

**LANGUAGE, SCHOOLS AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN THE WINDSOR  
BORDER REGION: A CASE STUDY OF FRANCOPHONE RESISTANCE TO  
THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S IMPOSITION OF REGULATION XVII,  
1910-1928**

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BORDER REGION: A CASE STUDY OF FRANCOPHONE RESISTANCE TO  
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by **Jack D. Cécillon**

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## Abstract

In June of 1912, the Ontario government, under the leadership of Premier James Pliny Whitney introduced Regulation XVII establishing new standards for the province's bilingual schools. Henceforth, the government would restrict the use of French as a language of instruction and communication to Form I, or today's version of grades 1 and 2. Provisions were made allowing for instruction of French as a subject of study, but only where parents specifically made such a request, and only for a maximum of one hour a day, and only in schools teaching French at the time of the Regulation's introduction. Franco-Ontarians, following the lead of the Association Canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFEO) protested this intervention, and many communities province-wide urged teachers and schoolchildren to boycott any visit by the newly appointed English inspectors sent to enforce this edict. This work aims to determine why the Windsor Border Region was the only section of the province where resistance to Regulation XVII was a failure.

One reason for the failure of the resistance movement to Regulation XVII was rooted in the divisions within the community. An examination of the 1901 and 1911 census statistics, coupled with regional literature on the francophones of the Windsor border region clearly indicates the existence of two major sub-cultural divisions. The first group, the Canayens, trace their roots to the old Fort Detroit community of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century trappers, traders, fishers and soldiers. This population settled on both sides of the Detroit river. A second group, the French Canadians, were migrants from Quebec who arrived primarily after 1850 to work as farm labourers and loggers and settled primarily on the coast of Lake St. Clair. These two sub-cultures had different histories, linguistic variations, family names and economic practices. As time would reveal, their response to the issue of Regulation XVII did not always converge. Whereas the Canayen communities on the Detroit river had lived for many generations near their Anglophone neighbours and the population saw the value of mastering English for purposes of trade and employment and largely accepted Regulation XVII, the most recently-settled French Canadian communities on Lake St. Clair proved more suspicious of the school edict and were therefore more prone to embrace the resistance. To complicate efforts at coordinating the regional resistance further, the city of Windsor's schools had abandoned instruction in French a couple of years before the edict. For these francophones, the chance to secure an hour of French may very well have represented an opportunity to gain a right, not lose a privilege.

Aside from divisions within the francophone communities, the leadership of Bishop Michael Francis Fallon of London, Ontario was also a crucial factor in the failure of the resistance. Fallon, an advocate of the new school regulation, moved to muzzle the natural leaders of most French-speaking communities in the region: the priests. Coinciding with his advent as bishop in 1910, French instruction vanished from three of

Windsor's four Catholic schools. When Regulation XVII was introduced two years later, French was forever banned from these schools. When a series of priests accused the Bishop of working to suppress French in the schools and churches, their grievances found their way to church officials in Rome. To secure a retraction for these damaging allegations regarding his character, Fallon summoned the priest-signers of the petition to appear before a diocesan court made up of 5 judges. When three of the priests who appeared before the court were subsequently punished with suspension or expulsion, tempers flared in the parish congregations of the Windsor border region against the bishop. Two other priests faced the threat of suspension only to be spared by Vatican intervention. The worst example of the anger towards the Bishop surfaced in Ford City on September 7, 1917, when a group of parishioners rioted to protest the forcible imposition of a new pastor deemed hostile to the French language and bilingual schools. The outraged congregation subsequently organized a boycott of the parish priest and appealed to Rome, over the head of their bishop, for the new pastor's removal and his replacement by a priest with pro-French sympathies. The year long standoff at Our Lady of the Lake Church was rooted in the whole Ontario Schools Question and Bishop Fallon's leading role in attacking the bilingual schools of the province. The conflict with the Bishop resembled similar language struggles in New England and elsewhere in Ontario involving francophone Catholics and efforts by church officials at integrating them into the larger English-speaking society.

The resistance to Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region did not simply fail because of the leadership of Michael Francis Fallon. Divisions within the francophone leadership further weakened an already small and isolated resistance movement. Disputes over resistance strategy, personality conflicts, and open disagreement regarding the construction of an independent French school tore the region's lay leadership apart. The appearance of two competing independent French schools with limited funding failed to attract a vigorous student body capable of sustaining the schools financially. These promising experiments ended badly, in part because of the incessant fighting among rival bands of francophone militants in the Ligue des Patriotes and the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste.

This thesis challenges historians to examine the complexities of other Franco-Ontarian communities, particularly for signs of division over issues of language, schools and resistance strategies. Provincial inspection reports suggest that some school districts in northern and eastern Ontario also eventually complied with Regulation XVII. Therefore, other communities did exhibit signs of division over this contentious school edict. What accounted for their submission? In what ways were they similar to the Windsor border region? In what ways were they different? Much work remains to be done before a clearer picture emerges regarding the success of this resistance.

## Acknowledgements

The inspiration for my topic, an examination of the resistance to Regulation XVII in the Windsor Border Region came to me as a result of a summer employment experience twenty years ago. At that time, I worked for minimum wage on a regional study of assimilation rates among francophone teenagers at the French elementary and secondary schools of the Windsor area. As I completed the report and prepared to do graduate work in history, the regional director of the ACFO, Madame Bernadette Grenier advised me to look into the Ontario schools question and visit local historian and priest, Ernest J. Lajeunesse at the old Assumption church. After a one hour interview with the 90 year old scholar, the Monsignor directed me to dig around for documentation regarding a long forgotten riot by francophones at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in East Windsor. Over the course of the next year, I conducted a series of interviews with elderly residents of the region, Monsignor Jean Noel of Belle River being one of them. This man fascinated me in particular. He seemed to be a gentle and kind soul, but upon the mention of bishop Fallon, the priest piped up and exclaimed in no uncertain terms, “Cet homme, il détestait les Canadiens français” – that man hated French Canadians. Noel had been studying to become a priest during Fallon’s reign as bishop in London. I knew then that there appeared to be a story waiting to be told.

From there I went on to interview another elderly resident, Hazel Lacasse Delorme, who was just a little girl at the time of the momentous event of the Ford City Riot. She later claimed that her grandmother had suffered a blow to the head during the trouble. Another interviewee, Claire Janisse, the daughter of Ford parish rebel Stanislas Janisse, was reluctant to offer any information whatsoever, until I spoke in French. Even then, she continuously referred to the event as a scandal that she would prefer to forget. It must truly have been a traumatic experience for a devout Catholic to take up arms against a priest in 1917 and then face excommunication.

This string of interviews in Windsor only seemed to raise more questions. Documents would have to be found, and some were literally placed in front of me, almost by accident. In 1989, while working as a student archival page, Windsor archivist Mark Walsh placed three large portfolios in front of me and suggested that I examine the contents. A part time employee at the Windsor public library had been throwing out old supplies on a storage shelf and had come across a batch of old newspapers. It turned out that the portfolios contained more than twenty years of an exceedingly rare century old weekly French language newspaper, that was not even recorded in the National Library of Canada’s newspaper collection. When I left my position, I wrote a letter to the archivist and head librarian strongly recommending its immediate preservation through storage in the municipal archives. Eleven years later, when I inquired at the archives to use it for research, I was horrified to discover that the new archivist had no record of its existence, and indeed, had never even heard of the discovery! For seven frantic days I

waited while the archivist searched the library. Incredibly, the collection of newspapers had not been thrown out. I would spend the summer of 2001 leafing through the old collection.

Perhaps the most gratifying experiences during my research involved the help I received from archivists and historians. The staff at the CRCCF allowed me to work long hours, and during one power failure, even provided me with a make shift lamp run by a generator so that I could continue to research and record information on my lap top for the two hours until the hydro was restored. Madame Bernadette Routhier demonstrated such a remarkable knowledge of the collections that she brought me relevant materials that I had not even requested. They even sympathized with me when my laptop motherboard crashed and I was forced to finish my research with a pencil and paper. The Windsor archivists frequently brought me coffee, and patiently listened to me drone on about trivial stories I encountered in the local paper of the 1880s. Sister Suzanne Malette of the Archives of the Holy Names Sisters in Windsor took me on a tour of the old convent just prior to its sale, and allowed me to work beyond the usual hours to meet my deadlines. Indeed, even my old high school principal, Shelly Roy allowed me to leave work at 12 noon once a week for two years to attend my classes at the York campus. Incredibly, I never received a speeding ticket on the 407 for all the urgent trips I made to get to my 12:30 classes.

The archivists and security guards at the Provincial Archives of Ontario have clearly proven to me that this institution is by far the friendliest to historians and researchers anywhere. The long hours and helpful staff allowed me to accomplish my research goals for more quickly than I could ever have imagined. I sincerely hope that the National Archives of Canada will learn from the lessons of the PAO. Part-time researchers rely on extended hours to accomplish their life dreams.

This dissertation would never have come about without the help of many people. How can I possibly thank the members of my committee for patiently listening to me and sifting through the rather rough first and second drafts of my dissertation? I would first like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Yves Frenette, for his invaluable support and encouragement throughout this process. Indeed, I am convinced that it is his letter of recommendation that played an important role in my entry into York's doctoral program. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Marcel Martel, for his counsel and the time he spent helping me to prepare for my comprehensive examinations. It made a significant difference in my performance, for that I am certain. I would also like to thank Dr. Roberto Perin, whose expertise on church relations, and thoughtful but challenging comments forced me to rethink my approach to this topic. The process, I believe, has made me a better historian. I the apprentice still have much to learn from the masters of the historical craft.

There are a number of other people who deserve recognition for completion of this dissertation. Naturally the archivists at the Windsor Municipal Archives, especially Linda Chakmak deserve a word of thanks for retrieving the newspaper *Le Progrès* from certain destruction in a damp basement. Madame Bernadette Routhier of the Centre de recherche en civilisation française provided me with endless support in my search for relevant documents on the francophone resistance to Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region. Dr. Suzanne Zeller of Wilfrid Laurier University, a former professor of mine offered invaluable comments on my dissertation. I would also like to thank Windsor academics Professor Ron Hoskins, Dr. Larry Kulisek, the late Dr. Peter Halford and the late Dr. Ian Pemberton for supporting my decision to further my studies. I would also like to offer a special thank you to my family, most especially my mother for always believing in me. Lastly, I am absolutely convinced that I would not be here today, had it not been for one person, my wife Lea. Her consistent support through proof reading my papers, my preparation for the comprehensive exams, and the research and writing of this dissertation often involved support in an infinite number of ways. It is to her that I dedicate this doctoral dissertation. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

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## Introduction

In the spring of 2000, the Catholic diocese of London, Ontario, seeking to consolidate expenses and acknowledging a decline in attendance and priestly vocations, announced the closure of three French-speaking parishes in Essex County. A new church would be built to consolidate the three church communities in question: Stoney Point, St. Joachim and Comber. To protest the decision, the parishioners formed a movement, SOS-Églises, to save their beloved churches and petition the Bishop of London to reconsider the plan, but efforts to dissuade him failed. The protest intensified when news broke that the 120 year-old church of St. Joachim was slated for sale and demolition. Consequently, the parishioners appealed to municipal officials of the town of Lakeshore to secure a historical designation for the building, since it was among the oldest in the community. The town council declined on the grounds that the request for heritage recognition was not made by the owner of the property, the diocese of London. SOS-Églises then turned to the Ontario Divisional Court to protect the church under the province's Heritage Act. On November 5, 2003, the Divisional Court of Ontario ordered the Town of Lakeshore to reverse its decision and assign a historical designation to the St. Joachim Church. In *Tremblay vs. Lakeshore*, the court argued that the principles for designation included respect for and protection of the Ontario francophone minority and respect for linguistic duality as a fundamental principle underlying Canadian society. This court battle over language and religion harkened back to an earlier francophone clash with the diocese of London.

In September 1917, while most Canadians were embroiled in the debate over conscription for a war-weary Dominion, some French-speaking residents of the Windsor border region were waging a war of their own against the Bishop of London. Disagreements over the issue of French language education in Ontario had been simmering for seven years. The severe restrictions on the use of French in bilingual schools, advocated by their bishop in 1910, and subsequently enshrined in the 1912 government edict, Regulation XVII, set many francophones on a collision course with their spiritual leader. This conflict over language, which touched both the parishes and bilingual schools, engulfed much of the country's Catholic leadership. The contentious issues eventually involved the civil and church courts, and even required the personal intervention of the Pope. The conflict reached its climax in the autumn of 1917, capturing newspaper headlines throughout the country when francophones rioted at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in the Windsor suburb of Ford City.

The French-speaking population of Essex and Kent counties can trace its longstanding heritage back to Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac's founding of Fort Detroit in 1701. Recently, Franco-Ontarian historians have turned their attention back to the French-speaking communities of the area. For many years, there existed only two works on this population: Télésphore St. Pierre's 1895 work on the history of the French Canadians of Michigan and Essex County and E.J. Lajeunesse's 1960 study, the *Windsor Border Region*; both offer a relatively comprehensive study on the area's francophones in

the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>1</sup> In the past few years, three new works have appeared on the francophones of the Windsor border region. Lina Gouger's doctoral study on the Detroit river settlement (including Windsor) during the *Ancien régime* period emphasizes the importance of the fur trade over agriculture for most of the early residents.<sup>2</sup> Michel Bock's recent work on historian Lionel Groulx only briefly refers to his close relationship to two of the region's key clerical protagonists in the bilingual schools controversy: Alfred Emery of Paincourt, and François Xavier Laurendeau of Ford City.<sup>3</sup> Marcel Beneteau's collection of works commemorating the tri-centenary of Detroit offers a significant examination of the francophones of the border region from an interdisciplinary approach, but concentrates largely on contemporary issues. Perhaps the most intriguing recent study on the francophones of Essex and Kent counties can be found in Beneteau's doctoral work. In this study of the linguistic variants and folk music of the area, the author argues for the recognition of two separate French-speaking regional local cultures, one of recent Quebec migrant families, and a second of long-established families associated with the Fort Detroit era. These two distinct cultures lived in relative isolation from one other. In spite of these new studies, much work remains to

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<sup>1</sup> Lajeunesse's work ends at the time of the Conquest while St. Pierre's work chronicles the francophones of Detroit from their establishment in 1701 through until the 1890s.

<sup>2</sup> Lina Gouger, "Le peuplement fondateur de Détroit, 1701-1765", Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Laval University, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Michel Bock, *Quand la nation débordait ses frontières : les minorités françaises dans la pensée de Lionel Groulx*, (Montreal: Cahiers du Québec, 2004)

be done on this region's language disputes, including the bilingual schools conflict of the World War I era.<sup>4</sup>

There exist only a few detailed studies examining the Ontario schools question in the Windsor border region. David Welch's doctoral work on twentieth century French language schools in Ontario makes considerable reference to the Windsor area, but does not conduct a detailed probe of primary source materials in his examination of the defining moment for many Franco-Ontarians: the resistance to Regulation XVII. Robert Choquette's work *Language and Religion* remains the only published work to deal with this issue in detail. This book focuses primarily on the clerical leadership of the resistance and the subsequent conflict that erupted within the Roman Catholic church throughout Canada. Choquette's work attributes much of the strife over the bilingual schools directly to Michael Francis Fallon, the Bishop of London. Though both studies offer the student valuable reference points for future research, neither examines the degree to which lay francophones resisted the school regulation in southwestern Ontario, and whether this opposition was successful.<sup>5</sup>

This study's initial aim was to answer the following research question: What was the response of francophones to the imposition of Regulation XVII on the bilingual

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<sup>4</sup> Marcel Bénéteau, "Aspects de la tradition orale comme marqueurs d'identité culturelle: Le vocabulaire et la chanson traditionnelle des francophones du Détroit", Doctoral dissertation, Laval University, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> See Robert Choquette, *Language and Religion*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1975); David Welch, "The Social Construction of Franco-Ontarian Interests Toward French Language Schooling", Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1988. Peter Oliver does emphasize the failure of the resistance movement in Essex and Kent and the foundation of an independent French school in his cursory examination of the end of Regulation XVII: Peter Oliver, "The resolution of the Ontario Bilingual Schools Crisis, 1919-1929", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, VII, 1, February, 1972. However, no in-depth examination of the resistance movement has been undertaken.

schools in Essex and Kent Counties? It is not designed to judge the merits or weaknesses of these Ontario schools. Robert Choquette's research describes how the school language question in the Windsor area and Ontario embroiled the Canadian Catholic clergy in a lengthy public dispute. Indeed, his work lays the groundwork for further research, by leaving the reader with new questions. For example, to what extent did laypeople follow the clergy's leadership in the resistance against the school edict in the Windsor region itself? Moreover, what factors led to the eventual failure of this resistance? Choquette offers a partial explanation, suggesting that school trustees feared for their provincial funding. His work emphasizes Fallon's role in this saga as an uncompromising autocrat, whose gregarious promotion of Catholic education focused primarily on the supremacy of English instruction at the expense of the French language. Unlike his mitred colleagues, such as the Bishop of Ottawa, Fallon proved incapable of soothing the concerns of French-speaking Catholics. His outspoken leadership against the bilingual schools fostered conflict rather than reconciliation. However, some of the reasons for the failure of the bilingual schools resistance in the region extended beyond the bishop to involve the francophone population itself. A closer examination of this population and its leadership is necessary for a fuller understanding of the forces at play in the resistance against Regulation XVII.

Pasquale Fiorino's doctoral work on the Bishop of London depicts Fallon in a far more sympathetic light, as a flawed but charismatic visionary, whose stance on bilingual schools was in fact perfectly consistent with his overall worldview for the future well-being of the church in North America. Indeed, Fiorino argues that Rome selected Fallon

as Bishop because he was a passionate advocate of dialogue with the English Protestant majority of Canada and the United States. Church officials believed that such a man could lead these Christians back to the Catholic faith. No prelate fixated on the issue of French rights could muster the same appeal among Americans or English Canadians; and all indications were that Canadian and North American society would become increasingly English in character. Rome, therefore, embraced a policy of Anglicization and cultural assimilation for non-anglophone Catholics in Canada and the United States, naming English-speaking Bishops to francophone areas in Ontario. Fiorino paints Fallon's campaign to abolish the bilingual school system as part of a strategy to save the Catholic separate schools. Indeed, he illustrates how Fallon's agenda for the bilingual schools resonated with Vatican officials who sought to come to terms with a modernizing Canadian state and society and its ensuing industrialization and secularization.

Two works place the issue of francophone rights in the larger North American context of the Roman Catholic Church. Roberto Perin's work, *Rome in Canada*, also demonstrates that church officials in Rome, as represented by Canada's early apostolic delegates, along with Ontario bishops advocated a policy of cultural integration for linguistic minorities into North America's greater English-speaking society during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, at a time when Dalton McCarthy, the Orange Order and members of the Canada First Movement were already clamouring for the elimination of bilingual separate schools. To realize this agenda, Rome appointed a number of Irish bishops to lead the various dioceses of Ontario, even those with a preponderant francophone majority. Indeed, in the early 1860s, Archbishop Joseph Lynch of Toronto

first underscored that the historic assimilation of the Irish to the English language had not led this nation to abandon the Catholic faith, indirectly challenging the French Canadian mantra of “la langue française gardienne de la foi catholique.”<sup>6</sup> Two later prelates, Archbishops Walsh of Toronto and Macdonnell of Alexandria were but two other examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century Ontario prelates, one Irish and the other Scottish, who would genuinely embrace the prevalent trend towards cultural homogenization. Officially, these bishops established an anti-national tone that sometimes proved indifferent to minority sensitivities in the service of a greater cause. In New England, some Catholic bishops urgently aimed to integrate immigrants into the American melting pot by dispelling the need for ethnic parishes, priests, or services in the mother tongue.<sup>7</sup> Walsh and Macdonnell were both agents in the Holy See’s design for an integrated North American church co-existing with the Protestant Anglophone society around them.

It is likely Bishop Fallon was swept up in this prevailing wind, for he too sought to ensure the survival of the separate school system by advocating the homogenization of all Catholics into the English-speaking mainstream. The bilingual schools, for all their alleged inefficiencies, were a symbol of otherness that set a substantial number of francophone Catholics apart, serving as a potential source of antagonism towards all Catholics by the English-speaking Protestant majority.

Yves Roby’s works specifically examines the integrationist outlook among New England’s Catholic hierarchy towards the recently arrived francophone population

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<sup>6</sup> Perin, pp. 20-21.

<sup>7</sup> Roberto Perin, *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Perin cites among others, the case of the American bishops wishing for “the assimilation of the ethnic Ruthenians with the Americans to form one people,” p. 168.

beginning in the late 1870s.<sup>8</sup> Aiming to counter the growing American nativist hostility against the church, a number of Irish-born Catholic bishops determined to speed the assimilation of the Quebec settlers. As a means to demonstrate that the Catholic church was becoming part of the American mainstream, these bishops discouraged the preservation of ethnic languages and cultures, and deliberately selected Irish, Belgian and French pastoral appointments, rather than priests of French Canadian background. Their integrationist agenda spawned a wave of francophone petitions, parish boycotts, failed legal appeals to Rome, and journalistic campaigns against these appointments. Roby's work illustrates how these francophone uprisings were doomed because of the Holy See's suspicions towards such ethnic aspirations. Indeed, the Vatican was clearly uneasy when Franco-American congregations questioned the authority of their bishops. In a second work, Roby details the divisions among the Franco-American leadership over issues of culture and language. These divisions did little to ensure the survival of the French language.<sup>9</sup> Strikingly similar events occurred in the Windsor border region, which support Roby's and Perin's allegations of a clear Church strategy of cultural integration and linguistic homogenization for North America's francophone minorities.

One public figure served more than any other as an agent of change in this vain within Ontario's Catholic church: Michael Francis Fallon, the Bishop of London. A vocal advocate of Catholic integration into North America's English speaking mainstream,

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<sup>8</sup>Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: 1776-1930*, (Sillery, Quebec: Les Éditions Septentrion, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*. (Sillery: Les Éditions Septentrion, 2000).

Fallon stirred unprecedented strife in the Diocese of London among francophones; his aggressive efforts to suppress attempts by his militant priests and laypeople to tie agriculture and the French language to Catholicism would eventually test the confidence of Roman officials when tensions spilled forth into violence. The bishop's crusade against the province's bilingual schools, most notably those of the Windsor border region, was representative of the Catholic church's efforts to come to terms with urbanization, industrialization, modernization and the subsequent pressure towards cultural homogenization, as represented by those nativist forces who had succeeded in destroying Manitoba's separate school system. Rome's efforts to come to an entente with the emerging secular nation states of the west under Pope Leo XIII sometimes meant local cultures would have to be sacrificed for the greater good: the survival of the Catholic church and separate schools in a rapidly changing and modernizing world. This approach eventually pitted Bishop Fallon against francophone militants in a very public dispute that captured the newspaper headlines over the Whitney government's introduction of Regulation XVII. Although a representative of Rome's integrationist policy, Fallon's authoritarian leadership and unbridled resolve to crush francophone militancy worsened an already tense situation.

Bishop Fallon played a critical role in the failure of the resistance to Regulation XVII. This Catholic leader was an enthusiastic supporter of the school edict. His early intervention with members of the Education ministry, coupled with his outspoken interviews in the national press on the issue won him many admirers, even some of French descent. However, many of the area's French-speaking Catholics looked upon the

Bishop with suspicion if not outright hostility, believing that he was in fact the inspiration behind the despised government regulation. Indeed, for some militant francophone priests, the Bishop's actions justified their subsequent insubordination. Fallon exerted considerable authority over those priests who shared their parishioners' concerns for the French language, successfully limiting their ability to play a leadership role in the schools struggle.<sup>10</sup> In the spirit of Yves Roby's work on the Franco-Americans, my work notes that the French language militants of the Windsor border region were also wracked by divisions over political procedure and the role of language. In addition to this, the most recently settled French Canadians were clearly more passionate participants in the opposition to Regulation XVII than the Canayens who had been in the region for nearly two centuries. The eventual confrontations between Fallon and these priests triggered unprecedented discord among Catholics in the Diocese of London. Tensions reached a climax in 1917 when the francophone parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake Church, Ford City (now Windsor) rioted in protest against the Bishop's appointment of a new pastor whose sympathies were highly suspect. Only the intervention of the highest court of the Roman Church could quell a yearlong popular boycott of the parish following the riot. Fallon's autocratic style, his provocative attacks on the bilingual schools, his suppression of popular dissident priests, and his inept handling of a critical pastoral appointment triggered unparalleled disobedience among francophone Catholics in the Diocese of London. Consequently, any examination of the local response to Regulation XVII must

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<sup>10</sup> See Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, (Montreal, Les éditions Septentrion, 2000).

naturally address the relationship between the school edict's greatest advocate, Bishop Fallon and the francophone Catholics of the Windsor border region.

Historians Gaetan Gervais and Chad Gaffield steer clear of religious matters, but also examine the issue of Ontario's bilingual schools, focusing on the question of identity formation. Both men consider the possible emergence of a minority identity in the face of the bilingual schools question. Gaffield asserts that the initial provincial intervention in the bilingual schools in 1885, followed by the Conservative party election campaigns of 1887 and 1890 against these schools, fostered the emergence of a distinctive Franco-Ontarian identity. These pressures coupled with the struggles with English Canadians over control of local school boards to shape a fledgling sense of group. The mass public protests, both English and French, centering around the Riel execution controversy further cemented this sense of otherness among Ontario's francophones.

...the evidence emphasizes that ethnic identity emerges from specific historical processes in which individuals come to share common experiences in their efforts to shape the conditions of their lives. Decisions about language go beyond the interests and ambitions of those in authority.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Gaffield, Gaetan Gervais argues that the founding congress of the ACFEO in 1910 marked the critical first step on this minority's road to a distinct identity for it spawned a national awakening to fight against the growing Anglicization of the community. However, Gervais places the definitive emergence of a Franco-Ontarian identity at a much later date.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French Language Controversy in Ontario*, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), p. 189.

<sup>12</sup> In a separate work, Gervais attributes the formation of a Franco-Ontarian identity not to provincial intervention in the bilingual schools, as Chad Gaffield does, but rather to the critical breakdown of French Canada with the advent of Quebec neo-nationalism as represented with the rupture of the 1966 French Canadian Congress over the issue of Canadian federalism. The new focus of Quebec neo-nationalists on self determination for the province left francophone minorities in the rest of Canada to redefine their

This work differs from previous works on the francophone resistance to Regulation XVII elsewhere in the province, since it illustrates the complex regional dimension of the Windsor border region that has been missed by other historians. In 1912, the Franco-Ontarian settlements of Eastern and Northern Ontario differed from the French-speaking population of the Windsor Border Region in a number of ways. According to Chad Gaffield, logging and subsistence farming prevailed in eastern Ontario, in similar fashion to the old province of Quebec, whereas in Northern Ontario, mining provided employment opportunities. Out of economic necessity, the francophones of Prescott County, for example, only sent their children to schools when they no longer provided useful farm or mill labour to support the family economy. In these schools, they encountered institutions controlled by English-speaking Protestants and Catholics. Largely native to Quebec, they would need time to learn the rules and procedures surrounding the election and operation of school boards in Ontario.

In the Windsor Border region, a different situation existed altogether at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Somewhat isolated from Quebec, overshadowed by the United States, and facing the pull of urbanization and industrialization, the border region's francophones relied on market farming, fishing, and skilled and unskilled industrial wage labour.

Unlike in Prescott County, these francophones exerted considerable control over the local

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identity, not as the Ontario part of French Canada for example, as they had traditionally done, but rather as the French part of Ontario. Such a redefinition was necessary to help Franco-Ontarians explain the changing world around them. See Gaétan Gervais, "Aux origines de l'identité franco-ontarienne", *Cahiers Charlevoix*, 1, 1995; Gaétan Gervais, "Le Règlement XVII (1912-1927)", *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario*, 18, (1996) pp. 123-192.

school boards. However, the area's French-speaking population was divided in many ways. Census data will illustrate that some francophones remained isolated in culturally homogeneous rural parishes whereas others adjusted to cosmopolitan, English-speaking urban life. Moreover, they were further divided among two major subcultures: the old stock Fort Detroit *Canayens*, and the French-Canadian migrants from Quebec. These groups and their leaders did not act in unison when called to join the province-wide resistance against Regulation XVII. A detailed discussion of the differences between the *Canayens* and French Canadians can be found in Chapter 2. In fact, the divisions among francophones over issues of language and schooling transcended subcultures and social class, highlighted varying geographic, personal and family priorities and attitudes, and served to weaken resistance to Regulation XVII as a whole. In contrast to the successful resistance in northern and eastern Ontario, this growing divide among the area's francophones, contributed to local disunity and the ultimate success of Regulation XVII. In effect, there emerged a split among militants over resistance strategy. On one side there stood the radical militants, whose leaders were largely newcomers to the area, and believed above all, that the French language must be preserved. For them, the only way to realize this was to oppose the provincial school regulation, and stir the local population to action by the use of political hyperbole and grand gestures, including the launch of a newspaper and the foundation of an independent French school with the help of the provincial Association canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFEO). A second group, whom we shall call moderate militants, believed that while French language rights were very important, such a goal could never be realized without the

blessing of the Anglo-Protestant majority, nor without the more apathetic members of the larger francophone population with a combatant attitude. Tact, discretion, and gradual steps would not only win over disaffected francophones, but this approach would also serve to win over well-meaning members of the larger Anglophone population. For many moderate militants, the issue of the French language had to be circumscribed within the bounds of their duties as good Catholics. This difference over strategy created fundamental divisions that would have lasting consequences for the resistance. Over time, some passionate militants like Gustave Lacasse and Damien Saint-Pierre evolved into moderates with regard to the French language, when their initial approach encountered indifference, distrust and even hostility among area francophones. No previous work on the Franco-Ontarian resistance to Regulation XVII highlights the divisions existent within the French-speaking population and the movement itself. In the Windsor border region, such community divisions contributed to the downfall of the resistance.

This thesis emphasizes the need to examine francophone communities as multi-dimensional with varying and sometimes conflicting priorities. Francophones who worked for the cause and promotion of the French language in the schools and churches are referred to as militants rather than nationalists because of the unique regional situation. All militants proved ready and willing to fight for the French language cause but their strategies, motivation and personalities determined their moderation or aggressiveness. Indeed, some militants even refused to support the resistance to Regulation XVII for reasons that will be discussed later in this work. Following in the

spirit of works by Marcel Beneteau and Yves Roby, this study emphasizes the complex and divided nature of the French-speaking communities of the Windsor border region. Further divisions also emerged among leaders over the degree of aggressiveness required in the resistance strategy.

This research endeavour is based on a number of primary sources. The Canadian census reports of 1901 and 1911 provide an overview of the complexity of the local francophone population, its two main subcultures, and its dependence on a diverse series of economic strategies to support their families. The archival collections of the Association Canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFEO) and Senator Gustave Lacasse located at the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française (CRCCF) at the University of Ottawa form the foundation of much of this work. The voluminous collection of letters and personal papers of clerical militants Lucien Beaudoin and Alfred Emery, and lay militants Dr. Damien St. Pierre and Marc Bontront trace the events leading to the confrontation at Ford City. Petitions, legal papers and correspondence between the Ottawa ACFEO leadership and the local militants complete this collection and suggest some possible reasons for the failure of the resistance to Regulation XVII in this region. Evidence reveals that divisions in the community over French language issues dated to well before 1910; reliable source materials appear, however, only after 1881. These sources offer only a limited glimpse at the opinions of local francophone farmers and workers, and largely reflect the militant bias of the French Canadian resistance leaders. Unfortunately, the voice of prominent *Canayens* and their grassroots is largely absent from the manuscript record, limited primarily to the words of

Henri Maisonville, Joseph O. Réaume and a series of church petitions. Nearly all of the Canayen priests remained obedient to Bishop Fallon, and aside from Maisonville and Réaume, few Canayens became publicly involved in the French language issue.

To reinforce these primary source materials, the Provincial Archives of Ontario and the Lionel Groulx Archives of Montreal also proved to be useful. School inspectors' reports in the files of the Ministry of Education offer insight on the state of French in the bilingual schools and the degree of public opposition to the school restrictions in question. The reports confirm some of the observations uttered by the resistance leaders, and suggest that the francophone community in the Windsor Border Region was highly complex and lacked the cohesion implied by historians in other regions of Ontario. This problem existed not just between the popular classes and their professional leadership, but also among the leading militants themselves as noted in the Groulx papers. The School Inspector's reports identified rural divisions in the resistance that corresponded geographically to the domination of one of the two predominant subcultures: Canayen and French Canadian. These divisions did little to help the struggling resistance movement. The Windsor chapter of the Ontario Archives of the Holy Names Sisters rounds out the primary source research by offering a teacher's inside perspective of the controversial events surrounding the bilingual schools and the resistance.

Newspapers and secondary sources complete the materials consulted by the author. Issues of a local nineteenth century French language weekly newspaper, *Le Progrès*, offer a detailed background of the cultural and political life of the border region francophones in the decades leading up to 1900, and hence provide the starting point for a

more consistent examination of this community.<sup>13</sup> This newspaper chronicles the early struggles over issues of language, schooling, and church. Other short-lived French language newspapers, such as *Le Courier*, *Le Clairon*, *La Défense*, and *La Presse-Frontière* allow the story line of the area to continue with relatively few interruptions. The latter three newspapers offer an ongoing commentary of Bishop Fallon's relationship with his francophone faithful. Many of the editorials offered caustic criticism of the prelate, while others were surprisingly frank in their assessment of the local community's commitment to language, schools and religion. The *Windsor Evening Record*, the *Border Cities Star*, and the *Catholic Record*, the weekly newspaper of the London diocese, provide a necessary counter-balance to the obvious bias drawn from the French language sources, with the latter journal serving to defend the bishop's policies towards the bilingual schools. Regrettably, the Diocese of London continues to deny researchers access to Bishop Fallon's papers more than seventy-five years after his passing. Historians can only hope that the church leadership will someday open the collection to inquisitive minds so that this period may be examined more fully.

This work acknowledges that some of Fallon's criticisms of the bilingual schools have validity. It also recognizes that some of his most vocal opponents did not speak for the whole French-speaking community. However, this work, while acknowledging

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<sup>13</sup> In 1989, I worked as an archival page at the Windsor Municipal Archives in 1989, when the chief archivist Mark Walsh called my attention to a box of rare old French newspapers languishing in the basement of the adjacent Windsor Public Library. These papers were provided by an unknown donor possibly of the Lacasse family, and proved to be of immense value for my research of the French Canadian community of Windsor. They are presently housed in the Windsor Municipal Archives and were recently made accessible to researchers on the internet thanks to the diligence of Marcel Beneteau, a native of Windsor and a professor of folklore at the University of Sudbury.

Fallon's participation in a larger integrationist movement within the church, also asserts that Fallon lacked the tact and the foresight to lead a multicultural diocese. As a supplement to previous works, this study illustrates that the bishop's outright dismissal of francophone grievances was in fact based on erroneous statistics and serious misconceptions regarding the resiliency of this population, thus sowing the seeds of further trouble. His claim that any strife was the work of a small band of malcontents ignored episodes of widespread protest.

This thesis will first attempt to provide an overview of the francophone population of Windsor in the decades prior to the advent of Bishop Fallon. By examining the economic, social, demographic, linguistic and historical underpinnings of the francophone communities, the reader will come to appreciate the complexities and divisions within a population experiencing profound change. In Chapter 2, by analysing census results, what emerges is a portrait of a relatively resilient francophone population divided into two major subcultures concentrated in different geographic sections of Essex and Kent counties. While these subcultures frequently mingled and intermarried in the border cities, there do appear to be signs that the degree of resistance to Regulation XVII varied among these groupings on a subcultural and geographic basis. This diverging response towards the school edict, although by no means absolute, was represented to some degree not just at the grassroots, but was reflected among leading members of the clergy as well. Chapter 3 highlights the significant leadership role played by Bishop Michael Fallon in the crusade against French instruction in both the bilingual schools and Catholic churches of the Windsor border region *prior* to and after the introduction of

Regulation XVII. Chapter 4 examines the penultimate conflict between the bishop and his francophone Catholics over his controversial appointment of a new pastor to Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Ford City. Growing anxiety over French language issues at the school and church level converged to trigger widespread francophone unrest and disobedience aimed directly at the bishop for his crusade against the bilingual schools. This chapter also examines the subsequent collapse of this militant struggle and illustrates how a growing rift in the francophone leadership and wider population coupled with the decision of the Roman courts to undermine the success of the resistance movement. Chapter 5 recounts the growing chasm within the francophone population and leadership over the resistance strategy, especially regarding the establishment of an independent French school in Windsor. Finally, this work examines why the Whitney government could reasonably consider its edict to be a success in the border region.

This work's principal aim is to answer a question Franco-Ontarian historians have yet to ask: why was the francophone resistance to Regulation XVII unsuccessful in Essex and Kent counties? Like Yves Roby's work on the Franco-American communities of New England, what emerges is a community that fails to unite in a common cultural cause; indeed, there exist many striking parallels to the francophone resistance in New England against a handful of Irish American bishops intent on assimilating them. However, unlike Roby's Franco-Americans, one parish appears to come together briefly as one, in the autumn of 1917, to protest publicly against the unpopular leadership of Bishop Fallon, the alleged architect of Regulation XVII. The eventual collapse of this protest exposed latent divisions within the larger francophone community, on a

geographic basis, amidst its religious leadership, its political leadership, and even among the masses. Interestingly enough class did not appear to be a significant contributing factor to these divisions. Indeed, many francophones embraced the belief that a better future for their children involved full integration into the larger English-speaking society. Such divisions within this complex French-speaking society proved to be too great for the militant leadership to overcome, and helped to explain why the Conservative government of Premier G. Howard Ferguson would later underscore how Regulation XVII had in fact succeeded in Essex and Kent Counties. The resistance to the reform of the bilingual schools as represented by Regulation XVII failed in the Windsor Border Region as a result of the actions of Bishop Michael Francis Fallon of London and the serious divisions within the local militant leadership and larger francophone population.

## **Chapter One: Origins and Brief Overview of the Francophone Community of the Windsor Border Region, 1701-1910**

### Historic Overview

Settlement in the Windsor border region began after the establishment of Fort Detroit by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac in 1701. This military fort, positioned at a strategically narrow point on the Great Lakes, the Detroit River, allowed the French to monitor the transportation of furs by aboriginal groups and curb English infiltration into their trading territory.<sup>1</sup> In order to support the fort with a reliable food supply, the French Crown recruited habitant farmers from the Montreal area. Experienced at clearing wooded areas and breaking virgin soil, some families received plots on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. The first recorded allotments were meted out at Petite Côte (now Lasalle) in 1748, southwest of present-day Windsor, with homesteads established quickly thereafter.

French settlement had barely begun to take root in what is now the Windsor Border region when news reached the pioneers of the British victory by James Wolfe over French forces at the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The Marquis de Vaudreuil, governor of New France, issued orders to the commander of Fort Detroit, Captain François Picoté de Bellestre, to surrender the garrison to the arriving British detachment. The local French settlers, *les Canayens*, would be allowed to secure their goods, furniture, lands and fur pelts, and freely exercise their Roman Catholic faith.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.J. Lajeunesse, *The Windsor Border Region*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960) pp.xxxix-xl.

