

CHAPTER 8

“NO COMPROMISE POSSIBLE”: ST. THOMAS 1962-1963

Calling the Board

Ever since its Halloween meeting in 1960, Bishop Leverman preferred not to convene a meeting of the university's board of governors. He wanted to avoid discussion of his single-handed appointment of Msgr. Donald Duffie replacing Fr. Lynn McFadden as president in May 1961, and also to avoid any possible opposition to the plans to move St. Thomas to Fredericton. But by the fall of 1962, a meeting was unavoidable if the campaign to move St. Thomas was to proceed. The government needed to be assured that the university's board supported the move, and it needed that assurance as soon as possible.

The situation was becoming increasingly complicated. Leverman knew that a majority of the present St. Thomas board would oppose the Deutsch Commission's recommendation to relocate St. Thomas, so he needed to add new supportive members, but the board itself would have to agree to the appointments. How to solve the dilemma?

In a letter dated September 18, Justice Louis Ritchie offered Leverman some political advice:

It is most important to avoid a situation where the residents of Northumberland County will be firmly opposed to moving St. Thomas to the UNB Campus and the rest of the Diocese just as firmly and vehemently in favour of it being moved.

He pointed out that the Northumberland County Liberal Association had adopted a resolution supporting the Friends of St. Thomas in their opposition to the move, and that there were “suggestions” of a cabinet split. The Liberal government could not afford to lose its four Northumberland seats, as

they had no hope of electing candidates in the Saint John and York County constituencies. He told Leverman he was “amazed” to learn that Robert Martin was a member of St. Thomas’s board of governors. He speculated that Martin justified his activities in opposing the move on the grounds that the board had not been consulted. He was also surprised to find out that Charlie Van Horne, a Conservative, was also on the board: “

With all deference to the present members, I suggest the board of Governors should be strengthened by the addition, or substitution, of members having a greater breadth of experience and vision.”

But the advice was superfluous. Leverman and Duffie knew what had to be done. Leverman had already turned things over to his master strategist. On September 14, a summons to meet had already gone out to board members over the bishop’s signature. The meeting would be held Friday, September 21, 1962—but not in Chatham. It was scheduled to meet in Fredericton, at St. Dunstan’s Hall.

Packing the Board

Holding the meeting in Fredericton was part of Duffie’s strategy. Supporters of the move were more likely to be found in Fredericton and Saint John than on the Miramichi. Richmond Grannon from Saint John was already on the board. And there was room for more: in 1939, the board was granted the legal authority to increase its membership to “any number not exceeding twenty-five.”

When the Chatham members arrived at the meeting they were surprised to find in the room not only Leverman and Duffie, but Duffie’s secretary, Ann Clinch, and six others who were not members of the board. The bishop called the meeting to order. There is no mention in the minutes that he began the session with the customary prayer for the Lord’s guidance. Nor were the minutes of the board’s last meeting (October 31, 1960) presented for discussion and approval. Furthermore, the members were informed that the president’s secretary rather than the university’s and the board’s official secretary, Fr. Henry McGrath, although he was present, would be recording the minutes.

The bishop announced that this was the board's annual meeting for 1962, which had been postponed from May. There was no mention of the fact that no "annual" meeting had been held in 1961 and, even more startlingly, no mention that St. Thomas in that time had a new president, namely Msgr. Donald Duffie. The bishop made a few comments about the Ecumenical Council, then presented the board with the proposal to appoint six new members—the six non-members present at the meeting.

In the past, appointees to the board were nominated and elected at one meeting and invited to take their seats at the next. The bishop suggested that, owing to the urgency of the business before them, there was no time to follow usual procedure. He presented the new nominees: Msgr. Francis A. Cronin, vicar-general of the diocese of Saint John; Msgr. Joseph Gallagher, chancellor of the diocese of Saint John; Msgr. Charles T. Boyd, of St. Dunstan's Church in Fredericton and host of the meeting; Henry E. Ryan, a lawyer from Saint John whom Duffie had recently appointed solicitor for the university; Frank. J. Lenihan, a chartered accountant from Bathurst; and Hugh McElligott, from Saint John.

The nominees had obviously been chosen to ensure support for Leverman and Duffie and to endorse the recommendations of the Deutsch Commission.

Yet they were eminent members of the Roman Catholic community. Speaking against them in their presence would have been highly embarrassing. Caught off guard, and no doubt hoping at least to balance opinion, the older board members could only make some additional nominations. Without those nominees being present, however, and lacking evidence that they had agreed to their nomination, the nominators had to agree to Duffie's suggestion that membership for them would be "conditional" until invitations came "from the Bishop" and until their agreement was secured. Besides, said Duffie, he would be nominating three more persons from the North Shore, although for the moment—because they did not wish to become involved in the present controversy—he could not reveal their names. The bishop then put to a vote the official appointment of his six nominees present in the room, and the

motion carried. The new members took their seats at the table, and Leverman introduced the matter of the day: the transfer of St. Thomas to the UNB campus, indicating that the issue needed to be addressed immediately. Old members remonstrated. Edward Carten spoke against the move, as did Robert Martin. New member Grannan supported the decision “made by those people who are closest to the situation, by people who have the moral responsibility,” meaning Leverman and Duffie. Old member Thomas Troy, a magistrate from Campbellton, spoke against the move. New member Ryan introduced a motion to support the bishop in accepting the commission’s recommendation. It was seconded by new member Boyd. Old member Martin proposed an amendment requiring the board to take six months to study the situation. Old member Fr. Bernard Broderick seconded Martin’s amendment.

As the meeting heated up, the lawyers took over. Duffie said Martin’s proposed amendment was a “new contradictory motion” and, according to parliamentary rules of order, could not be considered an amendment. (He neglected to mention that, according to those same rules of order, motions of substance had to be given forty-eight hours’ notice.) Carten, however, was up to Duffie’s legalities. He argued that Martin’s amendment could be considered a new motion, and, as it was a dilatory motion of privilege that sought to delay the first motion, it took precedence over it.

Duffie, caught out, tried to stall for time. He said there were “a few errors” in the financial report; in fact the university was on the verge of bankruptcy, so the move to Fredericton was financially necessary. McGrath disagreed with Duffie’s statement. Carten asked the bishop as chair to keep the discussion to the motion at hand. Troy seconded Carten’s motion. Duffie, in trouble, claimed that the motion was in essence a “non-confidence motion” in the bishop. Broderick said he did not like “the implication” from Duffie that “by following one’s conscience one shows himself as not showing confidence in the bishop.” Leverman, perhaps afraid of losing complete control of the meeting, announced that everyone was free to follow his conscience. He then called for a vote on the motion to delay. It was defeated 8–5, all new members voting against. He then called for a vote on Ryan’s motion

of support for himself and the Deutsch Commission recommendations. It passed. Much relieved, Duffie suggested that in order to give maximum assurance to the government, the board should make the affirmative vote unanimous. The bishop put his suggestion to a vote, but that was too much even for his supporters, and it failed.

Mopping Up

Duffie wasted no time. The next day, September 22, he had his secretary, Ann Clinch, type up the favourable resolution in support of the Deutsch Commission recommendations as extracted from the minutes. He sent copies to Leverman along with explicit instructions:

Here are several copies of the minutes of yesterday's meeting. I have placed the places for signature only on the original, but there should be two or three copies signed. First of all, have Henry Ryan look at them and see that everything is legally correct. Secondly, have two or three copies typed and sign them yourself. Have Msgr. Cronin and Msgr. Gallagher and Henry Ryan sign then send it to me and I will sign it and Miss Clinch will sign it. You will have to write to Fr. McGrath and tell him that he is to sign it. He will sign it in his office or my office, and I will send you back the copies with the exception of one which I will keep on file here. There should be one on file in the Chancery Office for safe-keeping. I don't want the minutes taken out of the building or distributed to different persons in the building. And I think to be safe Fr. McGrath should sign it, as he has signed all previous minutes.

The typed resolution from the board meeting contained places for signatures over only seven names: Leverman, Duffie, Cronin, Gallagher, McGrath, Ryan, and Clinch. Missing were those who had voted against the resolution, excepting only McGrath. As Duffie indicated in his letter to Leverman, he thought McGrath might be a problem, but he would deal with it. Copies of the signed resolution would be sent to Premier Robichaud, Minister Irwin, and President Mackay.

Leverman was preparing for another visit to Rome. Duffie added at the bottom of his letter, "The minutes should be signed right away, so that all will be cleared up before you go." Leverman did as he was told; copies signed by himself and three of the other Saint John board members—Cronin, Ryan, and Gallagher—were sent back to Duffie five days later.

Mackay was pleased with what Leverman and Duffie had done. He told the bishop it would be good news for the premier and his cabinet, and the recommendation now would surely receive their go-ahead, since the government now could claim they were not forcing St. Thomas to move. The decision was made by the bishop and the university's board.

Unexpected Setbacks

Things did not go as smoothly as Leverman and Duffie had hoped. The Friends of St. Thomas organized a rally in Chatham for Sunday, September 23, two days after the board meeting in Fredericton. According to the newspapers, more than 1,500 people attended. Robert Martin spoke about what had happened in Fredericton, and there was unanimous approval to send a resolution to the government protesting the removal of St. Thomas to Fredericton.

A few days later, Leverman wrote Ritchie to inform him that “unfortunately, and unexpectedly, the problem of the transfer of St. Thomas [has] turned into a political foot-ball.”

He had expected normal difficulties, but “not such vehement public and even bitter controversy.” He poured his heart out to Ritchie about the stressful board meeting of September 21, which he allowed Duffie to manage but which nevertheless created problems. Attempting to justify his actions at St. Thomas since 1959 when it was brought into his care in the Saint John diocese, he wrote, somewhat confusingly:

The set-up at St. Thomas in respect to many things was not up to my liking nor to the necessary requirements for such an institution, e.g. Board of Governors. I knew it would take time to create a proper instrument for the right running of things.

He seems to be telling Ritchie here that he wished St. Thomas had never been given a board, that the old way of running things under bishop and rector was better. Ritchie, an experienced corporate lawyer, must have wondered what Leverman had in mind by “proper instrument.” How was a board packed with supporters, as he had advised and as Duffie had so adroitly managed, not a proper instrument? The

bishop continued his self-exculpatory exposition as follows:

You see I started from almost nothing in regards to a properly constituted University and in the meantime I had many necessary and practical details to deal with. Irrespective of tradition and accomplishment, I had a long, arduous task ahead of me and so much was expected in a short time. After all, it is only three years or more since I took over. Had they put behind the College the efforts they have made the past few weeks, nobody would dare touch the place today.

It is unclear what Leverman meant by the last sentence. Did he mean that he had changed his mind about the wisdom of moving St. Thomas to UNB, that if it had been in better shape it might well have stayed in Chatham and that neither the government nor UNB would then have dared to think of moving it? If so, Ritchie (and Duffie, too, had he known) must have shuddered at the implication that their general was having second thoughts about the whole campaign.

Leverman went on to tell Ritchie that he could treat the question only “as an educational one” and could not get “involved in the political implications, although they are there.” That “is not my problem,” he declared, rather ambiguously. Referring again to the difficulties he was having with the board, he remarked somewhat cruelly that some of its members had been on it since he annexed the area to his diocese, although “time is eliminating them,” for which he was “not sorry, for they are only a restraint to progress and growth.” Leverman said there was talk about keeping a junior college in Chatham if St. Thomas moved, although he wondered if anyone would support it. “With its limited potential,” the diocese could hardly support it at the same time it was building up an institution on UNB’s campus,

especially with a junior college in Saint John. All that would do would be to establish another college and if they did that it might be as well to leave the present situation as it is since there would be the problem of finding staff.

He concluded by telling Ritchie that the problem was highly complicated, and that it might be best now to wait to see what the government was prepared to do. Ritchie must have shaken his head. It explains why, as we shall see, he shortly thereafter turned to Duffie as the recipient of his advice in the campaign.

