sons of the best families” in Catholic Toronto.\textsuperscript{75}

De La Salle Institute promoted an academic curriculum that indulged more privileged

\textsuperscript{72} Gregory S. Kealey, \textit{Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 99.
\textsuperscript{73} Houston and Prentice, \textit{Schooling and Scholars}, 333.
\textsuperscript{74} Paul W. Bennett, \textit{“Little Worlds”: The Forging of Social Identities in Ontario’s Protestant School Communities and Institutions, 1850-1930} (Ed.D diss., University of Toronto, 1990), 5.
\textsuperscript{75} Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, \textit{L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle}, 88. While the Brothers claimed that “students of all denominations are admitted” in practice this was extremely rare. LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 200237, \textit{De La Salle Institute}, 1876.
Catholics. In 1871, they offered a two-year curriculum with courses in religion, history, geography, English, and French to prepare boys who wished to enter university and the learned professions such as medicine and law. When a significant addition to the school was made in 1873, the new space was devoted to classrooms, a refectory, a study hall, recreation room, dormitory, and chapel. The expansion coincided with new classes in mental arithmetic and grammar, but the program of studies shows no additional space allotted for technical equipment or additional commercial courses. By 1876, the Brothers at De La Salle Institute claimed to provide a “thorough Educational course” with a comprehensive curriculum that included classes in a range of religious, behavioural, and classical fields. Commercial classes in stenography, bookkeeping, mechanical and practical drawing, penmanship, and practical geometry remained available for boys who planned to enter the trades, but they made up a minority of the classes. Indeed, the Brothers reserved their commercial department as a form of “Special Studies” within the school, reserved only for the “benefit of young men who cannot command the necessary time to pursue the whole course.” For the Brothers, the ‘whole course’ was much more of a priority, clearly visible in Table 4.

There was plenty of overlap with courses available at St. Joseph’s Academy, the convent school for girls run by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Some of their courses – “Painting, Plain and Ornamental Needle-work, [and] Wax Fruit and Flowers” – would have been unavailable to the boys at De La Salle Institute because of their perceived gendered nature. However, the Sisters also offered courses in Elementary Chemistry and Botany that are not found in the Brothers’ school, suggesting that perhaps scientific pursuits were stressed far more for girls than for boys in Toronto’s Catholic secondary schools in the latter nineteenth century or that the Brothers had

76 Morgan, Lasallian Education, 25.
Table 4: *Course of Studies, 1876*

**PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.**

**Second Class.**
Christian Doctrine, Principles of Politeness, Orthography, Reading, Penmanship,

**First Class.**
Christian Doctrine, Principles of Politeness, Orthography, Reading, Penmanship, English

**INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.**

**Second Class.**
Christian Doctrine, Principles of Politeness, Orthography, Reading, Penmanship, English
Grammar, Letter Writing, Geography, History (Sacred and Canadian), Elements of Latin,
Arithmetic (Mental and Written), Vocal Music.

**First Class.**
Christian Doctrine, Principles of Politeness, Orthography, Reading, Penmanship, English
Grammar, Elements of English Composition, Geography, History (Canadian and Irish),
Declamation, Elements of Latin and French, Linear Drawing, Arithmetic (Mental and Written),
Elements of Geometry, Vocal Music.

**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT.**

**Second Class.**
Christian Doctrine, Reading, Penmanship, English Grammar, Composition and Rhetoric,
Geography, History (English, French, and Irish), Declamation, French, Latin, Greek, Arithmetic
(Mental and Written), Linear Drawing, Book-keeping (Single and Double Entry), Mensuration,
Geometry, Algebra, Natural Philosophy, Elements of Astronomy, Vocal Music.

**First Class.**
Christian Doctrine, English Literature, Logic, Elocution, History (Ancient and Modern),
Geography, French, Latin, Greek, Penmanship (Plain and Ornamental), Architectural Drawing,
Book-keeping (by Single and Double Entry, with the latest and most practical business forms),
Mathematics (Pure and Applied), Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Vocal Music.

**SPECIAL STUDIES.**

A Commercial Department has been formed for the benefit of young men who cannot
command the necessary time to pursue the whole course. To those attaining such proficiency in
this course as will enable them to undergo a thorough examination before experienced book-
keepers and accomplished business men, certificates of competency are given as a guarantee of
their fitness to engage in mercantile pursuits.  

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77 LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 200238, *Course of Studies, 1876.*
no one qualified to teach this content at that time. Nevertheless, in the 1876-77 academic year, De La Salle Institute offered a wide array of courses for the 104 students. Indeed, it was the growing stature of the classics program that attracted 37 boarders from across Ontario and as far away as Cape Breton and Nebraska.

It would not be surprising if at least some of these Catholic parents sent their sons to De La Salle Institute because they were intrigued by advertisements highlighting the school’s location, the Brothers’ renowned discipline, and the extracurricular options, all of which they would have recognized as important elements of a refined boy’s education. In 1876-77, for instance, the Brothers’ recruitment literature emphasized the school’s “excellent” location in downtown Toronto, where students – ideally dormers – would enjoy the “ever-refreshing breezes of Lake Ontario” and could play on “well-devised playgrounds.” When the boys moved inside, they would notice that the buildings “are spacious, commodious, comfortable, well furnished, well ventilated, provided with ample bathing facilities … and in all particulars equipped with a view to health and comfort.” Moreover, the Brothers hoped that parents reading this recruitment literature would appreciate their style of governance, which, they claimed was “mild and paternal, yet firm in enforcing the observance of established discipline.”

The extracurricular options available served to reinforce differentiation along class lines. Gymnastic exercises, a choir, and a band were available after 1873. By 1876, the school also offered special courses in ornamental drawing, telegraphy, piano, violin, phonography, and German. The fact that these activities were not part of the core curriculum coupled with their required extra charges indicates

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78 The comparison is based on the 1866 Prospectus at St. Joseph’s Academy found in Smyth, *The Lessons of Religion and Science*, 127.
80 LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 200237, *De La Salle Institute*, 1876.
81 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1870-1888, *Annual Distribution of Premiums*, 25 June 1873.
that the Brothers were trying to train at least some of their boys to be ‘educated gentlemen’ and cultivate a shared culture among them. On the other hand, lower class boys would be unable to afford – and probably were presumed to have little interest in – much of the extracurricular options available. In a similar fashion to the Sisters of St. Joseph at St. Joseph’s Academy, the Brothers at De La Salle Institute hoped to “produce students who were both intellectually accomplished and physically healthy.”

The Brothers also used public displays and events to promote the school and demonstrate to their fellow citizens that they were conforming to expectations of the secondary school curriculum in the province. Beginning in 1871, the “Annual Commencement” ceremony provided an opportunity for the Brothers to showcase students’ achievements. On these occasions, usually in June at the end of the academic year, parents, friends, Church officials, and any interested parties watched as students performed alone or as part of the school choir or band. Sometimes, as was the case in 1878, there were debates. That year, J.D. Hayes and M. Moran faced off against J. Dunne and D.K. Edwards on whether or not “Greece produced greater men than Rome.” The Commencement ended with the granting of Academic and Commercial Diplomas and the Distribution of Premiums to the best students in individual subjects. Such endeavours earned the Brothers, and their school, positive press in the public eye. In June 1878, for instance, Archbishop Lynch, along with the Mayor and the local School Inspector, visited all the secondary schools of the city. The Inspector noted that the Brothers’ schools were “all very good, but your academy is the best among all our best in the city.” Eleven years later, an

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83 LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 200232-200239, Seventh Annual Commencement of De La Salle Institute, 26 June 1878.
anonymous writer at *The Catholic Record* in Montreal remarked that Toronto’s De La Salle College “stands at the head of educational establishments” in Ontario.\(^8^5\)

Besides the official curriculum and extracurriculars, religious activities were also widely available and enthusiastically encouraged. Religious classes were prominent, and crosses, spiritual paintings, and other sacred objects permeated the school, attempting to instill an otherworldly aura. There was also an annual retreat of at least one day and often an entire weekend, in which students engaged in bonding exercises, listened to speeches and presentations, and participated in mass and confession. Sometimes they focused on a specific theme: in autumn 1878, for instance, students made a 3-day retreat to celebrate the Immaculate Conception. Clergy spoke on the miracle of Mary’s birth, a mass was given in her honour, and the Brothers organized recitations of the Hail Mary.\(^8^6\) In the 1870s, three graduates became Christian Brothers and one, Vincent Donnelly, became a Basilian Father.\(^8^7\)

In 1881, De La Salle Institute came under the jurisdiction of the Toronto Separate School Board and officially renamed De La Salle College (though in practice both names were used). Over the next 40 years, the Brothers could not unanimously agree on how to best serve Toronto’s Catholic secondary boys, a division that reflected a broader debate among Ontario educational leaders and politicians at this time. There remained a three-year commercial course for students desiring to pursue trades and/or enter the business world. Indeed, throughout the 1880s, it was the only government-approved High School in Ontario offering commercial subjects.\(^8^8\) Students in this stream took courses in fields such as bookkeeping, stenography, penmanship, and accounting in order that they might be prepared to acclimatize themselves to the needs of various

\(^8^5\) LAC, m.f. K217, reel # 211467, *The Catholic Review*, 20 March 1889.

\(^8^6\) AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1, Toronto: Détaché du District de Montréal, Maintenant du District de Toronto, Fall 1878 and 13 February 1880.


\(^8^8\) AGR, DRLDCT, No. 290.1, Oaklands Toronto/Canada Communautés, *The Story of a Hundred Years Service*, 20.
kinds of mercantile businesses. Of particular pride for the Brothers was typing class, where, after 1891, the students practiced on typewriters owned by the Brothers themselves.\textsuperscript{89} In 1887, Catholic School Inspector Cornelius Donovan commented that De La Salle College’s commercial program was “so thorough and practical, that their graduates are at once ready to take responsible positions.”\textsuperscript{90} In fact, many graduates went on to successful careers: David A. Balfour went into business owning a stationery supply store, became an active member of the Toronto Separate School Board, and later served as a city politician; W. Ward Markle became president of the Association of Ontario Hotel Proprietors; and Joseph L. Seitz became president of Underwood Limited, a well-known Canadian firm dealing in typewriters and office stationery.\textsuperscript{91} As a whole, the commercial program remained an important element of the school’s identity. Unlike St. Michael’s College, which offered an overwhelmingly professional-based education, the Brothers provided many commercial classes for Catholic boys.\textsuperscript{92}

While still providing classes for students set on entering the business world, it became increasingly clear that De La Salle College would be responsive to broader educational trends in the province, and Catholic educational trends specifically. Most Catholic parents, school boards, and religious orders, along with many bishops and priests, emphasized that Catholic high schools adopt standard matriculation courses and an education system geared toward university admission. Catholics, they suggested, were not destined for mercantile industries, trades, or unskilled work; rather, their schools were regarded as breeding grounds for future Catholic teachers, priests, and professionals. For the Church hierarchy and teaching orders, a well-

\textsuperscript{89} AGR, DRLDCT, No. 290.1, \textit{The Story of a Hundred Years Service}, 21.
\textsuperscript{90} AO, m.f. MS5670, RG-2-42-0-6129, Donovan’s Report for Ontario’s Western Division, 1887.
\textsuperscript{91} AGR, DRLDCT, No. 290.1, \textit{The Story of a Hundred Years Service}, 61.
\textsuperscript{92} According to the 1901 Falconio Survey, St. Michael’s College offered courses in “Theology, Philosophy, Greek, Latin, English, French, German, Nat. Philosophy, Chemistry, Algebra, Geometry, Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Typewriting, Shorthand, Commercial Forms.” But it was clear that priority was not given to commercial classes. Indeed, in 1904, the school had 308 boys in the High School department and Preparatory Course, but only 24 in the Commercial Course. Falconio Survey, 1901.
rounded education for Catholic children would be a central means through which they could surmount negative cultural stereotypes. It was hoped that the Protestant majority would re-evaluate their Catholic neighbours, set aside their prejudices, and in the process, raise the stature of the Catholic Church and separate schools.

De La Salle College’s principals between the 1880s and 1914, Brothers Tobias, Odo, Tatian Edward, and Lawrence, happily stressed a matriculation program in order to give the school credibility as an institution of high repute. The Brothers progressively leaned toward a classically oriented curriculum, prioritizing courses that would help prepare students for university entrance. In the process, they were offering a program of studies that could compete with St. Michael’s for the right to educate senior Catholic boys. At the request of Archbishop John Walsh, the Brothers re-introduced Latin at the college beginning in 1894. While Latin classes had been offered in the 1870s, possibly taught by lay specialists or members of the clergy, they must have been discontinued in the 1880s. By the 1890s, the clergy demanded Latin instruction as a requirement for the priesthood and for general knowledge at church and parents expected it because it was sometimes a requirement for university admission. Though Reverend J.P. Tracey of St. Michael’s College taught the class for the first two years, the Christian Brothers took over in 1896.93 Obviously, other classes were available. When filling out the Falconio Survey about the state of Catholic Higher Education in Canada in 1901, Brother Odo Baldwin, the local superior, wrote about the various different branches of study at De La Salle

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93 The Brothers allowed the teaching of Latin even though it was contrary to their founder’s ideals. Recall that Jean Baptiste De La Salle banned Latin among the Brothers because he feared that they might then abandon their commitment to teach the children of the poor and instead enter the priesthood or turn to teaching the children of the wealthy. Controversy over the teaching of Latin in North America was put to an end in 1900, when the congregation officially forbade it from their schools across the globe. This decision was reversed in 1923, probably because it was already widely practised, especially in the United States, where the Church hierarchy demanded it as the core of humanities’ education. For details, see Ronald Eugene Isetti, “The Latin Question: A Conflict in Catholic Higher Education between Jesuits and Christian Brothers in Late Nineteenth-Century America,” The Catholic Historical Review 76, no. 3 (July 1990), 526-48.
College. He noted that there were courses in “Christian Doctrine, English Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Composition and Literature, Writing, Geography, English and Canadian history, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Book Keeping, Phonography, [and] Typewriting.” Similar courses were available for the following two decades, but, citing the fact that matriculation students annually outnumbered the commercial students, the commercial program was discontinued in 1924. The move to a more classically oriented education reflected the Brothers’ pursuit of attracting primarily middle-class Catholics seeking professional careers. Several of their graduates did go on to prosper in that regard, including judges W.T.J. Lee of Toronto and R.D. Gunn of Ottawa, doctor Daniel Phelan of Kingston, and the Honourable W.C. Kennedy, a Liberal Member of Parliament for Windsor who served from 1921 to 1923 as Minister of Railways and Canals in William Lyon Mackenzie King’s government. Perhaps most famous of all was Frank O’Connor, founder of Laura Secord Chocolates, Liberal member of the Canadian Senate, and noted philanthropist.

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94 Monseigneur Diomede Falconio was the Apostolic Delegate to Canada from 1899-1902. His survey inquired about enrollment data, the branches of study, textbook usage, students' spiritual lives and religious instruction, the number of teachers at the institution and their certification level (if any), and how the schools were funded. For details on his life and particularly on his interest in higher education in Canada, see Elizabeth Smyth, “The True Standing of Catholic Higher Educational Institutions’ of English Canada: The 1901 Falconio Survey,” CCHA Historical Studies 66 (2000), 114-31.

95 Falconio Survey, 1901.

96 Morgan, Lasallian Education, 27. While the Brothers’ decision was in line with Catholic higher education, it ran contrary to larger social trends in Ontario. Vocational and technical education actually grew stronger in both urban high schools and rural continuation schools in the 1920s. Indeed, one in four high school students in Ontario were enrolled in full time vocational programs in 1928. The fact that the Brothers discontinued their commercial program certainly irked some school officials. In 1935, Toronto Separate School Inspector J.M. Bennett suggested that the Brothers prepare Catholic boys for commercial jobs rather than force them into academic classes that would serve little practical help for their future employment: “Most of these boys don’t really want academic High School work. They haven’t the money to see a High School Course through to the finish + many haven’t the ability for it. Their parents evidently want them in a Catholic school. They should be given a mixture of academic + commercial work. … Our boys are losing out in commercial positions over this policy in a commercial city like Toronto. It isn’t too late yet.” ARCAT, Education Paper, ED SI – Schools (Individual), De la Salle High School, Toronto (Bond Street), J.M. Bennett to Archbishop McGuigan, 5 September 1935.


98 O’Connor was born in 1885 in Desoronto Ontario. He founded Laura Secord Candy Shops in 1912, a venture which brought him considerable wealth. He became an active philanthropist, donating money to the Archdiocese of Toronto, the Institute for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto, Sick Children’s Hospital, the Toronto Star
In a similar fashion as they had done in the elementary schools, the Christian Brothers teaching in secondary schools attempted to imbue students with lessons in noble citizenship and sound morals. At De La Salle College, officially renamed De La Salle Collegiate but known colloquially as Del Bond after 1913 because of its location on Bond Street next to the Cathedral, such an initiative was most visible in the cadet program, where the emphasis lay in discipline, morality, integrity, restraint, and a poised disposition, each of which would theoretically aid in creating respectful and upright men and citizens, with the ability to counter vice and stay vigilant in the face of outside threats. At the same time, cadet programs would help ensure preparedness for martial duties in defense of community, country, or Commonwealth, should the need arise.  

In 1900, there was 33 cadet corps in Ontario schools. But with the introduction of the Strathcona Trust in 1909, the cadet movement in Canada received a significant monetary boost and spread further into schools across Canada. The Brothers organized a cadet program at De La Salle College in 1905 and it quickly helped to ingratiate the school into the public domain. Paraded by the De La Salle Band, the cadets’ public displays, ceremonies, and processions were common in

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99 In Canada, the origins of the cadet movement dates back to the 1860s. In the wake of the American Civil War and the departure of British troops at Confederation, the young country needed a cost-effective, highly disciplined, and well-trained substitute for permanent troops. Canadian politicians quickly encouraged the creation of local militias and training involved physical exercises, rifle drill, and precision. By the turn of the century, the urban-industrial and imperial-nationalist contexts combined to push cadet activities into schools. For details, see Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15 and 95-102.

the city, helping to showcase Catholics’ willingness to participate in patriotic activities. The cadets were regularly praised for their discipline and the Brothers for their efficient training. In 1913, the unit won the Empire Trophy at the Canadian National Exhibition, and thus became British Empire Champions. In 1916, Toronto Mayor Tommy Church named the De La Salle cadets “the finest in Ontario” and their unit won first place at the Confederation Day Parade.101 Commanding the cadets at this time was Brother Rogatian, a member of the Strathcona Committee and a man who advocated cadet programs as a means to mould boys into upstanding Canadians, and in the process, advance the cause of Catholic education.

By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, as many historians have pointed out, education advocates understood physical education, amateur athletics, and organized sports as providing another ideal means through which to develop boys’ character.102 Stemming from the influence of British immigrants,103 sports such as cricket, soccer, baseball, golf, and rugby spread from the province’s universities and private secondary schools into the broader society, and especially into secondary schools.104 The reasons for their emergence are myriad, including a growing concern for youth welfare amidst the context of supposed feebleness caused by urban

101 Morgan, Lasallian Education, 34. For his services in organizing Cadet Corps across the country and for his work on the Committee, the Militia Department in Ottawa conferred Brother Rogatian with the title of Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel in the Canadian Militia in October 1914. For more details on Brother Rogatian’s commitment to the cadet movement, see BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, BRE-BRO, “Boulton, Edward (Brother Rogatian).”


103 Historian Gerald Redmond suggests that the “British influence” was particularly significant in the rise of organized sports in nineteenth-century Canada. See Gerald Redmond, “Some Aspects of Organized Sport and Leisure in Nineteenth-Century Canada,” in Mott, ed., Sports in Canada, 83.

104 Sports and athletic competition also trickled down into Ontario’s elementary schools in both curricular and extracurricular fashion. Statistics from the provincial Department of Education bear this out: participation in physical activities grew from 3.5 per cent of the in the early 1870s to 70 per cent by 1905. While this remarkable growth does not explicitly reveal what kind of physical training was given or the quality of instruction provided, it is likely that military drill for boys and calisthenics and Indian-Club exercises for girls remained the most common form of physical education. Morrow and Wamsley, Sport in Canada, 189.
industrial life, fears of social degeneration, and what many Ontarians referred to as the ‘young boy problem.’ The gender dynamic of ‘separate spheres’ was also particularly strong in this period, contributing to a growth in primarily upper and middle class men’s participation in sport as a way to construct and demonstrate their public image in an appropriate way, suitable to late-Victorian attitudes.\footnote{Kevin B. Wamsley, “The Public Importance of Men and the Importance of Public Men: Sport and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Canada,” in Kevin Young and Philip White, eds., Sport and Gender in Canada, 2nd ed. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2007), 75-91.} Further, an emergent rhetoric of muscular Christianity and social Darwinism contributed to a growing urgency among many Ontarians to offer opportunities to enhance boys’ physical and moral health.\footnote{Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling, 116-8. Social Darwinism is a term that linked Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection to human beings. Beginning in the 1870s, social Darwinists advocated a “survival of the fittest” philosophy, where individual and social strength helped perpetuate imperialism and defend a hierarchical international power system in which white Christians thrived. Muscular Christianity emerged in the late nineteenth century in response to a sense of perceived feminization in Protestant churches. It was accepted by both middle- and working-class men for it tied together the importance of rugged manhood, toughness, Christian service, love of sport, loyalty, and fair play in order to achieve personal salvation and societal improvement. For details, see David W. Brown, “Sport, Social Darwinism and Canadian Private Schooling to 1918,” Canadian Journal of History of Sport 16, no. 1 (May 1985), 27-37; Morris Mott, “One Solution to the Urban Crisis: Manly Sports and Winnipeggers, 1900-1914,” Urban History Review 12, no. 2 (October 1983), 57-70; Havi Echenberg, Sport as a Social Response to Urbanization: A Case Study: London, Ontario, 1850-1900 (M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1979); Clifford Putney, Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).} Technology itself further contributed to the rise of organized sport. Faster forms of transportation encouraged and expedited opportunities for competition and improvements in equipment design and cheaper costs facilitated access to sports gear and venues.\footnote{Morrow and Wamsley, Sport in Canada, 44-8. For a detailed overview on the impact of technological change on sports in Canada, see Ian Jobling, Sport in Nineteenth-Century Canada: The Effects of Technological Changes in its Development (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1970).} Finally, New Education advocates stressed the benefits of play for children.

Ontario’s Catholic schools had other reasons for introducing sports: they fostered a sense of pride in separate schools, built networks with public schools, and were increasingly envisioned as an integral part of the development of a person’s whole being. As Dennis Ryan has discussed in relation to Toronto’s Irish Catholic population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, participating in sports such as ice hockey, football, track and field, and rowing
was a vehicle through which they integrated into mainstream life and identified with Canadian sporting trends. At the same time, sports were an arena through which this community created and preserved their distinct ethno-religious identity. Perhaps the greatest exemplar of this trend was Basilian Father Henry Carr, a teacher, coach, priest, and, by 1915, superior at St. Michael’s College in Toronto. Carr, himself a graduate of the public school system, recognized that intercollegiate sports provided a gateway for positive social interaction with public schools. Since the press would report on such competition in a favourable light, Carr thought sports offered a key avenue for the College’s integration into Toronto’s consciousness and helped the school garner a sense of belonging at the University of Toronto.

