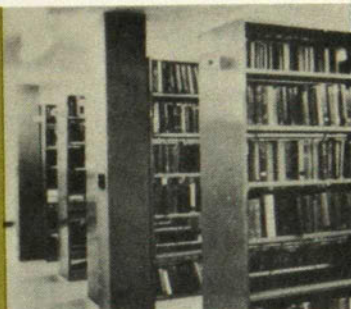






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The Rise of Social Sciences in French Canada

by Jean-Charles Falardeau

Department of Cultural Affairs
Quebec, 1967.

The Rise of Social Sciences
in French Canada

*Series on the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences
in French Canada*

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QUÉBEC

1967



The series of booklets on the *Arts, Humanities, and Sciences in French Canada*, was conceived as a working record and source of information to all those interested in cultural affairs, both in Canada and abroad.

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Geneviève de la TOUR FONDUE-SMITH,
Editor

We are indebted to McGill University Press for the translation into English of the booklets in this series.

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*Notre nouveauté, à nous, consiste
dans l'inédit des questions elles-mêmes,
et non point des solutions ; dans les
énoncés, et non dans les réponses.*

Paul VALÉRY, *Bilan de l'intelligence*

Foreword

The social sciences are a recent development in French Canada. As latecomers to the universities, where they have been taught for less than thirty years, they are in the first stage of expansion, but already give promise of full maturity. Social thought and research in French Canada are keeping pace with those of other countries. Yet they have their own special traits. What is the nature of these traits ?

Unlike the natural sciences, the aim of the social sciences is closely linked to the awareness, experiences, preferences, and personal involvement of those who study them. They are the means of encompassing objectively and methodically collective human realities and their underlying forces. Each of them asks specific questions about these realities and endeavours to formulate appropriate answers through a systematic discourse of its own. Indeed, those practising the social sciences, namely, historians, psychologists, economists, anthropologists, sociologists, and others, are members of a given society, which inevitably shapes the form and content of their scientific undertakings.

In each country where the social sciences have gradually emerged following the development of the natural sciences—especially at the end of the nineteenth century in France, Germany, England and the United States—social scientists selected in their own society the main problems on which to concentrate their investigations. German political sociologists tried to establish how a national state could be constructed over and out of cultural diversity ; French human geographers set out to identify the conditions that characterize a region ; American sociologists consistently analyzed the growth pattern of cities and the causes of inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts. Thus, each pursued his investigations within the intellectual traditions of his society.

The history of the social sciences in a community, then, cannot be divorced from that of the social forces which they attempt to interpret. Nor can it be separated from the general history of society or the history of its ideas. In a word, it cannot be dissociated from the view that society has of itself.

An ideal history of the social sciences in French Canada would follow such lines. But it could hardly be contained in a single book. Our ambition is more modest. It will be to sketch briefly, in a limited framework, some of the factors that marked the delayed appearance, the first efforts, and early progress of these sciences in French-Canadian society. To be properly understood, the account will have to examine certain aspects of the social environment that helped to mould the social sciences. This involves not only the immediate and

contemporary social context, but also past conditions which help to explain the present.

To some extent, the social scientists of our generation have replaced those who, in the nineteenth century and until quite recently, assumed the responsibility of defining and directing French Canada's destiny. Knowledge of the latter is necessary to understand the former. Among those intellectual leaders of the past were men who truly foreshadowed our present-day efforts and achievements. They were often bold and progressive thinkers, ahead of their time, and sometimes well grounded in one or other of the social sciences, such as they then were. This book will deal with them at length, not only by way of tribute but also because their concerns were often similar to ours. Since we lack a continuous intellectual tradition, they serve us as guides and models.

The development of the social sciences in French Canada may therefore be divided into the following four periods : (1) the nineteenth-century forerunners ; (2) the initial stage, in a slow-starting twentieth century ; (3) the beginnings in the institutions of the thirties and forties ; (4) the present conditions and future trends.

I. The Don Quixotes of Our Nineteenth Century

The men with whom we are here concerned lived in what may be called the century of a French-Canadian renaissance. In order to appreciate the strength of their influence, one must call to mind the hopes, disappointments, and ambitions of this gestation period.

Following the British conquest in 1760, the first eighty years of French Canada's existence were dominated by political strife. French Canadians were resolved to exist as a people and they succeeded in so doing. Yet, their political aspirations were soon crippled by the tragic and abortive Rebellion of 1837-38. This period can be summed up in one man : Louis-Joseph Papineau.

The union of the two Canadas in 1840 marked the beginning of a period of relative political stability. The clergy preached a policy of loyalty to and respect for the British conquerors and advocated a general philosophy of submission to all forms of political and social authority. The old French gentility, which had returned to France after the conquest, was rapidly replaced by a new élite of rural origin, composed of members of the liberal professions such as journalists, politicians, and writers.

The first representatives of this élite were self-taught. Those who followed came from the few colleges and seminaries established here and there in the province during the first half of the century. Some of the colleges, notably those at Nicolet and Saint-Hyacinthe, were centres of intense intellectual activity. There, knowledgeable and scholarly priests had set up remarkable libraries, importing from France a large number of contemporary works on philosophy, literature, mathematics, natural sciences, and even political economy. These priests were the pioneers and the first teachers; they taught a great many of the men who made a name for themselves in literature and politics in nineteenth-century French Canada.

The new élite adopted and echoed the liberal, reformist, and radical philosophies born in France, Britain, and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was through them that the ideas of Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and the encyclopaedists, of social romanticism and Jeffersonian political ideology gained widespread, if tardy, acceptance in French Canada. They were the proponents of a non-conformity opposed to the generally conservative attitudes of the official Church. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of the *Institut Canadien* in 1844, set up in Montreal as a centre for study, discussion, and teaching. The Institut, which became a seething hive of polemics, was later condemned by the Church. It is easy to understand that, in such conditions, the French-Canadian intellectuals in their Montreal and Quebec enclaves felt doubly isolated, by the psychological gap separating them from the rural masses, and by political

differences and ecclesiastical opposition. It is not surprising that they expressed themselves either in heroic or lyrical terms.

A HARBINGER OF GREATNESS : FRANÇOIS-XAVIER GARNEAU (1809-66)

After Papineau, who embodied the hope of political liberation, the next great name to emerge from the turmoil of the nineteenth century was that of the historian Garneau who gave voice to the glories of the French regime. His *Histoire du Canada*, published between 1845 and 1848, was to French Canada what the *Génie du christianisme* was to nineteenth-century French Catholicism. In the words of a contemporary, the Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain, "Never shall we forget the profound impression made on our imaginations, when we were young students, by M. Garneau's *Histoire du Canada*. The book was a revelation to us."¹ "The Age of Garneau" is more than a figure of speech. Around 1860 his work stimulated an enthusiastic group of poets, essayists, and novelists, known as the *École de Québec*, to find in patriotism the inspiration for the first works of any value in the fledgling French-Canadian literature.

