

CHAPTER 4

GROWING PAINS AT POST-WAR ST. THOMAS: 1945 – 1952

Sheep without Shepherds

Administering St. Thomas's affairs was becoming increasingly difficult. The senior priests and the bishop of the diocese ran the college responsibly and as best they knew how, but along traditional, hierarchical lines. Decisions were taken *in camera* by the senior priests, which in practice meant the rector and his longest-serving teaching priests, sometimes just the rector himself without consultation with anyone. In such a closed, hierarchical system, personalities played a crucial role. In 1938, as we saw, the francophone bishop of Chatham, Patrice Chiasson, had removed his See to Bathurst. Not wishing further to tread on anglophone toes in Chatham, he had left affairs at St. Thomas entirely in the hands of the rector, Fr. James Hill. Hill, by nature a private and exclusionary person, was left to run St. Thomas by his own lights, which suited most of the older teaching priests, although some younger ones new on faculty bridled at the constraints.

These Catholic shepherds had to address the broader issue of how to adapt St. Thomas as a Catholic, rural institution to post-war, secular Canada and the consequent demands and methods of a modern education. The old coat needed new seams, indeed needed to take on a whole new and often unfamiliar shape. To become modern, the institution needed new facilities, new courses especially in the sciences, new professionally qualified teachers. But such things entailed huge expenses, and the

college had always had difficulty finding money to run itself as it was. Bake sales and volunteer efforts would no longer suffice: major institutional donors would need to be found. Furthermore, if St. Thomas was to survive, much less prosper, it also needed to become more open in its dealing with its community of supporters. If parents were going to send their children to be educated there, and if the business community and government were going to be asked to pay for new facilities and buildings, St. Thomas needed to explain itself and its goals more clearly than it had done in the past. It also had to become open to suggestions from the public as to what changes it should undertake to meet the changing needs of a modernizing society. Such openness went against the grain. Tensions, both internal and external, were unavoidable.

It was a dilemma. Old-fashioned Catholic values had served the St. Thomas community well. The future, although promising to some, to most was obscure and worrisome. St. Thomas, aiming at producing devout men and women of high morals, had prided itself on shepherding young, malleable Catholic youth through the difficult teenage high school and post-secondary years, protecting them from the corrosive influence of a modern and increasingly secular age. Many of its graduates had gone on to careers in the Church. Could its students survive the secular and amoral fields of science, engineering and business without the theological and canonical certainties of a Catholic education? If St. Thomas's high school students and post-secondary arts students were sheep, can sheep survive without shepherds? People in authority when confronted with difficult choices often put off making a decision. Such was the case at St. Thomas.

Scholarships and Bursaries

A basic question was how to provide financial support for St. Thomas's students. If the college had little money to pay its teachers, it had less to help needy students. Scholarships had to come as specified donations from outside. The Loyal Order of Hibernians in the early years had funded one or

two scholarships for poor entering students. Occasionally money from various estates had been left to the bishop to be used for the “education of worthy and needy boys,” although by 1946 the fund amounted to only \$1300. When, the following year, Bishop Camille LeBlanc received from Rector Hill a list of seven student candidates for scholarships, he suggested that perhaps the latter was “allowing too much money for each scholarship, otherwise the funds of the scholarship cannot stand it as most of them are for students for the holy priesthood.” Each of those students would be in seminary for two or three years, which would leave little for new scholarships the following year. The rector had requested \$225 for two of the students, \$200 for three, \$125 for one and \$100 for another, for a total of \$1275. Although LeBlanc did write cheques for the recommended amounts, he cautioned Hill to ensure that scholarships went primarily to students intending to go on to seminary.

Some of the money available to help students came from the estates of priests who had left money specifically to help needy students from particular parishes. The deceased Fr. Power, for example, had left funds to assist students from the parish of Nelson. The parish priest there subsequently informed the bishop that most of the students going to St. Thomas from the parish were day students, thus their only expense was for tuition, which in 1947 was \$35. He suggested that Power's bequest be divided into five small scholarships, since “many of the fathers of those boys are hard pressed in raising their families and trying their best to give their children a High School education.”

Resignation of Fr. Hill as Rector

Whether because of the strain of running the place with all its demands, or because he was uncomfortable with the new bishop's constant interference, or simply because he had had enough at St. Thomas after eighteen years as its rector, Fr. James Hill resigned in October, 1945. The bishop assigned him to a new parish in Campbellton, the aptly named Parish of St. Thomas Aquinas. Hill may have

hoped to replace LeBlanc as bishop of the diocese. Certainly there were those who wished he would. The editor of Chatham's *Union Advocate*, whose paper did not "ordinarily comment on things religious," expressed the hope that Hill would eventually be made Bishop of Bathurst. He claimed that Hill knew the country as well as any politician and was "acutely aware of the problems of our fishermen, woodsmen and farmers." He praised his work in the cooperative movement and his concern for showing his people how "best they could obtain at least the minimum necessities of life." This was Hill's real concern, "not erecting and improving church buildings" wrote the editor somewhat cryptically, As a priest and as rector of St. Thomas he had been "bold and uncompromising," and would be the same as a bishop. But LeBlanc was not leaving Bathurst. Hill remained in Campbellton for a year until he was indeed appointed a bishop, not of Bathurst but of Victoria, BC, where he would serve until his death in 1962.

At the time of Hill's appointment as Bishop of Victoria, the new rector at St. Thomas praised him for "not restricting his work to college lectures." His view of education "was a broad one. He had laboured to organize progressive adult education and he went to the people to do it." In March, 1960, St. Thomas would award Bishop Hill an honorary degree.

Fr. David Walsh, a former student and teacher at St. Thomas, in an interview described Hill as he remembered him from his school days:

He was the perfect 19th century Irish Schoolmaster. Elegant and courtly with nice manners, but he could be tough. He wore a Prince Albert [watch chain]. He was articulate. He was a good teacher, stern, but students found him nice to deal with. He had dark hair which he wore long.

Fr. Henry McGrath also remembered Hill from his own student days at St. Thomas:

Tall and stern looking, but he had a sense of humour. I was walking by Fr. Hill's room one day after a class and the Rector came out in the hall and stopped me and said 'Son do you drive a car?' I replied: 'Yes'. Fr. Hill then said: 'You can drive my car over to the hospital and get my sister and drive her over home'. His mother lived in town and his sister was a nurse at the hospital. Then he added: 'You'll know her, she looks just like me.' He laughed. He was six foot or better and was a rather intimidating figure, especially to the high school boys. I had no trouble recognizing his sister.

McGrath also reminisced about his later teaching experiences under Hill:

Bishop Hill! Oh boy When I was a student there, he was strict, I'm telling you. And even when I was teaching there as a priest he was strict. Oh, yeah, he laid down the law. Like the time when I was teaching Chemistry there with seventy-two in one classroom. There were two chemistry classes. I taught half the students and Fr. Frank McGrath taught the other half. Frank got sick, or said he was sick, and would have to go away for a while, a long while, and Fr. Hill let him go. He then decided that it would be an honour for me to teach both classes, with all the labs. He thought it was a great honour for me to do that. An honour. Oh, God! Some honour!

Reluctant New Rector, Fr. Charles O'Hanley

LeBlanc, as usual without consulting the board, had taken it upon himself to appoint Fr. Charles O'Hanley, a teacher at the college, to be Hill's successor as St. Thomas's twelfth rector. Even O'Hanley himself was not consulted. In Boston in the fall of 1945 he received a telegram from the bishop advising him of his appointment. In the same manner, the bishop notified Fr. Arthur Scott that he was to be the new vice-rector. The appointment of the rector was not auspicious. O'Hanley was reluctant to accept the appointment, although the bishop assured him he do well. He advised him to "let the grace and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost help you and you will soon overcome the 'shock' that you have experienced when shouldered with the burden that you have neither desired nor sought."

Grace and inspiration, however, were not enough to help O'Hanley. Although he had a reputation as an excellent teacher, he lacked his predecessor's presence. He was described as really just an "outgoing farm boy." His attempts to exercise leadership fell flat. He did not know how to get people working together. He could not delegate, so he ended up trying to do everything himself. He was also famously disorganized. The burden of the presidency in addition to his teaching responsibilities, for he remained head of the Math department, were more than he could handle. He would serve for only three years before resigning in the midst of difficulties.

The Officious Bishop

With the appointment of the new rector, LeBlanc began to exercise even more authority in decisions affecting St. Thomas. And O'Hanley was less protective of his authority than his predecessor had been. LeBlanc, for example, decided it was time for the college to have a bursar to look after its financial affairs. Up to now that had been the rector's responsibility. In November, 1945, we find the bishop laying out for O'Hanley the duties of such an official. The bursar would be responsible for repairs to the buildings, buying food, wood, furniture, and whatever else was needed, including, somewhat bizarrely, "the cleanliness of the College and other buildings." The bishop believed the rector could not be "without a man that would only do that work." He pointed out that this was what was done at all other colleges. A bursar would relieve the rector of a lot of work and give him more time for his classes "and to attend to the general good of the house."

The bishop had already decided on the person suitable for the position. It was Fr. Herbert Reinsborough, recently released from Chaplaincy Service in the military. Reinsborough was instructed to consult with the bursar at Collège du Sacré-Coeur in Bathurst to learn their accounting system. The appointment, the bishop was confident, would "be received with great satisfaction" at St. Thomas. "The principle of having a Bursar would make a splendid impression on the Faculty because you would be modernising your institution." O'Hanley agreed to the bishop's choice and the somewhat simplistic notions of what it meant to modernize. He certainly could do with more staff to help with administration, but he must have had reservations about the bursar's duties as proposed by the bishop, which really fitted those of a manager of physical plant and even janitor. The new bursar must equally have had reservations about having to learn accounting. In his letter of appointment to Reinsborough, the bishop informed him that

your functions will be determined more precisely by the Reverend Rector to whom you are responsible for your work and who has every right, evidently, to know what expenses of importance are made or any improvement intended in the buildings and these improvements

must be brought about gradually.

The appointment would be temporary to see how it worked out.

The bishop also tended to add and remove priests to the faculty whenever circumstances dictated, which made the rector's job that much more difficult. In December, 1945, he informed O'Hanley somewhat obscurely that Fr. Joseph McKinnon was not in a "favourable atmosphere" in the parish where he had sent him. McKinnon had not complained, but the bishop was asking the rector to see if something could be arranged for him at the college after Christmas, where he could teach a class "or be useful in some way at the College." He assured O'Hanley that "he has knowledge and can communicate it to students." He added, however: "I understand that he has no authority in class. Don't you think that if he was told of those few weaknesses that he would not be ready to admit and submit to these remarks?" The bishop did not always have his way. O'Hanley replied: "After giving your letter due consideration, we regret that under the existing class arrangements there is no work at the present we could assign Fr. McKinnon at the College." The bishop in the meantime appointed McKinnon to be Chaplain at the Hôtel Dieu Hospital, instructing the acting Chaplain, Fr. George Harrington, to return to full time teaching at the college.

The bishop, it seems, was determined to tell the rector how to run his affairs. The following month he declared Reinsborough's job as bursar to be "permanent, at least to June," which was an interesting concept of permanence. He felt it "might be an enticement to do his work with more zest although I presume he is doing well." He also wanted O'Hanley to rethink his refusal to take Fr. McKinnon, who was "still a young priest and certainly has aptitudes that should be developed." He insisted that he was "not imposing him" on the rector.

The bishop on occasion attempted to work through Fr. Scott, the new vice-rector. Everett Grant was another priest that the bishop felt might be useful at the college. Grant and Scott had come to teach at St. Thomas together in 1935, but Grant had not stayed. Scott informed the bishop that he understood

Grant might return for “spiritual” reasons but not to teach. He pointed out that “he is no great professor... I do know that he was a good Confessor while he was here, and he helped out in sports.”

The bishop then suggested to Scott that Fr. Keane, who had earlier been a successful teacher at the college, was now wasting his talents as the parish priest in Douglstown. The bishop asked Scott to try to persuade Keane to return to do some lecturing in English the following year, in the fall of 1946. Scott replied that Keane had been ill and was feeling too old to take up teaching again and suggested that “someone else could do so much better.” The bishop told Scott to persevere, that perhaps Keane was not as ill as he made out. Scott agreed to “try another angle.” He would suggest to Keane that he would enjoy the company of priests and that “we need his grey hairs as a stimulus to more study.” It did not work. Keane did not return to St. Thomas and indeed died a year and a half later.