Carr’s efforts were prominent but not necessarily unique; other Catholic schools emphasized many of the same ideas. At the Brothers’ high schools across the province, athletics were an essential element for fostering character formation, healthy bodies, and the collective acceptance and integration of their schools into Ontario’s dominant Protestant society. At De La Salle College, the Brothers entered teams into non-school leagues such as the Ontario Rugby Football Union, the Toronto Hockey League (THL), and the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA). In 1914, for instance, Brother Ansbert (Maurice Sheehy) organized a hockey team that he entered in the Junior OHA along with St. Michael’s College, St. Andrews College, and Upper


Canada College. The Brothers were especially gratified when their boys won both the THL Juvenile division and the OHA Junior B championships in 1918. By the 1920s, they entered into intercollegiate leagues in a wide variety of sports against teams from other city schools. Whether discussing football, hockey, or other sporting activities, the Brothers invariably recorded every winning team in their year-end recaps, perhaps thinking these were points of pride for the coaches, who were almost always Brothers themselves. Team spirit and good sportsmanship were equally important with the physicality aspect of sports, since the aim was not winning the game but forming good character. In a short booklet commemorating the life of Brother Stanislaus (Edward O’Reilly), who died in 1938, Brother Methodius (William Koziak) remarked that his late friend and colleague “loved sport for its value to health, recreation and character building – never for its victories.”

Beyond the arenas and gymnasiums, other kinds of extracurriculars were prominent features at De La Salle College. The De La Salle Band was formed in 1910 as an accompaniment to the cadets. By the 1920s, the band had branched out beyond its complementary role into a more independent organization, participating in many public events, including St. Patrick’s Day Parades, Church Parades, Toronto Argos games, and Santa Claus Parades. In 1939 alone, under the supervision of Brother Anselm, the Band played the New York City World’s Fair, the funeral procession for Senator O’Connor, and they were the Guard of Honour for the visit of the King

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110 BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, The Establishment of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Toronto and their Early History (Transcribed by Brother Walter Farrell, from the Original Handwritten text by Early Brothers in Toronto), 81.
111 Morgan, Lasallian Education, 40-1. Intramural sports were also common between 1914 and 1954, and undoubtedly built public support when members of the Toronto Maple Leafs presented prizes during their Stanley Cup winning era in the mid-1940s. Amongst those who distributed prizes at Del Bond were future Hall-of-Famers Turk Broda in 1943, Joe Primeau in 1944, and Red Horner in 1945.
112 BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, O’N - O’SU, O’Reilly, Edward (Brother Stanislaus).
113 There is some debate on the founding date of the band. Brother Tobias Josephus, in an 1891 journal of key events over the preceding 40 years, noted that a musical band began in August 1863. AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.1, Toronto: Détaché du District de Montréal, Maintenant du District de Toronto, 18 August 1863.
and Queen. Finally, they were the only band selected from English Canada to participate in the Marian Congress in Ottawa in 1947.\textsuperscript{114} In the 1920s, Brother Francis’ choirboys performed at various Church functions and public festivals. The boys in Brother Gabriel’s drama society put on an annual play, including Shakespeare’s \textit{Hamlet} at Massey Hall in 1923. A school newspaper, \textit{The Delescope}, was introduced in 1922. Five years later, under the direction of Brother Memorian but essentially student-run and edited, \textit{The Delescope} published five issues per year.\textsuperscript{115} Essentially, the Brothers were actively trying to form their boys into well-rounded, upright, athletic, and cultured citizens.

De La Salle Collegiate (Del Bond) remained the Christian Brothers’ only secondary school in Ontario until 1920. The Brothers were proud of their work there, and they wanted to see that prosperity continue. Vocalizing such a view was the school’s principal, Brother Rogatian, who wrote a brief entry on the importance of higher education for Catholics in the \textbf{Ontario Catholic Directory, 1919}. While Brother Rogatian suggested that Catholic education was well served at the elementary and university levels in the province, he noted that “our weakness” was that boys and girls were denied the opportunity to attend Catholic high schools. As he saw it, access to secondary education was crucial: “They must receive it, or its equivalent, or remain forever inferior. The boy who begins the struggle of life to-day without, at least, a high school education, merits our pity to an equal degree and is as much a cripple, as our poor returned heroes who have lost a limb.”\textsuperscript{116} Such a view echoed many educators and others in the

\textsuperscript{114} Morgan, \textit{Lasallian Education}, 53-7.
\textsuperscript{115} Morgan, \textit{Lasallian Education}, 37.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ontario Catholic Directory, 1919}. Brother Rogatian, “Our Catholic High Schools of Ontario,” 95-7. BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, \textit{History of the District of Toronto}, 85. Born at Atherley Ontario in 1870, Brother Rogatian received the Habit in 1886 and began his teaching career. He served as a teacher in Montreal, Quebec City, and Vedado Cuba before serving as teacher, director, school principal, inspector, and superintendent in Toronto. According to one anonymous Brother, it was in Toronto where he promoted improved “standards for both teachers and pupils, better school buildings in better surroundings, more suitable living conditions for the teachers, public mass demonstrations of physical training classes from the Separate Schools, [and]
Church hierarchy in the early decades of the twentieth century, including Archbishop of Toronto Neil McNeil, a noted educator and longtime advocate for scholastic excellence stemming from his tenure as professor and rector at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. McNeil promoted a classical and liberal education and high academic standards at separate schools because he considered them to be gateways for Catholic students to enter the professions.¹¹⁷ The value of secondary education grew more pronounced at the same time that the Brothers’ growing numbers and institutional autonomy – stemming in part from the creation of the Toronto District in 1914 – became more marked. As such, the Brothers argued that the time was ripe for an expansion into more high schools.

From 1914 until 1962, English-speaking Brothers in the Toronto District devoted their teaching priority as well as financial and administrative resources to secondary school education. The Brothers took over or established their own secondary schools in Toronto, Windsor, and London in Ontario, Montreal and Quebec City in Québec, and in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. By 1925, their academic curriculum and extracurricular offerings were geared toward urban, middle-class Catholic boys. For the following few decades, all the Brothers’ secondary schools followed the prescribed curriculum of the Department of Education in their respective provinces. Yet the financial viability to expand Catholic secondary schools was a constant concern, particularly after 1928, when the Privy Council upheld a provincial decision that ruled that Grades 11-12 in Ontario’s Catholic high schools must operate outside of government funding.¹¹⁸ In the wake of folk-play festivals.” Moreover, he worked to make Catholic schools belong and not just be tolerated because of historical precedent or legal status. He did so by attempting to push the government to finance the salaries of teachers in Catholic schools, and offering teacher retreats to encourage good teachers to join or stay rather than seek better options elsewhere. For details on his life, see BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, BRE-BRO, “Boulton, Edward (Brother Rogatian)” and Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. III, 5-9.


¹¹⁸ The 1928 decision in the Tiny Township Case refused to grant any government funding beyond the tenth grade, since Catholic secondary schools were not constitutionally sanctioned according to the agreement reached in the
what was called the Tiny Township Case, and exacerbated by the Great Depression, religious orders such as the Basilians, the Christian Brothers, and the Sisters of St. Joseph constantly appealed to Catholic generosity for funds to maintain the high schools and their staff. In this context, the Brothers decided to open a privately owned and operated school in Toronto, unattached to the city’s separate school board. De La Salle “Oaklands” quickly became the Brothers’ flagship school in Ontario. The school would compete with the Basian-run St. Michael’s College for the opportunity to educate high school boys. When it opened with a major inauguration ceremony on 30 August 1931, the Reverend Michael Cline, a priest at Holy Name Parish, gave a sermon where he estimated that 90% of the leading men in business, politics, and the Catholic Church emerged from private-school education, hinting that Oaklands would be carrying on in an esteemed tradition.119

De La Salle Oaklands operated within the spacious and elaborate confines of an historic mansion already on site, which was remodeled to include five temporary classrooms; three concomitant buildings were also retrofitted to accommodate eight more classrooms and a cafeteria.120 The campus embodied the secluded and natural auras of other leading private boys’ colleges in Ontario. According to one Brother, the campus, located on 13 acres of the Avenue Road Hill, was “shaded by ancient oaks, surrounded by a variety of trees and rare species of shrubs, and with flowers sumptuously arranged on terraces. The princely residence overlooks the

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120 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle College (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton), Bulletin of the St. De La Salle Auxiliary, Vol. III, No. 1, December 1932. In what seemed to be a Catholic re-interpretation of the simple fact that there had been oak trees on the property, the De La Salle Auxiliary explained that these trees served a valuable function: “Giant oaks, fifteen feet in circumference, dot the landscape and keep guard, as it were, to halt commerce from laying profane hands on this lovely estate.” For more history of the “Oaklands” property and its historic home, see Lucy Booth Martyn, Toronto, 100 Years of Grandeur: The Inside Stories of Toronto’s Great Homes and the People Who Lived There (Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1978), 148-54.
city.” A massive fundraising campaign throughout the late 1930s and 1940s helped to open a new and more modern facility in 1950. Designed for 850 students, the new Oaklands included “up-to-date classrooms, science rooms, industrial art shops, 5 complete dressing rooms with lockers and showers, a gymnasium seating 500 people in the gallery, a cafeteria and an auditorium that houses a complete theatre unit.” The school’s design was meant to foster students’ sense of holiness: “The tall, stone columns, the graceful pillars, and the ornamental stone-work produce an atmosphere of dignity and culture conducive to the education of young Catholic gentlemen.” The building was to reflect a thoroughly modern Catholic institution. In erecting such facilities and ensuring they were properly adorned, the Brothers suggested that they were adhering to the Vatican’s expectations of Catholic schools while simultaneously conforming to similar private schools in Ontario.

In similar fashion to members in other schools, the Brothers at Oaklands hoped to instill their boys with a love for the Catholic religion. A divine spirit was supposed to permeate the school, inside and out. The outside of the building was marked with an engraving of *Signum Fidei* – the sign of the faith. While this was the Brothers’ motto, it seems likely that it was also the motto for Oaklands, and perhaps for all their schools. Moving inside, the day began with the entire student body congregating in the auditorium for prayers, announcements, and the national anthem. Walking down the hallways, boys would have seen statues, paintings, and other Catholic

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123 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.1, *The Story of a Hundred Years Service*, 27.
124 In some promotional material from 1947, the Ontario Brothers included several detailed passages from Pope Pius XI’s encyclical, *The Christian Education of Youth*, which outlined that: “[A]ll the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and textbooks and every branch, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that religion may be in very truth the foundation and crown of the youth’s entire training; and this in every grade of school, not only the elementary, but the intermediate and the higher institutions of learning as well.” In including such a passage, the Brothers insinuated that their schools were in fact appropriate environments for Catholic students. Cited in AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, *The Christian Brother*, 1947, 11.
iconography. Mass was given daily in the school chapel and confessions were heard every noon hour. Feast days and other markers on the Church calendar were celebrated accordingly.

Moreover, vocations to both the clergy and to their own congregation were actively encouraged, and with some degree of success. In 1946, Brother Wilfrid (Henry O’Brien) gleefully claimed that over half of the diocesan clergy had been taught at Oaklands, and that his colleague Brother Gabriel had taught over 80 of the clergy of Toronto Diocese.\textsuperscript{125} While it is impossible to verify their specific claims, it is known that by 1950, 136 Oaklands graduates had become priests, including many members of the Redemptorists, Paulists, Basilians, Jesuits, and Oblates.\textsuperscript{126} That same year, Cardinal McGuigan referred to Oaklands as his “junior seminary” because 30 former students of the school were seminarians at St. Augustine’s.\textsuperscript{127} Many Oaklands graduates also followed the paths of their teachers – all of who were Brothers themselves until the 1960s – and became Christian Brothers. Between 1931 and 1950, 38 boys had joined the congregation.\textsuperscript{128} That number continued to climb throughout the 1950s when there was an average of about five boys per year who entered the novitiate, a statistic that gratified many community members.\textsuperscript{129} Given its location, size, teachers, and prominence, it is no surprise that Oaklands became one of the centres of Catholic life in Toronto. The annual Holy Name Parade ended on its campus, it hosted events and meetings for the Catholic Women’s League, accommodated Catholic Soldier’s

\textsuperscript{125} AGR, Supplements Historique, Oaklands Community, Toronto, 1946.
\textsuperscript{126} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.1, \textit{The Story of A Hundred Years Service}, 43-7.
\textsuperscript{127} Cited in Morgan, \textit{Lasallian Education}, 28.
\textsuperscript{128} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.1, \textit{The Story of A Hundred Years Service}, 51.
\textsuperscript{129} AGR, Supplements Historique, Oaklands Community, Toronto, 1931-66. In their promotional material and in communication with the Church hierarchy, the Brothers regularly listed the names of boys who had graduated from their schools and were now diocesan priests and regular clergy, missionaries, Christian Brothers, or other male religious. In 1958 at Pembroke’s St. Columba’s Boys’ School, the Brother Director merrily claimed that of the 474 boys taught since the school opened its doors, 23 had gone into religious life in some capacity, including eight to the seminary and 15 to the Brothers themselves. Tellingly, it was only an afterthought that the Director noted that 31 boys had also gone to or had already completed university degrees. AGR, Supplements Historique, Pembroke Community, 1958.
Reunions, and played host to visits from several Catholic dignitaries.\textsuperscript{130}

The Brothers at Oaklands also offered what they believed was a “high calibre of academic work” as they prepared students for university and for professions.\textsuperscript{131} From 1931 to 1941, De La Salle Oaklands did offer a limited commercial program with courses in typewriting, bookkeeping, English, business law, and office practice. However, these classes were suspended when the Brothers re-introduced a commercial program at Del Bond in 1942 suggesting that the Brothers’ two Toronto high schools would be divided along class lines. Oaklands was much more oriented toward preparing boys for university than was Del Bond. Indeed, every effort was made to make the curriculum as academically oriented as possible. Students followed the prescribed curriculum of the Department of Education, were prepared to take the matriculation exams to qualify for Canadian universities, and those with “superior academic ability” were encouraged to vie for provincial and dominion scholarships.\textsuperscript{132} Whether they won scholarship or not, many Oaklands graduates did attend university. In 1956-57, Brother Pius, the director, wrote in his end of year review that 85% of graduates had gone on to higher education that year.\textsuperscript{133}

Classes from Grade One of elementary school to Grade 13 of secondary school were available. A list of the staff from 1950-51 gives some insight into the curricular, religious, and social life of the school. That year, Brother Wilfrid was school Principal and Community Director. Brother Gabriel, Assistant Principal and Community Sub-Director, supported Brother Wilfrid in his many responsibilities. The school chaplain was Reverend Joseph O’Neill, unaffiliated with any religious order. Other community members who were not teaching included Brother Christian, the Bursar, and Brother Linus, Prefect of Boarders. All teachers in the school

\textsuperscript{130} Les Frères des Écoles Chrétienes, L’Oeuvre d’un Siècle, 308.
\textsuperscript{131} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.1, The Story of a Hundred Years Service, 25.
\textsuperscript{132} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.1, The Story of a Hundred Years Service, 25.
\textsuperscript{133} AGR, Supplements Historique, Oaklands Community, 1957.
were Brothers and they taught in a wide array of courses, including Mathematics, Biology, English, History, Latin, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Science, Geography, and Algebra. Most of the Brothers in the secondary department taught multiple subjects while those in the elementary department focused on one grade each. There were two exceptions: Brother Basil taught Grades 1, 2, and 3 in one large classroom and Brother Julian taught another section of Grade 3 and all the Grade 4 boys together in another large classroom. Four lay people had responsibilities at the school: one man was the Director of Athletics while the other was school secretary; one woman was Matron of Junior Boarders while the other was school librarian.\(^\text{134}\)

Besides the academic curriculum, De La Salle Oaklands offered extracurriculars oriented toward upper and middle-class Catholics. Character formation associated with Catholic gentlemen was at the forefront of this endeavour. Significantly, this incorporated patriotism, social responsibility, morality, athletics, muscular Christianity, and service to the community and nation.\(^\text{135}\) These characteristics embodied those of other elite boarding schools, including the ‘Little Big Four’ discussed above.\(^\text{136}\) Most significant was the cadet program, where boys learned discipline, physical training, shooting accuracy, and first aid. The high benchmark set by the De La Salle College Cadets continued when they moved to Oaklands in 1932. Major General E.C. Ashton, the Inspector of Cadet Corps, was satisfied with his 1933 inspection, noting not only the benefits to the individual boy, but to the school and society as well:

> The Corps, has to my mind, made steady progress in the last two or three years. Their band is, of course, an excellent organization, but I am particularly pleased with the improvement of the Corps proper, in their infantry drill and rifle movements. The cleanliness and smartness of all ranks was most noticeable. … I am one of those who believe that the principles that should be taught in a cadet corps of loyalty, smartness, cleanliness, self-control and respect for constituted [sic] authority are extremely valuable

\(^{134}\) AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.1, *The Story of a Hundred Years Service*, 59.


\(^{136}\) Bennett, “*Little Schools*”, 27-39.
in the training of young men, and I am sure that the existence of a cadet corps in a school of this nature, must be of a benefit to the institution and must assist in developing the character of the boys along sound lines.\textsuperscript{137}

This kind of positive review continued in the following years. At the official Inspection at the City Armouries in 1934, the Visitor, Brother Urban (Thomas Agnew), announced that the Oaklands unit “received the highest marks that can be given to any Cadet Corps.”\textsuperscript{138} Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, under the instructorship of Brothers Paul (Patrick Joseph Tallore) and Victor (Victor Kelz), the cadets continued to receive public accolades and recognition for their program at the municipal, provincial, and national level.\textsuperscript{139}

Oaklands also offered boys the opportunity to participate in various artistic endeavours that catered to an upper-class student body. A glee club and orchestra were organized, as was musical theatre. Throughout the 1950s, Brothers Gabriel (Peter Ray), Andrew (Reginald MacDonald), and Walter (Joseph Fazackerley) directed a series of musical productions, including \textit{Cinderella O’Reilly} (1951), Gilbert and Sullivan’s \textit{Iolanthe} (1955), and \textit{Oklahoma} (1959). While many of these performances took place in the school auditorium, others occurred in public places in order to showcase the students’ achievements beyond Oaklands’ walls.

Similarly, Brothers Rogatian, Michael, and Alexander established and ran a school newspaper, \textit{Oak Leaves}, beginning in 1938 in order to inform parents and the interested public of goings-on at the school. Some of the premier events of the school year included opera night, Prize Day, a Christmas concert, band banquet, the carnival, the open house, and the Battalion Ball that was

\textsuperscript{137} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), De La Salle – Oaklands – 1931-1939, E.C. Ashton to Archbishop Neil McNeil, 13 June 1933.
\textsuperscript{138} AGR, Supplements Historique, Oaklands Community, 1934.
\textsuperscript{139} They won the Ellis Trophy from 1935-38, the Military District Trophy in 1943, and the Company Challenge Trophy in 1944, 1945, and 1947. Unfortunately, no archival reference could be found regarding how many total cadets eventually joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force. However, one memorial book notes that two De La Salle College grads died in the First World War and 48 graduates between Oaklands and Bond Street died in the Second World War, including Major Fred Tilston, winner of the Victoria Cross. Morgan, \textit{Lasallian Education}, 36.
essentially a year-end prom for cadets and bandsmen.\footnote{AGR, Supplements Historique, Oaklands Community, 1952, 1953, 1956, 1957, 1958.} Finally, in terms of sports and athletics, Oaklands’ boys participated in countless activities both in an intra-mural and inter-collegiate setting. The school won several hockey, basketball, and football championships from the 1930s-1960s.\footnote{For a full list of all Championship teams at Oaklands from 1932-2000, see Morgan, \textit{Lasallian Education}, 76-9.} All of these activities marked the Brothers’ effort to reflect a well-rounded education that coincided with their social class.

While elementary and secondary schools for middle and upper class boys were the Brothers’ principal areas of involvement in Ontario schools from the turn of the century until Vatican II, they were also immersed in industrial schooling for so-called ‘delinquent’ boys. The need for industrial schooling arose in late nineteenth-century Ontario in the wake of urban and industrial forces that contributed to rising rates of poverty, overcrowding, homelessness, and destitution. Such transformations initiated a new set of beliefs about children and childhood. Urban reformers displayed a marked sympathy for youth welfare.\footnote{They advocated for all kinds of child-saving humanitarian efforts: compulsory school attendance, improved housing, the introduction of playgrounds, fresh air funds, Children’s Aid Societies, support for children’s hospitals and day-camps, as well as health initiatives such as better nutrition and hygiene, medical and dental examinations, access to safe water and milk, and vaccinations to eliminate disease and its impacts. Neil Sutherland, “‘To Create a Strong and Healthy Race’: School Children in the Public Health Movement, 1880-1914,” in Michael B. Katz and Paul H. Mattingly, eds., \textit{Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario’s Past} (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 133-66; Stamp, “The New Education Movement,” in Piva, ed., \textit{A History of Ontario}, 170-9.} There also emerged a deep concern about juvenile delinquency and moral regulation, in part because there was a strong perception that youth crime was on the increase.\footnote{This theme pervaded newspapers, halls of government, and the public sphere. But while convictions for juvenile offences did rise, it is difficult to explain if this was because police forces were larger and better organized or because more juveniles were committing more offences. It is likely that both these rationales acted simultaneously. D. Owen Carrigan, \textit{Crime and Punishment in Canada: A History} (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), 218-9.} The products of this trepidation included institutions such as industrial schools, reformatories, and houses of industry, agencies such as the Prisoners’ Aid Association (PAA), and new legislation at both the provincial and federal level.\footnote{The PAA helped push for special courts for the young, limit detention for those under 14, and secure qualified staff for reformatories and industrial schools. Amongst the earliest legislative initiatives was \textit{The Industrial Schools Act} (1874), which gave magistrates the right to send boys to industrial schools that were run by public school.
All of these efforts emerged as part of a broader movement to recognize misbehaving and sometimes felonious youth not as malicious young offenders who needed to be locked up but as misguided children who needed proper supervision under the care of virtuous influences.¹⁴⁵

Essentially, the discourse had changed from an emphasis on punishing impropriety and criminality to correcting misbehaviour and instituting appropriate socialization through moral discipline, character building, vocational training, and athletics.