<sup>2</sup> Téléspore Saint-Pierre, *Histoire des Canadiens du Michigan et du comté d'Essex*, (Montreal: La Gazette, 1895), p.143.

The first record of schooling for francophone children in the Windsor border region appeared in 1782, when the local priest, François Xavier Dufaux secured a promise from Governor Frederick Haldimand to send a certified schoolmaster from Quebec to teach area children. During the interim, Dufaux opened the Assumption rectory in the fledgling town of Sandwich (present-day Windsor) to instruct a small number of boys. Four years later, Haldimand delivered on his promise, convincing Bishop François Hubert of Quebec to send two young women by the names of Adémard and Papineau to Sandwich. They began the first French school on the Canadian shore of the Detroit River with thirteen students five years before the creation of the province of Upper Canada.<sup>3</sup> In 1790, just four years after the school's foundation, the first Loyalist settlers established homesteads in the Amherstburg area due south of Sandwich.

The saga of French language schools in the region followed a rather bumpy and circuitous path after this initial effort. In 1816, the Upper Canadian legislature established a budget to fund common schools at no cost to residents. British officials made their first mention of a French language common school in the district in 1824. Reports suggested that Abbé François Chénier was teaching thirty-seven pupils in Sandwich. In 1826, Abbé Jean-Baptiste Mercure opened a school in Amherstburg, southwest of present day Windsor; by 1830, it hosted thirty-nine students.<sup>4</sup> A tradition of French language education had been established in the area.

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<sup>3</sup> F.X. Dufaux to Bishop Hubert, 24 août, 1787, Archives de l'Archévêché de Québec, v.47, as quoted in Lajeunesse, p. 296.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Godbout, *Les origines de nos écoles franco-ontariennes*, (Ottawa: Presses universitaires d'Ottawa, 1978), p. 139.

By the 1840s, Fathers Pierre and Nicholas Point reorganized the few disparate schools that sprouted throughout the vast parish of Sandwich and the dependent missions at Maidstone and Belle River. The brothers would visit these “schools” without teachers by canoe bringing with them a collection of books. After teaching the rudiments of reading and writing, the priests would leave these books to local students for purposes of study. They would return a couple of years later to collect the books and distribute them elsewhere.

Given the magnitude of their mission, the brothers reached out for help. In 1848, Nicolas Point welcomed Théodule Girardot, a teacher from Franche-Comté in France. Girardot would serve the Point brothers and the larger francophone community for the next fifty-three years. He would continue the practice of distributing French language books from the “meilleurs auteurs de France et du Canada” from his own personal collection.<sup>5</sup> Provincial officials would eventually recognize Girardot’s diligence by naming him a Public School Inspector for Essex county.

When Egerton Ryerson assumed the position of Chief Superintendent of Schools for Canada West, the legal status of the French language in the province’s schools was unclear. However, a conflict in the Windsor border region compelled Ryerson to address the issue. On April 5, 1851, Julien Parent of Sandwich and sixteen other Canayen ratepayers petitioned the Essex County Board of Public Instruction protesting against the employment of a unilingual Frenchman by the name of Gigon as teacher at their common school. The parents argued that their children had the right to receive an education in the

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<sup>5</sup> *Le Progrès*, March 30, 1882.

English language. The petitioners believed that “French instruction alone availeth them next to nothing at all, being an ornamental rather than a useful acquirement for the inhabitants of this country.”<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the Essex Board of Examiners declined to grant Gigon a certificate of qualification.

In response to this intervention, the Sandwich Board of Trustees, all of whom were Canayan, appealed to the local superintendent who conveyed their concerns to the Provincial Council of Public Instruction. Along with their supporters, the trustees organized a counter-petition. Among their arguments, they stated that the town had repeatedly attempted to find a bilingual schoolmaster to no avail. In addition, they emphasized that the district was composed of families who spoke French exclusively. The petitioners noted that in spite of Gigon’s inability to speak English, he was still a competent and committed educator of the French language who could reopen a school in their district.<sup>7</sup>

At its meeting on April 25, 1851, the members of the Provincial Council of Instruction discussed the issue, and inserted the following clause in the qualification guidelines for school teachers.

In regard to teachers of French or German, that a knowledge of French or German grammar be substituted for a knowledge of English grammar, and that the certificate of the teacher be expressly limited accordingly.<sup>8</sup>

The Council then informed the County Boards of Canada West that no guidelines in the School Act could deny employment to such a qualified teacher. J. George Hodgins,

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<sup>6</sup> Education Department of Ontario, *Sessional Papers No.7*, 1889.

<sup>7</sup> C.B. Sissons, *Bilingual Schools in Canada*, (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1917), pp.17-18.

<sup>8</sup> Sissons, p.22

Deputy to the Superintendent of Education, later wrote to J. McMullin, Chief Inspector of Essex County, to clarify the stance issued by the Provincial Council in the Gigon affair.

Mr. Gigon having complied with these conditions, as intimated in a letter I have received from the secretary of the County Board, the Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada has sanctioned a liberal construction of the programme for the examination and classification of teachers, making the term 'English' controvertible with 'French', where it applies and when applied to French candidates for the examination by the County board. The examination should of course be limited to teaching in the French language.<sup>9</sup>

This intervention by the Provincial Council of Instruction served as a precedent for the recognition of French as a legal language of instruction. Gigon was subsequently hired as the teacher of the school in Sandwich.<sup>10</sup>

This dispute over the language of instruction in Sandwich was significant, for it exposed divisions among the area's francophones. This early school controversy revealed that not all French speakers in Sandwich believed in the merits of an education for their children in the mother tongue. While some *Canayens* clearly believed that an education in English was absolutely essential for their children, not all of their compatriots shared this conviction, for many expressed gratitude for the mere opportunity to educate their children in the mother tongue. This initial conflict over language would serve as a precursor to future divisions among francophones over the use of French in the schools.

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<sup>9</sup> Sissons, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> It is likely that for practical purposes as well as for political reasons, Gigon was hired. The outlying pioneer community was still a considerable distance from most other Canadian municipalities of size and this likely discouraged many from settling here in an era of slow transportation. The Grand Trunk and Great Western Railways had yet to be built.

## Francophone Migration and Settlement Patterns in the Windsor Border Region

Francophone migration to the Windsor Border Region took place in two main waves. The French Crown sponsored the first group of settlers principally from the Montreal area to cultivate the land after the foundation of Fort Detroit. Following their initial settlement in 1748, the farmers spread out to occupy the best farm land on the Detroit river front. Starting at Petite Côte, southwest of present-day Windsor, the settlers spread south onto the River Canard and into Malden township where a new British military fort was erected at Amherstburg in 1796; a second group moved north-eastward settling primarily on Detroit river shores of what is present-day Windsor. Impressed by the orchards of abundant pear and peach trees lining the shores of the Detroit River, they occupied the waterfront lots that were to become the border cities of Sandwich, Windsor, and Walkerville. Some ventured still further east seeking out lands in Sandwich East township and in what would become Tecumseh, Belle River, Stoney Point and Paincourt in neighbouring Kent County. Old pioneer family names can still be found today in the telephone directories of these towns.<sup>11</sup> For the purposes of this study, this population of old Detroit French will be referred to as the *Canayens*.<sup>12</sup> In spite of their rapid acquisition of farm land, most of these early settlers made their living in the lucrative fur trade.<sup>13</sup> In

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<sup>11</sup> The author determined the old family names by cross referencing four vital sources: the Assumption Catholic parish registry of Sandwich which dates back to 1770; the St. Jean Baptiste parish registry which dates back to 1803; and the River Canard parish registry of St. Joseph's on microfilm which dates to the 1850s. These names were then compared to the names supplied from French colonial records as consulted and included in E.J. Lajeunesse's work, *Windsor Border Region*. These early settlers are referred to as *Canayens*.

<sup>12</sup> This term was used by both Father Lucien Beaudoin and Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre, as well as some of the older parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake in Sandwich East in reference to themselves.

<sup>13</sup> For more on the early settlement of the region see Lina Gouger, "Le peuplement fondateur de Détroit, 1701-1765", (Ph.D. thesis, Université Laval, 2002).

1820, there were fewer than 4000 francophone inhabitants in the province of Upper Canada, with the overwhelming majority residing in Essex and Kent counties.<sup>14</sup> By 1901, that local French-speaking population had grown to more than 16,000.<sup>15</sup>

The second migratory wave appears to have begun very modestly at the end of the 1820s, as a growing number of Quebec farmers and labourers sought opportunities in Michigan and Essex and Kent counties.<sup>16</sup> This wave accelerated with the expansion of the logging industry coupled with the eventual construction of the Michigan Central and Great Western Railway in the early 1850s attracting a torrent of Quebec settlers. Migrants came from Lotbinière, Rimouski, Beauport, Berthier, Maskinongé, Joliette, Laprairie and Napierville and settled in a band stretching primarily from Tecumseh to Belle River to Paincourt on the coast of Lake St. Clair.<sup>17</sup> The greatest concentration appeared to cluster together in Rochester and Tilbury North townships in Essex County, and Dover township in Kent County.<sup>18</sup> This migration continued well into the second decade of the 20th century as new settlers purchased farms or found work in the growing industries of the border cities. These settlers tripled the French-speaking population of

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<sup>14</sup> Cornelius Jaenen, "L'Ancien Régime au pays d'en haut", *Les Franco-Ontariens*, (Ottawa: Les presses universitaires de l'université d'Ottawa, 1993), p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> Canada, *Report on the Census*, 1901.

<sup>16</sup> A series of obituaries in the early 1910s commemorate the deaths of certain pioneer families from Quebec who arrived in the Windsor border region in the late 1820s.

<sup>17</sup> Madeleine Leal, ed. *La Paroisse Saint-Joachim*, (Windsor: Chamberlain Press, 1982). This work identifies Quebec migrants as having purchased farms and settled permanently in the St. Joachim area by the early 1850s.

<sup>18</sup> Leal, pp. 220-1. A few *Canayen* families like Mailloux and Reaume appear persistently throughout the northeastern bilingual belt of Essex, while others appear intermittently like Labadie, Renaud, Parent and Lesperance.

the region by 1871<sup>19</sup>. Local missionaries noted that their isolated lives were burdened with periodic hardships, reckless pleasure and faithlessness.<sup>20</sup>

From the 1850s onwards the steady stream of Quebec migrants strengthened the francophone character of the French Canadian villages of North Essex and Dover Township in Kent. These migrant workers eventually earned enough money to purchase farms of their own as the forests were cleared in Sandwich East, Rochester, Tilbury North and Dover townships. Father Gobeil remarked on the surprisingly vigorous French character of the communities : « l'observateur sérieux qui visite la Péninsule, tout particulièrement les comtés de Kent et d'Essex vers les 1890, ne s'y trompe pas et est grandement impressionné par la présence et la vitalité françaises de ce coin de notre province. »<sup>21</sup>

### Economy

In the late 1800s, some of the Canayen pioneers of Essex differed considerably from their French Canadian cousins when it came to agriculture. Many grew some wheat and rye, but due to aboriginal influences and the local conditions of soil and climate, they relied more heavily on the cultivation of corn and tobacco to turn a profit. Part of this population eventually specialized in market gardening on the fertile soils of Petite Cote and coastal portions of Sandwich East township. Many experienced considerable prosperity with their growing access to markets following the frenzy of canal and railway building in the mid-nineteenth century. Integration into the North American food

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<sup>19</sup> Saint-Pierre, p. 220.

<sup>20</sup> Father Carpenay, *Missions*, OMI, Tome IV, 72-73, in Gobeil, 181.

<sup>21</sup> Gobeil, p. 208.

processing market was entrenched with the establishment of Heinz and Green Giant canning factories in Essex County in the late 1800s.<sup>22</sup> Such changes began to link the previously isolated Canayens to the larger English-speaking society.

According to the 1901 and 1911 Census records, aside from farming, some Canayens from the village of Sandwich and the township of Sandwich East around Tecumseh eked out a living from fishing.<sup>23</sup> As the rail terminus at Windsor generated new jobs, a number of Canayens and recent French Canadian arrivals from Quebec laboured on the railway, docks and in the booming housing industry. The most noteworthy feature of this urban francophone population was the considerable number of men who plied carpentry as their trade. In addition to the work in construction, other francophones in the villages and border cities served as shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, bakers, butchers, and even moulders in the growing number of factories. A small professional class consisted of two doctors: a Canayen, Dr. Joseph Réaume, and a French Canadian, Dr. H.N. Casgrain, listing this profession in the city of Windsor in 1901. Dr. Henri Andrain of France served as one of the city's veterinarians. In terms of entrepreneurs, perhaps the most prominent were the Hippolyte Girardot and Jules Robinet families. Both clans hailed from France and established wineries in the town of

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<sup>22</sup> David Welch, "Social Construction of Franco-Ontarian Interests Towards French Language Schooling", (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1988), p. 131; Fernand Ouellet, "Disparités socio-ethniques et hiérarchies de la terre en perspective: Du poste de Détroit aux cantons de Malden et Sandwich, Comté d'Essex (1871)" *Cahiers Charlevoix*, 5, (Sudbury: Prises de Parole, 2002); Fernand Ouellet, *L'Ontario français dans le Canada français avant 1911*, (Sudbury: Éditions Prise de parole, 2005). For more details on Canayen market gardening see Chapter 2.

<sup>23</sup> A group of seven extended Canayen families made a living from fishing in Canada, *Report on the Census, 1901*. Most of these were found in Sandwich East and earned less than 300 dollars a year. Only one Anglophone and two French Canadian men opted for this venture, in the city of Windsor.

Sandwich luring a number of families from the mother country to assist in their endeavour.<sup>24</sup> Two more modest vineyards appeared in Tecumseh under Frenchman S.J. Valdemaire and French Canadian Wallace Lemire respectively. In Walkerville, another successful entrepreneur, Canayen Fred DuMouchelle employed more than ten people at his hotel and generated a handsome income for the times. His establishment employed more than one bartender and hosted visitors in a vicinity not too far removed from the production line of the Hiram Walker Distillery. He was but one of a number of francophone innkeepers who offered hospitality to out of town visitors. French Canadian contractor Euclide Jacques posted one of the highest salaries of any francophone in 1911, declaring an income of \$6000 per annum.<sup>25</sup>

Francophone women in the border cities of Windsor, Walkerville and Sandwich also reported earning an income. In 1901, some adolescent girls earned wages in the local cigar-making factory or as domestics. By 1911, a growing number of young women as young as 14 held well-paying jobs in button, stove, overall, and fur factories as well as the bottling plant of the Hiram Walker distillery, with wages varying from 300 to 600 dollars a year. Still more young women worked from home as seamstresses and dressmakers. A considerable number of widows and single mothers were compelled to operate boarding houses, hotels, and laundries to support their young families throughout

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<sup>24</sup> According to the Census of 1901, 25 households in the town of Sandwich were headed by immigrants from France with a total population of 137; by 1911, that number had dropped to 20 households and just 104 immigrants and their families. Canada, *Report on the Census*, 1901, 1911.

<sup>25</sup> Canada, *Report on the Census*, 1911, Essex North district.

these years.<sup>26</sup> Most of these incomes were modest at best and rarely exceeded 400 dollars a year, about the average salary for men in the region.<sup>27</sup> Just prior to the Great War, an emerging class of young female white collar workers assumed positions as sales clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers. One young woman, Lottie Maheux, the daughter of Quebec migrant Alexandre Maheux reported earning \$500 at her post as a sales clerk in a clothing store. Perhaps the most successful female francophone entrepreneur was Matilda Stephanus, a widow and hotelkeeper, who earned an annual income of \$2000 in 1901. Many adolescent girls and young women like Rose Fortier of Petite Côte took employment as domestics, where wages could fall as low as 100 dollars a year. Often, however, the census taker, listed no source of employment for widows and single mothers. In many of these cases a son's or brother's employment was indicated. In some instances though, especially in Sandwich and Windsor, a daughter was identified simply as a clerk. It was not uncommon for working class francophone girls over 10 to leave home and work as domestics with an English speaking family in either Windsor or Sandwich.

While the border cities attracted significant numbers of family heads who possessed a skilled trade, many men were simply unskilled labourers. Some of these settlers found work on the Great Western and Grand Trunk rail lines. A considerable number worked as day labourers at the Windsor docks or assumed farm labour in Sandwich East township at low wages to support their large families. With the

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<sup>26</sup> A similar situation was reported in Bettina Bradbury, *Class, Culture, Family and the Law: Wife to Widow in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Quebec*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1997); and *Working Families: Age, Gender and Survival in Industrializing Montreal*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> Canada, *Report on the Census, 1901*, Essex North district.

establishment of the Ford Motor Company in Sandwich East, a small number sought better wages in the automobile and construction industries of the border cities. This shift to wage labour likely brought with it cultural changes to the previously rural francophone population. Now time would be marked not by the natural rhythm of the planting cycle, but rather by the rhythm of a punch clock. The control of the means of production associated with the autonomy of farm ownership would now be surrendered to the dictates of an often-anonymous employer.<sup>28</sup>

#### Urbanization, Industrialization and Demographic Change: Sandwich East and Windsor

The people of Essex County began to congregate in villages in the early 1790s, when the British established 121 Loyalist settlers at the site of present day Amherstburg, at the mouth of the Detroit river just south of present-day Windsor. This location was chosen for strategic reasons, since the British military anticipated the American takeover of their fort at Detroit. This new settlement along with the old settlement of Sandwich, and the new village of Richmond (later Windsor) would compete for supremacy on the southern side of the Detroit River. By 1825, all three villages had more than 500 people and serviced the local farming population with skilled tradespeople and professionals. Sandwich specialized in government services, professionals and taverns. Amherstburg, home of the British Fort Malden, featured the most shops, tradesmen and manufactures, while also offering ten taverns to cater to a thirsty military population.<sup>29</sup> The emergence

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<sup>28</sup> For more on the impact of industrialization on traditional oral cultures, see Gerald Friesen, *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication and Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> For more information regarding the urbanization and industrialization of Essex county in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, consult John Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 89-90; see also Appendix 2.6 in Clarke's work, on p. 480.

of Windsor as the chief urban center would take another thirty years. As a depot for the Great Western Railway and due to its close proximity to the American city of Detroit via the river, Windsor provided ideal conditions for growth into an industrial centre. In 1854, Hiram Walker, an American entrepreneur established a distillery for the production of rye and malt whiskey and prompting the emergence of a new village, Walkerville, to the east of Windsor. This venture, coupled with the Great Western railway and river transportation of trade goods spawned the creation of countless jobs for skilled and unskilled labourers alike. By 1901, Windsor and the border cities hosted a total population of more than 15 000.<sup>30</sup> In the ten years that followed the region saw dramatic changes, especially with the establishment of the Ford Motor Company plant in 1904. This industry, accompanied with the appearance of other factories for the production of fur coats, canned food, wire fences, boots and shoes, overalls, buttons, stoves, steel, boxes, brass, cereal, corsets, furniture, asphalt and bridges ignited a veritable economic firestorm throughout the towns of Windsor, Sandwich and Walkerville. The population of the border cities grew from 15 000 souls to just over 23 400 by 1911, and surged to 57 000 by 1921 with the emergence of the new border towns of Ford City in 1912 and Riverside in 1919 in Sandwich East township.<sup>31</sup> This population explosion fuelled the demand for houses, creating an urgent need for skilled and unskilled workers in construction. While many of the newcomers to the city were francophones from the local

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<sup>30</sup> Canada, *Report on the Census, 1901*, v.1, Tables VII and IX.

<sup>31</sup>By 1921, the towns of Sandwich (4415), Windsor(38 591), Walkerville(7059), Ford City (5870), and Riverside (1155) attracted a multi-ethnic population drawn in large part from Eastern Europe, especially Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania prior to World War I. See Canada, *Report on Census, 1921*, Tables VII, XXVI.

area, eastern Ontario and Quebec, more of the new residents were immigrants from the United States, Britain, and Eastern Europe. Between 1901 and 1921, the overwhelmingly francophone proportion of the population of Sandwich East township declined from 82.5% to 53.9% excluding its urban center, the anglophone town of Walkerville. If one factors in this town the decline of the township's francophone population left it in a minority situation, falling from 59.5% to just 35.7%<sup>32</sup> Most of this decline took place in the Sandwich East precincts that became Ford City in 1912, where the francophone population fell from a solid majority to a minority between 1901 and 1921, or from well over 70% to just 45.3%.<sup>33</sup> Ford City would become the only urbanizing district where serious violence erupted involving the French language issue. All of the other urban districts hosted a francophone minority even in 1901.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Windsor border region was in the midst of a dramatic transition. While the city of Sandwich grew modestly, Windsor, Walkerville and Sandwich East township grew dramatically. Sandwich, Windsor and Sandwich East township formed the principle meeting ground between francophones and anglophones. Sandwich East township was still distinguished by a significant

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<sup>32</sup> Sandwich East is centered out because of its emergence as a centre of francophone unrest in 1917-1918 (The Sandwich East municipality of Ford City witnessed a riot over language) . Its population in 1901 was just 2794, if one excludes the single, largely Anglophone town of Walkerville with 2306 francophones or 82.5%. The francophone population was 2608 out of 4389 or 59.5% of the population if one includes Walkerville.

Sandwich East's population grew to 9716 by 1921, if one totals the entire population of the towns of Tecumseh (978), Riverside (1155), Ford City (5870), and the rural areas of Sandwich East (1713) again excluding the anglophone town of Walkerville (7059). The francophone numbers grew to 5238 out of 9716, excluding Walkerville, constituting just 53.9% of the total population in 1921. With Walkerville that number rises to 5994 out of 16775, with francophones declining to 35.7% of the total population of the township. See Canada, *Report on Census*, 1901, Tables VII, IX; 1921, v. I, tables, VII, XXVI.

<sup>33</sup> Ford City registered 2661 residents of French descent out of a total population of 5870 in the Census of 1921. See Canada, *Report on the Census*, 1901, v.1, Tables VII, IX; 1921, v.1, Tables VII, XXVI.

concentration of Canayens in 1901 (Table 1.1.a). According to the census, these Canayens possessed a majority of farms in the township (see Table 1.1.e) and predominated with 1331 individuals, 1020 of whom resided in the parish of Our Lady of the Lake, Ford City, the scene of future tension. These proprietors continued to speak French, as did their children. In spite of this Canayen domination, French Canadians and anglophones also purchased a number of farms in the township. The French Canadians ranked second in population with 949 individuals in this predominantly francophone township, with 565 residing in the Ford City parish. While their population could be found throughout the area, it was concentrated primarily in Tecumseh.

**1.1.a. Population Breakdown and French Language Retention Rates of Sandwich East township (minus Tecumseh and Walkerville), 1901**

Total Rural Sandwich East Population: 2052	Total Population of French Descent: 1599
Total Francophone Population: 1566	French Language Retention Rate: 97.9%
Cultural Group	Population
Canayens	1020
French Canadians	565
Anglophone Protestant	290
IRC	63
African Canadians	44
Others	56
French	14

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.1.b. Population Breakdown and French Language Retention Rates of Sandwich East township (minus Tecumseh and Walkerville parishes) 1911**

Total Rural Sandwich East Population: 3074	Total Population of French Descent: 2184
Total Francophone Population 2049	French Language Retention Rate: 93.8%
Cultural Grouping	Population
Canayens	1116
French Canadians	979
Anglophone Protestant	691
Irish Catholic	98

French	45
Franco-American	44
Other	101

Source: Canada Census, 1911

**1.1.c. Population Breakdown and French Language Retention Rates of Walkerville /Sandwich East Catholics (minus Tecumseh), 1911**

Total Catholic Population: 3226 <sup>34</sup>	Total Population of French descent: 2679
Total francophone population: 2511	French language retention rate: 93.7%
% of francophones/Catholics :75.2%	
Cultural grouping	Population
Canayens	1304
French Canadians	1228
Non-Irish Anglophone Catholics <sup>35</sup>	254
Irish	195
Franco-Americans	96
French/Belgian	51
Others	93

Source: Canada Census, 1911

**1.1.d. Population Breakdown of the Anglophone Catholics of Our Lady of the Lake Parish, 1911**

Irish	195
Anglicized French	173
English	149
Germans	44
Americans	22
Others	39

Source: Canada Census, 1911

The non-francophone proportion of Sandwich East grew considerably between 1901 and 1911. (Tables 1.1.b-d) This demographic shift impacted in a special manner upon the traditional rural francophone Catholic parish of Our Lady of the Lake. An

<sup>34</sup> This total represents all Catholics identified in Walkerville and Sandwich East with the exception of Tecumseh (Census district #50), which constituted a separate Catholic parish. It is not clear how many of these Catholics actually practiced their faith. These figures include the Walkerville Catholics soon to be separated into a new parish.

<sup>35</sup> This figure does not include 173 anglicized Catholics of French descent.

examination of the entire Catholic population of Sandwich East including Walkerville (but excluding Tecumseh) illustrates the considerable growth of the English-speaking segment, with the Irish Catholic numbers growing to nearly 200, and the number of anglicized French Catholics rising to 173 parishioners.(Table 1.1.d) As for the Anglophone population as a whole, census numbers suggest that for the rural districts of Sandwich East, this linguistic group jumped from 397 out of 2062 or 19.2% of the total population in 1901 (Table 1.1.a) to at least 789 out of 3074 or 25.7% in 1911. (Table 1.1.b) Perhaps the most significant aspect in this demographic change was the proportional decline of the Canayen population of the rural Sandwich East districts belonging to Our Lady of the Lake Parish. In 1901, 1020 of the 2062 individuals enumerated in these districts were Canayen, or roughly half of the total population.(Table 1.1.a) By 1911, there were 1116 Canayens out of a total population of 3074 residents, or just 36.3% of the total. In contrast, the French Canadian population of Sandwich East nearly doubled, jumping from 565 residents or 27.4% in 1901, to 979 or 31.8% in 1911. Could the increasing proportion of French Canadians have altered the existing atmosphere at Our Lady of the Lake at the very time when Anglophone numbers in the parish were growing?

Aside from francophones, most of the remaining residents were of English or Scottish background. However, African Canadians appeared in smaller numbers, working primarily as farm labourers in Sandwich East, with only one farm falling into their proprietorship by the end of the nineteenth century. Only 4 Irish families owned farms in the entire township. Similarly, by 1911, only four families from France owned

farmland in the township. Two of these families, the Bontrons and the Brutinots, would become prominent during the language struggles in the emerging city of Ford.

The emerging urban industrial nature of Sandwich East also impacted upon farm proprietorship. In 1901, 192 farms were reported on the census rolls, with the exception of Tecumseh, the home of St. Anne's parish (Table 1.1.e). By 1911, farm proprietorship had declined to just 157 farms. Out of the 35 farms sold, two-thirds of the transactions, or 23, involved long-held Canayen homesteads, likely on choice riverfront lots or properties adjoining the industrial park between Drouillard and Walker roads. Twelve transactions, or approximately one-third, involved Anglophone farmers. Interestingly enough, the number of French Canadian farms remained unchanged in 1911 at 53. (Table 1.1.e) This persistent French Canadian numbers could be explained a number of ways; either French Canadians were more reluctant to sell, they possessed a greater hunger to possess choice farm land regardless of the expense, or they were beginning to speculate in real estate. It is unclear how these social changes- the disappearance of family farms, the appearance of factories, and the arrival of non-francophone strangers in a long-entrenched community- impacted on the Canayen settlers. Is it plausible to imagine the Canayen population embracing the changes with excitement, or resisting the changes by holding tightly to all that was familiar to them: family, the farm, the church, and the French language? The Census rolls suggest that much of the younger francophone population, Canayen and French Canadian jumped at the new employment opportunities. In 1911, the overwhelming majority of the new industrial jobs held by the residents of Sandwich East fell into the hands of young adults. The high wages, often double the

earnings of the traditional farmers, likely lured many youths away from this lifestyle and into an English-speaking factory environment. There are some indications that the older generation of francophone farmers disliked these dramatic changes to their community.

**1.1.e. Sandwich East Township Total Farm Proprietorship, 1901/1911 (minus Tecumseh)**

	1901	1911
Total Farms	192	157
Canayen	102	79
French Canadian	53	53
Anglophones	30	19
IRC	4	1
French	2	4
Other	1	2

Source: Canada Census, 1901, 1911

The Canayen and French Canadian working class of Windsor and Sandwich East was remarkable for its rapid growth and heterogeneous nature. For example, in Our Lady of the Lake Parish, 250 workers headed francophone households compared to just 132 farmers by 1911; the remaining 29 men declared fishing as their livelihood. Significant numbers of young francophone men found employment at the Peabody Bridge works (79), the Ford Motor Company (60), carpentry and construction (31), and Walker's Distillery (20); young women found employment at a variety of smaller factories, including a brewery, overall factory, and fenceworks to name a few. (See Appendix C, Tables 1.9.1a-f) In just ten short years, the composition of Our Lady of the Lake was shifting from a predominantly rural and francophone parish to a far more complex multicultural community divided not just by language, but by social class and quite likely, by generational opinions regarding the future of the French language. It was into this changing atmosphere that tensions over this issue would explode.

The situation for francophones in Windsor also reflected change between 1901 and 1911. While the French Canadian population grew considerably and overtook the older Canayen population to form more than half the total French-speaking population (see Tables 1.6.a-b), the arrival of a small group of Franco-Americans in search of work illustrated the truly diverse nature of this community. Like the situation in Walkerville and Sandwich East, the francophone population of Windsor was overwhelmingly working class by 1911. No profession could boast more francophone numbers than carpentry, with 129 or 10% of the total working francophone population. (See Appendix 1, Table 1.9) The Ford Motor Company, the Peabody bridge works, the railway and construction industry, along with smaller factories all employed considerable numbers of male workers. However, 20% of all francophones reporting employment in the city were women, primarily under the age of 30. Traditional spheres like nursing and teaching were largely occupied by religious orders, leaving lay women to find work as dressmakers, book keepers, stenographers, and store clerks. A total of 25 women even reported employment in Walker's distillery or other factories. (See Appendix 1, Table 1.9.f) Francophones in the border cities were integrating into an English-speaking work world. Their adjustment to this new world may have caused a degree of anxiety.

## Intermarriage and Language Transfer Rates at the Turn of the Twentieth Century<sup>36</sup>

There appears to be considerable evidence that the Canayen and French Canadians were intermarrying, as evidenced by the names of Canayen in-laws in the homes of French Canadian fathers. This practice was largely limited to Windsor and the border cities. The rate of intermarriage in the Canayen villages with English speakers was still modest in 1901. In the villages of McGregor and River Canard, thirteen mixed marriages occurred out of a total of 177 francophone households.(Table 1.1.f)

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<sup>36</sup> Using census statistics to determine language transfer rates poses problems. For example, the researcher must take into consideration the biases of the enumerator, since they recorded the information rather than each citizen. Is it possible that some had an agenda to show the “muscle” of the French speaking community by using numbers? The same vulnerability to bias could conversely be attributed to an enumerator less sympathetic to the French speaking community. In addition, the answers of the respondents may not always have been accurate or honest. Census statistics do not indicate a significant rate of language transfer, in spite of the express concerns of leading francophones in the area. Is it possible that people were already surrendering the use of French in the home at this time? One possible indicator could be found in the census-for the language spoken by preschool children. In a truly bilingual household or anglicizing environment, the child would pick up English even before school. The 1901 census numbers indicate that most preschoolers could only speak French, suggesting that in fact, French remained the preponderant language in the overwhelming number of francophone households. This of course presupposes that a proud French Canadian would not see it as a badge of shame to announce to an enumerator that he/she allowed the use of English in the household, something militants deplored from the pulpit and the press. For this study, to determine language transfer rates among francophones, all families with at least one francophone parent were examined to determine the passage of the mother tongue onto the children. This naturally leaves out those families who declared their origins to be French but spoke no French. Most of these families came from the United States. The goal of this study is to determine the extent to which the Windsor border region served as an incubator for language transfer. Therefore these families do not need to be considered. Efforts to use the 1911 Census were even more problematic, since the questions regarding language changed. In 1901, a specific box was checked to indicate whether a citizen spoke English and whether they spoke French. In 1911, the Census changed methods, replacing this clear method with a more vague box entitled, “Language most commonly spoken”. Many families with French names were listed as speaking French, even though they had clearly appeared as bilingual in the previous census. In other words, even though the census enumerators were directed to indicate with an “E” and an “F” those individuals capable of speaking both languages, some enumerators only indicated one language commonly spoken for everyone cited, giving no indication that respondents might speak a second language. Other enumerators indicated whether the respondents were capable of speaking more than one language. In addition, many of the 1911 census records for the Windsor border region are in poor condition, and time has destroyed the legibility of certain columns including the language spoken and the rate of illiteracy among respondents. Fortunately, 1911 statistics were legible for Windsor and Sandwich East to compare language transfer rates in urban areas between 1901 and 1911.

**1.1.f. Exogamous Relationships and Language Transfer in Canayen Villages (1901)**  
**McGregor and River Canard /Anderdon Township**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 177
Mixed marriages 13
Families maintaining French 4
Families choosing English 9
English households with 2 francophone parents 0

Source : Canada Census, 1901

Out of these marriages, nine opted to raise their children in English only, meaning a mere 30.8% French language retention rate for exogamous relationships, and a 94.9% retention rate for all families with one or more francophone parents. In the neighbouring Canayen community of Petite Côte, the 91 francophone households were largely homogeneous, with only one couple, Leo Pagé and his wife raising their five children in English only, representing a French retention rate of 99.2%.(Table 1.1.i)

**Population Breakdown and French Language Retention Rates in the Canayen Villages of Northwestern Essex County**

**1.1.g. McGregor/Anderdon Township subdistrict b-4, 1901**

Total population : 547	Total population of French descent : 432
Total francophone population : 420	French language retention rate : 97.2%
%of francophones/Total pop. : 76.8%	
Canayens	278
French Canadians	154
Anglophones	72
Irish Catholics	5
Others	38

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.1.h. River Canard/Anderdon Township subdistrict b-3, 1901**

Total Population : 605	Total population of French descent : 499
Total francophone population : 468	French language retention rate : 93.8%
%of francophones/Total pop. : 77.4%	
Canayens	333
French Canadians	166
Anglophones	72
Wyandottes	25

Negroes	6
Irish Catholics	3

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.1.i. Petite Côte (Lasalle)/Sandwich West Township, 1901**

Total Population : 634	Total population of French descent : 605
Total francophone population : 600	French language retention rate : 99.2%
%of francophones/Total pop. : 94.6%	
Canayens	478
French Canadians	127
Anglophones	15
Irish Catholics	7
African Canadians	7

Source : Canada Census, 1901

In all francophone communities, intermarriage with non-francophones was a major contributing factor for language transfers to appear. In Sandwich East township, the town of Walkerville listed 13 mixed marriages with families and eight chose to pass on the English language alone to their children (Table 1.2.a). Just outside of Walkerville, the three neighbouring rural districts identified 30 exogamous relationships with nine families raising some if not all of their children to be unilingually English (Tables 1.2.b-e). Most of these mixed marriages, 18 out of 30, occurred among residents of polling station #4, the most urban and diverse of the three districts; this locality would become Ford City. This same district hosted six mixed families showing signs of language transfer. The most rural district, Sandwich East polling precinct #2 produced no mixed marriages at all and French proved to be most resilient here. Area francophones found support from their pastor Father Lucien Beaudoin, a passionate crusader for the French language and the Catholic faith. Throughout the entire township, only one francophone couple, the Montreuil of precinct #4, who operated a hotel near the town of Walkerville,

raised their offspring to speak only English.<sup>37</sup> The constant presence of anglophone visitors may have compelled the couple to rely exclusively on English for the comfort of their guests.

**1.2. Endogamous and Exogamous Marriages in Sandwich East**  
**Language Transfer Rates in Francophone-Non-Francophone Marriages (1901)**

**1.2.a. Town of Walkerville**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 105
Mixed marriages with families : 13
Mixed families with all children maintaining French : 2
Mixed families with some children maintaining French : 3
Mixed families choosing English : 8
English households with 2 francophone parents : 1

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.2.b. Sandwich East Polling Station #1**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 90
Mixed marriages/families 6
Mixed families with all children maintaining French 3
Mixed families with some children maintaining French 2
Mixed families choosing English 1
English households with 2 francophone parents 0

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.2.c. Sandwich East Polling Station #2**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 71
Mixed marriages 0
Mixed families with all children maintaining French : 0
Mixed families with some children maintaining French : 0
Mixed families choosing English : 0
English households with 2 francophone parents 0

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.2.d. Sandwich East Polling Station #4**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 115
Mixed marriages 18
Mixed families maintaining French 13

<sup>37</sup> Of course, it is absolutely impossible to determine how many francophones spoke on a regular basis in English to each other in a family or social setting. Reports in *Le Progrès* and *Le Clairon*, and reports from militants like Lucien Beaudoin and Gaspard Pacaud of Windsor suggest that this was a bone of contention between French language militants and the local population. *Le Progrès*, le 26 février, 1885; *Le Clairon*, October 25, 1913.

Mixed families choosing English 5
English households with 2 francophone parents 1
Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.2.e. Tecumseh (Sandwich East Polling Station #3)**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 143
Mixed marriages 6
Mixed families maintaining French 5
Mixed families choosing English 1
English households with 2 francophone parents 0
Source : Canada Census, 1901

Tecumseh was the most francophone section of Sandwich East township. Out of 150 households listed in the census, only six identified English as their mother tongue (Table 1.3.g) including one mixed marriage, four English couples, and one Irish Canadian one. Five other mixed marriages were reported, all of whom passed French onto all of their children; two of these involved Canayen fathers : Mailloux and Letourneau. (Table 1.2.e) In Tecumseh, one could also find five men born in France with Canadian wives: two farmers, one wine maker, one fruit farmer and one merchant. Only one French-born woman, Louise Lemire was found. Her husband, Wallace Lemire, operated one of two vineyards in Tecumseh. A total of 61 Canayen households were found, as were 73 French Canadian homes. As for homesteads, 23 farms were held by Canayens, while forty-four rested in the hands of French Canadians. Only one English farmer could be found, Almeda Clapp, a widow with five children.

Among the rural section of Essex County where French Canadians predominated, the statistics failed to unveil any serious signs of language transfer. However, in the lakefront communities of Belle River (Rochester township) and Stoney Point (Tilbury North township) an interesting francophone mixture appeared. Census rolls continued to

record the presence of some Canayen names, concentrated in the earliest and latest lots, and likely anchored to the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair and Belle River.<sup>38</sup> However, by 1901, the vast majority of family names on the census rolls of these villages bore little resemblance to the older border communities. Indeed, the census indicates that a considerable number of these families were either first or second generation Quebeckers. In the case of Belle River more than 70% and St. Joachim more than 80% of the pioneer population possessed names that were French Canadian and not Canayen in origin (Tables 1.3.a-b). These settlers occupied much of Rochester and Tilbury North township, as well as Tilbury East and Dover townships in Kent county. Aside from the towns of Paincourt and Tilbury, where a few Canayen families resided, between 85 and 95% of the francophone families drew their roots from nineteenth century Quebec society. St. Joachim, Stoney Point (Table 1.3.c) and Tilbury North township polling station #2 stand out for their francophone preponderance, with the latter holding a population that was more than ninety percent of recent French Canadian stock.(see Table 1.3.d)

**1.3. Population Breakdown and French Language Retention Rates in the French Canadian Villages of Essex North and Kent, 1901**

**1.3.a. Belle River/Rochester Township**

Total Population : 593	Total population of French descent : 485
Total francophone population : 474	French language retention rate : 97.7%
%francophones/Total pop. : 80%	
Canayens	139
French Canadians	339
Anglophones	50

<sup>38</sup> In the case of Tecumseh in particular, only old Canayens supported their families through fishing. This would have required easy access to the water. As new lots opened for settlement, many of the occupants' names no longer corresponded with those of the original inhabitants.