Illness among the parish priests continued to cause staffing difficulties at St. Thomas. Fr. A. A. McKinnon, an elderly priest, had asked the bishop for a curate to assist him in his parish. The bishop assigned him Fr. Frank McGrath, a science teacher at St. Thomas, but who apparently was too ill himself to be useful. McKinnon asked the bishop if he would send him instead Henry McGrath, one of the younger and more active teaching priests at St. Thomas. McKinnon spoke of “Fr. Henry’s stability of Character” and suggested that he would be “just the man to cope with parish requirements when the pastor is not up to the working standards required.” O’Hanley, however, could not allow it. Another faculty member, Fr. Thomas McKendy, had just left for graduate school, and the rector would have been “seriously handicapped” if Henry McGrath, who was “proving an excellent professor,” were to be removed, so he rejected the request. He mentioned that he had three other priests on the sick list, and two more had recently retired, so his search for a curate for the elder McKinnon had been “to no avail.”

Staff may have been down, but enrolment was up. In a futile attempt to fill the cracks, in 1946 Rector O’Hanley contacted the Mother Superior of a religious order in Montreal, asking if the Sisters could come to Chatham to help look after a small college of about one hundred seventy-five students

and about a dozen faculty members. She wrote back to say unfortunately they were unable to accept his invitation.

Administrative Structure

O'Hanley's appointment and difficult tenure as rector in the immediate post-war years were symbolic of the problems St. Thomas was facing and would increasingly face as it attempted to modernize an old-style Catholic educational institution. The problem was not simply finding enough faculty to keep the college functioning. That had always been a problem. Indeed, a few weeks after O'Hanley had arrived back in Chatham to take up his new duties, LeBlanc informed him that he would soon give him another priest, Fr. John Wallace, who would be useful "at least in the lower classes to offer relief for some of the overloaded programmes." But the bishop was avoiding the real problem.

The whole structure of St. Thomas needed to be re-thought, re-designed. Serious issues were in the air involving the very future of the institution. Should it keep its high school and commercial programmes, or should it move exclusively into post-secondary programmes in arts and nursing? Where would it find the money to add qualified professional teachers to the faculty? Would it keep its *raison d'être* as a school for preparing Catholic boys for the priesthood? Could it remain in its relatively isolated situation in Chatham? Should it consider affiliating with another university, such as the University of New Brunswick (UNB) in Fredericton or St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) in Nova Scotia, in order to offer proper science courses to its students? Or, if it were to remain in Chatham, could it survive if the Bishop of Saint John, as rumour had it, were to set up a post-secondary educational institution for Catholic students in that city, thus depriving St. Thomas of a vital source of students? These issues were darkening shadows on the walls, yet the bishop, who was known for the admirable quality of "simplicity," continued to believe that old-fashioned Catholic values had served the St. Thomas community well so far and therefore no changes were immediately necessary.

If the college's finances regarding student scholarships and faculty salaries were tenuous, its methods of making policy and its general administrative structure were equally in need of attention. A board of governors had existed in theory since St. Thomas's official incorporation as a university in 1934, but the board had almost never actually met much less exercised supervision. To us today, such a lack of responsible leadership might signify an inefficient administrative structure. Given the Catholic and hierarchical nature of St. Thomas's governance, however, it was not a problem. To the priests who ran the college an executive or supervisory board was simply unnecessary.

LeBlanc, following his official appointment as St. Thomas University's Chancellor in 1942, waited three years before convening the board. Even then, the decisions it took at a meeting on July 17, 1945, were hardly momentous. Rector Hill, Vice-Rector John Keane, and Secretary James Dunn attended the meeting. John Ryan, another of the original priest "incorporators" in 1934, was absent. The first item on the agenda was board membership. The bishop suggested that five members was insufficient since it was never easy to convene all five members at any one time. Membership he suggested should be increased to nine, and the board agreed. He nominated three priests – Msgr. J.J. McLaughlin ("the old Monsignor"), Fr. J. M. Burns, and Fr. Joseph McKinnon, a graduate of St. Thomas in 1936, recently Chaplain at the Hôtel Dieu Hospital, and now the parish priest in Blackville – plus, in a departure, one layman, the choice of whom was left to Hill, Keane and Dunn. The board accepted the bishop's nominations and agreed that the number needed for a quorum should be raised from three to five. The membership issue resolved, LeBlanc introduced the next item on the agenda: how to alleviate the difficulties that Fr. Lynn McFadden, Prefect of Studies (essentially the Dean of Students), was experiencing as a result of the growth of student enrolment. The rector responded that he would appoint an assistant for McFadden. In the next item of business, the board agreed to purchase a summer cottage for use by the priests as a retreat. And for the final item of business, the bishop read out a financial statement that "reflected a most successful year." Then the board adjourned.

Increasing problems, however, both internal and external, forced the bishop to convene his board more often. At the board's next meeting on February 27, 1946, there were four new faces, including the new rector, Fr. O'Hanley, Fr. Hill having resigned the previous October. Another new face was a layman, Mr C. P. Hickey, a Chatham druggist. The bishop proposed adding a second layman to the board, which the board approved and which would bring membership to ten. The immediate issue before the board was over-enrolment and the need to expand St. Thomas's facilities. The bishop indicated that he knew of a building, known improbably as Blink Bonnie, not far from the student residence and which might accommodate another twenty or so students, for sale at a reasonable price. The board gave the rector, O'Hanley, the authority to make a bid on the building. But a more serious and obviously related issue was brought up by the recently appointed member Fr. Joseph McKinnon. He mentioned that he had heard that the Bishop of Saint John was contemplating setting up a Catholic college in his own diocese, perhaps to be affiliated with UNB. There was much worried discussion among the members. St. Thomas was still the only English-speaking Catholic institute of higher education in the province. Catholic students from the southern part of the province, most of them from Saint John, had been enrolling at St. Thomas in the arts programme for a number of years, and their numbers had recently been increasing, despite the competition from StFX in Nova Scotia. Apparently some Catholics in Saint John felt it was time for that city to have its own Catholic university, or at least a post-secondary institution of some sort, perhaps a "junior college." Would such a move, asked McKinnon, not seriously deplete enrolment at St. Thomas, not only obviating the need for expanded facilities but perhaps threatening the college's very existence? Should St. Thomas itself perhaps consider forming some sort of affiliation with UNB in order to forestall such initiatives from Saint John? The bishop said he would discuss the matter with the Bishop of Saint John.

Saint John Considers a New English-Speaking College

The Bishop of the Saint John Diocese in 1946, Patrick Bray, had come to the position ten years earlier from Halifax. As we saw previously, he was remotely involved in the decision to remove the diocesan see from Chatham to Bathurst in 1938. In Halifax he had been Rector of Sacred Heart Seminary. The experience made him in principle a strong supporter of educational opportunities for Catholic youth, although in practice he was inclined first to look after the Catholic youth of the Saint John Diocese. In the summer of 1944 he raised the issue with some of his closest advisors. He asked them what they thought about the possibility of establishing a new college of some sort for English-speaking Catholics in the Saint John Diocese, and if so where it should be located. He also sought their opinion as to whether such a college ought to be run by diocesan priests or by a Catholic Order.

Bray's advisers were mostly negative in their assessments. On the one hand they agreed in principle on the benefits of a new post-secondary educational institution for anglophones within the diocese. Canon Law, as some pointed out, "demands a reasonable service to the people in their own language. The priest is for the people not the people for the priest." On the other hand, the practical problems were large. At the time, they pointed out, the Diocese of Saint John already included one post-secondary educational institution, the Collège Saint-Joseph, located in Memramcook. Since 1920 it had been offering a BA degree, and although it did conduct a few classes in English it was mainly for French-speaking students. If an English college were to be established in the diocese, St. Joseph's would probably abandon its English courses. Besides, St. Thomas already existed as an English-speaking Catholic college in the neighboring diocese to the north, which many Catholic students from Saint John attended as boarding students. The biggest problem was money. Financial support would have to come from all the parishes in the province, and the bishop's advisers doubted that such support would be forthcoming from the francophone parishes, any more than was likely to come from those in the Bathurst diocese.

Everyone agreed in principle that it would be beneficial to increase anglophone Catholic post-

secondary educational opportunities, that it would help to prepare anglophone boys either for the priesthood or simply for a better standard of living. But if a new such college in Saint John failed, or even if in practice it did not achieve a high standard of education, it would not be worth the effort. In the end, the bishop's advisers felt that such an institution would not attract enough fee-paying students to meet costs. Even if forty students enrolled in each of four post-secondary years, it would, they judged, be insufficient. Besides, Catholic students who intended to go on to professional programs would need science courses, and, the bishop was told, “no serious hope for satisfactory proficiency of the science courses of the college envisaged can be entertained, at least not for a number of years.... St. Joseph's had not attained it, it would seem, in the whole period of its existence.” Such students at present could attend StFX in Nova Scotia. As to whether or not an educational institution should be run by priests or by an Order, the question was moot (although the priests at St. Thomas might have had some advice for him in that regard). Bray, disappointed, dropped the matter, at least for the time being.

In a tightly knit community such as the Catholic priesthood, it was no wonder that stories of Bray's discussions about the possibility of creating a new Catholic educational institution in Saint John had circulated within the priesthood of the neighboring diocese to the north. It could not have been a complete surprise to the Bishop of Saint John, therefore, to learn that rumours of his discussions had made the rounds. He learned of it in March, 1946, when he received a long letter from his fellow hierarch in Bathurst. LeBlanc wrote about the recent meeting of the St. Thomas board, on which he sat as chancellor of the university, on February 27, 1946, at which the members had discussed the need to expand St. Thomas's facilities. The new rector, Fr. O'Hanley, had pointed out that if all the students now enrolled were to return the following year, as they were expected to do, there would only be only four places available in residence for new students. Thus, LeBlanc explained to Bray, the college would probably be purchasing another building to serve as a student residence. He went on to say that at that same board meeting one member had mentioned that the Diocese of Saint John was thinking “very

seriously” of setting up a Catholic college of its own.

LeBlanc was proceeding with some delicacy here. He did not want to be thought “trying to mingle into the affairs of another Diocese,” yet he had been instructed to pass on St. Thomas's concerns to the Bishop of Saint John. There were worries that since so many students from the Saint John diocese were presently attending St. Thomas College, the creation of a Catholic college in the Saint John Diocese might “greatly impede the progress of St. Thomas.” At the present time St. Thomas had forty-eight students from Saint John – twenty-two in the high school programme and twenty-six in the arts programme. Bishop Bray would understand that St. Thomas did not want to lose those students. It had been suggested at the board meeting that some arrangement might be made with the Diocese of Saint John in order to agree on “one strong Catholic college that could serve the educational needs of both Dioceses.” The board had directed the chancellor to approach Bray “to ascertain his attitude regarding a new Catholic college,” and also, if he was thinking positively in that direction, “was it his intention to affiliate such an institution with the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton?”

Members of his board, LeBlanc continued, had mentioned the possibility of St. Thomas itself becoming somehow affiliated with UNB, perhaps the way St. Michael's College was affiliated with the University of Toronto. He hastened to add that he had rejected suggestions that St. Thomas students might be “more readily accepted as ‘job seekers’ if they had their degrees from UNB.” In his opinion St. Thomas students did not “take a back seat” to students at any other universities. Furthermore, LeBlanc personally did not favour affiliation of St. Thomas with UNB. He referred to St. Dunstan's in Charlottetown and St. Francis Xavier in Antigonish as examples of colleges that stood successfully on their own. LeBlanc informed Bray diplomatically that he was not trying to get “news or information that are none of our realm” but that he was just passing on to him information about what had happened at the meeting of the St. Thomas Board. He did not expect Bray to tell him anything he “should not know.” What he would appreciate, however, was Bray's opinion about affiliating a Catholic college

with a non-Catholic institution. “Personally,” he concluded, “I cannot conceive the necessity of such an action.”

