

What did Michael Power Really Want? Questions Regarding the Origins of Catholic Separate Schools in Canada West

Mark G. MCGOWAN

There once was a time in Ontario when uttering the words “separate schools” would guarantee, in the least, an argument, or at worst, a fistfight. Political parties, communities, neighbourhoods, and families became seriously divided over the perceived right, or even the necessity, to allow the province’s Catholics to establish and maintain publicly-financed separate schools. The controversy and debate over these schools has also been evident in scholarly discussions of education nationwide. Since the late nineteenth century there have been two conflicting historical perspectives arguing the constitutionality, moral validity, and existence of publicly-financed Catholic schools. One issue upon which neither of these two historical schools has been able to agree is whether or not Michael Power, the first Bishop of Toronto, believed in, and was prepared to advance, the idea of a Catholic school system, sustained by the public purse. The question of Michael Power’s commitment to Catholic separate schools is critical for several reasons, not the least of which was the fact that his new diocese contained the fastest growing region in British North America, providing a haven for tens of thousands of European migrants annually. His diocesan territory extended from Oshawa in the east to Sandwich in the west and, then, from Lakes Ontario and Erie as far north as the Lakehead and the watersheds of Lakes Huron and Superior. Furthermore, for some historians to suggest Power’s lack of interest in separate schools could imply that not all colonial Catholic leaders desired publicly funded denominational schools and, in fact, such ideas were essentially thrust on the Catholic community, and by implication on the Province, by the “foreign” ultramontane bishops who succeeded Power.

These two adversarial historiographical schools of thought rely heavily on the testimony of two of Michael Power’s closest associates: John Elmsley and Egerton Ryerson. In response to statements made to the contrary in 1856,

Elmsley stated unequivocally in the public press that his dear departed friend, Bishop Power, earnestly believed in Catholic separate schools and, had the bishop lived, Elmsley speculated that Power would have made as vigorous a defence of them as his successor.¹ Catholic historians and supporters of separate schools have upheld Elmsley's interpretation of Power and, with it, the view that Catholic leaders from the time of earliest settlement had insisted upon public assistance for separate schools.² At the other end of the debate, Egerton Ryerson, arguably the architect of the common school system in Ontario, claimed that Power was most progressive among ecclesiastics in his toleration – “virtually a Canadian” – in the manner in which he supported the concept of one public system of schools for all of Upper Canada's children. Ryerson had only to point to the fact that Power not only agreed to sit on the first “Board of Education,” in 1846, he served as its first chair. Ryerson's associate, J.G. Hodgins and a host of respectable historians thereafter, have come to accept Ryerson's belief that Michael Power was an enlightened prelate, who preferred a common non-sectarian school system; it is they who point to Armand de Charbonnel, the second bishop of Toronto (1850-60), as the principal advocate of a separate publicly funded Catholic school system.³

¹ *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 28 March 1856.

² Franklin Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1955), 37-75. This line of argument can be found in his historical overview of Catholic schools in *Historical Sketch of Separate Schools of Ontario and Minority Report, 1950* (Toronto: The English Catholic Education Association of Ontario, 1950), 16-27, Robert T. Dixon, *The Ontario Separate School System and Section 93 of the British North America Act* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1976); James F. White, “Separate School Law and the Separate Schools of the Archdiocese,” in J.R. Teefy, ed. *Jubilee Volume* (Toronto: George T. Dixon, 1892), 252-3. White gives a very brief account that only suggests his work for Catholic schools. An article on Power by H.F. MacIntosh, in the same volume, makes no mention of Power and Catholic schools. Sir Richard Scott, the architect of the Separate School Act of 1863, also makes no mention of Power in his “Establishment and Growth of the Separate School System in Ontario,” *Canada An Encyclopaedia of the Country*, edited by J. Castell Hopkins (Toronto: The Linscott Publishing Company, 1898), 3:180-87.

³ J. George Hodgins, *The Legislation and History of Separate Schools in Upper Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897), 28-32.; C.B. Sissons, *Church and State in Canadian Education* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1959), 21-23; John S. Moir, “The Origins of the Separate School Question in Ontario,” *Canadian Journal of Theology* 5 (1959), 107-8; Murray W. Nicolson, “Irish Catholic Education in Victorian Toronto: An Ethnic Response to Urban Conformity,” *Histoire sociale–Social History* 17 (November 1984), 292. Ironically Nicolson downplays the role of Power in an effort to put forward Charbonnel as the architect of Catholic education in the Diocese

Thus, much of our knowledge about what Power may really have wanted in terms of separate schools essentially rests on the testimony of these two Victorian gentlemen. If one presumes that they were fabricating the truth to meet their own agendas, Elmsley appears little more than a caricature of an overzealous convert to Roman Catholicism and, more Roman than Rome, and Ryerson emerges as little more than a hyper-passionate school promoter and a Methodist cleric valiantly advancing principles of voluntaryism and religious toleration in an increasingly pluralistic colonial environment.⁴ Indeed, while both men probably were guilty of seeing Power through their own unique world view, it is hardly likely that these Victorian gentlemen, with stellar civic reputations and very deep religious convictions, lied about Power. This leaves the historical detective with few alternatives other than to try to reconstruct the life of Michael Power, himself, in order to ascertain by thought, word, and deed his position on Catholic separate schools. Unfortunately there are only fragments of his life that have been documented or archived; his personal correspondence is limited to his letter books and a few incoming letters that survived him.⁵ Nevertheless, the papers of other public figures, contemporary newspapers, court records, government archives, and genealogical data provide some insight into the development of the man responsible for laying the institutional foundations of the Catholic Church in

of Toronto. John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for Ontario Historical Studies Series, 1988), 146-7.

⁴ Murray W. Nicolson, "John Elmsley and the Rise of Irish Catholic Social Action in Victorian Toronto," *CCHA Historical Studies* 51 (1984): 47-66 or on Ryerson, Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977) or C.B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1947).