Irish Catholic	50
Undetermined francophones	13
Other	8
French	7

Source : Canada Census, 1901

### **1.3.b. St. Joachim/Rochester Township**

Total population : 700	Total population of French descent : 680
Total francophone population : 680	French language retention rate : 100%
%francophones/Total pop. : 97.1%	
Canayens	114
French Canadians	553
Anglophones	5
Irish Catholics	10
French	13
Danish	5

Source : Canada Census, 1901

### **1.3.c. Stoney Point/Tilbury North Township**

Total population : 636	Total population of French descent : 613
Total francophone population : 613	French language retention rate : 100%
%francophones/Total pop. : 96.4%	
Canayens	219 <sup>39</sup>
French Canadians	391
Anglophones	10
Irish Catholics	9
Others	4
French	3

Source : Canada Census, 1901

### **1.3.d. Tilbury North Township Polling Station #2**

Total population : 354	Total population of French descent : 329
Total francophone population : 329	French language retention rate : 100%
%francophones/Total population : 92.9%	
Canayens	5
French Canadians	324 (91.5%)
Anglophones	25

Source : Canada Census, 1901

<sup>39</sup> 14 Families with Canayen names were headed by a mother born in Quebec (including 76 family members-therefore the FC numbers could be reclassified as 467 and the Canayen numbers 143 if the mother was the predominant figure of the household).

**1.3.e. Paincourt/Dover Township (Kent County)**

Total population : 336	Total population of French descent : 253
Total francophone population : 226	French language retention rate : 89.3%
%francophones/Total pop. : 67.3%	
Canayens	89
French Canadians	164
Anglophones	66
Irish Catholic	17

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.3.f. Tilbury Village Essex/Kent Counties**<sup>40</sup>

Total population: 1101	Total population of French descent: 266
Total francophone population: 264	French language retention rate: 99.2%
%francophones/Total pop.: 24%	
Anglophones	793
French Canadians	238
Irish Catholics	37
Canayens	28
Other	5

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.3.g. Tecumseh/Sandwich East Polling Station #3**

Total population : 743	Total population of French descent : 723
Total francophone population : 720	French language retention rate : 99.6%
%francophones/Total pop. : 96.9%	
Canayens	311
French Canadians	384
French	28
Anglophones	17
Irish Catholics	3

Source : Canada Census, 1901

All of the rural communities mentioned above were characterized by their relative French Catholic homogeneity. The towns of Belle River, Paincourt and Tilbury were the exceptions (see Tables 1.3.a, 1.3.e, 1.3.f). These communities had a considerable number

<sup>40</sup> Geographically, the town of Tilbury straddles the Essex and Kent County borders with more than half the population on the Essex county side.

of anglophones, who worked primarily in the skilled trades, farming, the grain trade, commerce or hotel business; they also experienced some degree of intermarriage. As elsewhere, intermarriage was a necessary condition for signs of language transfer to appear. The 1901 rolls indicate that in predominantly francophone Belle River, ten mixed couples out of thirteen in the village passed French on to their children.<sup>41</sup> The situation in the village of Paincourt in Kent County was different, since only six mixed couples out of eleven still passed French onto their children (see Table 1.4.a). In Tilbury, a town that straddled the Essex-Kent county line, anglophones formed a clear majority. Here four mixed couples out of seven opted for English as the sole language of the household. There were no cases where a francophone couple failed to pass French on to their children in these communities. (see Table 1.4.b)<sup>42</sup>

**1.4.a. Paincourt/ Dover Township Kent County**

Mixed marriages 11
Mixed families maintaining French 6
Mixed families choosing English 5
English households with francophone parents 0
<b>1.4.b. Tilbury Village Kent County/Essex County</b>
Mixed marriages 6
Mixed families maintaining French 5
Mixed families choosing English 1
English households with francophone parents 0

Source : Canada Census, 1901

Five of the seven most homogeneous francophone communities of the Windsor Border region were found east and northeast of Windsor: Tecumseh, where 96.9% of

<sup>41</sup> This leaves two couples remaining. They did not have children.

<sup>42</sup> From a statistical point of view, these numbers of course are really too small to be considered as scientifically valid.

residents were French-speaking (Table 1.3.g); St. Joachim, where 97.1% of residents were francophone (Table 1.3.b); Stoney Point, where 96.4% of residents declared themselves to be French-speaking (Table 1.3.c); Tilbury North precinct #2 where 92.9% of the population was francophone (Table 1.3.d); and Dover Township precinct # 5 in Kent County where more than 87% of the area's people were francophone(table 1.5.b). French Canadians predominated in all five of these locations, with the last two districts distinguished by the considerable number of Quebec-born parents.<sup>43</sup> In Tilbury North polling station #2, 40 of 55 francophone families had at least one parent born in Quebec; and 33 such cases existed in Dover polling station #5's 146 families. In the case of Tilbury North, no mixed marriages with anglophones occurred. In the Dover precinct assessed, only three mixed marriages occurred, two of them with children. In both cases, French was not passed on to the offspring. This area was also known for an elevated number of unilingual francophones. It was in the French Canadian strongholds of Tilbury North and Dover Townships that the resistance to Regulation XVII persisted the longest, lasting seven or eight years. No such long-term public opposition to the French language restrictions or the Protestant school inspector manifested itself elsewhere in Essex or Kent counties.

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<sup>43</sup> The other two locations, Petite Côte and Sandwich East polling station #2, were predominately Canayen in their make-up, and registered francophone majorities of 94.6% and 91.3% respectively. For the case of Petite Côte, see Table 1.1.j. While polling stations and precincts were not necessarily legally recognized communities or municipalities, these francophones shared a common language, parish, and were neighbours. Many of them had children attending a common school, and some of these families were related either by blood or marriage.

**1.5. Population Breakdown and French Language Retention in Rural French Canadian Communities in Northeastern Essex County and Kent County**

**1.5.a. Tilbury North Township Polling Station #4**

Total population : 406	Total population of French descent : 295
Total francophone population : 295	French language retention rate : 100%
%francophones/total population : 72.7%	
Canayens	16
French Canadians	279
Anglophones	94
Irish Catholics	17

Source : Canada Census, 1901

**1.5.b. Dover Township Polling Station #5**

Total population : 806	Total population of French descent : 710
Total francophone population : 702	French language retention rate : 98.9%
%francophones/Total population : 87.1%	
Canayens	99
French Canadians	611
Anglophones	82
Irish Catholics	14

Source : Canada Census, 1901

The signs of language transfer become more noticeable in the cities of Sandwich, Windsor and Walkerville. In all three border towns, a correlation existed between endogamous francophone couples and the level of French language retention. A clear majority of such couples declared themselves to be bilingual, and reported passing French on to all of their children, as was the case in rural areas. Only ten recorded cases could be found where francophone parents opted not to raise their children with a knowledge of French : eight in Windsor and one each in Walkerville and Sandwich. The most measurable cases of language transfer in the census involved families with one francophone and one non-francophone parent. In Walkerville, out of thirteen mixed couples appearing in the 1901 census records, only two families passed on the French

language to all of their children(see Table 1.2.a).<sup>44</sup> One francophone household, that of hotelkeepers Fred and Jane DuMouchelle was likely predominantly English, since it hosted ten domestics and 17 boarders, most of whom could only speak English.

The city of Windsor was no more conducive to fostering French than the town of Walkerville. In 1901, only 12.3% of Windsor's population identified themselves as francophone.<sup>45</sup> Almost half of all French speakers had Canayen names, with nearly 40% being French Canadian. Among this minority, more than twenty percent of families with at least one francophone parent showed signs of language transfer (Table 1.6.a). This phenomenon was slightly more pronounced among Canayen families than those of French Canadian background (see Table 1.6.a). Mixed marriages with non-francophones increased the chances of linguistic integration considerably. Out of 93 mixed marriages, English became the common and sole medium of expression for 61 of these relationships(see Tables 1.7.a-d).<sup>46</sup> Only 13 families (14%) reported that all of their children conserved the mother tongue of their French-speaking parent. The rate of language transfer was greatest in Ward 2, the city centre with the greatest population

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<sup>44</sup> The census takers never consider whether the failure to speak a language implied an inability to understand the parent's mother tongue.

The census did uncover 8 cases in the city of Windsor where a family with two francophone parents did not pass the language on to the children. Bookseller Victor Marentette and his wife Delphine raised their oldest child in French but opted to raise the younger children in English only. Not all of these cases involved Canayen families uninterested in preserving the old culture-only four of the eight. Shoemakers Regis and Allie Asslin of Quebec opted not to pass French on to their children. Labourer James Girard and his spouse Catherine of Ward 4 in Windsor were both born in France, but they chose to raise all four of their children in their second language, rather than teach them their mother tongue.

<sup>45</sup> According to the 1901 census, there were at least 1498 francophones in Windsor (see Table 1.6.a) out of a total city population of 12 153. Just over half of this population was Canayen (52.5%), with French Canadians making up 42%, and the French registering just under 3% of the francophone numbers.

<sup>46</sup> Of these 93 mixed francophone-non-francophone marriages with children in Windsor, the majority, 48 of them were also mixed Protestant-Catholic marriages (see Table 2.1.b-2.1e). Most of these families raised their children in the Catholic faith. Just over half of the mixed Catholic marriages sampled occurred between Irish and French. Ten mixed marriages were recorded without children.

density. It was here that all but three of 28 mixed families (89%) opted for English as the sole medium of household communication(see Table 1.7.b). This ward also produced four of the eight cases of English households with two francophone parents in Windsor. The city also proved to have the worst record for French language retention rates, since more than 20% of those of French descent spoke only English.

**1.6. Population Samples of Municipalities with a Considerable Francophone Minority in Essex**

**1.6.a. Windsor 1901 Census**

Total population: 12 153	Total population of French descent: 2133
Total francophone population: 1498	French language retention rate: 70.2%
%francophones/Total pop.: 12.3%	
Canayens	787
French Canadians	629
French	41
Undetermined francophone <sup>47</sup>	41

Source: Canada Census, 1901

**1.6.b. Windsor 1911 Census**

Total population: 17 829	Total population of French descent: 4113 <sup>48</sup>
Total francophone population: 3168 <sup>49</sup>	French language retention rate: 76.4%
%Francophones/Total pop.: 17.8%	
French Canadians	2125
Canayens	1683
Franco-Americans	166 <sup>50</sup>
Belgian/French	30
Mixed	84 <sup>51</sup>
Undetermined nuns	56
Total	4144

<sup>47</sup> Forty-one French-speaking nuns were enumerated in Windsor-none of whom indicated their family names, making it impossible to determine their sub-cultural origin.

<sup>48</sup>This figure is drawn from Canada, *Report on the Census, 1911*. My compilations put the actual total at 4144.

<sup>49</sup> This number denotes the actual number of people identified as “French Canadian” in the 1911 census who specifically indicated an ability to speak French.

<sup>50</sup> Three Franco-American families, the Campeaus, Rivards and Reaumes were the only families from Detroit with old Canayen names. The remaining 26 names find their origins elsewhere, and were more likely to find their roots in Quebec, if not France.

<sup>51</sup> Mixed families were usually those families with Canayen names where the mother was born in Quebec, and thus constituted with certainty, a mixed Canayen-French Canadian family.

Source : Canada Census, 1911

**1.6.c. Town of Sandwich (1901)**

Total population: 1450	Total population of French descent: 714
Total francophone population: 582	French language retention rate: 84.8% <sup>52</sup>
%Francophones/Total pop.: 40.1%	
Canayens	200
French Canadians	245
French	137
Undetermined <sup>53</sup>	56

Source: Canada Census, 1901

**1.7. Exogamous Relationships/Mixed families and Language Transfer among Francophones in Windsor and the town of Sandwich, 1901**

**1.7.a. Windsor Ward 1**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent: 61
Mixed marriages/families : 13
Mixed Families with all children maintaining French : 4
Mixed Families with some children maintaining French : 2
Mixed Families choosing English : 7
English homes with 2 francophone parents : 0

**1.7.b. Windsor Windsor Ward 2**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 87
Mixed marriages/families : 28
Mixed Families with all children maintaining French : 3

<sup>52</sup> The overall rate of francophone language transfer in the smaller town of Sandwich seems to have been lower than that of Windsor. The settlement pattern of Sandwich is noteworthy, since a significant number of French immigrant families, 25 in total, worked for the Robinet and Girardot families as labourers in their vineyards and lived in close proximity. In addition, French Canadian and Canayen families had a tendency to cluster together far more in this old town than was the case in Windsor, where families tended to be spread out more evenly among their Anglophone neighbours. This pattern might help to explain the significantly lower rate of linguistic integration, and the significantly higher rate of language retention among francophones. In spite of this, French Canadians in Sandwich were more likely to enter into a mixed marriage with an Anglophone than were Canayens, which could help to explain their lower rate of language retention. Out of 1450 residents in Sandwich, 582 can be identified with certainty as francophones, constituting 40.1% of the population.

<sup>53</sup> Most of these individuals had a non-French surname, making it difficult to classify them. Some of these individuals indicated French as their "nationality", but were born in Ontario, while others indicated another "nationality", like English or Scottish. All of these individuals were indicated as French-speakers. There is evidence to indicate that some of these families were bicultural (i.e. mother's first name). If one removes these French speakers the francophone numbers for Sandwich drops from 638 to 582. This is the minimum number of francophones that resided in the town in 1901. It is possible, even likely, that the actual number of francophones was greater than 582.

Mixed Families with some children maintaining French : 6
Mixed Families choosing English : 19
English homes with 2 francophone parents : 4

**1.7.c. Windsor Ward 3**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 65
Mixed marriages/families : 19
Mixed Families with all children maintaining French : 2
Mixed Families with some children maintaining French : 2
Mixed Families choosing English : 15
English households with 2 francophone parents : 1

**1.7.d. Windsor Ward 4**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 124
Mixed marriages/families with children : 33
Mixed Families with all children maintaining French : 6
Mixed Families with some children maintaining French : 7
Mixed Families choosing English : 20
Mixed English households with 2 francophone parents : 3

Source : Canada Census, 1901

The rate of French retention was somewhat higher in Sandwich. Census records report a significant concentration of francophones in this old border town, with at least 582 residents out of a total population of 1450, or 40%. (Table 1.6.c) Sandwich was distinguished by the division of its francophone population among three subcultures: French Canadians, Canayens, and a considerable number of immigrant families from France. No group was dominant here. The 29 families reporting mixed marriages involving a francophone were almost evenly divided between French Canadian and Canayens. No mixed marriages involving French immigrants could be identified here. Of the 29 mixed marriages, 15 indicated retention of the French language among all of the children (see Table 1.7.e); seven noted some degree of language transfer, with one or more children failing to learn the mother tongue of their francophone parent, and seven

families passed English only on to all of their children. This higher retention rate of 84.8% (Table 1.6.c) could be attributed to the fact that Sandwich hosted a proportionately larger francophone population that was more prone to cluster together in neighbourhoods than was the case in Windsor. Nevertheless, out of all francophone families including mixed marriages, at least 15.2% indicated signs of language transfer. It appears that, as in Windsor, the presence of a francophone mother offered only slightly better odds for language retention. Just one household with two francophone parents raised their children in English only. Boat engineer Charles Semande and his wife Sarah chose not to use the language with their son.

**1.7.e. Town of Sandwich**

Total number of families with at least one francophone parent : 141
Mixed marriages with children : 29
Mixed Families maintaining French : 15
Mixed Families with some children maintaining French : 7
Mixed Families choosing English : 7
English households with 2 francophone parents : 1

Source : Canada Census, 1901

Language transfer likely impacted upon the many young francophones in the cities who boarded in English-speaking households. In Walkerville, adolescent Joseph Belleperche likely spoke little French as the sole house servant for the family of wealthy engineer Theodore Holmes. Boarder Louise Bondy, whose husband was struggling on his salary as a butcher, likely had to rely daily on English in the household of Rolf Haven. Joseph Janisse, the elderly coachman of Windsor physician Michael Dewar,

served his employer in English. Young Arlene Caza's duties as the live-in domestic of lawyer Abram Arnold would have required her to speak in English as well.<sup>54</sup>

### Illiteracy Among Essex and Kent County Francophones

Perhaps one of the most controversial issues involving francophones in the Windsor Border Region related to rates of illiteracy. In 1910, Bishop Fallon would deplore what he considered to be a largely ill-educated population incapable of speaking adequate English or French. Census enumerators recorded detailed information on illiteracy rates in the region. The results suggest that the bishop's characterizations were exaggerated, but did highlight a social problem for some of the area's francophones.

Historians have debated the validity of using census data as the basis of determining rates of illiteracy. Historian Michel Verrette argues that census results are problematic, because the questions vary from decade to decade, and asserts that in fact other sources, most notably, the civil and church marriage registries, offer a better source for measuring literacy.<sup>55</sup> Such sources examine most of the French-speaking population of Quebec, and the registries required proof of literacy through the signing of one's name. Verrette argues that the method of determining literacy that best holds up to critical scrutiny is the signature. However, he adds that while the signature likely underestimated the number of people who could read, it probably overestimated the number of people who could write. The problem with this approach is that it is rooted in the assumption

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<sup>54</sup> Canada, *Report on the Census*, Windsor, Essex North District, 1901.

<sup>55</sup> Michel Verrette, *L'Alphabétisation au Québec 1660-1900: En marche vers la modernité culturelle*, (Sillery, Quebec: Editions Septentrion, 2002).

that a person who can sign his or her name can necessarily read and/or write. Hence, this whole approach tends to exaggerate literacy rates.

While it is true that the census statistics probably did involve some people who did not answer honestly, does the researcher discard all census analysis that compiles data with specific questions? However, if one discards such data on the basis that some people may not be honest, as Verrette suggests, or that enumerators might tamper with results to serve an agenda,<sup>56</sup> the historian must then demonstrate that this was in fact the case. If not, is it foolhardy to accept that some people would openly admit to their own illiteracy? Such information is self-reported and therefore is far more directly answering the query regarding literacy than a mere signature. As Harvey Graff argues, the decision to suggest that census information on literacy is totally unreliable without corroboration, immediately casts doubt on all the other data collected by the census. In effect, self reporting requires a person to evaluate her own literacy skills, and answer yes or no to her ability to read or write. As such, in many cases an individual could judge his own ability, rather than a historian indulging in speculation. As Harvey Graff so ably notes, in 1861, in a comparison of Upper Canada's four cities, the literacy rates in all of these places were similar, varying between 90 and 93 per cent among adults. Several long-settled English-speaking portions of North America had high and similar rates of illiteracy, while isolated rural counties with recent settlement or high immigration

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<sup>56</sup> Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). This work argues that ultramontane Quebec nationalists successfully secured control over the census and enumeration process, and manipulated the census to illustrate the rural francophone values of large families and commitment to farm life, even as the great exodus to New England was occurring.

patterns and poor farming conditions often had substantially lower rates of literacy. As will be shown in the forthcoming pages, the Windsor border region followed this very pattern of similar results in urban and rural areas. All of these factors, while not guaranteeing absolute precision, suggest that “self-reported illiteracy and literacy in Upper Canada did not form random patterns, solely the result of improper enumeration, internal errors or the inattention of some enumerators.”<sup>57</sup> Hence, the census should in fact be recognized for its relative reliability when measuring such an important question, and deserves to be considered worthy of historical analysis, taking into consideration a reasonable margin of error. An analysis of the francophones of the Windsor border region revealed illiteracy rates of less than ten per cent throughout, in tandem with the provincial figures, with the exception of the recently-settled areas of Tilbury and Dover townships, corroborating the trends found in previous studies.

In many townships in the Windsor border region surveyed in the 1901 census, francophones do stand out for their illiteracy rates. This study corroborates the earlier research of Fernand Ouellet, who examined the 1871 census for Malden and Sandwich townships and determined that this particular population had a higher rate of illiteracy than either white Anglophones or the small black minority.<sup>58</sup> While francophones fared better in the border cities where access to schooling would have been relatively easy, census reports for both urban and rural areas indicate that illiteracy was not restricted to the very old, as was the case in most other cultural groups. Both Canayens and French

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<sup>57</sup> Harvey Graff, “What the 1861 Census Can Tell Us About Literacy: A Reply”, *Social History*, VIII, 16, (November, 1975), p. 347.

<sup>58</sup> Fernand Ouellet, *L'Ontario français dans le Canada français avant 1911: Contribution à l'histoire sociale*, (Sudbury: Éditions Prise de parole, 2005), pp.395-401.

Canadians reported cases, and no francophone community was spared.<sup>59</sup> In the Canayen communities of Petite Côte, River Canard and McGregor, illiteracy was not rampant, but it did claim a number of individuals, mainly adults. In Petite Cote, of the 23 reported cases, half were under 30, with four teenagers listed as illiterate, three being the children of a French Canadian farm labourer(see Table 1.8.c); 17 cases were Canayen, 6 were French Canadian and one English Canadian.<sup>60</sup> The vast majority of the illiterate worked as proprietors of their own market gardens, with an even number of males and females reported. However, out of a total francophone population of 614, this number represents an illiteracy rate of just 3.4%. River Canard reported similar results, with half of the 22 cases coming from the Canayen population. Six cases were French Canadian, with English families registering four. Again most cases were found among families that owned their own farms. In the case of River Canard however, two-thirds of the cases were over the age of 30, and most proved to be male, with 15 reported, 12 of whom were fathers. (see Table 1.8.b) The posted illiteracy rate here among francophones was just 3.6%. McGregor had the oldest illiterates, with more than two thirds over the age of thirty. Male and female illiterates were again evenly divided.(see Table 1.8.a) In this town of 420 French speakers, illiterate francophones 45 and under constituted 7.1% of the population. However, only 9 illiterates were under thirty.

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<sup>59</sup> In order to clarify the rate of illiteracy in the population, only those persons older than 10(having had an opportunity therefore to receive some schooling) and younger than 45, were surveyed to determine the extent of the problem among youths and young to middle aged adults. Many older adults lived in areas that did not have access to schooling until the 1860s. Even the town of Sandwich lacked a school in the 1850s. All cases of illiteracy in all cultures in the districts sampled were recorded.

<sup>60</sup> This census material was compiled by a Canayen gardener, Alexandre Gignac from Petite Côte, who served as the enumerator for the region.

## **1.8. Illiteracy Rates Among Francophones and Non-Francophones in 1901**

### **1.8.a. McGregor**

Total francophone population : 420	Total number of illiterates : 30
Total francophone illiteracy rate : 7.1%	Total number of francophone illit. : 27
Age groups	Total
20-29	9
30-39	12
40-45	9
Canayens	14
French Canadians	13
English	2

Source : Canada Census, 1901

### **1.8.b. River Canard**

Total francophone population : 468	Total number of illiterates : 22
Total francophone illiteracy rate : 3.6%	Total number of francophone illit. : 17
Age group	Total
10-19	2
20-29	5
30-39	12
40-45	3
Canayens	11
French Canadian	6
English	4
Unknown	1

Source : Canada Census, 1901

### **1.8.c. Petite Côte**

Total francophone population : 600	Total number of illiterates : 21
Total francophone illiteracy rate : 3.5%	Total number of francophone illiterates : 21
Age groups	Total
10-19	4
20-29	7
30-39	5
40-45	4
Canayens	13
French Canadians	8

Source : Canada Census, 1901

The illiteracy rates in the border cities of Sandwich, Windsor and Walkerville varied considerably. Whereas the francophones of Walkerville experienced only minimal

illiteracy among youths and young and middle aged adults, the situation in Windsor and the town of Sandwich was more serious. In Sandwich the census reported 47 cases of illiteracy, with 30 under the age of 30 (Table 1.8.d). A total of 21 French Canadians, 17 Canayens and four French individuals could not read or write. In contrast, among the anglophone majority of the town, only five cases of illiteracy were recorded. Out of a francophone population of 582, this represented a rate of 7.2%.

**1.8.d. Town of Sandwich**

Total francophone population: 582	Total number of illiterates: 47
Francophone illiteracy rate: 7.2%	Number of francophone illiterates: 42
Age group	Total
10-19	10
20-29	20
30-39	17
Canayens	21
French Canadians	17
French	4
Anglophones	5

Source: Canada Census, 1901

In the city of Windsor, the illiteracy rate was more modest; there were fifty-three cases of illiteracy among French Canadians and 38 among the Canayen population.(Tables 1.8.e) The greatest concentration of illiterates could be found in the largely industrial ward four, home to 45 of the 91 francophone illiterates in the city. Nearly half of that total were between 30 and 45 years of age, which suggests that the problem may have been declining among the younger generation.(Table 1.8.e) This problem affected 6% of the 1498 francophones in the city. Immigrants and African-Canadians also registered noticeable rates of illiteracy. On the whole however, the

magnitude of this problem paled in comparison to the rates in rural areas east of the border cities.<sup>61</sup>

**1.8.e. Windsor<sup>62</sup>**

Total francophone population: 1498	Total number of francophone illiterates: 91
Francophone illiteracy rate: 6.1%	
Age group	Total
10-19	24
20-29	24
30-45	43

Source: Canada Census, 1901

Census reports on the problem of illiteracy were similar to the east of Windsor. In Sandwich East, including the town of Tecumseh, there were 115 cases of illiteracy under age 45 out of a total francophone population of 2306, representing a rate of 5%. Out of this total 69 were Canayens, and 46 were French Canadian (Table 1.8.f), 66 were under the age of thirty, with 30 cases under twenty. The children of farm labourers and fishermen were most particularly affected, as were some farmers and their children. On the whole however, the problem appeared to be declining among the younger generation.

**1.8.f. Sandwich East (including Tecumseh/excluding Walkerville)**

Total francophone population: 2306	Total number of illiterates: 131
Francophone illiteracy rate: 4.9%	Total number of francophone illit.: 115
Age group	Total
10-19	33
20-29	34
30-39	48
40-45	16
Canayens	69
French Canadians	46

<sup>61</sup> For a detailed comparison of illiteracy rates between the region's francophones and the African Canadian population, see Fernand Ouellet, *L'Ontario français dans le Canada français avant 1911*, (Sudbury: Éditions Prise de parole, 2005).

<sup>62</sup> Given the higher rate of intermarriage between Canayens and French Canadians in Windsor, it is much more difficult to determine which francophones belonged specifically to one sub-cultural grouping or another. Therefore, for the purposes of clarity, the two groups were not classified in the case of Windsor.

Anglophones	6
African Canadians	6
Other	4

Source: Canada Census, 1901

In predominantly French-Canadian areas of Essex County, illiteracy was no less prevalent. In Rochester township, at rural polling station # 14, Belle River and St. Joachim, census takers reported 95 cases of illiteracy for individuals 45 years of age and younger; 74 were French Canadian and 20 were Canayens out of a total francophone population of 1194, representing a rate of 8%. (Tables 1.8.g) At 43, the small village of St. Joachim had the greatest number of illiterates. In Tilbury North township, including rural polling station # 2 and Stoney Point, census takers reported 68 cases out of a total population of 947, representing a rate of 7.2%. No Anglophones illiterates were found in this predominantly francophone area.

**1.8.g. Rochester Township (sample: St. Joachim and Belle River)**

Total Francophone population: 1194	Total number of illiterates: 95
Francophone illiteracy rate: 8%	Total number of francophone illiterates: 94
Age group	Total
10-19	11
20-29	31
30-39	41
40-45	7
French Canadians	74
Canayens	20
Anglophones	1

Source: Canada Census, 1901

**1.8.h. Tilbury Township (Stoney Point and Tilbury North Township #2)**

Total francophone population: 947	Total number of illiterates: 68
Francophone illiteracy rate: 7.2%	Total number of francophone illit.: 68
Groups	Total
French Canadians	47
Canayens	21

Source: Canada Census, 1901

Tilbury West and Dover Townships were the areas with the highest rates of illiteracy. The town of Paincourt included 24 French Canadian and 14 Canayen illiterates out of a total population of 245, constituting a rate of 15.5%. (Table 1.8.k) No reports of illiteracy were recorded among other cultures in the district sampled. Dover township polling station #5 in Kent County posted a higher rate of illiteracy with eleven Canayen and a staggering 164 French Canadian cases out of 762 francophone individuals not including those over 45 years of age, or a rate of 23%. (Table 1.8.l) Much of this population did not speak English, and illiteracy affected at least one young member of the vast majority of families in this section of Dover township.<sup>63</sup> Tilbury West township registered a similar rate of illiteracy, with the community of Comber measuring 22%, while Staples recorded a rate exceeding 24% among francophones. (Tables 1.8.i-j) Both of these areas had experienced relatively recent settlement from Quebec.

**1.8.i. Tilbury West Township-Staples**

Total francophone population: 185	Total number of illiterates: 45
Total francophone illiteracy rate: 24.3%	Total number of francophone illiterates: 45
French Canadians	44
Canayens	1

Source: Canada Census, 1901

**1.8.j. Tilbury West Township-Comber**

Total francophone population: 259	Total number of francophone illit.: 57
Francophone illiteracy rate: 22%	
Group	Total
French Canadians	47
Canayens	10

Source: Canada Census, 1901

**1.8.k. Paincourt**

Total francophone population: 245	Total number of illiterates: 38
Francophone illiteracy rate: 15.5%	Total number of francophone illit.: 38

<sup>63</sup> A cursory study of neighbouring districts in Dover suggest that the phenomenon was common. The barrel stave industry in the region often kept children busy in factories.

Group	Total
French Canadians	24
Canayens	14
Anglophones	0

Source: Canada Census, 1901

### **1.8.1. Dover Township Polling Station #5**

Total francophone population: 762	Total number of illiterates: 175
Francophone illiteracy rate: 23%	Total number of francophone illit.: 175
Group	Total
French Canadians	164
Canayens	11
Anglophones	0

Source: Canada Census, 1901

In short, the francophone illiteracy rate in most of the communities of Essex and Kent counties did not exceed the provincial average of 9 percent in 1911. However, this region was distinguished by its low rates of illiteracy among the Anglophone population. While most francophone communities in the Windsor border region were below this provincial average, the recently settled communities of Comber and Staples in Tilbury West township, and the farming communities of Dover township posted much higher rates in excess of 20 percent. This phenomena had been identified before by Harvey Graff in his previous works. On the whole, it is safe to assert that Bishop Fallon rightfully called attention to, but exaggerated the degree of illiteracy among francophones.<sup>64</sup>

### **Bilingual Schools in the Nineteenth Century**

The bilingual schools of Essex and Kent struggled to combat the stigma of illiteracy. There were a number of reasons for this problem. Many farmers prospered in

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<sup>64</sup> Bishop Fallon suggested that less than 5 percent of student body in the bilingual schools of Essex and Kent Counties passed the high school examinations in 1910. See page 185, footnote 63.

the region in spite of their lack of schooling. However there were other reasons beyond sheer lack of interest in a formal education. In 1882, during a visit through the region, Quebec missionaries Abbé Casgrain and Joseph Marmette visited these schools. They offered the following observations :

Trente-cinq écoles dans lesquelles on enseigne le français aussi bien que l'anglais; une demi douzaine ont deux maîtres. Les écoles sont fréquentées par environ 3500 enfants canadiens français, qui se servent des livres en usage dans la province de Québec..<sup>65</sup>

This account underscored the onerous duties of the teachers. The student-teacher ratio stood at close to 90 to 1. The poor pay and unattractive work conditions made it hard to find first and second class certified educators of quality. Women educators often stayed in the profession for only a few years until they married. All of these schools were characterized by an abnormally high number of third class teachers.

Pour plusieurs raisons valables chez nos Franco-Ontariens de Kent et d'Essex, il y a peut-être moins de diplômés de première et deuxième classes que chez d'autres nationalités. Les nôtres se marient assez jeunes et n'ont pas trop le souci, pour un certain nombre du moins, ni l'intérêt de se livrer à de longues et coûteuses études qui pourraient leur servir dans une carrière consacrée exclusivement à l'enseignement.<sup>66</sup>

To make matters worse, members of religious orders were reluctant to attend normal schools since individuals of the opposite sex were present and pedagogical manuals criticized the Catholic faith. When teachers actually completed their professional training, they often encountered students whose parents saw little value in a formal education.

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<sup>65</sup> F.X. Chauvin, "Origines de la race canadienne-française dans les comtés d'Essex et de Kent. Essai d'histoire régionale." Unpublished manuscript, L'Association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario, 1950; *L'Opinion publique*, tome XIII, 23 février, 1882, p. 86.

<sup>66</sup> Father A. Gobeil, "Le Passé et l'avenir des Canadiens français d'Essex et de Kent," Unpublished manuscript of work presented to the Congrès regional de l'Association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario, Windsor, Ontario, October 8, 1942.

For thirty years, beginning in the 1880s, leading francophones in the southwest peninsula called repeatedly for technical and professional training facilities for bilingual schools comparable to those for English institutions.<sup>67</sup> This faulty training and the lack of adequate institutional supports for new teachers had been criticized since 1881 by the local school inspector, Theodule Girardot. Girardot also condemned the alarming rate of truancy in the region's bilingual schools. In particular, he cited the example of Rochester Township.

Vous êtes frappés Messieurs, je dirai très surpris en apprenant que 835 enfants figurent comme n'ayant pas fréquenté l'école en 1880; mais permettez-moi quelques considérations pour expliquer cette proportion. Il n'y a pas de doute que nous avons droit d'accuser l'indifférence de quelques parents, encore trop nombreux, et inexcusables, puisque nous avons des écoles à la portée de tous, sans exception....<sup>68</sup>

Girardot lamented the lack of vigilance of the school board trustees in pursuing persistent truants. He urged them to impress upon the parents the benefits of a good education.

Girardot admitted that parental indifference was difficult to combat when weighing the calibre of his teaching personnel. He called on the school board members to dismiss the considerable number of lazy teachers.<sup>69</sup> The school inspector counseled his school board members to refrain from the practice of hiring teachers at reduced costs, since quality instructors were rare indeed, and came at considerable expense. He hoped that the growing number of francophone high school students would respond to this new call for qualified and committed teachers.

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<sup>67</sup> Gobeil, p. 218.

<sup>68</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 7 juillet, 1881.

<sup>69</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 7 juillet, 1881.

The issue of French language education did not gravitate solely around the question of quality instruction. For the editor of *Le Progrès* of Windsor, another pressing issue was emerging in Belle River, where the school board trustees had recently introduced an English-only curriculum. The newspaper deplored the fact that the newly hired schoolmistress could not speak a word of French,<sup>70</sup> in a village school that hosted a substantial French-speaking majority. The parents were slow to respond to this significant change in school policy. The subsequent failure of francophones to react raises questions as to whether this population preferred an English education, was discouraged from seeking French instruction by school officials or was simply indifferent to the issue of school altogether.

Aside from Belle River, English appeared to be the principal language of instruction in most of the region's bilingual schools, even in cases where the majority of the student body was francophone. In only a few isolated rural areas like Tilbury North and Rochester Townships, the French language continued to dominate, unless the school teacher was an English Canadian.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the area's French-speaking communities were already feeling the impact of the English-speaking world, in spite of the renewed immigration from Quebec that began in the late 1830s. The construction of the Great

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<sup>70</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 18 janvier, 1882. The editor of *Le Progrès* declared (incorrectly) that local francophones had a right to be indignant, since the federal constitution guaranteed French Canadians in Ontario the right to their language and schools. This theme would be uttered again and again.

<sup>71</sup> See School Inspector's Report, Théodule Girardot to the Minister of Education, 1889. See also, Ontario Ministry of Education, *Report of Commissioners on the Public Schools in which the French Language is Taught*, (1889), Published govt. document, on microfilm, RG 2-158, Provincial Archives of Ontario (PAO). This report indicated that only four of the area's thirty English-French schools actually accorded predominance to the French language in the daily curriculum in the third and fourth forms; also found in David Welch, p. 132.

Western Railway linked the French Canadian villages and farming communities of North Essex more closely to the markets of Windsor, Detroit, London and Toronto. The generally prosperous settlers of Essex and Kent oriented their farms, orchards and vegetable plots towards an English speaking clientele. This trend, historian David Welch argues, did not necessarily mean a renunciation of the French language and linguistic integration, but rather it suggests a subtle re-evaluation of the importance that French should take as part of the bilingual school curriculum and even in the daily lives of francophones.<sup>72</sup> The exodus of farmers' sons in search of employment in Windsor and the other Border Cities simply reinforced the growing importance of English in the workday of francophones.

Not all francophones accepted the disappearance of French from the schools quietly. In 1883, a year after the introduction of an English only curriculum at the Belle River school, francophone militants organized the first Essex county chapter of the St. Jean-Baptiste Society. The membership hosted a regional conference and invited militants from across Essex and Kent counties to Windsor to discuss the growing concerns over the decline of French language instruction in the area's schools. They passed the following resolution :

Que vu que la langue française est la langue de nos ancêtres, et que sa conservation parmi nous est une des principales sauvegardes de notre religion et de nos traditions nationales, le plus grand encouragement lui soit accordé surtout dans nos écoles et de la part de nos hommes d'État de notre origine.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Welch, p. 134.

<sup>73</sup> "Proposition de Francois-Xavier Meloche, appuyé par Hyppolite Girardot," as cited in René Dionne's "Une première prise de parole collective", *Les Cahiers Charlevoix*, 1, p. 42. Girardot was a teacher in a bilingual school in the town of Sandwich and the son of school inspector Theodule Girardot.

As early as the 1850s, attitudes towards the English language had divided area francophones. The local newspaper *Le Progrès* criticized the growing rate of anglicization among francophones. Gaspard Pacaud <sup>74</sup>, the editor of the newspaper, lamented,

...Un certain nombre préfèrent s'enrôler dans les sociétés anglaises plutôt que dans les sociétés canadiennes comme la société Saint Jean-Baptiste, des journaux français ils n'en lisent pas, ils ne veulent pas payer ou plutôt ils préfèrent les journaux anglais.<sup>75</sup>

The school inspector for Paincourt and Kent County suggested that some of the reasons for the rate of anglicization could be found in attitudes towards French language schooling. The inspector noted in his report the eagerness to learn English among the francophones of Kent county and their essential ambivalence towards French : « Certains parents se plaignent que dans les écoles on n'enseigne pas assez d'anglais... »<sup>76</sup> The desire to learn English appeared to be an on going concern for some parents who sought to offer their children greater opportunities in life.

In the city of Windsor, some francophone journalists did not understand this concern. Auguste Bodard of the *Courrier d'Essex* actually advocated a French-only education to combat English Protestant ideals. « Nous voulons que nos enfants jusqu'à 9 et 10 ans apprennent le français seulement et c'est pour cela que nous demandons dans Windsor des écoles françaises élémentaires. »<sup>77</sup> The editor's call for French-only schools

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<sup>74</sup> Gaspard Pacaud was MPP for Essex North from 1887 to 1890. In 1890, he lost the Liberal Party nomination to an Anglophone faction that opposed his overtly pro-French tendencies. He would attempt a comeback twice in the 1890s, and his name continued to circulate as a possible contender in future nomination struggles.