If the Bishop of Saint John had been disappointed in his earlier attempts to consider setting up a new post-secondary educational institution for Catholic students in his diocese, the letter from the Bishop of Bathurst served not only to revive his interest but also to make him wary of encouraging St. Thomas's plans for expansion. He replied to LeBlanc in a rather frosty letter that the question of a new Catholic college in Saint John had indeed been raised and discussed, although no conclusion had been reached. He was not, he said. “aware of what rumours might be about,” although he did feel constrained to point out that his diocese “reserves its full right to establish a Catholic college within its boundaries, should the project at any time be judged feasible and advisable.” He agreed that “only one English-speaking (Catholic) college can function efficiently in New Brunswick today.” Ominously, he declared that any changes to the education of English-speaking Catholic youth should be kept in a broad context. He, Bray, had indeed already heard rumours about the possible expansion of St. Thomas, but he hoped that any such plans would be “preceded by a thorough study, on a comparative basis, of the needs, ecclesiastical and lay, of the English-speaking Catholics of N.B.” The issue needed “a good airing” among English-speaking Catholics. He concluded his missive with the suggestion that he would be pleased to participate in further discussions if the board of St. Thomas was interested. As for affiliation with UNB, any such arrangement, he reminded the chancellor, would need approval from Rome. Such permission, he wrote, was occasionally to be had, but in a specific instance it had been refused “some twenty-five years ago in the case of the proposed federation of the College of Nova Scotia [Bray's reference here is obscure, since there was never a College of Nova Scotia *per se*: he may have been referring either to St. Mary's University, founded 1806 in Halifax, or the Université Sainte-Anne, founded 1890 at Church Point, NS, both being Nova Scotia Catholic universities] with Dalhousie University to constitute a Provincial University.” The implication was clear. Such approval

was sure to be denied St. Thomas, if ever it were to consider such a possibility.

Into the Lion's Den

The exchange of letters between the two bishops spurred LeBlanc to call another meeting of St. Thomas's board. On May 29, 1946, a concerned board appointed a committee to meet with Bray. The committee consisted of Rector O'Hanley with Frs. McLaughlin, McKinnon, and Ryan. Bishop LeBlanc himself would be unable to attend, ostensibly on account of a heavy schedule lasting until August, but he urged the committee to meet as soon as possible.

On June 7, 1946, Bray invited the St. Thomas delegates to meet with him in Saint John or, if they wished to shorten their journey, in Fredericton. The committee members in Chatham preferred the latter, and the meeting took place the following week at St. Dunstan's Rectory in Fredericton on June 14. Bray brought with him three of his priests: F. C. Cronin, F. M. Lockary, and Charles T. Boyd, pastor of St. Dunstan's, who acted as secretary of the meeting.

From the point of view of the St. Thomas delegation, there were two important and related issues to be discussed. First was "the dire need of additional personnel for the teaching staff" at St. Thomas. The second was the possible effect upon St. Thomas enrolment of the establishment of a new anglophone Catholic college in the Diocese of Saint John.

Regarding the first issue, the meeting agreed that expansion of St. Thomas at its present location in Chatham would require not only the financial support of English-speaking Catholics of both dioceses, but also personnel, namely the assignment of priests from Saint John to the teaching staff at St. Thomas. Regarding the second issue, the St. Thomas committee put forward a proposal that would render unnecessary a new school in Saint John and at the same time protect St. Thomas's enrolment: affiliation of St. Thomas with UNB. Under the plan, the Commercial Course, the High School Academic Course, and two years of the Arts Course would remain in Chatham, while the final two

years of arts courses would be established “at a new institution to be located in Fredericton,” somehow affiliated with UNB. Chatham would thus continue to have a junior college of arts which anglophone students from the two dioceses could attend. There would be no need for a new junior college in Saint John.

The St. Thomas delegates admitted that such a plan would entail “a heavy financial outlay” to cover the costs of new facilities and faculty. Would the English-speaking Catholics of the province be willing and able to pay? How large a population they would have to draw from, and how many students could they expect? O’Hanley pointed out that in 1945 enrolment at St. Thomas was one-hundred-fifty boarding students, of whom ninety-five were in the high school and fifty-five in the college. In addition to those, one hundred day students attended classes, making a total of two-hundred-fifty students. Classes were full, and a number of applicants had been turned away because of a lack of space, “among them ten or twelve well-qualified applicants.” He pointed out that “never in the history of the institution” had there existed a problem of low enrolment at St. Thomas.

Boyd had prepared some figures for the meeting. One-hundred-two Catholic students had attended UNB during the 1945-46 academic year, although the average in previous years was around sixty. Most were taking courses in engineering, science, pre-medical, pre-law, and forestry, although some were taking arts courses. A “respectable number” of Catholic students from New Brunswick were attending StFX, but accurate figures were not available.

The St. Thomas spokesmen picked up on those figures to bolster their case. Their main arguments in favour of some sort of affiliation with UNB would be the availability of laboratories as well as courses in forestry, engineering and the sciences, which would greatly decrease financial outlays as well as the problem of finding trained faculty in those fields. All agreed that such affiliation with UNB, however, while having “material advantages,” would also present serious problems. Affiliation with a secular university was “not ideal” from a Catholic point of view.

Bray referred to his earlier remarks that Rome had already refused to give permission to Catholic colleges in Nova Scotia to unite with other universities in that province. Furthermore, he objected, affiliation of an upper-level Catholic college with UNB would not meet “the need, always acute, to supply priests for the Church.” In general he was less than warm to the Thomists' ideas. The Catholic college being proposed, he suggested, would probably not attract the college boys who went yearly to StFX since that university had a “renowned reputation” as well as strong family ties. The English-speaking Catholic population of New Brunswick was only about 50,000, which was far less than StFX had to draw upon in the Diocese of Antigonish. Perhaps, he wondered aloud, instead of affiliation with UNB they should be considering setting up a new college that was affiliated with StFX?

The meeting finally agreed that in any case one English-speaking Catholic college was sufficient for New Brunswick, although how it could serve the interests of both dioceses remained an open question. It ended without any formal agreement on what should be done. Bray praised St. Thomas for the good work it had done, especially in providing priests for the church. His thoughts, however, were tending towards affiliation with StFX, even though Antigonish was so far distant from both Chatham and Saint John. He suggested a second meeting in a few months' time to continue the discussion.

Tellingly, when Boyd drafted the minutes from the meeting for Bray's approval, the bishop insisted on a change. He pointed out to Boyd that at the meeting he had been “careful to safeguard the right of the Diocese of Saint John to establish a college, should it ever be deemed feasible and advisable.” He wanted the minutes to reflect his caveats. He did not want the words “it was agreed that one English-speaking Catholic College was sufficient for New Brunswick” to be quoted later “as a formal commitment on the part of his Diocese to the principle of a single English-speaking Catholic College.” In case Saint John did not agree to go along with St. Thomas's expansion and found it necessary later on “to do something for ourselves, St. Thomas might rightly say that we did not live up

to our commitment but ran competition with them to the disadvantage of all.” He instructed Boyd to change the minutes to read: “While it was *felt* that one English-speaking Catholic College was sufficient for New Brunswick, *without commitment, however to that principle...*” [emphasis in original].

The change was made and the minutes were sent out, but it was a straw in the wind. Saint John would never see St. Thomas as anything but competition. The St. Thomas priests might have hoped for further meetings, but the second meeting that Bray had suggested never took place “due to unforeseen circumstances.” Nor is there any record over the next two years of further contact between the two bishops about a province-wide English-speaking Catholic educational institution. The St. Thomas community was left in the dark for those two years, since LeBlanc only convened the board two years later, in March, 1948, when it finally considered its special committee's report of the 1946 meeting with the Bishop of Saint John.

Hard Times for Rector O'Hanley

Fr. Charles O'Hanley's tenure as St. Thomas's twelfth rector was relatively brief – only three years – nevertheless in that time he had to deal with these two extremely difficult and delicate and indeed disturbing issues: the spectre of losing the college's many students from the Saint John diocese, and the stressful notion of affiliation with UNB.

Thus, things were not going well for O'Hanley. His lack of skill as an administrator together with the bishop's inclination to interfere in the college's affairs made for an unhappy situation. Immediately on O'Hanley's return from the June 1946 meeting with Bray in Fredericton, LeBlanc advised him that as soon as possible he should name advisors to help him administer college affairs. The bishop was responding to complaints about the rector “trying to do everything himself.” The bishop was “positive” that having advisors or a council to help him would “change the whole situation

and perhaps the attitude of many of your priests.” He admonished the rector that “the management of the college must not be a one man job and must never appear to be so.” The appointment of advisors or a council would be a benefit to the college. As usual, he suggested several possible areas where advisers could give him useful advice. The college's new bursar, Fr. Reinsborough, could advise him on financial matters, although he needed a little more training in bookkeeping and the general work that a bursar normally did at other institutions. The rector could, for example, consult a council of such advisers for their views on this, also for their opinion specifically on whether or not McKendy should be sent off to do graduate studies. The bishop admonished O'Hanley for procrastinating in such matters.

In fact O'Hanley had earlier given McKendy permission to go off to graduate school. He had asked the bishop for a replacement, but as usual the bishop had sent no one to take his place. O'Hanley, declared the bishop, should not have given permission without knowing beforehand as to whether or not he could get a replacement, so he should “recall the permission” and wait another year before sending McKendy away. Furthermore, O'Hanley had told McKendy he would have to pay his own expenses at graduate school. The bishop, however, decided that since McKendy had not asked for a leave of absence but was being sent by the college “to do higher studies,” the college should when the time came be responsible for paying his tuition and board.

Things went from bad to worse for O'Hanley in 1947. The previous year Vice-Rector Scott had been taken ill and gone for treatment to a hospital in New York. It was costly, and O'Hanley was unwilling to pay his expenses. When Scott returned to St. Thomas in February, 1947, and was recuperating, he wrote a letter to the rector expressing his concerns. He had been advised by some of the other priests at St. Thomas that they did not think it was right that he (or they) had to pay the entire cost of hospitalization if they took ill since they were part of a community and their ills were “of a community nature.” Scott then wrote the bishop to ask his opinion. He did not wish to embarrass the rector but he had been twice to New York and spent close to \$1000. He had never had much chance to

save any money since he had had to educate a brother and sister. As Prefect of Discipline at the college he had had little opportunity to add to his stipend by saying masses in the parishes.

There is no evidence that the bishop, in following up Scott's request, consulted the college's new bursar about the college's finances. It is possible the latter was still at the Bathurst college learning about bookkeeping. Instead LeBlanc consulted "the old monsignor," McLaughlin, to ask if he thought it "advisable to ask St. Thomas College to pay partially the expenses incurred by the sickness of one of the staff," as had been suggested to him. He admitted that the salaries of the priests on staff were "rather meagre." McLaughlin suggested that, if Scott "would not resent a gesture like that," he personally did "not see any crime in the suggestion" that Scott be given a raise in his salary for the year in order to help pay for his operation, the amount of the raise to depend on the "financial condition of the college." LeBlanc decided against McLaughlin's advice, although he informed the rector that he had consulted McLaughlin and had reached a decision. The college should pay half the cost of Scott's medical expenses, and "that the same would be done for any of your professors who would be in the same predicament." He hoped this would not happen frequently, especially not a sickness of such seriousness. O'Hanley questioned the bishop's decision. He informed him that he had already given Scott some financial assistance "in addition to his salary" while he was in New York. Was he now expected to give him more? There is no record of the bishop's reply to O'Hanley's query, but Scott did apparently eventually receive some money to put toward his medical expenses. The matter did nothing to endear the hapless rector to the other priests on faculty.

The bishop, as usual, was solicitous about the on-going staffing problems at the college. As he wrote McLaughlin, "in meditating on the conditions as I see them" he understood that "the actual strain is too heavy down there and that the men cannot hold out under it. I do not know what the Rector of the College would say, I know he needs help. They refused over one hundred applicants this year for admission." As a result he wrote to ask the rector about his "desires in the way of professors." He had

heard that one or two were “not giving satisfaction as to their work, and I presume you shall always have these deficiencies.” He promised to do whatever possible to remedy the situation. Would Fr. Woods be useful as a professor? If not the bishop would find other work for him. Fr. Bernard Broderick, presently assisting at the Chatham church, might also be available to take up work at the college.