Industrial schools provided an ideal location in which to combine government legislation, the child-saving movement, and New Education theories.¹⁴⁶ As historian Robert Stamp has argued, schools were “strategic centres for humanitarian reform” because children were a captive audience and could be presented with a uniform set of instructions.¹⁴⁷ Jointly managed by the Toronto Public School Board and the City of Toronto, the Victoria Industrial School for Boys, established in Mimico in 1887, was the first industrial school in the province. Their mandate was to reform boys through work (often on farms) and “proper” familial relations, ostensibly to keep boys out of trouble and help them reach their full potential.¹⁴⁸ The Catholic Church, its affiliated boards. More expansive legislation emerged in the wake of the Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire Into the Prison and Reformatory System of Ontario (1891), which advocated various efforts to police child labour, enforce compulsory school attendance, institute municipal curfews, and create and provide for child welfare agencies. The Children’s Protection Act (1893) promoted foster care, gave children’s aid societies guardianship power, and established the Office of the Superintendent of Neglected Children. Finally, the Youthful Offenders Act (1894) provided language aimed to eliminate contact between young offenders and “habitual criminals” whether during the trial or their post-conviction accommodations. Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society, 412-6.¹⁴⁵ Delinquents were those “boys or girls between the ages of seven and fourteen who appeared in court and were found guilty of breaking a municipal, provincial, or federal statute.” The archetypal juvenile delinquent from the 1880s to the 1920s was white, male, Canadian-born, poorly educated, urban, reared in difficult conditions, and fraternized with others of similar backgrounds. Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society, 98 and 209-21.¹⁴⁶ There is a historiographical debate about the origins of industrial schools and emergence of child-centred social reform in late Victorian Canada. Some historians argue that they emerged as an organizational response to social welfare concerns; others suggest that they were conservative innovations to ensure order and prevent upheaval; still others highlight the family-centred nature of an emergent humanitarian “social consensus” on the nature of juvenile correction. See Paul W. Bennett, “‘Turning ‘Bad Boys’ into ‘Good Citizens’’: The Reforming Impulse of Toronto’s Industrial Schools Movement, 1883 to the 1920s,” Ontario History 78 no. 3 (September 1986), 210-11.¹⁴⁷ Stamp, “The New Education Movement,” in Piva, ed., A History of Ontario, 180.¹⁴⁸ A “mother” and “father” looked after the boys in small cottages and oversaw small groups whilst at work, play, and in every other activity. Bennett, “Turning ‘Bad Boys’ into ‘Good Citizens’,” 213-7; 105-7; Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society, 101-7.
religious orders, and lay Catholic organizations were also invested in the welfare of children and recognized the value of industrial schools. Much of the impetus for that involvement was the infrastructural development of separate Catholic institutions in all areas of reform. The Archbishop of Toronto, John Walsh, considered the Victoria Industrial School to have a “thoroughly … Protestant atmosphere” with disastrous consequences for the impressionable Catholic boys subject to attend. Under such conditions, he claimed, “it would be folly to expect that a boy detained for a considerable time in such an institution could leave it without having made shipwreck of his Catholic faith – the most precious gift of God.” Citing their teaching record and their reputation as strong but benevolent disciplinarians, Walsh gave his financial and administrative support to the Christian Brothers for the establishment of an industrial school where wayward boys could “obtain a good Catholic education” and encouraged Catholics to support it financially.

Built at Blantyre Park in eastern Toronto in 1895, St. John’s Industrial School was designed as a reform institution for Catholic boys less than 16 years of age who had been committed by the courts for delinquency. In his first official visit in October 1895, Separate School Inspector J.F. White commented favourably upon the location and buildings, noting that the site was “well chosen being on a considerable elevation and commanding an extensive view” and that the dorms, dining hall, chapel, parlour, library, and classrooms were of a “handsome

149 Just as non-Catholic organizations organized all kinds of public welfare services, the Catholic Church and lay Catholic organizations were involved in a wide variety of social services and charitable endeavours, helping to address issues of poverty, education, child abandonment, unemployment, incarceration, prostitution, old age, and widowhood. Paula Maurutto, Governing Charities: Church and State in Toronto’s Catholic Archdiocese, 1850-1950 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 21-3 and 133-5.

150 The school was not officially Protestant. Perhaps Walsh was being purposefully provocative, inflaming tensions to try to make a point that an officially Catholic institution was needed and warranted Catholics’ financial donations.

151 ARCAT, Walsh Papers, W AA07.07, “Circular Letter of His Grace the Archbishop to the Clergy of the Archdiocese of Toronto,” 2 July 1897.

152 The first boy admitted to St. John’s school arrived 2 December 1895 via court order. Other boys committed by the court quickly joined him and on 7 March 1896, 16 Catholic boys were transferred from the Victoria Industrial School. In 1900, Archbishop Denis O’Connor aided the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in establishing St. Mary’s School for Catholic Girls.
appearance and substantially built.” His report determined that the architects and the Brothers had done a marvelous job in satisfying the “special requirements” of an industrial school, which was intended to make “school and the exercises as pleasant and attractive as possible, and to remove from the boys the unpleasant reminders that might suggest prison life.”\(^{153}\) Brother Orbanus (John Gallagher), the first Superintendent of the School could not have agreed more. The boys were not young criminals and the school was definitely not a prison. Rather, he called St. John’s a ‘protectory’ where “our boys are trained to useful citizenship who have shown tendencies which if unchecked would lead them to lives of wrongdoing.”\(^{154}\) A 1903 *Toronto News* report tried to capture this idea. The editor noted that St. John’s was a training school – not a prison – for boys “who have developed unwholesome or reckless tendencies” and who have been deemed “wayward or delinquent” by both government officials and ecclesiastical authorities. He further noted that the Brothers responsible for the school lived out their vow by “making good citizens for Canada of those who might otherwise swell the ranks of Canada’s evil-doers.”\(^{155}\) Furthermore, he was impressed with the relationship between deference, morality, and personal uprightness taught by the Brothers and adhered to by the boys, noting:

\(^{153}\) AO, RG2-42-0-6122, Report on St. John’s Industrial School. Toronto R.C.S.S. Board Delegates Responsibility to R.C. Industrial School Society, 1895, J.F. White, Inspector to G.W. Ross, 22 October 1895. There seemed to be a lack of success in this regard across all industrial schools. According to Sutherland, even into the 1920s, most boys regarded industrial schools such as the Penetanguishene reformatory as more akin to a prison than a school and the boys considered themselves more as prisoners than as students. Sutherland, *Children in English-Speaking Canada*, 151. Though they did feel that they were teachers providing an education to truant boys, the Christian Brothers at St. John’s often regarded the boys as “inmates” in both official and unofficial documentation.

\(^{154}\) *Toronto News*, 1903, quoted in ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, Brother Cyril Powers, *Scarborough Historical Notes & Comments*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2. Brother Orbanus had travelled extensively to Industrial Schools in the United States as part of his preparations for taking over the directorship of St. John’s.

\(^{155}\) Labeling boys as wayward or delinquent was often attributed to the fact that they came from “broken homes” and therefore not a problem they created themselves. The view that the boys were placed in the school because of factors beyond their control – not because of flaws in their character – persisted until at least the 1950s. Speaking in 1951, for instance, Cardinal McGuigan reflected upon precisely who was attending St. John’s. He remarked that it was a school “for boys ‘more sinned against than sinning’, who, on account of inadequate home care, poverty, bad companions or other reasons, get into trouble and are sent there for training and education.” See *Toronto News*, 1903, quoted in ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, Brother Cyril Powers, *Scarborough Historical Notes & Comments*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2; ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, *St. John’s Herald*, December 1954, 2-3 and *The Catholic Register*, 14 January 1956, 1.
the confidence and easiness of manner, coupled with respect, that characterize the attitude of the boys towards those in authority. There is no suggestion of disrespect or familiarity, but there is also an absolute absence of fear-inspired servility. This, one of the essentials in the up-building of a manly character, is undoubtedly due to the sympathy, coupled with firmness, which the Brothers observe in the discharge of their duties.  

Such commentaries undoubtedly gave the Brothers a sense of comfort that they were on the right track in terms of initiating reform.

Academic work at St. John’s was based on the provincial regulations used in the public and separate schools. In 1901, Brother Orbanus noted that the 58 boys took elementary level classes in “English Reading, Spelling, Writing, Grammar, Geography, History of Canada, Drawing, [and] Arithmetic.” While left unstated, vocational training was also a central component of boys’ schooling at St. John’s because the Brothers – like many reform advocates and educational administrators of boys’ training schools across the province – considered that a delinquent boy’s evolution towards useful citizenship and employment necessitated preparation for urban working-class employment. For the first twenty years, the Brothers provided an

156 Toronto News, 1903, quoted in ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, Brother Cyril Powers, Scarborough Historical Notes & Comments, Vol. 4, No. 3, 3.
157 Falconio Survey, 1901.
158 There was considerable debate on this matter. Some members of the Catholic clergy and reform-minded politicians preferred the boys be placed in rural settings and wanted boys’ training to re-focus in an agricultural direction. In 1914, for instance, Archbishop Neil McNeil pushed to have St. John’s moved from its location in Blantyre Park to a farm of “some distance from the City” to combat overcrowding, but also because this was deemed more natural and more fitting in terms of training. McNeil argued that current conditions did not provide institutionalized boys with a “fair chance in life” and that a large farm would be better suited for them, as they could then be “separated into groups sufficiently small to allow some practice of initiative to each boy.” J.J. Kelso, the long serving Inspector for the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, agreed. Following his official inspection of St. John’s in January 1915, he recommended that a farm was the best idea to accommodate the growing number of boys and to “properly train this class of boy” for their future and transform them into “useful and industrious citizens.” He wrote: “For lads, many of whom come from the country districts and who should, in the natural course of events return to farm and village life, most of the training should be of an agricultural character. Therefore, [I] would strongly recommend that as soon as it can conveniently be done, the school be removed to a farm property where better facilities would be provided for equipping boys for good citizenship.” Despite this plea, a farm-oriented industrial school never materialized. The Christian Brothers continued with training boys in urban trades in their eastern Toronto location. A lack of documentation invites some speculation as to why they did not do so: perhaps financial restraints limited their ability to expand or perhaps superiors did not value an agricultural education for the boys under their charge. For correspondence, see ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, Archbishop Neil McNeil to “My dear Lord,” 1 October 1914 and J.J. Kelso to the Provincial Secretary re. Inspection, St. John’s Industrial School, 26 January 1915. Long an advocate for social reform, Kelso established the
alternative version to a workplace apprenticeship, as the school had the requisite technology and tools for specific trades, including carpentry, laundry, tailoring, shoemaking, and gardening. Training in these fields was in part a means to provide practical experience which would theoretically help the boys with finding employment once they left the school, as it was assumed that they would go into trades or working-class industries.

Over the following few decades, St. John’s offered a more diversified regimen that mixed academic classes, athletics, and religious instruction. The Brothers there also provided “special adaptations suited to the needs and limitations of our boys.” During the 1933-34 year, the first half of the day was spent in class working on the regular academic program while the second half of the day was devoted to work in a specific trade. Yet vocational work remained the central component of students’ experience at the school. In fact, when the new St. John’s was established in the rural setting north of Uxbridge in 1957, the Brothers significantly expanded their vocational offerings, providing practical training in printing, barbering, baking, woodworking, auto mechanics, and metal work. Throughout its duration, Brothers taught all classes, both vocational and curricular, at St. John’s. According to one former member from Toronto, Brothers who faced difficulty in acquiring their Normal School certification or other academic qualifications were often placed there. Still others were sent there if they could no longer teach in the regular elementary and secondary separate schools because of health concerns. There, they would take up work as trades teachers or tackle supervisory positions in

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Toronto Humane Society in 1887, the Fresh Air Fund in 1888, and the first Children’s Aid Society in Canada at Toronto in 1891. He served as Inspector for the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children from 1893 until 1934. For details, see Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, In the Children’s Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), especially 179-89.

159 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, Informational, 1935, 4.
160 Private correspondence with George Morgan, formerly Brother Andres, 29 June 2011.
161 Brother Damian, once a teacher and principal at St. Mary’s School from 1920-27 suffered a nervous breakdown and could no longer take on the role of principal. He was moved to St. John’s School where he became the man in
the dorms, the meal hall, and on sports teams. Some of these Brothers may already have had a particular expertise in a given trade and were therefore specifically sent to St. John’s because of that proficiency, although most likely learned through on-the-job experience.

Besides trades, the Christian Brothers regarded athletics as another pivotal avenue through which to reform young male delinquents at St. John’s. From its institutional foundation, there were recreational leagues in hockey, lacrosse, football, baseball, and rugby, with boys participating according to age and ability. Other sporting activities played at various times in its history included gymnastics, handball, track and field, boxing, and swimming. Part of the rationale for such a wide variety of sporting activities was instilling a sense of teamwork and respect for conventions and conduct, since, according to a 1935 report issued by the Brothers, there was “a close relation between delinquency and poor play habits.” The Brothers justified all the time and effort spent on the sports program as a key factor in the rehabilitation of the boys’ character. One anonymous writer praised the Brothers’ methods in this regard, noting that “Fair play, courage, and ability to get along well with one’s fellows, loyalty and discipline are taught on the playing field in a forceful fashion.” If the boys’ characters were reformed, then the Brothers had done their work effectively. As one Brother suggested, “learning to take the knocks in sports helps the boys to become decent boys and men.”

The Brothers also made a concerted effort to ensure that the school was administered under Catholic auspices for they considered faith as a crucial element to boys’ reintegration into society. Essentially, the Brothers attempted to articulate the idea that all people were children of

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God, and that, despite a boy’s placement into the correctional facility, “God loves not the delinquent boy less.”\textsuperscript{165} Besides daily religious instruction in the classroom, there was a chaplain on site, and many boys received the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation whilst living there, suggesting that many had not received these sacraments as children.

According to a 1933-34 promotional pamphlet, the “frequency with which the great majority of our boys avail themselves of the opportunities offered to go to the Sacraments is the most important single factor in their development … moral and religious training of our boys is always in progress.”\textsuperscript{166} Moreover, religious training also incorporated an annual three-day spiritual retreat and participation in various festivities in honour of a saint or Church feast day. On 25 June 1933, for instance, the boys were part of the “colorful spectacle” that marched in Toronto’s 25000 strong Holy Name of Jesus parade. Wearing their “smart uniforms,” they marched from Queen’s Park to De La Salle Oaklands, where they were among the throngs of people who listened to Rev. Father J.B. O’Reilly speak from a large makeshift platform at the end of the football field. O’Reilly encouraged all present to consider not only their personal economic and social distress amidst the financial chaos of depression, but also to contemplate “the interests and life of the soul, to Christ and His teaching, to the saving mission of the Church.”\textsuperscript{167}

In a 1954 school newspaper, the Brothers regarded St. John’s as “a home, a church and a hospital as well as a school.”\textsuperscript{168} St. John’s was not an institution for punishment, but a site to combine an academic curriculum, vocational training, athletics, discipline, citizenship, spiritual instruction, and upright behaviour all on the road to boys’ personal transformation “with a view

\textsuperscript{165(9,903),(875,997)} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, \textit{St. John’s Herald}, December 1954, 2.
\textsuperscript{166} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, \textit{Informational}, 1935, 3.
\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Globe and Mail}, 26 June 1933. See also AGR, Supplements Historiques, St. John’s Community, 1933.
\textsuperscript{168} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, \textit{St. John’s Herald}, December 1954, 2.
to improving his character and [to] fit him for a useful place in society.”169 As such, it reflected Canada’s late-Victorian reform impulse and the ability to create wholesome citizens out of troubled youth. Their immersion in the sphere of industrial schooling was a timely and practical indication of their enthusiasm and readiness to meet local educational standards for delinquent boys. It was also part of a larger strategy of increasing curricular options in and access to various kinds of Catholic education for yet another class of boy: the modern delinquent. From its opening in 1895 until its move to Uxbridge in 1957, more than 3000 boys made their way through the school. Yet the undertaking was conditional upon their ability to defend and uphold the religious welfare of the province’s Catholic delinquents, which, the Brothers claimed, would only help to enhance the credibility of separate schools among the Ontario public and amplify their own reputation. Even though the Brothers tended to prioritize a liberal arts education in their schools, they also wanted to illustrate that they could establish an institution in line with Catholic teaching, Lasallian pedagogy, and responsive to the social ills in modern urban society.

The Christian Brothers in the Toronto District also provided tertiary/university education, albeit not in Ontario. To help expand their geographic profile and build up their reputation, the Brothers accepted Archbishop of Edmonton Henry Joseph O’Leary’s invitation to establish a Catholic college catering to Catholic students at the University of Alberta (U of A). While the Brothers were O’Leary’s third choice for spearheading the College’s construction and management, he appreciated their commitment to raise the necessary capital and arrange for staffing, something neither the Jesuits nor the Basilians were able to commit to or carry out.170 Construction of what became St. Joseph’s College began on the feast day of De La Salle, 15 May

1926, “in the presence of university administrators and a huge crowd.”

When completed in 1927, St. Joseph’s had classrooms, a library, a dining hall, conference rooms, chapel, gymnasium, and an amphitheatre for clubs and societies. Over the following four decades, many Brothers served in administrative, religious, teaching, and supervisory positions in the chapel, the dormitory, and in extracurricular organizations for the boarders and day students.

St. Joseph’s concentrated on apologetics, ecclesiastical history, and ethics of law and medicine and instruction would generally lead to Bachelors of Art and Bachelors of Science, both in the Faculty of Arts. Brothers that were sent to teach there generally had Master’s Degrees and some even had their doctorates. These members would have shown their academic excellence while in the scholasticate and would often have been encouraged by their directors and/or the Visitor to pursue graduate studies in their field of expertise, usually at St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto, Christ the King College at the University of Western Ontario in London, Laval University in Quebec City, the University of Montreal, or Sir George Williams College in Montreal. Amongst the earliest faculty members at St. Joseph’s was Brother Philip, an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Psychology who held an MA from the University of Toronto and a PhD from the Catholic University of America. His educational qualifications made him among the Brothers’ most highly educated members and his course offerings were a testament to his wide-ranging knowledge. In the 1934-35 academic year alone, Brother Philip taught Medieval Philosophy, General Experimental

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171 LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 202576, Canada Communautés, Edmonton, Brother Rogatian to Mon Très Honoré Frère, 20 October 1931.

172 From the outset, Brothers Rogatian and Alfred served on the Board of Governors, and the former was also the first rector, sitting on the University Senate between 1927 and 1933. For details, see Laurence K. Shook, Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 359-62.

Psychology, Introduction to Normal and Abnormal Psychology, Psychopathology, and co-taught Legal Psychology.\textsuperscript{174} Taking a more circuitous route on the way to a professorship at St. Joseph’s was Brother Anselm. While teaching at the Brothers’ St. Peter’s High School in London, Brother Anselm was granted permission by his Director to upgrade his education qualifications. He therefore took evening and summer classes at the nearby University of Western Ontario, achieving a BA in 1927. He continued to teach in London until the late 1940s, when he was given a leave to pursue graduate studies in Philosophy at the University of Ottawa, where he received an MA in 1949. Soon thereafter he joined the staff at St. Joseph’s where he taught philosophy courses – focusing on the spiritual treatises of St. Thomas Aquinas – and Catholic classes in the Faculty of Education for the following fourteen years.

Besides the academic work, the Brothers were keen to assure that they faithfully committed to the College’s intended purpose of watching over – if not intensifying – the religious life of the Catholic students attending the University.\textsuperscript{175} As an affiliated college of the U of A, St. Joseph’s provided a forum for young men to develop their faith as they trained to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, or pursued other similar careers. According to the Brothers, providing religious education and fostering moral and spiritual development to these future professionals was especially crucial in order that they remain upright men, citizens, fathers, and Catholics, and in the process, honour both the Church and their alma mater. To that end, they taught courses such as Catholic Philosophy, Christian Apologetics, and Catholic History. Besides the work of teaching, the Brothers promoted many Church-sanctioned organizations and

\textsuperscript{174} His Medieval Philosophy class concentrated on three key areas: sources of Medieval Philosophy, its development (with special reference to St. Thomas Aquinas), and Scholasticism and Neo-Scholasticism. In previous years, he also taught “Social Psychology and Social Anthropology” class which included “a critical study of anthropological data regarding the origin of language, myth, custom, morality, law, art and religion.” \textit{The University of Alberta Calendar, 1934-35}, 194-6.

\textsuperscript{175} AGR, Supplements Historique, Edmonton Community (University of Alberta/St. Joseph’s College), 1935.
initiatives designed to foster Christian ideals and generate model Catholics. For instance, there were morning and evening devotions, grace before meals was compulsory, and the young men were expected to attend confession frequently. During the 1935-36 academic year, the resident chaplain heard confessions every Thursday and Sunday, and an Extraordinary Confessor was called every month. The Brothers also organized student retreats run by the Redemptorist Fathers. Moreover, the Brothers suggested students join one of the many Catholic clubs on campus, including the Catholic Truth Society, the Catholic Evidence Guild, the Catholic Poetry Society, the Newman Club, and Catholic Action. The College grounds were also home to many important Catholic gatherings, banquets, and conventions for the Catholic Women’s League and the Knights of Columbus. In 1935, the Director, Brother Memorian (John Sheehy), remarked that St. Joseph’s was increasingly regarded as the principal location for Catholic activities in the whole city of Edmonton. He pointed out:

This is a great advantage inasmuch as it keeps the “Catholic idea” and the idea of Catholic action constantly before the students. The outcome of it all is that our students are gradually becoming proudly conscious of their Catholic faith and what it stands for. … St. Joseph’s is living up to the bargain made with the ecclesiastical authorities some years ago to the effect that every effort would be made to safeguard the Catholic life of the Students, and to further the cause of sound Catholic thought.

The Brothers’ ties to the university eventually ended in 1963, seemingly without any controversy or complaint. With the consent of the Board of Governors, Archbishop of Edmonton John Hugh MacDonald had them replaced by the Basilian Fathers, who he understood to have greater notoriety in the field of university teaching. Given the lack of archival documentation on the matter, it is plausible that the Brothers were relieved with the decision, perhaps wanting to

177 AGR, Supplements Historique, Edmonton Community (University of Alberta/St. Joseph’s College), 1935.
178 No archival documentation was found indicating that there was any problem with the Brothers’ departure from St. Joseph’s College.
prioritize high school teaching or perhaps because Edmonton was too far from the Motherhouse in Toronto.