<sup>75</sup> *Le Progrès*, December 20, 1884. The two local newspapers, one Rouge and the other Bleu,

<sup>76</sup> *Le Courrier d'Essex*, February 14, 1885.

<sup>77</sup> *Le Courrier d'Essex*, February 14, 1885. Auguste Bodard would leave Windsor within the year, and embark on a journey to recruit French immigrants to the Canadian west. His efforts would meet with

failed to elicit much support from the local population. Clearly Bodard, a recent arrival from France, did not have much support from local francophones. For the people of Windsor, even work on the docks and in the construction industry and smaller businesses required a mastery of English.<sup>78</sup>

A more pressing concern for francophones was the cessation of French instruction in St. Alphonsus parish school. The pastor, Belgian priest Theodore Wagner admitted that the Windsor Separate School Board, dominated by Anglophone trustees, had erred in leaving the school without a single francophone teacher. Wagner attributed this oversight to his recent absence due to illness.<sup>79</sup> In a sermon on Sunday, March 16, 1885, the priest assured the congregation he would restore French instruction at the first opportunity. However, Wagner actually suggested that the responsibility for the deterioration of French rested first and foremost with francophone parishioners themselves, for many had sent their children to English schools.<sup>80</sup> The sheer disinterest of some Windsor parents in passing on French to their children could be borne out further in the census statistics showing the considerable number of mixed marriages where English was the only language spoken in the home.

For most of the nineteenth century, however, harmony on the education front was easy to maintain since most francophone farming communities in Essex and Kent counties were isolated from anglophones. Poor roads, the slow nature of horse power,

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limited success. For more on Bodard, see Robert Painchaud, *Un rêve français dans le peuplement de la Prairie*, (Saint-Boniface: Éditions des Plaines, 1987).

<sup>78</sup> *Le Progrès*, February 21, 1885.

<sup>79</sup> *Le Courrier d'Essex*, March 21, 1885.

<sup>80</sup> *Le Courrier d'Essex*, March 21, 1885.

and the high cost of transportation on the new railroads made it easy for these relatively homogeneous cultural enclaves to preserve their language. Nevertheless, the presence of the railways did emphasize the need to do business in English when selling agricultural goods. In areas where the two cultures coexisted, tensions occasionally flared.<sup>81</sup>

The issue of bilingual schools and French language instruction eventually came to the floor of the provincial legislature at Queen's Park when a growing chorus of Conservative members under Opposition leader William Meredith called into question the existence of such schools. In the two consecutive provincial election campaigns of 1887 and 1890, Meredith made the schools an issue, and called for their abolition. In response, Oliver Mowat's Liberal government tightened regulations for bilingual schools, establishing a well-defined list of prescribed French books for all students and establishing the second class certificate as the minimum teaching requirement. The Minister also launched a commission to investigate the state of English in these schools with an eye to establishing new standards. The tightening of standards on third class teaching certificates impacted negatively on the bilingual schools of the province. In the Windsor border region as elsewhere, local school commissions frequently hired third class teachers and even candidates with temporary certificates due either to the shortage of certified francophone educators, or in many instances, as a means to keep wages low.

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<sup>81</sup> In Rochester township in the village of Woodslee in 1885, a small group of French Canadians clashed with Irish Protestants over the presence of a provocative shooting target: a stuffed effigy with the conspicuous label, "Louis Riel." The largest of the French Canadians, by the name of Lupien, boldly walked over to the dummy and carried it off. *Le Progrès*, November 8, 1885. For more information on this early tension, see Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French Language Controversy in Ontario*. (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

In some instances, the commissions resorted to hiring English teachers to staff the previously bilingual schools.<sup>82</sup>

The former editor of *Le Progrès*, and newly-elected Liberal Provincial Member of Parliament for Essex North, Gaspard Pacaud, appealed to Theodule Girardot and members of the local Catholic clergy to see if anything could be done to address this troubling development. Pacaud inquired as to whether the school inspector could modify certification exams for the benefit of French Canadian candidates in Essex County. He also wondered whether such modifications would really lower the overall quality of instruction. Finally, Pacaud wished to know whether these proposed changes would affect the overall test scores of the teacher candidates in question. Local pastor, Father François Marseille, a member of the Windsor School Board, rejected Pacaud's request warning that such concessions would leave the schools in a permanent state of inferiority vis-à-vis the English language schools.<sup>83</sup> Inspector Theodule Girardot echoed Marseille's comments stating that he in fact was already granting many teacher candidates latitude in spite of their examination scores. He was categorical in his rejection of Pacaud's request that the standards for teacher tests be relaxed. Indeed, Girardot noted that not a single local candidate had earned the minimum score required to pass the certification exams in 1888. He warned that any lowering of the standards would only

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<sup>82</sup> *Le Progrès*, February 28, 1889. Pacaud actually wrote that public perception that Belle River's and Windsor's bilingual schools were inferior compelled school commissioners to employ unilingual English teachers. "Déjà une partie de nos syndics d'écoles les croient inférieures aux Anglais. Je regrette de vous dire que cette année dans deux de nos meilleures écoles françaises, les syndics ont engagé des maîtres anglais, les croyant supérieurs aux nôtres." For more information on this early provincial effort to restrict French, see Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French Language Controversy in Ontario*.

<sup>83</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 14 février, 1889.

strip bilingual educators of the respect and confidence required to accomplish their duties.<sup>84</sup>

Girardot's public response to Pacaud coincided with the continuing debate at Queen's Park over the bilingual schools question. While opposition pressure was mounting on the Mowat government to abolish the bilingual schools, the local French newspaper published a school inspector's report for the trustees of each school in the Windsor border region. Girardot's report noted that nearly 60% of the bilingual schools were achieving satisfactory results.<sup>85</sup> While pedagogical weaknesses prevailed, the local population enthusiastically accepted English instruction. In many cases, the caliber of spoken and written English was already noteworthy. The Ministry of Education Special Commission of 1889 published its report on the bilingual schools, declaring,

There are thirty schools in the County of Essex in which French is taught, and all were inspected by us. Many of these could scarcely be distinguished from English schools. In twelve schools, English is mainly the language of the school; in fourteen French and English are taught about equally; and in four, French is the language of the school, the teaching in English being limited to reading and translation. The work done in these schools is about equal to what is done in the ordinary English rural school.... Taking the standing of the pupils in English as the basis of classification, seventeen schools may be classed as good, six as fair, and seven as poor and unsatisfactory.<sup>86</sup>

The Report also defended the traditional practice in the bilingual schools where the French child acquired some proficiency in the mother tongue before proceeding to learn English. Children were eager to learn English after learning to read first in French. The real problem affecting these schools, argued the commissioners, was the onerous student-teacher ratio. Class size limited English lessons and pupils were unable to learn to speak

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<sup>84</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 14 février, 1889.

<sup>85</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 19 septembre, 1889.

<sup>86</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education. "Report of Commissioners on Public Schools in Ontario in which the French Language is Taught", 1889, p. 8. Published govt. document, on microfilm, RG 2-158, Provincial Archives of Ontario.

English by associating with English children in schools where the entire student body was French.<sup>87</sup> The commissioners did note that within the county of Essex twenty-nine of the thirty-four teachers in the bilingual schools could speak English with considerable fluency, while five lacked the necessary proficiency to teach the language.<sup>88</sup>

In 1889, local school inspections of the Windsor Border Region reinforced much of the Inspector's Report. In the village of Belle River, which had long been reluctant to restore French instruction, Girardot reported, "Only a few English kids, but all can speak English, only one hour a day to French instruction.[sic]"<sup>89</sup> In Anderdon Township, near River Canard, School No. 2, Albert Bondy was responsible for a one room school of 66 students, while in neighbouring school no. 6, Antoine Vermette had 85 students under his charge, 48 of whom were in attendance on the day of inspection. In spite of these large classes, the inspector reported of senior students that "Pupils did exceedingly well in all branches and spoke English well." The greatest areas of weakness appeared in Sandwich East, Rochester, and Tilbury North Townships in Essex, and Dover Township in Kent, all of which had been areas of relatively recent Quebec migration except Sandwich East. In that particular Township, more than five-sixths of the pupils in Walkerville School No. 1 were French, but only a few learned their mother tongue. Conversely, in Walkerville School No. 2, all of the pupils were French and while the third and fourth forms read and understood English, Girardot, the inspector, reported that "Junior classes understand common things in that language...and that instructions are

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<sup>87</sup> "Report of Commissioners", p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> "Report of the Commissioners", p. 9.

<sup>89</sup> School Inspector's Report, North Essex, T. Girardot to the Ministry of Education, 1889, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-42-0-1976.

given in both languages.”<sup>90</sup> However, in rural schools like Sandwich East No. 2 students who had “attended irregularly did poorly” in English. In School No. 3, in spite of 3 hours of English instruction a day, “Pupils were not very proficient in English.” In School No. 4 John Dugal faced a class of 115 students on inspection day, most of whom were of French extraction, out of a total student roll of 152 students. The inspector reported,

The pupils in the junior division and twenty one in the senior division do not learn English. All of the above are in the First and Second French readers. French is mainly the language of the school. Pupils are quite backward in English.<sup>91</sup>

Similar reports appeared in the French Canadian belt of Northern Essex around Tilbury Township West, where Section Schools No. 1, 6, 8 and 10 all were classified as “backward in English”, with many experiencing absentee rates approaching fifty percent. In Rochester Township School No. 3, it was declared that of the 70 students in attendance in Maurice Renaud’s class, most were considered “backward in English.” In Rochester SS No. 5 the school inspector observed that the French Canadian pupils in the junior division were getting on slowly with English.<sup>92</sup> Interestingly enough, he also noted that “19 French [Canadian] pupils in the senior division do not learn French *by request of the parents.* [emphasis mine]”<sup>93</sup> Yves Roby notes that a similar phenomenon had appeared in francophone sections of New England a few years earlier, with a growing parental desire for a school system that emphasized excellence in English at the expense of French.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> School Inspector’s Report, 1889.

<sup>91</sup> School Inspector’s Report, 1889.

<sup>92</sup> School Inspector’s Report, 1889.

<sup>93</sup> Report of Commissioners...” pp. 30-40.

<sup>94</sup> Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, p. 99.

In Kent county greater emphasis was given to English in half of the bilingual schools. In Dover Township, these schools suffered from the « backward » stigma. The Commissioners declared that out of five schools,

In three schools little attention is given to French, English being the language of the schools. In one school about one hour a day is given to the French language and in the remaining schools about half the time is given to English. In the primary division of school no. 3, which consists of pupils in the First and Second Readers, scarcely any English is taught. All the teachers except the assistant have regular certificates and have received professional training.<sup>95</sup>

In spite of the report's criticisms of the schools and the widespread provincial press coverage, the Mowat Liberals successfully held off the Conservatives in the subsequent elections, and the bilingual program was not abolished.

The province's bilingual schools soon faced new challenges. Premier Oliver Mowat, in defense of his government's education policy, referred directly to the bilingual schools of the Windsor border region :

There are some of these schools in which English has been well taught for many years, so that they are practically English schools. There are also some, as will be seen from the statistical statement forming part of this report, in which the English language is largely used in the work of the schools. This is the case more particularly in the Counties of Essex and Kent.<sup>96</sup>

Under the new school policy, known as Regulation 12, the Ministry permitted one hour of French instruction in existing schools, and allowed for its introduction in new schools in communities where French was the prevailing language. Officials replaced French with English as the only language for teacher certification. The 1890 Ministry regulation also reduced the role of French instruction.<sup>97</sup> French was only to be used in schools in

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<sup>95</sup> "Report of Commissioners", p. 9.

<sup>96</sup> Oliver Mowat, "Public Schools in the French Districts," *Sectarian Issues and the History of the Present Position of the Public Schools in the French Districts*. (Toronto: Hunter Rose and Co., 1890), p. 21.

<sup>97</sup> Victor Simon, *Le Règlement XVII: Sa mise en vigueur à travers l'Ontario, 1912-1927*, (Sudbury: Société historique du Nouvel Ontario, 1983), p. 6.

cases where the students could not comprehend English. This clause came to serve as a loophole allowing many institutions to continue French instruction as before.<sup>98</sup>

### Bilingual Schools in the Separate School System

Tension over bilingual schools often involved religion as well. In 1863, the legislature of the United Province of Canada passed the Scott Act, with the support of the overwhelmingly Catholic and French contingent of members from Canada East (Quebec). This legislation enabled Roman Catholic ratepayers in Canada West (Ontario) to withdraw their tax support from their local public school and redirect it to establish a separate school of their own.<sup>99</sup> In essence, the new school law created two school systems, a public system for the Protestant majority and a separate system for the Catholic minority. The Scott Act gave Catholic separate schools in Canada West a legal claim to tax support and government grants. Previously, a number of schools across the future province of Ontario were already exclusively populated with Catholic teachers and student bodies. Officially, these schools were designated public and open to any child, Protestant or Catholic, English- or French-speaking. Even with this new legislation, the spread of designated Catholic separate schools was slow. As an increasing number of

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<sup>98</sup> Robert Choquette, *L'Ontario français, historique*, (Montréal: Études vivantes, 1980), pp.170-173.

<sup>99</sup> The first signs of the separate school system in Ontario appeared in 1841 with the creation of the united province of Canada under the terms of the Act of union. The new legislature introduced a School Act that included a separate school clause in Section XI which stipulated that the inhabitants of any township or parish professing a religious faith that differed from that of the majority in the township could dissent from the local common school and organize their own separate school, upon notification to the Clerk for the district council. An amended form of this legislation in 1843, under Section 55 allowed for the establishment of separate Catholic and Protestant schools, depending on the religious persuasion of the teacher, provided that ten or more residents made application for one. For more on the origins of the separate system, see Franklin Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada*, (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1956), p. 44, 48. For a detailed account on the history of Ontario's Catholic separate school system see Franklin Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario*, (Toronto: Thomson-Nelson and Sons, 1964).

Catholics moved to towns and cities in the late 1800s with their families and came increasingly into contact with Protestants, the spiritual welfare of the children preoccupied a growing number of church leaders. In addition, the growing number of public attacks on the separate system by the press, the Orange Order, the Protestant Protective Agency (PPA) and the Ontario Conservative party in the 1880s accelerated the growth in the number of separate schools.<sup>100</sup> Among the bilingual schools, twenty-seven such schools in the public system turned into separate schools between 1886 and 1890, due to the “uneasiness excited amongst the French people by the agitation over their schools four years ago, and the fear lest their privileges might be interfered with.”<sup>101</sup> Ontario Conservative leader W.R. Meredith’s calls for the abolition of the system from the mid-1880s to the mid-1890s heightened fears that the province would follow in the footsteps of Manitoba and New Brunswick and successfully abolish the bilingual and separate schools. To combat this situation, in 1893, Bishop Denis O’Connor directed all Catholic parents in the Diocese of London to send their children to Church-operated separate schools. Indeed, the *Toronto Mail* reported that from 1872 to 1894, 159 more schools and 16 000 more pupils entered the separate system.<sup>102</sup>

Many Catholics did not immediately obey the command of their bishop. In Belle River in 1894, the pastor, J. Edmond Meunier, a French Canadian originally from Trois-Rivières, attempted to convince his parishioners to transform Maidstone Township Public School No. 1 into a Catholic school; his plan encountered opposition. Many

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<sup>100</sup> Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario*, p. 173.

<sup>101</sup> *Report of the Commissioners on Schools in the Counties of Prescott and Russell in which the French Language is Taught*. (Toronto, 1891), p. 17.

<sup>102</sup> *The Toronto Mail*, August 8, 1894; Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario*, p. 179.

parishioners did not share their pastor's zeal for a separate school system with higher taxes. At nightfall, they chose instead to move the school building four miles south to West Belle River Road, on lot 13, in Maidstone township. From this site, the Robillard school, as it came to be known, continued to operate as a public school, in spite of its Catholic teacher and predominately Catholic student body.<sup>103</sup>

Father Lucien Beaudoin, pastor of Our Lady of the Lake parish in Sandwich East township faced similar difficulties. The leading militant voice for Catholic and French education among the local clergy, Beaudoin was a native of St-Roch de l'Achigan, Quebec and graduate of the Collège de l'Assomption. He taught at his alma mater for two years before moving to a New York City Catholic school to serve as its chaplain until 1891. In that year, at the invitation of the Bishop of London, Beaudoin took over the young parish of Our Lady of the Lake (*Notre Dame du Lac*).<sup>104</sup> In 1893, Beaudoin called upon local ratepayers to assemble and discuss the opening of a Catholic separate school. Like Meunier, his efforts encountered opposition. Some Canayen parishioners like Stanislas Janisse and Patrice Parent supported the measure and dutifully organized the event. However, the day before the meeting one of his parishioners, a Canayen named Hypollite Mailloux, conducted a door-to-door campaign to sabotage the measure.<sup>105</sup> The ratepayers voted to reject a transfer of the local public school to Catholic control. A parishioner in attendance informed Beaudoin that most of the ratepayers

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<sup>103</sup> *St. Simon and St. Jude Parish, 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*, (Windsor: Chamberlain Press, 1985), p. 130.

<sup>104</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 15 septembre, 1901.

<sup>105</sup> Lucien Beaudoin to Bishop Denis O'Connor, Feb. 13, 1893, ACFFO archives, CRCCF (University of Ottawa), C2/93/1, Lucien Beaudoin papers.

feared that a separate school would result in higher taxes. The priest deplored his congregation's decision.

[The neighbouring town] of Walkerville is not like other parishes. People like to go to church, they make their Easter duty. Here [Sandwich East] we have to go after them, very happy when they come, many of the parishioners going outside and many never coming to church.<sup>106</sup>

Beaudoin's analysis of his wayward parishioners temporarily dissuaded the Bishop from withholding the sacraments from Mailloux and other Catholic school opponents.

In spite of Beaudoin's bleak portrayal of the Canayens' fidelity to the church, O'Connor called upon Beaudoin the following year to rally the parishioners behind his project again: «let it be well understood that we must have a Catholic school for Catholic children. Let the well-disposed Catholic insist on a Separate School, because it must come, if not now at some time I hope not far distant. »<sup>107</sup> Beaudoin followed the Bishop's directions, and refrained from using the pulpit to condemn separate school opponents. This approach was fortuitous, for by April 26, 1894, Beaudoin had convinced a sufficient number of his parishioners to adhere to a Catholic separate school: *École Notre Dame*.<sup>108</sup> With the establishment of the school the Bishop directed all Catholics in Sandwich East to send their children to the new separate school or risk being denied the sacraments.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Beaudoin to O'Connor, Feb. 23, 1893, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

<sup>107</sup> O'Connor to Beaudoin, January 27, 1894, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

<sup>108</sup> Contract between L.A. Beaudoin parish priest, W. Waldman the Executive Committee of the Catholic School and the Contractors William Dahl and A. Vickard, April 26, 1894, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

<sup>109</sup> On more than one occasion, Bishop O'Connor received requests from Sandwich East Catholics requesting permission to send their children to a closer public school. Mr. Joseph Janisse wrote to the bishop regarding the delicate health of his children. The Bishop wrote to Beaudoin, "I have written him [Janisse] that I will reserve my decision until I see him in Walkerville and that in the meantime he may be admitted to the sacraments. This will deprive your school of his village taxes for the year, but I hope it will do good in the end. I hope my talk with him will do good to him and to others; if not we cannot be blamed

In 1895, Beaudoin built a second school called *École Saint-Louis* for poor fishing families living on the shores of Lake St Clair. This school would temporarily close over a dispute involving the ratepayers and trustees over taxes. The Bishop expressed his frustration over the local ambivalence to separate schools:

I regret that the project of a Catholic school does not meet with more encouragement. The parish will not be complete until you have one [school for the poor]. Of course I am not in favour of forcing people to carry out the project, but also they are not to understand that it is given up.<sup>110</sup>

As for Beaudoin, the large parish of Canayens kept him busy. The priest offset the lack of financial support through his personal savings and regular fundraising, including the annual parish bazaar that would become a yearly tradition for people throughout the Border Cities.

While Beaudoin was struggling to get his Canayens parishioners to adhere more fervently to the Catholic faith, trouble emerged again in the schools of Windsor. In 1893, *Le Progrès* once again deplored the cancellation of French instruction in the primary classes at St. François and St. Alphonsus schools. The newspaper suggested that this development was all part of a quiet plan to hire unilingual English teachers for the bilingual schools. When a petition was finally presented to the school board, the president, Judge Charles McHugh, appeared reluctant to act on the popular request. Tensions mounted between Irish and French Catholics. A special committee was established to study the question. In September 1894, French was reintroduced into the

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for not forbearing in the matter..” O’Connor to Beaudoin, Feb. 26, 1895. Eventually Mr. Janisse and his family were cut off from the sacraments, and only in the fall of 1897 did the Canayen comply to sending his children to the nearest Catholic school. At that point in time the Bishop directed Beaudoin to admit his family to the sacraments once again. O’Connor to Beaudoin, November, 10, 1897.

<sup>110</sup> O’Connor to Beaudoin, October. 23, 1896, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

primary classes at the two schools as a result of public pressure spearheaded by the local St-Jean-Baptiste society. In spite of this victory, one francophone wrote to the local paper to complain that while some families jealously preserved French in the home, the majority of petition signers, for all their bluster, often spoke in English at home and among their francophone friends.<sup>111</sup>

In the more remote, isolated community of Dover Township in Kent County, there existed little tension with the English majority. Here the education problems affecting the French Canadian children were different. While many teachers did excellent work, others lacked skill or necessary equipment. In addition, less than fifty percent of all school-aged children attended county schools in some districts.<sup>112</sup> In fact, most of the schools hosting a predominantly French Canadian student body were English language schools. Robert Park, the Inspector of West Kent County offered this analysis in 1894,

In this Inspectorate there are five schools in which the bilingual reader are used. These schools are in SS 3,4, 7,9, and 13 Dover. There are in addition, eight schools in which the majority of the children are French Canadian. ...Speaking generally, the school work is much better done in those schools where the teacher has a command of both languages than in the eight schools I have referred to where the teacher is unable to speak to the children in French. The French people are most anxious that their children shall get a good command of English. Many of them think it useless for their children to learn French in school, some of them prefer a teacher who cannot speak French. But there is no question that whether bilingual readers be used or not- the proper teacher for these schools is one who has command of both languages.<sup>113</sup>

Robert Park's report on the bilingual schools reiterated the eagerness of the local French Canadian population to educate their children in English. Park believed that the bilingual

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<sup>111</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 31 août, 1894.

<sup>112</sup> School Inspector's Report, West Kent County, 1894, Robert Park, Inspector of Public Schools to the Minister of Education, Feb. 1, 1895. Provincial Archives of Ontario, microfilm, RG 2-42-0-1976.

<sup>113</sup> School Inspector's Report, West Kent County, Feb. 1, 1895. Park blamed parents here for sending their children to work in the local stove mills.

schools enabled francophone children to embrace English with greater efficacy. Of especial interest was the fact that many francophone parents actually preferred to send their offspring to English-only schools, seeing little value in a bilingual education. This preference echoed an earlier request among French Canadian parents in Rochester Township for English-only instruction.

Park's work also underscored the indifference of some parents, francophone and anglophone alike to regular attendance. Indeed, Park reported in 1897 that the problem lay squarely with the parents. He argued that

Truancy is certainly not on the increase, if by this is meant the pupil remaining away from school without the consent of his parents. It is to be regretted that pupils are absent from school much more than the Truancy act allows, but it is the wish of the parents, who keep them home to help in busy seasons on the farm. Truancy, in the sense of remaining away from schools on account of dislike for schools studies, is almost if not altogether unknown.<sup>114</sup>

Park's analysis of the reasons behind truancy, while depicting student interest in school in somewhat idyllic terms, clearly pointed to parental coercion for the sake of the family economy.

The problems of child labour and school attendance also attracted scrutiny from Essex County's Public School Inspector Donald A. Maxwell. In 1899, he reported that much of the problem lay in fact with locally elected school trustees who were reluctant to enforce the truancy law upon their neighbours.<sup>115</sup> The newspaper editor for *Le Progrès* had identified poor attendance as a fundamental cause behind the generally poor school performance. One school commissioner from Sandwich East was categorical, "Quelques

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<sup>114</sup> Robert Park to G. W. Ross, December 24, 1896, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-42-0-1976.

<sup>115</sup> Donald Maxwell, Inspector of Public Schools, Essex County to George W. Ross, Minister of Education, February 14, 1899, PAO, microfilm, MS5609, RG 2-42-0-200.

élèves firent très bien, tandis que d'autres qui n'avaient pas été régulièrement assidus à l'école, firent beaucoup moins de progrès."<sup>116</sup>

#### Language Disputes in the Parishes of the Windsor Border Region before Bishop Fallon

The struggle for the preservation of the French language did not begin with the arrival of Michael Fallon as Bishop of London; nor did it simply involve the schools of the Windsor border region. It actually began within the congregations of certain border parishes. The first serious example of struggle between a Catholic bishop and his francophone faithful in the Windsor border region took place on the American side of the Detroit river long before Fallon's arrival as Bishop of London. Although the first dispute did not relate directly to language, it did call into question the degree of autonomy each parish could exercise under its bishop. In 1845, Belgian-born Bishop Lefebvre seized a farm bequeathed to the French-speaking parish of Sainte-Anne in Detroit by church warden Prisque Côté and used the proceeds to finance diocesan projects. Sainte-Anne's remained the only civil corporation of its kind and dated back to the foundation of the Territory of Michigan. When the church building was demolished to make way for a new structure, the bishop ordered the wardens to surrender title to the corporation in an attempt to seize \$300 000 in parish funds. When they refused, the bishop withheld consent for the construction of a new church, and denied the wardens the sacraments. Facing accusations of apostasy, the wardens submitted.<sup>117</sup> Half of the funds were then used in parishes that offered no services to francophones. On a second occasion, in

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<sup>116</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 19 septembre, 1889; school teachers had noted this problem as well. See also *Le Courrier d'Essex*, February 14, 1885.

<sup>117</sup> *Saint-Pierre*, p. 262-263.

1886, Bishop Burgess entrusted the French-speaking parish of St. Joachim's in Detroit to the Fathers of the Holy Ghost, under a French-speaking Alsatian German named Dangelzer who had little sympathy for the French language cause and preferred to use English in sermons. The francophone parishioners made known their displeasure. One night, four masked men armed with revolvers entered the rectory and ordered the priest to depart at once. The priest never returned.<sup>118</sup>

The French language issue also stirred emotions in Windsor following a public protest at St. Alphonsus Parish, Windsor in 1899. In that year, hundreds of francophones of the city appealed to Bishop Walsh of London for more French in the church. In a letter appearing in *Le Progrès*, Gaspard Pacaud condemned the systematic exclusion of French from high mass. He called for a parish meeting to settle the issue. On March 20, 1899, the francophones of St. Alphonsus assembled at the church hall to petition for more French at the Sunday services. More than 200 people called for the reintroduction of their language at high mass and at the 9 o'clock service. They also called for the appointment of a francophone to a church with three Irish priests and a congregation that was fifty percent French speaking.<sup>119</sup>

The French Canadian parishioners of St. Alphonsus, following the advice of the pastor, Flannery, chose to await the appointment of a new Bishop of London to present their grievances. Pacaud, representing the protestors, offered a petition to the newly-invested Bishop, John McEvay. Underlining the dangers that an English-only policy

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<sup>118</sup> Saint Pierre, p. 265

<sup>119</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 24 mars, 1899.

posed for the future faith of the French Canadians of Windsor, Pacaud and the petitioners appealed to the Bishop for fair play. Pacaud recalled the generous French Canadian donations of land, labour and supplies for the construction of the church edifice in 1858. He dispelled claims that this was a request at the expense of those of the English tongue. Rather, the petition was for equality.<sup>120</sup>

Monseigneur, ... les Canadiens-français se demandent avec raison, de quel droit on vient chasser l'usage de leur langue d'un temple qu'ils ont bâti presque seuls...? Il est vrai qu'il y a une instruction en français à la messe de 8 heures; mais est-ce que les Canadiens français doivent être privés d'entendre la grand'messe? Pourquoi leur langue, n'est-elle pas sur le même pied que la langue anglaise?...

Peut-être pour la première fois dans l'histoire de cette paroisse sommes-nous actuellement privés même d'un seul prêtre de notre nationalité...<sup>121</sup>

The petitioners suggested to the bishop that both English and French could be used at each of the Sunday masses. However if this proposal was unworkable the petitioners offered an alternative option to their Irish co-religionists : separation into two parishes. The Irish parishioners could buy out the French Canadian share of the parish or vice versa, to build a second church.

In January 1901, Bishop McEvay responded to the petition with the appointment of J. Edmond Meunier, a French Canadian, as the new pastor of the church. His two associates, Fathers Downey and Hogan, both had some facility in the French language as well. Aurèle Pacaud of *Le Progrès*, Gaspard's brother, declared

Le rêve depuis longtemps choyé d'entendre le français comme l'anglais, et de posséder d'éloquents interprètes de la parole de Dieu est enfin sur le point de se réaliser; dimanche prochain commencera la réalisation de cet espoir par l'entrée en fonction de nos nouveaux prêtres.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> A detailed account of this event can be found in Robert Choquette, *Language and Religion: A History of English-French Conflict in Ontario*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1975), 117-134; and Roberto Perin, *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 203.

<sup>121</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 21 septembre, 1899.

<sup>122</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 17 janvier, 1901.

In spite of this promising development, English would remain the predominant language of the church community. The all-pervading English atmosphere of Windsor had clearly affected the identity of some francophones. Aurèle Pacaud deplored the news that a certain Canayen named Mathieu Drouillard had taken to spelling his name “Matthew Drulard”.<sup>123</sup> He also lamented the growing use of English even among francophone professionals in their daily business with each other.<sup>124</sup>

As illustrated above, French language issues could at times, provoke an emotional response from some francophone Catholics. The threatened disappearance of French from their schools and churches did on occasion prompt a collective protest from parishioners wishing to preserve their heritage. As more than one priest would discover, the politics of language had to be handled delicately to preserve parish harmony. The politics of the French language would soon come to preoccupy leading francophones throughout the province of Ontario at a time when the overwhelming English atmosphere of the Windsor border region was growing increasingly evident.

#### The 1910 ACFEO Congress<sup>125</sup>

It was in part within this growing shadow of the forces of Anglicization driven by industrialization, modernization, and cultural homogenization that the leading francophone militants of Ontario met to discuss a coherent strategy to advance the cause of the French language. In January, 1910, francophone numbers were growing in the city

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<sup>123</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 6 avril, 1901.

<sup>124</sup> *Le Progrès*, le 26 février, 1885.

<sup>125</sup> For a detailed account of the founding congress of the ACFEQ, consult Robert Choquette, *Language and Religion*, pp. 68-78; and Margaret Prang, “Clerics, Politicians, and the Bilingual Schools Issue in Ontario, 1910-1917,” in *Canadian Historical Review*, XLI, 4, December 1960, pp. 281-307.

of Windsor, and economic prosperity gave the local elite the confidence to send an impressive contingent of delegates to the first provincial congress of the Association Canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFEO) in Ottawa. According to the published official report, 89 delegates were registered from the Essex and Kent county areas.<sup>126</sup> All but one of these delegates, Dr. Joseph O. Réaume, attended the

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<sup>126</sup> The following individuals from Essex and Kent County figured on the list of directors on the ACFEO provincial executive in 1910: Father Lucien Beaudoin of Walkerville, M. Arthur Burns of Amherstburg, M. Severin Ducharme of Belle River, M. John Dugal of Tecumseh, M. William Leblanc of Kent County, M. Patrice Ouellette of Windsor, M. Elie Quenneville of Saint-Joachim, and M. J.A. Tremblay of Tilbury. Among the Roman prelates in attendance were Monsignor J. Edouard Meunier of Windsor, former Acting Bishop of the Diocese of London. Joseph O. Réaume an absentee delegate was to have represented Windsor as a delegate and Conservative deputy in the Provincial Legislature, and Gaspard Pacaud, the distinguished former Liberal deputy from Essex North also represented the city. David Chenay, the Bilingual school inspector of Windsor was also in attendance as a delegate. Aside from these twelve distinguished guests, sixty-nine other names from Essex and Kent counties figured on the list of delegates. These delegates' names follow in alphabetical order: A. Amelin, of Essex, Alfred Auger, of Essex, Siméon Bouffard of Sandwich, Élie Bézaire of Rivière-aux-Canards, J.P. Belleperche of Walkerville, François X. Baillargeon of Tecumseh, A. Bondy of Amherstburg, H.N. Béchard of Chatham, C. Béchard of Chatham, Raymond Baillargeon of Tecumseh, L.S. Beaudoin of Windsor, H.N. Béchard of Paincourt, Alfred Côté of Belle-Rivière, Ernest Cécile of Tecumseh, F.X. Chauvin of Stoney Point, H. Chauvin of Windsor, Joseph Durocher of Sandwich, Ovila Durocher of Sandwich, Denis Ducharme, of Tecumseh, E. Éthier of Essex, Paul Gouin of Tecumseh, Damien Gourd of Windsor, E. Giroux of Essex, A. Jacques of Tecumseh, Urgel Jacques of Windsor, Ernest Jacques of Tecumseh, Euclide Jacques of Windsor, Adolfe Janisse of Walkerville, F.E. Ladouceur of Chatham, Reverend Pierre L'Heureux of Belle-Rivière, Charles Laporte of St. Joachim, Reverend Joseph A. Loiselle of Rivière-aux-Canards, D. Langlois of Tecumseh, Joseph Ladouceur of Belle-Rivière, Joseph Leblanc of Paincourt, Philippe Ladouceur of Windsor, Albert Lassaline of Walkerville, Alfred Langlois of Walkerville, P. Laferté of Essex, Israël Lalonde of Essex, D. Langlois of Essex, Reverend Pierre Langlois of Tecumseh, Philippe Mousseau of Belle-Rivière, Joseph Massé of Stoney Point, Maurice May of Tecumseh, Philippe May of Tecumseh, Paul Morand of Tecumseh, J.B. Marchand of Tilbury, Denis Ouellette of Belle-Rivière, P. Ouellette of Amherstburg, Alfred Poisson of Belle-Rivière, S. Poissonault of Saint-Joachim, Noé Parent of Belle-Rivière, Raymond Paré of Rivière-aux-Canards, George Plante of Walkerville, E. Parent of Essex, L. Parent of Essex, F. Proulx of Windsor, Joseph J. Parent of Essex, E.O. Parent of Walkerville, J.L. Parent of Tecumseh, Reverend Charles-A. Parent of Tilbury, Victor Pilon of McGregor, J.D. Pinsonnault of McGregor, Laurent Parent of Tecumseh, C. Paquette of Amherstburg, G. Quenneville of Stoney Point, A. Réaume of Stoney Point, O. Riberdy of Walkerville, George Sylvestre of Saint-Joachim, M. Saint-Denis of Windsor, F. Sylvestre of Saint-Joachim, Alexandre Saint-Louis of Walkerville, W.A. Saint-Louis of Walkerville, A. Saint-Louis of Windsor, A. Saint-Louis of Walkerville, and Narcisse Thibert of Windsor. (77 names after executive)

The delegate breakdown for the various communities of Essex and Kent Counties follows: Walkerville 10, Amherstburg 4, Rivière-aux-canards 3, McGregor 2, Sandwich 3, Belle-Rivière 8, Tecumseh 15, Windsor 15, Tilbury 3, Saint-Joachim 5, Stoney Point 4, Essex County (general) 10, Kent County (general) 1, Chatham 3, Paincourt 2. If one counts delegates from the old stock Canayen settlements of Amherstburg, Rivière-aux-canards, Sandwich, McGregor, Windsor and Walkerville, the total number of delegates is 37.

conference.<sup>127</sup> Belle River farmer, Sévérin Ducharme, a Liberal party organizer in Essex North riding, who delivered the report on the state of the French language in southwestern Ontario at the Congress, identified what he considered to be the fundamental concern of militants in the Windsor border region: complacency. “Il y a chez nous, dans l’Ouest d’Ontario, des Canadiens-français apathiques, indifférents, mais, grâce à Dieu, c’est l’exception.”<sup>128</sup> With the confidence of their growing numerical importance in Ontario, the Congress passed a series of controversial resolutions. Among those put forth were motions declaring that all primary schools should be declared bilingual where the majority of children were from French homes. Secondly, the Congress declared that in all classes where one quarter of the pupils were French, the trustees would request that instruction be given in French reading, spelling and composition. Moreover, the delegates resolved that French should be legally recognized in bilingual schools as a language of instruction and discipline. They also approved a motion calling for a system of bilingual secondary schools. Lastly, the Congress requested that high school entrance examinations be modified to lower the standards on English subjects for students from bilingual schools. The delegates conveyed these

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As for more recently populated FC communities, the number totals 42. The ten delegates from the generic Essex are difficult to determine. *Congrès d’éducation des Canadiens français de l’Ontario*, Rapport Officiel, (Ottawa: La Compagnie d’Imprimerie d’Ottawa, 1910).

<sup>127</sup> Réaume wrote to the Congress indicating that he would be in Europe at the time of the congress, but that he would make haste to return. He never showed up. Letter, J.O. Réaume to A. Constantineau, President of ACFEO Convention committee, May 13, 1909, as quoted in *Congrès d’éducation des Canadiens français d’Ontario*: Rapport officiel, p. 64.

<sup>128</sup> *Congrès d’éducation.*, p. 239-240.

demands to Premier James Whitney for consideration.<sup>129</sup> Unbeknownst to the delegates, these resolutions would trigger the wrath of some formidable opponents.

ACFEO delegates from Essex and Kent county were by no means representative of the growing urban nature of the region. An analysis of the ACFEO delegation from Essex and Kent counties suggests a corps of men that were associated either with farming, the priesthood, or white collar work. (See Appendix 2, Table 1.9.h) Fully 34 of the 69 identifiable delegates located in the 1911 census rolls professed to be farmers, and 58 of the delegates identified with rural domiciles. However, if one looks at the purported 31 delegates who hailed from urban centers, a problem arises: five of these delegates profess to be farmers, with three claiming to be from Walkerville. An examination of the 1911 census rolls identifies all three men to be residents of the rural outskirts (Sandwich East township), as is the case with one farmer associating himself with Windsor, and a fifth farmer associating himself with Chatham. Consequently, it is appropriate to state that no more than 26 of the 89 delegates, or 29.2%, represented urban areas, while more than half of all francophones in the Windsor border region resided in the border cities.<sup>130</sup> From a sub-cultural perspective, the divide appears once again, if one classifies Canayen and French Canadian delegates. Of the 89 delegates chosen, 32 or 36% of the total, possessed Canayen family names, while 57 or 64% of the total had French Canadian names. No immigrant names from France could be identified on the

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<sup>129</sup> *Congrès d'éducation...*, p. 151; see also Michael Fitzpatrick, "Bishop Fallon and the Irish-French Conflict in the Roman Catholic Diocese of London", (M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1969), p. 48.

<sup>130</sup> Jack Cecillon, "Turbulent Times in the Diocese of London", *Ontario History*, LXXXVII, 4, December, 1995: 392 (Appendix B)

delegate list. At least 13 delegates, or 14.6% of the delegates were born in Quebec.