Garneau's *Histoire* was both a defence and an act of faith. The failure and harsh repression of the 1837-38 Rebellion had left all classes of the population profoundly disillusioned. Lord Durham's report recommended the union of the two Canadas and the progressive assimila-

1. *Le foyer canadien*, IV, 4.

tion of the French population through massive British immigration. This appeared to seal the fate of the French-Canadian nation. To counter the prevalent defeatist attitude, Garneau reminded French Canadians that they had a past and that it was a glorious one. At the same time, he postulated the condition prerequisite to an equally glorious future: it should be fashioned on the same virtues which furnished the warp and woof of the past. The *Histoire* affirmed both the possibility and necessity of the survival of French Canada. It gave historical consciousness to the new middle class which was searching for a guiding philosophy. *Notre Maître le Passé*, the title of a work by another great patriot-historian, Abbé Lionel Groulx, sums up the central theme of Garneau's *Histoire*. The same theme continued to dominate French-Canadian historiography until our own time.

A PATRIOT ECONOMIST : ÉTIENNE PARENT (1802-74)

In contrast to the backward-looking and romantic Garneau, Étienne Parent resolutely faced the present and spread the gospel of social progress. With a patriotic intensity equal to Garneau's, his work outlined concrete plans for economic action. He was a journalist, polemist, and essayist and it has been said that he was the sentinel of French Canada. He untiringly wrote articles, delivered lectures, made speeches. His views coincided with the political aspirations of the leaders both before and after the 1837-38 Rebellion, the objectives of the *Institut*

Canadien, and the perplexities of the new middle class of whom he was the most eloquent spokesman. To implement his plans for collective salvation, he drew on all that was generous and optimistic in the most diverse ideologies. He admired Rousseau and Condorcet equally. An advocate of political liberalism, he nevertheless accepted the postulates of conservative nationalism. An individualist and a disciple of the physiocrats, he also enthusiastically supported the aims of Social Catholicism. He preached the cause of happiness and progress, stressing both material and moral progress as being of equal importance.

On his own initiative Parent read the works of Quesnay, Adam Smith, Jean-Baptiste Say, and McCulloch, and appointed himself herald of the new science of political economy. In lectures given to the Instituts Canadiens of Quebec and Montreal and many different types of audiences, he spoke on labour, industry, trade, the fate of the working classes, education, and the role of the clergy. He never ceased to affirm the primacy of economic science. He asserted that French Canadians would eventually be able to compete on an equal footing with their English-speaking compatriots if they learnt to exploit natural resources, keep material wealth in their own hands, and create as well as control their own economic institutions. He wrote: "We were able to find men equal to Burke and Mirabeau when they were needed: and now that we need people of the stamp of Cobden and Peel, we will search them out Gentlemen of the rising generation . . . your elders' long and arduous labours have paved the way to the promised land; they have done their work, and

it is now up to you to do yours. They sacrificed their time, energy, and intelligence to that great conquest and it now falls on you to make something of it. They had to act as tribunes ; you should become statesmen and enlightened economists. Only then will you enter the fight suitably equipped, ready to struggle on an equal footing with competitors who . . . at present are better prepared than we are . . .”² More than fifty years were to pass before Étienne Parent’s recommendations were to have an effect on the French-Canadian way of life.

A GARIBALDIAN WHO BECAME A COLONIZER : ARTHUR BUIES (1840-1901)

Arthur Buies is not out of place in the pantheon of our intellectual pioneers. This veteran of Garibaldi’s army was, in turn, a journalist, a chronicler, and a propagandist. Using caricature, invective, and exalted rhetoric, he voiced impatient protest against the static, formal, and pharisaic attitudes he found all too prevalent around him. He was one of the most unsettling influences within the *Institut Canadien*, where he gave a course in political economy. Pressed into service as a geographer, although he was an amateur, his writings in that field are among his most interesting. Acting as a publicist and colonization agent for the Quebec government, he travelled the length and breadth of the province, describing its beauties and resources. Like the colonizer-

2. Étienne PARENT, “Importance de l’étude de l’économie politique”
Lecture given to the Institut Canadien, Thursday, November 19, 1845 ;
Montreal, Imp. de la Revue Canadienne, 1846, VII, 20.

priest "Curé Labelle" who was his friend and co-worker, Buies wanted to put a stop to the emigration which had drained the countryside of some two hundred thousand souls between 1840 and 1866. His aim was to encourage people "to admire and love" their country. In this way, he not only breathed life into French-Canadian literature, but he also attracted attention to the physical realities of a little-known region, to the unexplored and unexploited areas towards which, he believed, were to head the rural masses victimized by a stagnant economy. Impressionistic though it may have been, his work heralded the systematic geographical investigations of the future.

A LEARNED EXILE : EDMOND DE NEVERS (1862-1906)

We have described the nineteenth-century French-Canadian intellectual as an isolated figure. It might be added that, in many instances, isolation meant exile, deliberate or involuntary, temporary or permanent. Voluntary and almost permanent exile was the fate of Edmond de Nevers (whose real name was Edmond Boisvert), a man generally unknown to his contemporaries and whose work has been discovered only recently.

The intellectual adventure of Edmond de Nevers was virtually without parallel in nineteenth-century French Canada. He alone undertook the systematic study of social sciences and he did so with boundless energy. From what is known about his stay in Berlin, he was anxious to familiarize himself with all of them



EDMOND DE NEVERS

and to master what the more advanced ones had to offer. He was an assiduous student of the historian Mommsen and he followed courses in ethnology, political economy, philosophy, and sociology. He applied this wealth of knowledge to observations on the future of America as a whole and of his own country in particular. Two works made him known in Europe : *L'Avenir du peuple canadien-français*, published in 1896, and *L'Âme américaine*, which appeared in 1900 and prompted Brunetière to write that the book was "one of the most interesting works on America to be published in a long time."

L'Avenir du peuple canadien-français gave evidence of a new perspective and pattern of thought. For the first time, a French-Canadian observer had made an objective, detached analysis of the whole of contemporary French-Canadian society. De Nevers defined the characteristics of the colonists who founded New France ; he described the structure of farm life and the causes of rural emigration ; he proposed a plan for an education system which, on every level, was to be the source of a new dynamism in all classes of society ; he listed the cultural and political institutions which the government should establish. Above all, de Nevers tried to show the alternatives open to Canada, and especially to French Canada, at the turn of the century : consolidation of the Canadian federation or union with the powerful American republic. He did not categorically state his opinion in favour of one option or the other. His aim was to diagnose the situation and to enumerate those conditions which would most likely promote the development of Canadian society.

THE FIRST SOCIOLOGIST :
LÉON GÉRIN (1863-1951)

Grandson of Étienne Parent, son of the author of *Jean Rivard*, and fellow-student of Edmond de Nevers at Nicolet, Gérin was the first to practice an authentic sociology. While on a short study trip to Paris in 1885-86, he discovered the "École de la science sociale." After attending lectures by Edmond Demolins and Abbé Henri de Tourville, he became their disciple and an admirer of the works of LePlay. Throughout the rest of his quiet life as a civil servant, he observed and studied French-Canadian society using the methods of that school. He reconstructed the history of colonization in New France ; he gave minute descriptions and analyses of the structure and functions of typical rural families in Quebec ; he carried out research on the causes of illiteracy and lack of initiative in the rural population. In his many writings, he made himself the apostle of "social science" as he had known it in Paris and as he wanted it to be known in Canada, an instrument of knowledge whose use would be prerequisite to any attempt at reform of local institutions, professional groups, or society as a whole. Gérin was the guiding spirit of a social science club in Ottawa, founded in 1905 by his friend Errol Bouchette and a few civil servants. Since they have been reprinted some twenty years ago, his principal monographs on rural society and on French-Canadian history have been known and appreciated at their true merit. A great many of his essays originally published in *La Science sociale*, a scholarly journal, and in the *Transactions of the Royal*