To complicate matters further for Duffie and Leverman, Fr. Henry McGrath, the board's official secretary, refused to sign the minutes. In a letter to Leverman dated October 1, 1962, McGrath said he was returning the three copies unsigned. He said he hoped the bishop would understand his position. He was not trying to be "disobedient or showing disregard for authority," but for him it was a matter of conscience—and the bishop said at the meeting one should follow one's conscience. McGrath pointed out that he was technically the board's secretary. In the past he was the one who sent out notices of meetings, took minutes, and entered them in the minute book. For the September 21 meeting, however, he did none of those things, nor was he asked to. He was not given the minute book, nor was he asked to read the minutes of the previous meeting. In fact, the minutes of that meeting were not read at all. As a result, he could not sign the minutes, especially since the space for his signature indicated that he was signing as the board's secretary. Furthermore, he pointed out that he did "not think the minutes as written conveyed a true impression of the feeling of the meeting, also many pertinent points are omitted." He felt that comments of Carten, Martin, and Troy were not fairly reported. They stressed the point that "they were not challenging the authority of the Bishop, but had been voicing their opposition to the Commission's report, advocating the closing of St. Thomas as a small Catholic college in a completely Catholic environment." McGrath also objected to the misrepresentation of other comments made at the meeting. He wrote that he could say more, but given what he had said, he felt the bishop would agree that he should not sign the minutes.

Leverman was furious. On October 6 he wrote McGrath to inform him that

on receipt of this letter you are hereby relieved of your duties as Secretary of the Board of Governors of St. Thomas University. This is official and definitive. You will hand over to the President of the university all documents that you may possess relating to your former position as Secretary. I cannot have your poor conscience tortured and agonized like this.

“I Have Been Too Good to Them”

Leverman had little sympathy for St. Thomas's friends on the Miramichi who were trying to save their college, even less for the priests who supported them. On the same day he wrote McGrath dismissing him as secretary of the board (he knew he did not have authority to remove him from the board entirely), he wrote McFadden, the erstwhile rector, Duffie's predecessor. The letter was very odd. Leverman seemed both to accuse McFadden of leading the opposition to the bishop and to ask his forgiveness for what he had done to St. Thomas, saying:

I think it is now come to the knowledge of the Clergy, I shall never 'eat their bread nor taste their salt' till there is positive evidence of loyalty, fidelity and obedience to the Bishop of this Diocese.

He would do his duty but had "no heart any longer in that area." The people had not supported him, so perhaps the area did not need a bishop at all. He was angry at the negative attitude of some priests "who had sat on the fence." He was preparing for a visit to Rome where "the Holy Father is striving to unite the peoples of the Christian worlds." (Leverman was referring to the imminent Vatican II, initiated by Pope John XXIII.) "But," he continued, "I shall be leaving behind me one of the saddest and [most] tragic things a Bishop and the Church can have, a divided Diocese, sectionalism." He could not understand what had happened to those "good priests and people"; he could not imagine men like Robert Martin, Paul Lordon, and Charlie Van Horne "speaking for the people."

The following day, October 7, on the eve of his departure for Rome, Leverman wrote an equally aggrieved letter, this time to a more sympathetic audience. The recipient was Archbishop Sebastiano Baggio, the Pope's representative in Canada; Baggio was the apostolic delegate from 1959 to 1964 and perforce became involved in the struggle over St. Thomas. The bishop wrote that he was not as concerned about the problem of re-establishing the college on the UNB campus as he was "about a spiritual condition, an attitude of mind, a deep-rooted spirit, which the incident has occasioned." Moving the college was only a problem of organization and effort. The real problem for him was "lack of loyalty and obedience on the part of the Clergy and the people, of course." He went on to describe

the problems that had developed in the Miramichi area that went back to the time of Bishop Chiasson, “who left the place quietly one night, went to Bathurst and never returned. The See was transferred to that City.” His successor, LeBlanc, who agreed to the division of the diocese attaching the Miramichi area to the diocese of Saint John, had recently told Leverman, quote:

I could never satisfy the priests of the Miramichi. They got rid of Rectors and the word is now, and I have no reason to disbelieve it, they will get rid of you and Duffie, Rector of the College. In the light of previous history, they are quite capable of trying.

Leverman informed Baggio that he had told the dean of the district that “they got rid of two Bishops but they were not going to get rid of me, at least not in the same way. I have been too good to them.” Those priests’ “spirit of independence,” which he perceived from the very beginning, was “habitual and persistent,” he complained. The clergy were simply reluctant to accept the decision of the bishop, and their attitude influenced the laity. When the Deutsch Commission’s report was published, “the opposition started in earnest.” There had been organizations, meetings, conferences, and “even priests [speaking] from the pulpit” without his knowledge or authorization. He sent “a solemn letter to the Clergy forbidding them to discuss [or] organize further.” Nevertheless, “this did not stop this stubborn, arrogant crowd, the College Alumni Meeting. This was a disgrace.” He warned the alumni director—none other than Fr. Henry McGrath—not to hold the meeting. It was after this meeting that he “saw real trouble ahead.” He held a meeting for all the clergy in the area, including the St. Thomas faculty, but, he complained bitterly, “no one had stood up in favour of the Bishop. Not a man. There were some who could not speak, some who did not have the courage, and the rest would not.” He was amazed to see men who agreed with him that the move should be made who “stood or sat on the fence.” The bishop apparently was looked upon as “an outsider, a foreigner, an immigrant.” He felt the people from that area had the same type of relations with the government:

They tell the Government what to do and are uncompromising. The Premier said they are the most unreasonable people he ever encountered. The normal problems are difficult enough but they took the whole affair and made it a political foot-ball.

The premier told him, he informed Baggio, that what was going on was nothing short of a “rebellion against the Church.” In contrast, the original part of his diocese (Saint John) reacted favourably.

Nothing was said there against the move.

The bishop was not done with relating to the apostolic delegate his litany of injustices and insubordination. He wrote how “the laity” on the Miramichi had organized another rally, which they claimed was attended by some two thousand. In a shocking display of independence, they discussed the educational and diocesan problem “and not favourably.” Leverman sent word to Chatham the night before the rally took place that

my subjects should not attend. Strange. And Chatham which is the core of this problem is more than 70 percent Catholic. Something has gone wrong and it goes far back. They have been left alone for too long and have governed themselves.

The people, he believed, were not necessarily against him personally, since everything they were fighting for now was what he had put there

with the help of God and assistance of many. In a word, I gave them more progress than they had for twenty-five or thirty years. At present, all to no avail. We shall lose everything should they succeed in stopping the move to UNB.

Leverman was afraid the government might implement only part of the program set out in the commission’s report, and that the St. Thomas part would be left for further study “in order to get more time.” He begged Baggio for advice and counsel:

Because of the public affair, now both people and Clergy must realize, in some fashion, that they have a Bishop and that they are not going to do what they please with him. How to do this, I am at a loss. A lesson is needed. If this is not done, it will spring up again in another fashion. It has gone on too long.

Reverses

Leverman left for Rome on October 11, 1962—the very day Vatican II opened—before receiving Baggio’s response. Meanwhile, his and Duffie’s plan of action was starting to unravel. Ritchie, writing

Duffie on September 28, a few days after the Friends of St. Thomas rally in Chatham, pointed out that because two members of the St. Thomas board had been successful “in throwing into the political field” the St. Thomas recommendations of the Deutsch Commission, he very much doubted that “the provincial government will have the courage to implement them.” He based this judgment on his experience “in practical politics.” He told Duffie that if he “to any degree” shared his doubt,

immediate consideration should be given to the question of whether there is any sound ground for compromise acceptable to all concerned and to all others who have projected themselves into the picture....The Friends will be satisfied with nothing less than having their own way, regardless of what the result may be. Logic is not included in their mental processes. Their platform utterances remind me of a comment on a brief made by Chief Justice Tritschler of Manitoba. He said it was “incoherently illogical.”...A small group of rabble-rousers appear to have succeeded in securing the support of a multitude lacking any knowledge of what 1962 standards demand a university should be and what capital and operating costs are involved in meeting those standards. Should an attempt not be made to impart that knowledge to them?

As to the practical tasks facing Duffie, Ritchie advised:

You no doubt are aware that ridiculous calumnies concerning you, not all originating with laymen, are emanating from the Miramichi Valley. You may have to undertake a drastic housecleaning of your faculty. The Bishop may have to undertake a similar chore in the parishes. The situation is not a nice one and not one that time, alone, will heal.

Duffie, aware that his campaign was faltering and pleased to have Ritchie’s support, responded on October 9 that he would follow his suggestions, even though he had made such attempts in the past. He informed Ritchie that immediately after the publication of the Deutsch Commission report he issued a “two-paged mimeographed sheet with a number of facts included thereon. However, to this date not too many have been willing to listen to facts.” Duffie felt that some people were having second thoughts, but that it was going to be

a long, hard fight, because those who do favour the move from Chatham to Fredericton are afraid to speak out and haven’t yet found a leader with the courage to oppose some of the politicians and mavericks and even some otherwise ordinary, reasonable people.

He went on to assure Ritchie:

There will be no compromise. I think with you that there will be a delay; but I am certain that I have been able to marshal enough support and resources to move in any case. There is only one

danger, and that is that those who favour the move may become momentarily discouraged if there is some delay in the move; but I can assure you that any apparent delay will be merely apparent. I think I can say that we will be in Fredericton within at the most a very few months of the original timetable.

Sounding more like a military leader than a scholarly man of the cloth, he concluded:

Our support is solid in Moncton, Sussex, Norton, Saint John, the border towns, Fredericton, Grand Falls, Bathurst and Dalhousie. There may be a slight pocket of resistance in Campbellton where Magistrate Troy is very much opposed to the move, and where Van Horne still has a little following. I know you will have confidence that we can make the move and that you will quash any attempts of anyone to try a compromise solution. There is just no compromise possible. P.S. By the way, you know you are being loudly damned as one of the instigators of this move.

Meanwhile, in October 1962, articles were appearing in provincial newspapers about successful affiliations of other Catholic colleges at other Canadian universities. Many on the Miramichi remained unconvinced. Some Friends of St. Thomas, led by Robert Martin, J. P. McCluskey, and James Doyle, held a meeting. Attendees were told that “a prominent Maritime university,” meaning UNB, was contemplating establishing a junior college on the Miramichi to replace St. Thomas. The Friends asked the Catholic Church to declare the Miramichi a separate diocese, removed from the Saint John diocese, which would allow a new, more sympathetic bishop (and president) to run St. Thomas’s affairs and maintain its Miramichi heritage. Many letters to the editor about St. Thomas were also appearing in the daily and weekly newspapers in Chatham, Newcastle, Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton. Most argued against the move.

New Recruits

Ritchie, an old army man, was obviously delighted to be included in the deliberations of HQ, especially given the disappointing leadership of their general, the bishop. He responded to Duffie on October 25, 1962: “Being credited, or blamed, and damned for results I have had no remote part in producing is not a new experience for me....It is something new, however, to be held responsible for recommendations submitted by a Royal Commission.” He wondered if he was also being accused of influencing the

appointment of the commission. He said that blame there should be laid at the door of Ernie Whitebone, one of the sponsors of the group who wanted a college in Saint John. Ritchie also felt the government would

place responsibility for setting up the Commission on the demands of the denominational universities for financial grants commensurate with those made to UNB. I am in good company. As co-defendants I have Bishop Leverman, you, Lord Beaverbrook and Ken Irving. The irony of the charges leveled against the last named is that he favours St. Thomas remaining in Chatham. He admits his is a "North Shore Community" viewpoint and not that of an educationalist.

Ritchie declared his interest in St. Thomas went back as far as the Basilians in the early years of the century. His recollection was hazy, but he seemed to remember that

the Basilians checked out after they told Bishop Barry it was just hopeless to attempt to develop a college at Chatham and he spurned their recommendation that St. Thomas be moved to Fredericton and raised to the status of a college affiliated with UNB. The official record probably shows some other reason for the Basilian withdrawal but there must be some foundation for my recollection. I did not pluck it off the branch of a tree.