Outside of operating educational institutions, the Christian Brothers also conformed to another key aspects in the realm of youth work in Ontario by running a summer camp. At the bequest of Toronto Archbishop Neil McNeil, the Brothers opened De La Salle Camp for Catholic boys in 1916, “deliciously located” on the southern shore of Lake Simcoe near Jackson’s Point. Reflecting a growing trend in the province in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Brothers advertised ‘Del Camp’ as an escape from urban and industrial settings. As historian Sharon Wall has illustrated, summer camps surfaced as a direct response to social, cultural, and economic anxieties in urban life. Cities were cast in a negative light, characterized as filthy, stressful, and harmful to people’s well being. The escape into nature for hunting, fishing, canoeing, and cottaging were thought to help provide reprieves from the trials and hazards of daily life. Of course, these kinds of escapes were not only necessary for adults, but were perhaps even more poignant for children. Essentially, going to a summer camp was thought to be particularly beneficial for boys and girls because they were designed to provide constructive leisure pursuits. Camps such as Ahmek, Arowhon, Bolton, Keewaydin, and Temagami – and other institutions and agencies such as the YMCA, League of Woodcraft Indians, and Boy Scouts for boys, and the YWCA, Girl Guides, and Canadian Girls in Training for girls – were shaped by religious, nationalistic, and imperialist values, intended to mould and/or reinforce gender norms and race and class differences, and were to help counteract urban

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180 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 170.1, *Le District Canadien-Anglais*, 1937, 2. The Jesuits’ Camp Ekon on Lake Joseph in the Muskoka Region did not begin operations until 1971, just as the Brothers’ De La Salle Camp was closing operations.
vices that were thought to be jeopardizing Canadian youth.\textsuperscript{181}

In line with this trend, De La Salle Camp would provide profitable leisure activities for all classes of Catholic boys in an outdoor setting. In a 1931 recruitment pamphlet, parents were encouraged to send their sons, aged 6 to 15, to enjoy life in the great outdoors at “Ontario’s most delightful summer resort.” It was at camp that boys could spend “two months of freedom away from our crowded cities and their everyday things – two months with Nature, with the tang of the woods in the air and a leafy canopy overhead, health and joy born of contact with the things of nature – these are what appeal to every boy.”\textsuperscript{182} The fact that the camp was run entirely by Christian Brothers who were unattached to wives or women and promoted as “experts in boy-work” was an appealing notion for parents and appreciated by the Church hierarchy.\textsuperscript{183} In a 1940 letter, Archbishop of Toronto James McGuigan commented that “Camp life may have a greater influence on the boy than school life” so it was important for boys to learn how to engage in proper recreation during their leisure time.\textsuperscript{184} Activities at Del Camp reflected common trends of the era, including sports such as baseball, tennis, volleyball, touch rugby, croquet, bowling, boxing, pony riding, and field events of every kind. Water-based activities were not neglected: swimming, diving, life-saving, canoeing, sailing, water-ball, and fishing were all actively encouraged. There was also an almost endless supply of activities for boys to engage in, including handicrafts, billiards, dramatics, music, photography, archery, day and over-night hikes, and campfires. The Medical Officer of Health responsible for the camp, Dr. O.M. Beattie, claimed that the boys “cannot help progressing mentally, morally and spiritually, as well as

\textsuperscript{182} BCSA, 600 Series, Photo Album, Promotional Pamphlet, 1931. The camp usually opened at the end of June or early July and ran for 8 weeks.
\textsuperscript{183} BCSA, 600 Series, Photo Album, Promotional Pamphlet, 1931.
\textsuperscript{184} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1940-1943, Archbishop McGuigan to Brother Director and Associates of De La Salle Camp, 7 July 1940.
becoming a better sportsman to which, I think, all boys aspire."\textsuperscript{185}

Such mental, moral, spiritual, and physical progression was integrally connected with boys’ character formation, and particularly the development of masculinity. The Brothers did not challenge traditional gendered assumptions about the place of boys or men in society. Rather, they were given credit for building up “the temple of character and manhood of our Catholic youth.”\textsuperscript{186} In the camp’s all-male environment, they sought to cultivate toughness and strength alongside refinement and courtesy, immersing campers into their version of Christian manhood.\textsuperscript{187} Spirited contests and rough sports were coupled with gracious conduct including the teaching of social graces, gentlemanly behaviour, fair play, and good sportsmanship. Despite the sports and games being competitive affairs, fair play was a necessary part of the action. One father of three sons who attended the camp during the 1930s noted: “In the games and contests they were taught good sportsmanship and learned to take defeat as gracefully as victory. Etiquette, tidiness, politeness, and courtesy were encouraged, while in the common life of the Camp they acquired experience in cooperative behaviour and a real sense of social responsibility.”\textsuperscript{188} The Christian Brothers, therefore, attempted to take a middle path in the class dimensions associated with masculinity.\textsuperscript{189}

This chapter documented the aims for, changes to, and expansion of the curricular and

\textsuperscript{185} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, The Christian Brother, 1947, 23.
\textsuperscript{186} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1940-1943, Archbishop McGuigan to Brother Director and Associates of De La Salle Camp, 7 July 1940.
\textsuperscript{188} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, The Christian Brother, 1947, 23.
\textsuperscript{189} Wall notes that private camps, which catered to children of the “respectable” upper and upper-middle classes, were designed to enhance characteristics befitting their social position. Promoting the Rooseveltian idea of the ‘strenuous life’, this form of masculinity was promoted in an effort by administrative authorities to groom the future business, social, and political elite. By contrast, gender construction in the fresh air camps for the urban poor emphasized reigning in the toughness of the city streets and channelling that fighting spirit into “manly sports” and taming the wildness of boys by developing “useful skills.” In these camps, counsellors could help to address possible delinquency and transform disrespectful behaviour into positive actions and conduct. For details, see Wall, The Nurture of Nature, 180-7.
extra-curricular options available to students in institutions run by the Christian Brothers in Ontario from 1851 to 1962. During that period, their educational program reflected the changes in the provincial education system more generally. Whether referring to the official or hidden curriculum, the Brothers constantly showed a willingness to adapt, with resistance limited only to the realm of religion. Their curriculum changed from one that emphasized Catholic catechism and rudimentary academics to one that provided an extensive program of industrial and commercial subjects, and arts, humanities, and sciences. Equally important, boys were also being prepared to become honest, hard-working, well-rounded, and moral men, fathers, Catholics, and Canadians, underscoring the type of boy they understood would best serve the Catholic population in Ontario. While the specific curricular and extra-curricular options varied from school to school, they all sought to maximize boys’ intellectual development, character formation, and religious welfare. This educational program – including class work, sports and athletics, cadets, and religion – conducted in an eclectic mix of settings, would ideally help Catholic boys retain their faith while integrating them into the larger population. The Brothers’ multi-faceted educative purpose served to legitimate the separate school system and, by extension, the Catholic Church and the Catholic faithful. It also preserved the congregation’s virtuous reputation amongst the Catholic hierarchy while simultaneously appeasing civil authorities in the Department of Education. The gradual implementation of various changes in course offerings, extracurricular activities, and types of schools brought the Brother’s educational mission increasingly in line with provincial expectations. Overall, the Brothers fashioned themselves as willing allies of the state, rather than its religious adversaries.
Chapter Five

A Return on their Investment?
The Legacy of Adaptation in Pre-Vatican II Ontario, 1914-1962

In April 1949, the Assistant for North America, Brother Nivard Anselme, commented upon the Toronto District’s steady growth since its 1914 inception. The District, he excitedly claimed, was now home to 188 Brothers with vows, including 22 scholastics. Additionally, there were 14 juniors and 17 novices, numbers that the Assistant anticipated would continue to climb in the years ahead. “The District is improving,” he wrote to the Visitor, Brother Claudius (Albert O’Neill), who was then overseeing the region. “Let us thank God and[d] ask Him to bless the work of our Recruiters and Masters of formation.”¹ Yet only three years later, when tasked with reviewing the Toronto District’s state of affairs, the Vicar General of the Montreal District, Brother Georges, was less than enthusiastic. While observing that most Brothers properly followed their Lasallian vows and lived according to the Rule, the misplaced priorities of some leaders posed a problem in nurturing members’ religious spirit, a problem that had the potential for disastrous consequences. Brother Claudius was singled out for particular condemnation. While he did an admirable job overall, and was “a man of good will” whose “zeal knows no bounds”, his concern over “buildings and money prevented him from seeing the other part of his mission.”² Continuing on this path, Brother Georges feared, would undoubtedly jeopardize not only the Brothers’ religious well being but also the welfare of the entire District. If Brothers chose to neglect their spiritual development, they would make themselves vulnerable to criticism that could devolve into scandal, dishonour, and, perhaps, their forced ouster from the province.

¹ LAC, m.f. K233, reel # 370120, Toronto Correspondence of Frère Visiteur Nivard-Anselme (1946-56) [hereafter Nivard-Anselme Files], Brother Assistant to Brother Visitor, 6 March 1949.
² LAC, m.f. K233, reel # 370141, Nivard-Anselme Files, Frère Georges to Frère Denis, 24 December 1952.
Brother Georges contended that “the future will improve greatly” only if the “choice of the next Visitor falls upon a man who pursues first and foremost the restoration of religiosity.”

The discrepancy in interpretation of the Toronto District’s affairs illustrates the complexity of understanding the Christian Brothers’ position and status in twentieth-century Ontario. Following the District’s formation in 1914, there was a steady amelioration in their financial, managerial, reputational, geographic, and numerical standing in the province and in English Canada generally. Like their French-speaking confreres in Quebec, they grew in virtually every conceivable category of measurement. There were considerably more Brothers, more schools in which they taught, and more variety in the curriculum offered at the schools they managed and taught in. Furthermore, there was a geographic expansion; although the city of Toronto remained the clear epicentre of the Toronto District, communities of Brothers dotted the Ontario landscape, stretching from the province’s furthest southwest corner to the near-mid north, into three other provinces, and even overseas. Their positive reputation amongst the clergy was nearly unanimous – at least publicly – and school inspectors were generally favourable in their evaluation of the Brothers as teachers. They joined professional organizations, pursued graduate studies, and earned other accreditations. The Brothers worked to make teaching a vaunted position in society and their congregation a valued component of the Catholic Church. For all intents and purposes, the policies of accommodation in language, qualifications, and curriculum appeared to have worked. The Brothers should have experienced a very real sense of belonging and a substantial level of rootedness in the province, a welcome change from the struggle to build up their numbers and their schools in the years between 1851 and 1914.

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3 LAC, m.f. K233, reel # 370140, Frère Georges to Frère Denis, 24 December 1952. Translation assistance from Matthieu Vallières.

4 It is doubtful that these changes were resented amongst Quebec’s Brothers, since membership grew at an even faster rate, they branched out to schools province-wide (and into French areas of Ontario), and continued to secure their strong reputation among Catholic parents and clergy.
While there was definite growth in membership and bishops and school inspectors appreciated their teaching, there was nevertheless much lingering doubt about the viability of their mission. In fact, the Brothers’ growth reveals the essential paradox of adaptation and accommodation. The more their numbers and institutions flourished in Ontario, the more apprehensive they felt about ensuring that growth continued. In spite of the tangible achievements, Ontario Brothers continued to feel susceptible about their status and their permanence in the province. Many members expressed uneasiness about the potentially devastating implications of various tensions; anything that threatened to disrupt growth was seen as problematic, if not scandalous, hypothetically leading to their exit from the province or at least a failure to maximize their reputation, membership, and funding. From accusations of loose morals to incurring financial debts, from insufficient qualifications to administrative incompetence, almost anything had the potential to rouse Brothers into a fury; no issue was too small that it did not warrant intervention for fear that it might degenerate into scandal. The legacy of adaptation, therefore, remained somewhat ambiguous for the Christian Brothers in Ontario from the turn of the century through to the Second Vatican Council (1962-5).

The combined impact of a more favourable socio-political context in Ontario, the erection of a juniorate in 1908 and novitiate in 1913, and the creation of the Toronto District in 1914 meant that the conditions were ripe for the Brothers to rapidly expand their institutional operations in the province and entrench some semblance of institutional permanence. Between 1914 and 1924, the number of schools and communities expanded, as did the number of boys taking the habit and joining the Brothers’ congregation. In part, this expansion can be attributed to the Toronto District’s administration in these early years, particularly from the Visitors and the various Directors of the Juniorate, Novitiate, and Scholasticate. Brother Tatian Edward, the
first Visitor, warrants particular attention. Born Edward O’Farrell in Ayton, Ontario (Diocese of Hamilton) in 1875, he came from a staunch Catholic family of Irish descent. O’Farrell attended the Christian Brothers’ high school in Hamilton when it opened in 1891, and having become acquainted with the Brothers there, decided to enter the novitiate in Toronto and finish his high school at De La Salle College. He received the habit in July 1891, and was teaching the following September in Toronto. He also taught in Kingston, Ottawa, and Cleveland, Ohio before returning to Toronto in 1896 where, until 1908, he taught the senior class and was principal at his alma mater. After briefly serving as Director of Juniors at the juniorate from March-June, 1908, he was named Assistant Visitor. From 1908 to 1914, he was in charge of Canada’s English-speaking contingent during the complex era of negotiations over certification for teaching religious. Ever a supporter of meeting provincial requirements, he spurred the creation of summer courses to match government regulations and improve pedagogy.\(^5\) Given his teaching credentials and administrative experience, Brother Tatian Edward was a logical choice for heading the new Toronto District in 1914. Several sources note that his “dedication”, “hard work”, and “zeal” were of immense service in organizing and solidifying the District’s re-birth and setting the stage for their 1920s expansion.\(^6\)

Significantly, Brother Tatian Edward concentrated his efforts on institution building and his work yielded tangible results. He secured the opening of Benildus Hall in Toronto in 1914 as a residence and administrative centre for the new District.\(^7\) In early 1916, he negotiated the purchase of a large property in Aurora, 40 kilometres north of Toronto, to act as the District

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\(^6\) For example, see BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, MAC-O’LE, O’Farrell, Edward (Brother Tatian), Reports of Brother Rogatian and Brother Gregory, c. 1940; LAC, m.f. K212, reel # 161957, *Centenary Number*, 15; BCSA, 700 Series, *History of the District of Toronto*, 102-3; AGR, DRLCDT, No. 290.1, *The Story of A Hundred Years Service*, 33.

\(^7\) The building was first located at 187 Jarvis Street, but moved to 575 Jarvis Street in 1919.
Motherhouse.\(^8\) Officially opening 15 May 1916 as De La Salle College, this building housed the retirees – called the Holy Family – as well as the juniors, novices, and, after 1918, the scholastics.\(^9\) The building also had a gymnasium and a swimming pool for recreation. This was the young District’s most prestigious building; its cachet was enhanced by its location on a sizeable property, which included old trees, a large lawn, a cemetery, playing fields, tennis courts, and an adjacent farm.\(^10\) The Visitor was eager to further expand the Brothers’ reach and prove that autonomy could generate a substantial status boost. As such, when Archbishop of Toronto Neil McNeil requested that they expand their vocation from the classroom to the outdoors, Brother Tatian Edward agreed and founded De La Salle Camp in Jackson’s Point in 1916. In addition to advancing the district’s material progress, the first Visitor was also credited with setting in motion other kinds of intangible benefits. One former colleague, Brother Gregory (Patrick Greene), wrote that it was Brother Tatian Edward who initiated, after 1914, “a revival of spirituality, a devotedness to study [and] a rapidly growing scholarship” and that he was “a religious, a radical, a human dynamo.”\(^11\)

\(^8\) The building was on the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Bloomington Sideroad. While some sources point to this location as Oak Ridges, it was actually in Aurora. The Montreal District defrayed the $175,000 price tag for the building’s erection, a dollar figure equivalent to about $3.4 million in 2015.

\(^9\) ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Brothers of the Christian Schools, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1900-1920, Brother Bernard to Archbishop Neil McNeil, 7 January 1920. This building is not to be confused with the Brothers’ Toronto-based high school, also called De La Salle College.


\(^11\) Nearly forty years later, his legacy as a builder – of souls, minds, and institutions – remained firmly intact. Writing in the early 1950s, Brother Austin wrote that Brother Tatian Edward “was the right man for the time of his Visitorship. … To what man does our District owe more?” Brother Austin’s commendations continued on a more personal note: “He was courageous, intelligent, enterprising, clever at devising new means and methods, and an inspiring speaker. He had not had much opportunity to become academically strong, but he made the most of his
Brother Tatian Edward’s successor was Brother Bernard, a man who continued the processes begun in 1914. Brother Bernard was born Thomas Breen in Douglas, Renfrew County, Ontario in 1877 or 1878. Following his elementary education in Renfrew, he entered De La Salle College in Toronto in 1891. After a two-year course there, he entered the novitiate, and received the habit in 1893. Although he began his teaching career in Toronto, he was dispatched to teach in Montreal in 1896. He soon became Director of St. Patrick’s Community and Principal of St. Patrick’s School, staying in these positions until he was appointed Director of the Juniorate in Toronto, a position he held until he was named District Visitor. Under his stewardship (1918-24), the Brothers experienced meaningful escalation in membership and community building, began their push westward, and solidified their presence in several Ontario Catholic schools.

Central to Brother Bernard’s program was capitalizing on the booming immigration context in the early twentieth century. At this time, the Canadian Catholic Church wanted to provide Catholic immigrants with the spiritual and physical means to ply their faith. National churches, priests, and parishes emerged nationwide, in both urban and rural centres. In western Canada, home to a massive influx in Ukrainian immigrants between 1900 and 1920, both English and French-speaking bishops supported assimilationist ideas into the Latin rite and respective national-linguistic spheres. But tensions between French and English-speaking clergy over that vision were complex; issues of language, authority, and the presence of a Ukrainian bishop were all evident. Typifying the French-Canadian vision of a Catholic West was Louis-Philippe-Adélard Langevin, the Archbishop of St. Boniface who had geographic control over much of this region. To fulfill French Canada’s supposed destiny, he recruited the Redemptorist Fathers, and,

opportunities. … He lacked the prudence and tact of the polished executive, and was reckless in offending people when he thought some principle was at stake, but these were the defects of his virtues.” See BCSA, 700 Series, History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 102-3.

12 For more information on his life, see Farrell, ed. Deceased Brothers, Vol. I, 21; BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, BRE-BRO, “Breen, Thomas (Bro. Bernard).”
to a more limited extend, celibate Uniate priests. He also supported the idea that some Latin rite priests “translate” to the Greek rite.\textsuperscript{13}

It was the Redemptorists – primarily of Belgian and French-Canadian background but a vocal minority of English-speaking Canadians as well – that emerged as the primary clergy to serve Ukrainians’ spiritual needs and help in their transition to Canada.\textsuperscript{14} Some Redemptorists sought to learn Ukrainian and preserve their Eastern rite practices in order to provide social welfare and ministerial services while still expecting that the majority would gradually learn English or French. Others, such as Father George Daly, wrote extensively on the Church’s need to systematically organize and assimilate western Catholics, particularly via schools. Father Daly assumed that English-speaking Catholics were so thoroughly engrained in English-Canadian society that they, like Protestants, could act as instruments of assimilation for new immigrants.\textsuperscript{15}

Integrating Ukrainians was deeply concerning for Ontario’s English-speaking Catholics between 1900 and 1930. During this period, this community grew increasingly confident that the fate of the west would be English. Toronto’s Archbishop Neil McNeil and his colleague Alfred E. Burke, president of the Catholic Church Extension Society (CCES), supported the home missions, but suggested that Redemptorist mission activity was not substantial enough to fully incorporate Ukrainian Catholics. To assist in this broader mission, the CCES invited Brother Bernard to open a school for boys in the prairie west, offering financial and moral support to see

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item In that period, the Redemptorists grew in number and established new foundations in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. Administrative restructuring created the Vice-Province of Toronto in 1912 and an autonomous Province of Toronto in 1918, meaning that Canadian Redemptorists outside Quebec were no longer under the authority of leaders in Baltimore or Quebec City. Paul Laverdure, \textit{Redemption and Renewal: The Redemptorists of English Canada, 1834-1994} (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996), 88-9. The Redemptorists formed houses in Brandon, Manitoba (1898), Yorkton, Saskatchewan (1904), East Kildonan, Manitoba (1914), Regina, Saskatchewan (1915), as well as scattered missions across the West. Laverdure, \textit{Redemption and Renewal}, 112.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the venture come to fruition. Brother Bernard accepted the offer and sent a group of three Brothers to Yorkton, Saskatchewan in May 1919 and St. Joseph’s College opened in October 1920. With only six boys registered at the outset, attendance was a major problem, one that would persist throughout the 1920s. Despite the low attendance, the Brothers were quite pleased with their venture into Western Canada, thinking that it was a windfall to their expansion efforts and an excellent model of their scholastic service to the Church.

While preliminary efforts were underway in the West, the Christian Brothers concentrated their efforts on development in Ontario, a province with a rapidly-growing Catholic population. Ontario’s Catholic schools were also growing at an exponential rate, none more so than the Toronto Separate School Board, which required a growing number of teachers to staff their schools. While wanting to fill that gap, the Brothers faced stiff economic stresses in the immediate post-First World War years. Besides Toronto, they rejected offers for their services from Guelph, Hamilton, London, Windsor, and Renfrew. These requests contributed to Archbishop McNeil’s July 1920 Circular, in which he stressed that money was needed to help financially sustain the Brothers’ new novitiate. The circular asked for a one-time donation to carry the training college through its current financial adversity. This was a “promising novitiate” McNeil reasoned, and, dismissing any notion of laymen teaching in Catholic institutions, claimed that it was “the only way to secure male teachers for our schools.” Financial

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16 In 1918, Father Noël-Marie Decamps asked the Brothers to erect a school in Yorkton, but they did not officially accept until the CCES provided financial aid the following year.
17 This institution is not to be confused with St. Joseph’s College, Edmonton, which opened seven years later.
18 Voisine, Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada, Volume II, 204.
19 In 1911, Ontario’s Catholic population was 484,997. Ontario Catholic Year Book and Directory, 1915, 31.
20 For details on the population growth in Toronto’s separate schools, see TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meetings, 1878-1910. Note in particular the Annual Report for 1886, where Brother Tobias, Local Inspector from 1878-88, reported that there were 3792 Catholic students in Toronto that year (5 April 1887). In the Annual Report for 1905, Brother Odo Baldwin, Local Inspector from 1888-1909, reported that there were 5544 pupils registered in the Toronto Separate School Board that year (6 February 1906). In 1918, enrolment was slightly over 8000 students in Toronto’s 25 separate schools.
aid from the faithful would not only have the sacred benefit of illustrating one’s “justice as well as charity” but would have the added practical advantage of placing the Brothers in an enviable situation which would allow them “to accept positions as teachers in other parts of Ontario.” In doing so, according to McNeil, they were “preparing to contribute substantially to the placing of our schools on a level with the best in the land.”

This call for assistance, coupled with the surge in enlistment in the novitiate’s first six years, paid immediate dividends across the province. In 1910, only 33 Christian Brothers lived and worked in Ontario (excluding Ottawa, which continued to be a part of the Montreal District). More specifically, all of them lived in Toronto, where they taught in seven schools. However, because of their cheap labour and positive reputation amongst the laity and clergy, boards across the province began to turn to them. With an improved financial footing, the Brothers felt confident to open several new schools in cities and towns that they had previously refused. In 1920, they opened Sacred Heart School in London, adding St. Peter’s High School in the city the following year. The Brothers also took command of four schools in Windsor for the opening of the 1924 school year. They also operated a High School in Hamilton from 1921-24. Meanwhile, more young men continued to attend and train for the religious life in the House of Formation in Aurora. Brother Bernard was also able to secure the purchase of a summer vacation-place called Goffatt Island near the village of Atherley on the northern reaches of Lake Simcoe.

A re-organization of the Canadian Districts along linguistic – rather than geographic – lines furthered the numeric growth and terrestrial coverage of the Toronto District. This shift was

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21 GABF, A313, A. 313, 1892.30, N. McNeil, “Circular,” 28 July 1920. The chosen date for taking up this special collection was 8 August 1920.
22 The Brothers moved out of St. Peter’s School around 1924, establishing De La Salle High School in its place. For more details on the Brothers in London, see Michael Power et al., Gather up the Fragments: A History of the Diocese of London (London: Diocese of London, 2008), 138-9.
23 LAC, m.f. K212, reel # 161943, Centenary Number, 1937, 15.
completed in 1922 when Brother Bernard successfully orchestrated the transition of Quebec’s 29 English-speaking Brothers and their three communities to the control of the Toronto District. As such, religious superiors in Toronto took administration over the Brothers at St. Patrick’s and St. Ann’s Schools in Montreal and St. Patrick’s School in Quebec City, thereby engineering a remarkable increase in membership.

Table 5: Brothers, Communities, and Schools in the Toronto District, 1915-65

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Brothers</th>
<th>Number of Communities</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946*</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from information available at AGR, Personnel de l’Institut, Toronto District Communities, 1915, 1925, 1935. LAC, m.f. K223, reel # 270738-271200, État du Personnel des Maisons, 1946, 1955, 1965. *1945 statistics are unavailable because lines of communication were cut off between Toronto and Rome over the course of the Second World War.

By the end of his tenure in 1924, Brother Bernard had expanded the Toronto District dramatically. There were now 129 Brothers living in seven cities across three provinces. They taught in or managed 15 schools ranging from elementary and secondary schools to industrial and commercial schools. Upon his death in 1929, both of Ontario’s Catholic weeklies eulogized Brother Bernard in glowing terms. P.J. Coleman, editor of Toronto’s Catholic Register and Canadian Extension, commented that Brother Bernard “used his administrative genius for the development of the Order and the expansion of its work in favor of Catholic youth.” Evidently, his name was “a household word” in Toronto and Montreal.24 London’s Catholic Record was

24 Catholic Register and Canadian Extension, 18 July 1929, 4.
equally effusive with their praise: “Canada has lost a great educator,” the editorialist wrote, and very few “have had a wider or deeper influence on its educational welfare and progress.”