⁵ Existing biographical sketches include Hugh Fraser MacIntosh, "The Life and Times of Bishop Power," in the aforementioned *Jubilee Volume*, 107-140; derivative of this essay is MacIntosh's "The Catholic Church in Toronto," in J. Edgar Middleton, *The Municipality of Toronto: A History* (Toronto: Dominion Publishing Company, 1923), 715-26; MacIntosh is very influential on Murray W. Nicolson, "Michael Power: The First Bishop of Toronto," *CCHA Historical Studies* 54 (1987), 27-38; Much of this is reiterated in his "The Growth of Roman Catholic Institutions in the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1841-1890," in Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds. *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 154-8. Power's early years are covered in Terrence Punch, *Some Sons of Erin in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Petheric Press, 1980), 47-51. The overview of Power's life is in Robert Choquette, "Michael Power" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 7:705-6.

western Upper Canada (known officially, but not colloquially, as Canada West after 1841).

When one assesses Michael Power's life, while posing the question, "what did he really want in terms of Catholic education," it is possible to see shards of truth in the interpretations offered by both Elmsley and Ryerson, though probably neither man understood Power's motives or actions in their entirety. Power was certainly a passionate Roman Catholic, but he was also a loyal citizen of the British Empire who understood all too well the precarious position held by a Catholic minority living within a predominately Protestant colonial context. He had an astute sense of timing as the Catholic leader of Western Upper Canada, which prompted great judiciousness in him when it came to public response and reaction to issues involving religion, family, and public morality. His brief career demonstrated the strategic manner in which he asserted the rights of Catholics while not giving offense to, and co-operating with, Protestant authorities and institutions. Power's whole life was marked by his attention to balancing the precepts of his faith, with the lived reality of being a British subject, under a Protestant monarch. In the end, the evidence suggests that Michael Power firmly believed in state-funded Catholic Common Schools, as established by law, but like most other Upper Canadians of his day,⁶ he did not consider the common school to be the exclusive means to deliver education. In Power's view, state-supported denominational schools, mixed schools, Catholic-dominated Common Schools, parish-based catechism classes, and "superior" schools, all constituted possible vehicles for the delivery of a Catholic education, depending upon the context. Above all, he carefully weighed the context in which denominational issues could be pursued assertively or when episcopal discretion was the better part of valour. His untimely and tragic death, 1 October 1847, has not allowed historians the ability to see how his strategy would have played itself out, particularly given the growing sectarian hostility in the United Canadas in the 1850s. Nevertheless, by exploring Power as "citizen of the Empire" and as "servant of the Church," we may come to understand more fully his educational strategy and ultimately "what he wanted."

The researcher expecting to find significant documentation regarding Michael Power's involvement in the formative period of Upper Canada's common schools, in the 1840s, will be sadly disappointed. Despite the passage of three major school acts, excluding ongoing amendments, between

⁶ Robert D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in the Nineteenth Century* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 4-7.

1841 and 1847, Michael Power left few records of his thoughts or actions. When he arrived in Toronto, in June 1842, the Common School Act (Day Act) of 1841 permitted, under section XI, the establishment of denominational schools, where “any number of inhabitants ... professing a Religious Faith different from that of the majority of the Inhabitants” requested them.⁷ When, in 1843, Francis Hincks introduced new legislation to correct the deficiencies and difficulties of applying the Common School Act, Power lobbied Catholic politicians to ensure that Catholic rights were respected.⁸ The revised “Hincks Act” became law in December 1843, and within sections LIV, LV and LVI, there were provisions that in each district, ten Catholic or Protestant freeholders could petition the local municipality for the creation of a separate school, on condition that the local Common School teacher be of the “other” faith.⁹ Otherwise it was implied that if the Common School teacher was Catholic, there was no danger for Catholic children attending the local mixed school, since it was presumed that no Catholic teacher would utilize anti-Catholic texts or readings offensive to the Church. Nevertheless, Power commissioned Father Angus Macdonell, nephew of the deceased Bishop of Upper Canada (Kingston) to safeguard Catholic interests as bills related to schools and Catholic rights were debated in the Assembly.¹⁰ Macdonell had been an able assistant to the new Bishop of Toronto in 1842, but had since returned to the diocese of Kingston, where he was in closer proximity to the legislators of the Province of Canada.

Power’s final public appearance in the schools’ issue was his acceptance of membership, and then chairmanship, of the first Board of Education, as established by the new Common School Act of 1846. Egerton Ryerson’s foundational legislation provided once more for the establishment of separate Catholic or Protestant schools, under similar conditions as laid out by the Hincks Act of 1843. The Board of Education, exclusively for Canada West, was created by Ryerson in order to supervise the selection of school texts, create and manage a Normal School for the training of teachers, and advise

⁷ *An Act to ... Further Provision for the Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools Throughout the Province*, 4 & 5 Victoria, ch. 18, section XI, 18 September 1841. In J.G. Hodgins, *Historical and Other Documents Illustrative of the Educational System in Ontario, 1782-1853* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1911), 1: 142.

⁸ Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (hereafter ARCAT), Michael Power Papers, Letter Book 2, Power to Dominick Daly, 7 November 1843. LB02.110.

⁹ *An Act for the Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada*, 7 Victoria, ch. 29, 9 December 1843, sections LIV, LV, and LVI.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, Letter Book 2, Power to Angus Macdonell, 18 December 1844. LB02. 219.

the Superintendent of Schools. Ryerson and Attorney General William Henry Draper (chief minister of the Government) had wanted the first Board to reflect the religious diversity of the Province without the appearance of being too clerical. In 1846, on the glowing recommendation of Anglican bishop John Strachan, Ryerson selected Michael Power as a Roman Catholic spokesperson on the new Board of six voting members.¹¹ Power was elected Chair and served faithfully in that post until his sudden death in 1847. Aside from overseeing the adoption of Irish readers for Canada West's schools, the conversion of the old legislative building in Toronto into the first Normal School, and the hiring of its first Master, Power's tenure as an educational public servant passed without noticeable controversy.¹²

While these fragments of his public life betray an absence of turmoil and a sense of calm, in reality Power was juggling the two central issues of his episcopate. On the one hand he was carefully carving a place for Catholics in a province whose political and social institutions were overwhelmingly Anglican and Protestant. At the same time he was coming to terms both personally and ecclesiastically with the emergence of ultramontane Catholicism, particularly its French-Canadian variant which was being transplanted into North America by his friend, episcopal colleague, and former superior in Montreal, Bishop Ignace Bourget. Loyalty to the Church and loyalty to the crown would form the warp and woof of Michael Power's thought and action after 1841.