O'Hanley was willing to accept Woods on faculty, who he thought “would prove a faithful, efficient and exemplary College priest.” As for other necessary changes, he made no concrete suggestions but claimed that the bishop was “already acquainted with my desires.” The reference appears to have been to the difficulties the rector was having in maintaining discipline among the staff. One priest had been visiting a family in town in the evenings where there was an unmarried woman. It had caused some concern, and complaints had reached the bishop's ears. O'Hanley's investigation had convinced him there was no impropriety. Although the man of the household was “an addict to strong liquor drinking,” the priest was merely counseling him at his house. The bishop objected. He informed O'Hanley that he felt it was imprudent to do counseling in people's homes and that “no priest should be absent from the College without the permission of the Superior and particularly to go out in private houses.” The rector was instructed to inform all his priests that “permission of the Superior is required to go out of the College for visits as is the rule in every other institution of the kind.” The intent was clear: the rector was lax in disciplining his priests.

Admittedly, the bishop himself was feeling stretched. Priests in his diocese were often ill and several recently had retired, as a result of which he himself often had to act as the priest for various parishes. He was peeved to have received suggestions from faculty at the college that O'Hanley ought to be replaced as rector by someone more competent. The bishop had only so much time available to attend personally to the college's affairs.

Student Council

Whatever the difficulties that were starting to plague the college's administrators, however, student activities in the post-war period continued to grow. As we saw previously, students as early as 1942 considered the need to establish a council that would attend to and represent specific student needs. The Aquinas Debating Society – the ADS – led the discussions. A student survey supported the idea and a faculty member looked into the possibility, but his investigation was completed too late in the year for any action. The following year, 1943, an article in the *Aquinian* suggested that formation of a student council or union had become “a serious undertaking.” A student group, after examining student unions at other universities, had come to “the unanimous conclusion that a students' union was applicable at St. Thomas.” By October, 1943, it had become “a lively topic of discussion in the corridors between classes and in the refectory.” The consensus seemed to be that a student union would become a reality at St. Thomas. Like so many other ideas, however, without active faculty support and given war-time pressures, the issue went dormant.

Dormant, that is, until the ADS again took up the matter. By 1946 it had extended its influence over several other extracurricular activities. The *Aquinian* in April, 1946, reported that the Debating Society now controlled “all dramatic ventures, the College paper, as well as any social entertainments that may be held during the year.” Why not a union? The *Aquinian* suggested that “in the ADS we have a society that could very easily become the nucleus of such a union,” advising its readers to keep that in mind in electing the Debating Society's officers for the following year.

Support for a student council or union continued to grow. On November 27, 1947, the entire student body met in the auditorium at St. Michael's Academy where *Aquinian* editor Lawrence Shelley outlined for the students the earlier attempts to form a council. He presented information on student councils at other colleges and universities and suggested that it was time to put one in place at St. Thomas. The meeting agreed and voted to establish the St. Thomas Student Council.

Elections to the council followed. Ronald MacDonald, a senior, was elected president. He had attended high school and completed his first year of arts at St. Thomas before going off to war, returning in 1945. He was President of the Debating Society and, according to reports of the meeting, since “there was no one student who could measure up to his standards, the entire student body refrained from what would have been fruitless nominations of other candidates to run in opposition to him.”

Elections to the other positions, however, were “hotly contested.” In the process students split into two parties: the “Progressive Student Party” and the “Student’s Welfare Party.” In the end, John Kelly, another senior, was elected vice-president, Robert Hay, a junior, was elected Secretary, and Frank Irvine, a sophomore, Treasurer. Each of the four college classes elected its representative: Phil O’Neil for the Freshmen, Leo Drapeau for the Sophomores, Carmella Gautreau for the Juniors, and Nelson Lynch for the Seniors. It was decided that the high school students would not have representatives. The Debating Society elected Vince Whelton as its representative; the Athletic Association elected Vance Toner; the *Aquinian* elected Lawrence Shelley; and the Entertainment Committee elected Mike Gayner. Charged with enthusiasm, the students declared that their new Council should meet weekly, which, for a time, it did.

Raising Money for St. Thomas

Meanwhile, in the Chatham community, some prominent Catholics wanted to help the college raise funds for its proposed expansion. They were not themselves wealthy, but they knew that finances at the college were extremely tight. They invited some of the senior priests to meet with them on December 11, 1947, to discuss the need for a financial drive. They were enthusiastic. St. Thomas, as we have seen, had always had a strong rapport with the citizens of Chatham and the Miramichi. Indeed, that community support had become St. Thomas's hallmark. Such a drive would require “extensive

organization,” and they agreed to get started immediately. A second meeting was planned for December 29 with St. Thomas's board of governors, all the college priests, and the priests of the anglophone parishes, in order to discuss and organize the campaign. The bishop was asked to attend, not only for his “imprimatur but also for assurance that all arrangements and organization will be in harmony with your wishes.” If he could not attend, he was asked to give his written support.

A year and a half earlier, as we saw, St. Thomas's delegates at a meeting with the Bishop of Saint John had already expressed a pressing need for more teachers and more space at the college. By 1947 St. Thomas was still the only English-speaking Catholic post-secondary educational institution in the province, and since there had been no further movement by the Saint John diocese to establish another such institution, St. Thomas was proceeding on the assumption that it would remain the only one for the foreseeable future. That meant it had to prepare for a further steady increase in enrolment from across the province.

Yet the idea of raising money for St. Thomas ran up against LeBlanc's own plans for his francophone college in Bathurst, the Collège du Sacré-Coeur. He had not sought the advice of St. Thomas's Chatham supporters, for obvious reasons: francophones outnumbered anglophones in the diocese, he himself was francophone, and he was the bishop. The request from the Catholic citizens of Chatham, therefore, was embarrassing. Two weeks later LeBlanc let his decision be known. He informed O'Hanley that because he had to attend the funeral of the former Archbishop of Montreal he would be unable to attend the meeting set for the 29th. And while he did support in principle the campaign for St. Thomas, he preferred to see an all-diocesan drive rather than one for St. Thomas alone. It was certainly “very important for an educational institution to be well equipped materially so as to satisfy both personnel and pupils,” but, he announced, his Collège du Sacré-Coeur in Bathurst would be launching a drive for the same purpose. Fund-raising in the francophone parishes, however, need not interfere with fund-raising in anglophone parishes. Indeed, he suggested, organizing the drive

throughout the diocese would be more efficient.

The bishop's announcement momentarily put a stop to the Chatham group's plans, but all they could do was wait to see what transpired. LeBlanc, determined to proceed with his plans, early in 1948 contacted a certain Thomas Finn from Kansas City, Missouri, presently in Ottawa. Mr Finn and his associates, it appeared, had conducted financial drives for Catholic dioceses and institutions for many years. LeBlanc asked if Mr Finn would run the campaign in the Bathurst diocese. Finn agreed. At the end of February, 1948, the bishop informed O'Hanley that Finn would be organizing the fund-raising drive for both St. Thomas and the Collège du Sacré-Coeur. The bishop then requested the secretary of St. Thomas to convene a board meeting for March 7, 1948, "at 2 p.m. sharp" since he had another meeting in Bathurst that night. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the fund-raising drive in the diocese.

The board met as planned, but because in usual fashion it had not met for two years there was a lot of old business to be dealt with. Since the last meeting, one member (Fr. Keane) had died. A decision was made to increase the number of board members to fifteen, including the two *ex-officio* members – the chancellor (i.e., the bishop) and the rector – by adding the following laymen: William Hogan, D.S. Creaghan, Dr. Percy Losier, and Dr. C. J. Duffy. Not by coincidence, those four had led the meeting of St. Thomas's Chatham supporters on the preceding December 11th. From the bishop's point of view that was a way of involving them in the on-going fund-raising efforts. The expanded membership introduced the issue of year-on-year continuity, so the thirteen appointed members drew lots to decide who would serve for one, two, or three year terms.

On another item of old business, Fr. Joseph McKinnon presented an account of the meeting of the special committee set up by the board two years earlier in June 1946 in Fredericton with the Bishop of Saint John. He reported that a second meeting proposed by Bishop Bray "did not materialize due to unforeseen circumstances." The issue was fraught with indeterminate complexities. If the Bishop of

Saint John were to proceed with setting up another Catholic post-secondary college, St. Thomas's future was bleak. Yet nothing further had been heard from the Bishop of Saint John. LeBlanc was more interested in his own money-raising plans. Suggesting that they let sleeping dogs lie, he proceeded to outline his fund-raising plans.

The need for improvements at the college had been recognized for some time but there had been no money. Earlier, the bishop said, he had given his “wholehearted approval” for a financial drive for the college, but nothing happened. Last December, he said (referring to the meeting of December 11th) he had been happy to give his “entire support to this project” since he had already recently given his support to the authorities of Collège du Sacré-Coeur in Bathurst for a similar fund-raising drive. The bishop told the board that, as he explained to Rector O’Hanley, he decided to join the two campaigns into one for the educational needs of the whole diocese and arranged for Mr Thomas Finn to organize the drive. Since then, however, certain people had informed him of other pressing needs in the diocese besides education. Therefore, he had called this board meeting to announce a broader drive: for “educational *and charitable* purposes in the Diocese.”

This was probably not what the board members wanted to hear, and it certainly did not warm the hearts of the Chatham group. But the bishop as usual was in a hurry to get things done, and done his way. As the minutes recorded, “after such needs were outlined by His Excellency” the board members agreed that it would be “advantageous to expand the purpose of the drive.” The bishop then announced that he would meet with Mr Finn to outline the proposed drive, whereupon the rector and other members of the board proposed leaving it to the chancellor to decide, after consultation with Mr Finn, on the amount of money to be raised and the method of conducting such a drive.

Initially the bishop planned to raise \$300,000 for education and charities. After discussing the matter with Finn, that amount was raised to \$400,000. In his penciled notes, the bishop estimated the total cost for “a library, laboratory, building and equipment, biology, etc., for a new college” at one

million dollars. He noted that tuition of about \$250 per annum would be expected to carry one-third of the cost of the upkeep of such a college. If we had only High School and Junior College, he noted to himself, “the cost...would be much smaller. Not advisable, it seems, not to include HS and JC. Affiliation with UNB—no. Biology—not taught in a Catholic Institution. Affiliation with StFX is the thing.” In the end, the bishop and his financial advisors decided on a less expensive plan. “Special Gifts Dinners” would raise money for the campaign.

Dr. Deferrari, Outside Expert

The St. Thomas board members including the bishop would have been less confident had they known more about the intentions of the bishop of Saint John. For Bray had not given up on the idea of a new Catholic post-secondary educational institution for his diocese. Quite the opposite. News that St. Thomas was planning to raise money for expansion had given him a new sense of urgency. In his consideration, as he pointed out in his correspondence with his advisers, the diocese had a “special problem in the field of higher education.” The city of Saint John had the province's largest Catholic population. They had a high school taught by Catholic teachers, although the fact that their salaries were paid by the city school board meant that teaching of religion was restricted to after-school hours. That was unsatisfactory. The only English-speaking post-secondary educational institution for Catholics in the province was in Chatham under the control of the Bishop of Bathurst, an Acadian. Furthermore, Bray did not have a high regard for the education being offered at St. Thomas. It was a small institution, and he felt that in such a small institution “it is difficult, if not impossible, to reach standards that command recognition.” Opinions as to how to improve the situation varied considerably, as he had discovered during his previous correspondence and meetings (referring to the discussions that had taken place in June, 1946). It was now 1948, and time was wasting. He had decided to invite an outside expert to do a complete survey of Catholic educational in the province.

Again, one has to feel for St. Thomas's benevolent Chatham supporters. Once again, they are being left in the dark as the hierarchy attempts to determine the course of Catholic educational development in the province. As it happened, just as the board at St. Thomas was meeting to discuss its fund-raising plans, Bray was informing Dr. Patrick Nicholson, President of St. FX, about his plan to call in an outside expert to study Catholic education in New Brunswick. Pointedly, he did so without consulting either the rector of St. Thomas or the bishop of Bathurst. On March 19, 1948, he wrote to Dr. Roy Deferrari, Secretary-General of the Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, DC. Deferrari was also the head of the CUA's Committee on Affiliation and Extension. Bray asked if Deferrari would review the educational problems concerning English-speaking Catholics in the province and recommend a solution.