Hence, it is clear that the effort to recruit an emerging francophone militant leadership in the region was leaning heavily on a French Canadian clientele from rural areas at a time when the population was increasingly heterogeneous and a majority now resided in urban areas.

A Measure of Francophone Militancy in Windsor: Analysing Church Petitions during Fallon's Reign

After the Congress, with the aid of Ottawa's French Canadian elite, leaders from Essex and Kent Counties drafted petitions for use by the local parishes. In all, there were seven completely francophone parishes in the Windsor border region: Paincourt and Grande Pointe in Kent County, Stoney Point (Pointe-aux-Roches), St. Joachim, Staples and River Canard in Essex County. Eight other parishes provided bilingual services during the sermons of the Latin mass: Sandwich, St. Alphonsus and Immaculate Conception churches in Windsor, Ford City, Tecumseh, Belle River, Tilbury and McGregor. Three parishes with substantial francophone numbers had no French language service whatsoever: Amherstburg and Walkerville in Essex County and St. Joseph's of Chatham, in Kent County.<sup>131</sup> For discontented francophone militants, the ACFEQ offered a readily available source of legal and political advice. Such was the case for Windsor's francophone Catholics in their draft of a petition for more French at Immaculate Conception and St. Alphonsus parishes.

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<sup>131</sup> Alfred David Emery to Lionel Groulx, April 18, 1924, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1A/1270.

An examination of two church petitions regarding the French language suggest divisions within Windsor's francophone population over the issue. The 1911 petition from St. Alphonsus listed 143 names of "family heads", 91 of which were Canayen, and 46 of French Canadian origin. Four of the first six names on the petition belonged to professionals who had come from Quebec : Dr. S.H. Amyot, school inspector David Chenay, license inspector and former MPP Gaspard Pacaud and Justice of the Peace Joseph D.A. Déziel. The most prominent Canayen to sign was Patrice Ouellet, the music director of St. Alphonsus parish. The vast majority of the Canayen and French Canadian names belonged to working class men. Of the 86 individuals who could be positively linked to the census, the carpentry trade was the most common line of work identified, with government clerks, grocers, and hotel keepers taking the second, third and fourth positions.<sup>132</sup> Forty percent of the remaining signatures belonged to a variety of skilled and unskilled workers. These 143 signatures represented just 16.53% of the 865 francophone family heads listed in the 1911 census for the city of Windsor.(See Appendix B, Table 1.9.h) This mediocre turnout might suggest that few francophones were genuinely concerned about French language issues almost immediately after the disappearance of their mother tongue from two of the city's separate schools. It might

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<sup>132</sup> The absence of 57 petition names from the 1911 Canada census rolls for the city of Windsor raise concerns for the historian. It is possible that given the high rate of transiency during this period, many of the signatories had left the region. Nevertheless, if many of the indigenous Canayen names could not be traced to actual residents in Windsor or anywhere else in the 1901 or 1911 census rolls, it is fair to ask whether such individuals existed, and if they did, where did they actually live? Is it possible that one tactic used by the petition organizers to give more weight to their protest might have involved the deliberate addition of false names or dead people. Whatever the case may be, the sample of 1398 identifiable francophone residents of Windsor provides an adequate cross-section of this population (4113 were identified in the 1911 census as being of French descent). See Appendix 3.

explain why some leaders expressed frustration with the apathy of Windsor's francophones regarding the language issue. Nevertheless, this petition suggests that when language concerns did exist, they transcended social classes and subcultures. Some Canayen and French Canadian families expressed a genuine preoccupation with the disappearance of their language from their church and their schools. This petition failed to secure any new concessions for the French language.

In December, 1913, after a series of fruitless petitions to London, and the recent introduction of Regulation XVII, the francophones of Windsor organized their largest petition drive requesting the creation of two French Canadian national parishes. Three ex-patriot Quebeckers, contractors Euclide Jacques and Alfred Saint-Onge of Windsor, and their compatriot, Justice of the Peace J.D.A. Déziel, with the help of Canayen carpenter Christopher Marentette, garnered an impressive 3039 names in a protest letter sent to the Apostolic Delegate in Ottawa, Pellegrino Stagni.<sup>133</sup> According to the 1911 census, there were 4113 people of French descent in the city of Windsor. If the names on the petition were all identifiable, this would represent a participation rate of 73.9%. However, when cross-referencing the petition names with the 1911 Canada Census for Windsor and Essex County, it was possible to identify only 1562 names of francophone signatories (see Appendix 3, Table 1.9.i). Of these names, 389 belonged to identifiable families who signed the petition, with French Canadians constituting 52%, the Canayens

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<sup>133</sup> *Mémoire au sujet des Paroisses Canadiennes-françaises à Windsor* à Son Éminence Le Cardinal Gaetano de Lai aux Éminentissimes Cardinaux de la Congrégation Consistoriale, Rome, 1914. A detailed analysis of the petition can be found in the Appendix 3.

47%, and the remaining 1% being French immigrant families. However, the examination of individual signatories on the petition clarifies the subcultural breakdown, and highlights the preponderance of French Canadian names. While roughly 41% (644 out of 1562) of signatories were of Canayen background, just under 58% were French Canadians. However, 164 signatories from the sample were from outside of Windsor, but in Essex county; if these people are removed from consideration, as should be the case, the French Canadian percentage of the remaining 1398 signatories declines slightly, by less than one percent. If one compares these figures to the sub-cultural breakdown for Windsorites of French descent, the results do not indicate a Canayen indifference to French language issues, but they do suggest that French Canadians were more prone to embrace the militant cause of the French language.(Table 1.9.i) A socio-economic analysis of the 1398 identifiable Windsor names on the petition suggests that in fact, the overwhelming majority of signatories belonged to working class families. Fully 15% of the household heads who signed were carpenters, outweighing their proportion of Windsor working francophone population (10% of the total). The considerable number of signatures from individuals in the building trades suggest that Quebec contractors Euclide Jacques and Alfred Saint-Onge may have used their influence to encourage these people to support the petition. This petition would also fail to garner a positive response from the Bishop. The efforts of the militant leadership to enlist popular support would be put to the test with the new school regulations affecting French language instruction.

## Bilingual Schools on the Eve of Regulation XVII

In the years leading up to the announcement of Regulation XVII, Windsor's divided francophone community would be faced with a number of problems affecting the area's bilingual schools. Indeed, the first decade of the twentieth century was a period of decline for French instruction in the schools of the border cities. In March, 1904, Separate School Inspector David Chenay visited Sandwich East Separate School No. 1. The Inspector remarked that

the teaching of French in the school has not received the share of attention to which it is entitled—through no willful neglect of course. But the teachers assure me that henceforth they will give the subject their most serious consideration.<sup>134</sup>

Father Beaudoin, the local pastor, must surely have been discouraged that this development had occurred in his parish school.

By the end of 1905, the Catholics of Walkerville could claim St. Edward's as their new two-storey school. However, Inspector Chenay's 1905 report deplored the overcrowding in the classes with 62 students in the junior class. The school's teachers were paid only half of the salary earned by educators at the neighbouring public school.<sup>135</sup> David Chenay's report condemned the lackadaisical attitude of the Walkerville school board towards the problem of overcrowded classes and underpaid teachers. Chenay reported similar conditions in Sandwich East at Notre Dame, a school with just two teachers and an enrollment of 108 students.

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<sup>134</sup> Report of D. Chenay, Inspector to the Trustees of Separate School No. 1, Sandwich East, Walkerville Ontario, March 12, 1904. CRCCF, C2/ 93/1-10, Documents Lucien Beaudoin. (Beaudoin, as pastor of Sandwich, East was president of the local Catholic school board).

<sup>135</sup> Report of David Chenay, Inspector to the Trustees of St. Edward School, Walkerville, c. Oct. 1905. CRCCF, ACFO records, C2/93/6.

The bilingual schools issue reemerged on the provincial scene after 1905, when the people of Ontario finally deposed the ruling Liberal party and elected James Pliny Whitney's Conservative party. During its first term, the provincial government commissioned Chief Inspector F. W. Merchant to conduct a secret study on the state of education in the English-French schools of the Ottawa region. The 1909 Report claimed that about three-quarters of the children who graduated from the fourth form (the seventh and eighth years of elementary school) were bilingual, while only 15 per cent of third form pupils (the fifth and sixth years) could make such a claim. However, Merchant noted that very few students ever reached the fourth form.<sup>136</sup> In other words, many bilingual school students never acquired a true grasp on the English language. A growing chorus of voices from English-speaking Ontario, Liberal and Conservative alike, called for provincial government intervention. As a result of these findings, the Whitney cabinet was now forced to address a major problem involving bilingual schools: young French Canadians were not integrating into the anglophone majority, with many barely able to speak English.<sup>137</sup>

On the eve of the major school reforms, Essex County had 45 schools designated as bilingual, 29 of which belonged to the Catholic separate system. Kent County had just eight bilingual schools, with four public and four separate schools, all of which were located in Dover Township.<sup>138</sup> The twenty public bilingual schools of Essex and Kent had 25 teachers and a student body of 817 in 1910. The 33 separate bilingual schools of

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<sup>136</sup> Welch, p. 90.

<sup>137</sup> Welch, p. 90.

<sup>138</sup> F. W. Merchant, *Report on the Condition of the English-French Schools in the Province of Ontario*, (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, King's Publisher, 1912), p. 2.

the two counties had 71 teachers and a student body of 2719 that same year.<sup>139</sup> As school inspector reports would later record, nearly all of the resistance to the French language regulations would come from bilingual separate schools, in part to protest the presence of an inspector of the Protestant faith.<sup>140</sup> While 80 percent of the public school teachers earned \$500 a year or more, fully 60 percent of the Catholic separate school teachers made \$350 or less annually, fostering a dominance of the profession by religious orders and largely inexperienced young women. Fully two-thirds of the area's bilingual teachers had less than ten years of experience.<sup>141</sup> Only 20 of the 96 teachers had the required second class certificate. Twenty-seven bilingual teachers could produce a third class certificate. The vast majority lacked even this basic training. Not a single bilingual educator in the region could produce a first class certificate.<sup>142</sup>

The provincial government's growing concern with the bilingual schools situation focused not on Essex or Kent county, but rather on the eastern districts of the province, where the wave of Quebec immigration had been most significant. In these areas, the French Canadian population quickly outnumbered the older English speaking settlements. More importantly, these migrants turned to religious teaching orders from Quebec to staff their separate schools. Many of these educators lacked the proper qualifications in

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<sup>139</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1910*, (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, King's Publisher, 1910), Tables I B, I G.

<sup>140</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, Essex North, 1912-1927, Ministry of Education Files, Provincial Archives of Ontario (PAO), RG 2-42-0-4185, MS 5652. School inspection reports indicate that only Maidstone SS. No. 1, a public school, exhibited resistance to the prescribed instruction time limits for French. This resistance was short lived, disappearing by 1915. All other public bilingual schools fell immediately into compliance.

<sup>141</sup> Merchant, *Report...*, p. 15.

<sup>142</sup> Merchant, *Report...*, p. 15.

Ontario, and to make matters worse, some were utterly incapable of teaching the English language. Such was not the case with the vast majority of teachers in the bilingual schools of the Windsor Border Region. Nevertheless, the growing problem of French-only schools in eastern Ontario would prompt a growing number of critics to repeat the call for the outright abolition of bilingual schools.

The outcry against the English-French schools did not erupt in a vacuum. Earlier hostility resurfaced following the ACFEO Congress in January, 1910 that called on the province to improve and expand the system of bilingual schools to the secondary level. It was clear to militant francophones in the Windsor Border Region that the most ardent proponent of the French language in Essex and Kent counties was Lucien Beaudoin. Aside from religion, the French language and Catholic education were Beaudoin's all-consuming passions. Over the span of his 25 years of service at Our Lady of the Lake parish, he would build three schools, largely at his own expense. In addition, he personally taught his English-speaking nuns the foundation of the French language to use in the bilingual schools. Beaudoin also made regular rounds of his schools to catechize the children in the French language. Finally, as pastor, he served as president of the Sandwich East and Walkerville Roman Catholic Separate School Boards. By the time Fallon became Bishop of London in 1909, Beaudoin had already established a solid reputation as a leading defender of Catholic education rights and bilingual schools in Essex County. His stature and zeal would challenge the equally outspoken new bishop.

Beaudoin's crusade for bilingual schools and the French language divided the area's francophone priests. In an era where the parish pastor held considerable social

status and was often the only university-educated member of the church community with experience in public speaking, these priests were respected and often looked to for leadership within the French-speaking population of the Windsor border region.

A vocal minority of six priests supported Beaudoin's language stance on several occasions: J. Edmond Meunier of Windsor, Alfred Emery of Paincourt, Napoléon Saint-Cyr of Stoney Point, Pierre L'Heureux of Belle River, Joseph Loiselle of River Canard and Pierre Langlois of Tecumseh. Three other priests offered periodic support for the French language, most notably, L. Landreville of Grande Pointe, Theo Martin of Tilbury, and eventually Joseph Emery of Ford City, the newly ordained associate pastor to Beaudoin. Of these nine priests, eight were French Canadians, six born and educated in Quebec and one, Langlois, was Canayen. The majority of francophone priests in the area, seven Canayens, eight French Canadians and two Frenchman, failed to rally to the militant banner.<sup>143</sup> Like Roby's Franco-American priests of New England, those clerics who were native to the Windsor border region were less likely to be as actively engaged in the French language militants' struggle.<sup>144</sup> Eight of the nine militant priests, Meunier of Windsor being the exception, led parishes that were predominantly rural in nature,

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<sup>143</sup> This classification is built largely upon Fallon's own interpretation of his priests' activities for the French language. M.F. Fallon to Peregrino Stagni, Apostolic Delegate to Canada, May 25, 1914, Fallon Papers, Archives of the Diocese of London, as quoted in Choquette, *Language and Religion*, p. 141. Fallon classified the following priests as his supporters: Canayen priests J. N. Campeau, A. Côté, J.A. Pinsonneault, H.N. Robert, and J.G. Labelle; and French Canadian priests F.X. Laurendeau, C. Laliberté, E. Plourde, S. Rocheleau, F. Semande and French Priests P. Chalandar and G. Fuma. Fallon also added five priests with whom he believed he had no quarrel: Canayens C. Parent, G. Pitre and French Canadians Joseph Emery, D. Brisson and A. Rondot. Joseph Emery admitted to family members his clandestine support for the militants during the Ford City riot of 1917. Author's interview with Amedee Emery, August 30, 1988.

<sup>144</sup> See Roby, *Les franco-américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: rêves et réalités*, (Sillery: Les Editions Septentrion, 2000), p. 311.

where agriculture still held considerable importance. Their espousal of a philosophy that melded farm life, the Catholic faith and the French language into a bulwark against the forces of urbanization, industrialization and Anglicization put them at odds with the integrationist agenda of Bishop Fallon. All of the militant priests espoused the traditional French Canadian belief that to lose one's language was to lose one's faith. Their inability to rally most francophone priests to the cause of the French language would prove to be significant. The compliant priests likely placed matters of faith and obedience to the bishop above this national struggle. For the militant priests, the Catholic bilingual schools were an essential element in the cultural survival of the local francophone population. Their stance placed them on a collision course with their new bishop, Monsignor Michael Francis Fallon, who, while a strong advocate of Catholic education, would prove to be among the most avowed opponents of the bilingual schools.

## Chapter 2: Regulation XVII and a Community Divided

Much of the literature on the era of Regulation XVII highlights the struggle of this population to overcome adversity to secure their rights to a French language education for their children. Images of the hatpin-wielding mothers at the Ecole Guigues in Ottawa, and the fearless Jeanne Lajoie's effort to rally the Pembroke community single-handedly to maintain a private French school make up the colourful imagery that has sprung from this historic struggle. Such depictions, while not entirely absent from the Windsor border region, recount only part of the resistance story. Little has actually been written on the deep disappointments, divisions and disagreements that this francophone population experienced. A closer inspection of the Windsor border region reveals a complex and divided community lacking the will and leadership to unite for the French language cause. Given the paucity of primary sources, the voice of the grassroots is absent, except through the analysis, the hopes and despair of the elites.

### A Heterogeneous Francophone Population: The Canayens and the French Canadians

A careful examination of the census rolls of 1901 reveals striking differences and divisions among the francophones of Essex and Kent Counties. As mentioned in chapter one, there existed a small community of French immigrants largely associated with the Robinet and Girardot wineries in the town of Sandwich. By 1911, this population was decreasing. In that same census year, another group of francophones appeared to be surfacing in modest numbers: Franco-American families in search of employment in the

emerging industries of the border cities. Neither group made up a significant percentage of the French-speaking population.

The most distinctive component of the diverse francophone community of the Windsor border region remained without question the descendants of the old Fort Detroit settlement. For the purposes of this work, the Canayens<sup>1</sup> were those families who began settling on seigneurial-style farm plots along the Detroit river after 1701, with the first Canadian lots meted out in 1749. According to Lina Gouger's work, the initial wave of settlement from France and New France ended about ten to fifteen years after the Conquest, around 1775. Those francophones from Quebec who began arriving from the early 1820s onwards shall be referred to as French Canadians.<sup>2</sup> Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Canayens were highly transient, moving frequently back and forth from Michilimackinac to Detroit and the Illinois country. They focused primarily on the lucrative business of trapping and trading furs with the aboriginal peoples, rather than the more sedentary life associated with agriculture.<sup>3</sup> As the fur trade declined, this population settled into farming and tending the orchards granted to them by Cadillac or the French king on the Detroit riverfront. Although the eventual emergence of the border cities of Sandwich, Windsor and Walkerville swallowed many of the original Canayen homesteads, this old Detroit French population was still prevalent around the agricultural

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<sup>1</sup> This is a term commonly employed by both Lucien Beaudoin and Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre in referring to the old stock French population. Apparently, this was a term that even the old Detroit French used to refer to themselves.

<sup>2</sup> It is likely that the handful of French Canadians who settled among the Detroit River Canayen community intermarried and assumed some of their cultural traits. Those who would settle in the Lake St. Clair communities would maintain a different set of cultural traits that will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Lina Gouger, "Le peuplement fondateur de Détroit, 1701-1765", (Ph.D thesis, Laval University, 2002), pp. 121-122.

communities of River Canard, Petite Cote, McGregor and Sandwich East in 1901, and remained resilient in passing the French language on to their children, if the census statistics can be trusted. Nevertheless, the Canayens appeared to be adapting to a changing society, since nearly all individuals under the age of 45 were bilingual.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the second wave of francophone settlers arrived primarily after the establishment of the Great Western Railway in 1854.<sup>4</sup> These pioneer families from Quebec purchased a series of farms forming communities along the southern shore of Lake St. Clair, quickly outnumbering the few disparate Canayen homesteads. Their population formed a band of villages stretching from Belle River to Paincourt. With the improved transportation links, these settlers, whom we will refer to as French Canadians, received continuous reinforcement from new Quebec settlers over the course of the next sixty years. Unlike the Canayens, these French Canadians, like many of their counterparts who went to the Midwestern United States, immediately embraced logging and an agricultural lifestyle, and solicited from their native province priests, doctors and lawyers to meet their spiritual and secular needs. With the emergence of high paying industrial jobs in the border cities, a number of resident French Canadians joined the steady stream of new Quebec arrivals moving to the growing

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<sup>4</sup> Vincent Almazan, *Les Canadiens français du Détroit. Leur parler*. Unpublished manuscript. (Belle River, Ontario), 177p. Almazan notes that according to census statistics for the region, there were between 2800 and 3000 francophones in the region in 1843, but that number jumped to 9000 by the 1859 census. There are clear indications, based on an examination of patronyms in the Canayen communities, that some sporadic migration did continue after the Conquest until the 1850s, but that the numbers were not significant. River Canard marriage registry, 1857, Windsor Public Library, microfilm. This source was cross referenced to three sources: Lajeunesse's list of family names from French government sources, as listed in his work, *Windsor Border Region*, his compilation of the Assumption Marriage registry dating back to 1770, and the marriage registry of St. Jean-Baptiste parish in Amherstburg, dating back to 1803. For more on this population, see Vincent Almazan, *Français et Canadiens dans la région du Détroit aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*. (Sudbury: La Société historique du Nouvel-Ontario, 1979).

metropolis for work. It was here that the French Canadians came into contact with the Canayens for the first time in a serious way.<sup>5</sup> In rural areas, the two sub-cultures remained distinctive communities.<sup>6</sup>

This concept of two separate francophone communities in the Windsor border region is not new. In fact, a number of scholarly works have addressed the existence of a linguistic or cultural divide between the Canayen and French Canadian settlers. Cecilia Maria Craig's 1939 study on the French Canadians of the village of Staples, just south of Lake St. Clair first identified notable differences between the speech of these villagers and that of the francophones settled further west along the Detroit River.<sup>7</sup> In 1953, Alexander Hull was the first linguist to call attention to the presence of two regional speech variants in the Windsor border region.<sup>8</sup> According to Hull, the old Fort Detroit pioneer families spoke a more archaic form of French with words distinctive to the region's environment and laced with aboriginal influences.<sup>9</sup> In 1961, Neil Johnson, a Mount Clemens, Michigan resident and Canayen by heritage, studied the French spoken

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<sup>5</sup> The 1901 Canada Census clearly indicates that there were signs of intermarriage in Windsor, Sandwich, Sandwich East and Tecumseh. Census rolls indicate that families with Canayen patronyms often hosted in-laws with French-Canadian names, and vice-versa. In addition, some French Canadian farm labourers also boarded in Canayen households.

<sup>6</sup> According to the census, aside from the border cities, the Canayens and French Canadian populations had already begun to coexist in Sandwich East township, most notably in the village of Tecumseh. See Table 1.1.3c.

<sup>7</sup> Cecilia Maria Craig, "The Significance of the Changing Culture Patterns of the Essex County French Canadians, Supported by a Detailed Study of 'S' from 1908-1938", (Master's Thesis, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1939).

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Hull Jr, "The Franco-Canadian Dialect of Windsor Ontario: a Preliminary Study", (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Washington, D.C, 1955).

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the distinctive language variants of the Canayens see, Peter Halford, "Trois siècles de francophonie: archaïsmes et régionalismes dans le parler du Détroit", *Français du Canada-Français de France*, Actes du sixième Colloque international d'Orford, Québec, du 26 au 29 septembre, 2000; and also Marcel Bénéteau, "Variantes phonétiques, morphologiques et lexicales dans le français des deux groupes colonisateurs de la région du Détroit", *Français du Canada-Français de France*, Actes du sixième Colloque international d'Orford, Québec, du 26 au 29 septembre, 2000.

by his older relatives, and identified unique linguistic traits linking the old villages on the Detroit riverfront. Johnson's study challenged the existing linguistic paradigm for the French language groupings of North America, arguing that a third grouping be added to the Quebec and Acadia-Louisiana variants. He argued for the recognition of a "Midwestern French" geographic variant, to include the unique French spoken in the Illinois country, Missouri, the Mississippi valley and the Windsor-Detroit border region.<sup>10</sup>

In more recent years, two researchers from Windsor have pursued Johnson's original thesis of distinctiveness further. Linguist Peter Halford examined a variety of sources to measure the uniqueness of this Midwestern or Canayen French, starting with the work of the 18<sup>th</sup> century missionary, Pierre Potier's lexicon manuscript<sup>11</sup>, and continuing with personal interviews, including a collection of seventy-five taped 1981 Radio-Canada Windsor interviews with Fort Detroit descendants. Undertaking a comparative study of the French spoken by the Canayen and the French Canadians of the Lake St. Clair villages, Halford identified a striking number of differences, noting the existence of a considerable number of Canayen words that were altogether absent from the vocabulary of both Quebec and Acadian French.<sup>12</sup> Marcel Bénéteau extended Halford's work, undertaking nearly 200 personal interviews, and examining 2000 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Neil Johnson, "The Sugarbush Speech of the French Dialect of Detroit", (Master's thesis, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1961).

<sup>11</sup> Pierre Potier was a Jesuit missionary at the Detroit settlement who studied and catalogued a glossary of the unique form of French spoken at Detroit and in the Illinois country.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Halford, "Trois siècles de francophonie: archaïsmes et régionalismes dans le parler du Détroit", in *Français du Canada-Français de France*, Actes du sixième Colloque d'Orford, 26-29 septembre, 2000: p. 191.

century handwritten folk songs emanating from both the Canayen and French Canadian villages of Essex county. Like Halford, Bénéteau identified substantial linguistic variants, including more than 1500 words of vocabulary unique to one or the other linguistic community. Of particular interest, is their identification of 745 regionalisms, archaicisms and Amerindian words most of which were unique to the Canayen vocabulary, such as the *couiche-couiche* (cochon/Amerindian for pig), *rat de bois* (opposum), *prairie* (terrain marécageux; marais/marshland), *blé d'Inde fleuri* (maïs soufflé/popcorn), *roulin* (vague/wave), and *trou de firou* (trou de cul/asshole). More than 100 words of this vocabulary related directly to the unique flora and fauna indigenous to the Windsor border region, with much of the remaining vocabulary relating to fishing, the fur trade or everyday pioneer life on this river front settlement.

Bénéteau presents at least four other arguments for the recognition of the Canayens as a unique identity.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the most obvious difference could be found in the isolation of the two communities from each other, with the Canayens congregating primarily around the shores of the Detroit river, while the French Canadians settled overwhelmingly to the east of Windsor, near Lake St. Clair. The relative isolation of this first community from Quebec by 1000 kilometres had helped to foster its distinctive

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<sup>13</sup> Bénéteau's criteria for recognizing the Fort Detroit French as a unique culture are drawn in part from Micheline Marchand, *Les voyageurs et la colonisation de Pénétanguishene (1825-1871). La Colonisation française en Huronie*. (Sudbury: La Société historique du Nouvel Ontario, no. 87, 1989). Marchand argues that the origin of the colonists of Penetanguishene and Lafontaine, the lots they occupied, their occupations, their social behaviour and their perceptions of one another all serve to sustain her thesis that the voyageurs from Drummond Isle in Georgian Bay had a different culture rooted in the fur trade tradition, while the more recent French Canadian farmers from Quebec who began settling in the area after 1840 were more of a pale reflection of Quebec society: sedentary, agricultural and more religious. These two communities settled in the neighbouring villages of Penetanguishene and Lafontaine but had little social interaction.

language and culture. Aside from its unique vocabulary, Beneteau denoted the distinctive phonetics of Canayen speech, emphasizing the utter disappearance of the final “r” in words ending in *-oir*: *comptoi, crachoi, miroi, mouchoi, rasoï, tiroi...* From a perspective of identity, he highlighted the fact that the Canayen could perceive these differences in speech with his or her French Canadian counterpart from the Lake St. Clair villages. One interviewee quipped, “Nous autres [Canayens] on dit *miroi*; eux-autres [French Canadians], ils disent *mirouère*. »<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the colourful profanity of French Canada, Beneteau also underscored the smaller repertoire of swear words and profanity present in the vocabulary of the Canayens as an example of a community in an isolated linguistic spatial-temporal framework<sup>15</sup>. The Canayens often preferred modified versions of vulgar expressions, commonly uttering *mauseusse* or *saprement* to express their displeasure. Finally, Beneteau compares the folk music of the area’s Canayens and French Canadians and notices significant differences in the lyrics, genres, and origin of the songs, identifying an overwhelming preponderance of unique songs and lyrics in the Canayen communities. Indeed, his work accentuates the greater importance of folk music to this older community and its declining importance to the younger French Canadian ones. While French Canadian folk songs were often gay, entertainment-based,

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<sup>14</sup> Marcel Bénéteau, “Variantes phonétiques, morphologiques et lexicales dans le français des deux groupes colonisateurs de la région du Détroit”. Beneteau notes on another occasion one Canayen’s obvious identification of the distinctiveness of their songs, commenting on a Lake St. Clair French Canadian song, “On a déjà entendu ça, mais c’était pas une de nos chansons;” while another Canayen remarked, “Oui, mais ça, ça vient du Québec,” as quoted in Marcel Beneteau, “Aspects de la tradition orale comme marqueurs d’identité culturelle: Le vocabulaire et la chanson traditionnelle des francophones du Détroit”, (Ph.D. Thesis, Laval University, 2001), p. 378.

<sup>15</sup> Bénéteau cites the work of Anglican Bishop Jacob Mountain an observer who visited the area in the early 19th century. He also underscores the absence of profanity based on the symbols of the Catholic mass in the lexicon manuscript of Pierre Potier, reinforcing the current thesis of some linguists that much of this profanity emerged in the lumber yards of 19th century French Canada.

emphasizing life in Quebec or pride in being francophone, the Canayen folk songs were often about the insurmountable obstacles facing love, the life of the French soldier, the fur trade and the history of the old French settlement at Detroit. In short, Beneteau presents these different oral traditions, folk songs, lexicons, geographical and historical realities as well as the people's distinct conception of themselves as the criteria for the recognition of the Detroit French [Canayens] as a unique francophone culture, quite distinct from all other Franco-Ontarian settlements.<sup>16</sup>

Like Bénéteau's work, this study argues that the old Canayen settlements should be recognized as unique.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, according to the 1901 census there are geographic and economic indicators to reinforce Beneteau's premise. To begin, the Canayens resided primarily in the same settlements as their fur trading forefathers, with some families still residing on the same homesteads farmed by their ancestors at the time of the Detroit tricentennial in 2001.<sup>18</sup> The census statistics for 1901 illustrate that three of these communities southwest of Windsor, Petite Côte, River Canard and McGregor, while opening up to larger markets and in the early process of demographic change, remained predominantly Canayen. Hence, history and geography played a role in marking their identity as a separate community. The census statistics underscore two other fundamental factors distinguishing the Canayens from the French Canadian communities: patronyms and employment. In Petite Côte, River Canard, and McGregor ,

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<sup>16</sup> Marcel Bénéteau, "Aspects de la tradition orale comme marqueurs d'identité culturelle: Le vocabulaire et la chanson traditionnelle des francophones du Détroit", (Ph.D. Thesis, Laval University, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Refer to footnote 13 in this chapter.

<sup>18</sup> During the Detroit tricentennial of 2001, several old pioneer farming families were invited to participate at the festivities commemorating the arrival of their ancestors and their continued ownership of this patrimony.

Canayen names, such as Marentette, Bézaire, Bénéteau, Drouillard and Meloche dominate the census rolls with only a few Quebec names, but are utterly absent from the French Canadian communities of St. Joachim, Tilbury, Comber and Paincourt. In addition, the census data still highlight the vestiges of the old Canayen lifestyle, with the community of Sandwich East hosting 29 men who still made a living from fishing in 1911, 27 of whom were Canayen. (See Appendix 1, Table 1.9.c) When the Canayens did farm, they relied more heavily on the cultivation of corn and tobacco to turn a profit than wheat and rye, a tradition harkening back to aboriginal times. Other Canayen farmers cultivated tomatoes, soy beans, sugar beets, cucumbers, fresh berries and orchard fruit which distinguished this population from the traditional French Canadian grain growers in other parts of the region.<sup>19</sup> On the western coast of Essex county, Petite Côte's census rolls stand out for the considerable number of Canayens (66 out of 91 households) who made a living as fruit growers or market gardeners rather than as wheat farmers.<sup>20</sup> The growing concern with the larger English-speaking market might help to explain the nearly all-pervasive bilingualism noted among Canayens under 45 in the census rolls. Only the few French Canadian families of Petite Cote following the lead of their Canayen neighbours made their living as market gardeners; this practice never took root in any French Canadian community in the Windsor border region. Aside from patronyms and work habits, there are signs that the Canayens were less imbued with a sense of militancy

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<sup>19</sup> Fernand Ouellet, "Disparités socio-ethniques et hierarchies de la terre en perspectives: Du poste de Détroit aux cantons de Malden et Sandwich, Comté d'Essex (1871)" *Cahiers Charlevoix*, 5, (Sudbury: Prises de Parole, 2002); Fernand Ouellet, *L'Ontario français dans le Canada français avant 1911: Contribution à l'histoire sociale*, (Sudbury: Éditions Prise de parole, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Canada, *Report on the Census*, 1901.

than their French Canadian cousins. Indeed, part of the reason for this might relate to the fact that the Canayen population was divided by an international border, with many families residing in or around the riverfront parishes of St. Anne's and St. Joachim in Detroit. As noted in chapter one, and as will be demonstrated in this chapter, this work has detected some varying and ambivalent Canayen attitudes towards French language issues in these agricultural settlements, with signs of divergence at times from the rural French Canadian settlements in the Lake St. Clair vicinity. An early visitor to the border region, Bishop J.O. Plessis, summed up his impressions of the Canayens with an outright condemnation of their godless behaviour on a confirmation visit in 1816, deploring the penchant of these settlers for reveling, singing, dancing, vanity and excessive drinking.<sup>21</sup>

A small number of settlers from Quebec, purchased farms in Canayen areas of settlement or worked as day labourers in the logging industry and on farms from the 1830s onwards. With the construction of the Great Western railway in 1854, this small population swelled dramatically, concentrating in far more homogeneous villages on or near Lake St. Clair. These farmers would focus on grain growing and the raising of livestock. Churches appeared rapidly in these areas, with four by 1882. The spiritual needs of this population would compel the local bishops to import priest-graduates from Collège Ste-Thérèse in Montreal to minister to this largely unilingual francophone population. While French Canadians were initially somewhat isolated from most Canayens and the Anglophone majority, when the industrial boom struck the border

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<sup>21</sup> H.Tétu, *Journal*. Québec, 1903 as quoted in Hugh Joseph Somers, *The Life and times of the Hon. And Rt. Rev. Alexander Macdonell, D.D. first Bishop of Upper Canada*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1931), p. 68; and Robert Choquette, "L'Église de l'Ontario français" in *Les Franco-Ontariens*, ed. by Cornelius Jaenen, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2001), p. 204.

cities, a growing number of French Canadian and recent Quebec migrants would move to Windsor, eventually outnumbering the old Canayen population. While they would also manifest a greater devotion towards the Roman Catholic church, they still failed to impress the priests with their piety.<sup>22</sup> These francophones would continue to look to the mère-province for cultural sustenance and leadership, with a number of doctors and lawyers coming from Quebec. In 1911, there was no clear evidence to suggest that the Canayen and French Canadian sub-cultures were merging into a single francophone identity.

#### Early Signs of Francophone Division: The 1911 Election

The initial divisions among the two main francophone groups over French language issues first surfaced on the political scene in the autumn of 1911. James Pliny Whitney, the Conservative Premier of Ontario called an election for December 11. The question of bilingual schools became an all-important issue during the campaign, especially in the Windsor border region. The Public Works Minister, Dr. Joseph O. Réaume, a Canayen pediatrician from Windsor, survived a bruising renomination battle against Orange Order insurgents for the Conservative party ticket in the riding of Essex North. Réaume practised medicine in Windsor for more than ten years before being elected member of provincial parliament in 1902. After spending three years on the opposition benches, he followed Whitney's sweep to power under the Conservative banner in 1905. For the next nine years Réaume would serve as the Minister of Public

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<sup>22</sup> Alfred Emery to Lionel Groulx, May 4, 1914. Fonds Lionel Groulx, Centre de Recherche de Lionel Groulx, (CLRG), P1/A, 1270.

Works for the province. Aside from Public Works, he also served on the standing committees for hunting and fishing as well as the railways. The Essex North MP would remain fiercely loyal to Premier Whitney even during the dark days of Regulation XVII.

In the 1911 election, Réaume faced Liberal Severin Ducharme, a French Canadian farmer from Belle River. Both candidates called for improvements to the existing bilingual schools, but neither of them sought to exploit the issue as a means to win the election. At the provincial level, Whitney focused on other issues, eschewing any discussion on the bilingual schools, even denying their existence in an interview at Fergus to avoid addressing this thorny question.<sup>23</sup> His opponent, Liberal Leader N.W. Rowell rightfully questioned the Premier's outlandish claim, given the fact that the previous year Whitney himself had appointed Dr. F.W. Merchant to investigate the conditions in the bilingual schools! In spite of their partisan differences, Réaume and Ducharme both defended the parents' right to educate their children in the French language provided they received adequate English instruction.

In the Essex North riding, events turned dramatically, when in late November, Conservative insurgents nominated the relatively unknown coppersmith, John R. Mason to run as an independent. Mason spoke out openly for the abolition of bilingual schools and French instruction. He reiterated the earlier claims of J.J. Foy, an Irish Catholic minister in Whitney's cabinet who claimed that such schools were in fact illegal, effectively exposing a split in the Conservative cabinet. Mason's candidacy would provide some of the most exciting moments of the local campaign.

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<sup>23</sup> See *Windsor Evening Record*, November 22, 1911; *Toronto Globe*, November 22, 1911.

In the closing days of the campaign two events suggested that the bilingual schools issue was on the minds of both anglophones and francophones. On December 2, in downtown Windsor, Joseph Kilroy, a Mason supporter, printed a series of pamphlets condemning the bilingual schools. These flyers also attacked Joseph Réaume's stand on the issue, and questioned the character of his former private secretary, Canayen Harry Maisonville of Sandwich East, a man who purportedly leaked the famous Hanna-Pyne letter to the press regarding Bishop Fallon's contentious stance on the bilingual schools question. Maisonville confronted Kilroy, and when the latter refused to stop circulating the defamatory fliers, he proceeded to punch him in the face.<sup>24</sup> Maisonville would later be charged with assault.

The second exciting event involved Mason himself. In the waning days of the autumn campaign, the neophyte politician agreed to participate in an all-candidates' debate at the old Windsor courthouse. The one-issue candidate soon found himself outflanked in the hall. Upon declaring his opposition to the bilingual schools, part of the crowd marched out of the room while "those who remained kept up a storm of protests."<sup>25</sup>

Mason soon found himself unable to shout over the angry voices of the partisans of Réaume and Ducharme. Upon the urgent prompting of the debate moderator, Mason cut short his speech, and beat a quick retreat from the hall. Dr. Réaume, on the other hand, struck a popular chord with his pledge to correct any abuses that might be found in

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<sup>24</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, December 2, 1911.

<sup>25</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, December 4, 1911.

the bilingual schools as a means to improve them. In spite of this symbolic victory, Réaume's political future remained in doubt on election night. Indeed, the embattled cabinet minister snared the slimmest of victories, edging out his Liberal opponent Ducharme by just 56 votes. Ducharme swept his home section of the riding, taking with him most of the French Canadian vote of the Lake St. Clair communities. Réaume on the other hand won a plurality in the more heavily populated Border Cities and the Canayen settlements of his home township of Anderdon (River Canard and McGregor). The *Record* would later note that inclement weather and muddy roads might very well have cost Ducharme the election, when a number of French Canadian farmers were literally disfranchised when they were unable to reach the polling stations.<sup>26</sup> By all appearances, the Canayens supported Réaume, one of their own in Essex North, and conversely, French Canadians did the same by voting for Ducharme.

#### The Merchant Report

Just four months after the election, in March 1912, the provincial Chief Inspector Dr. F.W. Merchant tendered a provincial report on the state of the controversial bilingual schools of Ontario.<sup>27</sup> The report recognized flaws, especially their inefficiency. Merchant lamented the lack of teachers with proper certification meeting provincial standards.<sup>28</sup> The report surveyed 53 schools in the Windsor border region, 33 separate and 20 public, in which there had been some French instruction and a considerable number of francophone children. Merchant found that of 93 bilingual teachers in Essex and Kent

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<sup>26</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, December 16, 1911.