In Michael Power's early life there is much to suggest precedents for Ryerson's impression that he was an advocate of tolerance and loyalty within the Empire. Born in Halifax in 1804, the second of eight children to Waterford immigrants Captain William Power (commercial sailor) and Mary Roche, Michael Power was raised in British North America's most important naval installation.¹³ In his Irish lineage he was a member of Halifax's largest ethnic

¹¹ Sissons, *Church and State in Canadian Education*, 21; Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), RG 2, Ministry of Education, Inventory 2, Administrative Histories A-L; General Board of Education for Canada West; *School Act*, 9 Victoria, ch. 20 (1846); RG 2-3-5, Department of Education, Container 1, General Board of Education, Minutes, Drafts, 21 July 1846, first meeting, election of chair; AO J.G. Hodgins Papers, MU 1375, Ryerson to Draper, 3 March 1846, "Remarks and Suggestions on the Common School Act, 9 Victoria, Ch.20"; Ryerson to Draper, 14 May 1846 (Strachan "highly approved" of Power's appointment).

¹² *Globe*, 9 October 1847.

¹³ ARCAT, Power Papers, Birth Certificate, authorized by Thomas O'Donnell, Halifax, 21 April 1930. Archives of the Archdiocese of Halifax, Certificate from John Carroll, 15 January 1823, St. Peter's Parish Register. Genealogy derived from *Nova Scotia Vital Statistics from Newspapers*, ed. By Jean M. Holder (Halifax:

and religious minority, although the social, political and economic life all about Power in Halifax was unmistakably British. The new “jack” of the Act of Union fluttered over the citadel fortress, only blocks away from the Power home on Hollis Street. The Church of England, its edifices, and its institutions were prominent in the cityscape of this outpost of the motherland. The thousands of sailors who embarked, disembarked, brawled and cavorted in the streets of the port each year were a constant reminder of the commerce, industry, and military strength that linked England with her colonies in the North Atlantic triangle. In 1814 and 1815, from his own housetop, Power would have been able to sight the British warships, fully outfitted, leaving Halifax to rid the world of Napoleon Bonaparte or to vanquish the “evil” forces of the United States.¹⁴ On his many excursions to Point Pleasant Park, to satisfy his interest in botany, the young Power would be reminded of the British military presence when he hunted for wildflowers in the shadows of the park’s rather imposing Martello tower. In such an environment he would come to identify himself as a citizen of the British Empire.¹⁵

Michael Power would have his emergent sense of British citizenship reinforced when he went to school. Although each Sunday he attended the catechism classes offered by Father Edmund Burke, the Roman Catholic missionary in Nova Scotia, Power attended to his weekly lessons at the Grammar School managed by the Reverend George Wright, Anglican chaplain to the British garrison at the Halifax Citadel.¹⁶ Wright’s classes were held in a building owned by the colony’s legislature and the alumni of his school contained some of the storied names of colonial Nova Scotia: Thomas Chandler Haliburton and the scions of the Cunard family. Power’s classmates were mostly Protestants and Anglicans, including boys from some of Halifax’s leading families. There is some evidence to suggest that one of Wright’s pupils in Power’s day was an aspiring writer and future reform

Genealogical Committee of the Nova Scotia Historical Society, 1980) volumes for years 1823-8; 1835-9; 1840-2. Terrence Punch, *Religious Marriages in Halifax, 1768-1841 from Original Sources* (Halifax: Genealogical Publications of Nova Scotia, 1991), 126; Leonard H. Smith Jr. & Norma H. Smith, *Nova Scotia Immigrants to 1867* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1992), 1:458 and 2:195 and 201.

¹⁴ Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years* (Halifax: Formac Press, 1999), 40-1. “Le journal des visites pastorales de Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis (Eveque de Quebec), En Acadie 1811, 1812, 1815,” *La Societe historique acadienne, Les Cahiers* 11 (no. 1-2-3) (mars, juin, septembre, 1980), 178-91.

¹⁵ *The Cross*, 23 October 1847.

¹⁶ Dorothy Pollock, M.Ed., to the Author, 10 April 2001.

politician, Joseph Howe.¹⁷ Education came at a price in the British colony: the residual effects of the Penal laws and public attitudes discouraged a distinctively Catholic school, while education itself came only to those who could afford the fees or had a generous benefactor.

At worship, young Michael Power and his family would also be constantly reminded that they lived in a British world. In 1784, in Nova Scotia, the Penal Laws had been relaxed to the extent that Catholic laymen in Halifax, the Powers included, were able to establish and support a church and parish cemetery. As was the case in several other British colonies, the lay Catholics in Halifax held title to the Church's property and managed all affairs of the parish through the agency of elected trustees, or Church wardens. Temporal affairs in the parish were entirely in the hands of the laity, whereas it was the expectation of parishioners that the priest would be one who presided over liturgy and dispensed the sacraments.¹⁸ The clergy, many of whom in Power's time were still itinerant, although appointed by the Bishop of Quebec, were subject to the likes and dislikes, quirks and quarks, of members of the congregation who had the power to make or break the local priest.

Edmund Burke, who served as missionary to Halifax and later as Apostolic Vicar to Nova Scotia in 1817, had a significant influence on Power's formation. Recognizing in Power some academic potential and a piety that might fit him for the priesthood, Burke made arrangements in 1816 that the twelve-year old student continue his education in Quebec. While studying in the minor seminary, the *Petit Seminaire de Saint Paul*, Power was a colleague of several of the future leaders of Lower Canada; these young men, among whom were counted George-Étienne Cartier and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine,¹⁹ were restless aspirants to the liberal professions and certainly their political positions, akin to those of the *Parti Canadien*, challenged many of the traditional assumptions of British colonial rule. Questions of the extent of Imperial control of the colonies, responsible government, and the liberties of the individual would never be remote from the conversations and activities of Power and his classmates.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 April 2001. *Punch*, *Sons of Erin*, 48; *The Cross*, 23 October 1847.