Now with official control over the direction and administration of their own affairs, the Ontario Brothers experienced a newfound sense of liberty. Free from the control of Montreal authorities, directors of the juniorate, novitiate, and scholasticate now had the exclusive right to evaluate potential candidates for the order and mould them in a manner more suitable to the religious and educational expectations of a Christian Brother in Ontario. Indeed, the main purpose of Aurora’s De La Salle College was to prepare those boys who wished to join the order for the necessary professional qualifications required of teachers by the provincial Department of Education while simultaneously acclimatizing them in the daily patterns and practices of congregation members. Given the need to undergo professional certification, the decision on who could or should be included amongst the Brothers’ ranks ought to have been made more difficult. However, the most influential Brothers in the district seemed to have had other concerns on their minds – most obviously expansion. When they gathered together annually in the late summer to gauge postulants’ eligibility and preparedness for inclusion into the Brothers’ ranks, very few were ever denied. In every year between 1914 and 1968, virtually every single candidate was admitted, and almost 99% were unanimous votes. Even the overwhelming majority of those who failed or did not score well on their entrance forms were admitted.

The steady growth in novitiate graduates ensured that, over the course of the five decades after its formation, the Toronto District expanded its membership and extended its geographic scope both eastward and westward. The growing population of Quebec’s English-speaking

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25 Catholic Record, 20 July 1929.
26 BCSA, 700 Series, The Habit + Novitiate History, Minutes of Meeting to admit Postulants to take the Habit, 1914-1968. This book provides the birth names of candidates, the votes for and against, and sometimes the score of an examination, the opinion of the Visitor, and general remarks.
Catholic community from the 1920s to the 1960s coupled with the slow but rising demand for secondary school education in that province, the Toronto District opened five new schools and attendant communities. The Brothers opened three secondary schools in Montreal, namely St. Dominic’s (1925), D’Arcy McGee (1931) and Cardinal Newman (1951) along with two schools in Lachine, namely Resurrection School (1950) and Bishop Whalen High School (1954).

Meanwhile, expansion into Western Canada did not end with St. Joseph’s College in Saskatchewan. To meet the needs of a growing Catholic population in Alberta, the Brothers of the Toronto District were instrumental players in the foundation of St. Joseph’s College at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, which opened in September 1927. They also opened O’Leary High School in the same city in 1960. Continuing the Brothers’ development and enlargement in Ontario, new elementary and secondary schools were opened in Windsor, Oshawa, Pembroke, and Renfrew between 1930 and 1961 (see Table 6).

There was also a clear desire among many in the Toronto District to expand beyond Ontario and invest in missionary schools overseas. Motivation behind this kind of expansion was two-fold but interconnected: to expand the prestige of the Toronto District and to educate and save the souls of boys in foreign lands. Brother Sulpicius of Mary (Thomas Barlow) looked eagerly upon the day when the Toronto District would “be in charge of a mission.” He argued that the Toronto District would “progress fast” in terms of numbers and influence only when the day came that they opened a mission. “Many Brothers are mission-minded,” he exclaimed, “but they have no place to go.”

Requests for mission schools came from Bishops and religious

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27 LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032721, “Correspondence of Administration du District, 1949 à 1955 Frère Nivard Anselme, Assistant [hereafter Correspondence of Administration, Assistant],” Brother Sulpicius of Mary to Brother Superior General, 1 June 1952. The argument that opening a mission would benefit the District was heightened when Brother Sulpicius of Mary noted that it would also please God and assist individual Brothers in their role as Religious: “I am ready to go to any part of the world, to do anything that is decided for me to do. I offer myself without any condition. … Just tell me where you would like me to be. All places will please me as they all belong to
Table 6: Growth of Schools in the Toronto District, 1914-1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>St. Peter’s School (London)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>De La Salle High School (London)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>St. Ann’s School (Montreal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s High School (Quebec City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s School/De La Salle (Windsor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>St. Francis School (Windsor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>St. Alphonsus School (Windsor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Sacred Heart School (Windsor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>St. Dominic’s Academy (Montreal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>De La Salle Moore Park (Toronto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>St. Clare’s School (Toronto)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s College (Edmonton)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>St. Angela’s School (Windsor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>D’Arcy McGee High School (Montreal)</td>
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<td>1931</td>
<td>De La Salle College, Oaklands (Toronto)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>St. Gregory’s School (Oshawa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>St. Columban’s High School (Pembroke)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>St. Francis Xavier School (Renfrew)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Resurrection School (Lachine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Cardinal Newman High School (Montreal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Bishop Whalen High School (Lachine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Juniorate (Brome Lake)</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>O’Leary High School (Edmonton)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>St. Gabriel’s High School (Windsor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s High School (Edmonton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>J.J. Lynch School (Toronto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Senator O’Connor High School (Toronto)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


orders across the globe, including South America, Asia, and Africa. The Bishop of Ondo Nigeria, Thomas Hughes, called for educational missionaries to maintain or develop English-language schools in his diocese. To achieve this goal, he met with senior members of the Brothers’ Institute, namely the Vicar General, Brother Dennis, and the Assistant for Ireland and Great Britain, Brother Lawrence. By early 1956, the Superior General ultimately decided that

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God. I am ready to teach, to look after the sick, or cripples, or lepers – just as you please. If I am in a POOR community or district I believe I will progress faster on the way to become a saint – my goal!”
English-speaking Brothers from Ireland and Great Britain would open a community and school in Hong Kong, given its colonial relationship with England. Meanwhile, as French-Canadian Brothers in the Montreal and Quebec Districts had opened missions in Togo and Cameroon, it was decided that the Toronto District Brothers would open a community and school in Nigeria.²⁸

St. Peter’s Teacher Training School in Akure, Nigeria was opened in 1956. The school was designed to educate local people on how to become teachers, with Brother Bernard acting as the first community Director and principal. Other schools and communities were taken over or set up by Brothers in Nigeria, including St. Anthony’s in Ibadan, Mount La Salle College in Naka, and the privately run St. Joseph’s School in Ondo. A second mission apostolate, St. Martin’s School, was established in Kingstown on St. Vincent Island in 1965. Playing a particularly important role in setting up this school and attached community house was Brother Robert (Robert Brick), Visitor of the Toronto District from 1959 to 1965. Once he completed his Visitorship, Brother Robert took on the reins as the community’s first Director and principal.²⁹

In the 1930s and 1940s, the significant expansion in membership and the belief that this trend would continue meant that the Ontario Brothers were beginning to outgrow their Aurora accommodations. By the end of the 1940s, with numbers having jumped significantly following the lull during the war years, they requested permission to proceed with erecting a much larger Motherhouse. Named Christian Brothers’ College and built in 1950, the new Motherhouse was established on Maryvale Farm, a property in northeastern Toronto given to the Brothers at the bequest of the late Senator Frank O’Connor, one of their most famous former pupils. It housed the Visitor’s office, rooms for retired Brothers, and the three tiers of the novitiate.

²⁸ Private correspondence with Brother Francis McCrea, FSC, 9 June 2015.
²⁹ Details about the Brothers in Nigeria and St. Vincent come from email communication with Brother Walter Farrell, FSC, 3 September 2014.
The erection of Christian Brothers’ College only further served to solidify Toronto as the metropole of the entire District throughout the 1914-62 period. It had the resources, the training facilities, and the highest concentration of Brothers and schools in English Canada. The city’s Catholic population had grown at a brisk pace since its modest beginning, from both internal growth and immigration. This development necessitated several new schools, particularly at the secondary level, since the public was beginning to demand children spend longer durations in school, a process that was still in its infancy in the late nineteenth century. As such, the demand for the Brothers’ services in the city continued unabated. Although they had already been offering secondary classes at De La Salle Institute/De La Salle College since the 1870s, they were asked to run a second Catholic high school. Moore Park De La Salle opened in 1925 operating out of the top floor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Elementary School. The school was private, paid for by Archbishop McNeil, contributing to some complaints from Catholic ratepayers about the use of diocesan funds. The complainants were soon assuaged when the Brothers and their students gradually left Moore Park after 1931, moving into the privately-run De La Salle Oaklands.

Despite the opening of Oaklands, funding issues remained paramount in the slow development of Catholic secondary schools. Indeed, the Tiny Township Case of 1928 saw the provincial government limit funding for secondary schools to Grade 10. But in the wake of

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30 Between the 1850s and 1920s, the city of Toronto’s Catholic population grew at a brisk pace: from 7940 in 1851 to 21830 in 1891 to 64773 in 1921. Dixon, *We Remember We Believe*, 102. The Diocese (and later Archdiocese) of Toronto grew fast as well, from about 30000 Catholics in 1850 to 75000 in 1915. For key dates and figures, see *The Ontario Catholic Year Book and Directory*, 1915, 39. Stemming in large part from immigration, the number of Catholics in the Archdiocese of Toronto was 580 000 by 1965. *Ontario Catholic Directory*, 1965, 59.


32 Grade 11 students left Moore Park for Oaklands in 1932 and Grade 12 and 13 students were transferred in 1933. Details about Moore Park come from email communication with Brother Walter Farrell, FSC, 3 September 2014.
World War II, the combination of large-scale immigration, a phenomenal jump in birthrate, and a growing recognition that secondary schools were crucial to pupils’ economic success and social formation all coalesced into a significantly heightened push for secondary schools, including Catholic ones. Historian Franklin Walker notes that enrolment in Ontario’s Catholic schools skyrocketed by 117% in the 1950s, from 116,350 to 252,535 students, a development that made separate school boards across the province determined to fight for Catholic education through to the end of high school. Moreover, Cardinal James McGuigan and other bishops advocated for an expansion of “free” high schools in the 1940s and 1950s. They initiated funding drives and pushed priests and parents to send children to these schools whenever they were able. The strong presence of the Christian Brothers in Toronto combined with the hierarchy’s support meant that they were well placed to host a large percentage of Catholic boys in high schools. By the 1940s, there were “constant requests for more brothers” in high schools, because, as one anonymous Brother wrote, “high school boys need men teachers.” The Brothers opened St. Columban’s High School in Pembroke in 1948 and established St. Francis Xavier School in Renfrew in 1950. In Toronto, a new and more modern Oaklands school had its official opening on 3 December 1950. Through to the early 1960s, the Brothers continued to prioritize the building and operation of secondary schools, especially in Toronto, where J.J. Lynch and Senator O’Connor Schools were erected. Not surprisingly, the Brothers chose names in honour of two of their greatest moral and financial supporters.

36 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 170.1, District de Toronto, c. 1952.
All of this expansion seemed to indicate that the Toronto District was thriving. At the opening of the District in 1914, there were 42 Brothers living in five communities exclusively in the city of Toronto. By 1937, the district had expanded considerably, with 150 Brothers teaching nearly 5000 pupils in 16 schools and their House of Formation. By 1965, there were 244 Brothers in the District now incorporating 22 communities in five cities and towns in Ontario, four in Quebec, and one each in Saskatchewan and Alberta (see Table 6). At this time, the Toronto District encompassed all English-speaking Brothers in Canada. Although theoretically covering communities and schools ranging from Edmonton to Quebec City, the geography of the district was somewhat misleading, since all except four of the communities were within four hundred miles of Toronto. Oaklands was the only school owned and operated by the Brothers, with the rest teaching in Catholic schools run by provincial separate school boards or, in the case of Quebec, the Catholic School Commission.

The expansion of the Toronto District relied in large part on the solid reputation they enjoyed with the Catholic hierarchy across Canada. Many priests, bishops, and cardinals noted that the Christian Brothers played a crucial role in guiding young Catholics in their spiritual and academic formation; some of them even commented that it was their education in a Brothers’ school that set them on the path toward the priesthood. Bishop Michael Fallon of London, for instance, recalled his time as a former pupil of the Brothers in Kingston:

The foundations of whatever education I possess were laid by the Christian Brothers. … I revere the memory of those venerable educators to whom I owe much more than I shall ever be able to repay. No body of teachers in the world have ever mastered the science of Primary Education as have the Brothers of the Christian Schools … and it would be for

38 In addition to operating the Junior and Senior Novitiate, the Brothers were teaching at five elementary schools and one secondary school. Nine Brothers were stationed at St. John’s Industrial School. LAC, m.f. K200, reel # 041806-041812, Personnel de l’Institut, 1914.
me an unspeakable delight if every Catholic boy in the Province of Ontario were under
the care of these eminent educators.\textsuperscript{40}

Fallon’s successor in London, Bishop John T. Kidd, was no less effusive with his commendation.
In 1937, Kidd claimed to know “from personal experience” as a former pupil of the Brothers at
De La Salle College in Toronto, “the excellent manner in which their schools are conducted.”\textsuperscript{41}
Nearly 15 years later, he continued to give positive testimony of the Brothers’ work: “Their zeal
and untiring efforts to advance their pupils and, especially, the thoroughness of the religious
instruction and moral training imparted, are particularly gratifying. The noble work of Christian
Education carried on by the Brothers is consequently an inestimable treasure for any
community.”\textsuperscript{42} By 1937, a total of 20 bishops and archbishops in Canada had been or were
currently graduates of schools run by the Christian Brothers. In fact, in 1937 alone, the Brothers
educated the archbishops of the three principal archdioceses in the country (Quebec, Montreal,
and Ottawa). The Brothers in Ontario taught 6 of the 20 overall, including Bishops Hugh
Gauthier (Ottawa), Michael Fallon and John Thomas Kidd (London), Francis Carroll (Calgary)
and Thomas O’Donnell (Victoria).\textsuperscript{43}

According to Church leaders, the Brothers’ reputation as devout religious was rarely ever
in doubt. But it was also their reputation as excellent teachers that enabled their stature to
improve between 1914 and 1962. In addition to the near universal praise from the clergy, other
public dignitaries, including mayors, judges, and inspectors, also offered commendations. In late

\textsuperscript{40} Cited in AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, \textit{The Christian Brother}, 1947, 20.
\textsuperscript{41} LAC, m.f. K212, reel # 161946, \textit{Centenary Number}, 6.
\textsuperscript{42} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.5, District de Toronto, Documents Généraux, 1951-1960, \textit{Letters from the Bishops of Ontario}, c. 1951. Since this document is from 1951, but Kidd died in 1950, it must be a copy of a previous
published letter. Kidd worked closely with the Brothers in London during his tenure as Bishop (1931-1950), and his
death in 1950 came as a significant blow to their London community. It also provided them with an opportunity
to pay him tribute. The Brothers reported his passing in their \textit{Historique}, noting that “our beloved friend … a brother’s
boy, has long been our strongest supporter and most sincere friend.” BCSA, 700 Series, Hamilton London Ottawa
\textsuperscript{43} Les Frères des écoles chrétiennes, \textit{L’Œuvre d’un Siècle}, 104.
February of 1934, Toronto Mayor Thomas Church and other dignitaries visited Del Bond and presided at the publication of the Second Quarterly Examination results. In addressing all assembled, including the teachers, boys, and parents, Church stated that De La Salle “led all similar institutions in high school work and was recognized as second to none.”

In another example from the mid-1930s, Harry Burville, Acting Judge in Hamilton’s Juvenile Court, looked favourably upon St. John’s, telling Catholic boys that they need not fear being sent there, as they would be well looked after. “One hates to send a boy away,” he noted, “but for his own future I think it is better that he should go away and get proper training. He has to be taught the difference between right and wrong, and the place he will learn is at St. John’s School.”

Finally, in 1945, the Inspector of Industrial Schools commented favourably on the Brothers’ work despite the handicap of minimal funding: “Humbly and patiently and unselfishly they have gone ahead, hampered by an unsuitable building, but making the most of it and doing a really fine job.”

The Christian Brothers’ ongoing commitment to professionalization also played a key role in earning the endearment of the Church hierarchy and lay leaders. The strife of the qualifications question at the turn of the century was soon turned on its head. In general, Brothers in the Toronto District quickly embraced provincially sanctioned credentials. Much like other communities of teaching religious, at the end of the academic school year, Ontario’s Brothers often spent their summer months taking extra courses in areas of interest, obtaining university degrees, improving their teachers’ qualifications, going abroad or to Quebec to learn languages,

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44 BCSA, 700 Series, Duke St. + Bond St. Annals + Personnel, The Establishment of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Toronto and their Early History (Transcribed by Brother Walter Farrell, from the Original Handwritten text by Early Brothers in Toronto), 85.
45 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, Informational, 1935, 6.
46 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 3, St. John’s Training School, Remarks Following Inspection of St. John’s Training School, 22 January 1945.
47 LAC, m.f. K211 reel # 151006-151007, Statistiques des F.É.C. au Canada, 21-2.
or running summer school sessions. A few examples help flesh this out, one on an individual basis and the other one from a group perspective. In the summer of 1955, following a year teaching history at St. Joseph’s College, Brother Stanislaus James (Alex Balawyder) remained in Yorkton to tend to office affairs and to draft the final version of his 136-page Master’s of Education thesis for the University of Manitoba.\footnote{BCSA, 700 Series, Yorkton History + Personnel + Edmonton Personnel, History of St. Joseph’s Community, Yorkton, 1919-1970, 130-41.} In the summer of 1960, the entire St. Patrick’s Community in Quebec City was dispersed. Brothers Celsus, George, Lucian, and Andrew went to De La Salle Camp to act as counsellors, Brothers Basil and Denis pursued summer university courses, the former at Assumption University and the latter at the University of Ottawa. Finally, the Director, Brother Pascal, took some time to visit the Juniors at Brome Lake, tend to administrative duties in Quebec City, and take a short vacation at Fourteen Island Lake north of Montreal.\footnote{AGR, Supplements Historique, St. Patrick Community, Quebec City, 1960.}

Catholic teachers in Ontario also used professional organizations to continue to propagate Catholic ideas and principles. The Ontario Teachers’ Council (OTC), formed in 1924, advocated for greater stability in the teaching vocation and for teaching to be recognized as a profession.\footnote{The OTC formed in the transformative post-First World War era, emerging out of an alliance of the Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario (established in 1918), the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (established in 1919), and the Ontario Men Teachers Federation (established in 1921). For details, see Sheila Coo, The First Forty Years: OEFTA, 1944-1984 (Toronto: OEFTA, 1984), ii-iii, 17-20.} Many of their goals were reached with the passage of the Teaching Profession Act in 1944, which raised the status of teaching, gave teachers a stronger voice over the delivery and content of education, and fostered a closer relationship between teachers and school boards. Developments of this kind encouraged the OTC to widen both their membership and scope of their collective action, and they sought Catholics’ inclusion for the proposed Ontario Teachers’ Federation (OTF). Before the 1940s, Ontario’s Catholic teachers had no formal organization with
which to voice their concerns, leaving it up to religious orders or individual efforts. While increasingly cognizant of all teachers’ collective plight as professionals in the classroom, Catholic teachers such as the Christian Brothers still understood their distinct situation as Catholic men and women teaching in separate schools. Consequently, they decided to join the OTF not as members of one of the existing groups, but separately as the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA) in 1944.

Priests and religious teaching orders joined and staffed OECTA from its inception. OECTA formed as a collective organization for English-speaking Catholic teachers, lay and religious alike. Its purpose was to raise the status of teachers, ensure proper remuneration, offer legal and collective bargaining advice, publicize ministry guidelines, and provide professional development courses and conferences on a wide array of educational trends and practices.  

Among the leading figures in the organization’s first decade were Brothers Stanislaus, Arnold, Thaddeus, and Maurice. Brother Stanislaus (Gerald O’Reilly), Director of London’s Brendan Hall Community and teaching at its associated De La Salle High School, was named to the first OECTA Executive as its third Vice-President. Also serving on that first Executive Committee was Brother Arnold (William Harrigan), who publicized OECTA’s activities to its 2000 members. By the late 1940s, when the battle for better working conditions and salaries was in full force, OECTA relied on the judgment of Brother Thaddeus (Joseph Hurley), who was elected as First Vice President in 1947 and 1948 and then as President for 1949.  

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51 Coo notes that there was little evidence of any attempt at collective action among Catholic teachers prior to the 1930s. One notable exception, she claimed, was the work of Brother Rogatian, who, in 1918, helped to organize Catholic lay teachers in Toronto. Coo claims that Rogatian’s work “succeeded in negotiating a salary increase of almost 100 per cent” for the city’s non-religious teachers. Coo, *The First Forty Years*, 17.

52 Brother Thaddeus joined the Brothers in 1925. After earning his High School diploma, he attended Toronto’s Normal School, where he received his Elementary School Teacher’s Certificate in 1929. While teaching full time and maintaining his religious obligations was time consuming, Brother Thaddeus still tackled summer school, eventually earning a BA from the University of Toronto in 1941 and an MA in 1965. He taught elementary and secondary school at Brothers’ schools in London, Ottawa, and Toronto, was principal at St. Paul’s School in
busy with his role as St. Mary’s Community director and principal at St. Helen’s School in Toronto, Brother Cornelius also served as President of his local and on the OECTA executive in the early 1950s.\textsuperscript{53}

Despite all this institutional and membership expansion in the 1914-64 era, or, more appropriately, because of that growth, the Toronto District was rife with internal bickering. Having shown a united front against ongoing French-speaking authority in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, divisions quickly permeated the English Brothers’ ranks. The more they grew in stature and numbers, the more they had to worry about. Moreover, the gravity of these concerns became more evident – and sometimes more public – as the stakes were higher because of the financial and human investment. Problems arose around financial decisions, construction projects, placements, spirituality, behaviour, and educational performance. Such tribulations were a locus for anxiety about the Brothers’ status in Ontario. They wanted to ensure that difficulties of any sort did not detract from their commitment to prosper. It was precisely because they wanted to prosper so much that every problem became a potential scandal, potentially diminishing the inroads they had made with provincial education representatives and endangering the bonds they held with the church hierarchy. Overall, scandals of every sort had the potential to jeopardize the Brothers standing as educators in Ontario, theoretically bringing dishonor to their order, separate schools, and to the Catholic Church in the province.

Between 1914 and 1962, there was no more serious scandal at that time than those revolving around finances. In the Brothers’ view, managing capital investments such as schools or community houses was a central component of sound and competent administration. The reverse was also true: financial mismanagement would necessarily lead to their humiliation and disgrace. Even more important was that Brothers’ fiscal misconduct could also seriously discredit separate schools. As Franklin Walker has shown in his classic work, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario*, Catholic leaders and separate school boards across the province were perpetually concerned about operating costs and funding issues; potential bankruptcy was always a disheartening possibility. Because monetary issues could potentially erupt into scandal – and possibly dismissal – and thereby ruin all the Brothers had worked for and all they had hoped to achieve, they needed to be dealt with earnestly and efficiently. However, there were diverse views on what, when, and how solutions would be implemented.