Ritchie's recollections were indeed hazy. The Basilians never recommended moving St. Thomas to Fredericton; Bishop Barry died in 1920; the Basilians did not leave Chatham until 1923, and that was because Bishop Chiasson was unable to pay them what they wanted. Nevertheless, Ritchie had a tale to tell and a point to make. Once started there was no stopping him. He told Duffie that when legislation was passed in 1934 raising St. Thomas to university status, his only reaction was disappointment that the name was not changed from St. Thomas College to St. Thomas University. (The change of name was made official only in 1960.) At meetings of the council of the Barristers' Society over the years, he heard "derogatory remarks" about the academic standards at St. Thomas and if a St. Thomas BA degree was creditable. It was apparent to him that the "principal reason motivating acceptance of the degree was to avoid being accused of bigotry." He mentioned Mackay's interest in moving St. Thomas to Fredericton in the late 1950s and of his having secured his senate's approval for the move. His impression at that time was that McFadden himself felt it was "hopeless to carry on at Chatham" and

that a move to Fredericton was the “only solution” to their problems. Leonard O’Brien in 1957 “or thereabouts” also told him that Bishop LeBlanc favoured such a move and that the board approved it, although when the faculty subsequently expressed opposition, Leverman let the matter drop. He suggested that Duffie should check into that with the bishop.

In the same lengthy letter, Ritchie informed Duffie that after Chatham was brought into the Saint John diocese, he urged the bishop to “go slow” in committing himself to any policy concerning the future of St. Thomas. He further advised the bishop to make a thorough examination of the affiliations made by Catholic colleges like St. Michael’s, St. Paul’s, St. Mark’s, and St. Thomas More. But, complained Ritchie, his suggestions and recommendations had been “brushed aside peremptorily.” The bishop informed him that “affiliation agreements might be suitable for ‘pioneer provinces’ in the west but were completely impractical in an old province like New Brunswick.”

Ritchie informed Duffie that the bishop had subjected him to a long lecture on Catholic education and a discourse on what a tremendous mistake it would have been for Saint Mary’s to affiliate with Dalhousie University.

During the course of this lecture I managed to interject remarks that the University of British Columbia did not look like a pioneer institution and that my Halifax friends thought [that a] tremendous mistake had been made in not affiliating Saint Mary’s with Dalhousie.

“During pauses for breath,” Ritchie asked a number of questions, only to discover that he was “more familiar with some aspects of Catholic education than was the lecturer.” As a result it occurred to him that “there was very little difference between the thinking of the Bishop of Chatham in 1923 and that of the Bishop of Saint John in 1958.” Ritchie wondered why, barely four years later, after “the expenditure of more dollars than the Diocese could afford,” Bishop Leverman appeared to accept “without any reservation” the recommendations of the Deutsch Commission.

What Ritchie did not know was that an agreement of affiliation between UNB and St. Thomas had been signed a year earlier, but not yet made public.

New Strategies

Ritchie continued his strategic advice to Duffie. In order to counter the activities of the “Friends,” Duffie needed to impress on them “the present deficiencies” of St. Thomas and what it would cost to remedy them. He thought a comparison of St. Thomas’s faculty salary scales with those of UNB ought also be of interest to them. He heard that St. Thomas could not meet the standards for membership in the Federation of Canadian Universities and Colleges. He felt the Deutsch Commission “glossed over” the deficiencies of St. Thomas, but exposing them to the public “might rock some of the Friends.” He warned Duffie:

Do not discount Paul Lordon and Charlie Van Horne. They are rabble-rousers par excellence and neither rarely, if ever, admits he has been wrong. They will not let go of this issue so long as they have a following. They are talking to a Northumberland County mentality that has been warped by a chronically depressed economy.

Ritchie pointed out to Duffie another possible avenue of attack, which would be to bring a Catholic teaching order to New Brunswick to “set up shop” in Fredericton at UNB, presumably as a way to provide an opening for St. Thomas teachers on campus. He mentioned Leverman’s earlier remarks that he, the bishop, did not think the diocese could afford to support junior colleges in both Chatham and Saint John, once St. Thomas had affiliated with and was being established at UNB. Ritchie told Duffie he suggested to the bishop that a teaching order might help solve Leverman’s problems, but the bishop seemed opposed to bringing in a teaching order, on the grounds that vocations would be lost to them. Ritchie, however, did not share the bishop’s fears. He believed the majority of vocations “are formed in the home, prior to university age,” so the bishop was worrying needlessly. He hoped that when Leverman returned from the Ecumenical Council in Rome “his allergy to teaching orders” might have disappeared.

Whatever Duffie did, advised Ritchie (reversing his advice of a month earlier), he must avoid

being forced to compromise. There was a real worry that the provincial government might decline to give them financial assistance to implement the recommendations of the commission completely. They might instead “offer to assist in working out some compromise scheme that will douse the political fire in Northumberland.” The diocese surely would not have the resources to move St. Thomas without the assistance of the government.

Finally, wrote Ritchie, Duffie should attend to the qualifications of his faculty. A number of years earlier he had read that

the average Catholic priest or Protestant minister was not a well educated man; that his education lacked breadth in that it was directed almost wholly along theological paths. I immediately thought of the secular clergy on the St. Thomas faculty, realized the age of specialization had engulfed the clerical as well as the other professions and wondered whether the majority of your clerical professors should not be alleviating the shortage of priests at the parochial level.

This was unfair. Throughout the 1950s, St. Thomas, under the direction of Bishop LeBlanc and Rector McFadden, had already taken measures to upgrade the qualifications of its teachers. And Duffie himself was highly sensitive to the importance of academic qualifications in postsecondary education. Writing to the bishop in 1959 as an outside observer, he may have implied that he too thought academic standards at St. Thomas were lax when he said “the standards must be right and the reputation untarnished by anything of a deprecatory nature in the educational set-up.” Now in 1962 he was happy to boast of the academic accomplishments of his faculty and was doing everything possible to improve their standing. As we saw in his president’s report the previous spring—the requiem for St. Thomas in Chatham—he bragged about the number of new degrees appearing among faculty. Among the teaching priests who had recently earned degrees were Fr. Edward Troy with a PhD in philosophy from Louvain University, Fr. Winfield Poole with an MA in mathematics from Fordham, and Vincent Donovan with an MA in classics, also from Fordham. Fr. Walsh was presently enrolled in the MA history program at Fordham, although he was not on leave; Fr. Edmund Casey was on leave, working on his PhD in

sociology at St. Louis University. Among the new young lay Catholic scholars were the Australian Augustinian scholar, Leo Ferrari, PhD in philosophy from Laval, whom Duffie had brought with him in 1961 from Mount St. Vincent University; and John Brander, MA in economics from Queen's University.

Recently, in the summer of 1962, Duffie assured another promising lay Catholic scholar, Frank Cronin, of a position teaching philosophy as soon as he obtained his doctorate. Having completed his MA at Fordham and knowing about the recent inclusion of Chatham and St. Thomas within the Saint John diocese, and furthermore having heard about the recommendations of the Deutsch Commission, Cronin asked Duffie if there might be a job for him if he were to return to Fordham to work on a PhD. Cronin was well connected. His uncle was Msgr. Francis Cronin from Saint John (member of the St. Thomas board as of September 21, 1962) and his brother's father-in-law was Justice Ritchie. As we have seen, both were instrumental in supporting Duffie's efforts to move St. Thomas to Fredericton. Duffie seized the opportunity and said yes. (True to his word, in the fall of 1966 he hired Cronin, who had by then completed all the course requirements for his doctorate, to teach philosophy.)

Duffie would demonstrate a steadfast concern for the academic qualifications of faculty throughout his thirteen-year tenure as St. Thomas's president.

Reassessing the Battlefield

As Ritchie surmised, the government was having difficulty making up its mind whether or not to accept all the recommendations of the Deutsch Commission. On October 19, a week before he received Ritchie's last letter, Duffie sent a lengthy report to Leverman in Rome, summarizing all that had gone on recently regarding St. Thomas. Two days earlier he had a call from his brother William telling him that the cabinet had agreed to implement the findings of the commission, "except for St. Thomas, which would be decided within one year." They would give the universities the money recommended,

“less the \$750,000 for St. Thomas, but we will honour our agreement. (This of course, will not be stated anywhere in print.)” William Duffie said the premier was concerned about the opposition on the Miramichi and was not willing to risk losing the four seats held by the Liberals in Northumberland County. Approval of the recommendation to move St. Thomas would have to wait until things calmed down on the Miramichi. Duffie received the news officially on October 18. The premier wrote that his government was giving, in Robichaud’s words,

careful and extensive consideration to the report of the royal commission both in the Executive Council and the Treasury Board, especially the financial considerations of implementing the report’s recommendations and the long-term implications in providing the structure required for higher education in the future. Accordingly, I felt that I should immediately advise you of the decisions which the Government has reached in regard to the Commission’s report. You will recall that that the Report of the Commission was most emphatic in stressing that alterations to the existing structure of higher education were imperative if future needs are to be met at reasonable cost. It further specified that such alterations should be a prerequisite to any further expenditure of public funds. The Government concurs with this view and with the Report’s recommendations which are related to it. It is, therefore, on this basis that additional Government financial support will be made available.

Duffie’s analysis was as follows:

The only conclusion I can arrive at is that the Government has committed itself fully to the structure proposed by the Royal Commission on Higher Education, and that St. Thomas will receive no monies from the Government as long as it remains in Chatham. In other words, every financial consideration forces St. Thomas to be in Fredericton.

He forwarded a copy of the premier’s letter to Msgr. Cronin in Saint John, with instructions to keep it in the archives since they didn’t have facilities in Chatham “for guaranteeing the safety of anything, and this is a letter we may need in the future.” Meanwhile, wrote Duffie, he was redoubling his proselytizing efforts. He told the bishop he was doing a lot of travelling around the district, talking to influential people, collecting information about those still opposed to the move, trying to win them over, although with limited success. One businessman in Chatham told him that neither he nor the bishop could do much by themselves. The priests had to come around first “and get into the pulpits and do some talking.” He was also told that a number of people were afraid to say anything “for fear they

would be against Fr. McFadden.” He asked Leverman for “written authorization” as the bishop’s delegate “to talk in the parish churches in the area.” If he could just get into the churches and talk to the parishioners with the bishop’s imprimatur he could “get a lot of facts across to the people that they don’t know about.” As far as he could ascertain, people in the Bathurst area “with the exception of three people” were in favour of the move. He met with a small group from the Holy Name Society in Loggieville to answer their questions, and he thought “they were quite satisfied.” He met a man who had been part of a delegation to Fredericton to oppose the move and who “was very sad about the whole affair,” claiming to have been “forced into it and then double-crossed by the Conservatives.” “The great difficulty,” Duffie wrote Leverman—which would have come as no surprise to the latter—“was the priests [who have been] speaking against the move....The number of priests that are opposed to it [have] left the thing so confused that the people [do] not know whether to follow authority or numbers.” As for the faculty at St. Thomas, Duffie admitted he was having difficulty with some of them, too. “There are four priests and one lay faculty member,” he complained, “who still pay little or no attention to me at meals or elsewhere.”

Indeed, Frs. Poole and Troy, about whose academic work Duffie had recently been so proud, were becoming increasingly outspoken against the proposed move to Fredericton and against the president himself, and, as Duffie feared, they were influencing others. As we shall see, Poole’s opposition would become much more serious than simply a cold shoulder at dinner time.

In his October 19 letter to Leverman, Duffie mentioned that one priest was not doing any harm. Furthermore, one lay faculty member told him he would be more than willing to move to Fredericton. Another, however, was presenting difficulties, so Duffie told him his work was unsatisfactory, intending to give him “early notice in January that he will not be here in 1963.” The athletic director, Vance Toner, was also giving Duffie trouble, but he felt he had no choice but to “suffer” him since Toner seemed to have the support of “all Victoria County and Edmundston, including all his relatives,”

even though one of them, Fr. Arnold Toner, who was the superior of the English Canadian Province of the Holy Cross Congregation, supposedly “ordered Vance to get off the pages of the newspaper.” Thus, support among the St. Thomas faculty was unsure.