LÉON GÉRIN

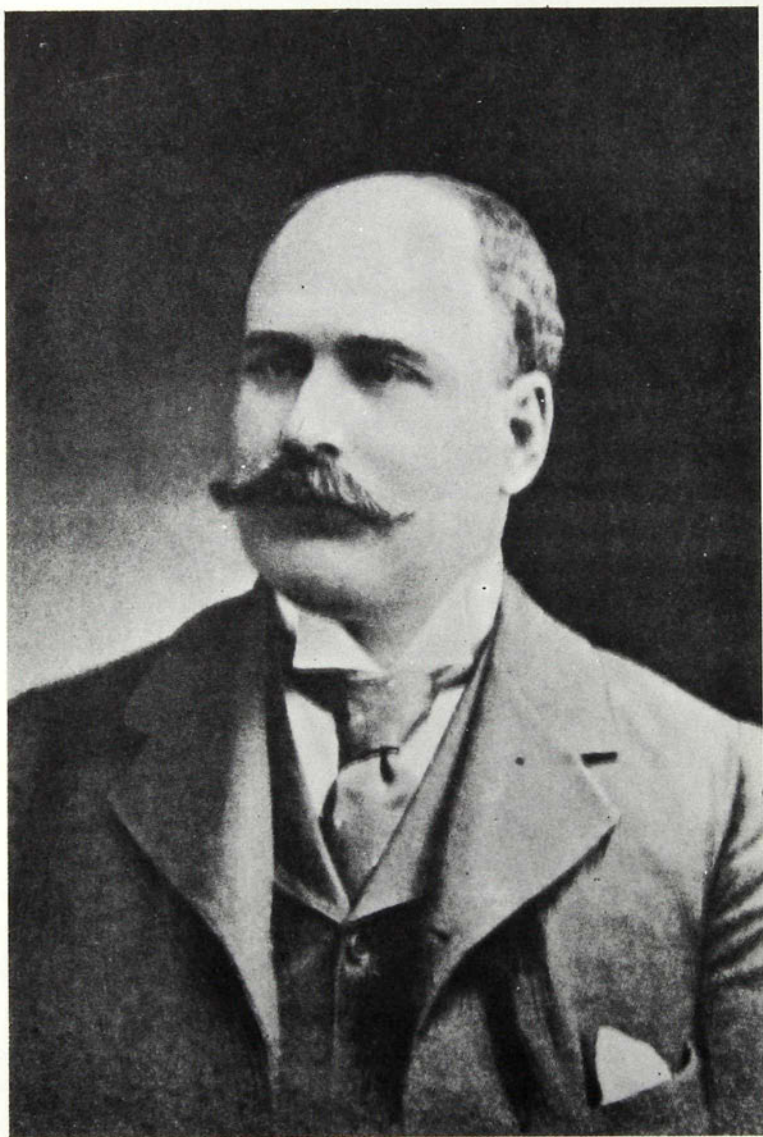
Society of Canada, are still difficult to come by. All these essays went completely unnoticed by his fellow-countrymen.

A PLANNER AHEAD OF HIS TIME : ERROL BOUCHETTE (1863-1912)

A similar fate befell the work of Errol Bouchette, Gérin's contemporary and friend. Ever since 1834, when Ludger Duvernay, the founder of the patriotic Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, coined his slogan, *Emparons-nous du sol* (Let us get hold of the land), the mainstream of thought had glorified rural life and maintained that French Canada's destiny was essentially agricultural. As has been said above, Gérin's work did not escape this influence. Bouchette, on the other hand, envisioned collective salvation through industry. His slogan : *Emparons-nous de l'industrie* (Let us get hold of industry) was opposed to that of Duvernay.

Bouchette, like Edmond de Nevers, was concerned with the destiny of all of Canada, and especially with the future relations of the country's two major groups, the English and the French. In his opinion, any eventual understanding between the two groups depended on their economic conditions. "It will never be achieved by disregarding the legitimate aspirations and stifling the vitality of one part of the population".³ Bouchette took up Etienne Parent's thesis and gave it new vigour and definition. The French Canadians had to take part in

3. Errol BOUCHETTE, *L'indépendance économique du Canada français*, Arthabaska, La Cie d'Imprimerie d'Arthabaskaville, 1906, 19.



ERROL BOUCHETTE

the great movement of industrial expansion and aim at economic independence. To this end it was necessary to create, as soon as possible, a system of industrial and technical schools and to invest in the development of natural resources. These efforts would be an extension of past political efforts. "The only way for us to fulfil our destiny is to be, in every way, the strong men of our century. We shall never get there by hanging on the coattails of our English-speaking neighbours ; we must be unshakeably resolved to honour and practice this science, which observes (and applies) the laws determining the ability of people to produce and enjoy those goods which nature does not spontaneously and freely give to man. That is what we have to do ; the rest will follow of itself." ⁴ The science of economics was the necessary instrument for national salvation. It was in this perspective that it would soon be studied and applied.

4. *Ibid.*, 326-327.

II. The Twentieth Century: A Slow Start

The telling voices identified in the foregoing chapter were voices crying in the wilderness. With the two exceptions of Garneau and Bouchette, they have had no continuing echo. It is to be deplored that they have not been heard in university teaching, but the universities were not ready to recognize them and far less to make use of them.

Laval University, in Quebec City, had been in existence since 1852. Montreal, which had independent schools of medicine (1840) and law (1851), was to become a more comprehensive institution in 1876 when it was made an extension of Laval University and finally became autonomous in 1920, after much heated debate. University training at both Laval and Montreal was to remain practical for the best part of three quarters of a century. It was aimed exclusively at the three careers embodying the professional ideal: the cloth, medicine, and law. Training of this kind was empirical, conservative, and traditionalist. It was influenced by the conception society had of its élite and of the kind of training that this élite desired. In 1905, André Siegfried

was to say of such training : “. . . The university, far from being, as it is in certain countries, a field for the cultivation of new ideas, of tomorrow’s developments, has become instead an effective agent of conservation. Laval conveys an impression of poetic venerability which lends it great charm in the eyes of the French visitor. But leaving all emotion and sentiment aside, it must be admitted that progress in young America is being made elsewhere : a serious problem for the Church and for the future of the French in Canada ! . . . Left to its own devices, French-Canadian higher education tends to remain unchanged, its guiding principles uncondusive to improvement. The situation calls for leaders of exceptional energy to introduce radical, searching reforms.”⁵

The principles and bias of this education found full expression in the writings of Monseigneur Louis-Adolphe Pâquet : writings that were theologico-legal, dogmatic, and apologetic. The cornerstone of the French-Canadian educational system was the classical college rather than the university. Secondary education, with its emphasis on Greek and Roman classics and on scholastic philosophy, aimed at a broad culture ; its primary object was the training of priests. In the hands of teachers as imaginative as those of the early days, it had encouraged intellectual awakening. Left to drift its own way, it killed spontaneity, curbed initiative, and stifled curiosity about things, men, and ideas. It became the platform from which the rhetoric of political strife spread through the professional and middle classes.

5. André SIEGFRIED, *Le Canada, les deux races*, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, second edition, 1907, 123, 124.