¹⁸ Terrence Murphy, "Trusteeism in Atlantic Canada: The Struggle for Leadership among the Irish Catholics of Halifax, St. John's, and Saint John, 1780-1850," in Murphy and Stortz, eds, *Creed and Culture*, 126-51.

¹⁹ Olivier Maurault, PA, pss., *Le College de Montreal, 1767-1867* (Montreal, 1967), 3 and 217.

Such ideas continued to interest Power even after his ordination in 1827.²⁰ He subscribed to several publications throughout his priestly service in Lower Canada, including the Conservative Montreal *Gazette*, the loyal *L'Ami de Peuple*, and the *Vindicator*, a vociferous reform organ published by fellow Irishman Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan. Similarly, Power purchased the speeches, pamphlets, and books of Daniel O'Connell, the advocate of Irish political rights and constitutional reform in the United Kingdom.²¹ Power's literary interests suggest his fascination with the politics of the day, the battle between interpretations of the Constitution of 1791, and his concern about the rising tide of radical reform in Lower Canada. Some of his political opinions would have been put to the test between 1831 and 1833, when he served as the parish priest at Petite-Nation, the seigneurie in the lower Ottawa valley ceded to the Papineau Family. Denis-Benjamin Papineau, brother to the radical reform leader Louis-Joseph, and Power clashed several times over the building of a mission school and financial conditions in the seigneurie.²² Underpaid, somewhat dispirited, and on poor terms with his Bishop, J.J. Lartigue, Power was moved, in 1833, to the parish of Ste-Martine, in Beauharnois.²³

The Chateauguay and Beauharnois regions were a cauldron of political radicalism in the years leading up to the rebellions of 1837-8, and certainly this environment tested the metal of the young curate at Ste-Martine. After the failure of Louis-Joseph Papineau's forces in the Richelieu valley and at Deux Montagnes, in 1837, the *patriotes* of the Beauharnois region continued the fight against the Crown. In November, 1838, under the guise of the *clubs chasseurs*, *patriotes* attacked local seigneuries and attempted to incite local Mohawks into rebellion.²⁴ Allegedly, Michael Power was seized and held under house arrest in his rectory by the rebels. A combined force of militia and British regulars, under the command of Sir John Colbourne extinguished the

²⁰ ARCAT, Power Papers, Sacraments, 19 August 1827, P AA02.02.

²¹ ARCAT, Power Papers, Receipts and Bills, AD01.01 to AD01.03.

²² Michel Chamberland, *Histoire de Montebello, 1815-1928* (Montreal, 1929), 149-58; Cole Harris, "Of Poverty and Helplessness in Petite-Nation," *Canadian Historical Review* 52 (March 1971): 23-50; Andre Bucault, *Le Memorial de Plaisance* (Ottawa: Les Editions de Petite-Nation, 1986), 163-4; Claude Baribeau, *La Seigneurie de la Petite-Nation, 1801-1854* (Hull: Editions Asticou, 1983), 26-8.

²³ Archives of the Archdiocese of Montreal (hereafter AAM), Jean-Jacques Lartigue Papers, Lartigue to Michael Power, 17 October 1833, Register 7, p. 289; Harris, 42.

²⁴ Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 332-63; *Montreal Gazette* 6, 8, 13 and 24 November 1838.

revolt quickly and initiated severe reprisals against suspected rebels and their property throughout the region. For his part, Power remained in close contact with the military authorities in Montreal, interceding on behalf of innocent parishioners, some of whom were released as a result; Power, however, also allowed the law to take its full course against others of his flock, whom he had reported to the British. Although Power had placed himself squarely on the side of the Crown, he demonstrated considerable sympathy for those members of his parish, whom he felt were coerced into taking up arms by rebel leaders.²⁵

The rebellions of 1837-38 were among the two single most transforming events in Michael Power's life. His personal involvement in the rebellion won him accolades from both the British military and the editors at the *Montreal Gazette*.²⁶ Power himself wrote to the Colonial Office arguing that the extension of Catholic institutions into the frontier areas of Upper Canada would help to quell "the spirits of insubordination and fierce democratic spirit which unhappily exists in a formidable degree."²⁷ When questioned on the subsequent appointment of the new bishop of Toronto, Governor General Sir Charles Bagot personally claimed he disapproved of the appointment of any more Roman Catholic bishops, but in the case of Power he was willing to make an exception. Bagot noted that Power was among the most loyal of Her Majesty's Catholic subjects – a true friend to the British colonial administration:

Of Mr Power personally I have received a very favourable account. He is a man of enlarged views – of mild temper combined with firmness – and of undoubted loyalty. I believe it would have been scarcely possible to select a better man for the office or one more likely to act harmoniously with the Government.²⁸

Thus, by 1842, Power had established solid Imperial credentials; as such, Ryerson's impressions of Power as "virtually a Canadian" in his attitudes and sympathies, was grounded on sound evidence based on Power's immediate past.

While personally and publicly committed to the Crown, as were his episcopal colleagues in Quebec and Montreal, Power was still digesting his

²⁵ Archives of the Province of Quebec (hereafter APQ) E 1837.2236, "Inhabitants of St. Martine confined in Prison"; APQ, E 1837.2238, List of Parishioners Given by Michael Power.

²⁶ *Ami de Peuple*, 11 November 1838; *Gazette*, 20 May 1842.

²⁷ National Archives, (hereafter NA) Lord Stanley Papers, R.C. Bishopricks, 1841-1851, Appendix 1, Power to Stanley, 27 September 1841, Reel A-31.

²⁸ NA, Sir Charles Bagot Papers, MG 24 A 13, Volume 6, Letterbook, "Confidential Letter to Lord Stanley," Quebec, 8 July 1842, p. 313.

recent experiences of Catholic revival. If during the events of 1838 he had committed himself to British colonial rule, in 1841 he confirmed his own affinity to the spirit of the new ultramontane thinking, a conversion that was somewhat surprising, given the context of his early days as a priest in Lower Canada. What is often overlooked about Power is that, prior to his arrival in Toronto in 1842, he had spent two-thirds of his life immersed in the French-speaking culture of Lower Canada. His priestly formation was conditioned by French-Canadian norms and, in his youth, he bore a streak of priestly independence, unanticipated in one who was to become a pioneer bishop.