At the Brothers’ two western Canadian schools, fears concerning financial incompetence began from the outset in the 1920s. Pecuniary anxieties threatened the Toronto District’s emerging reputation. Despite new buildings, growing numbers, and highly-respected individual Brothers and teachers, the perception of monetary mismanagement by some in the Church hierarchy and some of their own superiors led to serious questions: Were the Brothers the correct choice to operate a high school for Ukrainians in Saskatchewan and to teach young men in Alberta’s first Catholic university? At Yorkton’s St. Joseph’s College, for instance, the Brothers’ financial problems were perceived as a central contributing factor to the school’s potential closure after only one year of operation. By November 1921, there were only 25 boarders and eight day-pupils for a total of 33 students, not nearly as high as expected nor enough to cover expenses. While the Brothers appreciated the limited financial backing from the Catholic Church

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Extension Society (CCES), funding for the school remained low. At the same time, the Christian Brothers were not getting the expected support from Ukrainian immigrants in part because of their grave fears about forced Anglicization and Latinization. Indeed, while the public voice was to express support for Ukrainian Catholicity, the CCES still had a lingering “assimilatory edge” from 1912-29. The general inclination amongst this organization was that education would help to Canadianize Ukrainians. But the two leading Redemptorists in Yorkton, Fathers Noël-Marie Decamps and Achiel Delaere, complained that the Brothers were unwilling to learn Ukrainian and were prejudiced by their English-Canadian nationalism. “It seems that we get the cold shoulder no matter where we turn,” wrote Brother Ansbert (Maurice Sheehy), Director of the Yorkton community and principal of St. Joseph’s school. Personality clashes between

55 For instance, in early 1920, one member of the Redemptorists in Yorkton, Father Noël-Marie Decamps, lamented that the Brothers seemed more preoccupied with pursuing “a life of pleasure” than focusing on their ministry and that they lacked “the courage to make the necessary sacrifices to save these souls…” Decamps stressed that there were grave fears among the “Ruthenian” community – the common term to describe Ukrainians in early twentieth-century Canada – that the Brothers were there to Anglicize them and was therefore “absolutely convinced” that they needed to learn Ukrainian in order to “win their sympathies … every effort to evangelize toward them will be fruitless if we don’t speak their language.” The Redemptorist Superior, Achiel Delaere, also accused the Christian Brothers of not being up to par on the language front and felt obliged to write to Archbishop Neil McNeil about his concern. While acknowledging that they knew how to read a bit of the language, they “know not how to speak or understand even small conversation in Ruthenian.” For Delaere, such a predicament could be potentially disastrous both for the students at St. Joseph’s College and for the Brothers in Western Canada. He noted that the priority should be for the Brothers to learn Ruthenian, as that would help these immigrants keep to their sense of community identity and their religion. “This does not mean that they will never learn the English spirit,” he wrote, “but it has to proceed slowly if we want to conserve their Catholic faith.” This was an especially concerning issue because Protestants had been attempting their own acculturation and conversion efforts among the Ukrainians in Saskatchewan. He further stressed that where Protestants had employed men who learned Ruthenian, they were much more successful in their endeavours. For a full account of the anxieties over Latinization and Anglicization, see McGowan, “A Portion for the Vanquished,” in Lciuki and Hryniuk, eds., Canada’s Ukrainians, 218-37. See also ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), St. Joseph’s College – Yorkton, Sask – 1920-1925, V.M. Decamps, CSSR to Neil McNeil, 11 February 1920; Ibid., A. Delaere to Neil McNeil, 5 May 1920; BCSA, 700 Series, Yorkton History + Personnel + Edmonton Personnel, History of St. Joseph’s Community, Yorkton, 1919-1970, 115-7. This theme is also discussed in relation to the Redemptorist experience in Laverdure, Redemption and Renewal, 146-52.


57 Laverdure, Redemption and Ritual, 94-7. Delaere was born in Flanders, Belgium in 1868 and was ordained in 1896. After a brief period serving Polish Catholics in Brandon between 1899 and 1904, he moved to Yorkton and founded St. Gerard Parish and Monastery. Over the course of the next 40 years, he served the needs of Ukrainian Rite Catholics – even moving to this Rite himself in 1906 – and was called the “Apostle of the Ukrainians in Canada.” For details on his life and work in the Canadian west, see Laverdure, Redemption and Renewal, 89-92.

58 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), St. Joseph’s College – Yorkton, Sask – 1920-1925, Brother Ansbert to Brother Bernard, Visitor, 5 November 1921.
Brother Ansbert and Father Decamps coupled with their battles for control over the school’s curriculum and staffing only exacerbated the tensions over the school’s poor economic situation.

St. Joseph’s School and the Brothers’ Yorkton community merely scraped by for the following few years, relying on small donations from the Catholic laity, the CCES, and the limited resources of the Toronto District Brothers. Attendance remained low as poor crops and droughts throughout these years necessitated many parents to sacrifice their sons’ educational ambitions in order to stay home to work their fields. By 1924, the Brothers had debts to the baker, butcher, lawyer, and other merchants in Yorkton. Financial pressure that year was so burdensome that the Visitor, Brother Bernard, deliberated if he should delay or suspend the College’s opening. Brother Bernard feared that a permanent closure would not only ruin their prospects for western vocations, but would also restrain their ambitions for geographic expansion, indicating a limit to their growth and prestige. Despite this dire situation, the Visitor stressed the essential nature of the work in providing Ukrainian boys with an education: “The importance of the work and the great influence of the college amongst these poor people must make us determined to save the situation at any cost.”

When conditions again threatened the school’s opening in 1925, Father Delaere stressed the necessity of keeping the school open, fearing that boys would otherwise attend Protestant schools. In fact, closing St. Joseph’s, according to Delaere, “would be a triumph for the Protestants; who will say and write, that the Catholics are unwilling or incapable to do anything for the maintenance of their faith.” A Greek Rite priest in Yorkton, the Reverend Krakospi, also pressured the Brothers – or more correctly, the CCES – to not permanently close St. Joseph’s, believing that would be “the biggest mistake


\[60\] ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), St. Joseph’s College – Yorkton, Sask – 1920-1925, Father Delaere, CSSR to Brother Stanislaus [Bernard], 28 March 1925.
they have ever done.” With the depression now over, he noted, “improvement will come.”61

But while the Brothers on the ground in Yorkton remained “optimistic and enthusiastic” about the College’s future, improvement was not immediately forthcoming and the school’s closure remained a real possibility.62 Superiors in Toronto remained fretful about the potential humiliation they would face upon closing a school after so much fanfare from the CCES and financial and moral support from Ontario Catholics. By 1927, the new Visitor, Brother Austin, pleaded with Archbishop McNeil to help lighten the fiscal burden and avoid financial ruin. He complained that the Toronto District was in a “precarious financial condition” stemming from the “[n]ecessities of development and expansion” throughout Ontario and, more recently, into the West. More specifically, he speculated that the combined factors of rapid development, small revenue, and additional resources needed to operate St. Joseph’s College “have so taxed our resources that we are in absolute need of help at the present moment.” Knowing that his congregation could not keep up this pace, Brother Austin suggested that the Archbishop’s intervention was absolutely mandatory. Without his aid, there would be a very real possibility of closing the entire Toronto District, necessitating re-absorption by Montreal authorities. “Such a thing would ruin forever our work in Ontario and Western Canada” he claimed. “It is to prevent such a catastrophe that we are appealing to Your Grace and to the other Bishops of Ontario.”63

Not wanting to tolerate such a blow, great effort was made to keep the school in operation. Expansion was tempered in Ontario, with the Brothers not taking on too many new commitments because of the inherent financial liability. Moreover, the Archdiocese of Toronto

63 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1921-29, Bro. N. Austin to Archbishop Neil McNeil, 1 February 1927.
and the CCES provided more money to ensure St. Joseph’s had adequate funding. Finally, the Brothers attempted to allay any suspicions about Latinization and Anglicization once and for all “by visiting the colonies and mixing with the people.” These visits played an integral role in showcasing their commitment to the region and their desire to see the school prosper. In the process, relations between the Christian Brothers and Saskatchewan’s Ukrainians genuinely improved over the course of the late 1920s. The “active opposition” from some Redemptorists began to wane and, especially following the arrival of a Ukrainian Brother into the community and the addition of some lay Ukrainian teachers, “the suspicion and the prejudice of the people were dispelled and confidence was created.” Ukrainians fears were steadily assuaged, evidenced through the Brothers’ efforts to preserve Ukrainians’ culture and faith while gradually introducing them to Canadian customs and the English language in order to allow them to more fully participate in Canadian life. Such efforts contributed to a significant jump in attendance over the following three decades and the growing number of Greek Rite priests who spoke highly of their experience at the College.

The Brothers were able to overcome the challenges and potentially scandalous problems that arose and turned difficulties into a productive and highly regarded school. While one Brother remarked that the College’s first decade was “a record of patient suffering” he marveled

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65 By 1931, there were 59 students. That number jumped to 155 by 1947. AGR, Supplements Historique, St. Joseph’s Community (Yorkton), 1931 and 1947. On the occasion of St. Joseph’s Silver Jubilee in 1945, dozens of tributes poured in from politicians, priests, and educational ambassadors. Bishop Vasyl Ladyka of the Ruthenian Catholic Diocese of Canada praised the Brothers’ “spirit of sacrifice and perseverance” in creating “respected citizens of Canada” and in contributing to a flourishing Catholicism by graduating a “large number” of “spiritual leaders” among the Ukrainian populace. Yorkton’s Mayor, Charles A. Peaker, complimented the work of the Christian Brothers, whose college “has carried on a meritorious and beneficent program of education” by graduating boys “to careers of worthy usefulness of this land where it is hoped a people of common ideals of national life will arise from its different contributing elements.” Most Reverend P. J. Monohan, Archbishop of Regina, was perhaps the most lucid in identifying both the civic and religious benefits in attending higher education under the Brothers’ tutelage. Through their guidance, he wrote, the boys will have “a richer and happier life in this land of ours” and will “give to the Church and to Canada intelligent, virtuous and patriotic leaders in every walk of life.” All quotations are cited in AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.4, The Christian Brother, 1947, 18.
that their “devotedness, prudence, and zeal led one of the leading Ukrainians to state that the Christian Brothers were the only organization, lay or religious, that had won the love, respect and confidence of the Ukrainian people.”\textsuperscript{66} That strong reputation remained intact through to the mid-1940s; taking “great joy” in celebrating the College’s Silver Jubilee in 1945, Toronto’s Archbishop McGuigan commended the Brothers at St. Joseph’s for having “done a noble work” not only for the Ukrainian people, but for the Catholic Church in Canada.\textsuperscript{67}

In the 1920s, financial problems were also complicating the Brothers’ western ambitions in Edmonton, where they had been asked to teach at St. Joseph’s College, the new Catholic campus attached to the University of Alberta. The Assistant for North America at this time, Brother Mandellus, was concerned about how the school would be staffed and financed; he did not want his congregation to face the ignominy of having to forsake the project before it even got off the ground or abandon it after only a few short years because it would not be able to cover expenses. “Our Province [District] in Ontario is young though promising,” Brother Mandellus wrote, “and we need therefore to equip our Brothers with a good training. The few men of experience we have are already employed in Toronto and in other places of Ontario.”\textsuperscript{68}

These fears frustrated the ambitious Toronto District Visitor, Brother Austin, who was optimistic that his District could overcome any challenges that arose and dreaded postponing the College’s opening. He attempted to persuade his superior of St. Joseph’s value and the devastating consequences for the Brothers’ reputation if delays continued. “While we are debating conditions,” Brother Austin remarked, “souls are being lost” amidst the “Protestant

\textsuperscript{67} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), St. Joseph’s College – Yorkton, Sask – 1926-1946, Archbishop McGuigan to Reverend Brother Aloysius, 30 April 1946.
\textsuperscript{68} LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 202564-202566, Canada Communautés, Edmonton, Brother Assistant Mandellus to The Most Reverend Henry J. O’Leary, 10 February 1925.
atmosphere” of the University of Alberta. If they could not sort out their problems, Brother Austin cautioned that the Brothers “will be made ridiculous all over Canada,” and that English-speaking Bishops “will lose all confidence in us and I can see nothing less than a catastrophe for our work.” Finally, in late winter or early spring of 1926, Brother Mandellus was informed that the financial arrangements were secure. Evidently, the Archdiocese of Edmonton stepped in with a guarantee against financial loss for the first five years. Furthermore, Brother Alfred (Alfred Dooner) conducted a well-organized endowment drive raising $100,000, a dollar figure equivalent to roughly $1.4 million in 2015. This amount was matched by a Carnegie Foundation donation. Feeling confident that the Brothers were in a much better pecuniary situation and had a plan for stable financial management, Brother Mandellus agreed to allow them to operate St. Joseph’s. It seems plausible that he also came to recognize that venturing further into Western Canada offered both the promise of more recruits and the acclaim associated with operating a university.

While the above affair was quickly solved, a new crisis emerged when reservations about the College’s Catholicity further delayed St. Joseph’s opening. Misgivings stemmed from Cardinal Gaetano Bisleti, the Prefect of Rome’s Sacred Congregation of the Seminaries and Universities. In this position, Bisleti worked to establish seminaries and other institutions of higher learning and assist in providing them with laws for their foundation, government, and

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69 LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 202566-202567, Canada Communautés, Edmonton, Brother Austin to Brother Assistant, 26 January 1926.

70 Brother Alfred is perhaps most famous for co-founding, alongside James F. Kenney, the Canadian Catholic Historical Association in 1933. Brother Alfred wrote many articles for the CCHA’s Report until his death in 1949. For details, see BCSA, 400 Series, Brother Personnel, Dooner, Alfred James (Brother Alfred). For details on the foundation of the CCHA, see Glenn T. Wright, “James Francis Kenney, 1884-1946: Founder of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association,” CCHA Study Sessions 50 (1983), 11-45.

71 The Carnegie Foundation began in 1911 as a philanthropic wing of Andrew Carnegie’s United States Steel Company. The organization was dedicated to institution building and long-term societal progress rather than immediate relief. Not bound to any particular Christian denomination, the foundation was willing to donate to causes that Carnegie cared deeply about, such as education, justice, and peace efforts.
effective administration. Yet Roman bureaucrats regularly failed to grasp Canadian models of higher education, which often involved Catholic Colleges and Institutes affiliating or federating with larger universities and offering more specific courses. As Laurence K. Shook has pointed out, misunderstandings surrounding autonomy and Catholicity of institutions such as St. Michael’s College and the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto, as well as St. Mary’s College in Halifax, all caused controversies and delays amongst bishops, religious orders, and Roman officials as they tried to function and flourish in Canada.  

Bisleti, too, exemplified this lack of understanding. He was particularly worried that Archbishop O’Leary’s supposedly Catholic College would be too closely connected with the “protestant” University of Alberta. As such, he feared that it would not be for Catholics alone, but rather “open to students of all religious denominations, in order to afford them an opportunity of co-mingling in College days and thus make for mutual understanding, good will and fellowship.” While left unstated, Bisleti left no doubt that this camaraderie between Protestants and Catholics was absolutely intolerable.

Seeking to avoid being “tainted with an absurd liberalism,” O’Leary tried to alleviate the Cardinal’s horror by clarifying the university’s mandate and stature within the University of Alberta. He noted that the “ideal” solution would obviously be “a Catholic University of our own” but acknowledged that this was an impossibility given the lack of financial resources and provincial legislation that gave the University of Alberta a monopoly over university education. Affiliation, therefore, provided the “only suitable remedy” to ensure the building of a “purely

72 Laurence K. Shook, *Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 57-74; 141-65; 210-21. It is unsurprising that European cardinals and bureaucrats had trouble understanding the complexities of institutions of higher education in Canada, given that many people (professors, presidents, university senates, etc.) also found the complexity difficult. Shook himself claims that there is probably “no institution in Canada [that] has been so chaotically put together and its chaos so persistently maintained as St. Michael’s.” Shook, *Catholic Post-Secondary Education*, 192.

Catholic College” that would “protect and defend the faith” all while acquiring degrees for the learned professions without having to travel 2000 miles away to the closest officially Catholic University. Finally, he assured Bisleti that the Christian Brothers would instill a virtuous and totally Catholic environment, suitable for carrying out the College’s mission of safeguarding the faith. Whether he understood the intricacies of affiliated colleges is debatable, but Bisleti eventually granted his consent to the Brothers’ ongoing operation in Edmonton. By 1931, Archbishop O’Leary wanted to draw the Brothers’ Superior General’s attention to the fact that the College “conducted excellent work. … In my opinion, this is the most important of all the institutions of which the Brothers operate in all of Canada.” O’Leary remained equally satisfied six years later, when he congratulated the Brothers on their work and noted that the College had “done a world of good” over the previous decade because it gave “to Catholic students a training truly imbued with Catholic principles.” Once again, the Brothers and their allies showed that despite some challenges from potential scandals, they were able to overcome them and prove to their superiors – in both the Church and in the order – that the Toronto District could flourish.

One of the most important and controversial disputes related to finances began to surface at Toronto’s De La Salle Oaklands in the early 1930s. The Oaklands Principal at this time, Brother Alfred, now returned to Toronto following four years at St. Joseph’s College in Edmonton, was deeply concerned about both internal and external threats to the school’s financial welfare and its future viability. In 1932, in response to declining numbers of people willing and able to pay tuition, Brother Alfred wrote to Archbishop Neil McNeil concerned that...

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75 LAC, m.f. K216, reel # 202580, Canada Communautés, Edmonton, Archbishop O’Leary to Frère Adrien, Superieur-Générale, 30 October 1931. While they had control over its operation, note that St. Joseph’s College did not belong to the Brothers. Rather, it was owned by the St. Joseph’s College Corporation, which was comprised of a board of governors, including the Archbishop of Edmonton, the Bishop of Calgary, the Rector, Bursar, and Dean of the College, and three laymen.
76 LAC, m.f. K212, reel # 161945, Centenary Number, 5.
the Basilians at St. Michael’s College had initiated an “unreasonable and unfair method of competition” by proposing to lower tuition costs from $75.00 to $40.00 per year. Brother Alfred feared that such a move would undoubtedly “make matters very difficult” for financing Oaklands and instead suggested a “very reasonable” fee of $50.00 for first and second year high school boys and $60.00 for boys in third, fourth, or fifth year.

[T]he whole attitude of St. Michael’s College towards us, is a very strange one. … If Parish priests and curates, at the instigation of the authorities of St. Michael’s College, are to canvass the city against us; if the pulpits are to be used against us; if fees are to be slashed almost 100% to under cut “Oaklands”, you can readily understand, Your Excellency, that our problem here is greatly complicated.

If the Basilians’ “aggressive” proposition were allowed to proceed, he argued, parents would certainly send their boys to St. Michael’s owing to the cheaper tuition. Brother Alfred assumed that such a development would inevitably cut into Oaklands’ sustainability since it was built in part as an investment to maintain the Brothers’ other operations across the province. Essentially, he argued that if Oaklands failed, it would jeopardize the Brothers’ capability to function as an independent district.

In April 1933, Brother Alfred’s concerns turned inward, expressing his anxiety to both the Visitor and the Archbishop about the difficulties associated with running an enterprise as large as Oaklands amidst the harsh economic climate of the Great Depression and exacerbated by internal opposition. He suggested that these issues impeded the Brothers and their young district from reaching its full potential. Writing to the Visitor regarding Oaklands financing, Brother

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77 These figures are equivalent to a reduction from roughly $1250 to $660 in 2015.
78 These figures are equivalent to about $830 and $1000 respectively in 2015.
79 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), De La Salle – Oaklands – 1931-1939, Brother Alfred to Archbishop McNeil, 19 August 1932. A more formal complaint was submitted to the Archbishop by the Visitor, Brother Urban, who expressed his consternation over some priests’ priorities. While he welcomed “fair competition,” Brother Urban was alarmed that priests were using the pulpit “to favour one Catholic School in preference to another” rather than promoting Catholic schooling in general. He flatly remarked that it is “Catholic Education that both Brothers and Priests should be interested in.” See ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1930-1933, Brother Urban to Archbishop Neil McNeil, 22 July 1932.
Alfred explained that they must follow through on their previous agreement with the Archbishop to transfer the Grade 12 and 13 boys who had been at De La Salle Moore Park to Oaklands and thereby assure $60.00 per student annually (equivalent to about $1000 in 2015). Recall that Moore Park opened as a private school in 1925 for grades 11-13 because the Catholic population in the city had increased and De La Salle Collegiate (Del Bond) was over-crowded. While Brother Alfred expected that all the Moore Park boys would be transferred to Oaklands by 1932, only the grade 11 boys had done so. Defaulting on the agreement to transfer the grade 12 and 13 boys would be shameful, he reasoned, because it is precisely what they had already promised the Archbishop that they would do: “Any opposition to this will certainly put His Excellency in very bad humor. He has his heart set on the financial and academic success of “Oaklands”. “80 Brother Alfred feared that shirking on one’s promise would surely upset the Archbishop – a man who was “heavily involved financially” with Oaklands – possibly leading him to limit his willingness to invest in the Brothers’ building projects and doubt their prospect for future success.

Concern about the heavy financial burden of operating Oaklands during an abysmal economic downturn and the poor leadership shown by the Visitor in attempting to handle the crisis led Brother Alfred, from his position as school principal and community director, to again correspond with McNeil. Brother Alfred wanted to assure the Archbishop that, by placing Oaklands on a stable financial footing, it was he who was truly working in the District’s best interest; anyone who stood in the way of that undertaking was acting selfishly. Unafraid to call out particular individuals on this issue, he named his superior and his colleagues as particularly meddlesome. The Visitor, Brother Urban, was “a weak man” who was being led astray by an organized contingent of “agitators” under the leadership of Brother Memorian, who, “for reasons

80 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), De La Salle – Oaklands – 1931-1939, Brother Alfred to Brother Urban, 18 April 1933.
of jealousy,” were opposed to Oaklands and sabotaging his righteous efforts.\textsuperscript{81} Brother Alfred demanded the Archbishop’s intervention, specifically requesting that he order the boys from Moore Park School be transferred to Oaklands out of financial necessity and that Brother Memorian’s interference be stopped.\textsuperscript{82} If these aims were carried out, he felt assured that Oaklands would persevere, and, as a result, so too would the entire Toronto District. This demand would also have the added benefit of quieting any rising tension within the Brothers’ ranks, a development that would undoubtedly help to eliminate the indignity of disobedience, which, if left unchecked, would continue to be a major distraction.

Oaklands’ financial distress continued unabated throughout the 1930s. By the end of the decade, the tension between the Christian Brothers and the Archdiocese – now headed by Archbishop James McGuigan – degenerated into a heated battle. The conflict emerged on a grand scale in the wake of the death of Senator Frank O’Connor in 1939. Before he died, McGuigan learned that O’Connor would leave his 900-acre Maryvale Farm in northeast Toronto to the Brothers. The Archbishop suggested O’Connor alter his will so that the Brothers receive the Maryvale property but then cede it to the Archdiocese as a means to cover the $250 000 debt owed to it for the purchase of the Oaklands property in 1931.\textsuperscript{83} When O’Connor refused, McGuigan approached Brother Austin, once again at the helm of the District in the position of Visitor, and pressured him to buy Oaklands outright and therefore relieve the Archdiocese from the burden of continuing to subsidize the Brothers and their assets: “This would give you ownership with stability and security while, if the Diocese is continually obliged to subsidize, we

\textsuperscript{81} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 4, De La Salle (Oaklands)/St. Joseph’s College (Yorkton, Sask.), \textit{De La Salle – Oaklands – 1931-1939}, Brother Alfred to Neil McNeil, 26 April 1933.
\textsuperscript{82} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1930-1933, Brother Alfred to Neil McNeil, 26 April 1933.
\textsuperscript{83} This sum was significant, equivalent to about $4.2 million in 2015.
will lose everything.”

Brother Austin rebuffed the idea, arguing that the property was a gift to all of the Brothers in the District, and not only those linked to Oaklands.