Intellectually, the twentieth century began some twenty-five years late in French Canada. These twenty-five years, during which politics played a most important part, were merely a continuation of the nineteenth century. All moral energy and intellectual resources were mobilized for political action. This period, marked by Canadian participation in two wars, the Boer War and the First World War, was dominated by two political giants, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Henri Bourassa. It was also the period during which two forms of nationalist thinking took shape under Henri Bourassa and Abbé Lionel Groulx. Since Confederation in 1867, French Canadians had concentrated their political interests on the federal scene, where their representatives played an active, if minority, role. Relations with English Canadians were taut and prone to deteriorate. Most French Canadians were wholeheartedly opposed to British imperialism and were consequently hostile to those English Canadians who approved or tolerated such imperialism. This tension was duplicated on the provincial level as French Canadians were rankled by Anglo-Saxon domination and superiority in the economic field. The industries being founded in Quebec were under foreign — American or British — control. Paradoxically mixed with the nationalist ideology, which deplored this second form of domination, was the messianic doctrine which Monseigneur Pâquet preached with authoritarian eloquence: Providence had given the French-Canadian people in North America a spiritual mission; loyalty to this mission was part and parcel of keeping faith with the traditional virtues of rural life. At this time, however, the rural population which did not emigrate to the United

States was being absorbed by the new industries and organized by American trade unions.

The first Catholic, French-Canadian labour unions were founded to counter these "international" and non-sectarian infiltrations. Also inspired or directed by the Church, many social movements with patriotic, moral, or semi-political aims were born. For instance, the *Société d'Économie sociale et politique*, founded in Quebec in 1905, launched the newspaper *L'Action sociale catholique*. In 1904, the Jesuits established the *Association canadienne de la jeunesse catholique*. In 1911 they founded the *Ecole sociale populaire* to instruct the middle classes in the Catholic interpretation of social problems by means of conferences, study sessions, and periodical pamphlets. It was the Jesuits once more, who, to the same end, launched the *Semaines sociales du Canada*, modelled on the *Semaines sociales de France*. What had become of Errol Bouchette's exhortations ?

In spite of everything, they were not to pass unheeded. They were fulfilled through the work of one man and one institution. The man was Édouard Montpetit, and the institution the *École des Hautes Études commerciales*. As early as 1902, J.-X. Perrault had suggested the establishment of such a school and it was set up by the Quebec Government in 1907. Its aim, coinciding with one of Bouchette's hopes, was to "train men capable of taking over the management of business" and becoming the agents of economic revival. The French-Canadian businessman had been satisfied with his small shop or family enterprise. He held aloof from modern capitalism. He rarely had the boldness needed

in big business and corporation ventures. He was not familiar with either the machinery or methods of commercial and industrial life, and his economic philosophy remained either romantic or doctrinal. Its expression is to be found in the *Traité classique d'Économie politique selon la doctrine de Léon XIII avec application au Canada*, published in 1892 by Abbé F.-A. Baillargé in the form of a catechism. The new School hoped to teach scientific and technical economics. It would thus help to create a breach in the three-cornered structure of the liberal professions. It would enable new generations of French Canadians to obtain at least a share in the control of commercial and financial enterprises.

The man chiefly responsible for this innovation was Édouard Montpetit, the first economist to be officially recognized in higher education. In 1910 he began a course in economics at the École des Hautes Études commerciales which he gave for thirty-five consecutive years. He also taught at the Faculty of Law of the University of Montreal. He has told of the disappointments and difficulties he experienced at the beginning of his career. They impose upon us the figure of a true pioneer. "I had almost no traditions on which to draw", he wrote, "for earlier workers in the field were few and scattered . . . How to discover Étienne Parent's articles? . . . Gérin's works were buried in *La Science sociale*, a European review . . . All I could do was to adapt to the needs of French Canada the lessons learned in France and to devise a training from them." ⁶ He also

6. Édouard MONTPETIT, "Les Canadiens français et l'économie", *Mémoires et Comptes rendus de la Société royale du Canada*, third series, XXXIII, section I, 1938, 55, 56.



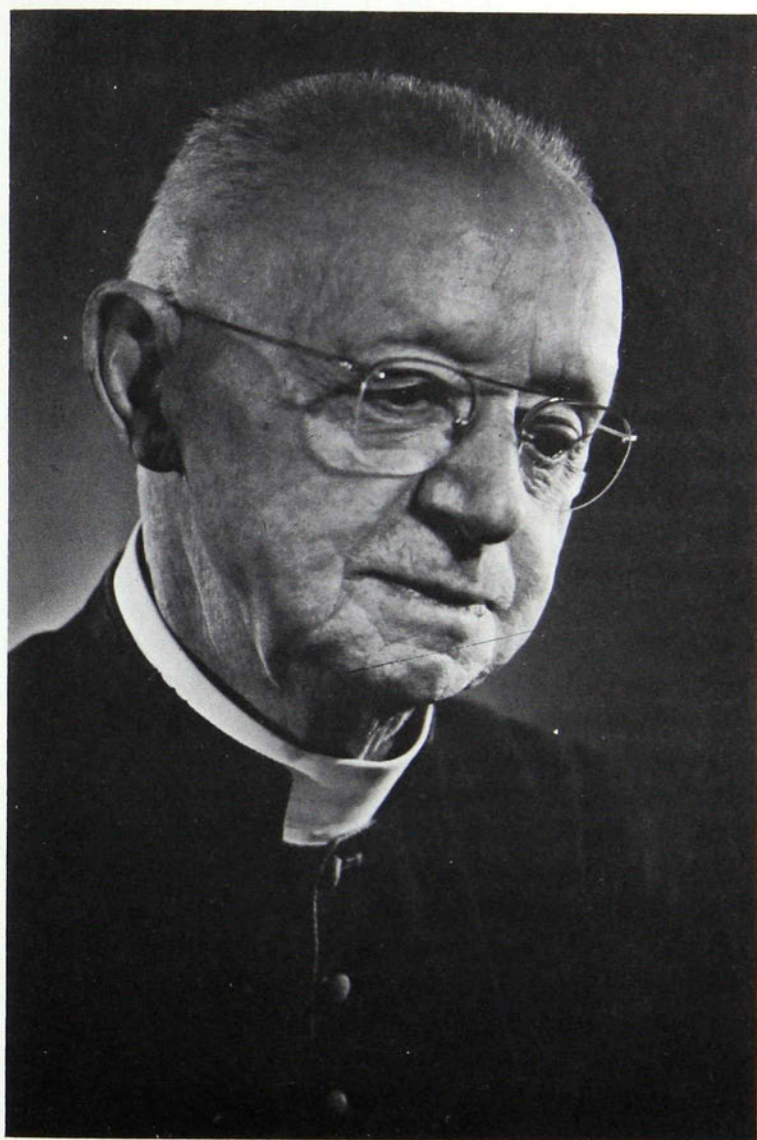
ÉDOUARD MONTPETIT

told of the opposition that soon arose in various quarters to the teaching of the science "of wealth": "It created quite a turmoil on the enlightened citadel. Self-enrichment, a dangerous doctrine, indeed! Had we not, from time immemorial, ranged intelligence against the opulence of others? The worthy classical disciplines against practical instruction? And poverty, nemesis of a shoddy idealism, against materialism?"⁷

Édouard Montpetit was the direct intellectual descendant of Étienne Parent and Bouchette. He filled the role with conviction, gusto, and the supreme elegance of the man of letters he could and wanted to be. His eclectic curiosity was as aesthetic as it was economic, more literary than theoretical. His zeal as an economist matched his zeal as a patriot. He divided the history of the French-Canadian people into three phases corresponding to three types of struggle: conflict on the field of battle, political strife, and the present-day economic fight. "Today, the scene of our striving has changed in appearance. The struggle has become a practical, self-interested one; it is more down-to-earth but no less hazardous. . . . It has left the realm of rights and essential freedoms to descend to that much more arid realm of business: it has become an economic battle."⁸ Bouchette had said: "It is therefore obvious that, if we wish to fulfil our destiny, we must look for the most effective industrial and social solutions and practice them in our

7. *Ibid.*, 58.