His formative years as a Catholic priest and missionary were characterized by struggle, disappointment, and hardship. While still within her womb, Michael Power had been promised to the Church by his mother Mary Roche Power. When during his education in Lower Canada, Power had expressed certain doubts with regard to his vocation, Mary Power soon reminded her son of his destiny and duty. In his mother's view his abandonment of the priesthood would be a grave disappointment to his community in Halifax, and perhaps a deception of his parents and their efforts.²⁹ Power, therefore, continued his studies and, in 1827, was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop DuBois of New York, who had been visiting the District of Montreal, in the Diocese of Quebec. Although Power had studied Abenaki with great success, with the intent of working in the mission field, after his ordination he was instead assigned by Bishop Panet to the new communities of Irish who were settling between Drummondville and Sherbrooke.³⁰ In 1831 he was reassigned to minister to the poor pioneer population of Petite-Nation in the Montreal District, now under the episcopal supervision of J.J. Lartigue, the titular bishop of Telmesse, and episcopal vicar to the Bishop of Quebec.³¹ At Petite-Nation he assisted recently arrived Irish and, in 1832, aided the dozens of his new parishioners stricken during the cholera epidemic. In 1833 he ran afoul of Lartigue when he refused to serve the inhabitants on the west side of the Ottawa River, or Catholics technically in the Diocese of Kingston. Power claimed the transportation across the Ottawa was treacherous and the income was pitiful. Angry with the young priest, and embarrassed that his personal

²⁹ ARCAT, Power Papers, Correspondence, Mary Power to "Mick", 27 May 1822 and 17 March 1823, AA04.

³⁰ Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec (hereafter AAQ), Bishop Panet Papers, Panet to Laurent Amiot, 18 October 1826, Register 13, p. 30; Panet to Francois-Joseph Deguise, 5 January 1827, Register 13, p. 93.

³¹ AAQ, Panet Papers, Panet to Power, 22 July 1831, register 14, p. 456.

promise to Bishop Macdonell was unrequited, Lartigue requested that Bishop Signay send the unhappy Power to Beauharnois.³²

In his new posting, Power attracted the attention of a senior from his seminary days, Ignace Bourget, the coadjutor of the new Diocese of Montreal. Bourget consulted with Power frequently and, in 1839, was probably delighted upon hearing of Power's transfer to LaPrairie-de-la-Madeleine, across the St. Lawrence river from Montreal. Shortly after Bourget's elevation to the see of Montreal, in 1840, he appointed Power archpriest and then, in 1841, Vicar General of the Diocese.³³ This involvement in the administrative structure of the diocese and his more frequent exposure to the ultramontane ideas of Bishop Bourget initiated a new phase of Power's priestly life. In 1841, the Diocese of Montreal was swept up in an ultramontane revival, stirred by the powerful oratory of itinerant preacher, Bishop Auguste-Marie-Joseph Forbin-Janson of Nancy and Toul. Speaking to overflowing churches, Forbin-Janson kindled Catholic enthusiasm and lit the fires of an ultramontane revolution in Lower Canada.³⁴ Michael Power found himself not only at the nerve centre of diocesan politics, but at the eye of a veritable Catholic revival.³⁵ His own exposure to the rising ultramontanism of his day was heightened in May 1841, when he accompanied Bishop Bourget to Europe, venturing into the heart of the Catholic revival—Paris, Marseilles, and Rome. On this trip Bourget recruited the newly erected and revived religious orders of Europe – Jesuits and Oblates – for service in the Diocese of Montreal. Power's first visit to Rome was impressive; staying at the Convent of the Holy Apostles, he was but a ten-minute stroll from St. Peter-in-Chains, the Spanish Steps, and the offices of the Propaganda Fide, and only a fifteen-minute amble from Santa Maria Maggiore, the Quirinale, and the ruins of the Forum and Colosseum.³⁶ He accompanied Bourget during his audience with the aging

³² AAM, Lartigue Papers, Lartigue to Power, 12 July 1833, Register 7, pp. 177-9; and 2 August 1833, Register 7, pp. 199-200; Lartigue to Alexander Macdonell, 4 August 1833, Register 7, p. 203; AAQ, Bishop Signay to Power, 30 September 1833, *Registre des lettres*, vol. 15, p. 494.

³³ AAM, Lartigue Papers, Register of Letters, vol 9, p.230, 15 September 1839; AAM, Bourget Papers, *Pieces et actes*, tome 4, f 53, v, 23 avril 1841.

³⁴ Leon Pouliot, sj, *Monseigneur Bourget et son Temps*, (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1956), 2:37-41; *Melanges Religieux*, 21 and 26 December 1840; *L'Aurore des Canadas*, 8 September and 6 October 1840.

³⁵ His contact with Forbin-Janson is confirmed in AAM, Bourget Papers, Power to Bourget, 14 December 1840, volume 255-104, pp.840-1.

³⁶ Pouliot, 51-73; *Melanges Religieux*, 30 May 1841; Mother M. Margaritha, ibvm, *Mary Ward's Institute in America* (Toronto: IBVM private, 1945), 25. Power told the Loretto Sisters that he had gathered watermelon seeds in Italy and grown them in his own garden in Toronto. He was likely referring to his second visit to

Pope Gregory XVI, and thereafter it became common knowledge in Rome that this young priest of LaPrairie was the favoured candidate for the intended episcopal see of Western Upper Canada.³⁷

Just as the events of 1838 had a significant influence on Power's views of civil loyalties, so the European tour began to remake him as a Catholic. As Bishop of Toronto, in December 1841, he emulated Bourget in many ways. He too recruited European religious orders to help create the educational and missionary institutions – the Jesuits and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary answered his call. Among his first acts as Bishop was curtailing the authority of lay trustees, particularly in the French Canadian parishes near Sandwich, a prelude to his lobbying and winning, in 1845, the status of Episcopal Corporation for both himself and all of his successor bishops in perpetuity, and for the Diocese of Kingston as well.³⁸ Power clearly established through incorporation that all church properties were vested in the Bishop and in so doing made it clear to the laity and the priests that the Bishop's authority was supreme in both spiritual and temporal affairs.³⁹ Similarly, he demanded strict discipline among his priests, whom he gathered for a retreat in 1842, which was immediately followed by a diocesan synod, at which the canons for the diocese were promulgated. Power became relentless in his perspicacious application of the rules of the diocese and the Canon Law of the Church. Priests were scolded for unclerical dress, unpriestly behaviour, neglect of the canons, or insubordination. He often used suspension as an effective tool to keep order among his priests on the frontier.⁴⁰ Power's strictness with regard to Church discipline, Canon Law, and the

Rome in 1847.