Matériel for the War Effort

In his long report to Leverman of October 19, 1962— really a legal brief—Duffie included some supporting documentation gleaned from previous board minutes. At a meeting in June 1955, for example, in a discussion of St. Thomas’s difficult financial situation, members had been told that although St. Thomas was the only English-speaking Catholic college in New Brunswick, UNB had more English-speaking Catholic students. Rector McFadden had suggested that perhaps the college was “not fulfilling the function given it by Divine Providence.” In order to improve the situation he had urged the bishop to ask the other bishops of the province to share “the burden of providing Christian education for the English-speaking Catholics of the Province.” Duffie told Leverman these extracts show that “as early as 1955 there was a realization that St. Thomas should look after Catholic university education for all New Brunswick.” Furthermore, the minutes of the August 1957 meeting show that the board agreed “it is possible to have a very satisfactory affiliation [with another university] such as was proposed by Lord Beaverbrook.” Those same minutes also recorded that Bishop LeBlanc “approved of a set-up between St. Thomas and UNB” and, further, that he should “acquire assistance in preparing facilities at Fredericton in the event that the College moves there.” These extracts, Duffie assured Leverman, show that well before the parishes of the Miramichi had been brought into the Saint John diocese, “there was a desire and willingness to move to the University of New Brunswick campus.” Duffie argued that the only reason affiliation had not already happened was that “the money could not be obtained.”

“The New Move in Education”

Duffie went on to review what transpired in the Deutsch Commission with respect to St. Thomas. He reminded Leverman that in the summer of 1961 the commissioners had visited Chatham and invited St. Thomas board members to meet with them, but neither Robert Martin nor Edward Carten had done so, although both were now vocal opponents of the move. He also reminded Leverman of their own private, four-hour meeting with the commission in Montreal where “every possible argument was put forward (more extensive and more reasonable than those later of the ‘Friends of St. Thomas’), to keep St. Thomas in Chatham,” yet afterwards Deutsch told them that “St. Thomas could not continue in future years to exist at all in Chatham.” Duffie also reminded Leverman how, after all the meetings with the commissioners, UNB and St. Thomas had come to a tentative agreement allowing St. Thomas to keep its independence “and extend its scope of influence so as to influence the 427 Catholics at UNB and the 400 to 500 coming into the New Brunswick Teachers’ College to be established on the UNB campus in 1964.” Duffie further reminded the bishop how, when the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities in Rome granted permission for St. Thomas to move to the UNB campus, “it was then understood that the arrangement between UNB and St. Thomas was then in effect.” At that time Duffie was able to produce a copy of the signed (1961) agreement between UNB and St. Thomas, although it had not yet been made public. When the Deutsch Report was finally published in June 1962, claimed Duffie, it had been “universally hailed by all educationalists, not only in New Brunswick, but all the Maritimes and all Canada.” But then “some few persons on the Miramichi” spread rumours that the bishop and the president of St. Thomas were actually against the report, and those persons had formed themselves into the so-called “Friends of St. Thomas.” Although Duffie publicly denied the friends’ statements, and affirmed his and the bishop’s support for the commission’s recommendations, it had little effect. The friends countered by saying the bishop and the president were “off the track.” To demonstrate the church’s support for moving the university, Duffie informed the

press of Rome's permission to affiliate with UNB and transfer St. Thomas to Fredericton. That, Duffie assured Leverman, "met with a wave of good will all over the province.... Catholics everywhere were pleased they were not condemned to second-rate education." Protestants, too, liked the idea. "Indeed," wrote Duffie,

few announcements in the history of New Brunswick have met with such universal acclaim and nothing had ever done more for good will between all religious groups and all language groups. Protestants and French-speaking Catholics also realized the announcement helped promote and raise the standards of education for all New Brunswickers and substantially helped themselves also to improve their lot.

Duffie, for all that he had been accused by his opponents of having a thick skin, demonstrated in the conclusion to his report to Leverman how deeply he had been wounded by the personal attacks on himself. The premier recently told him in his office that he was "being stabbed in the back." A priest in Chatham told him that "they are after me." It was, he confessed to the bishop,

an effort to destroy the reputation which I have attained in the province of New Brunswick as a member of the Diocese of Saint John, and antecedently to this as a member of the New Brunswick Bar, an employee of the Province of New Brunswick, and a newspaper man....At the same time, it is not myself as a person, but myself as a symbol of the new move in education which they are out to destroy.

Secondly, the foregoing mentioned men are agreed that the reason that I am being attacked is that it is too dangerous to attack you...and again I am closer to the scene at Chatham itself.

Every day from all over the Province and from every walk of life I am being asked and encouraged by Catholics and Protestants, French and English, to see the present fight through to the end. It is my intention, always under obedience, to do that, God Willing.

The Battle Wages On

On October 20, 1962, the day after Duffie wrote his report to Leverman, the Liberals held a provincial convention. Some Northumberland representatives thought about introducing a resolution opposing St. Thomas's move, but after discussion declined to do so. That evening the minister of public works announced a five million dollar bridge to cross the Miramichi River at Chatham, to be built over the next two years. Some saw this as an attempt to bribe Miramichiers into letting St. Thomas go.

Government spokesmen argued that it had been in the works for some time. When the Conservatives held their convention a week later, on October 26–27, some members apparently also considered introducing a resolution opposing the move, but in the end did not.

It was clear that the issue was not going to become broadly political, but the premier was still worried about losing support on the Miramichi, having “nothing in writing or on record” to show that St. Thomas was definitely going to Fredericton. As Duffie wrote Leverman on November 2, 1962, the premier

may be able to technically make [this] assertion in view of all the moves and counter-moves. But in any case, he has said very definitely that the Government accepts us as there when we say in writing that we are going to be there.

A number of students from Chatham, he reported to the bishop, joined in the protests against the move, but “they were not talking very much in the last few days.” Some believed it was all over now, although he found it “strange” that the Friends’ supporters still included some faculty members, who had “so convinced themselves that it will take a while for them to even see.” Mackay informed him that he had been told by the premier that the recommendations of the Deutsch Commission regarding St. Thomas had not been turned down by government but had been left open for further consideration, while his efforts to have the Teachers’ College moved to the UNB campus had been assured.

Duffie was uncomfortable with the ambiguities of the situation. He took one of his recent board appointees, Frank Lenihan, who was from Bathurst, to meet with the Knights of Columbus in Dalhousie. Lenihan gave them “facts and figures which seemed to please them.” But Duffie also heard a worrisome rumour that certain people had approached the Vatican: he had “reason to think that a petition was sent secretly by a small group who have been holding meetings and working on the project of keeping St. Thomas in Chatham.” Moreover, he was recently informed by “one of the Government men” that a petition was being circulated in the province “against the Government giving all these monies to Catholic education whether in Chatham or in Fredericton, and I suppose having reference too

to the new University in Moncton.” Still, he reassured the bishop, any serious danger to their plans had passed. The public protests had died down, and it was time to put pressure on the government. If anything unexpected arose, he told Leverman, he would

call Msgr. Cronin and Henry Ryan and Sir Richmond Grannan [Duffie’s Saint John board members], and I will make an immediate announcement that the University authorities, having complete legal jurisdiction over St. Thomas University, will move to Fredericton. In view of the wording of yesterday’s announcement, the Government will be forced to accept us.

The Vatican Gets Involved

Unfortunately for Duffie, a petition to the Vatican against St. Thomas’s removal was more than a rumour. Before he received Duffie’s letter, Leverman in Rome had already received from Baggio in Ottawa a copy of the petition from the Friends of St. Thomas. Baggio requested an explanation from Leverman.

Leverman was well aware that the previous spring the Congregation of Universities and Seminaries approved in principle the plan to move St. Thomas, but the petition and Baggio’s request threw him into a depression. He was in Rome attending the first session of the Vatican Council II, staying at the exclusive Hotel Bernini in Piazza Barberini. Yet he was without his chief advisers when so much was going on back home. His only confidant was Noël Kinsella, the theology and philosophy student from Saint John who had escorted Leverman and Duffie when they visited the Vatican back in January. Kinsella had worked for the bishop the previous summer in Saint John, serving as his driver to, among other places, Chatham on his visits to St. Thomas. Leverman was reluctant to address the Congregation of Universities and Seminaries lest by answering their questions about problems at home, he raised doubts in its members’ minds as to the wisdom of their previous approval to relocate St. Thomas. He did, however, respond to Baggio’s request for his opinion of the petition.

“Really Angry”

In a letter to Baggio from Rome dated November 1, Leverman speculated that the petition was “not completely the work of laymen. Priests are behind it, and I do not think this is a rash judgment.” He said the premier told him that “about fifteen priests are doing underground work.” (How Robichaud would have known that is left unexplained.) Those priests, claimed Leverman, did not sign the petition, since “they are afraid to go against my direction lest it would give the Holy See a clear-cut opportunity to admonish them.” He fumed:

The future may show that they have perpetrated a tragedy for we could lose the College, either if they try to run it alone or even if the whole Diocese tries it. For years they did not support the College. The former Rector showed me a record which showed 25 to 35 dollars a year from the parishes in support of the College. Imagine. They now state that wonderful things have been done, but it is so noticeable they never mention the Bishop as the one inaugurating the program. This is so typical. What is there now is theirs and not the Diocese's. Saint John does not exist for them. This is true. One priest told me, they simply do not care. It is a strange mentality.

Leverman had warned the priests:

They better exercise judgment with regard to the University of New Brunswick and not make whole-sale statements concerning the religious status of that institution. They speak of an atheistic and amoral atmosphere. This is unwise and not true in respect to the whole institute since the University has over four hundred Catholic students including many good Protestants.

Leverman was not surprised, he wrote Baggio, that the petitioners stated “the relationship between the people and their Hierarchy can never be the same. This is the first intimation that they would like to get rid of me as they did my two predecessors.” They gave the diocese very little financial support, complained Leverman, although he got them out of debt with money raised primarily in the rest of the diocese. They gave him no credit for that. He even named the first new building constructed in years on the Chatham campus after Fr. Arthur Scott. This was Leverman's idea: he knew Scott well, and Scott was in favour of moving to Fredericton some years ago. The premier himself told him how unreasonable the Chatham people were. “They despise Mons. Duffie,” he wrote, as opposed to Fr. McFadden, the former rector, “who gave them their own way.” They should be careful what they say

about Duffie, however:

He is not the most tactful man in the world but an excellent priest and highly qualified. The things they bring up are not as serious as they appear. They are determined to get rid of him. How they condemn!

Leverman's pride was most wounded by the petitioners' lack of respect for himself as their bishop: "Everything they are fighting for I gave them the past three years, more than they got over twenty-five years. I took them out of shacks. This is literally true." Here he was undoubtedly referring to the old wartime H-huts originally taken over from the Chatham Air Base and only recently carted away when the new classroom building opened. But now his diatribe became personal. Of the parties who signed the petition,

Not one of them is worthy of consideration. Some are conservatives and are opposed for political reasons. Another is an Athletic Instructor who should have nothing to say since his cousin, the Provincial of the Holy Cross Fathers in Montreal, has sent word that he should be told to keep quiet.

Leverman was in a rage. All these people, he proclaimed, consider themselves responsible for St. Thomas; they do not realize that he, Leverman, is responsible. "Isn't it strange," he asked, that those causing most of the trouble among the priests are not "Miramichers [sic]." They are simply "people who do not want anyone to come in and tell them what to do. They are stubborn and proud. The one thing they are afraid of is what they call excommunication." He was now appealing to the Holy See's representative to impose punishment of some sort: "A stern hand could be exercised. But would that work?" Some of his older priests in Saint John suggested letting those on the Miramichi look after themselves in their own diocese, "since they say they can do it." As a result of it all, he now had "no heart for them." They had embarrassed him and needed "stern administratorship and teaching." He concluded his diatribe to Baggio with a desperate plea: "I need advise [sic] and counsel and the strength of higher authority."

Thus, on November 8 when Leverman answered Duffie's letter of November 2, he told Duffie

that his optimism was unwarranted: "You always have such an optimistic note in your letters that it is difficult to realize a problem exists. And a problem does exist and it is not settled yet." He was "not at liberty just now to say things." (Baggio had asked him not to discuss the petition with anyone else.)