<sup>27</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Merchant Report, see Charles Bruce Sissons, *Bilingual Schools in Canada*, (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1917).

<sup>28</sup> *Toronto News*, March 7, 1912.

county, 13 had no qualifications whatsoever. Of those teachers holding the required first or second class certificates, only 22 made the grade. The remaining 58 teachers held temporary or third class certificates.<sup>29</sup> Merchant's remarks echoed the call of Bishop Fallon of London for more rigorous teaching standards to improve student success at the annual High School entrance examinations.

Merchant's work also evaluated the success rate of schools where there was a preponderant number of students enrolled in the first and second forms<sup>30</sup>. The study discovered that in Essex and Kent counties, the vast majority of francophone students between nine and eleven years of age were still studying in the first and second forms.<sup>31</sup> Merchant attributed this phenomenon not to the pedagogical inferiority of the instructors, but rather to truancy and the transiency of many families.

The irregularities in attendance are doubtless the cause of the backwardness of pupils in many of the schools. The facts regarding the attendance of pupils in the counties of Essex and Kent...do not indicate fully the actual conditions. In many schools the same pupils were absent continuously for several months of the year. It is evident that children who attend school in this way at broken intervals for short periods and leave school at twelve, thirteen or fourteen years of age, cannot, even under the conditions obtaining in well-equipped schools, receive a satisfactory education. ...Inquiry shows that this loss is due mainly to irregularities in attendance and to changes of pupils from school to school.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> F.W. Merchant, *Report on the Conditions of English-French Schools in the Province of Ontario*, (Toronto: King's Printer, 1912). Merchant added that the reasons for the presence of so many unqualified teachers could be attributed to a "misunderstanding regarding the terms of the act, respecting the qualifications of certain teachers."

<sup>30</sup> Today, first form would represent grades 1 and 2- designated primarily for 6- and 7-year olds; second form would represent grades 3 and 4-designated primarily for 8- and 9-year olds, third form would represent grades 5 and 6, designated primarily for 10 and 11-year olds, and fourth form would represent grades 7 and 8, designated primarily for 12 and 13 year old students.

<sup>31</sup> According to Merchant's statistics, there were an alarming number of below-grade level children in the junior grades of the Essex-Kent bilingual schools: 209 students between ages 10 and 11 were still in Form I out of 409, and 226 students of the same age group were studying in Form II, out of a total of 359. F.W. Merchant, *Report on the Conditions of English-French Schools in the Province of Ontario*, (Toronto: King's Printer, 1912), p. 49-50.

<sup>32</sup> Merchant, *Report*, p. 70.

More alarming still were the societal problems contributing to the inefficiency of the schools, most notably, the overall rate of illiteracy.

Labour conditions in Essex and Kent are somewhat exceptional. A large portion of the land in the French Canadian settlements is given up to market gardening or to the raising of crops such as tomatoes, corn and sugar beets which require a great amount of individual labour in planting, care and harvesting. Children are required to do a considerable share of this work. The canning factories in the river front towns also employ a large number of children during the busy season. Many of these children, I am informed, are below the legal age.<sup>33</sup>

Merchant added that irregular attendance plagued the schools and was largely due to family decisions. During the cold winter months, parents kept their children at home, and of course, at the harvest, children were expected to help out on the farm or work in the Green Giant and Heinz canning factories.<sup>34</sup> The Merchant Report was significant, for it underscored not only the pedagogical inferiority of the teaching personnel, but also the high rate of truancy as a significant factor in student performance. These findings simply echoed earlier reports made by bilingual school Inspector David Chenay<sup>35</sup>. Instead of advocating the abolition of the system, Merchant recommended better training for teachers as part of a long-term solution. He added that the local francophone student body actually exhibited greater fluency in the English language than their counterparts elsewhere in the province, due to widespread regional use of the language and the fact that the bilingual schools themselves were already largely English.<sup>36</sup> While Merchant recognized that many children did leave school inadequately prepared to face the

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<sup>33</sup> Merchant, *Report*, p. 21. Merchant found the quality of English instruction in some Essex bilingual schools to be exceptional, "The writing of the pupils in the senior division of PSS No.2 Sandwich West should be specially mentioned. I have never found better work in a rural school." P. 65.

<sup>34</sup> Merchant, *Report*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>36</sup> Merchant *Report*, p. 50.

demands of life, he also noted that some bilingual schools proved to be quite efficient, especially those in Amherstburg, North Bay, Ottawa, and Windsor.<sup>37</sup>

Public response to the Merchant Report was relatively positive. Francophones did not object to their schools being improved. On the other side of the spectrum, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ontario called for the immediate repeal of the bilingual schools, to establish an education system based on one language only, English.<sup>38</sup> The Ontario government accepted the Merchant Report, and then took it a radical step further. Rather than move to improve the training of bilingual teachers, the province established clear measures to restrict all instruction in the French language as a means to concentrate more energy on improved English instruction.

#### The Introduction of Regulation XVII

In June, 1912, the Whitney government, with a fresh mandate from the people, introduced Circular of Instructions No. 17, or Regulation XVII, establishing new standards for the province's bilingual schools. Henceforth, the government was to restrict the use of French as the language of instruction and communication to Form I, or today's version of grades 1 and 2, provided that the child demonstrated an inability to understand English. Provisions were also made for French as a subject of study, but only to those students whose parents specifically requested it, and for not more than one hour of the school day. (See Appendix E) All French-speaking children were to receive improved English language instruction. To ensure that the inspection of the bilingual

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<sup>37</sup> Merchant, *Report*, p. 69.

<sup>38</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, March 21, 1912.

schools followed the new regulation to the letter, a double inspectorate was established. Now the Chief Inspector of the Public Schools for each region was given supreme authority over the Catholic school inspector and charged with conducting one of these inspections. In virtually all cases, this officer was a Protestant. To ensure that there were no loopholes to this new school guideline, the province limited the use of supplementary French instruction only to those new students who had yet to master English. No such consideration could be extended beyond Form 1, or the first two years of school. For francophones, the message of Regulation XVII was clear: for the first time, the provincial government truly intended on enforcing a limit on the use of French as a language of instruction in Ontario's schools.

The ACFEO lost no time in preparing a province-wide resistance strategy to respond to the imposition of Regulation XVII. The Association recommended that all bilingual teachers defy the directive restricting French instruction to a mere hour a day. Secondly, to emphasize their disapproval, parents and teachers were to encourage children to leave their schools upon the arrival of the Protestant Chief Inspector. Finally, francophones were to pressure their elected officials to recognize the injustice of the existing school edict in the hopes of forcing a reversal of the government decision.

The effort of local francophones to respond to the bilingual school regulation faced problems. Leading ACFEO organizer and French language militant, Lucien Beaudoin suggested that the Windsor border region suffered from a lack of leadership and cohesion with regard to language issues. His initial analysis of the local situation offered cause for concern among Ottawa's resistance organizers. The Sandwich East

priest was particularly discouraged by the personal commitment of bilingual educators. Immediate action would be required by leading educators to increase the resistance movement's chances of success. Unfortunately, his appeals to the bilingual schools inspector for action met with disappointment. Beaudoin wrote of the need to inspire the militants to action.

Si votre Monsieur Paiement veut aider les Canadiens d'Essex, c'est le temps dès septembre prochain de remuer nos instituteurs et institutrices qui n'ont jamais rien fait pour la langue française. Je ne me gêne guère et prêche partout la résistance aux lois injustes du gouvernement. M. Grenon [ACFEO secretary] sera bien reçu dans toutes les paroisses du comté. Venez nous voir.<sup>39</sup>

Beaudoin's frustration with the teaching profession suggested that a united front could hardly be expected on the education front regarding Regulation XVII without help from officials with the ACFEO in Ottawa.

Beaudoin's pessimism was understandable given the French language situation in his very own parish schools. The St. Joseph Sisters teaching in Walkerville and Sandwich East offered Beaudoin cause for alarm: "L'Ecole Notre Dame a trois sœurs dont deux irlandaises, lorsque trois devraient être de langue française...."<sup>40</sup> Beaudoin lamented the inability of these nuns to teach French adequately, making resistance to Regulation XVII unthinkable. His frustration with these teachers compelled him to employ other strategies to combat the anglicizing effects of the schools, including catechism classes on Sundays at the church. Second, aside from daily visits to his parish schools to catechize the children in French, he had the children promise to conserve the French they knew, much to the dismay of the sisters. Beaudoin also organized the Petits

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<sup>39</sup> Lucien Beaudoin to Charles Charlebois, CRCCF, C2/92/9, August 30, 1912.

<sup>40</sup> Lucien Beaudoin to Charles Charlebois, CRCCF, C2/92/9, September 5, 1912.

St. Jean Baptiste and the Cadets de Sacré Cœur, two parish youth organizations to participate in church processions aimed at instilling patriotism in the upcoming generation. <sup>41</sup> Eventually Beaudoin would send a passionate appeal to the Superior of the bilingual Holy Names Sisters to take over his schools, but failed to elicit a positive response, given the intervention by Bishop Fallon. <sup>42</sup>

Beaudoin was not the only priest to face new English-speaking teachers in the Catholic parish schools. Pierre L'Heureux, the pastor of Belle River also expressed his frustration that his all-francophone student body studied under the tutelage of two Irish sisters and one Canayan. Some French Canadians, upon L'Heureux's lead, petitioned the school trustees, disputing the interpretation that the school law allowed for just a half hour of catechism in French and a half an hour of French reading.

In Tilbury North district, the school trustees raised their voices in protest aiming their frustration at the provincial government. The separate school board, following the example of Ottawa separate board, announced its determination to resist the Whitney government's bilingual restrictions. Students were to march out of the class room if the Protestant school inspector attempted to enter. Upon taking this action, the Separate School Section no. 7 was denied its government grant of \$84. <sup>43</sup>

When militant trustees and priests like Beaudoin and L'Heureux sought to lead the movement against the new school regulations, they did not find a united front among bilingual educators. Following the introduction of Regulation XVII, the School

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<sup>41</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, September 5, 1912.

<sup>42</sup> Lucien Beaudoin to Mother Fredericka, September 1912, Ontario Archives of the Saints-Noms de Jésus et Marie, Windsor, Ontario.

<sup>43</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September, 13, 1912.

Inspector, David Chenay summoned all of his French-speaking teachers to attend a session of the North Essex Teachers' Association, held in the Sandwich public school in late September, 1912. Chenay, a French Canadian born in Quebec, presided over the meeting and explained to the teachers the new school regulations regarding the instruction of the French language, reading from the actual government text. According to the *Windsor Evening Record*, Chenay actually urged *obedience*, meeting a mixed response from the crowd.

The clause of the new regulations limiting the study of French to one hour came in for some hard raps, but Inspector Chenay and others counselled patience, and told the teachers not to take a stand against the government. But the individual teachers were not so submissive and after the session was over there was animated discussion during which more than one declared that the regulation restricting the teaching of French to one hour would be a dead letter in so far as she was concerned.<sup>44</sup>

Chenay offered a different interpretation of the meeting to the Deputy Minister of education. In a letter to his superior he noted that in fact,

In regard to the teaching of French in accordance with the new regulations, a few complaints came from teachers of ungraded schools, who said they could not do justice to their classes with one hour per day, following which, the discussion bore on 'How best to divide the said hour among the different classes, so as to get from it the most possible.'

There was not during the whole convention, the slightest hint of opposition to the Regulations of the Department. If individual teachers expressed such sentiments outside of the convention, they have neither the concurrence nor the sympathy of the Association as a body.<sup>45</sup>

These divergent interpretations of the meeting illustrated the divisions among bilingual educators. Chenay's motives for collaborating with the provincial government on this controversial school edict are not altogether clear. He was married to an English Protestant and the father of four children, only one of whom could speak French.<sup>46</sup> More noteworthy is the fact that Chenay held a prestigious position and earned a generous

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<sup>44</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 28, 1912.

<sup>45</sup> David Chenay, Inspector of Public Schools, Essex North, to the Deputy Minister of Education, A.H.U. Colquhoun, September 28, 1912, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-42-0-4176.

<sup>46</sup> Canada Census 1911, Windsor Ward 2.

income as a provincial school inspector and his dissent on this matter would likely have warranted dismissal. Beaudoin expressed a certain hostility to and frustration with Chenay as a man who had allowed the bilingual schools of Windsor to drift towards an English curriculum under his watch as Inspector without taking action.<sup>47</sup> Chenay's letter might have been more of an act of self-preservation than an accurate assessment on the existing situation in Windsor.

Without the leadership of the bilingual school inspector and chief francophone educator, Beaudoin admitted that recruitment for the province-wide opposition to Regulation XVII would prove to be more challenging in the border region. The provincial ACFEQ would be needed to organize the resistance among the teachers. In a letter to his confidante, Charles Charlebois, Beaudoin wrote,

Il ne sera pas aussi facile pour nous de faire opposition ouverte et obtenir la sortie des élèves que dans l'Est d'Ontario. D'abord, il faut instruire nos gens. La visite de M. [Alexandre] Grenon sera très utile. Nos gens sont dans leurs champs de tomates et de blé d'Inde. C'est pourquoi je crois que novembre sera le temps propice. Tous les syndicats devraient être visités.<sup>48</sup>

The ACFEQ's plan to send Alexandre Grenon, the organization's dynamic secretary to southwestern Ontario illustrated its commitment to educate the area's francophones.

Beaudoin expressed his frustration to the ACFEQ that not all parish leaders were on side with his orders for action. For example, Gaspard Pacaud of St. Alphonsus parish, the president of the Windsor Separate School Board and member of the provincial

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<sup>47</sup> Of Chenay, Beaudoin wrote, « ...il nous faudrait un inspecteur d'écoles pour remplacer Chenay. Ce dernier n'a jamais rien fait pour promouvoir la langue française. En un mot, c'est un outil dont se servent les Religieuses irlandaises. » Beaudoin to Charlebois, July 18, 1911, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

Beaudoin's contempt for the French Canadian school inspector could indeed be rooted in Chenay's rebuttal of Fallon's attack upon the bilingual schools. Chenay argued that in fact the bilingual schools were already largely English. Beaudoin deplored the fact that Chenay had been on watch during this evolution, seeing predominantly English bilingual schools as an incubator for apostasy among young francophones.

<sup>48</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, September 28, 1912.

ACFEO executive, appeared to be powerless, given his lucrative position as Provincial Licensing Officer.<sup>49</sup> Another school trustee, Joseph A. Deziel, found himself in a similar position, as a court clerk. Beaudoin remained hopeful, but given Fallon's restraints on clerical action on the bilingual schools issue, he could not speak openly. He would search for lay people to lead this crusade.

When a leader failed to appear, Beaudoin assumed the risks involved in organizing the local resistance to Regulation XVII. He was not without support. Some lay teachers in Sandwich East seemed determined to protest by continuing to teach in French. At the beginning of the school year in October, 1912, Beaudoin enlisted the support of some Catholic school trustees in the border cities following a passionate appeal to them at a meeting in his parish hall. Representatives from Walkerville, Windsor, and Sandwich East passed resolutions as outlined by the Association (ACFEO). The priest offered this sombre account of the event :

J'espère remuer le Comté d'Essex qui est paresseux et endormi. Il faut expliquer aux gens l'affaire. De fait, il faudrait un homme pour visiter tous les syndicats d'école.

A l'assemblée, il y avait un syndic de Windsor, qui s'engage à faire faire la même chose dans son district scolaire.<sup>50</sup>

Beaudoin's mission was hampered by the complex nature of the local francophone population. For the priest, most of this population was apathetic when it came to the militant cause. The only francophone MPP, Canayen doctor Joseph O. Réaume,

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<sup>49</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, October 2, 1912.

<sup>50</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, October 2, 1912.

« proteste son dévouement et ne fait rien ». <sup>51</sup> When inspector Chenay finally did show signs of dissent, he was dismissed. <sup>52</sup>

Chenay was not the only lay francophone to disappoint the language militants. Dr. Joseph Réaume's controversial statement at the Congrès du Parler Français that took place in Quebec City just days after the provincial government announcement had given many cause to hope for his leadership on this issue. The Public Works Minister, likely hoping to distance himself from previous criticisms that he had not attended the 1910 Ottawa ACFEO conference, concluded his speech to the Congress by declaring, "Before we leave this congress, we should make a vow to raise and educate our children in the French language, no matter what part of Canada we live in."<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately for language militants, Réaume would remain mute on the issue of Regulation XVII in the months to come.

Beaudoin's frustration with local francophones compelled him to write a letter to the ACFEO, advising them to avoid corresponding with several suspect figures. Even militants like J. Edmond Meunier appeared to be less than trustworthy when it came to the cause of the schools. <sup>54</sup> This division among francophone clerics worked against the

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<sup>51</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, October 15, 1912.

<sup>52</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, December 3, 1912, "Inspector D. Chenay is out of the school inspectorship of North Essex. The Ontario legislature, at its last session, amended the public school laws in such a way that county councils would be notified of the continuance in office of any school inspectors on the list of those retained. At the opening sitting of the county council Monday afternoon a letter from the deputy minister of education continuing in office D.A. Maxwell, BA LLB, as an inspector was read. Inspector Chenay's name wasn't mentioned and this means that he has been dropped from the list.... Inspector Chenay... is understood to have come in conflict with the department over the bilingual question."

<sup>53</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, June 26, 1912. Ironically, the 1901 census statistics indicate that just one of Réaume's four children could speak French!!!

<sup>54</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, October 15, 1912. Beaudoin might have been dissatisfied with Meunier's inaction on the insufficient amount of French at some masses at St. Alphonsus in Windsor .

bilingual cause. The breach was compounded by the emerging divisions within the Windsor Separate School board..

Dimanche dernier il y a eu une assemblée à Windsor dans la paroisse de l'Immaculée Conception. G. Pacaud déclara que le mouvement inauguré par l'Association était incurie. Et Patrice Ouellette vient déclarer que les Canadiens de Windsor devraient être reconnaissant envers Wallisburg d'avoir une heure de français par jour, chose inconnue à Windsor puisque le français n'est pas enseigné dans les écoles de l'endroit. Pilon, syndic, et St. Onge suivent Pacaud dans ce pétrin? Celui-ci sortit furieux. On comprend l'attitude de M. Pacaud qui veut garder sa position. Je ne serais pas surpris qu'il fut envoyé à l'assemblée par Réaume. L'Assemblée déclara que le temps était venu de renvoyer les Ursulines pour les remplacer par des Canadiennes religieuses ou laïques de langue française.<sup>55</sup>

Divisions and frustration over the English-only curriculum of the Windsor schools could not be healed as long as francophone leaders could not overcome their differences over strategy. Pacaud claimed to resent the direction from ACFEO Ottawa, where he believed the leadership had little understanding of "regional realities". Both Réaume and Pacaud were unwilling to embrace a passionate resistance to the provincial regulation, and the latter appeared to stonewall any meaningful disobedience at the school board level. As politicians, both had to answer to non-francophone voters who might not appreciate an overtly "pro-French" stance that would put provincial funds at risk for Catholic schools. Their position appeared weak and even treacherous to more passionate militants like Beaudoin.

Aside from counselling a strategy of pressuring the local school trustees, the provincial ACFEO sent written requests to the religious orders of the area to increase the amount of French taught in the schools. In addition, it made a special plea to the local French language weekly, *Le Progrès*, to speak out more aggressively against Regulation XVII. The ACFEO president, C.S.O. Boudreault, wrote to Windsor school trustee and

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<sup>55</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, October 24, 1912.

building contractor Alfred St. Onge of Windsor, asking him to intercede with his friend Aurèle Pacaud, the editor of the newspaper.

L'ACFEO a besoin actuellement de l'aide et de l'influence du journal *Le Progrès*. Les amis du comté de Simcoe se demandent comment il se fasse que le rédacteur de ce journal, un canadien français catholique qui en plus d'une circonstance s'est fait le défenseur de nos droits, se retranche à l'heure actuelle derrière un silence inexplicable et semble vouloir ignorer les nombreuses difficultés suscitées par le gouvernement contre l'enseignement bilingue.<sup>56</sup>

The Ottawa leadership was baffled that the only French language newspaper was mute at a time when the bilingual schools were in crisis. Boudreault hoped that the ACFEO would have an opportunity to write a series of articles concerning bilingual education in *Le Progrès*. He also wrote to newly-elected Windsor alderman Euclide Jacques to inquire as to why the newspaper had remained silent. Jacques offered a possible explanation

...the Rédacteur (Editor) of *Le Progrès*, Mr. Aurel Pacaud as far as I know would only be too willing to take an active part to defend French Canadians in Windsor, but sorry to say *Le Progrès* has very little circulation in Windsor. In fact, I do not think there are more than a dozen people who receive *Le Progrès* in Windsor, therefore you can judge for yourself that it will not be of any use whatsoever.<sup>57</sup>

Jacques was a leading member of the ACFEO, and his assessment of the bilingual issue in the city of Windsor held out only limited hope, given the fact that the editor of *Le Progrès* was none other than the brother of Gaspard Pacaud, chair of the separate school board who opposed any organized resistance to the school regulations.

Jacques did add that aside from divisions in the leadership, the francophone population of Windsor was also hopelessly divided.

Regarding our situation here in the City of Windsor about bilingual schools we are in a peculiar position as you know. We are working and doing our very best and hold meetings every two or three weeks in the parish of the Immaculate Conception church, but we do not make very much progress, because it is a very hard matter on account of the parish priest who is always working

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<sup>56</sup> C.S.O. Boudreault, ACFEO president to Alfred St. Onge, October 23, 1912, CRCCF, C2/222/11.

<sup>57</sup> Euclide Jacques, Windsor Alderman, to C.S.O. Boudreault, November 4, 1912. Jacques often wrote his personal letters in the English language.

against us and there is always a number of our French Canadians who stand by him, but however most of the intelligent French Canadians of the Immaculate Conception parish are with us and will stand ready to join with the ACFEO to protest against the present law.<sup>58</sup>

Divisions among local francophones found their root in each individual's personal commitments. For militants, language and faith were intertwined, and hence inseparable, so resistance was necessary. For others, loyalty to the Catholic faith superseded concerns over language, allowing them to be swayed by priests indifferent to the French language, and such elements often allied themselves with their English-speaking correigionists. These francophones were not terribly concerned with preserving their mother tongue.

Euclide Jacques informed ACFEO leaders in Ottawa that the Windsor school board deliberations over Regulation XVII had stalled.

On the 20th of October last, we had a meeting to which the members of the Separate School board were present, and the meeting was for the purpose of protesting against the present law, but after quite a deliberation from the president [Gaspard Pacaud], it was decided to wait for a few more weeks as the president said that the inspector was coming to Windsor to inspect the schools, therefore we consented to see what would be the results.<sup>59</sup>

The impasse among the Catholic board members was unique for the majority of members were francophone. After the January 1913 election, unlike Ottawa, Windsor's separate school board consisted of none but francophone trustees, yet still declined to mount a meaningful protest against the school regulation.<sup>60</sup>

In the midst of this division, the ACFEO executive pressed leading Windsor militants to persevere in organizing the resistance to Regulation XVII in spite of the

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<sup>58</sup> Jacques to Boudreault, November 4, 1912.

<sup>59</sup> Jacques to Boudreault, November 4, 1912.

<sup>60</sup> After the January 1913 Separate School Board elections, only francophones served as trustees. The two Irish members of the board resigned when the francophone members refused to grant them an equal number of seats as part of a purported agreement that collapsed. *Windsor Evening Record*, January 4 and 10, 1913. "The election of the officers of the separate school board was held last night and resulted as follows: Chairman, Gaspard Pacaud, re-elected; finance, J.G. Gagnier, A. St Denis, Noe Beneteau; building sites, J. Mousseau, I. Belleperche, A. St. Denis; printing and supply committee: A. St. Denis, I. Belleperche, F. Bordeau; teachers, W. Pillon, F. Bordeau, J.G. Gagnier." Only Belleperche and Bénéteau were Canayens; the six other trustees were French Canadians. *Evening Record*, January 8, 1913.

school board politics. President C.S.O. Boudreault called on Euclide Jacques to rally the troops, and inserted a veiled critique of school trustee Gaspard Pacaud.

Windsor above all should be mustered to its full force during the present bilingual agitation. The principles at stake are too important to permit devoted friends to remain idle. We are well informed as to the acute situation but we must adopt means so that Windsor will be as organized as we are glad to say every other part of the province now is. Our secretary, Mr. Grenon will be in Walkerville on Sunday. Make it a point that a delegation sees him and that a series of meetings be held in Windsor, resolutions of protest adopted and a campaign started at once. This is not the time for deliberations, but for action.

We have already received well-worded protest from almost all parts of the province and we would be very disappointed if Windsor was not in the rank and file. We look to you that French Canadians attend [participate] in large numbers. Get dodgers printed if necessary and charge the cost to the Association.<sup>61</sup>

Jacques clearly had his work cut out for himself if he aimed to meet the expectations of the ACFEO brass in Ottawa. Early signs indicated that Windsor would be the only location to accept Regulation XVII without a meaningful protest. Requests for French in the city's schools were turned down by Inspector Elmer Ingall.

Although the decision of the local inspector to refuse the request for more French is not surprising, there remain unanswered questions regarding Gaspard Pacaud's reluctance to lead the resistance to Regulation XVII. A native of Quebec, Pacaud's life passion had been the promotion of the French language, as evidenced in the columns of *Le Progrès*. Indeed, his father, Phillippe-Napoléon Pacaud had been involved with the Patriotes during the Rebellions of 1837 and 1838 in Lower Canada. However, at this critical time, Pacaud suddenly appeared to be leading a rearguard action to slow down the calls of passionate militants to resist. An examination of the 1901 and 1911 census records suggest that Pacaud, a Liberal, after years of financial struggle, had secured a lucrative sinecure as Provincial License Inspector with the current Conservative

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<sup>61</sup> C.S.O. Boudreault to Euclide Jacques, November 5, 1912. CRCCF C2/222/11.

government through his friendship with Dr. Joseph O. Réaume, earning the handsome salary of \$2500- more than twice his previous earnings as an editor of a French language weekly. As Beaudoin noted, any overt criticism might very well have cost him this government appointment. His newfound moderation on issues of language left the movement without one its most talented orators and writers. The fact that the other trustees followed Pacaud's lead does suggest notable francophone support for his stance. The most likely explanation is that many of the city's francophones had little cause to react to a school edict that could not take anything further away from them. French instruction had been dropped in three of the four separate schools in the previous two years.<sup>62</sup> In Windsor access to one hour of French instruction would have been considered a gain, not a loss; the natural aim of the Windsor trustees would be to seek to secure the rights outlined under Regulation XVII rather than to resist. Pacaud's tempered stance never sparked outrage among the city's francophones, and he would be re-elected to the board several times in the years to come. In contrast, elsewhere in the border region, Regulation XVII reduced French instruction, triggering opposition; these different realities could help to explain the diverging response to the provincial resistance movement in the Windsor border region. It might also explain the inevitable breach between the ACFEO leadership and Gaspard Pacaud, a member of the organization's provincial executive.

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<sup>62</sup> See Chapter 3 for more details on the disappearance of French instruction from Windsor's separate schools in 1910.

While the situation appeared exceedingly bleak for the francophones of the city of Windsor, divided among themselves and denied any French instruction at all for their children, all hope was not lost for the region. In effect, certain separate schools in Essex and Kent Counties exhibited a spirited opposition to the new restrictions, and even Windsor francophones did not accept their fate quietly. Like the strategy in eastern Ontario, some francophone children resisted the appearance of a Protestant school inspector.

À Tecumseh et Stoney Point, les enfants sont sortis de l'école. Les syndics d'ailleurs n'ont point répondu à l'Inspecteur Ingall. On attend de pied ferme sa visite... Tout ira à merveille.

Hier, à Windsor, grande séance donnée par les Dames de l'Immaculée Conception. Six cents enfants et près de cinq cent personnes étaient présentes. Mr. Jacques est fier de son succès...<sup>63</sup>

The resistance to Regulation XVII heartened Beaudoin and other militants, and was reinforced by the vocal protest meeting of 1100 francophones at Immaculate Conception parish in Windsor. The good news continued when Beaudoin learned that while the separate school in the town of Sandwich had allowed Inspector Ingall through its doors, the Inspector chose not to go to Walkerville and River Canard after learning of the widespread opposition of both parents and students to his pending visit.<sup>64</sup> Apparently, the initial resistance to Regulation XVII seemed to transcend the Canayen and French Canadian sub-cultures reaching both of their communities.

In January 1913, ACFEO officials, under Beaudoin's leadership, determined to organize a regional congress to educate school trustees on the importance of the

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<sup>63</sup> Beaudoin to Alexandre Grenon, Secretary of ACFEO, December 10, 1912, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

<sup>64</sup> Beaudoin to Grenon, December 21, 1912, CRCCF, C2/93/1; see also the River Canard School Registry, December 11, 1912, OASNJM.

resistance movement and bind francophones to the Association. Officials chose

Tecumseh as the site for this important gathering. Beaudoin observed,

L'Association doit être félicitée car nous attendons beaucoup de ce congrès qui éclairera nos syndics d'école et groupera davantage Essex et Kent à l'Association de l'Éducation. Il est certain que la position des Canadiens n'est pas très sûre dans plusieurs endroits. C'est dû au manque d'organisation, à l'apathie de certains curés et à l'ignorance d'un certain nombre.<sup>65</sup>

Beaudoin's concern was very telling; militant leaders doubted the commitment of many francophones to any long-term organized resistance against Regulation XVII. Beaudoin deplored most especially the lack of leadership and indifference of many francophone priests to the new restrictions on bilingual schools. In effect, priests like Arthur J. Côté at Assumption parish in the town of Sandwich were preaching obedience as a means to preserve the Catholic separate schools from harm, effectively undermining efforts to unite all francophones behind the resistance.

As the effort progressed to organize a regional congress, Beaudoin conceded that his plans to unite Essex and Kent francophones faced obstacles. "Vous connaissez assez l'apathie qui existe en certains milieux. Il faut organiser ce petit congrès qui donnera certainement de bons résultats."<sup>66</sup> Beaudoin's continual criticism of local apathy was compounded by the search for local organizers who could inspire the people as a whole to action in the various villages and towns. The masses were not responding with enthusiasm to the militant leaders.

Local organizers for the ACFEO clearly had a monumental task in front of them. Speaking visits from ACFEO provincial secretary Alexandre Grenon in November 1912, and March 1913 helped to galvanize the militants of the area. Nevertheless, growing

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<sup>65</sup> Beaudoin to Alexandre Grenon, January 22, 1913.

<sup>66</sup> Beaudoin to Grenon, March 1, 1913.

frustration with the inaction of the Windsor Separate School Board's francophone trustees over the absence of French instruction did not spawn a grassroots uprising of the larger francophone population.

À la reunion de notre association les membres m'ont prié de vous informer que les *vrais canadiens français de la ville de Windsor* [emphasis mine], fatigués de constater qu'ils sont incapables d'obtenir satisfaction des commissaires d'écoles séparées concernant l'enseignement de leur langue dans ces écoles, ont presque décidé à fonder une école indépendante pour l'ouverture des classes le premier septembre prochain. Les promoteurs aimeraient connaître, votre opinion et recevoir des suggestions, renseignements etc. avant de commencer l'affaire sérieusement.<sup>67</sup>

This ACFEO correspondence is instructive for it recognized the divisions apparent among Windsor's francophones, noting that francophone militants who joined the resistance were in fact the only *true French Canadians of Windsor*. This mindset underscored the inability of the Association to appreciate the complexities of the divisions among border region francophones regarding the resistance to Regulation XVII. This complex population appeared to be made up of those who vowed to fight the school edict, those who wished to accommodate the Anglophone majority and seek French under the regulation, and those who actually sought to integrate into that larger community by assimilating. However, even radical militants failed to act on their plan to establish a privately-funded independent French school in 1913. The ACFEO's critique of Pacaud, would eventually foster divisions between radical and moderate militant factions, and even lead the man in question to challenge the usefulness of the ACFEO for the Windsor border region publicly.

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<sup>67</sup> J.J. Massé secretary, ACFEO regional, to ACFEO provincial, Alex Grenon, June 7, 1913, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

ACFEO efforts to foster a defiant spirit and pride among local francophones found expression with the launch of a new French language newspaper to replace the defunct *Le Progrès* which had vanished the previous year. The ambitious plan garnered the support of the *Union commerciale de Windsor*, a grouping of the area's francophone business people committed to resisting Regulation XVII, including contractors Euclide Jacques and Alfred Saint-Onge. The syndicate purchased the print shop of William Jacques, and sought out a competent editor from the Montreal area, Frenchman Auguste Bodard. The newspaper was to be Catholic and French Canadian in character, and devoted to the ACFEO cause. The organizers believed that ads for Midwestern American and southwestern Ontario manufacturing interests would generate needed revenues. The St. Jean Baptiste societies of Essex and Kent counties summoned popular support for the fledgling newspaper. Its founders hoped that the new local weekly, christened *Le Clairon*, would eventually become a daily.<sup>68</sup> After a few issues, Bodard handed over the editorship to Arthur Meloche, a 34 year-old Canayen member of the press staff.

*Le Clairon's* first editorials emphasized the dire need of popular francophone support for bilingual education. In its first issue, the newspaper recounted Armand Lavergne's address to the Saint-Jean-Baptiste society, exhorting his audience to preserve their language: "Ayez des écoles bilingues ou françaises! Vous apprendrez l'anglais dans la rue sinon à l'école. Les droits du français en Ontario sont les mêmes que ceux de l'anglais au Québec, ni plus ni moins!"<sup>69</sup> Lavergne's clarion call, while stirring, misstated

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<sup>68</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, March 5, 1913.

<sup>69</sup> *Le Clairon*, le 25 septembre, 1913.

the actual legal rights to French language education in Ontario. In addition, he misunderstood how important English instruction was for the children of French-speaking parents in the southwestern corner of the province.

Following Lavergne's cue, *Le Clairon* took a daringly militant approach to the bilingual schools issue.

C'est une obligation rigoureuse pour les Canadiens-français d'élever leurs enfants dans la pratique de leur foi et dans la connaissance de leur langue. Ceux qui faillissent à ce devoir sont des traîtres à l'église et à la race...<sup>70</sup>

L'apathie et la jalousie et la légèreté ne sont pas nos moindres défauts. Nous en avons d'autres, mais ceux-là sont reconnus pour nous faire plus de mal que tous les ennemis de l'extérieure. Il est étonnant que connaissant si bien ces défauts, nous nous en corrigeons si peu.

Notre apathie dans tous les champs de l'activité humaine nous a laissé beaucoup de batailles à gagner... Il faut penser de parler français dans la famille d'abord. Les parents qui permettent à leurs enfants de parler habituellement anglais au foyer font preuve d'une mollesse impardonnable. Les clients qui s'adressent en anglais à leurs fournisseurs ont également tort. Pourquoi ne pas acheter de préférence chez les nôtres? Et dans ce cas il n'y a pas lieu de parler anglais...<sup>71</sup>

Bodard's strong criticism of English in the household may have discouraged this largely

bilingual population from fully endorsing such a radical paper.

Aside from chiding parents for failing to use French exclusively in the home,

*Le Clairon* also sought to find inspiring examples where francophones were asserting

their identity. The refusal to welcome the Protestant school inspector Elmer Ingall at a

Tilbury North school was one such example.

Nous avons eu la visite de l'inspecteur Ingall. Les enfants de l'école se sont montrés excessivement polis en quittant l'école. L'inspecteur est arrivé dans le cours de l'avant-midi : les enfants prirent leurs chapeaux et leurs livres, et personne ne revint pas à l'école dans l'après-midi, pas même l'inspecteur qui avait compris qu'on avait reçu à la dernière façon; il s'en retourna sur le premier train, heureux comme un renard qu'une poule aurait pris. Il avait encore quatre classes à visiter, il devrait y passer 2 jours.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Le Clairon*, le 2 octobre, 1913.

<sup>71</sup> *Le Clairon*, le 9 octobre, 1913.

<sup>72</sup> *Le Clairon*, le 9 octobre, 1913.

Ingall could not claim to be surprised by this resistance. In June of 1913, H.G.

Rocheleau, a Canayen trustee from Tilbury North warned the inspector that

It is my opinion, obtained by personal observation that the French Catholics will never freely consent to have their schools inspected by Protestant inspectors. The experience of the 1912-1913 year has proved that this system of inspection has been conducive of much harm by encouraging insubordination in the pupils. If continued it will produce a spirit of rebellion that will be a national evil.<sup>73</sup>

The success of this early resistance to the Protestant school inspector, while limited largely to rural outposts, appeared to have the support of many in both the Canayen and French Canadian communities of Essex and Kent county.

While there were successes, the 1913 school year was also marked by a setback when Chief Inspector Ingall gained entrance and offered the following report on St. Edward's school of Walkerville. His work shed light on the ethnic and linguistic makeup of the student body. The study reported that in the first form, 11 out of 47 students declared English to be their mother tongue; in the second form, 11 out of 38; in the third form, four out of four; and in the fourth form 0 out of four. In fact, 95 out of 96 children examined spoke English fairly or well, compared to 70 out of 96 children for the French language. Nevertheless, Ingall noted that just 29 out of 70 French speakers were studying French, or just over 40%.<sup>74</sup> Ingall then proceeded to note of the French program of instruction: "English was the mother tongue of both teachers; the ability of the teachers to instruct in French was fairly sufficient to teach French as a subject of study-

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<sup>73</sup> H.G. Rocheleau to Elmer Ingall, Chief Inspector of Separate Schools, North Essex, December 9, 1913, Stoney Point (Tilbury North), Ministry of Education Files, microfilm, Provincial Archives of Ontario (PAO), RG 2-43.

<sup>74</sup> Report of the English-French School Inspector, Elmer Ingall, Walkerville, Ont., September 23, 1913. Ministry of Education Files, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-43.

more like a second language.”<sup>75</sup> What is most noteworthy here is that even though 73% of the school’s students were francophone, only 30% were actually studying the one hour French program. It is not altogether clear why this was the case. Did the quality of the teachers’ French foster boredom and apathy in a classroom where the children may have spoken better French than the teachers? The Inspector’s comments suggest he was less than impressed with the quality of French instruction. On the other hand, the poor participation of French Canadian children might very well correspond to earlier reports that many French-speaking parents did not care whether French was taught, since English was the language of business, success, and the larger society. During the very week that Ingall made his visit to the Walkerville schools, on Thursday, September 11, 1913 the Windsor Separate School Board met and passed a resolution directing all school principals to have the teaching of French placed on the time table within eight days’ time. In each class French instruction was to last one hour and include reading, grammar, composition and spelling. The trustees added that

The prayers and catechism are to be taught in the French language to the French speaking pupils; that the above programme is not to be compulsory and shall apply only to cases when parents desire their children to be taught the French language as above set forth.<sup>76</sup>

The Windsor Separate board’s directive was little more than a symbolic gesture.

In the autumn of 1913, facing growing resistance to its new restrictions on French instruction, the Whitney government opted to make adjustments to the school regulations to promote its acceptance among the province’s francophones. The provincial government granted wide powers to the Chief Inspector of each district with

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<sup>75</sup> Report, Elmer Ingall, September 23, 1913.