The bishop informed Deferrari that in the whole of New Brunswick there was only one small Catholic post-secondary educational institution for English-speaking Catholics – St. Thomas College at Chatham. He pointed out that because of its size “it is difficult, if not impossible, to reach standards that command recognition.” Views on how to improve the situation, he claimed, varied. Although the college still taught students at the high school level, some wanted to see St. Thomas College develop “with the hope that it will one day reach the proportions and standards of Saint Francis [Xavier] University.” Many others, he claimed, considered this “a mere dream.” Various schemes of federation had been proposed by certain people. The Bishop of Saint John himself favoured a federation between a two-year college in Saint John and StFX in Nova Scotia, but others objected on the grounds “of distance and location of the University in another Province.”

Deferrari wrote Bray back on March 30th, 1948, saying diplomatically that he assumed the bishop was asking him to do this because he wanted “to get a fresh mind on the problem which is not colored in any way by such controversies which may have gone on in your region on the merits of the various plans.” He agreed to come and set up a plan whereby he would look at all the proposals and

discuss them with those who advocated them. He would also like to visit St. Thomas and UNB, or at least talk with some of the administrators from each institution. Then he would do a study of the resources available from information that he trusted the bishop could provide him. He thought that by the time he left the bishop would have some idea of what he would recommend and they could discuss it before he returned to Washington where he would prepare a final report.

On April 23 Bray wrote Deferrari that what he proposed was acceptable, but he had “a very important point” that needed clarification. If “junior colleges,” by which he meant two-year post-secondary institutions (and pointedly using the plural), were to be recommended for Chatham and Saint John, and if federation with UNB or StFX was being proposed for the last two years of the arts course, what would be needed in such junior colleges in order to provide the “most efficient course in Sciences during the first two years” so that the boys would be qualified in those areas for their subsequent work at the university? While the bishop recognized that it would take time and money to establish a strong scientific course and gain a reputation for the course, if the expense to the college of supplying chemicals, building laboratories and hiring well-trained professors was going to be considerable anyway, then perhaps the proposed institution should “provide a complete course leading to a BSc degree and thereby keep our young folk away from the non-Catholic University.” The bishop sent along to Deferrari all the material he could find, asking him to be discrete about the matter. Obviously he did not wish details of the review to reach St. Thomas prematurely.

Deferrari responded to Bray on May 7, 1948, assuring him that he would not discuss his investigation with anyone else. He gave the bishop his itinerary, which allowed him to spend three days in the province, from May 24 to 26, gathering whatever else he might need to write his report.

That same day, May 7, Bray decided finally to inform St. Thomas about his actions. He wrote to Secretary Dunn outlining the purpose and dates of Deferrari’s planned visit in two-and-a-half weeks’ time. Aware of the possible controversy, he asked Dunn to keep the information in the letter

confidential since “any publicity given to it at the present moment would be misinterpreted and would prove embarrassing and harmful.” He claimed he had been giving the matter “serious consideration” ever since their meeting in 1946 and had invited in an expert in order to get a “fresh and independent view of our problems as it concerns the welfare of all our English-speaking Catholics in the Province.” He hoped that what Dr. Deferrari would suggest would be best for everyone “within the bounds of realization.” Because Deferrari could only come for a few days, a meeting in Fredericton was all that could be arranged. Nevertheless, he was inviting the members of the previous St. Thomas committee together with Bishop LeBlanc to meet with Deferrari to discuss the problem, present their views, provide him with any further relevant information, and hear any suggestions he might be able to make. The meeting was scheduled for May 25. Dunn was cautioned again to keep the “fact and purpose” of the meeting within the committee since “as we well know, journalistic imaginations take fire very easily and do a great deal of harm.” The other priests at St. Thomas were not to be informed of these developments, and certainly not the people of Chatham.

A week later Bray sent LeBlanc a copy of his letter to Dunn, explaining that he had intended to write him earlier but that he had been caught up in “some pressing matters which made it impossible.” Bray explained to his fellow bishop that because the question of post-secondary education for English speaking Catholics was being brought up “again and again,” he had decided for his own enlightenment to obtain “some professional and expert advice on what the setting up of such facilities would entail.” Dr. Deferrari had been recommended to him and he was now coming to do a study. “Many priests,” he wrote, “have but a faint idea of all that is entailed” in such a proposal. He said he had contacted “the Chatham priests” (meaning the senior priests at St. Thomas) since they “had seen fit” to contact him in the first place about this problem back in 1946. (In fact, it had been the Bishop of Bathurst himself who had first contacted the Bishop of Saint John about the issue.) Now that Deferrari was coming to New Brunswick, Bray wanted to give the St. Thomas priests “the opportunity of meeting and discussing the

different aspects of the question with him, if they cared to do so. Otherwise they might think I was acting independently of them.”

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

He told LeBlanc that it had been his intention to have written him first “to ask your approval of this action on my part, but recalling that we had your approval for our first meeting a year or more ago I concluded it would be all right to go ahead with my invitation.” He told the Bishop of Bathurst that “should you care, and your functions allow you, to attend the meeting, we shall be greatly honored to have you.” He assured him that “there is no question of deciding on any definite policy or taking any definite action.” The purpose of bringing in Deferrari was “just a matter of getting what information we can from some one who is supposed to know all about these educational problems.”

The Bishop of Saint John was being less than straightforward. News of the fund-raising drive for St. Thomas had reached him, which was no doubt the reason he had called in Dr. Deferrari when he did in order to forestall that expansion in case a different location for the proposed provincial Catholic university should be recommended. He had kept the senior priests at St. Thomas and his fellow bishop in Bathurst in the dark until the last possible moment. The meeting set for May 25 in Fredericton would be similar to the meeting two years previous, only now an outside expert from the US would shine his light on the situation, with unknown consequences. With the plans for raising money for St. Thomas already watered down by LeBlanc's plans to include the Collège du Sacré-Coeur, not to mention “charities” in the diocese, as he had informed the board in March, the situation that the senior priests (the rector and the priests on the board) at St. Thomas were facing was worrisome. St. Thomas was in danger of being caught in the play between the Bishop of Saint John and the Bishop of Bathurst, its needs ignored by both.

Because St. Thomas Convocation exercises in 1948 were set for May 26 and the committee

members (who would be the same as before: O'Hanley, McLaughlin, McKinnon, and Dunn, plus LeBlanc) all had to be in Chatham that day, Dunn requested that the meeting be held early on the afternoon of the 24th instead of the 25th. That would allow the bishop and the committee members to get to Fredericton and back in time for convocation.

The meeting took place in Fredericton as suggested on May 24, once again at St. Dunstan's Rectory. This time both bishops attended. There were no minutes of the meeting, however, and we can only assume what transpired. It could not have been comfortable for anyone attending. Since Deferrari's final report made no reference whatever to St. Thomas, and since in the end it recommended a "two-year junior college" in Saint John affiliated with StFX, it is understandable that the St. Thomas delegation returned to Chatham in low spirits.

It is nevertheless worth reviewing Deferrari's report, for although its recommendations were never realized, in light of what would actually happen some fifteen years later when St. Thomas would be relocated to the UNB campus in Fredericton, it gives a foretaste of some of the problems, theoretical as well as practical, that would arise. Deferrari submitted it to Bray on July 1, 1948, who forwarded a copy to Dunn, the College Secretary, who forwarded a copy to LeBlanc.

Deferrari's Proposed Solutions Ignore St. Thomas

The 1948 Deferrari report, entitled "Report to Bishop Bray on Catholic Higher Education in the Province of New Brunswick," was relatively concise. By way of introduction, Deferrari alluded to the goals of the encyclicals of the Pope: to raise the level of intellectual and cultural training among all the people, to train leaders in all walks of life – the professions, commerce, politics, and others – who will be governed by Catholic principles in all their actions and have the courage of their convictions, to stimulate vocations, and to train Catholic teachers for all schools.

Deferrari proceeded to discuss the financial impossibility of establishing a new, stand-alone

Catholic university. In his view, building a building somewhere in the province large enough to house a fully-fledged university, including library, laboratories, gymnasium, administrative offices, classrooms, recreation rooms, and hygiene facilities for three- to five-hundred students, would cost at least half a million dollars. To equip it and provide adequate salaries for faculty and administration for the first year would cost another half-million. In addition, the report put the cost of maintenance “at a conservative estimate” at \$100,000 a year. In 1948, these were astronomical sums. Besides, it was not clear that an adequate number of students would be available to attend such a university, and if so whether or not that number would continue from year to year. In any case, income from tuition fees would not meet operating costs, so other sources of annual funding beyond tuition would be needed. Deferrari suggested an annual collection from all the Catholic parishes in the province. Another major concern was whether trained faculty and capable administrators would be available to operate such an institution.

Deferrari’s assessment of the costs involved and the problems that they would face must have come as an enormous shock, not only to both bishops but also, especially, to the priests of St. Thomas. Their little college operated with a staff that consisted of a few priests who were paid a small stipend by the diocese and some laymen who were paid much lower salaries than those in most other colleges and universities, altogether a tiny budget that barely met the bills.

Deferrari outlined possible solutions. The first, which in his mind would be ideal if ultimately unaffordable, would be to establish “the nucleus of a university, perhaps a full-fledged general college of liberal arts with one or two professional schools, entirely independent and under the control of the Bishop,” meaning of course the Bishop of Saint John. Although this might be the ideal plan to achieve the bishop’s objectives, Deferrari recognized that it was impossibly costly at present. It might be possible to do something more modest like a small “general college,” but he would not recommend that unless the bishop had in his hands \$1,000,000 or at least \$750,000. Even this he felt would be

impossible at the present time.

His second possible solution was for some sort of collaboration with UNB similar to that found in other provinces like Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The best existing models he was aware of were St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, and St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan. That kind of arrangement would seem to solve the financial problems, although in New Brunswick the best solution might be to have one or more "junior colleges" in various parts of the province, with a centre on the campus of UNB. That might provide "very broad opportunities for higher education" to English-speaking Catholics of the province. This of course would depend on whether or not UNB itself had "reached a rather advanced stage of development as a university," which Deferrari was "inclined to doubt," because, unlike the University of Toronto or McGill University, it was not yet a member of the AAU (Association of American Universities). He added that after personally visiting the library of UNB he had found "conditions there much worse" than expected. UNB appeared to him to be basically an undergraduate school with "no genuine graduate work at all." In his opinion it would have difficulty being approved by any regional association and was "definitely inferior to St. Francis Xavier University."

Besides, suggested Deferrari, any affiliation or federation with UNB would put an end to the possibility of establishing a new and complete Catholic university in New Brunswick or even in the Maritime Provinces. Furthermore, with affiliation the bishop would not necessarily be able to exercise any influence over important university decisions, whether or not they involved doctrinal questions. Unless all courses offered to Catholic students were given under Catholic control, "or more importantly still, by Catholics thoroughly conscious of their responsibility to present the implications for Catholics on all matters of fact in any way touching on Catholic doctrine, such courses are potentially dangerous for Catholics." As he explained: "all facts are exactly that, facts and true, but the interpretation of the significance of these facts may be quite erroneous and harmful." In his view "there are very few

courses in a university curriculum today which are not open to dangerous misinterpretation.”

On the basis of three major points, therefore, he dismissed the possibility of making any arrangement with UNB, namely: 1) the “lack of university advantages” at UNB; 2) “the ever present possibility in almost any university course for the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of facts”; and 3) “the loss of freedom for Catholic opinion to express itself as coming from a Catholic university and the essential loss, for a long time to come, at best, of the opportunity to develop a new, independent Catholic University of the Maritime Provinces. I would not favor a cooperative plan with the University of New Brunswick.”

A third possible solution, which he thought a somewhat better arrangement, would be simply closer cooperation between the Catholic high school in Saint John and StFX University. His reasons: 1) cost would be no greater than a similar arrangement with UNB; 2) the fact that StFX was further away was not a serious problem since students from Saint John would have to board at university whether they went to UNB or StFX; and 3) the advantages StFX had, “both as a fully developed general college and as a university,” were for him “definitely superior, except in a few specialized fields” to those at UNB. The strongest argument for closer cooperation with StFX was that it was entirely Catholic and would develop into a Catholic university “of the first rank.”