³⁷ Archives of the Propaganda Fide, Rome, Series 3, SOGC, volume 960, fol.821, item 197, Michael Power to Ignazio Giovanni Cardolini, Secretary, 28 July 1841, Rome.

³⁸ ARCAT, Power Papers, Act to Incorporate the Roman Catholic Bishops of Toronto and Kingston, 29 March 1845, Letterbook 1, LB01.136.

³⁹ Samples of his assertiveness on issues of episcopal control are evident in ARCAT, Power Papers, Power to Father M.R. Mills, 9 November 1842, LB02.026; Power to Father O'Dwyer, 16 November 1842, LB02.027; Power to Otto Klotz, 14 February 1844, LB02.131; Power to Father Sanderl, 8 May 1844, LB02.158; and Power to Charles Baby, 23 August 1846, LB02.272.

⁴⁰ Samples of his assertion of episcopal control over his priests and the enforcement of the canons of the synod of Toronto are evident in ARCAT, Power Papers, Power to Father O'Dwyer, 30 September 1843, LB02.104; Power to M.R. Mills, 30 September 1843, LB02.108; Power to William Peter MacDonald, 4 May 1844, LB02.156. A poignant response to what one priest referred to as Power's "tyranny in governing" his priests is Father M.R. Mills to Power, 26 November 1846, AB11.08.

directives of the Council of Trent did not go unnoticed in ultramontane circles. At the time of his death, the *Melanges Religieux* likened him to St. Charles Borromeo, hero of the Catholic counter-reformation.⁴¹ Such a comparison emphasized Power's death as a result of serving the sick, as well as his attempts to standardize church life in Upper Canada along Tridentine lines.

Despite appearances to the contrary in public, Bishop Power was unequivocal in his demand to his priests that Catholics establish their own schools wherever possible. This drive to establish Catholic schools became a constant theme during his first pastoral visitations and in his private correspondence to priests. In the following letter to Father Michael R. Mills of St. Thomas, Power underscored that his episcopal opinions were not subject to the scrutiny of others, particularly laymen, and that while a modified curriculum for Catholics in mixed common schools was possible, given local finances and population density, separate Catholic schools were preferable:

You ought to know that the Bible cannot be made use of as a mere class book and that no Catholic child can attend the reading of a chapter from the protestant version of the Holy Scriptures. The Catholic children should be allowed to remain in a separate room until the usual lesson from the Holy Scriptures shall have been read; they can there read themselves a chapter from the authorized Catholic version of the New Testament. It would be preferable in every way if the parents of Catholic children could have a separate school of their own; but this must depend in a great measure on the number of Catholics in each locality. You must not communicate any part of my letter to any person: you have no right to force me to communicate even indirectly with any gentleman. You have asked my advice; I have given to you my instructions and you must act in accordance with them without bringing your Superior forward, as if you wished to get rid of all responsibility.⁴²

Similar requests were made to Catholics at Belle Riviere in 1845 and to Father Simon Sanderl, the Redemptorist priest responsible for the German Catholic missions in Wilmot and Waterloo.⁴³ In fact, throughout the 1840s, Power was publicly prepared to accept the educational *status quo* arrangement as it applied to separate schools, although behind the scenes he demanded that priests do their utmost to establish Catholic schools in every district possible, as outlined in clauses fifty-four through fifty-six of the School Act.

⁴¹ *Melanges Religieux*, 5 October 1847.

⁴² ARCAT, Power Papers, Letterbook 2, Power to M.R. Mills, St. Thomas, 8 July 1845, LB02.247.

⁴³ ARCAT, Power Papers, Letterbook 1, Mandement to the Inhabitants of St. Jude Parish, Belle Rivière, 19 September 1845, LB01.139; Letterbook 2, Power to Simon Sanderl, CRR, Wilmot, 28 June 1844.

In this spirit, Power actively sought to expand the number of Catholic common schools in his diocese. In 1844-45, he lobbied Governor General Charles Metcalfe to release to the diocese the lands promised to Catholics for a school in West Toronto. Power intended that once released to him, the lands would be the site of a second Catholic Common School in the city.⁴⁴ Similarly he insisted to civil authorities and his episcopal colleagues in Quebec that the compensation for the Jesuits' Estates be apportioned fairly to the dioceses of Canada West, since the Jesuits had been given authority to evangelize and establish schools in territories now occupied by his diocese. Throughout Power demonstrated a clear and deep commitment to uphold the historic rights and privileges of Catholics regarding denominational schools and properties for school houses.⁴⁵ Reports from Ryerson's own department indicate that at the time of Power's appointment, in 1841, there were no officially designated separate Catholic schools in Power's new diocese; six year's later, at the time of Power's death, there were eight.⁴⁶ While the stability of all separate schools was in doubt, for demographic, financial, and even a change in the teachers at the local common school,⁴⁷ what appears to be clear is that Power had a guiding hand in using the provisions in the education act to create separate Catholic schools whenever and wherever possible.

While Power could be insistent to his priests and church wardens on the necessity of establishing separate Catholic schools in each district under the terms of the School Act, it is not entirely clear that Power had one singular model for the delivery system for Catholic schools in mind. In this respect, he differed little from other religious and civil leaders of his day. Education in the 1840s was characterized by institutional variety.⁴⁸ Common schools, grammar schools, and private schools were all considered appropriate means to deliver education to the classes and masses of Upper Canada. While the state, under

⁴⁴ ARCAT, Power Papers, Letterbook 2, Power to Governor General Metcalfe, 11 December 1844, LB02.215.