<sup>76</sup> D.Gourd, Secretary Treasurer of the Windsor Separate School Board to the Principals of the Roman Catholic Schools of Windsor, September 12, 1913. Ministry of Education Files, PAO, RG 2-43.

regard to French as the language of instruction and communication in the classroom. Under the discretion of the Chief Inspector, French instruction could be extended beyond Form I for pupils who were unable to speak or understand the French language.<sup>77</sup> The government added that in the case of a new school in a district where French Canadians had recently settled, or an old school where they had gained ascendancy, even if the Ministry had not designated the school as English-French, it could still use French as a subject of study according to the terms of Regulation 12 which had been implemented under the Mowat government in 1890. The Ministry allowed for an extension of French instruction and communication beyond Form I in any particular school, even English, upon the advice of an inspector, provided that the Minister granted his approval.<sup>78</sup> Finally, the government now gave the Minister the power to extend the amount of French instruction in any school beyond the one hour limit if he saw fit to do so.<sup>79</sup> Lastly, the Catholic inspector was to be placed on an equal footing with the Protestant inspector. Nevertheless, the inspection would continue to emphasize a minimum standard of English in the schools and limits on French instruction. The Ministry hoped to quell the growing defiance of the French Canadian population of the province to the restrictions on their language. The new restrictions were now dubbed Regulation XVIII by the government.<sup>80</sup>

A significant number of bilingual schools were in compliance with Regulation XVII almost from the very first school inspections. Nearly all of the Canayen schools

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<sup>77</sup> *Toronto News*, September 11, 1913.

<sup>78</sup> C.B. Sissons, *Bilingual Schools in Canada*, (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1917), p. 111.

<sup>79</sup> Sissons, p. 111.

<sup>80</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 26, 1913.

admitted the school inspector in just the second year of the school regulation. In the autumn of 1913, Sandwich East saw two of its three schools in full compliance with edict. In the farming community of Sandwich West township, section schools 1 and 4 were in compliance according to the Protestant inspector. In Maidstone Township, French Canadians were in compliance with Regulation XVII while in Rochester and Tilbury North townships, the two most predominantly French Canadian parts of Essex County, eight of the twelve bilingual schools accepted the Protestant inspector and followed the law. In Dover township, Kent county, five of the eight bilingual schools, located in Grande Pointe, Paincourt and the surrounding area also obeyed the new provincial school regulation.

Despite these signs of submission, a number of schools remained defiant during the 1913-1914 school year. In Sandwich East, Father Beaudoin's home district, one school did not admit the inspector in 1912. A second school witnessed the departure of a few pupils when the inspector arrived. A third school, SS# 4, admitted the inspector but continued a program of 180 minutes of French instruction daily through to Form III, in blatant disregard of the government policy. In contrast, while the school inspector was also admitted to the Canayen districts of Anderdon Township, he reported, to his dismay, that one school's day consisted of 140 minutes of French instruction in contravention of Regulation XVII.<sup>81</sup> In the Canayen community of Sandwich South (SS#2) the teacher also objected to the entry of the inspector. Among the French

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<sup>81</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, 1913, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-43. The school in question straddled three districts and had the anomalous designation of Anderdon SS#2,6,8.. The River Canard School Registry reports that the Chief Inspector opted not to bother visiting the school, leaving the task to the bilingual separate school inspector alone. River Canard School Register, 1915, OASJNM.

Canadian schools east of Windsor, Rochester SS. #3 and 6, and Tilbury North SS #10 all boycotted the arrival of the inspector. However, in Tilbury North SS. #1, teachers admitted the inspector but were not complying with the school regulations for its overwhelmingly francophone student body. In the French Canadian district of Dover Township, Kent County, three of the eight schools were in defiance of Regulation XVII, with the departure of the students at two of them. In essence then, a significant number of schools were in compliance with Regulation XVII almost from the very first school inspections. The communities of Anderdon, Tecumseh (Sandwich East Township), St. Joachim (Rochester Township), Stoney Point (Tilbury North Township), Painscourt and Grande Pointe (Dover Township) appeared to be the areas of greatest resistance against Regulation XVII in the 1913-1914 school year.<sup>82</sup> All of these districts hosted a preponderantly French Canadian population with the exception of Anderdon township. In just the second year of Regulation XVII, the bilingual school resistance was showing clear signs of division in the Windsor border region, with most Canayen districts and at least half of the French Canadian ones already in compliance.

The resistance of the Anderdon township Canayens at River Canard could be attributed in part to its unique circumstances. For one, their teachers were Holy Names sisters, one of the last remaining groups of French Canadian teachers from Montreal. In addition, the pastor, a Quebecker named Joseph Loiselle, was among the most radical

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<sup>82</sup> English-French School Inspector's, Essex and Kent counties, 1913-1914, PAO, microfilm, RG2-43. See *Le Droit*, November 19, 1913 for St. Joachim's resistance, and *Le Droit*, May 13, 1914 for Grande Pointe's refusal to abide by Chief Inspector Elmer Ingall. All of these communities, with the possible exception of Tecumseh were populated almost exclusively with recent migrants from Quebec. Canada, *Report on the Census*, 1901.

French Canadian militants of Essex county. Was it their leadership of the resistance, or was it the will of the Canayens to resist the new school edict that drove the dissidence? Given the widespread absence of Canayen opposition elsewhere, the presence of these French Canadian militants should not be overlooked.<sup>83</sup> However, Mother Fredericka of the Holy Names Sisters declared the previous year that with regard to reception of the Protestant Inspector, « Sur la demande expresse des parents, nous sommes dans l'obligation de lui refuser admission, au risque de voir nos élèves quitter les classes à son arrivée. »<sup>84</sup>

Another account of resistance to Inspector Elmer Ingall in the Windsor border region could be found in the pages of *Le Clairon*. The newspaper trumpeted the departure of the French Canadian children from the school in Paincourt, Dover Township on Friday, October 17, 1913. On that occasion, the pupils marched out of their school house upon learning of the arrival of the Protestant school inspector, and spent the morning playing in the school yard. When the Chief Inspector attempted to speak to them, they began to sing with full force, "O Canada".<sup>85</sup> Ingall departed in dismay.

Alfred Emery, the French Canadian pastor of Paincourt, expressed his astonishment with the determination of his parishioners to resist the school regulation. However, he recognized in a letter to his former Collège Sainte-Thérèse school mate,

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<sup>83</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, Essex North, 1913-1914. Little if anything is known about the teacher or teachers working at Sandwich South #2, the only other school in a Canayen community to resist Regulation XVII in the autumn of 1913 by refusing to accept the Protestant school inspector altogether. The only notes left by the inspector regarding the school, declare, "Teacher objected to the English inspector".

<sup>84</sup> River Canard School Register, unpublished manuscript, December 11, 1912, Ontario Archives of the Soeurs des Saints-Noms de Jésus et Marie, Windsor, Ontario.

<sup>85</sup> *Le Clairon*, October 23, 1913.

historian Lionel Groulx, that this public show of force while impressive, concealed profound divisions among his francophone faithful on this issue

...il ne faut pas croire que tout le monde veut défendre nos droits- il y a des lâches qui s'efforcent de nous trahir continuellement. Paincourt était sur le point de devenir anglais et depuis un an surtout les gens commencent à se réveiller, c'est encourageant...<sup>86</sup>

Emery clearly indicated that the introduction of Regulation XVII had caused some francophones to reassert their identity as elsewhere in the province. However, his analysis was tempered by the recognition that not even the leadership of a radical clerical militant could unite this entire francophone parish against the school regulation.

Dover and Tilbury North school districts became the focal point of resistance to Regulation XVII henceforth, in part due to their relative isolation, and the leadership of four militant pastors, Napoleon Saint-Cyr of Stoney Point, Theo Martin of Tilbury North, and L. Landreville of Grande Pointe, and especially Alfred Emery of Paincourt.<sup>87</sup> Many of the settlers were in fact recent migrants from Quebec. On the other hand, Windsor, Sandwich, Walkerville, Amherstburg, would prove more compliant to the school restrictions and had hosted large numbers of *Canayens* that had lived in relative proximity to anglophones for more than a century.<sup>88</sup>

The bilingual resistance movement encountered further discouragement in the village of Tecumseh in the spring of 1914 when one of the school trustees escorted Inspector Ingall into his section school, purportedly preventing the children from leaving

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<sup>86</sup> Alfred David Emery to Lionel Groulx, May 4, 1914, Fonds Lionel Groulx, (CLRG), P1/A, 1270.

<sup>87</sup> Reverend Fathers Napoleon Saint-Cyr of Stoney Point, and Alfred Emery of Paincourt, (Dover) were two of the most passionate advocates of French language education in southwestern Ontario. Bishop Fallon would subject both men to disciplinary action in relation to the bilingual schools dispute and the legal case involving Reverend Father Lucien Beaudoin.

<sup>88</sup> English-French School Inspector's Reports, Essex and Kent counties, 1913-1914, PAO, microfilm, RG2-43.

the school house upon Ingall's arrival. Canayen Denis Rocheleau, the president of the local ACFEO, offered his own assessment of the situation.

Vous voyez par lui que tout n'est pas rose dans notre section, ne pensez pas qu'il sera approuvé par la majorité des parents, mais le mal est fait, et je suppose que le gouvernement prendra cela comme une victoire et que Tecumseh s'est enfin rendu au fameux règlement 17. Le Réverend P. Langlois a été bien surpris de la chose et il m'a demandé de vous écrire et je me rends à son désir, connaissant sa situation.<sup>89</sup>

Rocheleau's assurance of continued resistance in Tecumseh following this incident proved to be wishful thinking for opposition here to the school regulations would never take on the same energy again. The schools of Tecumseh and Sandwich East quickly complied, limiting French instruction to one hour a day, and accepting the regular visits of the Protestant inspector.<sup>90</sup>

By the end of spring 1914, most bilingual schools in Essex and Kent Counties had fallen into compliance with Regulation XVII. In nearly all Canayen communities, the resistance did not last more than a year, as was the case in half of all French Canadian communities. While the resistance raged on in Ottawa and eastern and northern Ontario, only a handful of schools in the Windsor border region continued to oppose the provincial school regulations. Nevertheless, the issue remained on the minds of voters in the upcoming provincial election.

### The 1914 Election

In the spring of 1914, speculation was rampant that the premier of Ontario would call an election. While the key issue of the pending campaign for most Ontarians was

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<sup>89</sup> Denis Rocheleau, president of the local ACFEO, to AT Charron, 11 March, 1914, CRCCF, C2/219/2. Langlois had been under Fallon's watchful eye since the SSJB meeting at his church hall in Tecumseh in September 1910, and sought to avoid writing any letters that might eventually fall into the wrong hands.

<sup>90</sup> See English French Schools Inspection Reports, 1914-1919 for Tecumseh and Sandwich East, PAO, microfilm, RG 102-0-1.

that of Prohibition,<sup>91</sup> in the bilingual belt of Essex County, Regulation XVII occupied centre stage. One journalist for the daily *Evening Record* predicted that a storm was brewing for Public Works Minister Joseph O. Réaume.

There is a feeling among the French people that the doctor has not been as aggressive as he might be on the bilingual question. He stood by Sir James Whitney and Hon. Dr. Pyne defending the course of the government all through. His attitude has not given satisfaction to those who say they are ready to place race above politics in the fight for bilingual schools.<sup>92</sup>

Réaume's controversial situation was made a bit more comfortable in the spring of 1914, when the Whitney government divided the district of Essex North, creating the new riding of Windsor for the embattled minister.

In spite of this development, Réaume's situation went from bad to worse. Aside from a strong Liberal challenger, the minister also faced a growing insurgency within the local Conservative riding association. Many English Protestant Conservatives considered Réaume's speech before the 1912 Congrès du Parler Français as a betrayal of the government's bilingual schools policy. In fact, Réaume's handling of this delicate issue had satisfied neither the francophone nor anglophone population of Essex.<sup>93</sup> Party insurgents had failed at the previous nominating convention three years earlier to force Réaume to mend political fences and appoint more local party members to patronage positions. During this nomination battle they once again pushed a rival candidate, Orangeman Jason Fleming.<sup>94</sup> The party in-fighting culminated this time with the

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<sup>91</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, see various issues, especially the headlines, through April and May, 1914.

<sup>92</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, April 24, 1914.

<sup>93</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 20, 1914. Indeed, Réaume was at odds with outspoken Conservatives who decried any concessions whatsoever to the Franco-Ontarian minority.

<sup>94</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, June 3, 1914.

insurgent faction seizing control of the convention and successfully out-maneuvering the Minister, wresting away the Conservative nomination from him.

Réaume's ouster caused considerable distress for the Premier, James Whitney. He had served as a competent minister, and had successfully won three elections in what had hitherto been a Liberal stronghold. Indeed, Whitney's growing dilemma resided in the fact that Réaume

has stood with the government in endorsing No. 17 Regulation of the department of education with respect to bilingual schools.

Sir James might find it difficult to find another Frenchman of as much prominence as Dr. Réaume who would accept a portfolio and attempt to tell the French people that this particular regulation was satisfactory and all that.<sup>95</sup>

The Premier indicated his preference for Réaume openly but was clearly rejected by the insurgents. He was now faced with the problem of finding an alternative riding for his Minister. In the end, Reaume had to settle for running as an independent "Whitney choice" candidate. Unwilling to face either Conservative faction, the premier stayed away from Windsor for the entire campaign.

With the election campaign under way, Essex North Liberals re-nominated Sévérin Ducharme, a Belle River farmer, as their candidate. Ducharme had narrowly lost to Réaume in Essex North riding in 1911, and now sought to claim the seat as his own.

In his nominating speech he declared,

As far as bilingualism is concerned, ...I am a bilingual man and I myself am a product of the bilingual school and I see no reason why the French people of the province should not get their rights the same as any other place. If I am elected on June 29, I will see that the French people get justice as far as French teaching is concerned in the schools.<sup>96</sup>

To the delight of the Liberals in attendance, A.C. Meloche, the editor of *Le Clairon*,

broke his pledge to remain neutral in any election, and gave a rousing speech in favour of

<sup>95</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, Wednesday, June 3, 1914.

<sup>96</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, Wednesday, June 17, 1914.

the Liberal candidate, accusing the Whitney government of breaking faith with francophones by introducing Regulation XVII.

At his opening rally, Réaume<sup>97</sup> dispelled the accusations from Liberal Séverin Ducharme that he and the premier had sold out “the French people”. His good friend, Conservative Senator H. N. Casgrain ridiculed Ducharme for false statements, “No man has been more favourable to the French people than Sir James Whitney... What we want is not French schools where English is taught, but English schools in which French is taught.”<sup>98</sup> This exchange between francophone Liberal and Conservative partisans underscored the divide over Regulation XVII. Réaume, a prominent Canayen, had certainly lost the support of many francophones. Nevertheless, Casgrain’s speech did resonate with some segments of this community who valued French instruction, but within the context of an English-speaking school and society. Réaume seemed to epitomize this frame of mind. While French instruction remained important, for Réaume and his francophone supporters, a quality education in English was paramount for their children.<sup>99</sup> However, Réaume’s Achilles heel, the French language situation in Windsor’s schools, however, weakened his argument, and exposed a rather inflexible provincial policy. Severin Ducharme now led the charge for the French language and the bilingual schools.

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<sup>97</sup> The local daily newspaper later recounted that Réaume was in fact running with the endorsement of Sir James in the constituency of Windsor, as evidenced by the Premier’s stand behind Réaume’s declarations on the school issue and on the modification of Regulation XVII in 1913, which had been fiercely opposed by some extreme members of the Orange wing of the party in Windsor. See *Windsor Evening Record*, June 19, 1914.

<sup>98</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, Thursday, June 18, 1914.

<sup>99</sup> In effect, for Réaume, not all of his children even spoke French, since their mother was not a francophone.

Réaume responded to Liberal Charles Montreuil, a former Sandwich East reeve, who accused him of being, in fact, a traitor for supporting Regulation XVII.

As far as the clause No. 17 is concerned, to which so many objections have been held, it is not in existence now, as it has been replaced by clause 18. This clause permits the teaching of French in the schools for more than an hour and the placing of separate school inspectors on a level equal with those of the public school. In clause 17 French was allowed but one hour in the schools of the province, and the inspectors of separate schools were under those of the public school.... Mr. Montreuil of Ford, called me a traitor to the French people, but I think that Mr. Montreuil is not a loyal Frenchman himself, for if you speak to him in French he will answer you in English... I am a Frenchman, and know the way the question stands at the present time, and I know I can remedy the trouble. If the French people want their rights it is not [the Liberal Opposition Leader] a Rowell government that would do them any favours, but it is the Whitney government, which has stood up and will stand up for, the rights of French people, as well as the rights of English people.<sup>100</sup>

Réaume would not be the only French-speaking standard-bearer to offer a spirited defense of the premier and face hostility from the francophones of the Windsor border region. French Canadian Colonel Paul Poisson of Tecumseh ran as the Conservative candidate in Réaume's old riding of Essex North, against Ducharme. Like Réaume, Poisson argued that the school regulation was indeed moderate and offered the first concrete guarantees for francophones to instruction in their mother tongue.

Poisson's campaign in North Essex was not without its moments of excitement. The emotional intensity of the bilingual schools question, stretched out over a four-week campaign, caused tempers to flare. Towards the campaign's close, a particularly dramatic incident erupted in the Canayen village of McGregor, south of Windsor.

The excitement had reached the virulent stage, which culminated in an outrage at McGregor, where Dr. Paul Poisson, the Conservative candidate, was made the target for a shower of eggs, one of which exploded on his shoulder while he was standing on the platform. Every window in the hall was smashed by hoodlums, who started practice with missiles and wound up with hen-fruit. Liberals vehemently denied that they had anything to do with the attack, which was evidently perpetuated by irresponsible and possibly drunken ruffians.

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<sup>100</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, Saturday, June 20, 1914.

The ostensible reason for the egg-throwing incident is the stand Dr. Poisson has taken in defending the Whitney administration on the school regulations. He has asserted that the extreme views on bilingualism do not represent the majority opinion of the French people.

Among the French districts this is like battling against a strong head wind. The doctor however, is a splendid talker and a vigorous fighter.<sup>101</sup>

Poisson's experience revealed how difficult and explosive it could be to defend

Regulation XVII in a francophone community.

The results of the 1914 election indicated that the francophone population of Essex North riding was for the most part, displeased with the Whitney government's bilingual school regulations. Ducharme garnered 2431 votes to Poisson's 1797. In the heaviest francophone districts of Rochester and Tilbury, the Liberals amassed sizeable majorities. In the townships of Anderdon and Sandwich East, the childhood home of Poisson, where a considerable population of old-stock Canayens resided near or alongside English Protestants, Poisson actually won a narrow majority. In effect, the francophones of Essex North did not vote as a bloc in favour of the Liberal candidate and against the Whitney government. It is apparent that a significant minority of francophone voters, especially from the predominantly Canayen areas of Anderdon and Sandwich East townships, endorsed Colonel Poisson's spirited defense of the regulations or were indifferent to the question altogether. In contrast, in the predominantly French Canadian areas of Rochester and Tilbury North Townships, opponents of Regulation XVII gave Severin Ducharme a clean sweep.<sup>102</sup> The 1914 election clearly illustrated that opposition

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<sup>101</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, Saturday, June 27, 1914.

<sup>102</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, June 27, 1914. In Ducharme's home district of Rochester, he polled 302 votes to Poisson's 119, while Belle River gave Ducharme a 96-41 vote spread, and Tilbury North also proved to be a Liberal stronghold, with a 244 to 49 showing; Tilbury West went to Mr. Ducharme by 49, Ford gave the winner a 78 vote majority, and Sandwich West, 103. Sandwich South and Maidstone were very close, giving Mr. Ducharme eight and five majorities, respectively.

to Regulation XVII was by no means unanimous in the predominantly francophone riding of Essex North, which straddled both Canayen and French Canadian communities.

Unlike 1911, the predominantly Canayen township of Anderdon did not have one of their own to vote for this time. Nevertheless, the majority of voters here cast their ballots for the Conservative Poisson, raising questions about their feelings regarding Regulation XVII.

In the neighbouring riding of Windsor, the bitter division in Conservative party ranks enabled the Liberal candidate to profit from vote-splitting to carry the riding. Nearly sixty percent of urban voters had endorsed a Conservative candidate, thus suggesting that some francophones likely voted for the outgoing Minister of Public Works in spite of his support of the government's controversial policy for bilingual schools. The divisive results of the election in the Windsor border region were a harbinger of a series of setbacks to come for the bilingual schools resistance. The first significant defeat lay in the re-election of the Whitney Conservative government and the consequent continuation of the schools regulation.

#### Alfred Emery: Portrait of a Militant Priest

The re-election of the Whitney government and enforcement of Regulation XVIII were a cause for concern among the population of Paincourt, in Kent County. French Canadians in this village looked to a radical militant for leadership: Father Alfred David Emery. Under his direction, Paincourt purportedly defied the Protestant chief inspector's

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Dr. Poisson suffered the worst blow in Sandwich East where he eked out a majority of just eight votes, after supporters predicted a margin of at least 200. Both Amherstburg and Anderdon gave Poisson majorities of 60 and 37 respectively.

entry into the bilingual separate school for seven years until 1919.<sup>103</sup> Lionel Groulx would come to serve as a confidant for the priest who styled himself 'the worst enemy' of Bishop Fallon.<sup>104</sup> While Emery launched a series of initiatives aimed at preserving French among the younger generation,<sup>105</sup> his most exceptional accomplishment involved a campaign for the propagation of French language books and parish bulletins. Convinced that reading served as the cornerstone in the struggle against anglicization, Emery enlisted the support of the ACFEO and secured the donation of books, old parish bulletins, and magazines to use in a major home-grown project. Emery began to write, edit and print a local bulletin, when he was not giving away free books.

Depuis longtemps, nous sentons le besoin de répandre la bonne lecture parmi nos gens et après plusieurs essais nous avons trouvé que le meilleur moyen d'instruire et rendre nos gens meilleur par la lecture, c'est le bulletin paroissial, pour la bonne raison que nous le distribuons gratis; s'il nous fallait demander quelque aumône nous n'aurions presque personne pour le lire; alors nous faisons des sacrifices pour forcer en quelque sorte les gens à lire français... Nos gens sont si anglicisés.<sup>106</sup>

Emery's preoccupation with the state of French in Paincourt echoed Father Beaudoin's worries about his compatriots in the Border Cities. The francophones of southwestern Ontario were slowly embracing the culture of the English-speaking majority.

In spite of Emery's gloomy assessment, his project blossomed into a modest success. By the autumn of 1915, his bulletin's circulation had grown considerably.

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<sup>103</sup> Victor Simon, *Le Règlement XVII et son application à travers l'Ontario*, (Sudbury: Presses universitaires de Sudbury, 1977).

<sup>104</sup> Alfred Emery to Lionel Groulx, January 5, 1915, CRLG, Fonds Lionel Groulx, P1/A, 1270.

<sup>105</sup> ACFEO survey, March 1915, by Reverend Father A.D. Emery, March 1915, Paincourt, Kent County, Ontario, 2pp, CRCCF, C2/211/1. Emery founded a youth group known as the "Cercle des jeunes" in which older students taught catechism in French to their younger schoolmates. As well, he helped to organize a study group known as the "Cercle agricole", also run chiefly by the younger members of the parish, to instill pride and disprove arguments from their English neighbours that they were inferior farmers.

<sup>106</sup> A.D. Emery to Alexandre Grenon, ACFEO, November 15, 1915, 2pp., CRCCF, C2/211/1.

Le bulletin que je publie actuellement est répandu déjà dans neuf paroisses, et nous tâchons de le répandre dans toutes les paroisses du diocèse de London; nous en publions actuellement 1900 copies. Il faut bien savoir que j'ai commencé avec 200 copies seulement.<sup>107</sup>

Like Beaudoin, Emery made a concerted effort to support the use of the French language among his parishioners and encountered considerable apathy.

Il est bien malheureux qu'un grand nombre de mes gens ne veulent pas comprendre le sérieux de notre cause; ils n'y voient que de la politique... et le curé en souffre.

Mes efforts sont surtout dirigés vers la jeune génération, et encore qu'elle est ingrate.<sup>108</sup>

Emery's exasperation indicated a clear divide between the priest and much of his French Canadian farming congregation, who shied away from the politics of language and schools.

Emery attributed public apathy to two factors. Many francophones in Paincourt embraced English as a means to serve a growing number of anglophone business interests.

Malheureusement, un trop grand nombre préfèrent se ranger du côté des hôteliers, que de dire un mot, ou de faire quoi que ce soit contre le gouvernement. De plus, l'affaire du *Clairon* a tout gâté les gens, ils ont perdu confiance; vu que *Le Droit* avait promis de remplacer *Le Clairon* et la chose a été discontinuée, je sais que l'œuvre de la bonne presse ne prendra pas.<sup>109</sup>

The failure of *Le Clairon* discouraged many of the recent converts to the resistance.

Francophone hotelkeepers, known for serving alcohol to thirsty English- and French-speaking farmers, opposed any attempt to politicize language, and advocated accepting the existing school regulations. Militant leaders, in an attempt to keep the population on their side, promised the population that *Le Droit*, the Ottawa daily would fill the void with a local weekly edition. The failure of this second project so soon after the collapse

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<sup>107</sup> A.D. Emery to Alexandre Grenon, ACFEO, November 15, 1915, CRCCF, C2/211/1.

<sup>108</sup> A.D. Emery to Alexandre Grenon, ACFEO secretary, December 16, 1915, CRCCF, C2/211/1; and L.A. Beaudoin to A. Grenon, ACFEO, December 6, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/4.

<sup>109</sup> Emery to Grenon, December 16, 1915.

of *Le Clairon* dampened the initial enthusiasm of many francophones for the resistance and shattered their faith in the militant leaders.

#### Signs of Weakness in the Resistance

Elsewhere in the Windsor border region francophones involved in the bilingual schools resistance experienced frustration. The arrival of Inspector J.F. Sullivan worked to undermine the boycott in the separate schools by denying the bilingual schools in Ford City and Tilbury their provincial subsidy for employing non-qualified teachers in the autumn of 1915.<sup>110</sup> An examination of the school inspection files reveals that the separate school in the town of Tilbury employed three teachers who were weak in English and allowed for French instruction in all forms instead of Form I alone, in clear contravention of Regulation XVII. The inspector recommended that the trustees be properly instructed in the terms of the school regulations.<sup>111</sup>

The annual inspection of the Amherstburg schools raised new problems for the separate school trustees. The violation of Regulation XVII here involved the Board's imposition of compulsory French. Inspector Sullivan reported that the board had hired a teacher who would teach forty-five minutes daily in each of the school's classrooms.<sup>112</sup> Sullivan argued that the new arrangement was illegal since the Board compelled all pupils to take French instruction in violation of the terms of the school regulation from an unqualified teacher who had an inadequate command of English. He had the new teacher

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<sup>110</sup> Letter Hector Gaboury, Inspector of English French schools to A. Colquoun, Deputy Minister of Education, August 21, 1915, PAO, Ministry of education Files, RG 2-43.

<sup>111</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, Tilbury, 1915, PAO, microfilm, RG 102-0-1.

<sup>112</sup> J.F. Sullivan, Separate School Inspector to A. Colquoun, September 11, 1915, PAO microfilm, Ministry of Education Files, RG 2-43.

dismissed from her functions, and then offered this analysis of the state of public support for French instruction.

Personally I think that if the Board is granted the privileges of Instruction 17, the teaching of French will not continue very long; the teachers are not in sympathy with it; and the great majority of parents are indifferent or opposed. But in the meantime the subject should be taught by competent and properly qualified teachers.<sup>113</sup>

The Deputy Minister confirmed Sullivan's assertions that trustees had no right to compel any pupil to take French without the parents' express permission. In addition, he added that no person could be legally hired to teach in any public or separate school of the province without the appropriate certification from the Department of Education.<sup>114</sup>

The Inspector directed the Amherstburg separate school to cease its activity or face sanctions from the Ministry. The school complied with the government orders by the time of the next Inspector's report. What remains unclear is whether Sullivan's analysis of Canayen parental attitudes towards French instruction was rooted in fact or prejudice.

#### The Plight of French Instruction in Windsor Separate Schools

The alleged denial of French to Windsor's francophone children gathered considerable attention in the winter and spring of 1916. Quebec native J.J. Massé, a cement manufacturer and the secretary of the Union commerciale business association, publicly criticized Regulation XVII and suggested its annulment would spawn an increase in war recruitment for francophone districts. The editor of the *Evening Record* disagreed.<sup>115</sup> The paper increasingly tied the schools dispute to the need for the country to unite behind the war effort overseas, and disputed claims that the school edict

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<sup>113</sup> Sullivan to Colquoun, September 11, 1915.

<sup>114</sup> Colquoun to Sullivan, October 8, 1915, PAO microfilm, Ministry of Education Files, RG 2-43.

<sup>115</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, January 22, 1916.

deprived the city's francophone children from learning their mother tongue. Public sympathy in the anglophone population did not appear to be widespread for the plight of bilingual schools when Canada seemed embroiled in a life or death struggle in Europe.

Massé responded to the Record's dismissive tone with this stinging rebuke,

Right here in Windsor the children of French Canadian parentage are completely deprived of their natural and constitutional right of learning their maternal tongue besides the English language... French Canadian parents of this district are getting more and more enlightened, however, on this dangerous question and before very long will undertake the same methods as their courageous compatriots at Ottawa city, to resist injustices by a provincial government inspired by Prussian methods and kultur.<sup>116</sup>

The Record countered by calling Massé and his supporters extremists since "they were not willing to give Regulation 17 a fair trial. They refuse to cooperate with the government in trying to see how the regulation will work."<sup>117</sup> The editor criticized one bilingual district for refusing to let the inspector do his work. Another district was criticized for teaching in English while the Inspector was in attendance and resuming classes in French after his departure.<sup>118</sup>

As Quebec newspapers publicized the plight of French in the Windsor area schools, the Education Minister, G. Howard Ferguson, felt compelled to reply to the growing criticism.

It has been contended that the position of the French language in the Windsor separate schools is a proof that the department is preventing French-speaking children in those schools from learning their own language. It should be said that nothing has been refused to the Windsor separate schools in the way of the use or the teaching of French to which the acts or regulations entitle them. These schools are not under Regulation 17, and accordingly the right to introduce French teaching into them, whether they were schools in which French had never hitherto been taught, or schools where it had been taught for a time and then abandoned, would be determined by Regulation 12 (2) which does not apply unless where French is the prevailing language. French is

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<sup>116</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, February 5, 1916.

<sup>117</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, February 5, 1916.

<sup>118</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, February 5, 1916. This critique supports claims that clandestine opposition to Regulation XVII continued in some area schools. Such claims are later collaborated in a 1918 ACFEQ report, where the extent of such surreptitious opposition is further described at the end of the chapter.

not the prevailing language in Windsor, according to every test which can be applied in such matters.<sup>119</sup> While Ferguson was technically correct in his interpretation of Regulation 17, since the Windsor separate schools that had French instruction eliminated it from their curriculum before the enactment of Regulation XVII. However, his argument ignored the fact that the “hitherto” clause in the Regulation, which stipulated that only schools where French instruction had « hitherto » been part of the curriculum, that is to say in 1912 at the time of its enactment, actually denied most francophone children in Windsor any instruction in their mother tongue. The disappearance of the language from three separate schools had only occurred with the advent of Fallon as Bishop of London in 1910. Under Regulation XVII, French could not be reintroduced into these schools.

One lasting irritant to francophones of the Windsor Border Region was the sense that this area suffered disproportionately under the new education regime. One writer to the *Windsor Evening Record* contended that the case of the city of Windsor was one of particular injustice.<sup>120</sup> The editor of the newspaper countered with this rebuttal :

The agitation now being carried on is against regulation 17, which declared that in schools where French has hitherto been a subject of study, certain provision may be made for the teaching of French. The Windsor case does not come under that regulation because the Windsor application for the teaching of French related to a new school, not one in which French had been taught when that regulation was passed. It is governed by the old law, which has been in force for many years. That law provided for the teaching of French or German in school sections where the French or German language prevails. The department ruled that the French language did not prevail in Windsor-that is, it was not the language of the community- and so the application failed. Is the ruling reasonable or not? Can it be said that French is the prevailing language of Windsor? What do Windsor people say?<sup>121</sup>

This spirited defense of Regulation XVII suggested that since the call for French in the Windsor schools contravened the letter of the existing education laws, it did not therefore

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<sup>119</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, March 13, 1916.

<sup>120</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 2, 1916.

<sup>121</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 2, 1916.

merit serious consideration, regardless of its discriminatory aspects. In short, Regulation XVII was designed to contain the growth of French instruction to those areas still using the language, with the express intention of preventing its reintroduction to francophones seeking redress. This policy clearly exposed the government's real intention to assimilate francophones rather than merely improve the quality of English taught in the schools.

For francophone militants, the issue of language rights in the Windsor area could not be so easily dismissed. Indeed, the city's francophone children became the topic of debate in the House of Commons in May, 1916. W.F. Nickle, a Conservative MP for Kingston reiterated the provincial government's argument that under Regulation 17, the right to one hour of French instruction pertained only to those schools that had hitherto enjoyed such privileges at the time of the school edict's enactment. Quebec Liberal MP Jean Lamarche challenged Nickle's explanation. Lamarche identified three schools in Windsor where the Department of Education had shown discrimination, denying any French instruction to francophone children.<sup>122</sup> Under Regulation XVII, French could only be taught at schools where it was part of the curriculum at the time of its enactment, or at schools where French was the predominant language. Any exceptions were subject to the discretion of the Minister of Education himself. In Windsor, the Minister refused to make an exception. Lamarche sponsored a resolution declaring the Ontario law unfair and illegal, and aimed to show the Canadian public and the British Empire the content of the law to expose the province as the place where minority rights were least respected.

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<sup>122</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 12, 1916.

Amidst the pressure of the federal debate, the new premier of Ontario, William Hearst<sup>123</sup> delivered a public memorandum to the Dominion government on the bilingual controversy, containing an exhaustive review of the hotly contested Regulation XVII. The provincial memorandum declared that with the 1840 Act of Union, the education law of Upper Canada only conferred rights or privileges to denominational schools. The statute in question “authorized the voluntary establishment of separate schools by Protestants, coloured people and Catholics. No provision was contained in the act for the use of any special language.”<sup>124</sup>

The Premier’s defense of Regulation XVII did nothing to allay the controversy over French instruction in the schools province wide. However, in southwestern Ontario, provincial officials had reason to hope for better times ahead. The Inspectors of the English-French Schools noted a growing acceptance of Regulation XVII. They expressed confidence that all francophone children in the region would become well-versed in the English language provided they attended school. While all the public bilingual schools complied with the regulations, a few separate schools continued to resist.<sup>125</sup>

#### A Catholic Chief Inspector

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<sup>123</sup> Premier James Whitney died suddenly at the end of 1914. The Conservative caucus chose William Hearst to complete his five-year term.

<sup>124</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 17, 1916.

<sup>125</sup> English-French School Inspector’s Report, North Essex, March, 1916, PAO, Ministry of Education Files, R2-43-20A. Public Inspector W.J. Summerby reported in the spring of 1916, “The time taken for French does not, I believe, exceed one hour per day in any case; and the teachers use the English language in the instruction, management and discipline of the school, as required by the Public Schools Act, Section 84b.”

The official reports of the English-French School Inspectors suggest that administrative changes were undermining the bilingual schools resistance by the 1916-1917 school year. The appearance of Thomas Swift as the new Chief Inspector helped to weaken the resistance in the Windsor Border Region to Regulation XVII. Swift, a practising Catholic, offered this analysis for Essex County in his year end report for 1916.

I was received at every one of the schools with all the courtesy and respect due to a regularly accredited inspector appointed by the Department. At several schools which had previously refused to receive a Protestant Inspector, I was told that, being a Catholic inspector, I was perfectly welcome and satisfactory to the authorities and supporters of the schools. Consequently, my visits were a pleasure to me and I made a careful and thorough inspection of every school. As may be seen from the accompanying Report Sheet, *only three out of twenty-eight* [emphasis mine] schools were found not to be complying with the Regulation.<sup>126</sup>

Swift claimed that those schools that had been complying with Regulation XVII from its inception were in the best condition and compared with the best English public and separate schools. The chief problem encountered related to the lack of certified teachers from religious orders, even in cases where good teaching practices had been established. Religious orders that had previously resisted the entry of Protestant inspectors now permitted a government assessment of their daily routines. For example, on October 25, 1916, in River Canard, the Holy Names Sisters willingly allowed the new Catholic Chief inspector to conduct a thorough examination of their school, after years of limiting entrance to the local bilingual inspector alone.<sup>127</sup> Swift's report indicated that two of the three schools in resistance, Tilbury North Section Schools #6 and 10, were found in the bailiwick of two rebel priests, Theo Martin and recently deposed pastor Napoleon Saint-

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<sup>126</sup> Thomas Swift, Separate Inspector of English-French Schools to Dr. A. Colquoun, Deputy of Education, Ministry of Education Files, December 13, 1916, PAO, RG 2-43.

<sup>127</sup> River Canard School Register, October 25, 1916, OASNJM.

Cyr of Stoney Point<sup>128</sup>; both parishes were composed primarily of settlers from Quebec. The other school, Sandwich South SS. No. 2 was located near Tecumseh, the parish of rebel priest Pierre Langlois, and had a mix of French Canadians and Canayens; it began to comply that same school year.<sup>129</sup> Ministry records actually indicate that Swift reported a fourth school in his initial records, Rochester SS#3 in St. Joachim where French was the language of instruction in Forms I and II, in violation of Regulation XVII.<sup>130</sup> Pioneer families from Quebec had founded St. Joachim three generations earlier and Charles Laliberté was the Quebec-born pastor. The dismal resistance to Regulation XVII, could hardly have been encouraging for the ACFEO leadership.<sup>131</sup> In the parish of Walkerville, in spite of Beaudoin's passionate crusade for the mother tongue, the school inspector for St. Edward's noted that for the 1915-1916 school year, of 64 francophone students, just 9 were studying French.<sup>132</sup> According to official reports, all of the bilingual schools found in areas with higher concentrations of Canayens were in full compliance with the school restrictions on French instruction. By the end of 1917, the situation had worsened, with Swift reporting that only Tilbury North SS. No. 10 in Stoney Point, under the tutelage of

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<sup>128</sup> For details on Fr. Saint-Cyr's sudden dismissal, see Chapter 3.

<sup>129</sup> See English-French School Inspector's Reports, Essex, 1916-1917, Ministry of Education Files, PAO, microfilm, RG 102-0-1.

<sup>130</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, 1917, Essex, Ministry of Education files, PAO, microfilm, RG-102-0-1.

<sup>131</sup> It is unclear whether a surreptitious resistance continued in Essex and Kent counties's bilingual schools as was the case for many Franco-Manitoban separate schools, where all appearances indicated that the school was English at the time of the Inspectors visit, when in fact, much of the instruction actually took place in French. Later in this chapter, a 1918 ACFEO report suggests that such a resistance did in fact exist for a few more years. English French School Inspector's Report, Essex, 1917, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-102-1.

<sup>132</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, Essex, 1916, Ministry of Education Files, PAO, microfilm, RG 102-0-1.

Alzire Massé was still publicly resisting Regulation XVII.<sup>133</sup> In Kent County, one school in Dover Township also continued its public resistance, with the support of pastor Alfred Emery.<sup>134</sup> Both schools were in predominantly French Canadian districts.