8. Édouard MONTPETIT, "Introduction à l'étude de l'Économie politique", *Mémoires et Comptes rendus de la Société royale du Canada*, third series, X, section I, 1916, 407.



CANON LIONEL GROULX

own country.”⁹ Montpetit added: “Therein will lie the nucleus of future policies which we shall have to formulate some day, since we are already dimly aware of a pressing need for them This doctrine will be compatible with our origins, respectful of our French ancestry ; it will be supported by and anchored in our national traditions, the well-spring of our existence as a people and sole justification for our continuing resistance.”¹⁰ The very titles of his principal works reveal his basic motivation: *Pour une doctrine, La conquête économique*. Montpetit’s leitmotiv is that it is essential to “think nationally” in stating the principles of a “positive and constructive” economic policy.

“Think nationally . . .” That imperative has influenced every plan of action of French Canada for generations. It was to have an even greater effect on the imagination of the rising generation, thanks to Abbé Groulx. Groulx’s historical work had a basic design identical to that of Garneau: to publicize the French fact in America. The work of a scholar, it is also a work of fervour, of patriotic apostleship and, at times, a call to arms. It wished to convince French Canadians of the greatness of the French epic on our continent ; to evoke lyrically the exploits of the colonizers, the missionaries, the warriors ; to list every unfortunate result of the British conquest, and all that was pernicious in the still visible domination of the conquerors ; to draw from this fate a vision of the struggle that lay ahead if as large a measure of independence as possible was to

9. Errol BOUCHETTE, *op. cit.*, 21.

10. Édouard MONTPETIT, “Introduction à l’étude de l’Économie politique”, *op. cit.*, 407.

be secured in all spheres : first in the political, then in the social, economic, and intellectual spheres. The bold views of Groulx, ranging between a paradise lost and a utopia to come, have set in motion numberless forces in different, sometimes opposite, directions. They have also somewhat obscured present social realities. To acquire lasting interest and value the social sciences in French Canada had to transcend such rhetoric.

III. The Beginnings in Institutions

One of the most revealing aspects of the period beginning with the 1920's was the gap between the rhetoric and casuistry of official interpretation of the mission, political aims, and social obligations of French Canada and the actual living conditions of its people.

Let us recall some of the significant events of those years. After the First World War, French Canadians lost both interest and confidence in the federal government. From then on they pinned their hopes on their own government in Quebec. This government, however, continued to practice an empirical policy of concessions and privileges that strengthened foreign control of industrial development. When Victor Barbeau surveyed the situation in 1936, the dreams of Bouchette and Montpetit were further than ever from realization. A French, Catholic labour federation, established in 1920, *La Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada*, encouraged acceptance of working and living conditions on the part of the French-Canadian worker. The extent of urbanization and the weakness of economic policies became evident in the depression years of the

thirties when the unemployed masses in the cities, without real leaders or immediate objectives, looked desperately to the government for their salvation. They were handed a nostrum: "Return to the land", under conditions little different from those of the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The Second World War, while intensifying industrial production, brought about a new political crisis. The report of the Rowell-Sirois Commission, set up to reconsider the constitutional powers of the federal and provincial governments in taxation matters, recommended that the federal government consolidate its authority and prerogatives. This led to a hardening of Quebec's attitude on provincial autonomy. Absolute and complete autonomy was to become the new political credo of a people who, more than ever, felt economically dispossessed in its own house.

During this time, all those professionally concerned with social problems, clergy and laity alike, pursued their study within the dual perspective of the Church's rigidly defined social philosophy and of a single nationalist ideology. Their efforts found expression in annual meetings, called the *Semaines sociales*, and later, with renewed enthusiasm, in a "Programme for Social Restoration", (Programme de restauration sociale) published in 1938 by a group of these social apostles. French-Canadian political and social philosophy strained and struggled, on three levels, between opposite poles: the upholding of rural values, and the requirements of urban and industrial living; participation in federal activity, and provincial autonomy; the obligations of

loyalty to a system of abstract ethics, and the need for technical efficiency in social and economic reform.

These problems created a challenge that could not be ignored. Solving them depended upon release from an ideology that had become monolithic. Realistic thought was called for. French-Canadian society had to be viewed first as a reality to be understood, not as an entity to be saved. In the words of Léon Gérin, there had to be a methodical attempt to unravel the social tangle. Or, as he wrote from Paris in 1886, when he was discovering LePlay's work in the social sciences: "Enough of 'theories'—we must have positive observation!"

Self-examination was imperative and facts had to be recognized. It was incumbent upon the social sciences to be responsible for this examination and recognition of the facts. Their advent had been predicted, desired, and prepared. The matter was urgent. The social sciences would implement institutionally, systematically, and in a continuing fashion what the great pioneers had accomplished individually, spontaneously, and sporadically. However, they came into being gradually and in many ways, growing out of factors which were both external and internal to the environment.

The progress of the social sciences in Europe and America, associated as it was with distinguished names, had long attracted universal attention: human geography with Vidal de la Blache and Jean Brunhes in France; sociology with Durkheim and the French school, with Thomas and Park in the United States; economics, in



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France, with Gide and Simiand, in England with Keynes ; psychology with Freud and the Austrian school, and with behaviourism in the United States ; anthropology with Frazier and Malinowski in England, Marcel Mauss in France, and Radcliffe-Brown in the United States. These developments, which had already gained acceptance in English-speaking circles, became a goad and a reproach to French-speaking Canadians. Foreign observers had given them, to their surprise and embarrassment, the most up-to-date picture of themselves : André Siegfried (*Le Canada, les deux races*, 1905, and *Le Canada, puissance internationale*, 1938) ; Vattier (*Essai sur la mentalité canadienne-française*, 1928) ; Raoul Blanchard (*L'Est du Canada français*, 1935) ; Miner (*Saint-Denis, a French-Canadian Parish*, 1936) ; and Everett C. Hughes (*French Canada in Transition*, 1944). It is true that a few isolated French-Canadian research workers had quietly carried out original work. Émile Miller had published the first scientific work in French on the geography of Canada and Quebec. Marius Barbeau, working for the National Museum of Canada since 1910, had devoted himself to innumerable ethnographic surveys of Canada's Indian groups, the Hurons, the Algonquins, and the Pacific coast tribes. His writings on the language, customs, myths, and art of these Indians make up whole volumes of the Museum's annual reports. Very early his attention had been drawn to the rural Quebec. Impressed by its rich tradition of legends, songs, and stories he tirelessly set about collecting them, described all forms of popular handicraft, accumulated vast collections of vocal recordings, and wrote constantly for Canadian, American, and European reviews.