But I can say that we have yet to come to a settlement in respect to those people up there. They are very determined and persistent and can still cause much anxiety. If it were not for the need, if not immediate yet pending relatively soon, one could bear with the situation and time would help gradually. But as long as the College question remains as such there will be trouble. Two people are concerned, you and I, and we are the immediate objects of their protestations.

Like Duffie, Leverman was surprised that the premier said there was no statement on record to show St. Thomas had "a decided policy" on the move. He said he found the "whole thing very trying and it does look like a hopeless impasse. The embarrassment caused is unhappy enough. I just wonder, at times, how it is going to work out." He had received clippings from New Brunswick newspapers saying that a "decision awaited the return of the Bishop." This made him

really angry. What decision? To me the whole thing is clear. We stated publicly that we were going on the campus of UNB and this was done privately and in our meeting, the last one we had in Fredericton. There is nothing to make clearer. The opposition came but there was no change in the decision. It is the Gov. afraid for certain reasons to go beyond what they have decided so far and stated openly. It is very annoying when statements are made concerning [a] decision when the decision was made and clear-cut. And it is on record. The [newspaper] statement "Decision awaits return of Bishop" is a new statement of opposition and it is clear that those people, or some, do not accept the decision of the Bishop.

Until this opposition is removed we are at an impasse. They are telling the Gov. also what to do. They state that the responsibility falls on the Gov. and cannot be assigned to Church or College authorities. This is definite opposition to what the Bishop has expressly decided. I am not going to change that decision unless commanded by the spiritual authorities and not the people up there. If they say it should not be done and I know that they or we together cannot carry the proposition, then they will have to do it themselves for I cannot put our effort into a situation that must fail.

That is why I say we are at an impasse and they are making it more difficult for the Government. They are putting up another stand and forcing the Gov. to say yes or no again to the operating grants. They will push the affair to the limits. They are now against both Church and state, and the state will have to reassert its position. If they go against the Report which they have accepted, then they are in a spot and will have to support St Th. and the College in Saint John.

The situation is uneasy and we must see that we are not forced to take a ball which is not ours. They established the Commission and we stood by it. They state that it is up to the Board of Governors to take the onus. We did already and stated it in the press. What more did they want? But they have everyone over a barrel.

The Gov. is in a spot. There may be yet a need for an independent arbitrator to settle the problem and work out a compromise. I do not know. My mind is they will never be integrated with Saint John and they are not able to handle things alone. Queer. They are now doing with the Gov. what they are doing with us. They are going to run things and everyone must do what they say. It is not easy to see a solution. But the Gov. started it.

The New Buildings at UNB

On November 9, 1962, before receiving Leverman's lengthy November 8 letter, Duffie wrote the bishop to report that he had just returned to Chatham from four days in Fredericton and Saint John. The minister of education, Henry Irwin, had recently announced that the new provincial Teachers' College would be built on the UNB campus in 1963, ready for occupancy in 1964—provided a site could be obtained. This was a potential worry for Duffie: if the teachers' building went up first, it might take the spot he coveted for St. Thomas, the upper southwest corner of the campus. But he assured Leverman the problem was solved. He had spoken to Irwin, who told him that he sent the provincial government's architect, Doug Jonsson, to the United States to talk to the architects of the UNB buildings (Larson & Larson). Irwin told Jonsson that St. Thomas was to have its preferred site on the UNB campus: "The Teachers' College was not to interfere with or prevent the more suitable site for St. Thomas."

It was a close call, at least from an aesthetic point of view. The Teachers' College building, being a provincial rather than a university responsibility, was a Jonsson, not a Larson, creation. It was supposedly a "modernized classical" design, totally unlike the other UNB buildings. Many, including Mackay and Duffie, found it not particularly attractive. Jonsson initially proposed placing the building directly beside St. Thomas, which upset both Duffie and Mackay. They eventually succeeded in having it positioned farther to the east, where it stands today as Marshall d'Avray Hall. The design would indeed be a poor fit for the general architecture of the campus. Furthermore, as the architectural historian John Leroux has remarked, "The building, which has not weathered well, predicted the cheapening of materials that would soon overtake much of the built landscape." Fortunately for the

appearance of the campus, Duffie would hold by his agreement with Mackay to engage Larson & Larson to design the St. Thomas buildings, and in the chosen prominent spot at the top of the UNB campus with a commanding view across the St. John River valley.

At their meeting, reported Duffie, Irwin reaffirmed that the government meant to follow the Deutsch Commission report and that they fully expected St. Thomas “to be going ahead.” Following that meeting Duffie visited Mackay, “who was in somewhat of a state of wonderment at the Premier’s announcement that he had nothing in writing or on record that St. Thomas was coming to the UNB Campus.” Mackay thought everything was agreed. Duffie reassured Mackay that St. Thomas was coming and proceeded to discuss with him its specific needs on the campus. He told Mackay it was imperative to have “sufficient space and room for expansion.” Mackay agreed and wanted to know what exactly they were planning, whereupon Duffie said they needed a men’s residence, a women’s residence, a building for classrooms and faculty offices, another building for administrative offices with some classrooms and “eventually a chapel. And room to expand.” According to Duffie, UNB was willing to lease sufficient space on the southwest portion of the campus to allow for future expansion, although details remained to be worked out. Furthermore, UNB was prepared to clear the land for construction of the Teachers’ College and the St. Thomas buildings in the coming spring, 1963.

Impressing on the bishop the need for prompt action, Duffie informed him that he talked to a number of people and the “unanimous verdict” was that they should start construction in the summer of 1963, even if they put up only classrooms and a residence. To wait any longer would put them into the election year of 1964, and if the government changed hands they would “have to start all over again,” as a new government would “not be likely to have any sympathy with us for stalling on the thing.” Besides, since a Conservative Government “would be principally in the Protestant, English, UNB Section of the Province, those who advocate only a secular University might have great strength.” Duffie told the bishop he met with the Mother General of the Sisters of Charity, who was prepared to

see work begin right away on a women's residence. She expected it to cost at least \$1 million. In fact, they were prepared to put \$1.2 million—if necessary, \$1.5 million—into the UNB campus.

The Bishop Returns to the Field of Battle

Aware that Leverman would soon be back in New Brunswick, Duffie warned him that reporters would be after him for a statement. It was “imperative” that the bishop say nothing until he got caught up with events in New Brunswick. He also cautioned that the opposition was not yet dead. The Friends of St. Thomas had been collecting money, although he didn't know how much or what it was for. He added:

I might as well give you the blunt truth. Paul Lordon told Fr. McKenna that they knew very well that they cannot keep St. Thomas in Chatham, but if they put up enough opposition they may well get a change in Bishop or a new Diocese.

Obviously, wrote Duffie, no compromise was possible. He had no fears as far as the priests were concerned: “All they need is to have their bluff called, but it must be done on an individual basis and not on a mass basis.” He added, “Don't let the problem worry you too much.” An attempt to get the New Brunswick Trustees Association to oppose the move failed. Although the Royal Orange Lodge at Derby, outside Newcastle, agreed to support the Friends, they were, observed Duffie, “a dubious ally.”

A few days later Leverman, still in Rome, heard from his friend Oscar Schneller, the diocese's financial adviser. In a cheery letter dated November 12, Schneller wrote that he sympathized with what it must be like

to be more or less isolated on the Continent with pressing work there, as well as consistently mounting problems of an acute nature at home, not to mention the adjustments to climate, food and such smaller matters as the type of inept portable typewriters which all hotels in Europe seem to have in abundance.

He told Leverman that while he had never been directly involved in this sort of affair, he recalled some French-Irish battles in the Windsor area of the diocese of London, Ontario, where he had seen “ample evidence” of the extent that “some misguided people” would go “in the heat of a controversy.” He also

recalled some difficulties disciplining priests of a particular religious order on the grounds of disobedience. He was reminded at that time by a Provincial “that unlike [in] a business firm, such people could not be fired, and unfortunately there was a law in this country which did not permit drowning.” Schneller assured Leverman he had “made his position clear cut throughout” and that he would remain the bishop of Saint John

with or without the Miramichi. If that area is determined to keep its glorified high school then it naturally follows that they must maintain it financially without any help from the Chancery, or even any permission to solicit contributions outside.

From what he could gather at a distance, Schneller thought

Duffie was the man in the right place at the right time. A tactful man with the type of underground work that apparently has been going on would undoubtedly have got the Bishop into real hot water by this time.

He would be “inclined to discount” the influence of provincial politicians opposed to the move, even if they could control the four local MLAs. He doubted that any party “would be fool enough to touch that hot poker once the real powerful interests in UNB, acting as they are on the recommendation of the Commission, are brought into play.” He wondered if it would be possible to start a small Catholic college on the campus of UNB “and simply ignore St. Thomas entirely.”

Schneller concluded by reiterating that even though Leverman was a little depressed, he should remember he was the bishop of Saint John “with a record of performance which in my opinion will defy the best efforts of this volatile group.” He should not be too concerned:

“The next move is up to them and the way they are going it is only natural that they will become more indiscreet as they go along.”

Meanwhile, Duffie was keeping Leverman well informed. Responding to Leverman’s letter of November 8 in which the bishop accused him of being overly optimistic, Duffie agreed: “I am much more optimistic than you are. More and more individuals are seeing the light.” If they were to compromise now, he continued, they would lose the respect of all New Brunswickers. In politics, one

had to live with reality. He found the reaction to the premier's statement (that there was nothing "in writing or on record" that St. Thomas was definitely going to Fredericton) surprising. To his mind, the only people who did not understand the situation were the academics:

A lot of ordinary people, and I would say the vast majority, thought his decision was wonderful. A garageman with not too much formal education said to me in Bathurst yesterday "That Louis [Robichaud], he's smart. He got rid of taking the responsibility and he left you free to do what you want to do, and that is only right. After all, you own the College, and a man should be able to do with his own property what he wants."

Duffie understood that if the premier made a "vehement statement accepting the thing," it would only have started another controversy, one the newspapers would love to keep going. The best solution was "to stay completely out of the newspapers if possible, make the agreement with the University of New Brunswick, and keep going." The government was committed to giving them the money to build in Fredericton. The education minister told him that as soon as St. Thomas moved out of the college in Chatham, the department would move in, as the government had "given its blessing for a technical school."

Leverman answered Duffie that there was no sense going over things because he would be home soon, early in December. He was feeling more positive and had no intention of yielding to the opposition. "Unless," he wrote, in typical indecision, "a compromise is necessary." For example—picking up on Schneller's offhand suggestion—it had been suggested to him that perhaps they should start "in a small way" on the UNB campus and "gradually build it up." He asked Duffie:

Why not a community, and with some of our own men and some good laymen? I have a sneaking feeling that the material at STU is not good university material. The present estrangement and their opposition to you and me is not going to smooth out by even a change. I can see that their policy (if one can call it that) is not in harmony with mine and yours.

All Quiet on the Northern Front

Duffie, of course, would have no part of the bishop's indecision. On November 23 he wrote one more

letter to Leverman in Rome. He told him things seemed to be settling down. Newcastle was quiet. There was still some agitation in Nelson, and Chatham “still had its agitators, but they are gone underground.” He had heard that the Friends had raised some \$2,000. No one knew what it was for, although there was talk of sending someone to Rome. He heard there was a petition requesting the creation of a new diocese for the Miramichi, but he had not been able to verify it. He was “unable to find anyone who thinks that there is any hope of that happening.” Duffie continued:

It becomes more evident every day, both from the educational and financial aspects and not forgetting at all the very definite indications which we have of future trends in education, that we can survive only in Fredericton either financially or educationally. Every responsible person in New Brunswick knows that, and of course what is most important is there can be no Catholic university in Fredericton or no St. Thomas in the UNB Junior College in Saint John unless we give up St. Thomas in Chatham. In other very plain words, unless St. Thomas moves to Fredericton, it is not [only] St. Thomas that ceases to exist in New Brunswick, but it is all Catholic university education except for whatever can be done in the way of a Newman Club. So as I see it, nobody has any choice. Or if you want to say there is a choice, then the choice is between moving and closing up all English-speaking Catholic university education in New Brunswick. It is just that plain.