Deferrari's fourth suggestion was his preferred solution, “at least for the present”: a “junior college” in St. John, affiliated with StFX. If students graduating from this junior college “in their folly” did not want to go to StFX to finish up and chose instead to go to UNB, there was nothing to stop them from doing it. The plan would be cheaper than attempting to build and staff a new, full, four-year university. The new Catholic High School (St. Vincent's), presently in the planning stage for Saint John, could be expanded to become both a high school and a “junior college.” That would save money since funds could be obtained from the province, and the libraries and laboratories could be shared between the high school and the junior college. Deferrari believed such an arrangement would encourage more

Catholic boys to go on to university. Such a junior college should be for day students, not boarding students, although students from outside Saint John should be encouraged to board in the city. The bishop should determine whether or not the people of New Brunswick would support such a project. If so, it could lead to a more comprehensive plan in the future.

The report, although it purported to address the educational concerns of English-speaking Catholics throughout New Brunswick, was really a plan for the Diocese of Saint John. There was no mention of any arrangement between the two New Brunswick dioceses to strengthen St. Thomas. Indeed, nowhere in the report was there the slightest reference to St. Thomas. Obviously, in the mind of the Bishop of Saint John, neither the Bishop of Bathurst nor the faculty of St. Thomas were considered essential in any new arrangements for post-secondary education.

In the event, however, the 1948 Deferrari report landed in a drawer to gather dust. LeBlanc pursued his financial drive that included some funding for expanding and strengthening St. Thomas College in its Chatham location. And the notion of any sort of affiliation with UNB was left hanging for the next decade.

O'Hanley Resigns as Rector

In the meantime, a bare two weeks before Deferrari submitted his report, O'Hanley resigned as rector of St. Thomas. The stress of dealing first with an interfering Bishop of Bathurst and then with an even more overbearing Bishop of Saint John undoubtedly played a role in O'Hanley's decision. Besides, relations between him and his faculty during 1948 had not improved. On June 10, 1948, the bishop complained to O'Hanley about the college's continuing administrative problems, whereupon the latter offered to resign. LeBlanc said he would consider the offer. The following day the bishop informed the rector that since their conversation of the day before he was "convinced more than ever" that his idea of resigning "seems the most logical solution. Nevertheless I leave you absolutely free in

your decision. I have given you all the [money] I could get and apparently things are now getting worse; personally I could not stand it for one moment.” The bishop offered O’Hanley the parish of Douglstown, at least temporarily until another parish opened up, and said he was sorry “so much criticism has been going around and that all the sins of Israel seem to fall on [your] shoulders.” He advised O’Hanley not to mention names “so as not to aggravate the situation and perhaps get to the ears of outsiders and make things worse.”

A few days later, on June 16, O’Hanley formally submitted his resignation. He had been rector for only three years. The bishop thanked him for his work at St. Thomas where he had put his “whole heart and soul at the service of training young men intellectually and morally since over twenty years” and informed Scott that as vice-rector he should take over the duties of the rector until a replacement could be found. He was to immediately get the “books, keys and financial standing of St. Thomas College” from O’Hanley. LeBlanc then set about finding a new rector.

Finding a New Rector

He turned for advice to three of his senior, non-teaching priests and on June 23 received a joint letter from them. Frs. J. J. McLaughlin, A. A. McKinnon, and W. J. Wallace informed him they had heard of the resignation of O’Hanley and urged the bishop to move quickly to appoint a new rector to get things organized for the coming term. After discussing the matter among themselves, and because of “due consideration of facts, which we are reluctant to commit to paper, we feel that the most suitable choice among the present staff would be the Reverend Lynn McFadden.” They recognized that “he may not have all the necessary qualifications for the position,” yet they believed him to be “the most competent of the present staff.” Although they had heard that many found McFadden rather gruff, at his core they believed he was kind and competent.

The three priests furthermore suggested to the bishop that a number of other priests and

members of the laity “who are dissatisfied with the present conditions at St. Thomas College” believe he should contact the Irish Christian Brothers about the possibility of their taking over the college once more. They enclosed for the bishop the address of the order in New York. They based their recommendations on their knowledge of the “actual confusion prevalent in this Institution [St. Thomas] through lack of accord, submission and discipline.” They even stated that “in fact we have lost hope of any permanent amelioration of present conditions” at St. Thomas. O'Hanley's unhappy three-year tenure as rector had left its stamp. What was needed, from the priests' point of view, was a regime of the discipline that the brothers were known for in their methods elsewhere in educating poorer elementary and high-school age students. The previous unhappy experience some seven decades earlier with the Christian Brothers at St. Thomas's predecessor, St. Michael's, as we saw in chapter 1, was quite forgotten in the urge to straighten things out once for all.

McLaughlin enclosed a dissenting note to LeBlanc. He was, he admitted, perhaps not as familiar with the situation at the college as the other two priests who had referred to the situation there as one of “confusion,” with Fr. Wallace making comments such as “no rule – no discipline – no submission – liquor – out at night.” McLaughlin, however, cautioned the bishop that “there are two sides to every fence. We must be prudent. Religion will suffer if we do not act prudently.”

LeBlanc reluctantly agreed about McFadden. “For the time being,” he wrote, “I suppose that we could not do better.” He was not happy, however, with the idea of inviting the Christian Brothers back. Before making such an overture he felt they should “study more carefully the departure of the Brothers in 1911 or thereabouts and then take some action.” He was mistaken about both the brothers and the date. The Christian Brothers had left Chatham in 1880. The Basilian Fathers had left St. Thomas but in 1923, not 1911. In light of future events regarding the Christian Brothers, it was perhaps just as well that he rejected his priests' suggestion.

To deal with the issue of appointing the new rector, LeBlanc instructed Secretary Dunn to call a

board meeting for June 27, 1948. In typical fashion, although probably unconstitutionally, he requested that only the (six) priest members attend, not the (eight) lay members. Evidently he did not want news of the college's recent problems leaking out into the public.

The meeting was held. No minutes were taken. The reduced board approved McFadden's appointment. On the same day, June 27, the bishop wrote to McFadden, informing him that the resignation of O'Hanley had necessitated "immediate action in the appointment of a successor." On the advice of "a number of Pastors and outstanding laity" he was appointing him to be the new rector. He would assume the position "immediately," relieving Acting Rector Scott. He added:

I realize as well as you do that this is not an easy task. However, the burden shall and must be carried by all your priests who are under your guidance and must share your heavy responsibilities. The training of youth in a Catholic college differs altogether from any other institution. The Church expects it, and parents put their young men under your care and trust so that they may receive a good, solid Catholic education.

Canon Law clearly points out the duties not only of the Rector but also of the professors who should be priests who are outstanding not only for learning but also for virtue and prudence so that they may be able to help the students in word and example. All are expected to obey the Rector of the college in the fulfillment of their respective functions.

Therefore be it well understood by all that there shall not be any entertainment held or sponsored by the student body of the college and *a fortiori* by the college, as such are not becoming to our standard Catholic education. Dances shall not be held nor sponsored by your college. If I make mention of this it is because there have been abuses in the past as you well know, not forgetting that we must take into consideration other neighborly institutions who are disturbed by such entertainments.

The "neighborly institutions" referred obliquely to complaints from the Sisters of the hospital and convent, as well as from people living in the area, about noise and rowdiness at the college. The bishop cheerfully concluded his admonitory letter to McFadden as follows:

I wish you and your priests a most successful year and may God bless you all. I wish you every success in this very important but not too easy function.

McFadden, with understandable reluctance but considerable courage, picked up the torch.

Thirteenth Rector, Fr. Andrew Lynn McFadden

St. Thomas College was entering into a period of turmoil and confusion when McFadden took over as rector on June 27, 1948. The new rector would have to lead the way through a veritable minefield, and indeed it took some arm-twisting to persuade him to accept the appointment. Money was scarce. New programmes were needed, as well as new faculty to staff them. Old buildings and other facilities were deteriorating and needed repairs or replacement. Local support for expansion of college facilities was strong, but the Bishop of Saint John was once again considering establishing some sort of post-secondary educational institution for Catholics in his city, which would threaten enrolment by diverting many Catholic students from St. Thomas. The difficult issue of affiliation with UNB again was about to raise its head, posing not only public relations problems with St. Thomas's loyal supporters in Chatham but also serious financial and even moral questions. McFadden, with remarkable fortitude and some successes as well as some failures, would carry on as rector from 1948 for thirteen difficult years until 1961.

The College in Need

St. Thomas was operating on a shoestring and struggling to survive. The willingness of the teaching staff to spend long hours in the classroom for little money was keeping the university going, along with support from the local community, but the situation was tenuous. It was not at all clear how long the college could continue. Such concerns troubled St. Thomas's small but dedicated staff of teaching priests.

Fr. George Martin, a graduate of St. Thomas high school as well as St. Thomas college (BA 1945), recently ordained (May 1949), returned to St. Thomas in the fall of 1949 to join the faculty. In later years, he reminisced about the situation at the time:

In 1949 when I came back to the college, as a priest and teaching in high school, St. Thomas was not flourishing. It was *not* flourishing. I remember Fr. [Arthur] Scott, who worked his heart out for the institution. There was a big change in him from the time I was a student and the time

I arrived there as a priest in 1949. He was discouraged. He had been really enthusiastic when I was a student, you know – make the college go. Of course it never went very well anyway. It was just a rag-tag kind of thing and small. Small and no visible support. The only thing we operated on was by the money we took in from the students. It was probably the smallest and the weakest small Catholic college in the Maritimes.... We just had our old building, one building. That would have been built in the 'twenties, I think. But there was nothing to it. And the high school was bigger than the college in enrolment. They were just hanging on. There was no support either, you see. Absolutely no government money. Nothing. Not a cent.

It is always darkest before the dawn. Possibilities for improvement indeed lay just over the horizon. The bishop's financial drive in the diocese, which had been officially started in the spring of 1948, would actually produce considerable funding for the college. The federal and provincial governments eventually would produce an annual government operating grant for St. Thomas. Even more heartening, St. Thomas would finally find a generous benefactor. It would soon be possible to make real improvements at the college.

The Board Addresses Procedure

Such improvements, however, required a certain amount of structural reform of the college's administration. Up to now St. Thomas's board had acted as a legal entity, not as a practical body of supervision. As we have seen, it had been convened irregularly, either to consider unforeseen problems – as with the issues raised by the Bishop of Saint John – or more usually simply to approve what had been done by the bishop and the rector. It had been on the bishop's own authority in June 1948, for example, that he had convened a reduced board meeting of priests, specifically excluding its lay members (increased from two to six only three months previously) to approve his appointment of McFadden as the college's new rector. As we saw, he had been unhappy with how O'Hanley had been managing things. He wanted changes, in particular more discipline in the lives of both teachers and students. His exclusion of the lay members of the board from the discussion is an indicator of his conviction that discipline was a matter best dealt with in the usual hierarchal fashion. From this time

forward, however, pressing issues regarding the college's very existence demanded a less personal, more structured approach.

For example, at a board meeting in May, 1949, some members pointedly raised the question of the board's authority. Fr. John Ryan, a board member since 1934, said it was unclear "just what function the Board exercised in the affairs of the University." The bishop, referring to the University's act of incorporation, responded that it was clear to him that the board "was charged with all matters concerning the general running of the University, particularly in the purchase of Land and Buildings." That being the case, Fr. Joseph McKinnon wondered if the board should not have been consulted before the rector's recent purchase of some temporary classrooms and some adjacent land for the college? The bishop admitted that such consultation should have been done, but there hadn't been enough time. To avoid further embarrassment, the board moved to ratify after the fact the actions of the bishop and the rector, whereupon the bishop attempted to clear the air by praising the way McFadden had conducted himself in his first year as rector. LeBlanc informed the board that the latter had only agreed to take on the duties of rector after "some strong persuasion," which was quite true. McFadden had been well aware that, although he loved his teaching, he was not good at running things, at bringing his colleagues together, and had reacted with incredulity at the bishop's choice. The bishop now told the board that "it was quite evident from his fine results that Father McFadden has done an excellent job." Nevertheless a procedural principle had been established. Both bishop and rector were learning something about the difference between authoritarian and collective decision-making, a difference that would lead to more confrontations in the future.