During this period, French-Canadian universities timidly opened their doors to new disciplines. Thomas Chapais was professor of Canadian history at Laval University as early as 1907. From 1912, the École des Hautes Études commerciales offered instruction in economic geography. Outside the universities, amateur scientific societies and publications specializing in geography and history had helped, in some small measure, to arouse curiosity and interest in research. Moreover, many teachers' training institutes were the immediate forerunners of university instruction in psychology.

THE NEW INSTITUTIONS

It was during the years 1920 to 1930 that the universities in Montreal and Quebec began to offer a genuine higher education, and ceased to be "agents of conservation" to become media for "fostering new ideas". As a first step, departments of literature and philosophy were created. Progress became more spectacular when faculties of science were established and it was to reach a final crescendo with the institutes and faculties of social science.¹¹ To understand how this was achieved,

11. Here, in chronological order of their foundation, are the principal establishments to which we are referring: 1. L'École des Sciences Sociales, Économiques et Politiques, set up at the University of Montreal in 1920, became a faculty in 1942; 2. L'École des Sciences Sociales de l'Université Laval, founded in 1938, became a faculty in 1943; 3. L'Institut de Psychologie de l'Université de Montréal, established in 1942; 4. Les Archives de Folklore de l'Université Laval, created in 1944; 5. L'Institut d'Histoire et de Géographie de l'Université Laval, founded in 1946, became two separate institutions in 1955; 6. L'Institut d'Histoire de l'Université de Montréal, established in 1947; 7. L'Institut de Géographie de l'Université de Montréal, founded in 1947.

we would have to reproduce the intellectual climate of the thirties. We would have to describe the atmosphere of discussion, the stirring of new ideas, and the beginnings of an ideological awakening which were, once again, the work of journalists and polemicists such as Olivar Asselin in *L'Ordre* and Albert Pelletier in the periodical *Les Idées*. These were also the first to support the efforts of men such as Léo Pariseau, Marie-Victorin, and Adrien Pouliot to bring the universities to participate in the scientific life of the age.

The origin of the social science institutions was not the same in all cases. In some, new wine was poured into old skins. Beginning in 1932, an evening school of social sciences at Laval University gave courses similar to the *Semaines sociales* which were designed to popularize the social encyclicals. A group of priests, unhappy with this type of institution, outlined a plan for a new school which would be in closer touch with contemporary realities. The chancellor of Laval University, Cardinal Villeneuve, decided to put this plan into effect in 1938 and invited a young Dominican, who was already lecturing part-time in economic philosophy at Laval, to be its founder and director. The young man was Father Georges-Henri Lévesque, o.p.

In other cases, it was the arrival of some renowned foreign professor at the university, and his teaching there, which was the determining factor in the establishment of new institutions. Thus, one cannot overlook the decisive role played by Professor Deffontaines in establishing the Institut de géographie or that played by Professor Latreille in the type of teaching given in the

Institut d'histoire at Laval. Although Marius Barbeau was not a foreigner by birth, he was geographically and professionally a stranger. It was the prestige of his work and the interest aroused by the lectures he delivered at Laval which led to the creation of a new professorship and of the Archives de folklore under his pupil, Luc Lacourcière, in 1944. Later, other institutions developed very rapidly and seemed to come to life completely organized, like Pallas from the brow of Zeus, as it were. Such was the case of the Institut d'histoire founded by Abbé Groulx and Guy Frégault, and the Institut de psychologie, organized by Father Noël Mailloux, o.p., at the University of Montreal.

The faculties of social sciences at Montreal and Quebec developed very differently from each other. At the University of Montreal, the school was established in progressive stages and was the work of two men: Édouard Montpetit, who founded it in 1920 as a school to give training for careers in journalism, administration, and diplomacy. In 1942 it was raised to the status of a faculty. Esdras Minville, who succeeded Montpetit as dean in 1950, reorganized it completely. At Laval, "Father Lévesque's School" offered, from its inception in 1938, a programme that was deliberately planned to give "a general social formation" and was very soon to lend itself to a great diversity of specialized courses in sociology and economics.¹²

12. The important part played by each of these faculties justifies a brief account of their history:

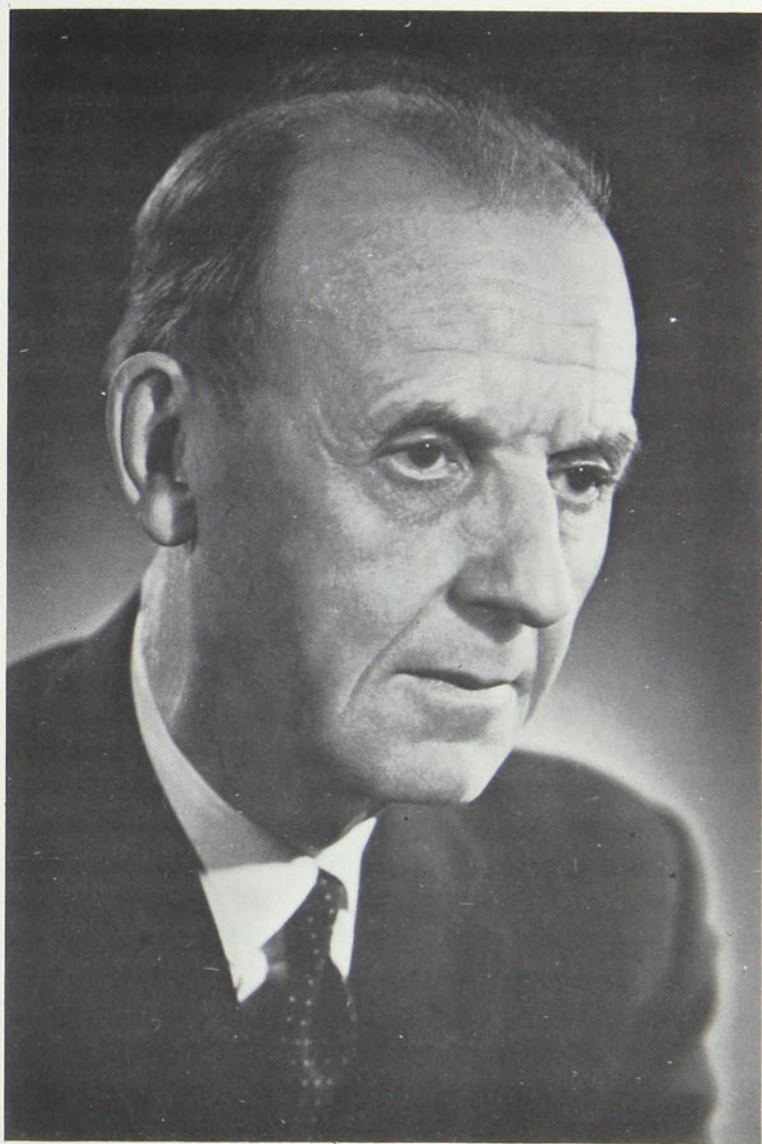
a) In Montreal, the École des Sciences Sociales, Économiques et Politiques gave most of its courses at night from 1920 to 1950. The programme was spread over two years for the first ten years of its existence, and was extended to three years in 1930. The École became a faculty in 1942, without any changes in its programme. An industrial relations