The Costs of Becoming Modern

Duffie was concerned at the apparently haphazard, or at least unbusinesslike, way the university was run. In the same letter of November 23, he told Leverman that in Fredericton, things were going to have to change, and change drastically. He had gone through the university's books. Salaries for lay faculty and administrative staff were lower than elsewhere and almost nonexistent for the teaching priests. Little cash actually came in. Money was transferred from one account to another when necessary to pay bills. Certain suppliers allowed credit when funds were especially low. It was not uncommon for staff and faculty to dip into their own pockets. For instance, McFadden, as rector, apparently paid some bills himself, including half the cost of the auditor's bills. Only \$4,100 had been spent on the library for supplies and salaries, when by Duffie's reckoning at least four times that amount was required. He was convinced they had been trying to cut library expenses “to the lowest it is

possible to get away with in the hope of trying to present a balanced budget.” The small surplus that should exist “if we were carrying on respectable University education” was missing. In short, the university could not balance its books. He was appalled. If St. Thomas was going to offer a “respectable,” modern education, it needed an efficient and accountable administration. The old, personal way of doing business might get lost in the process, but so be it. The financial office must be responsible to the administration office, not the other way around. The old days of Rector McFadden, after he had “already agreed to reconstruct the football field or renovate the gymnasium, going to Bursar McGrath and asking him how they were going to pay for it,” or simply going out and “persuading contractors to do it as cheaply as possible without telling the bursar,” had to end.

Such changes were necessary but, wrote Duffie, he could not make them while the bishop was away. It “is one of the first matters which we must discuss when you return.” But it was by no means all. Duffie was upset to discover that “these girls who work in the kitchen are working at absolutely scandalous salaries.” They were getting \$12.50 a week, “plus living in.” Girls doing equivalent work at the Hôtel Dieu Hospital started at \$34 a week. They had to pay their room and board, but their salaries went up at regular intervals. They also got days off and “other fringe benefits.” Something had to be done about it right away. The salaries of the men working there were also low, but Duffie was not as concerned about them “since some of them are not too stable in the condition in which they present themselves for work, and since there is a high degree of inefficiency.” Furthermore, the farm, which in earlier years had provided food for the boarders, was “minimal anyway and of no value to us.” Duffie felt that the “first logical step in closing the University” would be to close the farm in the spring of 1963.

Efficiency must prevail, he declared: “The picture in education is bad.” Whatever value the university had in its current situation resided in its auxiliary enterprises. Yet auxiliary enterprises, especially residences and dining halls, were not meant to carry education. They should be “a break-

even project.” This was one of the reasons why he was so concerned about the salaries paid to the girls in the kitchen, who worked long hours, six or seven days a week. He told Leverman, “If we are not going to put the encyclicals into effect here, we might as well close up.”

Duffie sent a copy of his remarks with the latest auditor’s report (dated August 31) to Schneller, who was predictably shocked by what he saw. Schneller wrote the bishop on December 11:

I can now appreciate why there is so much opposition. This looks like an exact duplicate of the old Christian Brothers school fiasco in Toronto years ago. Apparently a lot of the students pay half fare and a lot of them don’t pay anything. Naturally a transfer to UNB would create quite a hardship on the type of individual that expects the Church to take care of him. But what is much more serious to my way of thinking is that no Bishop, including yourself, can afford to continue to support an inefficient operation of this type, even if it remained at Chatham. Am I out of turn in suggesting that some of the higher authorities should see this auditor’s report, which is pretty damaging to put it mildly.

Pressure on the Government

On December 8 Leverman finally returned from Rome to the field of battle. Duffie convinced him it was time to put some pressure on the government to make clear their position on moving St. Thomas to Fredericton. On December 11, 1962, they drafted the following letter:

To the Honourable Louis J. Robichaud, QC, Premier of New Brunswick, and the Honorable Members of the Provincial Cabinet:

St. Thomas University has given careful and extensive consideration to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Royal Commission of Higher Education in New Brunswick.

It has had the invaluable advice of eminent men in the field of education and finance.

St. Thomas University has always accepted and accepts the full report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education. By this letter St. Thomas University wishes to advise you officially that it commits itself and stands committed to the full implementation of the Report as it affects St. Thomas University, and without detracting in any way from this general acceptance, more specifically to the removal of St. Thomas University to the campus of the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

St. Thomas University and the University of New Brunswick have already agreed basically on their status with regard to each other, and on certain other questions are pursuing the full implementation of their relationship as outlined by the Report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education.

In moving from Chatham to Fredericton, St. Thomas University is motivated by the desire for excellence in its own education and the education of all New Brunswick students, as

that desire is so ably expressed in the Commission Report.

The letter was signed by Leverman and Duffie. Duffie and Msgr. Boyd delivered it in person to the premier on December 12. They suggested that the premier if he chose could make the letter public.

Robichaud read out the letter to his cabinet later that morning, and in the afternoon telephoned Duffie to say, “The Cabinet is unanimously against publication of the facts contained in the letter of December 11, but you may proceed with your plans.” Duffie went again to see Robichaud in his office, and in Duffie’s words, “I was told that it was perhaps a good thing to have on record that we were committed to move to the University of New Brunswick campus in Fredericton.” The premier repeated his request “as a favour” not to publish the facts contained in the letter of December 11. Duffie told the premier he would “guarantee that the contents would not be published at least until somebody spoke to him again before the publication of the facts.” The premier appeared to be satisfied with the commitment, “and appreciated it very much.” He said he was “deeply concerned over the four seats which his Government holds in Northumberland County, although he admits that the only thing to do educationally is to move [St. Thomas] to Fredericton.”

Duffie advised Leverman to communicate the contents of their letter to Baggio in Ottawa. He felt it was important for the Holy See to “know the extent to which everyone is now committed.” In order to counter the objections being made by the Friends of St. Thomas, he listed all the important people who supported the move, and suggested that Leverman relay their names to the apostolic delegate: Lieutenant-Governor Leonard O’Brien; Provincial Supreme Court Justice Louis Ritchie; Chief Justice John B. McNair; Chief Justice of Queen’s Bench J. E. Michaud; Justice Albany M. Robichaud; Justice Arthur Anglin of the Admiralty Court; Registrar of Courts Leo Cain; two county court judges; the Protestant members of the Queen’s Bench; eleven of the twelve cabinet ministers; Premier Robichaud himself; many MLAs; the presidents of all New Brunswick’s universities; the president of Dalhousie University; the New Brunswick Teachers’ Association; all the leading members, English-speaking Catholics as well as others, of the New Brunswick Bar Association; “and even Kenneth C. Irving, the province’s leading industrialist, who is a North Shore man at heart but who realizes that educationally St. Thomas must move to Fredericton.”

As further ammunition—and to counter those who claimed UNB was anti-Catholic—Duffie listed Catholics on the UNB senate and faculty who supported the move, as well as a large number of non-Catholic teachers and administrators at UNB. Duffie reminded Leverman to mention that the New

Brunswick Teachers' College was being relocated from its home in the Normal School building on Queen Street to the UNB campus, and that St. Thomas at its location on the UNB campus would be

so placed that it will be readily available not only to the students of St. Thomas University but also to the Catholic students attending the New Brunswick Teachers' College, as well as Catholic students attending the University of New Brunswick.

Some Faculty Support

Duffie had some support among faculty. Leonard Doucette, a former student at St. Thomas High School, taught Latin and modern languages at the university from 1958 to 1961, after which he left to pursue his doctorate at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Duffie understood that young lay scholars like Doucette who were upgrading their academic credentials tended to share his views about the need for better facilities at St. Thomas, a need that might be met by moving to Fredericton. Doucette was happy to respond to Duffie's request for a letter of support. In a letter dated January 17, 1963, he wrote that the Friends of St. Thomas were misrepresenting the views of the majority of Miramichi residents. On the contrary, there was considerable support for the move. He was sure Duffie realized that

the three principal protagonists in the "anti-move" party happen to be political has-beens, who are more than eager to seize upon any pretext for fanning the flames of ill-founded sentiment and emotion to which we on the Miramichi are particularly prone.

Doucette noted St. Thomas's "serious limitations in the field of higher education, principally its woefully inadequate library, its lack of laboratory and classroom facilities, and, occasionally, sad to say, the lack of interest and competence among some of the instructors." He assured Duffie that he and "a great many others" were entirely with him but "made less noise than the others."

The Enemy Within

Duffie turned his attention to silencing those among the faculty at St. Thomas who were still trying to

prevent the move from taking place by trying to have a new diocese (with a different bishop) created for the Miramichi or by ousting him as president. As he had reported to the bishop in late December, a priest in Chatham had informed him privately as to “who was at the head of all those activities that were going on respecting St. Thomas. Who is out all the nights, who is losing all the sleep, who is writing all the speeches? His answer was Father Poole.”

Win Poole was thus fingered as the leader of the anti-Duffie, anti-move conspiracy. It had a certain logic, Duffie told Leverman. Poole was a friend of Fr. Bernard Broderick, who had been moved out of St. Thomas faculty in 1960 to do parish work but who, like Henry McGrath, had remained a member of the board. Poole had also been seen with McFadden at the latter’s residence, since he was no longer living at the college. Like Poole, Fr. Reinsborough was keeping his distance from Duffie, which was suspicious, as he and Poole were good friends. Duffie saw a letter of protest recently sent to Archbishop Baggio. He told Leverman that certain paragraphs in it “bear striking resemblance to the remarks made to you in Saint John last spring when Fr. McFadden sought to have me removed from the Presidency of St. Thomas University.” He pointed out that Poole’s recent resignation as dean of men was supported by Vance Toner, “whose activities are well known to you.” Duffie continued:

Whether or not Fr. Poole has been designated as leader of the faculty group here opposed to the move I do not know, but certainly he is carrying on an opposition attitude. And in his presence some others are very glum and show they are apparently of the same thought. It is striking that some of these individuals can be very pleasant when they are alone. Fr. Poole has always been looked up to by all this group as possessing preeminent intellectual powers. He is also quite well known among them for his stubbornness.

Poole would not bother him so much, wrote Duffie,

if he were alone. It would be possible to handle him to some extent, but it is difficult when he is more or less the leader of the group. What he lacks is [respect for] authority. Every matter is one to discuss or argue or fight over. It is one of those contradictions, because Fr. Poole’s intelligence is high, his moral character is perfect, and he is assiduous in every one of his religious exercises.

Duffie might have added that Poole was a very good piano player.

Poole had indeed been dean of men but resigned in protest over some of Duffie's actions. Duffie now complained to the bishop that it

caused some confusion among the students, who were not stupid and saw the challenge first to your authority and then to my authority, and the reaction to a considerable extent has been to regard at least certain members of the faculty without respect.

Other priests complained about the lack of respect by students for their professors. (As we shall see, Fr. Troy resigned "in protest" because of "the animosity between many of the staff and the president and the lack of order and discipline among the students.") But, Duffie assured Leverman, these were just the complaints of some bad apples and did not apply to all members of faculty, and "personally, I have found them most respectful to myself." He regretted having to give the bishop this information, but he felt he should know about it because it was "of wider importance than the mere campus of St. Thomas University." In other words, Duffie wanted Leverman to show some backbone.

Duffie was determined to deal with these personnel issues. It was late December and the students were home on holidays. He had to find a new dean of men before they returned. No one on faculty seemed suitable. One professor suggested getting someone from outside the university. Indeed, a new priest, Fr. A. J. Kandathil, was expected to arrive from India in January, and he might be a possibility. "A priest from outside the University as the Dean of Men would give us a real balance in the faculty, for the lay faculty is, in the majority, on my side." On the other hand, he did not want the new man "to have to start off under adverse circumstances." Duffie had a better plan, a way to kill two birds with one stone. He suggested that the bishop transfer Poole to Saint John in exchange for a priest from Saint John who could become the new dean. "I hesitate to suggest it," he wrote unhesitatingly, "but the atmosphere at the University would be considerably cleared, and I think it would be of vast help in the Miramichi, if you could exchange Fr. Poole." If the bishop approved, Duffie would like to have a certain Fr. Dolan sent up from Saint John to be the new dean of men, since he "is much respected by all the boys from Saint John whom he has helped." He reiterated that the bishop should

“give a thought on exchanging Fr. Dolan for Fr. Poole since he [Poole] is, I understand, most acceptable to Fr. Gillen in Saint John.”