⁴⁵ ARCAT, Power Papers, Copy of letter to Father Angus Macdonell, 11 December 1844, AA10.06, and 18 December 1844, LB02.219; Petition from the Bishops of the Canadas to Governor General Metcalfe, January 1845, LB02.233. Power to Bourget, 27 January 1845, LB02.231.

⁴⁶ *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, vol 12, Chapter 1, table 7, pp.34-5.

⁴⁷ The Hincks Act stipulated that a separate Catholic school could only be created if the teacher in the local Common School was a Protestant. The same provision applied for Protestants wishing separate schools – the local Common School teacher would have to be Catholic, therefore making it permissible to protect Protestant children by means of creating a Protestant separate school.

⁴⁸ Gidney and Millar, 32.

the educational leadership of Ryerson, had taken an active effort to provide public money for common schools, offering the basics of literacy and numeracy to girls and boys in small local establishments, middle and upper class citizens often preferred to pay fees to private institutions so that their children could receive a “superior” education. This diversity of schools underscored more of a class distinction between types of schools than any suggestion of a distinctive primary or secondary school curriculum.⁴⁹ His recruitment of religious orders confirms that Power was similar to John Strachan, Egerton Ryerson, and other religious leaders in his belief that denominational instruction, in his case Catholic education, could be provided at a variety levels. The Loretto Sisters, whom he recruited in 1847, established a tuition-based school for girls, emulating the curriculum of many of the “superior schools” of the time, blending curriculum “basics” like reading and arithmetic, with foreign languages, history, painting, ornamental needlework, and music, among many subject areas. Even in his correspondence with Mother Teresa Ball, the superior of the order, he was clear that the Sisters would be operating a Catholic school that charged fees that would be most competitive with local Protestant girls’ schools.⁵⁰ The charging of tuition fees would not have been considered unusual; in fact Egerton Ryerson’s ideas of free schools in the 1840s was a radical and controversial notion to those involved in promoting schools.⁵¹

Power’s request to the Loretto sisters, however, was multifaceted. Implied in his letter to Mother Teresa Ball was that the sisters would be involved in two different types of schools – a “day school” and “a common school,” both of which he hoped would be “numerously attended.”⁵² Power admitted that the sisters would “have as much as they can do,” but promised that he would make every provision for their needs. His request of the sisters

⁴⁹ Ibid, 12-17 and 34-6.

⁵⁰ Letter from Power to Ball, 25 June 1847, as cited in [Bride Costello], *Life and Letters of Rev. Mother Teresa Dease* (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1916), 37-39. The curriculum is confirmed in advertisement of first school, *British Colonist*, 15 October 1847. A fee of £3 would be charged for day students. His plans for religious orders are confirmed in ARCAT, LB02.302, Power to Archbishop Reisach of Bavaria, from Paris, 8 May 1847.

⁵¹ Even by the time of Confederation, in 1867, the notion of a free school was not universal. In that year 86.8 per cent of Common Schools in Ontario were “entirely free.” J.G. Hodgins, *A Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, vol. 20, “Annual Report of the Schools in Ontario, 1867,” (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1908), 131.

⁵² Archives of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Rathfarnham, Ireland, Michael Power to Mrs Teresa Ball, 25 June 1847, P2/1/B2/1.

suggests that he was a creature of his time, promoting basic education and “superior” schools, but also he reaffirmed his promotion of “separate” common schools, in hopes that such schools might be directed by the religious orders. Thus the existing evidence suggests that Power envisioned at least five ways to keep Catholic education alive in his diocese: (1) the preservation and extension of state-funded separate common schools; (2) permitting the status quo, in such areas as the Simcoe or Western Districts, where Catholic children under the tutelage of a Catholic teacher might dominate the local common school; (3) the promotion of parish catechesis, as a supplement for the Catholic children attending mixed common schools, in areas where it was impossible due to poverty or low Catholic settlement to establish separate Catholic schools; (4) the creation of superior Catholic schools, privately operated by religious orders, and funded by tuition fees; and, finally (5) common schools operated by religious orders, an option envisioned but untried, perhaps due to his untimely death. John Elmsley, perhaps, was partially correct in identifying Power’s commitment to state-funded Catholic separate common schools, but it was only part of the Bishop’s program. On the one hand, he like others, was experimenting in the rather ambiguous atmosphere of educational policy in Upper Canada, where types of schools and the sources of school funding were by no means graven in stone. On the other hand, in light of the fragile denominational balance in the Province, Power seemed far too prudent with regards to the sensibilities and opinions of Protestant civil authorities to stake all of the colony’s Catholic education “system,” *per se*, on one method of delivery.

Given the Bishop’s multi-dimensional approach to Catholic schools, the supporters of Ryerson’s interpretation, may question Power’s commitment to publicly funded “separate schools,” by 1846, particularly given the fact that he accepted membership and chairmanship of Ryerson’s first Board of Education. Could such a move be construed as an acceptance of a Common School system for *all* Christians in Upper Canada? Perhaps. Such a position, however, too easily overlooks Power’s personal commitment to lay the frameworks of a renewed Catholic Church, while dealing judiciously and tenderly with the Protestant majority who controlled the structures of colonial governance. Chairmanship of the Board of Education offered Power the means of assuring the delivery of Catholic education according to the School Act. Ryersonians may retort that if Power had been so concerned about Catholic separate schools, he certainly did nothing to prevent the Amendment to the School Act in 1847, that effectively placed the right to establish common schools, and by implication separate schools, in the hands of councillors of incorporated cities, towns, and villages. Ryerson made this change to the Act of 1846 upon the urging of Anglican Bishop John Strachan, who was upset that Anglicans had lost the right to establish separate schools under Ryerson’s

School Act of 1846.⁵³ Strachan appeared confident that the large Anglican population in Upper Canada's largest cities and towns would be able to convince local counsellors to erect Anglican separate schools if needed. Roman Catholics, a group constituting probably no more than twenty per cent of the colony's population, were now at the mercy of Protestant-dominated municipal governments.⁵⁴