At the founding of several institutions, we find one or two bold men who knew how to communicate their enthusiasm and who stamped them with the originality of their vision. The models on which these architects drew for inspiration were French or American, or a combination of both. Édouard Montpetit reported that, at the time he was drafting the plan for a school of social sciences in Montreal, three ideals were uppermost in his mind: the London School of Economics, Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, and the École des sciences politiques in Paris.¹³ But such models were unattainable. The school he actually founded was, in fact, inspired "by similar schools organized by the Catholic universities of France". In its initial stages, Father Lévesque borrowed several elements from the faculties of Catholic institutions in France, particularly the one in Lille where he had studied. He later added others which were inspired by American models. Very early, the Institut de psychologie at the University of

section, giving day courses, was set up in 1945. A social work section was added in 1948. The faculty began day courses in 1950. Its present organization was established in 1955 and 1958 by the creation of new departments of sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science, by making the industrial relations department an industrial relations "centre", and by raising the social work section to the status of a school. Finally a department of criminology was created in 1961.

b) L'École des Sciences Sociales, Économiques et Politiques de Laval, when founded in 1938, was affiliated with the faculty of philosophy; from the outset, its programme was spread over three years and given during the day. In 1943, with the backing of a group of professional teachers, the École became an independent faculty with departments of sociology, economics, and industrial relations, a social work school, and a research centre. An adult education programme was added in 1944; it was later called the Centre de Culture Populaire. A political science department was added in 1954, and in 1961 the sociology department branched out and became a department of sociology and anthropology.

13. Édouard MONTPETIT, "L'enseignement supérieur est-il américanisé?", *Revue trimestrielle canadienne*, XXVI, September 1940, 242.



ESDRAS MINVILLE

Montreal strove to adopt the most advanced features of the best institutions of the kind in North America. The same applied to the Institutes of History and Geography at Laval and Montreal, although, in each case, very obvious preference was given to French universities as models.

EARLY TEACHING

Once the models were established, making them work was a matter of patience. It generally took ten to fifteen years to set up these institutions and be sure of their vitality. In the beginning, the founder, with the help of a few colleagues, had to assume entire responsibility for teaching, administration, and planning. Some of the first graduates went abroad to pursue their studies and returned as teachers to swell the ranks of the original team. They in turn trained others, some of whom followed in their footsteps and later became their colleagues. The economists went to Harvard, Paris, Louvain, or London ; the sociologists to Chicago, Louvain, Paris, Zurich, Cornell, or Columbia ; the geographers to Grenoble or Yale ; the psychologists to Columbia, Paris, or Geneva ; the historians to Chicago, Lyons, Paris, etc. The first generation of career teachers in the social sciences took every point of the international scientific horizon in their compass. Their attempts enriched French-Canadian

higher education with all the intellectual attitudes, the methodology, the empirical knowledge that the social sciences of the day, at their most advanced level, had to offer. It is difficult to speak of any dominant influence, beyond noting that early scientific teaching in certain institutions possibly reflected the European or American schools of thought to which the first instructors had been exposed.

This was a primitive, militant, and sometimes heroic, phase. Those engaged in it felt themselves to be pioneers in their own way. Each had to experience for himself the distressing yet stimulating experience of Montpetit's early days: "... no intellectual tradition on which to base one's philosophy..." From one semester to the next, he had to devise his own teaching material. He had to create libraries. He had to set research projects going. Moreover, he had to attract and enrol students; answer the call of those who expected help or co-operation; deal with the problems, fears, and even provocations of those whom the social sciences disturbed or jolted out of their complacency. In this respect, the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval was in itself truly a crusade. Sparked by the enlightened zeal of Father Lévesque, a man of thought and action, the original team had to win acceptance for an institution which refused to be cowed by traditional orthodoxy, political parties, or electoral myths. It had to defend itself against all kinds of reactionary influences and demonstrate its usefulness. While heeding the limits of true university work, it applied to the social sciences the precept that Marie-Victorin had addressed to all scientists in 1943: "We

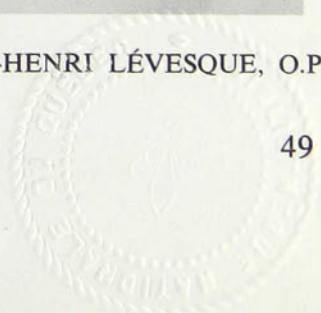
must seek out and earnestly honour unbiased research, in a word, science . . ." For the same reasons, other teams in other places went through a similar experience.

However, each of the two faculties of social sciences displayed a dual tendency in its early days : toward scientific teaching allied with research, and toward technical training for careers that were considered important. The latter tendency was exemplified by social work schools and industrial relations departments. For similar reasons, the first publications by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval were *Cahiers*, containing short essays on history or social questions and aimed at a wide audience. This was a stage of transition between religious and patriotic preaching and the diffusion of the results of the social research which had scarcely begun.

Each institution was thus both a laboratory for thought and, by its external action, a kind of social movement : on the one hand, teaching and research ; on the other, educational and therapeutic action directed toward individuals or groups. In many instances one or the other, or both, of these activities led to new structures being added to the initial one. Two complementary institutions were added to the Institut de psychologie at Montreal : the Centre de recherches en relations humaines is concerned with research ; the Centre d'orientation concentrates on therapy. In 1959, an Institute of Applied Economics was set up in the École des Hautes Études commerciales : it is both a teaching and a research centre for the economic disciplines. The Institute of Geography at Laval inspired the foundation



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of a Northern Studies Centre staffed by geographers, ethnologists, and demographers. The Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval established both a Research Centre and an Extension Department. Another interesting development has been the transformation of one department of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Montreal into a Centre of industrial relations and the setting up of an Institute of criminology.

EARLY RESEARCH

We have defined the rise of social sciences in French-speaking Quebec as an answer to a challenge : to gain a realistic and objective view of French-Canadian society and establish close contact with it. An essential condition for attaining this knowledge was the freeing of minds which until recently had been too preoccupied with a moral and ideological interpretation of events. A double task was therefore imposed on the social sciences : the condition was to be met through teaching, and the objective was to be reached through research. We have just given an outline of the teaching and have shown how it could bring about a new intellectual attitude. It allowed the change from an ideological to a scientific approach, at least in such fields as economics, psychology, social anthropology, and sociology. The change is still in progress. However, research could not be delayed until this first step was completed. The requirements of the social sciences and urgent social needs made such research imperative. It

was carried on with the people, time, and money available. In such areas as psychology, everything had to be done from scratch. In others, everything had to be done over again. French-Canadian society had greatly progressed since the days of Gérin, Bouchette, and even Blanchard. It had to be considered anew, like an unexplored land. Institutes and faculties became workshops, small at first but better equipped as the years went by. The first research workers had little more than an overabundance of challenges to choose from.

What direction did social research take at first? Very early there appeared overall studies on contemporary Quebec society, for instance the collection *Études sur notre milieu*, which began to appear in 1942 and which was a joint effort under the direction of Esdras Minville.¹⁴ The *Essais sur le Québec contemporain*, grouping a number of studies on the social impact of industrialization in the province, appeared ten years later.¹⁵ These works were general surveys rather than studies in depth. To the latter category belong certain anthropological essays of French-Canadian culture. In the field of history, an already brilliant historiographical tradition of long standing set an example for comprehensive works. Younger historians, however, limited themselves to precise areas of investigation:

14. *Études sur notre milieu*, a series under the supervision of Esdras Minville, Montreal, Fides and Hautes Études commerciales, 5 vols: *Notre milieu*, 1942; *L'agriculture*, 1943; *Montréal économique*, 1943; *La forêt*, 1944; *Pêche et chasse*, 1946.