Poole was not the only fly in Duffie’s ointment. Henry McGrath was also a problem, having recently nearly thwarted Duffie’s plans by refusing to sign the crucial minutes of the meeting in September. If neither he nor the bishop could remove him from the board (indeed, McGrath would remain on St. Thomas’s board throughout the 1960s), at least he had the authority to remove him from his position as bursar. According to Duffie, McGrath claimed he was too busy teaching the chemistry courses to supply the president with the financial information he had asked for. Yet the new priest-professor from India, Kandathil, would be teaching chemistry after Christmas, so there “wouldn’t be any excuse after January 1 that Fr. McGrath doesn’t have much time.” He added, by way of criticizing McGrath’s performance as bursar, that it was “regrettable that while we cannot get day to day information, or get it only with great difficulty, that in the past information has been available to those who had no right to it outside the University.” He was implying that McGrath as a director of the St. Thomas Alumni Association was being indiscreet about what should be confidential regarding the university’s finances. He was annoyed because he did not know how much, “if any,” financial information was actually available. He told Leverman, “I am thinking that the new Dean of Men could also be the Treasurer of the University.”

If only Duffie could persuade the bishop to exercise his authority to remove Poole and McGrath from St. Thomas, he could breathe more easily.

The Bishop’s Response

Leverman replied in early January 1963. Duffie should not worry overmuch since he, the bishop, had every confidence in him and his consultants. He suggested that “a few months will show the picture more clearly.” He had told Duffie before, “They [the Friends of St. Thomas] are a tough bunch to bring

around.” He hoped in fact that they did petition Rome “because that would demand an answer.”

Duffie must have ground his teeth at the bishop’s lukewarm response. He needed to have his primary tormentors removed from St. Thomas. Instead, for the time being the bishop would address only Duffie’s request for a new dean of men and new bursar. He was thinking of sending Fr. Edward Higgins to Duffie to serve in both roles.

The bishop was mistaken in thinking that the battle was nearing an end and that Duffie could stop worrying. Duffie, with his keen political instincts, knew better. He was determined to get rid of his toughest opponents before it was too late. On January 7, 1963, he informed Leverman that Kandathil, the new priest from India on the faculty, had arrived and had taken over all the first-year classes and labs from McGrath. Duffie told Kandathil to “step up the tone of the Chemistry classes” and “to be prepared in September to assume direction in the whole Chemistry field.” Kandathil himself had offered to take over teaching the students in second-year chemistry, but McGrath had insisted on keeping that class. Nevertheless, Duffie told Leverman, he now had a willing replacement for McGrath and that “if at any time in Diocesan changes it becomes necessary for me to provide for all Chemistry, I can do it without any previous time notice.” In other words, the bishop was free to transfer McGrath out of the St. Thomas faculty, if only he would act on Duffie’s advice.

The Bishop is Embarrassed

Immediately after receiving Duffie’s letter, Leverman heard again from Baggio in a letter also dated January 7. What he had to say was deeply embarrassing for the bishop and shook the ground under the campaign to move St. Thomas out of Chatham. In spite of Leverman’s recent audience with Pope John XXIII and personal representation to the Congregation of Universities and Seminaries in Rome, the Holy See remained worried by the conflict and unrest that the proposed relocation was causing within the Catholic community on the Miramichi. Last spring, in relaying to Leverman the positive

recommendation of the Congregation for the move, Baggio cautioned Leverman to ensure that “the greatest care must be taken to see that the University of St. Thomas be not involved in local politics.” Recently, however, he received a written remonstrance complaining about Duffie, his methods, and particularly his political activity. Baggio felt it was time to resolve the issue. He suggested that perhaps Duffie be removed from the picture: “All things considered, prudence may dictate his replacement as President, for rightly or wrongly he has apparently lost forever the confidence and trust of his staff.” He was referring to another written intervention, a copy of which he had received, signed by thirteen members of the faculty of St. Thomas, addressed to Leverman “on the occasion of [Duffie’s] meeting with the Clergy of Northumberland County Deanery dated October 28, 1962.”

Baggio pointed out that the bishop had not informed him of that intervention by faculty. Furthermore, the apostolic delegate subsequently received a long letter signed by five priests, also members of faculty and “strongly opposed to the move” to Fredericton. He quoted for Leverman the letter’s damaging conclusions:

- (1) The chief reason alleged by His Excellency [Bishop Leverman] for this stand is the finding of the Royal Commission. We have shown, we believe, that the findings of the commission in this matter are seriously suspect, both in substance and in motive.
- (2) The present financial status of this University is excellent: despite a very recent and extensive building program, it is nearly debt free. Its operating deficit last year was trivial, in the vicinity of \$5,000, and this was partly offset by outstanding debts owed to the university. It may be noted that this deficit was made to appear much larger through the inclusion of certain capital expenditures by a public accountant hired to audit the university books. This same accountant [Frank Lenihan] was one of the three laymen who were mentioned above as being brought into the meeting of the Board of Governors and nominated thereof.
- (3) It should be clear from the foregoing pages that the Bishop’s belief on the financial impossibility of continuing in Chatham is a thought fathered by the wish of Msgr. Duffie.

We, then, are of the persuasion that the removal of the University to the campus of the University of New Brunswick would be an unalleviated tragedy in the history of higher education in this province, a tragedy whose repercussions would extend beyond the field of education into the cognate field of pastoral ministration, a tragedy which would not be repaired for at least a century and only then at a cost of once more making many arduous sacrifices to regain fruits of earlier years of sacrifice, fruits which would have been needlessly destroyed.

Baggio now instructed Leverman:

In the light of the conflicting views expressed by opposing factions in this dispute, and considering [that] the consequences of transferring St. Thomas University to the Campus of UNB are interpreted in such antithetical fashion and that a great deal of conjecture is involved in judging the future, I consider that I am not in a position to make a decisive judgment in this affair. The final decision must lie with Your Excellency and I leave it to your prudent judgment.

The language was diplomatic. In fact, the apostolic delegate clearly did not find the bishop's judgment to date especially prudent, and he wished him to reconsider. He pointed out that the Congregation of Universities and Seminaries gave its approval to implement the recommendations of the Deutsch Commission "on the basis of information supplied by me," which in turn was based on what the bishop told him. He now felt obliged to complete his report to the Holy See. Before doing so, however, he wanted to hear from Leverman "a detailed outline of your most recent impression of the situation." He also wanted to know "what solution you intend to propose to the Holy See in your Pastoral Prudence."

Everything, it seemed, was back on the table. Leverman's audience with the Pope and the appearance before the Congregation had not been as effective as he hoped. Having the government's tacit permission to move was one thing. More important was the Vatican's approval, for without it there was no possibility of relocation to Fredericton. Understandably embarrassed and shaken, Leverman replied on January 11 that he would need "a little time to line things up again." He had been hoping that he would not have to bother the apostolic delegate again "with a multitude of details and inevitable repetitions." Nevertheless, he would of course prepare what was wanted "as soon as possible." Meanwhile, he assured Baggio that he was in charge. "A radical change is necessary," he wrote.

Resources were limited, and

it is strongly opined that if steps are not taken to set up this College under securer circumstances, in five years we will either lose it or it will not have the recognition a Catholic University deserves.... Too much emphasis has been placed on Msgr. Duffie. He has been made the scape-goat all thru and whilst it may now be wise to remove him, as I explained to you in my letter from Rome, it is evident that they are against a regime rather than any particular man.

Nevertheless, he promised to supply Baggio with further details "that may help in this vexing question."

Witnesses for the Prosecution

Leverman conferred with Duffie. Duffie was not surprised at the suggestion of his removal, but he was determined to fight on. He convinced the discouraged bishop that they needed to gather favourable witnesses to bolster their case and justify their actions.

Catholics at UNB

The first issue to address was whether or not Catholic students would find a hostile atmosphere at UNB. As we have seen, Duffie gave Leverman a list of Catholics on the faculty and others who supported having a Catholic college on campus. Responding on January 23, 1963, to a request from the bishop, Msgr. Boyd, pastor of St. Dunstan's Church in Fredericton, countered allegations that UNB was "atheistic" or "anti-Catholic," or that "a Catholic student in attendance there is in danger of losing the Faith." Boyd said he wished "to register justified and necessary protest." He had lived in Fredericton for sixty years. He had known many exemplary Catholic youths over the years. Many went into "high places in the Professional Fields, as Judges, Lawyers and Doctors, as well as Outstanding Engineers." Like Duffie, he listed current and former UNB professors who would be "disturbed and shocked to be told that their Alma Mater was considered definitely atheistic and a danger to the faith." He admitted that there "may be the odd crackpot among them, there usually is," and that a dean of one faculty "is considered pink," but he has been there for years and "never flaunts his Philosophy in the Lecture Hall. He is always respectful and polite, and in a marked degree, to the Sisters." He agreed that a state university was "no place for a lax Catholic or half Catholic, but a student of strong faith would be just as strong, and even stronger in faith, on his graduation day as when he first arrived."

Given the large number of Catholics, students as well as teachers, who would be moving to the UNB campus when the newly constructed Teachers' College opened, and given a new nursing program, Boyd argued that the situation on campus would be better than ever for Catholics. Indeed, with St.

Thomas on the UNB campus, together with the other changes there,

It would be a dream come true, the dream come true of the majority of English-speaking Catholic people in the Province, the dream come true of most of the priests—the dream too of our nuns who must keep abreast with the times in the fields of higher education, the dream of the former greats of St. Thomas, who waited and longed for the great day when St. Thomas University would be federated with the University of New Brunswick.

Strong stuff—but welcome, since Duffie and Leverman had to make their case as compelling as possible.

K. E. Gilliss, assistant secretary of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association, also weighed in on the issue of Catholics on the UNB campus. He too reminded Leverman of the many Catholic students who would soon be on campus at the new Teachers' College. They would be outside “the influence of a Catholic University unless an existing university in close proximity to the University of New Brunswick gave them the opportunity to take advanced training under the direction and guidance of the Catholic Church and Laity.” St. Thomas on the same campus would clearly provide the Catholic influence. Furthermore, with the availability of interest-free loans, St. Thomas could expand its “now very small Bachelor of Education program” as well as its summer school and extension program.

Enrollment and faculty would increase because Catholic students and teachers would be attracted to

the Catholic atmosphere and environment of St. Thomas. They would have better library services, and liaison between the teacher training authorities of the Department of Education (responsible for licensing and certification) and the authorities of St. Thomas would be facilitated.

Instead of St. Thomas serving only one small area of the province, the institution could serve teachers from across the province, which would benefit both St. Thomas and the students themselves. As a native of Chatham, “educated at St. Thomas Academy and St. Thomas University,” Gilliss sympathized with local citizens who wanted to keep their university, but

“the welfare of all Catholic students in the province should take precedence over local interests.” He disagreed with those who said St. Thomas would lose its identity if it moved to Fredericton. On the

contrary, it would “open new doors to the Catholic youth of the province. St. Thomas could fulfill its destiny as one of the renowned Catholic universities in Canada.”

Finances

Another compelling argument for removing St. Thomas from Chatham involved finances. Duffie asked Frank Lenihan, newly appointed accountant and board member, to give the bishop a professional opinion of St. Thomas’s prospects. Lenihan wrote that if St. Thomas were to become first-rate, “the space would have to be doubled or perhaps tripled,” because only a small portion of the province’s English-speaking Catholics were enrolled there. To bring the university up to the standards required by the Association of Canadian Universities, St. Thomas would need a proper library with qualified staff; facilities for chemistry and physics would have to be improved; the faculty would have to be enlarged by hiring highly qualified professors, paid competitive salaries. In short, to improve the standards as the university stood in Chatham would at least double the costs of the present university, and there would be problems of where to get the money. The college had survived only through “the devoted service of the priests on the faculty who work for almost nothing.” Indeed, argued Lenihan, almost all the non-faculty staff received wages far below those called for “in any industry covered by minimum wage laws.” If the standards were to be raised to a level that would allow the university to join the Association of Canadian Universities, “it would be quite reasonable to presume that more English-speaking Catholics would enter the university and the cost of running it would be increased to the vicinity of one to two million dollars.” In sum, the university was breaking even financially only because of donated salaries by the priests, rental income, low wages, and little or no expenditures for library, research, or laboratories. Furthermore, there had been no allowance for depreciation of physical assets or potential interest on investments, “which would be substantial costs.”