Relishing its new-found sense of responsibility, the board, although not without some heated discussion, moved to establish an Executive Committee. It would consist of three members of the board, excluding the chancellor and the rector, and would act "in an advisory capacity in matters requiring an immediate decision." Although its members would be appointed by the chancellor and the

rector, establishing the committee was clearly an attempt to rein in the rector, who had a pronounced tendency to act first and tell the board later. Because its mandate was limited to “cases of emergency,” and “emergency” was left undefined, the Executive Committee's supervisory authority between board meetings had few teeth. Even so, it constituted another small step toward institutional accountability for St. Thomas from an authoritarian past.

The steps were nevertheless small and hesitant. At a board meeting in 1951 as McFadden's three-year term as rector was drawing to a close, he would hint that he would like to be relieved of the job, pointing out that his predecessor had served only one three-year term and that he, McFadden, had accepted the position on the understanding it would be for three years only. The bishop, however, would have none of it, interrupting the discussion to say that he had asked McFadden to stay on as rector for another three years, and there would be no further discussion of the matter. The bishop clearly was not in a hurry to relinquish his authority.

The Board Addresses Financial and Staffing Needs

Financial concerns had long been a primary concern at St. Thomas. It was at the board meeting in May, 1949, that Bishop LeBlanc finally announced the amount that St. Thomas might expect to receive from his fund-raising efforts. Of the \$798,000 that had been subscribed by the last day of December, 1948, at least \$200,000 would be earmarked for St. Thomas. Asked when the college could expect the funds, the bishop said the usual practice was to wait until the pledged funds came in. That meant waiting until the following year, although “money might be advanced in case of immediate need.” The board, now including its full complement of fifteen including the chancellor (the bishop), the rector, seven priests and six lay members, expressed its collective appreciation.

McFadden outlined how some of the funds would be allocated. He had already purchased, as member McKinnon had noted, four H-huts from the Chatham air base, at a cost of \$8,000. H-huts were

roofed shacks in the shape of an H, designed as temporary wartime barracks with fifty bunks in each of the parallel structures and washing facilities in the connecting piece. The college had re-erected these simple and inelegant but efficient and cheap buildings on campus and they were already in use as classrooms. Even so, the college remained in dire need of a new building to accommodate its growing number of students and staff. McFadden also explained the land purchase that he had made, with the bishop's approval. The college had purchased three farms, located behind the university, a portion of which he had agreed to sell to the provincial Department of Transport for expansion of the nearby airport.

The board, as we saw, approved these purchases after the fact. The members then turned their attention to the college's running expenses. Fr. Nowlan introduced the question of yearly tuition, and whether or not what was being collected from students covered ordinary expenses. The rector replied that the cost of food and wages were increasing and that tuition indeed barely covered costs. Fr. McKinnon immediately introduced a motion calling for the board to set aside money from the fund-raising campaign for equipment for laboratories as well as for the salaries of the faculty, which the board passed. The rector, who was used to spending the college's funds as he saw fit, abstained from the vote.

Indeed, the board members at the meeting expressed their concern to improve the qualifications of the St. Thomas's teaching staff. Fr. Ryan put forward his view that the need for "a good staff was more immediate and more important than new buildings." He suggested that teaching priests should be sent away for advanced studies to avoid the need to hire lay teachers. The board then approved a motion introduced by Dr. Percy Losier that money from the fund-raising campaign also be used to support priests who took post-graduate studies in science. Fr. McKinnon started a discussion about the need to hire two new professors, one for English and one for Biology.

By the board's meeting the following spring, in May, 1950, the promised funds from the

bishop's financial drive still had not materialized. The bishop did indicate that so far \$88,000 of the money pledged in the Chatham region had been turned in and some of that could be made immediately available for necessary improvements. The rector reported that repairs during the year had eaten up all reserve cash funds, although he had not had to touch the college's capital savings of \$80,000 in bonds. At least the recently-purchased farm, which McFadden called "an indispensable asset," was supplying milk and food to the college and was helping to cut down expenses, although more equipment was needed for it to operate successfully.

Indeed, more funds were imperative if the college was to continue operation. Student numbers were rising and the college was "taxed to capacity." Enrolment in the high school programme was especially high at about one hundred sixty, of whom about seventy were boarding students, but as usual tuition fees were not covering expenses. In an effort to quiet some expressions of alarm, McFadden assured the members that "many colleges go behind each year."

It was suggested that the college might be able to get some assistance from the province for the cost of running the high school. Board member Dr. Connolly, a member of the Legislative Assembly, immediately squelched that idea. He informed the board that "under the present setup" there would be little hope of getting assistance from the Education department, that "our problem in Catholic Education is wholly ours as Catholics." He suggested that the college "expand moderately, and with due expediency plan a long-range programme."

Regarding capital expenditures, the rector pointed out that more space was needed for chapel accommodations, the dining hall, and the kitchen. The science department needed at least \$2,000 for additional space and lab equipment. When board member Ryan suggested that improvements should include the building of a new hockey rink, since the old one was "dilapidated" and a new one would be "a paying proposition," the rector dismissed the proposal in favour of a new educational building. Students had been turned away the past year because there was no place to put them. The residence and

the classrooms were overcrowded. Such concerns, at least for McFadden, outweighed the need for a new rink. He asked the board to “lay down the general lines of a building programme.” The bishop replied that that could be done soon, now that the first phase of the fund-raising drive had been concluded, and he was expecting shortly a full report of the money collected.

Referring to the board's previous concerns about upgrading the qualifications of the faculty at St. Thomas's, McFadden was pleased to report that the previous fall an excellent new addition to the staff, Dr. Phonse Campbell, had taken over direction of English Literature classes. A native of Prince Edward Island, Campbell had obtained a BA from St. Dunstan's University and in 1941 an MA from Fordham University in New York. Following four years with the Armed Forces overseas, he had returned to Fordham where he had recently completed his PhD in English. Fr. Thomas McKendy, who had been studying at Fordham at the time, had recommended him to McFadden. For the next ten years “Doc” Campbell would be an important member of faculty, taking over direction of the student Drama Society. According to reports of former students, Campbell involved every student he taught in at least one play. A popular teacher, he was yet considered something of an eccentric. Almost every former student or faculty member from those years has a story to tell about him. He was also important for being the first non-priest (although a Catholic) to become a regular, full-time member of faculty. As the college continued to expand, other lay academics would join the full-time faculty. Campbell would organize the first formal faculty meeting, a small but historic step toward the eventual involvement of all the faculty in the college's governance.

The rector also reported that the priests Bernard Broderick and Henry McGrath would be returning to teach in the fall term following their graduate studies at Notre Dame and Fordham, respectively, but that the college needed to hire a new Biology teacher. Dr. Losier, a member of the board whose medical practice was in Chatham, for the past year had been teaching Biology with the assistance of Daniel Hurley, a recent St. Thomas graduate, but neither of them would be returning the

following year. .

By the time the board met next, in May of 1951, the rector with evident relief was able to report that an initial tranche of \$42,000 in cash from the fund-raising campaign had finally come to St. Thomas. But now more than ever he needed “a Building Policy.” Enrolment during the year had reached an all-time high at a total of 281 students. 171 of these, or about 60%, were in the high school programme; 110, or about 40%, were in the in the post-secondary arts program. Promising students had once again been turned away for lack of space.

As for running expenses, McFadden stated that, operating under the board's previous directive to use “whatever money was necessary to bring the teaching up to standard,” he had spent a lot of money trying to meet staffing and equipment needs. He had hired two new full-time professors, one to teach English and one Biology. He had sent five members of faculty off to do postgraduate work in American universities, the largest number ever to have been sent off to study at one time. He had also spent money on laboratory equipment. These expenses had amounted to about \$3,000. The remainder of the \$42,000 had been invested in bonds, joining the \$80,000 in bonds that he had inherited as rector, creating a capital fund of about \$119,000 that should be made available for building construction. He was now, therefore, asking the board yet again to endorse a building policy.

Before any further discussion could take place, however, the 1951 meeting was interrupted by Fr. Scott arriving to inform the bishop of the sudden death of one of his priests. The bishop immediately left, and rather than continuing the meeting without the bishop the board decided to adjourn., leaving the rector without a building policy. He had to continue as before, saving the capital funds for future building construction and spending money to cover running costs, although at least here he had hopes that his efforts to secure federal and provincial government operating grants for St. Thomas would bear fruit.

Government Grants: The Massey Commission

In 1949 the Federal government had established a “Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,” chaired by Charles Vincent Massey, a lawyer. (In 1952 he would become the first Governor-General to be born in Canada.) It became known as “The Massey Commission.” The National Conference of Canadian Universities (NCCU), a voluntary association of Canada's leading universities, presented a brief in 1949 to the Commission making a strong case for federal grants to universities as “national institutions.” The NCCU, however, had not included smaller colleges, “those without professional schools,” in the list of universities that should receive grants. Naturally, the exclusion had upset small educational institutions, such as St. Thomas and St. Mary's in Halifax, so in December, 1949, a number of them had submitted additional briefs to the Commission.

In the St. Thomas brief, McFadden described the role of the “small, classical colleges.” He stressed the importance of “Arts and Letters” in teaching man “to lead a full life,” which is done by taking him “back through the centuries of human life.” In this way the student learned not only how man had failed but also how he had learned from his mistakes and had gone on to succeed. Such a student's mind was sharpened so that he became a leader of the people, a law abiding citizen, someone who could acquire the knowledge of “eternal truths revealed by the Creator which lays firmly the foundation for the best in individual and social Life.” The education that colleges like St. Thomas provided, McFadden argued, should be made accessible to the greatest possible number. Large universities alone could not do it, since they were located in urban centres where the cost of living was high as well as their fees. Besides, personal contact between teacher and student at those larger universities was limited or nonexistent. Small classical colleges like St. Thomas, on the other hand, offered a “well balanced diet of intellectual fare” and could “most conveniently accomplish the task of preparing large numbers of men for their place in the society of the nation.” McFadden had claimed that such colleges could reach large numbers of those who would otherwise “fail to receive such an

education.” They served people in those areas at less expense because living expenses were not so high, and because they kept fees down. For the needy, who would not be able “to share in their country’s heritage,” they provided greater opportunities. In addition to this, they offered a more personal contact between instructor and student and thereby produced “more favourable results.”

McFadden argued that the administration of colleges and universities was becoming difficult because of financial problems. Fees did not cover the cost of a college education, and most students could not pay higher fees. Charitable contributions had been more generous in the past than they were now, and taxes took more and more of people’s income making it difficult to help students. At the same time more and more students were seeking higher education. These problems, he pointed out, would continue and cause greater problems in the future. Small colleges, like St. Thomas, were suffering disproportionately. Library facilities and laboratory equipment on a per student basis were prohibitive. Demands for higher wages, “though right and just,” could not be met. Grants were as necessary for educational institutions teaching the “Arts and Letters” as for professional schools. McFadden pointed out that the motto of St. Thomas clearly indicated the institution's purpose – *Doce Me Bonitatem et Disciplinam et Scientiam*, “Teach me goodness, discipline, and knowledge.” Its aim was to give the student “that culture of mind, will and emotions necessary to dispose him to achieve an excellent personal and social life within the framework of the particular calling for the exercise for which he is being prepared.” St. Thomas had struggled through the 1920s and 30s when an “economic pall” lay over the area and had survived under heavy handicaps. It had not limited its facilities to Roman Catholics but had been open to students of other denominations. The achievements of its students had contributed to the Arts, Letters and Sciences not solely in its own particular area but in “the province and the nation.”

St. Thomas College had many students whose parents had made great sacrifices to give them an education, but many others were unable to do this. The college tried to help “by carrying along

deserving students,” but this was often at the cost of not purchasing needed equipment. Access to national scholarships would be a great help to them.

McFadden in his December 1949 brief stressed that over the years St. Thomas “without much help from government or other agencies” had attempted to “elevate the cultural level” of farmers and fishermen and their families in the North Shore region of New Brunswick by their work in adult education. With additional funds from government it could do much more. At present it was operating under a growing deficit. The future of the college at present indeed was at risk.