Thus, the question looms. If Catholics lost rights by means of this amendment, why did Power, in his role as chair and as bishop, not protest? In fact, why did it take his episcopal colleague in Kingston, Patrick Phelan, close to ten months to register his protest? There are several possible explanations that are consistent with Power's past actions. First, from January to June 1847, Michael Power made his second trip to Europe and thus was not in Canada when the amendment was debated or passed.⁵⁵ When he returned from Europe, the school year was nearly over and there would be no new applications for new separate schools until the autumn. Moreover, upon his return, and for the next four months, the Canadas were being inundated with nearly 100,000 refugees from the Irish Famine. The priorities of civic and religious leaders were to assist the sick and weary Irish and to arrest the mass panic caused by outbreaks of typhus in Canada's major entrepôts. For Power and others school legislation was a secondary concern during this crisis. Later Ryerson reported that the forty-one separate schools in the province, in 1847, marked a decline in the denominational system and he anticipated, with some

⁵³ AO, Hodgins Papers, Ryerson to Draper, 29 March 1847. Ryerson's purpose is more clearly established in "The Chief Superintendent's Annual Report for 1847," in J. George Hodgins, ed., *Papers and Documents Illustrative of the Educational System of Ontario, 1842-1861*, (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, King's Printer, 1912), 5:52-3; and Chapter XIX, 7:201-2. See also AO, John Strachan Papers, MS 35, Reel 12, Letterbook 6, Strachan to Solicitor General Sherwood, 27 April 1846 and Strachan to Ryerson, 26 May 1846. In the former letter, Strachan criticizes Ryerson and Draper's attempt to amalgamate all non-Catholics into one category for Protestant separate schools as an "infidel principle" that members of the Church of England could not accept.

⁵⁴ ARCAT, Power Papers, Power to Archbishop Milde of Vienna, 16 January 1845, LB02.229. Power estimates of the 212,000 people in his diocese 50-60,000 may be Catholic. In Toronto, Catholic constituted 4-5000 of a population of 20,000.

⁵⁵ AO, Hodgins Papers, An Act for Amending the Common School Act of Upper Canada, 3rd Session, 2nd Parliament, 11 Victoria, 1847. 1st Reading 18 June 1847; 2nd Reading 25 June 1847. Amendment to Section 5, clause 3. AO, Minute Book of General Board of Education, RG 2-3-1-1, Box 1. Power is absent from the Chair as of 5 February 1847. He returns to the Chair, 29 June 1847. There is no record of a discussion of the issue at that meeting.

satisfaction, a continuation of this pattern in the future.⁵⁶ There is no available evidence to suggest Catholics made requests for new schools that year, although Ryerson confessed that he had not received reports from either Toronto or Kingston. What is clear, however, is that in September, Power fell ill while serving the Irish suffering from typhus and other diseases in the sheds along side Toronto harbour; by October 1, he was dead. It was only in November that Power's colleague, Bishop Phelan, in the wake of the beginning of another school year, began to denounce a school act that placed the establishment of Catholic separate schools in the hands of Protestant municipal politicians. Nevertheless, the Catholics of Hamilton, Toronto, and Waterloo were all able to establish new separate schools by 1849, just in advance of the repeal of "offensive" amendment of 1847.⁵⁷

Throughout his episcopate, Power had been on excellent terms with his Protestant co-workers in the field of education. After 1847, he was no longer around to affect the needed balance between the interests of the Catholic Church and the interests of public servants. His See would remain vacant for three years, during which time, diocesan administrators struggled to keep in place the institutional frameworks he had established. When Armand de Charbonnel arrived to replace Power, in 1850, the social, political, and economic climate of the Canadas was changing rapidly. The 1850s would be inflamed by bitter sectarian passions, "papal aggression," and episodic violence. Perceived aggression by Pius IX in Europe, sectional deadlock in the Assembly of the Province of Canada, and the visibility of unemployed Irish Catholic migrants in the major cities of Canada West, created cultural and religious tension unseen in the 1840s.⁵⁸ These changed social and political circumstances, when combined with Charbonnel's much more overt ultramontanism, provided for explosive relations between Catholics and

⁵⁶ "The Chief Superintendent's Annual Report for 1847," 38. These figures include both Protestant and Catholic separate schools and bear little similarity to the figures cited by Ryerson in later reports. Correspondence to Ryerson's office suggests that separate schools (both Protestant and Catholic) had a very short life relative to the school year, because of the ability of these schools to receive their portion of local school funds within the statutory timelines, the itinerant nature of the teaching profession, and the ability to gather together the needed number of ratepayers. Separate schools seemed to disappear as quickly as they appeared. By 1854, Ryerson's department could only identify fifty-three separate schools province-wide (4 Protestant, 49 Catholic), of which eight had been established during Power's tenure. *Documentary History*, 7:34-5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 34-5.

⁵⁸ The presence of Irish Catholics is lamented in *Globe*, 5 November 1856 and 11 February 1858.

Ryerson over schools. It would not be difficult for Ryerson, in retrospect, to yearn for the days when he worked with Power.

Power never lived in the changed social environment of the 1850s and it would be folly to speculate what he might have done with regard to the separate school issue. The opinions offered by both Elmsley and Ryerson, espoused passionately in the heat of this sectarian bitterness, are incomplete, nuanced by the context of their times, and subject to the fallibilities of human memory. In their own way, each friend of the bishop brought forth only part of what Power really wanted. Available evidence suggests, however, that Michael Power was very much a contributor to the moderation that marked the 1840s in Canada West. His policy was to carve a pathway that was attentive to the basic needs of Catholics, defending their educational rights as established in law, while cooperating, respectfully and tolerantly, with Protestant civil and church leaders. In his public life he did not willfully compromise his belief in Catholic schools, although he appeared flexible enough to recognize that there were a number of acceptable methods – public and private – for the delivery of Catholic catechesis. While this appears to be vintage MacKenzie King “*state supported Catholic schools if necessary, but not necessarily state supported Catholic schools*” – it is the mark of a judicious churchman who could acknowledge that the rights offered to a minority are often best guaranteed by the goodwill of the majority. It is also the legacy of an astute pioneering leader, grappling with the ambiguities of educational policy in a fledgling outpost of the British Empire.