Graduates’ Qualifications

A third argument Duffie and Leverman used for relocating St. Thomas concerned the questionable qualifications of St. Thomas graduates. Lenihan also addressed the issue. He suggested that the bishop might usefully compare St. Thomas graduates with English-speaking students from other universities. Apart from those entering the priesthood,

The comparison would not be very good. As a parent of boys, I agree with many who would have liked to send their children to St. Thomas but out of consideration for the future have had to choose other universities with better standards.

English-speaking Catholics, Lenihan argued, should have a university equal to that available to other segments of the population. Miramichi English-speaking Catholics were disadvantaged by their relatively small and poor population. The solution, however, was at hand:

The findings of the Deutsch Royal Commission on Higher Education are sound and should be followed. The recommendations of this Commission were based on facts and sound reasoning and in my opinion that recommendation concerning St. Thomas University is most fair and reasonable.

Academic Facilities

Duffie asked Leo Ferrari, the young Australian professor of philosophy he had brought with him from Halifax, to give the bishop his opinion of the academic facilities. Ferrari responded enthusiastically and with professorial flourish. He wrote that he welcomed the chance to comment, “lest in the silence hitherto maintained it might be thought that the entire faculty is unanimously agreed that the present facilities are of even minimal university standard.” He told the bishop he, like Duffie, had been “labouring under the same serious handicaps since joining the faculty.” On the basis of his experience, which included training as a chemist, he could state:

The laboratories as presently equipped are manifestly inadequate for even small numbers of first year students, when compared with the facilities of other universities. The most elementary equipment is too often either in short supply or entirely non-existent....The library facilities (not to mention lack of a trained librarian), these have to be seen to be believed! Even so, a shocked and irate representative of the Canada Council had difficulty in believing his own eyes when it fell to my embarrassing duty to show him our library last summer. Based on my eighteen years in various phases of higher education, in many institutions and on both sides of the world, I have never seen anything to compare with the present deplorable conditions. As a member of

the faculty whose background and qualifications permit of a more objective evaluation of the present conditions, I am firmly convinced of the wisdom of Your Grace's plans for an adequate centre of Catholic higher education for the English-speaking populace of the Province of New Brunswick, a centre of which we can all be proud. I pray therefore that Your Excellency will continue to be given the grace to bear nobly the heavy burden of your office for the spiritual and temporal benefits of all those entrusted to your care.

Residence Facilities

Yet another argument Duffie and the bishop could bring to bear concerned the condition of residence facilities in Chatham. Duffie asked Anne Bradley, who had earned her BEd from St. Thomas and whom he had hired as dean of women when he became president, to send the bishop a report on the "condition and facilities of the Women's Residence at St. Thomas in Chatham." Bradley, formerly a student at Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax, did not pull any punches. In her report of January 22 she wrote that there were twenty women, including herself, living in the women's residence. The building was built originally as the Bishop's Residence and was the oldest building on campus. There was "a serious lack of accommodations." All the rooms occupied were "unsuitable." The basement was "too cold and too dangerous," although two or three girls were living there at present. The five rooms on the north side of the building were "extremely cold" and lacked running water. The heating system was "woefully inadequate." The furnace was "ancient and burns coal, so that there is a continual odour of coal gas in certain sections of the building." Although extensive repairs had been made to the windows, they remained drafty. Fire protection was inadequate. Movement about the building was limited because the library was in the same building. The "so-called Kitchenette" had "no water, refrigeration or cooking facilities," which made "even the care of a girl who is sick extremely difficult." There was no room for even one more student or house guest. The rooms lacked "some of the very essentials—proper lighting, closet facilities, proper desks and dressers." By contrast, the women's residence at Mount St. Vincent, although not elaborate, at least had

proper lavatory facilities, a heating system adequate to supply comfortable and uniform temperature throughout the building, students' bedrooms with proper lighting and

ventilating facilities and furniture, a proper Kitchenette, and rooms that could be used as lounges and reception rooms.

None of these, concluded Bradley, were present in the women's residence in Chatham. If she "had not been assured these quarters were just temporary," she would suggest that "the building could no longer be used as a women's residence."

The Bishop Restates the Case for the Prosecution

Having gathered these and other testimonials, and fortified with Duffie's exhortations, Leverman finally responded to Baggio on February 2, 1963. He explained that it had taken "some time to gather the details" that the apostolic delegate requested. Under separate cover he would send even more information that would "substantiate the decision already made to effect a radical change in the status of this College." He belatedly thanked Baggio for the "gracious reception and consideration" he had given to his questions and for obtaining a positive decision from the Holy See for St. Thomas's relocation.

Leverman then launched into a lengthy review and justification of all he had done since the Holy See's positive decision the previous spring. In his mind, it "served only to prove that such a decision was wise, and [that] the only course for us to follow was according to the recommendations of the Royal Commission." He expounded his own involvement with St. Thomas: "Altho' in the beginning I went ahead seriously and sincerely to establish a small college in that area, I saw immediately when the Commission came in that we were up against an impossible situation." He had explored all possible alternatives, but in the end realized the only way to save the university and keep English-speaking Catholic education alive was to join with UNB, and as soon as possible; only then could St. Thomas share in public financial support for postsecondary education. The protesters, he wrote, wanted him to delay action for five years. That was impossible. It would only widen the gap

between St. Thomas and the other universities. St. Thomas “would lose out completely,” while the other universities “went ahead.” The cost of education was mounting all the time. As other universities expanded, there was a shortage of professors: it was difficult to find qualified teaching staff, and even if available, nearly impossible to attract them to Chatham. StFX, he said, because of inadequate facilities had been unable to attract chemistry professors from the US. All the smaller Maritime universities were in financial trouble; affiliation with UNB offered an exceptional opportunity for St. Thomas: “To support St. Thomas with our resources would be to pour water into a sieve. This is our opportunity and if lost the same chance may never come again. We have no choice and we cannot wait.” If the deal did not go through, the approximately 300,000 Catholics in the province would be shocked and disappointed.

Leverman now returned to his earlier arguments and justifications. The move, he reiterated, was being challenged only by a small minority. No one who signed the last petition was

worthy of consideration....They have dealt in lies, slander, disobedience and disrespect. They do not know the actual facts and will not listen to reason. The years of their isolation and running their own business is now showing up. We are paying the price for it. It is so important for the future for the spiritual and intellectual welfare of these people. It is a shame, for they are wonderful people, and the priests, but a few are now showing the results of long running their own show and they resent anyone interfering with them. This cannot go on indefinitely. It is providential that at last someone has to shake them of this narrow sectionalism. It is not easy to be the one to try it.

In his opinion, those opposed to the move would “simply have to get over it.” He concluded his letter to Baggio with the following sentiment, which at the time the wise Baggio must have understood to be more wishful thinking than accurate self-analysis: “As for my own attitude towards the situation, I remember the words of St. Jean Eudes: ‘La patience et mansuétude.’ I have kept quiet, carried on no controversy and intend just not to be aggravated by the whole matter.”

Leverman gathered some additional information and included it in a letter written four days later, February 6. He reminded Baggio of the agony he had suffered as chancellor of St. Thomas.

Originally it had been the Deutsch Commission that caused him to change his mind, “or at least to pause and consider calmly the need to do something about the College very different from my first hopes and dreams.”

The developments of the past few months all resulted from that change of heart. Now he was convinced that moving St. Thomas to Fredericton offered a great opportunity. He enclosed a copy of the tentative agreement with UNB, “an excellent agreement.” He had been assured that no radical changes would be made to it. (The final version would not be made public until July 1.) He regretted the trend, he told Baggio, toward state universities,

with their materialism and potentially political connotations, [but] it is difficult to see how a Catholic institution of higher learning can exist independently in an isolated area within the confines of a state which is becoming more and more welfare.

It was unclear how the provincial government would deal with a federation between St. Thomas and UNB, but so far they were going along with the recommendation of the commission: “A ‘sine qua non’ is that the government will have to compensate us for the buildings we have already built in Chatham. There is no way we can undertake the move without that understanding.”

Leverman had stated his case. Now the bishop and the president could only wait to see if the winds were blowing their way.

Appendices to Chapter 8

Appendix I: Listed signatories of the September 21, 1962, board meeting resolution:

- Most Reverend A. B. Leverman, D.D., Bishop of Saint John and Chancellor of St. Thomas University;
- Very Reverend Donald C. Duffie, President, St. Thomas University;
- Right Reverend F. A. Cronin, Vicar-General, Diocese of Saint John, Member of the Board of Governors;
- Monsignor J. M. Gallagher, J.C.D., Chancellor, Diocese of Saint John, Member of the Board of Governors;
- Reverend Henry McGrath, Secretary to the Board of Governors;
- Henry Ryan, Solicitor for St. Thomas University, Member of the Board of Governors;
- Ann Clinch, Secretary to the Meeting.

Appendix II: The Faculty 1962-63

[**bold type** indicates new appointment to faculty that year]

John Brander, BA (UNB), MA (Queens)	Economics
J. Edward Butler, MA (STU)	History
rev. Edmund Casey, BA (STU); MEd, Cand PhD (St. Louis U) (on leave)	Education
J. Sheldon Currie, BA (StFX), MA (UNB) (on leave)	English Lit
Rev. Vincent Donovan , BA (STU), MA (Fordham)	Latin & Classics
Leonard Doucette, BA (London), Cand PhD (Brown)	Mdn Langs
Msgr. Donald Duffie, BA (St. Joseph's), BCL (UNB), BCL (Oxford), JCD (Laval)	Political Science
Charles Dugas, BSc (StFX), BEd (Sacré-Coeur), BComm (Laval)	Phys & Biology
Leo Ferrari, BSc (Sydney), PhD (Laval)	Phil & Physics
Rev. R. A. Grattan , BA (STU)	Latin
Rev. George Harrington, MA (Catholic Univ of America)	Sociology
Rev. A. J. Kandathil , BSc, MSc (Madras); BPh, LPh, BD, LD (Kandy); PhD (Notre Dame)	Chemistry
Rev. George Martin , BA (STU)	English Lit
Rev. Henry McGrath, BA (STU)	Chemistry
Rev. Thomas McKendy, BA (STU), MSc (Fordham)	Theology
Rev. J. Winfield Poole, BA (St. Joseph's), BEd (STU), STD (UofMontreal), MA (Fordham)	Mathematics
Pierre Sallenave, BA (Potiers)	French & Spanish
Vance Toner, BA (STU), MS (Springfield)	Education
Rev. J. Edward Troy, BA (StFX); PhL, PhD (Louvain)	Philosophy
Rev. W. D. Walsh, BA (STU), Cand MA (Fordham)	History

Sources, Chapter 8

For the material in this chapter, extensive use was made of the written correspondence of Bishop Alfred Leverman, Msgr. Donald C. Duffie, Archbishop Sebastiano Baggio, Justice Louis McC. Ritchie, Dr. Colin B. Mackay, and Fr. George Martin, 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]. Colin B. Mackay's correspondence is also located in PANB.

Other sources used were:

Minutes of the Board of St. Thomas University, 1962-63

St. Thomas College Calendars, 1962-63

The Aquinian 1962-63

John Leroux, *Building a University: The Architecture of UNB* (Fredericton, Goose Lane, 2010)

Contemporary accounts in the following newspapers:

The Chatham Gazette

The Fredericton Daily Gleaner

Personal interviews with the following:

James O'Sullivan, former member of the Deutsch Commission

Professor Francis Cronin

Professor Senator Noel Kinsella

-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); and *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com)