Moreover, assuming the entirety of the Oaklands mortgage was a liability that Brother Austin was unprepared to tackle at this time, particularly given the many responsibilities they already had coupled with the context of the Great Depression. He especially did not wish to liquidate the Brothers’ other assets in a hurried fashion in order to take full control of Oaklands, as this “would not be a good thing either for the archdiocese or for the Brothers.” Nevertheless, he assured McGuigan that relief for the diocese’s financial burden was on the horizon since the O’Connor money could go toward gradually paying off the Oaklands property. Brother Austin remained confident that “however rough hewn the plans” regarding Oaklands, “I am sure they will eventuate in something really worthwhile. The essence of the whole thing is time; we must have time to work out the O’Connor legacy to the best advantage.”

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, tensions between the Archdiocese and the Brothers – particularly when connected with Oaklands – were aggravated by internal conflict within the Brothers’ ranks. Some Brothers suggested that financial bungling on the part of the leadership undermined their chance for prosperity and threatened their very survival in the province. Brother Alfred, for instance, believed that Toronto District Visitors both past and current were terrible, and regularly complained about their inept leadership and fiscal mismanagement. In 1939, for instance, he intimated to Archbishop McGuigan that “the incompetent management of our affairs in Toronto” was ruining all the good that had been

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84 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 2, Correspondence: Financial, 1938-1979, Archbishop McGuigan to Brother Austin, 31 October 1939.
86 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 2, Correspondence: Financial, 1938-1979, Brother Austin to Archbishop McGuigan, 3 November 1939.
accomplished by both him personally and the Brothers in general since their arrival in the city.\textsuperscript{87}

Two years later, he opined that the Visitors’ financial ineptitude was exacerbated by their tendency to consolidate decision making, a situation that made them not just difficult, but impossible to work with:

Brother N. Austin concentrated all power regarding both the spiritual and material welfare of our province in himself. He ran everything according to his own ideas, would take suggestions from nobody and he finally ended up sinking us hopelessly and ruinously in debt. Brother N. Austin was, as I say, entirely unable to handle the situation. He was without initiative or ingenuity of any kind, so he just adopted a “laisser faire” policy, allowed everything [sic] to drift, and sank us year after year deeper into the hold. Instead of creating new sources of revenue (our revenue was insufficient in face of the sacrifices we were making) he kept on borrowing from the banks and mortgaging our properties, until today we are almost wrecked. His predecessor, Brother S. Urban, another incompetent who held position for six years, had done much the same thing, so that today, our indebtedness amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars. There has been for years amongst us, no proper control of moneys, no proper accounting. Incompetent men have been given charge of works and were allowed to practically do things as they wished, so that much money was squandered.\textsuperscript{88}

Because of their vows of obedience, the archival record does not often document grievances about those in higher positions. This was undoubtedly an exceptional case, but Brother Alfred feared that the incapable administrators that supposedly surrounded him might lead the religious hierarchy to doubt the Brothers’ ability to carry out their mission. It was a crisis that warranted Archbishop McGuigan’s intervention.

Brother Alfred’s fretful assessment of the situation came to a head in the early 1940s, when McGuigan grew deeply concerned about what he considered to be the financial mismanagement in the Brothers’ operations and their increasingly autonomous decision making. He framed his motivation for having the Brothers’ finances settled as noble and altruistic, suggesting that it would prevent humiliation befalling the Archdiocese and its concomitant

\textsuperscript{87} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1936-39, Brother Alfred to Archbishop McGuigan, 23 November 1939.

\textsuperscript{88} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 2, Correspondence: Financial, 1938-1979, Brother Alfred to Archbishop McGuigan, 31 March 1941.
religious orders. By early March 1941, McGuigan claimed that “there is no administration at the Mother House worthy of the name” and pointed out that “if very stringent and definite steps are not taken at once a financial scandal will result which will affect the financial [welfare] of all the Communities of this Archdiocese.” Venting these frustrations to Ildebrando Antoniutti, the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, and to The Sacred Congregation of Religious, McGuigan complained that the Brothers borrowed $350 000 without his permission, an arrangement he considered to be a severe violation of their power.

McGuigan criticized the Brothers for adopting “a very independent attitude” and for participating in and making use of a lay committee not under his immediate control. Even more importantly was the clear indication of their economic imprudence. The Brothers “cannot meet their payments,” he griped. They “are practically bankrupt” and they “have no sense of financial responsibility.” Just why this “unhappy” and “desperate” condition was so important to McGuigan was connected to the negative image it would inevitably portray of the Catholic Church in his Archdiocese:

Toronto is a very Protestant city, very prejudiced against the Church. A financial scandal of the Christian Brothers or of any other community would have a terrible effect upon Church finance here. Moreover, it would arouse great discontent and hatred among those who hold the bonds if means are not available to pay them.

As such, McGuigan proposed that Antoniutti grant him “complete control” over the community in order to see to the discharge of the debt. If the Brothers refused, he threatened to have them

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89 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 2, Correspondence: Financial, 1938-1979, Archbishop McGuigan to Brother Romuald, 11 March 1941.
90 A dollar figure of $350 000 in 1941 is equivalent to about $5.4 million in 2015.
91 ARCAT, McGuigan Papers, MG DS43.26, McGuigan to Ildebrando Antoniutti, 11 March 1941. This mess was exacerbated, McGuigan thought, by the ineptitude of Brother Austin, who failed to recognize the gravity of this situation. McGuigan suggested that Austin was “quite incompetent as an Administrator. He should be replaced at once.”
92 ARCAT, McGuigan Papers, MG DS43.32 (A-C), McGuigan to The Sacred Congregation of Religious, Vatican City, 28 March 1941.
replaced at Oaklands, a proposition he wished to avoid. Writing to Brother Alfred, with whom he had a special bond, McGuigan noted: “The day is coming when the Brothers will have their backs to the wall. Then and then only will they open their eyes. May God defend them against themselves.”

McGuigan’s pressure finally paid off, as Brother Abban Philippe, the Assistant, ousted Brother Austin in mid-March 1941. To try to ease tensions, the Assistant wrote a letter addressed to all Brothers in the Toronto District explaining the removal. Officially, he stated that Brother Austin’s health was beginning to fail him and, as such, he needed “work of lesser responsibility.” Reading between the lines, however, reveals that the Visitor was unable to handle the many problems facing the District. The Assistant demanded that the Toronto Brothers bow to the wishes of the Archbishop because without his assistance, “we can accomplish nothing of good in our scholastic endeavours; without him our work can end only in shipwreck and disaster.” A new Visitor was “called upon to shoulder the burden” and eliminate “the incubus of the annoying debt which is paralysing our work, stunting our development, impairing [sic] the efficiency of our efforts and ruining us as men of right reason, in the eyes of those desirous to help us.”

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94 ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 2, Correspondence: Financial, 1938-1979, Archbishop McGuigan to Brother Alfred, 11 March 1941. The special bond referred to above is based upon the voluminous letters between the two, often disclosing secrets that they did not relay to the Visitor (which was customary) and upon the affectionate greetings and closing lines of their correspondence.

95 AFÉCCF, FÉC Étrangers au District, Relations avec l’Extérieur, Relations Publiques et Externes, 3055.19, Assistant to the Brothers Directors and dear Brothers [of Toronto District], 18 March 1941. Brother Austin did not receive this news with a spirit of humility, but with anger at his “forced” removal at the behest of someone outside the congregation. He wrote a lengthy letter to McGuigan expressing his frustration with the Archbishop’s tactics and intervention in securing his dismissal from the Visitorship. He claimed that this action “has, logically, destroyed any prestige I might have in this District and the French-Canadian and American Districts, where I have a goodly number of friends and connections.” Moreover, he was particularly upset that a removal of this kind has ensured that family and friends in Toronto were speculating “as to what high crime or misdemeanour I have been guilty of. … I did not create the financial situation in the Toronto District, any more than you created the financial mess in the Toronto Archdiocese. … Brother Assistant was good enough to transmit a message to me from you to the effect “that you had nothing against me”. I am glad that such is the case and would be glad if I could honestly reciprocate the message.” ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 2, Correspondence: Financial, 1938-1979, Brother Austin to Archbishop McGuigan, 22 March 1941.
new Visitor was Brother Prudent (James MacDonald), a man whose namesake McGuigan hoped would live up to expectations. Mercifully, for McGuigan, Brother Prudent brought a steady hand to the District’s administration. In the context of World War II, few postulants were joining and little money was being generated. As such, he did not try to exceed expectations, opening only one new community and school, Oshawa’s St. Gregory’s, in 1944. Nevertheless, with the Great Depression over and Senator O’Connor’s financial gift paying dividends, Brother Prudent’s short era evinced a renewed enthusiasm and some semblance of financial stability. By the time his successor, Brother Claudius, took the reins in 1944, the Brothers could once again focus on solidifying their presence and reputation in Ontario’s separate schools.

Much like their experience dealing with financial disarray, various failings and weaknesses – real or perceived – connected to their teaching and/or credentials posed potential threats to their sense of permanency in the province. Recall that Ontario’s English-speaking Brothers had, between 1907 and 1910, supported the province’s call to move away from an internal teacher-training format and towards a provincially regulated and approved system. Yet, ten years later, despite their efforts to meet the provincial qualifications, all was not well in that pursuit. Around 1920, one unidentified and very unhappy Brother from Toronto noted that a few members of the clergy gave some “unpleasant little remarks” opposing the Brothers’ work. This Brother, probably a high school teacher at De La Salle College (Del Bond), assumed that the source of the opposition was a priest at the Basilian-run St. Michael’s College, De La Salle’s chief competitor. According to the Brother, this priest had uttered an attack on the Brothers’ teaching qualifications and methods, jeopardizing their reputation amongst the city’s Catholic population. In particular, the Brother alleged that the priest told a woman with three sons: “You must send your boys to St. Michael’s College where they will be taught by Educated Men. The
Brothers are not educated men.”\textsuperscript{96} Evidently, there was much work to be done to assure some priests and Catholic parents that the Brothers’ commitment to accommodate to provincial norms and showcase their talents was working. With this kind of bad publicity stemming from the clergy, the Brothers feared that Catholic parents would inevitably direct their children away from Del Bond and toward St. Michael’s. Such a development obviously placed the Brothers in a difficult situation since it risked cutting off financial resources and, more importantly, showed them in a negative light as substandard teachers amongst the Catholic masses.

Efforts to limit separate school funding or abolish them outright were continuous since the introduction of publicly funded separate schools in 1841, when the Common School Act (Day Act) was passed. Intermittent spikes in anti-Catholic school sentiment ensured that the Christian Brothers were perpetually nervous that a scandal of any kind could be devastating to separate schools and their presence therein. The Brothers were especially concerned that behavioural or spiritual problems might expose them as worldly, disingenuous, and sinful, all contrary to the mission and spirit of a Catholic religious order and therefore troubling their sense of comfort and threatening their future. As such, superiors needed to take complaints seriously. These complaints arose regularly; problems relating to conformity, discipline, obedience, and other aspects of daily life were virtually guaranteed for groups of men living in vowed community; superiors could never guarantee saintly, let alone professional or devout, members living according to their founder’s (or the Church hierarchy’s) ideal. These problems in and of themselves were of significant concern but so too were the attendant endangerments to their positive image and/or the ensuing public-relations frustrations.

\textsuperscript{96} The anonymous Brother believed the priest’s name to be Father O’Connor. However, The Dictionary of Basilian Biography does not have an entry for that name in this time period. ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1900-1920, unknown author and untitled document, c. 1920. The Brother was presumably writing to Archbishop Neil McNeil since the file is found amongst plenty of letters between Brothers and the Archbishop.
Several spirituality-related problems came to light in the Toronto District following the official tour from Brother Romuald-Hosea, the Assistant, in the summer of 1932. His report relayed some disconcerting findings. At Aurora’s House of Formation, he found that it was “the divine element that is missing” at the Juniorate, alluding to a lack of charity, harmony, and regularity amongst the juniors. He thus recommended greater adherence to the body of laws found in *The Rule for Junior Novices*. Further irreligious conduct was observed in the Novitiate where the Assistant found the community “lacking in fervor” and needing to instill a more “heavenly” atmosphere. Across the district more broadly, discipline and obedience were particularly problematic, with some Brothers defying their directors on issues such as wake-up call, tobacco use, and inappropriate attire. The Assistant claimed that “discord, quarreling, and cliques … are the order of the day” leading to his ugly but candid assessment of the Toronto District as a whole: “God’s charity is thoroughly unknown; no spirit of cooperation.”

Clearly, Brother Romuald-Hosea expected that the Toronto District Brothers would immediately get to work in rectifying these “serious irregularities.” The Assistant framed his rationale for correcting the order’s poor record on two bases. The first was religious oriented, focused on not wanting to let down their heavenly Father. “God cannot bless the work being done in this region,” he noted, since “the conditions to deserve divine assistance have not been fulfilled.” This being the case, he was planning to pray for those sinning Brothers that they might take comfort in the way of God and rectify their bad behaviour. However, the Assistant was wise enough to recognize that the impetus to correct one’s transgressions necessitated more concrete repercussions. The many “deplorable” abuses he listed were especially damning, he claimed, because they have significant real-world consequences on the formation of young Brothers, the

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97 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.3, Brother Romuald-Hosea to Brother Urban, c. summer 1932. Translation assistance provided by Véronique Church-Duplessis.
harmony of community life, and the positive and charitable image that the Brothers enjoyed in Ontario. If left unchecked, there was a very real possibility of a calamitous outcome for the District. While left unstated, the implication was obvious: the Ontario Brothers needed to address their faults or else face re-absorption by the Montreal District or outright dismissal from the province.

In January 1935, more evidence of serious wrongdoing surfaced in the Toronto District where a lack of piety and poor obedience exemplified by some Brothers was yet again cause for concern. Seeking to avoid rumour and the embarrassment of an irreligious and non-conformist community, the Director of Toronto’s De La Salle Community, Brother Tatian Edward, thought obliged to inform both the Visitor and the Superior General in Rome about the “scandalous state of affairs” going on in his community house. Focusing his critiques on Brothers Alexander and Arnold, Brother Tatian Edward claimed to have observed very little in the way of commitment to their spiritual exercises and their blatant refusal to submit to authority. Brother Alexander, for instance, was criticized for taking extra holidays, parading around in his own car, incurring debts in a personal bank account, and having the “liberty to run around as he pleases.”

Exacerbating these tensions was Brother Arnold’s consorting with ex-policemen in operating illegal lotteries in another one of the Brothers’ community houses the previous year. Brother Tatian Edward reported that “People came to the house all day long and far into the night. Most of them did not ring the bell, they just entered, passed the chapel door on their way upstairs to the lottery room. Groups of them remained in this room till late hours of the night and early hours of the morning, and there seemed to be a fair allowance of beer and whiskey to

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98 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.3, Brother Romuald-Hosea to Brother Urban, c. summer 1932.
satisfy their thirst.”\textsuperscript{100} While Brother Tatian Edward concentrated on the moral element, the 
\textit{Globe and Mail} focused on the nature of the crime, the police investigation, and the court 
summons in some detail. According to a Detective Sunderland and Inspector Thomas Sackett of 
the Toronto Police, Brother Arnold and two “agents” were illegally selling lottery tickets under 
the title of ‘D.L.S.A.A. Membership Subscription Contest’ and falsely claiming that proceeds 
were going toward “educational purposes.”\textsuperscript{101} The Crown Attorney, W.O. Gibson, told the court 
that after a two-month police investigation, the agents had been served with summonses. While 
Gibson had not served Brother Arnold with a summons because he believed him to be out of 
town, Brother Tatian Edward reported that Brother Arnold had “to go into hiding from the 
police.”\textsuperscript{102} Whatever the case, Gibson was not impressed that none of the three men had shown 
up in court, given the serious nature of this “indictable offense.” When they eventually appeared 
in Police Court on 6 February 1934, the magistrate found that there was insufficient evidence to 
warrant a committal for Brother Arnold, but his two co-defendants were released on $500 bail 
and committed to trial.\textsuperscript{103}

This illicit activity was clearly a violation of \textit{The Rule}, and therefore a major problem. 
Yet, interestingly, very little ink was allotted to these activities in the Brothers’ internal 
correspondence. Rather, the more threatening issue for Brother Tatian Edward was the 
potentially devastating impact public knowledge of these criminal acts might have for the 
Brothers. When one of the con-men “threatened to reveal all the deception, illegalities, 
crookedness, bribery, etc” which Brother Arnold had practiced, the Procurator felt compelled to

\textsuperscript{100} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.3, Brother Tatian Edward to the Superior General, 14 January 1935. 
\textsuperscript{101} It was widely understood that D.L.S.A.A. was an acronym for De La Salle Auxiliary Association. 
\textsuperscript{102} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.3, Brother Tatian Edward to the Superior General, 14 January 1935. 
\textsuperscript{103} $500 in 1934 is equivalent to about $8650 in 2015. For details on the trial, see the \textit{Globe and Mail}, 29 January 
1934, 7; 30 January 1934, 5; 31 January 1934, 5; 6 February 1934, 4. There is no indication from the \textit{Globe and 
Mail} that either of the two co-defendants served any jail time.
give him $300 to placate him and not publically report the misconduct.\(^{104}\) Evidently, some Brothers did not want to make visible the illegal behaviour in order to save face and ensure their reputation was intact. However, the fiasco was actually made worse when word spread that new lottery agents were selling tickets on the Brothers’ behalf at various Protestant churches. The ignominy of the affair rankled Brother Tatian Edward. Citing concern “for the good of the Brother himself and for the good reputation of our district” Brother Tatian Edward attempted to persuade the Visitor, Brother Urban, to have Brother Arnold moved out of the city. He maintained that such a move would be “conducive to the restoration of good order, religious discipline, and religious life” in the community. But no doubt also factoring into this recommendation was the lasting damage such terrible behaviour and action would have amongst the Toronto populace if it continued to go unchecked.\(^{105}\)

Evidently, this kind of tempestuous behaviour continued for another year and reached a breaking point in the summer of 1936. In early August, the Assistant, Brother Abban Philippe arrived to oversee the 30-day Retreat. While admitting that there were “a large crop of good souls and good religious in this small district, especially among the youth,” he was not impressed with the unfolding drama, and informed the Superior-General of the “troublemakers” and “individuals of loose morals” who were causing such a headache for local superiors.\(^{106}\) Because he considered Brother Urban a man “lacking in control and energy” for not having better handled this poor state of affairs from the very beginning, he demanded a reorganization in leadership. By the end of the month, new obediences were sent out and Brother Austin became the new

\(^{104}\) A $300 amount in 1934 is equivalent to about $5000 in 2015. AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.3, Brother Tatian Edward to the Superior General, 14 January 1935.


\(^{106}\) AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.3, Brother Abban-Philippe to Brother Junien-Victor, 6 August 1936. Translation assistance provided by Véronique Church-Duplessis.
Visitor, a position he had already held from 1924-30.\textsuperscript{107} Once again one notices that when a problem threatened to devolve further, the most senior Brothers intervened to prevent calamity. They wanted their congregation to flourish in the province, and when a matter preventing that from happening was at work, steps were taken to correct it. It seems as though the discomfort with the Brothers’ place in the province was not a subject for the Toronto District alone, but also for the upper echelon of the order.

Fears of scandal connected to certain Brothers’ impious reputations were particularly harmful if they had the potential to lead novices astray from their vows and from living in harmony with their fellow colleagues and community members. In one example, Brother Memorian, director of the novitiate, outlined a “strange incident” which transpired at the Motherhouse on the night of 6 June 1955. Evidently, the 77-year old Brother Silvin of Mary (Michael Green) was given a car by his brother, and decided to give “a most extraordinary demonstration” in it in front of a group of retirees, novices, and juniors. He claimed that the car belonged to him and that he could do with it as he pleased, and posted a note to a door suggesting that 60 years in religious life earned him the right to do what he wanted. For Brother Memorian, this event precipitated a mini-scandal and a “shameless affront” to a Christian Brother’s vow of obedience. He considered the incident to be a brazen act and a detriment to the power relations inherent in community life.

This was not Brother Silvin of Mary’s only display of challenging authority. According to Brother Memorian, he also took unapproved extended vacations and, worse still, had been teaching after hours at various schools in which Brothers were not employees and did not report

\textsuperscript{107} AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.3, Brother Abban-Philippe to Brother Director, 25 August 1936.
All this wayward behaviour represented “a very real evil that has been brewing for some time in the dear District of Toronto” and was evidence of “a lack of effective control on the part of superiors.” This insubordination constituted “a scandal of alarming proportions – especially in the house of formation.” Brother Memorian feared the potentially destructive impact such disobedience had on juniors and novices, as they lived in the same building as Brother Silvin and would invariably come into regular contact with him. Since many were still learning the order’s religious obligations, vows, and rules, such a blatant violation could induce their apprehension and mistrust, and possibly lead them astray.

While the impact of spiritually-related scandals within the Toronto District were important for the way they harmed internal community living and violated the congregation’s rules, anxiety was exacerbated when it had the potential to transform into public scandal, sometimes inducing moral panic for lay Catholics or fuel for Protestants’ outrage and condemnation. Reflecting upon the early years at the Aurora Motherhouse decades after the fact, Brother Austin recalled that during its construction in 1916, citizens of this small town – few of whom were Catholic – began to circulate rumours that the building was going to be a home for “odd” men who lived together in common. While this word choice might insinuate a reference to homosexuality, Brother Austin was really alluding to gossip that the Brothers were considered spies who, in the context of opening a new facility in the midst of the First World War, would be aiding the Germans by storing guns in their new institution. Seeking to alleviate any suspicions, the Brothers continued their longstanding trend of ingratiating themselves to their surroundings.

108 Brother Memorian noted that Brother Silvin was even teaching illegally in girls’ institutions, though he did not specify which ones or where. According to the Brothers’ necrology, Brother Silvin was “a colourful and unpredictable figure, much too full of unorthodox initiatives to be a comfort to Superiors.” Yet, the same biographer notes that that he was also a man who “valued his position as a Christian Brother and faithfully included among his activities the basic prayer life of his vocation.” For more details on his life, see Farrell, ed., Deceased Brothers, Vol. III, 30-1.

109 AGR, DRLCDT, No. 171.5, Brother Memorian Cyriacus to Brother Vicar-General, 20 June 1955.
In order to get the townspeople on side, they played host to a public open house, hung several Union Jacks from the windows, and held concerts and fundraisers to showcase their good nature. Evidently, this strategy worked to good effect and positive and enduring relations were established with neighbours and townspeople.\textsuperscript{110}

Sometimes public criticisms centred on Brothers’ inappropriate behaviour – or for allowing inappropriate behaviour to flourish – in schools or other public spaces. In the summer of 1934, for instance, Archbishop McNeil received a complaint from “A Well Wisher” who was highly critical of what he saw transpire at the annual De La Salle Picnic. Amongst the list of complaints were teenage boys and girls “Carousing together” and telling lewd jokes, Brothers removing their collars, and, most damaging of all, priests and Brothers “in the midst of a lot of young girls.” The writer suggested that the risk to “the innocent” was severe: “It does not savour of good. In fact it looks very bad.” The writer noted that the Brothers were unfortunately not living up to the standard expected of them. The Catholic Church was supposed to be a “teacher of Morals, the protector of the young and the safeguard of the innocent, and a bulwark of example to the wayward.”\textsuperscript{111} Unfortunately, according to this writer, these attributes had clearly gone to the wayside with the irresponsible conduct of the Christian Brothers. When asked for an explanation, Brother Alexander – responsible for organizing the Picnic – explained that he saw nothing out of the ordinary or anything that would warrant such a grievance.\textsuperscript{112} While dismissing the complaint as somewhat ridiculous, the fact remains that it reached the upper echelon of the Church hierarchy who in turn contacted the most senior member of the Christian Brothers for an explanation. Whether the rumour-mongering referenced their public life in towns or on beaches,

\textsuperscript{110} BCSA, 700 Series, \textit{History of the Novitiate of Toronto}, 105.
\textsuperscript{111} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1934-1935, “A Well Wisher” to Archbishop Neil McNeil, c. early August 1934.
\textsuperscript{112} ARCAT, ROSII, A44, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1934-35, Brother Alexander to Brother Urban, 8 August 1934.
they were issues that needed to be dealt with so as to prevent gossip and stem accusations from spreading any further. No scandal was too small that it could not do permanent damage to the Brothers’ mission and image.