He was now joining the other hitherto excluded colleges and universities in their submission to the Massey Commission in requesting: 1) that the federal government implement a plan for aiding the institutions of higher learning with grants through the provinces, so as to preserve provincial autonomy in that field, 2) that in any plan of federal aid to be set up “the classical colleges receive their just share,” 3) that national scholarships be made available to worthy students as well as supplementary grants to the universities, 4) that a Council of the Arts be set up which would function along the lines already followed by the National Research Council, and 5) that the federal government, in cooperation with the provinces, contribute more to adult education.

McFadden's arguments appear to have fallen on deaf ears. In June 1951 the Massey Commission tabled its report in the House of Commons. It made three general recommendations: 1) the Federal government should make unrestricted grants to universities, to be divided up among the universities on the basis of enrolment; 2) the government should establish a national scholarship plan; and 3) the government should set up a “Canada Council for the Encouragement of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.” After consultation with the NCCU and the provincial governments, the Federal Department of Finance drew up a list of the universities and colleges, public and private, that would be eligible for grants. Thirty two institutions were named. St. Thomas was not on the list. The grants were to be distributed by the provinces on the basis of enrolment in accordance with Massey's formula.

An upset McFadden immediately wrote G. Roy McWilliam, the local Member of Parliament in Ottawa. He had read in the newspapers that the list of thirty two eligible institutions to benefit from the decision included only members of the NCCU. McFadden pointed out to McWilliam that the NCCU was a voluntary association to which not all Canadian universities belonged, including St. Thomas in Chatham, Collège du Sacré-Coeur in Bathurst, and St. Mary's University in Halifax. It was improbable that St. Thomas could become a member of the NCCU in time to qualify for federal help. Besides, the government had "never advised any university to become a member." If government had "the good of all at heart," wrote McFadden, it should aid all universities. St. Thomas would not receive much since the grants were based on enrolment, but St. Thomas was not asking for much. At least it "should get what is fair."

McFadden further explained to McWilliam that there never was much reason for most small colleges to belong to the NCCU. Their meetings were of interest mainly to the professional schools, "not a university such as ours." Should St. Thomas be deprived of grants simply because it was small? He concluded his plea with: "I am not pretending that we should get as much help as the large universities but we should not be ignored." He agreed that it might be a good idea for St. Thomas to become a member of the NCCU, but in the meantime, while the government was working out a policy for the distribution of the funds, "the cause of the small universities should be presented." He requested McWilliam to ensure when the matter came up in the House of Commons that the small colleges were not overlooked.

The president of StFX, Dr. Patrick Nicholson, was a member of the committee of the NCCU that had advised the government on how federal grants should be distributed. On Aug. 3, 1951, he wrote McFadden telling him what had happened and giving him some information in case he felt it desirable "to take some practical steps without delay." He told McFadden that the NCCU committee had not been able to draw up a list of institutions other than those in the original list plus a "few well

known” institutions that were not NCCU members. “Personally,” he wrote, “it is difficult for me to see how the Government can avoid including such institutions as your own.” He mentioned that although the government had sought the advice of the NCCU, it had not felt obligated to follow its advice in every detail.

McFadden wrote Nicholson on August 6 to tell him how, when he had “read with astonishment” the leading article in the *Montreal Star* of June 21 that the institutions to benefit from the grant were only the thirty-two members of the NCCU, he had immediately contacted Fr. Lynch at St. Mary’s and Fr. Paquet at Collège du Sacré-Coeur since he knew they, too, did not belong to the NCCU. They had not seemed worried because they thought the government had agreed to give funds to “all chartered universities,” which would have covered them all. The local MP in Ottawa, Roy McWilliam, had supplied McFadden with information, including the parliamentary record of June 30th in which Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent had said that “all institutions authorized by provincial legislation to grant degrees would be recognized as of university level.” He wanted to know from Nicholson if this was true and if there was anything he could do “in a practical way” to make sure the aid came to St. Thomas and Sacré-Coeur, especially since he had heard funds were going to Prince of Wales College, a non-degree-granting, non-denominational Normal School in Charlottetown.

Nicholson replied to McFadden that the executive of the NCCU had not felt they were in a position to make an inspection of every individual institution in Canada and could not make recommendations for additions to the list. They had included Prince of Wales, since it was a provincial institution and widely recognized as one of the few public educational institutions in the province. Carleton, which also did not belong to the NCCU, had been included because the larger institutions in Ontario “took in their students.” For other institutions, the committee was unable to commit itself. The executive of the NCCU was planning to meet on Labour Day, 1951, to consider the text of the Order-in-Council that was being prepared and they expected it would be passed on September 15. The Order-

in-Council would deal with grants for the 1951-52 academic year. After one year of operation, they expected that permanent legislation would be passed placing it on the statute books. Nicholson ended his letter by telling McFadden that he would be well advised to keep members of parliament and senators from New Brunswick interested in St. Thomas's case. While he felt St. Thomas would be safe, he believed "it is well for you to take every possible precaution."

McFadden took Nicholson's advice. He wrote McWilliam again and also contacted the Honourable Milton Gregg, previously Chancellor of UNB and now MP in Ottawa for York-Sunbury. To be on the safe side he also wrote Prime Minister St-Laurent. McWilliam wrote back telling him that, as McFadden probably knew, Bishop LeBlanc had already written on behalf of St. Thomas and Collège du Sacré-Coeur, and that he himself had made "representation" to the PM and to the Hon. Milton Gregg, Minister of Labour, for their support for St. Thomas College.

McFadden received a letter from the prime minister saying that "most careful consideration" would be given to his concerns. He also received a supportive letter from Gregg. McFadden then contacted Senator G. P. Burchill on Aug. 27. The next day Burchill wrote the PM giving him a short history of St. Thomas and pointing out that he was well aware of the "many young men" in his community who had received their training at St. Thomas, who "would have been unable, probably, to afford to attend university if they had been obliged to go to another part of the province." He also pointed out that St. Thomas, like other colleges, was having difficulty and was looking for financial assistance and that, unless there was "some qualification that he was unaware of" they should be entitled to share in the grants the government was making available.

On October 22, 1951, Burchill wrote McFadden to say he had been informed "on good authority" that a grant would be coming to St. Thomas, as well as to other small universities. In January, 1952, McFadden received further letters from Gregg, Dan Riley and McWilliam. All contained copies of the Order-in-Council concerning the decision of the government on grants to colleges and

universities, along with a list of those getting grants. This time St. Thomas was included. McFadden could breathe more easily. McWilliam told McFadden he was pleased about what had happened. He added that he knew St. Thomas would put the money to good advantage, and that McFadden should feel “entirely free” to call on his services any time, “not only for your college but for any other matter.”

McFadden learned that he should apply to the New Brunswick Department of Education for the federal money given to the province for the universities. He was told that the only students that could be counted in determining the grant were “college” – i.e., post-secondary – students, so the grant the first year would be only \$1,184. Hardly a grand sum, yet McFadden was pleased. It was the first grant from the government that St. Thomas had received since 1910. As enrolment in the arts programme would grow in the years ahead, the grant would grow as well. The principal of support had been established. It was a significant step in St. Thomas's modernization, as important as its act of incorporation as a university in 1934. McFadden could be proud of his accomplishment.

The Alumni Association

Perhaps equally important in the modernization of St. Thomas was the formation of an Alumni Association. Early attempts to form such an association had fallen by the wayside during the war years, but on October 23, 1949, an organizing meeting was called in Chatham to rejuvenate the association. Seventy-five former students attended and elected an executive: Dr. Percy Losier, President; John Duffy, Vice-President; V. A. Moar, Secretary; Joseph Walsh, Treasurer; and Fr. Henry McGrath, Alumni Secretary. Over the course of the following year the executive contacted a number of prominent alumni, including Judge Leo Troy; Campbellton MLA J. C. “Charlie” Van Horne; Bishop James Hill of Victoria, B.C., former rector of St. Thomas; Bishop Carroll of Edmonton; Msgr. R. M. Hickey, a decorated war veteran who had served in the North Shore Regiment with many graduates of the college; Senator F. E. McGrand; forty-one Diocesan priests; and a large number of former students now

in various religious orders across Canada and the United States. They were informed about the Association and asked to form branches across the country.

The Association held its first regular meeting in Chatham on June 11, 1950. That year it collected \$1,500 for scholarships and nearly the same amount for books for the library, as well as some additional donations given directly to the college. At its second meeting in December, 1950, on the recommendation of its Executive the Association established a Board of Directors consisting of ten members, each representing a different area of the province and elected by alumni in that area. The ten areas were as follows:

1. Miramichi (Northumberland Co.)
2. Moncton (Westmorland, Kent, and Albert counties)
3. Saint John (Saint John, Charlotte, and King's counties)
4. Fredericton (York and Sunbury Counties)
5. Bathurst (Gloucester County)
6. Restigouche (Dalhousie and Campbellton)
7. Grand Falls (Carleton and Victoria counties)
8. Edmunston (Madawaska county)
9. Province of Quebec
10. U.S.A.

At its next meeting in 1951, the Association elected Dr. Losier president again and voted to have a banquet to raise money for more scholarships and library books. The members also planned a "closed retreat" to be held at St. Thomas the following summer, in 1952, conducted by the Fathers of the Redemptorist Order. One older alumnus, Jim Butler, actually composed an "Alumni Song" for the meeting, which he delivered while sitting and playing at a piano:

St. Thomas on the Miramichi
Was home away from home to me.
'Twas there I knew those kindly boys
I number with my lasting joys.
'Twas there from masters wise and good
I learned to strive as Christian should.
I hold in deathless memory
St. Thomas on the Miramichi.
St. Thomas on the Miramichi
Was not a palace fair to see

But those bleak halls upon the hill
Are warm with happy memories still.
So I'll return each passing year
To view the scenes I hold so dear
And cherish in this company
St. Thomas on the Miramichi.

Butler, who had first taught at St. Thomas in the 1920s, was back teaching History there and was known fondly as something of an eccentric. His rooms were piled high with books that he was always giving away to others. His song, however, never became popular.

The Association organized an alumni reunion in August, 1952, with "STU Salad" and Roy McWilliam as guest speaker, the same local MP who had helped McFadden secure the government grants. The next year the banquet included "STU Rolls" with Henry Murphy, a judge from Moncton, as speaker. In 1954 the special dish was "STU Cakes" with MLA Charlie VanHorne the speaker.

St. Thomas on a Roll

The alumni had reason to celebrate. All things considered, St. Thomas in the early 1950s appeared to be not only surviving but flourishing. By 1951 the bishop's fund-raising campaign was finally bringing in a substantial amount of money to the college. By the start of 1952, thanks to Rector McFadden's efforts, not only had government support been secured but a promising benefactor had appeared. Plans for new buildings were underway. The growing pains of the immediate post-war years appeared to be diminishing. On the distant horizon clouds were gathering that would, by the end of the decade, darken the skies above St. Thomas on the Miramichi. Yet for the moment, all was going well.

Sources, Chapter 4

For the material in this chapter, extensive use was made of the written correspondence of Bishop Patrice Alexandre Chiasson, Bishop Camille LeBlanc, Fr. James Hill, Bishop Patrick Bray, and Fr. Lynn McFadden, as noted in the quoted passages. Much of their correspondence is located in the archives of the Diocese of Saint John [ADSJ]; copies of some of it is located in the relevant funds of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick [PANB]. Also in the ADSJ is the 1948 Deferrari report, entitled "Report to Bishop Bray on Catholic Higher Education in the Province of New Brunswick."

Other sources used were:

Minutes of the Board of St. Thomas University (various years)

St. Thomas College Calendars (various years)

The Aquinian 1945-1952

Contemporary accounts in the following newspapers:

The *Union Advocate*, a Chatham newspaper

The *Chatham Gazette*

The *New Freeman*, a Saint John newspaper

The *Saint John Telegraph*;

The *Fredericton Daily Gleaner*

Personal interviews with the following persons:

Fr. Henry McGrath

Fr. David Walsh

Much useful biographical information about people who lived in the Miramichi area can be found in W.D.Hamilton, *Dictionary of Miramichi Biography*. Saint John, 1997.

Other useful biographical information can be found in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online: www.biographi.ca/index-e.html