15. *Essais sur le Québec contemporain*, Presses Universitaires Laval, 1953.

the French regime ; a revision of the nationalist thesis ; the nineteenth century, whose ideological currents and economic history have been given particularly close attention.

As for individual research, even a superficial count of the early investigations in various disciplines is enough to show their diversity. A few folklore research workers continued to add to the material which Marius Barbeau had assembled by making methodical inventories, region by region, of the elements underlying traditional culture. However, this work on folklore remained relatively closed to anthropological considerations. Anthropological studies of Quebec have only recently come to the universities. We already owe to them valuable monographs on a few rural areas. Sociology, on the other hand, was first concerned with the process of urban growth, with the parish as a basic social institution, and with changes in the family. Economists embarked on regional studies, analyzed the occupational structure, and began to rewrite the economic history of Canada and Quebec. The first psychological experiments dealt with the origin and dynamics of inter-ethnic attitudes and relationships.

The financial help which made this early research possible came, in general, from outside the universities and paradoxically, in most instances, from sources outside Quebec. One major outside source was the Social Science Research Council of Canada. There is scarcely a single university research worker in Quebec as in the rest of Canada, who has not at some time been

subsidized by this organization. And it was through Council grants that many French-Canadian graduates in one social science or another were able to complete their specialized training in universities abroad. By 1950, the social sciences were well and truly on their way. From this point on they could only go forward.

IV. The Present Situation and Future Prospects

The outstanding feature of the social sciences today is their vitality. Hundreds of students attend regular courses in faculties at Laval and Montreal. Programmes have been improved and departments have multiplied. Each of the two older universities now has a political science department. The young University of Sherbrooke has set up a department of economics in its Faculty of Arts. Increasing diversification in fields of specialization has been accompanied by improvements in interdepartmental and interdisciplinary co-operation. Research is carried out by teams made up of specialists in the various disciplines, often from more than one university. The first generation of professional teachers is still with us, but their colleagues are constantly growing in experience and numbers. Thanks to Canada Council grants and the good offices of the Institut Franco-Canadien, the university departments benefit each year from the presence of colleagues from abroad, particularly from France. These visits are becoming longer and more frequent.

French-Canadian social scientists have long been members and attended meetings of the Association Canadienne-Française pour l'Avancement des Sciences (ACFAS). At the 1963 meeting, seven of the twenty-seven study sessions were given over to the social sciences. Today, we have the Association canadienne des économistes, the Association canadienne des anthropologues, psychologues sociaux et sociologues de langue française and the Société canadienne de science politique, not to mention associations of historians and geographers. Results of empirical, clinical, and theoretical research are published in some ten reviews.¹⁶

Furthermore, social science graduates can be found at every level—even the highest—of the provincial and federal administrations, in industrial and commercial personnel and planning services, adult education organizations, independent research firms, diocesan institutions, trade union federations, and social movements. The advantage of hindsight will allow historians of the future to evaluate accurately the part played by the social sciences over the last twenty years in the rejuvenation of “doctrines” and action programmes in such areas as trade unionism, the Church’s pastoral activities, and political planning. It has been a significant one.

The great progress made in French-Canadian social research may be appreciated simply by referring to such recent books as *Mélanges géographiques canadiens offerts*

16. See the complete list in the Bibliography.

à Raoul Blanchard,¹⁷ the bibliographical catalogue compiled by teachers at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes commerciales de Montreal,¹⁸ and especially *Situation de la recherche sur le Canada français*.¹⁹ This work, the result of a seminar organized by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of Laval, is a critical inventory of original research carried out up to the present and bears witness to its variety and scope. There is hardly any part of French-Canadian life that has not been the object of scrutiny, and scarcely any discipline whose theoretical or analytical resources have not been used, from demography and human ecology to the sociology of religion. It must also be understood, as was pointed out by the organizers of the Laval seminar, that "we are still very much at the stage of coordination rather than at that of synthesis."²⁰ And let us recognize that this research is ethnocentric in character. Dumont and Martin, the seminar organizers, add: "Few French-Canadian research workers study their own society in relation to others . . . That seems to us the next direction that research should take in French Canada."²¹

As we have seen, one of the first tasks of the social sciences has been to study the structure of society particular to French Canada. A remark recently made

17. *Mélanges géographiques canadiens offerts à Raoul Blanchard*, published under the auspices of the Institut de géographie de l'Université Laval, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1958, 491 pp.

18. *Cinquante années de rayonnement: Contribution des professeurs de l'École des Hautes Études commerciales de Montréal à la vie intellectuelle du Canada*, Catalogue of principal works, Montreal, École des Hautes Études commerciales, mimeograph, October 1962, 132 pp.

19. *Situation de la recherche sur le Canada français*, under the direction of Fernand Dumont and Yves Martin, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1963, 296 pp.

20. *Ibid.*, 8.

21. *Ibid.*

by two sociologists, Fernand Dumont and Guy Rocher, gives us an idea of how that task has been carried out. "The main characteristic of the recent social development of French Canada has been the evolution from a monolithic view of ourselves to a reluctant recognition of plurality. Consequently, our society's present situation appears to be conditioned by our difficulty in devising once more a collective identity."²² It may be said that the social sciences have contributed to this phenomenon in two ways. Through the work and research which they have inspired, the social sciences helped to free the French-Canadian mind from its unitary concepts. Through their very existence and activities, they spread knowledge of some of the factors and results of the diversifying and pluralizing processes taking place in our social milieu. Moreover, they stimulated a rational and secular attitude toward social realities through rigorous and constant practice of positive methods of approach. This development has not been evident at the university level alone. It may also be seen, albeit somewhat attenuated, in many areas of thought. In the Quebec of today, problems are no longer stated in the same terms as they were twenty or thirty years ago. Whether dealing with questions of trade unionism, politics, education, or religion, there is hardly anyone today who does not try to be "objective".

Our last question is this: What has been the attitude of the social sciences toward the traditionally dominant ideologies? An answer to this question would

22. Fernand DUMONT and Guy ROCHER, "Introduction à une sociologie du Canada français", *Recherches et débats*, XXXIV, (*Le Canada français aujourd'hui et demain*), Paris, 1961, 13.

call for an essay that could well provide the framework of a future history of the social sciences. We have seen that history, anthropology, and sociology have redefined and reinterpreted contemporary French-Canadian society. Of necessity, this meant that they also discussed and criticized its ideologies. Moreover, the postulates on which certain historians, for instance, are basing their reinterpretation of the destiny of French Canada imply that a new ideology is supplanting older ones. The social sciences in French Canada, by their concern with the factual, have exposed the mythology surrounding its past and present ; but they have yet to acquire a deeper understanding of that past and present, by showing how the old definitions and interpretations arose. They will have to study today's society in relation to other societies and times, and present their findings in more clearly defined scientific terms. That is the task for them to perform in years to come. French-Canadian social scientists will take an increasingly large part in a great world dialogue—the dialogue of research workers in the sciences of man, who labour not only to increase the accuracy and improve the quality of their scientific investigations, but also to give mankind a definition of itself which will take into account both the manifold dimensions of its existence and the deeper meanings of its fate.

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