Panic over potential public outrage was also evident when the vision for institutional expansion clashed with the priorities of many members. While new buildings and communities were regarded as a crucial part of the district’s progression, some Brothers argued that they ought not to be pursued at the expense of the order’s spiritual growth, and that if buildings superseded spirituality on the metaphorical priority list, there would inevitably be complications and unintended consequences. This issue came to light in the late 1940s and early 1950s when controversy erupted over a proposed Military Academy. When word began to circulate that the Visitor, Brother Claudius, proposed erecting a college of this sort, several Brothers – both inside and outside of the District – vociferously contested its necessity, and, by consequence, the Visitor’s logic.

Amongst the first to voice his concern was one ex-Visitor of the Toronto District, Brother Austin, who was against it for several reasons. Chief among them were fears over “plunging [the District] into what may well be ruinous debt.” Word quickly spread up the chain of command, reaching the Superior General in November 1950. His condemnation of the proposed school was no less forceful. He stressed that Brother Claudius ought to exercise caution on the “building program” and instead endeavour to “strengthen the organisations you have at present before attempting to extend your work. Remember that your best investment is in men, not in buildings.

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113 The District Council included the Visitor, the Novitiate and Scholasticate Directors, and 2 or 3 key directors from Toronto-based communities, usually Oaklands and St. Mary’s Communities.
114 LAC, m.f. K233, reel # 370111-370113, Nivard-Anselme Files, Brother Austin to Brother Assistant, 27 March 1949. Brother Austin felt it was the improper influence of Brother Claudius’ “unofficial advisors” at Maryvale, namely the “wild talkers” Brothers Rogatian and Alexander, who pushed for the extra spending and the military school. Pressuring the Assistant to consider the silent majority opposed to this “latest scheme,” Brother Austin requested that he interview the Directors across the District so that he might come to realize “the vigour and extent of the opposition.”
… Remember that ‘Men build in vain unless God build with them.’”115 Yet three months later, the issue remained of concern in the upper echelon of the Brothers in Rome. The Assistant for North America, Brother Nivard Anselme, was particularly apprehensive. In January 1951, he wrote to the Superior General expressing frustration with the leadership in Toronto and with the goals of a military academy: “We don’t have the manpower for this venture and it is not our business to have this kind of College in Canada. I believe it will be best to nix this idea before it is too late. … I want to believe that the Dear Brother Visitor has good intentions, but he is very entrepreneurial.”116 At the next meeting of the General Council in Rome, Brother Nivard Anselme’s trepidations were seriously considered. In the end, the Regime made official their opposition to the project, refusing to grant the Toronto District permission to “take any engagement in this matter for the future.”117

Before word reached back to Toronto, however, Brother Claudius was still pressing the idea. At a meeting of the District Council on 7 February 1951, a vigorous debate about the viability of the project ensued. Among the most vocal opponents on Council were Brothers Sixtus Fidelis (George Stout), Thillo Benedict (Harold McAvoy), and Andrew (Reginald MacDonald). These men chose to proceed with Claudius’ motion to collect money for the purpose of erecting a Military Academy but all stressed that they were compelled to do so by the Visitor. Each one, therefore, decided to write to the Assistant protesting the legitimacy of the meeting and venting about Brother Claudius’ lack of leadership, his unwillingness to listen, and, most egregious, his blatant violation of the Rule when it came to voting. They feared that the

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115 LAC, m.f. K233, reel # 370131-370132, Nivard-Anselme Files, Brother Superior-General to Brother Sexbury Claudius, Visitor, 2 November 1950.
116 LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 32667-032668, “Correspondence of Administration, Assistant,” Frère Nivard Anselme to Frère Athanase-Emile, 15 January 1951. The choice of using the word “entrepreneurial” in this case is very interesting since it cuts against its usually positive connotation and illustrates that anxiety about expansion was quite animated if it was disconnected from a fervent faith and sense of obedience.
117 LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032669, “Correspondence of Administration, Assistant,” Vicar General to Frère Nivard Anselme, Assistant, 22 January 1951.
Visitor was determined to proceed contrary to the Brothers’ general wishes and against Council’s advice. Brother Andrew was the most blunt about the problematic nature of the Council meeting. There was, he wrote, “a clear vote of non-confidence by the council” but Brother Claudius tried to force his vision through persuasion, supplication, and scolding. In the end, Brother Andrew felt coerced to vote along the Visitor’s wishes: “I didn’t vote by conscience but like they do in Moscow elections.”\footnote{LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032708-032712, “Correspondence of Administration, Assistant,” Brother Andrew to Brother Assistant, 18 February 1951.} The decision to support the Visitor’s motion, Brother Sixtus remarked, was taken “very reluctantly” because of Claudius’ “extreme” measures and was, in the end, “[c]ontrary to our better judgment.”\footnote{LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032701, “Correspondence of Administration, Assistant,” Brother Fidelis to Brother Assistant, 8 February 1951.} Finally, Brother Thillo suggested that there was “little likelihood of success” for this academy owing to poor assumptions about the number of pupils and the very real fact that there would not be enough staff for manning it.\footnote{LAC, m.f. K233, reel # 370135-370136, Nivard-Anselme Files, Brother Thillo Benedict to Brother Assistant, 9 February 1951.}

The reason these men pleaded with their superiors to block Brother Claudius’ attempt to build a Military Academy was “solely for the sake of peace and to avoid a scandal in the District.”\footnote{LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032701, “Correspondence of Administration, Assistant,” Brother Fidelis to Brother Assistant, 8 February 1951.} These Brothers argued that the financial investment necessary to fund the project was unsustainable and that it conflicted with the congregation’s mission to serve the poor. As such, carrying through on the work of this project would, according to Brother Thillo, place at risk all of the Toronto District’s accomplishments of the preceding 35 years:

All the Council feels quite sure it will not succeed. If we launch it and have to stop it could easily ruin all our work. … I feel the day he starts dragging the excavation for the Military College he is dragging the grave of the Toronto District. … I am not the one to write tattling letters over superiors’ heads. You haven’t received any other letters of this kind from me. I have no ulterior motive in writing. I simply do not want a project started.
which we cannot handle – and all because of the vainglory of one man and the desire of an unreligious monk to run a millionaire’s college.\textsuperscript{122}

Without actually citing or referencing any of the letters above, the Assistant ordered Claudius not to proceed. Like the Council members mentioned above, he, too, worried that the financial cost of building the school coupled with the lack of manpower to sustain it would be damning for the Toronto District, threatening its very survival. Further stressing the school’s disreputable nature, he emphasized that this type of building did not reflect a Lasallian ethos, writing that “the schools for the poor must not be stopped for those who can pay.”\textsuperscript{123} Brother Claudius finally admitted defeat, when, in 1953, he assured his superiors that no actions had been taken and nothing more was planned.\textsuperscript{124}

While the military academy never materialized, the debates surrounding it speak volumes about the state of the Christian Brothers in pre-Vatican II Ontario. Some Brothers hoped to establish yet another type of institution to reflect the congregation’s increasingly upwardly mobile future and regarded it as a boon for Catholic education. Yet others feared that that such a venture would undoubtedly end up disastrous for their congregation’s permanence in the province and as a hindrance for the ongoing stability of separate schools. Discussions surrounding the military academy, therefore, are emblematic of this fascinating era in the history

\textsuperscript{122} LAC, m.f. K233, reel # 370135-370136, Nivard-Anselme Files, Brother Thillo Benedict to Brother Assistant, 9 February 1951.
\textsuperscript{123} LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032704-032705, “Correspondence of Administration, Assistant,” Frère Nivard Anselme to Brother Claudius, 14 February 1951. Regarding the Regime’s reluctance to go forward, Brother Claudius vented to the Assistant: “I was appalled and utterly discouraged by the series of crippling regulations you sent me on the day of your departure. I have at the Cardinal’s direction on two separate occasions, been searching about the means of augmenting our revenue. His Eminence specifically advised me to start the military school this September in temporary quarters, as he figured our financial position required it. He is at present most favourably inclined towards us and appreciates most highly the success I have had in putting our finances on a solid basis. He has expressed this to me personally and to numerous other parties. The Catholic business men, have frequently said the same thing, but unfortunately you choose to listen to men who know nothing of our position or who are seeking personal motives in the things they tell you.” LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032702, “Correspondence of Administration, Assistant,” Brother Claudius to Brother Assistant, 19 February 1951.
\textsuperscript{124} LAC, m.f. K199, reel # 032742, “Correspondence of Administration du District, Assistant,” Brother Claudius to Brother Assistant, 31 August 1953.
of the Christian Brothers in Ontario.

This chapter illustrated that within a social, political, and religious context more amenable to, if not accepting of, Catholicism, the Toronto District Brothers were able to thrive in the decades following the First World War. They were more visible, expanded their geographic scope, erected more buildings, taught in more schools, and grew in numbers and reputation. After decades of struggle with solidifying their English-language presence, meeting qualification regulations, and integrating the provincial curriculum, the years between 1914 and 1962 were remarkably prosperous. Such expansion enabled a more complete immersion into Ontario society and enabled a more solid footing for their congregation in the province’s separate schools.

But existing alongside such buoyancy was great trepidation about their status in Ontario. The appearance that all was well belied the obvious fear that all their progress could come to a dramatic halt. Between the 1920s and the 1960s, the constant threat that spiritual, educational, or behavioural scandal would force their exodus remained persistent.\textsuperscript{125} These kinds of tensions had religious and political resonance: they could challenge their image as teachers extraordinaire, expose their congregation as unfit to handle finances, and most dangerous of all, compromise their mission. Thus, there remained a perpetual sense of discomfort about their permanency in the province; few Brothers – whether a young teacher or a senior administrator – ruled out the possibility that they could be expelled at any moment.

Despite the Christian Brothers’ precarious position and their lack of security in these decades, their resiliency prevailed. Tensions and potential scandals never completely overshadowed their positive reputation among educational, civic, and religious leaders.

\textsuperscript{125} Obviously, scandals of a sexual nature were also paramount, but remained shrouded in absolute secrecy. In the 1980s and 1990s, when the Ontario Christian Brothers were involved in court proceedings connected to sexual abuse, any files discussing violence against children were removed into the hands of lawyers, and have remained inaccessible.
Nevertheless, these scandals and tensions offer a glimpse of the cracks in their armour – cracks that broke out into full-scale ruptures with the revolutionary changes of the Second Vatican Council.
Conclusion

In early twentieth-century Toronto, Brother Michael (Michael O’Reilly) was a popular and capable teacher and principal at St. Francis School.¹ With an earnest piety and energetic personality, he relished the life of the zealous Christian educator, judging that the position provided him with the best opportunity to carry out his teaching vocation. Not only did Brother Michael reckon that his position as a Christian Brother would proffer his students’ and his own personal salvation, but he further considered that this mission was essential to the future of Catholic education. To be sure, his biographical sketch in the Brothers’ necrology notes one of his favourite and most frequently-stated quotations: “What a power for good is the religious teacher, the future of the country is in his hands.”² Such a view was not merely a literary trope used by one Brother from turn-of-the-century Toronto. Rather, Brother Michael’s assessment about the Brother’s vocation would have been shared by hundreds of his confreres from their arrival to Ontario in 1851 through to the early 1960s. Indeed, the Brothers constantly pushed the idea that that they could ensure that Ontario’s Catholic boys received an education on par with other boys across the province while safeguarding their Catholicism.

This dissertation has carefully examined the Christian Brothers’ efforts to bring their apostolic mission into the hearts and minds of Ontario’s Catholic boys, the nation’s future fathers and leaders, and in so doing, bring Brother Michael’s vision to fruition. Although the Institute of

¹ Born in Osceola, Renfrew County in 1876, O’Reilly was of Irish heritage. He entered the Brothers’ juniorate in Amawalk, New York in October 1889. In January 1891, he was part of the first group of novices at the re-formed Toronto novitiate. There, he received the habit and began his teaching career, first at St. Nicholas School in St. Catharines and later at Toronto’s St. Mary’s and St. Francis Schools, where he was both teacher and principal. In 1909, while walking with their students back to the school following Sunday Mass, Brothers Michael and Matthew were struck by a Queen Street streetcar. Although Brother Matthew escaped serious injury, Brother Michael was instantly killed. His untimely death provided an opportunity for the Toronto Separate School Board trustees to convey their “sincere sympathy” and “deepest sorrow” to the Christian Brothers: “Brother Michael was beloved by all who knew him and by his sad death the Christian Brothers have lost one of their ablest teachers, and the pupils of St. Francis School in which he labored so zealously for many years, a true and loving friend.” TCDSBA, Minutes of the Meeting, Minutes, 11 January 1910. For details on his life and impact, see LAC, m.f. K197, reel # 012433, Noviciat Toronto, Brother Senecian Michael.
the Brothers of the Christian Schools was a Catholic congregation with its own rules, regulations, customs, and distinctive clothing, the Brothers were nevertheless attuned to the social, educational, religious, and political context in which they lived. The Brothers in Ontario devoted considerable thought – evident in the archival record – on how to cultivate their congregation and sustain a rich and vibrant Catholic population in Ontario. Most significantly, they suggested that compliance with Ontario educational norms and standards was a gateway to maximize their institutional growth and entrench their congregation as the best choice for the province’s Catholic boys. In order to achieve these ends, the Brothers took a pragmatic and accommodating approach in three major social and educational contexts in Ontario society. They overwhelmingly advocated for English-language institutions and greater local control over community life; they underwent significant pedagogical training and recognized that improving their qualifications enhanced their professional standing; and, save for explicitly religious education, the Brothers stressed that their official and hidden curricula matched those in the public school system.

Such strategies of conformity – anglicization, professionalization, and curricular adaptations – were the crucial domains through which the Brothers evolved from a small cadre of internally-trained and French-speaking elementary school teachers in the mid-nineteenth century into a large body of English-speaking, native born, and professionally qualified teachers in a wide variety of educational institutions by the middle decades of the twentieth century. Generations of Brothers’ efforts to correspond with provincial norms and customs were what helped them to flourish as a religious congregation. The more the Brothers conformed to the expectations of living in Ontario, the more members they added and the more esteemed their reputation according to school inspectors and the Church hierarchy. This strategy allowed them
to position themselves firmly into Ontario society and, by extension, enabled their expansion into Catholic schools where they could reach out to a greater number of male students. The Brothers laid the foundation for a promising separate school system by opening up access to some of the first Catholic elementary schools in the province. Over the course of the following century, they also contributed to the extension and variety of the separate school system: they opened secondary and industrial schools; they generated textbooks, many of which were used by teachers across the province; they trained separate school teachers and taught religious education to future lay Catholic teachers in Normal Schools; they served as school inspectors; they established and/or held leadership positions in many Catholic organizations; they were actively involved in professional organizations; and thousands of their graduates not only went into careers in religious life, education, business, government, and other professions, but also sent their own sons and daughters to Catholic schools. As such, the Christian Brothers were crucial players in the consolidation of a still functioning separate school system and the integration of the larger community of Roman Catholics into Ontario life.

Ironically, though, the greater the Brothers’ conformity and integration, the more they were concerned about their status and security in the province. The sheer growth in numbers, expansion of schools, and reputational enhancement did little to downplay anxiety concerning the long-term feasibility of their educational mission in Ontario. Rather, in quite the opposite sense, many Brothers seriously feared that tensions and scandals of any kind could permanently unsettle any gains that were made and thereby lead to their ouster. Put simply, conformity did not lead to comfortability.

By the 1960s, the Brothers’ apprehension with their position and with their sense of stability was palpable. With the dramatic transformations of the Second Vatican Council, the
uneasiness burst into profound anxiety. Between 1962 and 1965, Pope John XXIII met with cardinals, bishops, priests, and representatives of the Catholic laity in a series of meetings officially called the Second Vatican Council but alternatively and colloquially referred to as Vatican II. Broadly speaking, the assembly debated policy, traditions, authority, and the nature of the liturgy; in effect, they tried to address the place of the Catholic Church in the modern world. Focusing to a large extent on the dignity of the human person and the spirit of renewal and change in the Church (aggiornamento), Vatican II sent significant shockwaves throughout the global Catholic community. Several major changes emerged in its wake. In terms of liturgical reforms, priests now faced the congregation, spoke in the vernacular, and incorporated local customs during Mass. Greater lay involvement was encouraged based on a new interpretation of the faith: the “Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity” purged the Church’s long-time notion of superiority of priests and religious states and the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* understood the Church as the People of God. All Catholics – not just priests and theologians – were encouraged to read and reflect upon the Bible, albeit using the magisterium’s and scholars’ critical exegesis to help explain and interpret the text’s meaning. Other changes surfaced as well, including a strong emphasis on an informed freedom of conscience. Moreover, negative attitudes toward other religions and non-Catholic Christian denominations softened and an effort to reconcile with Jews was made manifest. In the end, greater dialogue with and participation in – rather than rejection of – the contemporary world played out.³

Vatican II’s emphasis on a Church engaged in the modern world had a particular salience for members of religious orders. In *Perfectæ Curitatis*, the “Decree on the Adaptation and

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Renewal of Religious Life,” Sisters and Brothers were asked to analyze their congregations’
charism, history, goals, inspirations, structures, and customs in order to effectively carry out the
renewal encouraged by the Council itself. In its wake, members experienced dramatic and lasting
changes connected to their identity as religious: there was much greater freedom for individual
members to choose their clothing, their names, their careers, and their living arrangements; they
were more socially involved in contemporary affairs; and there was increasing questioning of
hierarchy and bottom-up efforts for autonomy and individual initiative.⁴

In a similar vein as other religious orders across North America, the Christian Brothers in
the Toronto District experienced rapid organizational changes in the 1960s and reacted to the
unfolding vocational transformations of this period with mixed feelings. Questions of identity
shifted with the times as most Ontario Brothers in the post-Vatican II era reverted to their birth
names and shunned the habit. Most Brothers pursued university degrees and a majority began to
teach alongside lay Catholics, both of which brought the Brothers into greater contact with
secular society and likely broadened their worldview. Further, decision-making was
democratized, no longer the purview of the local superior alone. Finally, there was some
evidence of acceptance of Vatican II’s spiritual and liturgical reforms. At Toronto’s St. Mary’s
Community House, for instance, the Director noted that the Jesuit priest who regularly said mass
for the Brothers was “pleased as punch at the progress we have made in the chapel and the
following of the new liturgical services. He has remarked several times that we are further
advanced than the nuns or the Jesuits for that matter in switching over to the new method of
hearing mass.”⁵ At Benildus Hall, home to the Visitor and his administrative staff, the director

⁴ Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh, Out of the Cloister: A Study of Organizational Dilemmas (Austin, TX: University of
⁵ AGR, Supplements Historique, St. Mary’s Community, 1965.
observed that the liturgical changes had a significant benefit: “Within the community we have been reciting the office in English and have probably understood it more fully.”\textsuperscript{6}

Nevertheless, this transformative period was challenging for Ontario’s Brothers, much as it was in the church itself. Struggles with the Church’s new direction were particularly evident, and many Brothers seemed uncertain about the nature of the change and the confusion presented by aggiornamento. One Brother at St. John’s School in Uxbridge typified the anxiety that the Brothers across the district were facing. Writing in 1968, he noted that his community, like Brothers across the District, was undergoing

a year of ferment, of change, of the need to adjust to new values and methods. A new spirit is abroad throughout the world, whether for good or evil, remains to be seen. Old and tried structures are being questioned, new ones arising, not only in the Church but in every area of human life. Let us hope that in the process of change the baby isn’t thrown out with the bath water!\textsuperscript{7}

In Montreal’s St. Ann’s/Cardinal Newman community, still a constituent part of the Toronto District at this time, some Brothers tried to implement a revised constitution advocating for greater flexibility in clothing, living arrangement, and governance in order to align the institution’s customs with this new post-Vatican II spirit. Yet many Brothers resisted the effort, preferring the conventional attire and well-worn traditions. In his 1968 year-end appraisal, the pro-Vatican II Community Director feared the negative rumblings stemming from Montreal educational circles. He hoped to downplay what he considered to be destructive rumours that the Brothers still belonged “to an old school of spirituality” and counteract the idea that they carried “a nineteenth century mentality.”\textsuperscript{8}

The rapid exodus of members alongside the dearth in enlistment into congregational life was the most visible – and indeed shocking – manifestation of the transformations among

\textsuperscript{6} AGR, Supplements Historique, Benildus Hall Community, 1964.
\textsuperscript{7} AGR, Supplements Historique, St. John’s Community, 1968.
\textsuperscript{8} AGR, Supplements Historique, St. Ann’s/Cardinal Newman Community, 1968.
religious orders spurred by Vatican II. While this history is deserving of its own study, preliminary research indicates that the Christian Brothers in Ontario were hit particularly hard. By the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, membership in the Toronto District dropped precipitously. In stark contrast to the pride of place given to the number of recruits received into the order from the 1930s to the early 1960s, the *Supplements Historique* for every community only sporadically mentions new additions after 1965. Embodying the lack of enthusiasm for this new state of affairs was the Director at Yorkton’s St. Joseph’s College, who, in 1970, recorded that it had “been several years since we had a vocation to the religious life or the priesthood. As in most parts of the Church, these are difficult times.” By 1969, the District no longer operated a juniorate or novitiate because so few applicants were interested in joining, and the prospect for a reversal was slim. The District Motherhouse, which had opened to great acclaim in 1950, faced the wrecking ball only twenty years later. That same year, the St. John’s Community Director asked a most prescient question: “Will the Brothers be able to carry on with fewer and fewer Brothers, and for how long?” The historical record demonstrates that the Ontario Brothers’ efforts to maintain their presence as educational missionaries have been largely unsuccessful in the post-1960s era, as they were unable to sustain their numbers and failed to carve out a revised mission. The Brothers departed entirely from the vast majority of their schools in cities and towns across the province, focusing on schools in Toronto as well as St. John’s in Uxbridge. Properties and buildings were regularly sold off in order to secure funds for the growing number of members living in retirement and needing health care.

The Christian Brothers’ state of affairs between the 1970s and today is in marked contrast with their predecessors in the pre-1962 era. Following historian Tom O’Donoghue’s call for

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more detailed and complex studies of individual religious orders that pay attention to the specificities of time and place, this dissertation has explored the Ontario Brothers’ broad institutional transformations, their strategies of integration, and their many multifaceted relationships between the 1850s and 1960s. These Brothers interacted with a wide array of individuals and institutions both internal and external to the order, including religious superiors, parents, the church hierarchy, and school board and provincial education officials. In drawing attention to the discrepancy between the order’s aim of separation from the world and the reality of its active involvement in it, this dissertation ultimately suggests the importance of understanding integration both as a concept and methodology for future scholarship on religious orders. By layering church, government, and education records with the Brothers’ own files, this project reveals a hidden chapter in the broader history of Catholic schooling, the teaching profession, religious orders, and Canadian Catholicism. It demonstrates the multiple and sometimes conflicting ways in which the Brothers’ educational vision coincided with and emerged from its social context.

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