#### Growing Local Tension with the ACFEO Provincial

As the leaders of the resistance grappled with a lack of popular opposition to the provincial school regulations, they expressed a growing sense of urgency. Lucien Beaudoin of Sandwich East recruited three lay professionals to help spearhead a new militant project. The scheme involved the establishment of yet another French language newspaper. Three recently arrived professionals pondered such an undertaking; Damien Saint-Pierre of Cornwall, Gustave Lacasse of Montreal, and Joseph De Grandpré, a lawyer from Montreal all detected a latent weakness among the francophone population. De Grandpré attributed this situation to their “deformed mentality” which had been shaped by the preponderant Anglo-Saxon ambiance of the region and the lure of American wealth and capitalism.<sup>135</sup>

Aside from financial obstacles, most notably a lack of enthusiastic investors, de Grandpré, Lacasse and Saint-Pierre encountered other tribulations. No printer in Windsor would guarantee a reliable publishing schedule for a weekly newspaper.<sup>136</sup> Consequently, the men abandoned the project, fearing that frequent interruptions would

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<sup>133</sup> English-French School Inspector’s Report, Essex, 1917, PAO, microfilm, RG-102-1. Swift noted, “No effort made to comply with Regulation XVII.”

<sup>134</sup> English-French School Inspectors Report, Kent West County, PAO, microfilm, RG-102-1; see Victor Simon, *Le Règlement XVII et son application à travers l’Ontario*, (Sudbury: Presses universitaires de Sudbury, 1977).

<sup>135</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to Alexandre Grenon, May 11, 1917, ACFEO secretary, CRCCF, C2/222/2.

<sup>136</sup> De Grandpré to Grenon, May 11, 1917.

make its success unlikely. De Grandpré regarded the potential consequences of another such failure for the francophone community to be calamitous. “Et si pour l’une quelconque de ces raisons, nous devions suspendre notre publication, c’en serait peut-être fini pour jamais, un pareil échec venant surtout après celui du *Clairon*.”<sup>137</sup> The fear of bankruptcy, so justified by the failure of the first newspaper, frightened off investors for the new venture. Even efforts by the three men to convince *Le Droit* to produce some local coverage failed when the trio also insisted on local editorial control, while requesting that the Ottawa branch assume all expenses! This failure generated hard feelings between the negotiators in Ottawa, many of whom represented the ACFEO, and certain militants in southwestern Ontario.<sup>138</sup> The lack of a newspaper at this discouraging time only weakened the resistance further. Alexandre Grenon, the secretary at the Association in Ottawa wrote Beaudoin for direction.

Le Révérend Père Charlebois me prie de vous demander si vous pourriez lui dire confidentiellement si les canadiens-français de Windsor sont quelque peu mécontents de l’Association. Il semble qu’ils se désintéressent de plus en plus. À plusieurs reprises, nous leur avons écrit et ils n’ont jamais répondu. Vous obligeriez beaucoup, Monsieur le Curé, si vous pouviez nous dire la cause.<sup>139</sup>

The ACFEO secretary expressed a growing concern at the provincial headquarters with the extent of local disaffection with the Association.

Grenon’s letter was likely in response to a weekly column by Gaspard Pacaud in the *Windsor Evening Record*, where the president of the Windsor Separate School Board had publicly criticized the ACFEO’s resistance strategy. In his February 21

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<sup>137</sup> De Grandpré to Grenon, May 11, 1917. There appear to be indications that following the bankruptcy of their business venture *Le Clairon*, construction contractors Euclide Jacques, Alfred Saint-Onge and J.J. Massé fall conspicuously silent on French language issues.

<sup>138</sup> See De Grandpré to Grenon, May 11, 1917.

<sup>139</sup> Alexandre Grenon to Lucien Beaudoin, May 8, 1917, CRCCF, C2/94/6.

column Pacaud accused the Association of unfair financial practices, suggesting that even though Quebec's *Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne-française* (ACJC) had raised more than \$54, 341 for the ACFEO in the bilingual schools struggle, Essex county francophones had been denied any financial support out of this fund, and their plight was completely ignored by the provincial organization. Pacaud declared,

J'avais toujours été sous l'impression qu'Essex était dans Ontario. Mais en tant que cette jolie souscription est concernée, nous demeurerions en Chine que nous en aurions pas été tenus plus éloignée.

Je me suis informé pour savoir si nous avons reçu aucune aide de quelque nature que ce fût, soit d'Ottawa, ou d'ailleurs. Rien, absolument rien.

... Notre cas est unique et si l'on s'était donné le trouble que la jeunesse canadienne-française de la Province de Québec avait le droit d'attendre de ceux qui acceptaient son argent au nom des écoles bilingues d'Ontario, on se serait aperçu de ce fait. On aurait bientôt vu la lutte séparée qu'il fallait faire pour nous.

Ce genre de guerre, est-il seulement pour Ottawa, ou pour Ontario en général?<sup>140</sup>

Pacaud's accusations stimulated considerable discussion and discord among local opponents of Regulation XVII. Naturally, the unique circumstances of Windsor's francophones accentuated their suffering under the current Conservative regime, but some militants were suspicious of Pacaud's real motives, given the Association's past criticism of his actions. For Pacaud, the ACFEO's failure to address Windsor's unique situation financially or otherwise, and its inability to recognize the local desire for even one hour of French must have been frustrating indeed.

In light of the growing divide between the ACFEO and some local militants, Beaudoin sought a road of conciliation. Nevertheless, he identified Pacaud as the real source of agitation against the Association, and scolded the former MPP for the potential harm he had inflicted on the resistance movement :

...j'ai fait avaler à l'ami Pacaud les colossales erreurs qu'il a émises contre l'Association.

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<sup>140</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, February 21, 1917.

N'allez pas croire que les Canadiens d'Essex sont contre l'Association. Ce qui manque, comme un peu partout, dans Essex et Kent, c'est la cohésion des Canadiens-français. Grand nombre sont indifférents. Grand nombre ne connaissent rien de la question ontarienne, beaucoup ont peur, et plusieurs qui ont confiance de l'avenir de leur race attendent le temps où l'on cherchera à mettre en pratique la lettre du Pape.<sup>141</sup>

Beaudoin's letter illustrated that area francophones were divided on many fronts. Some francophone professionals, in spite of their militant credentials, were frustrated with the ACFEO leadership in Ottawa. However, the priest also noted the disunity over strategy, with fear dissuading a considerable number from embracing the militants' resistance. This fear was rooted in isolation, especially in the border cities, where francophones were a minority living alongside English-speaking neighbours. The need to live in relative peace would compel many francophones to remain quiet. Nevertheless, the letter also revealed Beaudoin's inability to understand Pacaud's promotion of the diverging priorities of Windsor's francophones.

Efforts to establish new bilingual schools or to maintain French language instruction often met with subtle resistance from local Inspectors. In August 1917, Sandwich West ratepayers petitioned school officials for a new school in section 11. The arrival of a new wave of francophones from Quebec displeased Donald Maxwell, the public school Inspector. He wrote the deputy minister of Education to express his concerns,

Because of these recent arrivals and a desire by some others that their children may learn to read in French it is desired that in the second or lower division, that French may be taught one hour per day.... This will be a constant nuisance and a basis for agitation by ultra-French partisans. It is a consummation devoutly sought after, that cause or opportunity for agitation shall be reduced to a minimum. The people desire the concession stated above. It may be this concession will be the thin edge of a wedge, which may be driven far when 'the Devil handles the beetle.' I believe I can

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<sup>141</sup> Lucien Beaudoin to A. Grenon, May 12, 1917, CRCCF, C2/94/6.

handle the situation without friction, but consistency with Departmental policy must be maintained....<sup>142</sup>

Maxwell's letter clearly illustrated his utter lack of sympathy for any instruction whatsoever in the French language. Out of this spirit came a philosophy among officials that sought to promote the letter of the law with regard to French instruction.

### The Collapse of Resistance to Regulation XVII

By the autumn of 1917, inspector reports indicated that nearly all of the bilingual schools of the Windsor border region were now complying with Regulation XVII. Indeed, only Tilbury North SS.#10 under school teacher Alzire Massé near Stoney Point continued to resist the government policy through that fall. He was subsequently replaced by Denise Tisdelle, and the school finally submitted by April, 1918. It is plausible that this resistance was surreptitious, given Fr. Emery's passionate defense of bilingual schools but rather precarious position in the eyes of his enemy Bishop Fallon.<sup>143</sup>

By 1918, school officials in both Essex and Kent counties expressed their satisfaction that all of the bilingual schools were in compliance with Regulation XVII. Nowhere else in Ontario could the Hearst government claim such a success. However, an ACFEQ survey produced that same year, at a time of intense acrimony (see Chapter 4), suggested that while on the surface compliance appeared to be the order of the day, a number of the schools were maintaining a surreptitious resistance. In 1918, shortly after the Ford City Riot, the ACFEQ sponsored a detailed survey of the French Catholic

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<sup>142</sup> D. A. Maxwell to A. Colquoun, Deputy Minister of Education, August 17, 1917, Ministry of Education Files, PAO, RG2-43-35.

<sup>143</sup> English-French School Inspector's Reports, Kent, 1917-1919, PAO, microfilm, RG-102-1. The claim that the school resistance to Regulation XVII persisted in Paincourt, Kent County as late as 1919, is not supported by the English French School Inspection Reports, which actually state that all of the schools in Dover County were in compliance with the school restrictions by 1916.

parishes of Essex and Kent Counties. Their study, recorded by Saint-Pierre of Ford City in conjunction with willing local representatives from the churches offered an alternative perspective on the state of the resistance to Regulation XVII, contradicting the official report that only Tilbury North SS.#7 in Stoney Point was still in non-compliance with the school regulations.<sup>144</sup> According to the ACFEQ secret survey, 11 schools continued to resist the law. In the Amherstburg area, one local separate school, run by the bilingual Holy Names Sisters, were leading the local school inspector to believe that they were observing Regulation XVII.<sup>145</sup> All other schools in the vicinity offered no French instruction whatsoever to their francophone children, regardless of their numbers.<sup>146</sup> The correspondent complained bitterly about the indifference of the population towards French:

La plupart des enfants canadiens français ne parlent pas le français. Les parents eux-mêmes parlent anglais et laissent parler anglais dans la maison. Ce sont les parents qui demandent aux instituteurs de ne pas enseigner le français à [sic] leurs.<sup>147</sup>

When confronted by militant neighbours about abandoning the French language, some Canayens offered a less than encouraging reply: "Ils prétendent que le français doit disparaître. Les vieux gémissent et les jeunes ne veulent pas réagir."<sup>148</sup> The report, while offering some evidence of resistance, still regarded the prospects for the cultural survival of French in the Amherstburg parish as grim indeed.

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<sup>144</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, Tilbury North, December 1918, Ministry of Education Files, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-43.

<sup>145</sup> ACFEQ Survey, St. Jean Baptiste Parish, Amherstburg, 1918, CRCCE, C2/227/4.

<sup>146</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Amherstburg.

<sup>147</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Amherstburg.

<sup>148</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Amherstburg.

In the neighbouring Canayen village of River Canard, the situation held more promise. This exclusively francophone parish of 1500 could rely on a French Canadian militant pastor and five bilingual sisters of the Holy Names order. However, only one of the five schools in the area continued to resist the school edict. According to the ACFEQ report, French remained the language of communication in the Anderdon SS.#2 and 5 (a united school). This particular school was the only one where corroborating evidence could be found to suggest surreptitious resistance to the letter of the school edict in Forms I and II.<sup>149</sup> Public schools trustees justified their rationale for refusing to execute the orders of the ACFEQ to resist Regulation XVII : “de crainte de perdre des octrois.”<sup>150</sup>

The town of Sandwich offered little hope for francophone militants. Many youths did not speak their parents’ language and all three of the separate schools observed Regulation XVII, while in the public schools, “le français y est très peu enseigné.”<sup>151</sup> Saint-Pierre blamed the pastor of Assumption parish, Arthur J. Côté for the disappointing conditions in the town. “Les paroissiens ont très grande confiance en leur curé...La plupart ne croit pas à la survivance du français.”<sup>152</sup> Côté, a supporter of Bishop Fallon, concerned himself more with religious matters than those of culture or language.

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<sup>149</sup> The Holy Names Sisters of River Canard (Loiselleville) offer the only evidence that they surreptitiously “stretched” Regulation XVII’s restrictions on French instruction for first and second form until 1925. River Canard School Register, November 23, 1925, Mother Superior Marie-Antoine, OASNJM.

River Canard School Register,

<sup>150</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Loiselleville (River Canard), 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

<sup>151</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Sandwich, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

<sup>152</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Sandwich.

Windsor's two Catholic parishes appeared to suffer from the same ills. H.N. Robert argued that in general, it was the parents that spoke French and not the children. In effect, neither the three public schools of the area, nor the three separate schools offered instruction in French. At St. Alphonsus parish, assimilation had taken a toll on the population. "Un bon nombre de Canadiens français le savent mais ne le parlent pas habituellement."<sup>153</sup> The one sign of hope could be found at Sacred Heart school, where students learned one hour of French a day, according to the school regulation.

Pierre Langlois, another militant priest, offered little to rejoice about in his report to the ACFEO regarding his parish of Sainte-Anne in Tecumseh. Langlois noted that while his parish of 1800 was almost entirely of French stock, parishioners sent their children to schools that observed Regulation XVII. The ACFEO orders to resist were passed down by the pastor himself, and observed only at the beginning of the schools struggle. Since that time support for the ACFEO initiatives had vanished. Langlois did offer one ray of hope with regard to the schools however. He wrote that school trustees had lately asserted their desire to have at least an hour of French in all of their separate schools and had warned the Mother Superior of the Ursuline order of their intentions to dismiss them if their request was not honoured.<sup>154</sup>

The situation in Belle River was similar. This district had been the home of the rebellious Father Pierre L'Heureux for several years. While L'Heureux still claimed that in spite of Regulation XVII, not one of his francophone parishioners had lost their

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<sup>153</sup> ACFEO Survey, St. Alphonsus, Windsor, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

<sup>154</sup> ACFEO Survey, Tecumseh, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

French, five of the area's six schools taught little if any French. Indeed, even in the one separate school with any real French instruction, L'Heureux lamented that the St. Joseph Sisters were largely anglicized, with three of the five nuns incapable of teaching in French. As for the initiatives of the ACFEO, L'Heureux's efforts to promote the resistance program failed due to the "influence d'un paroissien qui est en faveur du Règlement XVII et l'apathie des gens."<sup>155</sup> Parishioners were also divided over whether to turn the separate schools back into public ones to save a few tax dollars.<sup>156</sup>

In Saint-Pierre parish, Tilbury township, just one of the six schools was not abiding by Regulation XVII, with English the only language of instruction in all of the other schools.<sup>157</sup> In neighbouring St. François parish in the actual town of Tilbury, Saint-Pierre exaggeratedly claimed that out of a population of 2100 residents, 2000 were francophone in flagrant contradiction to the Census reports for 1901.<sup>158</sup> Of these, St. Pierre did concede that many could no longer speak French. Two of the three separate schools resisted Regulation XVII, since all of the students were French Canadian.

Les Canadiens français de cette paroisse, sont en grand nombre apathiques. Ils voudraient bien rester français, mais il n'en prennent pas les moyens. Un bon nombre sont peureux. Ils craignent de s'y afficher. La jeune génération est bien affectée. Les jeunes gens parlent à peu près tous anglais entre eux, surtout pendant qu'ils fréquentent l'école. On me dit que ce mal disparaît un peu dans la suite, lorsque les jeunes gens reviennent en contact plus assidu avec les parents mais dans le village, ce mal se fait sentir sur une assez grande échelle.

Les Canadiens français ne peuvent arriver à prendre la direction des affaires. Soit à cause de leur apathie, soit à cause de leur manque d'organisation, ils ne peuvent réussir à élire des conseillers municipaux canadiens français. Il manque une tête. Il faut un homme de profession qui aurait de l'initiative et prendrait en main la direction des canadiens français.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>155</sup> ACFEO Survey, Belle River, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

<sup>156</sup> ACFEO Survey, Belle River.

<sup>157</sup> ACFEO Survey, St. Pierre, Tilbury Township 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4. "Un bon nombre de Canadiens français fréquentent les deux autres écoles publiques, mais on n'y enseigne jamais un mot de français."

<sup>158</sup> Canada. *Report on the Census, 1921*, v.1, Tables VII, XXVI. The census reported that less than half of the inhabitants of Tilbury were of French background.

<sup>159</sup> ACFEO Survey, St. François parish, Tilbury, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

In spite of St. Pierre's depiction of surreptitious resistance, the francophone population of Tilbury as a whole appeared to be abandoning the use of its mother tongue. The appearance of a generation gap, coupled with a lack of organization and direction kept this population from mounting any serious resistance to the school regulation.<sup>160</sup> The proliferation of newspapers, magazines, and motion pictures were all luring the youth to embrace American pop culture and reject their French and Catholic heritage.

Isolated parishes in northeastern Essex County and Kent County held out the greatest hope for cultural survival. In Saint-Joachim, a homogeneous French-speaking hamlet, the ACFEO reported that both separate schools resisted Regulation XVII. Charles Laliberté quietly passed on the orders of the ACFEO to his parishioners who dutifully observed them. "La paroisse est totalement française. On n'y parle jamais ou presque jamais l'anglais..."<sup>161</sup> In Kent County the two isolated francophone communities of Paincourt and Grande Pointe were led by pastors with a militant zeal. In Grande Pointe, Father L. Landreville and later Father Joseph Emery led an ethnically homogeneous parish where one public school and one separate school did not accept Regulation XVII, and a similar number complied with the law. Joseph Emery noted that the compliant schools submitted to the regulation since like elsewhere, "les commissaires

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<sup>160</sup> ACFEO Survey, Tilbury. St. Pierre echoes this phenomenon in a later report to SSJB officials. "...l'ambiance dans laquelle ils vivent tendant absolument à atrophier leur mentalité française et catholique, à commencer par le théâtre, le journal, la revue, anglaise ou américaine, où ils puisent quotidiennement le mépris de leur race et les idées anti-catholique, et jusqu'à l'église et l'école où en les dépouillant de leur mentalité française on leur enlève en même temps le sens catholique." Rapport sur la situation des Canadiens français des comtés d'Essex et de Kent, SSJB, to Alexandre Grenon, ACFEO Provincial secretary, January 1922, CRCCF, C2/97/12.

<sup>161</sup> ACFEO Survey, St. Joachim, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

ne veulent pas perdre l'octroi."<sup>162</sup> He emphasized that the widespread distribution of French books among most families, due largely in part to the efforts of his uncle, Alfred Emery, had made a critical difference. In the neighbouring parish, Alfred Emery's 1918 report to the ACFEQ survey, boldly declared in open contradiction to the school inspector's reports :<sup>163</sup> « Défiance des intrigues de l'inspecteur protestant dans les écoles. »<sup>164</sup> However, Alfred Emery conceded at the end of his ACFEQ report that only one of six area schools was in resistance, with the rest offering little or no French instruction at all.

As a historic source, the ACFEQ reports are problematic for there is some doubt as to their reliability. In a number of parishes, in Windsor and Sandwich in particular, an outsider, St. Pierre of Ford city authored the report. As illustrated in the case of the town of Tilbury, St. Pierre was prone to exaggerate, and therefore, it is unclear whether his assessments are accurate, or the product of wishful thinking. Nevertheless, he and the other authors, parish priests like Pierre Langlois and Alfred Emery in particular, did highlight a few commonalities that suggest that the resistance was indeed in serious trouble. First, most of the authors, with the exception of Lacharité, pastor of Saint-Joachim, indicate that the orders of the ACFEQ were either not followed, or ignored after the first or second year of the resistance, suggesting opposition or indifference to the bilingual schools issue by most francophone parishioners. Second, several of the reports complain of the persistent apathy of the parishioners to the French language cause, with

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<sup>162</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Grande Pointe, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

<sup>163</sup> English-French Inspector's Report, Paincourt, Ministry of Education Files, PAO, RG 2-43, c. 1918-1919.

<sup>164</sup> ACFEQ Survey, Paincourt, 1918, CRCCF, C2/227/4.

some in Tilbury, Sandwich and Amherstburg even considering the struggle to be lost. However, if one is to accept the ACFO reports as at least somewhat accurate with regard to the resistance, the following trend can be noted: while the clear majority of the bilingual schools did comply with Regulation XVII, or simply did not offer French instruction, eleven schools spread out through Amherstburg, River Canard, Ford City, St. Joachim, Tilbury, Tilbury Township, Paincourt, and Grande Pointe maintained a surreptitious resistance to Regulation XVII at least until 1918, while officially appearing to comply with the Regulations during the official inspections. Eight of these schools could be found in what was known as the bilingual belt of the province beginning in St. Joachim and moving eastward towards Dover Township in Kent County. These schools hosted a majority of students whose parents and grandparents had only recently migrated to Ontario from Quebec. As for the remaining three schools, one was located in Ford City, a haven for Quebec migrants and Canayen farmers and a parish that had been profoundly influenced by Lucien Beaudoin, but also home to Damien Saint-Pierre, who may have been exaggerating. Only two schools fell within the shadow of a Canayen village, River Canard, but were led by another radical French Canadian militant priest, Joseph Loiselle, and hosted the Holy Names sisters, a bilingual teaching order from Montreal that expressed little love for Bishop Fallon since he had chased it from many of the region's schools.<sup>165</sup> These women may have preferred to keep their resistance to Regulation XVII quiet. However, a letter written in 1920 suggests that in fact, this

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<sup>165</sup> The Amherstburg school was situated along the border with Fr. Loiselle's parish and run by the Holy Names sisters.

surreptitious resistance might also have been exaggerated. ACFEO official J. Edmond Cloutier wrote the mother superior of this order forwarding complaints of attempts by members of the order to anglicize the Canayen children.<sup>166</sup>

Saint-Pierre's rosy portrayal of the school resistance as outlined in his 1918 secret report to the ACFEO had changed dramatically by 1922, further calling into question the report's credibility. He wrote pessimistically in a 1922 SSJB report:

Dans les villes, et à Windsor particulièrement, il ne s'enseigne pas un mot de français, excepté un tout petit peu à l'école Sacré-Cœur à Windsor. La majorité des Commissaires d'Écoles cependant sont canadiens français, mais ne sont pas favorables à l'enseignement du français, invoquant comme prétexte le Règlement XVII. La majorité des Canadiens français de Windsor seraient capables et disposés à faire élire des commissaires favorables à l'enseignement de leur langue; mais ils ne s'organisent pas suffisamment....<sup>167</sup>

St. Pierre's final analysis of the bilingual schools of the border cities fails to suggest any resistance whatsoever to Regulation XVII. It is doubtful that this leading militant who had so enthusiastically described the opposition just four years earlier, would suddenly paint the resistance in such a pessimistic light to the militant SSJB if in fact the surreptitious resistance persisted. Indeed, in his many confidential letters to Lionel Groulx, militant cleric Alfred Emery made no further mention of the school resistance

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<sup>166</sup> J. Edmond Cloutier to the Superior General of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Montreal, March, 12, 1920. CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>167</sup> Rapport sur la situation des Canadiens français des comtés d'Essex et Kent", Joseph de Grandpré, Damien Saint-Pierre, Stanislas Janisse, A.T. Saint-Pierre, SSJB, Windsor Ford City, Essex, Kent, to Alexander Grenon, ACFEO provincial secretary, January 1922, CRCCF, C2/97/12, p. 6. In Ford City, francophones had encountered difficulties advancing the French cause in their own separate schools two years earlier. Stanislas Janisse, the Secretary of the St. Louis Separate School Board forwarded a written request to Mother Mary Mechtild of the Sacred Heart Sisters to hire two French teachers. The Mother Superior's response was hardly encouraging.

As to giving two French teachers, I cannot say at present. You know, very few French girls fit themselves for teachers, and not many from Ford and vicinity enter the convent. In order to keep up the French language in the schools, more French girls should become teachers and enter religious communities.

The English speaking religious orders imposed by Bishop Fallon proved incapable of providing the local ratepayers with instruction to their children in the mother tongue.

after 1918. The only other source examining the bilingual schools, the Inspector's Reports, declared that all of the schools were in compliance and had been for five years. There is of course, no way of knowing whether the teachers and students had learned how to fool the Inspectors. Therefore, it is safe to assert while public resistance to Regulation XVII in the bilingual schools of the Windsor border region likely ended around 1917, it is not yet known whether other schools followed a surreptitious program of resistance as exemplified with the school at River Canard.

St. Pierre's 1922 SSJB report offered a number of reasons for the failure of the resistance movement against Regulation XVII in Windsor. The francophone majority on the separate school board opted not to join the resistance movement against the school regulation. To make matters worse, the population as a whole had yet to be convinced of the benefits of a French language education in this English-speaking city. The inability of francophones to organize behind the French language cause was partly rooted in the influences of the local Catholic clergy. Many priests encouraged their francophone followers to embrace an ambivalence or distrust of militant initiatives for the sake of "preserving" Catholic schools. In addition, a growing number of francophones, like Joseph Réaume and H.N. Casgrain accepted membership in the Irish dominated Knights of Columbus, a Catholic organization that was aggressively recruiting men at the parish level. The movement's State Chaplain was none other than Bishop Fallon. Among this order's assigned duties, was the preservation and promotion of the Catholic separate school system. Many of the association's members, true disciples of Fallon, believed that any concession to the existing bilingual schools could imperil these confessional schools.

In addition, the Windsor board proved reluctant to replace the English-speaking nuns with French speaking lay teachers for fear of imposing tax increases on an unwilling population.<sup>168</sup> To compound the situation, the sheer absence of competent lay bilingual teachers could not be addressed without the establishment of a new bilingual Model School.<sup>169</sup> Bishop Fallon had closed the Sandwich Model school for teachers just a year after his arrival in 1911. Any hope that it would reopen would have to await the arrival of a new bishop. In 1922, Fallon was a robust man of just 55. The situation was grim indeed.

### Conclusion

It is evident that the francophone communities of the Windsor border region were wracked with divisions at the time of Regulation XVII. Aside from the entrenched subcultural differences between the Canayens and the French Canadians which made organizing a concerted, united resistance more difficult, divisions existed on many other planes as well. Not all French Canadians communities opposed the imposition of Regulation XVII in this predominantly English-speaking region. Furthermore, the francophone priesthood was by no means united on the issue of resisting a school edict that could allegedly put the funding of Catholic separate schools in peril, as had occurred in Ottawa. In addition, even though Windsor's Separate School Board was made up solely of francophone trustees in 1913, it failed to arrive at a consensus on whether to resist the new bilingual schools regulation. While this apparent inaction drew criticism

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<sup>168</sup> "Rapport sur la situation des Canadiens français des comtés d'Essex et Kent", Joseph de Grandpré, Damien Saint-Pierre, Stanislas Janisse, A.T. Saint-Pierre, Saint-Jean Baptiste Society, Windsor, Ford City, Essex, Kent, to Alexander Grenon, ACFEQ Provincial Secretary, January, 1922, CRCCE, C2/97/12, p. 6.

<sup>169</sup> Rapport, p. 6

from radical militants and the ACFEO in Ottawa, it is likely that the unique reality in Windsor's schools compelled some trustees to see Regulation XVII as an opportunity to secure an hour of French instruction where there was currently none at all. The provincial organization's inability to recognize this unique local perspective likely contributed to the eventual alienation of Gaspard Pacaud, a prominent local militant and member of the ACFEO executive. Indeed, several of the most prominent members of the francophone community, school inspector David Chenay, school board president Gaspard Pacaud, Joseph Réaume, H.N. Casgrain and Paul Poisson were either reluctant or opposed to resisting Regulation XVII for personal or philosophical reasons. Their refusal to enlist wholeheartedly in the resistance movement, coupled with the active opposition of several anti-nationalist francophone priests, left the movement without the assistance of several talented leaders and worked to undermine the success of the resistance. These divisions at the top would be reflected in the grass roots. The hopes and despair of this community, unfortunately, can only be expressed through the voices of the elite, given the sheer absence of primary sources.

The divisions between the Canayen and French Canadian communities do not fully explain the failure of the resistance to Regulation XVII. Indeed, most of the prominent francophones of the Windsor border region who supported the Whitney government or did little to help the resistance were in fact of French Canadian background: David Chenay, H.N. Casgrain, Gaspard Pacaud, and Paul Poisson. Chenay and Pacaud were constrained by their highly paid public offices, while Casgrain and Poisson were prominent members of the provincial Conservative party. In the case of

Chenay and Pacaud in particular, their leadership served to undermine francophone opposition by teachers and trustees alike. Their opposition worked against the leadership of such radical militants as Lucien Beaudoin, Alfred Emery, and Euclide Jacques. However, this opposition was not merely self-serving. Both Chenay and Pacaud were Windsor francophones who may very well have regarded Regulation XVII as an opportunity to secure the right to French instruction where there was none at all: in three of the four separate schools of Windsor.

Regulation XVII did not provoke a widespread francophone revolt in the bilingual schools of the Windsor border region. Even among predominantly French Canadian communities divisions existed, as witnessed by the rapid compliance of certain schools in Belle River, Tilbury, St. Joachim, and Paincourt. Priests and ACFEO officials alike recognized that the fear of losing the provincial school subsidy compelled more than one school board to submit to Regulation XVII. In the overwhelmingly French Canadian parish of Immaculate Conception in Paincourt, Alfred Emery also identified elements who were intentionally working to undermine the resistance to Regulation XVII from the very start, quite possibly for the benefit of their children in the greater English-speaking society. Indeed, despite their passionate leadership, both Beaudoin and Emery witnessed all of their schools publicly submit to Regulation XVII after some initial resistance. Both men attributed this failure to unite the francophones in opposition in part to a general atmosphere of apathy among their parishioners, and the presence of vocal elements supporting submission to the school edict. Lastly, a number of observers recognized a generational divide between that militant section of the population, which tended to be

largely over the age of forty, and a much younger population, that seemed enamored with American pop culture, and proved apathetic or indifferent to the cause of the French language. It was this combination of factors dividing the francophone population, rather than any single cause that helps to explain why the bilingual schools of the Windsor border region submitted to the terms of Regulation XVII, while the resistance prevailed elsewhere.

## Chapter Three: Bishop Fallon and the Bilingual Schools Question

### Catholic Precursors to Bishop Fallon

As the modernizing forces of industrialization, urbanization, liberalism and national integration swept many western states including Italy, the Catholic Church was forced to confront dramatic change. Led by Pope Pius IX, some Roman Catholics rejected modernism and retreated into a reactionary ideology. Pius's successor, Leo XIII opted for a more open policy. In his encyclical on the Church and the industrial state, *Rerum Novarum*, Leo attempted to come to terms with modernizing states and societies and combat the emerging philosophy of socialism as a means of ensuring the survival and relevance of the Catholic Church in a changing world where such leading states as France and the United States openly promoted secularization and cultural homogeneity. This church policy would find fertile soil in North America, especially in those areas outside of Quebec where francophones constituted a considerable minority. Indeed, according to Roberto Perin, one of the Vatican's Apostolic Delegates to the United States, Archbishop Francesco Sartoli, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in reference to the Franco-Americans of Hartford Connecticut, asserted, "It is ridiculous...to affirm that if they do not maintain their native language exclusively in the home and at church they risk losing their faith, as if the latter were tied to one or other language for every nation..."<sup>1</sup>

The push to integrate the francophone population of North America triggered a number of spirited confrontations between the Catholic hierarchy and the Franco-

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<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Sartoli, as quoted in Roberto Perin, *Rome in Canada: the Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 226.

American congregations in New England. In 1884, Bishop Thomas Hendricken of Providence infuriated the congregation of Notre Dame in Fall River when he appointed an Irish priest as pastor to replace a French Canadian. Eventually he would be compelled by the Vatican to cede to the wishes of the parishioners for a French Canadian pastor. In 1898, in North Brookfield, Massachusetts, Bishop Thomas Beaven turned down the Franco-American parishioners' requests for a French Canadian pastor and a new parish of their own. Church courts in Rome rejected an appeal by the congregation. After some parishioners persisted in their refusal to return to the Irish parish and set up a rival parish with a disobedient Belgian priest, they were excommunicated in September, 1900.<sup>2</sup>

Franco-Americans were not the only immigrants to confront these integrationist bishops. German layman Pierre Paul Cahensly spoke on behalf of the German Catholics of the northeastern United States after the Civil War when he advocated the creation of ethnic parishes. Cahensly suggested that most Catholic immigrants would likely abandon the faith over assimilationist policies.<sup>3</sup> The outspoken member of the Prussian legislature argued further that the appointment of ethnic national bishops for each cultural group in the United States, coupled with ethnic parishes, would go a long way to ensuring the survival of the Church in the new world. Cahensly's proposal would fail to sway the Holy See. To the contrary, the initiative of some 19<sup>th</sup> century Catholic bishops to integrate their polyglot congregations into larger English-speaking fellowship would extend beyond the American states with the blessing of the Vatican.

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<sup>2</sup> Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1790-1930*, (Sillery: Les Editions Septentrion, 1990), p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> Roby, p. 182.

Michael Fallon was not the first Ontario bishop to advocate Catholic integration into the larger English-speaking society as a means of ensuring the Church's survival. Archbishop John Joseph Lynch of Toronto was the first prelate to suggest the incorporation of all non-anglophone Catholics into the mainstream of Ontario society. An Irishman convinced of the need for all ethnic Catholics to follow the example of his countrymen in blending into the dominant Anglophone culture, he was a vocal opponent of the French Canadian ultramontane precept of intertwining the French language with the Roman faith. Indeed, aside from criticizing the retrograde, narrow-mindedness of Quebec's clergy, "he accused them of antagonizing politicians and thereby endangering the rights and privileges of the Catholic church in Canada."<sup>4</sup> A later archbishop of Toronto, John Walsh, also warned his Catholic followers not to take their rights to separate schools for granted in Ontario since "the Protestants tolerate us while seeking to take away our rights."<sup>5</sup> This fear of a potential Protestant nativist backlash against minority Catholic separate school rights motivated more than one bishop to speak out against French Canadian militants advocating bilingual school rights, given the disastrous example of the Manitoba schools crisis.<sup>6</sup> In that province, Catholic separate schools had been abolished by the provincial government and replaced with a single English public school system for all. Efforts to redress the Franco-Manitoban grievance that their constitutional right to separate schools had been violated failed before the courts.

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<sup>4</sup> Perin, p.21.

<sup>5</sup> Perin, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Perin, p. 34.

The Vatican's appointment of an Apostolic Delegate to Canada aimed to improve the strained relations between the federal government and the Quebec Church hierarchy following the Manitoba issue. The decision underscored the Holy See's growing concern with militant francophone prelates. Apostolic Delegate Merry Del Val's conviction at the turn of the century that the church should convert North America to Catholicism precluded any overt sympathy for the ethnic proclivities of francophone minorities in an English-speaking world.<sup>7</sup> Hence, the church could not countenance the ideology of the French language as guardian of the faith.<sup>8</sup> In 1890, when Archbishop Bégin complained bitterly to the Holy See that the Manitoba school legislation of 1890 was an example of Canada's Protestants trying to homogenize the country, his comments fell on deaf ears, as the Vatican called Quebec's church hierarchy to heel when it attempted to exert their weight on the issue. Merry Del Val asserted that Manitoba's Catholic separate school rights rested on the goodwill of the Protestant majority, and counseled against a crusade for federal disallowance, arguing that such an initiative would provoke a backlash by Canada's Protestants that could have devastating consequences. Quiet negotiation would by necessity, have to replace the political maneuvering by some Catholic prelates to save minority education rights. "What Rome wanted above all was that ethnic or religious questions not divide the local church and that as much possible they not trouble

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<sup>7</sup> According to historian John Zucchi, Apostolic Delegates Rafael Merry del Val, Donato Sbaretti, and Pellegrino Stagni all advocated cultural integration into the Anglophone majority as a policy for ethnic Catholics in Canada outside of Quebec. For more information on the sympathies of the Apostolic Delegates towards the English language as a tool of evangelization, see John Zucchi, *The View From Rome: Archbishop Stagni's 1915 Report on the Ontario Bilingual Schools Question*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2002), pp.xv-xx

<sup>8</sup> Perin, p. 94.

relations with civil authorities.”<sup>9</sup> In contrast, much of the French Canadian clergy in the United States and English Canada viewed their struggle in the context “of a wider continental campaign for the preservation of cultural diversity from the forces of Anglo-Protestant homogenization.”<sup>10</sup> This viewpoint underscored the necessity of preserving the French language. This clash of two conflicting agendas within the North American Catholic Church pitted the homogenizing integrationism of Irish prelates and their Vatican superiors against a vocal and militant francophone elite committed to cultural and linguistic survival. These two forces would eventually clash in the Windsor border region and the larger Catholic church, with French- and Irish Canadian bishops taking opposite sides. These tensions eventually erupted into a conflict over the appointment of a successor to Archbishop Joseph Thomas Duhamel of Ottawa in 1910.<sup>11</sup> The end result would be the outbreak of hostilities on a wider scale. Fallon represented a powerful movement within the Church that sought to embrace and evangelize a modern, secular homogenizing world. Whatever was seen to divide Catholics would have to be suppressed by the Church, which was having a difficult enough time adjusting to modernization.

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<sup>9</sup> Perin, 223.

<sup>10</sup> Perin, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Choquette ably describes the struggle between Ontario and Quebec bishops in the election of a new bishop for Ottawa. At the heart of this power struggle was the effort to appoint an Irishman or a French Canadian as the new ordinary. Archbishop Charles Hugh Gauthier was an Anglophone with a French name. Robert Choquette, *Language and Religion: A History of English-French Conflict in Ontario*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1975), pp.110-116.

## Bishop Fallon

It was within this historic context that the Holy See appointed Michael Francis Fallon as Bishop of London in 1909. Fallon's firm conviction in the inherent dangers of French Canadian nationalism would set the stage for a controversial tenure in the Diocese of London. According to Pasquale Fiorino, Fallon's appointment as bishop related largely to his initiative in evangelizing Protestants across English Canada and the United States through a series of speaking tours and retreats. For Canada's Apostolic Delegate Donato Sbarretti, Fallon fit the bill as a man who could realize the lofty dream of leading North America back to the true faith.<sup>12</sup> Like Lucien Beaudoin, Fallon was a passionate defender of Catholic education. However, his concern over the survival of separate school funding in Ontario compelled him to call for the abolition of bilingual schools on the grounds that they provided an inferior education. In the process, he played a pivotal role in pressuring the provincial government into introducing new restrictions governing French language instruction. Although he spoke French fluently, the Bishop would become the enemy of francophone militants everywhere.

Fallon was born on May 13, 1867 in Kingston, Canada West, the son of Irish immigrants.<sup>13</sup> A lifelong sufferer of diabetes, he persevered and went on to the University of Ottawa, where he became an active member of the rugby, drama and debating teams, while taking an avid interest in journalism. Upon graduation, Fallon furthered his theology studies in the Netherlands, and later Rome, where he was ordained

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<sup>12</sup> Pasquale Fiorino, "Bishop Michael Francis Fallon: The Man and His Times, 1910-1931", (Ph.D. thesis, Gregorian Pontifical University, Rome), p. 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> John K.A. Farrell, "Bishop Michael Francis Fallon, Bishop of London, Ontario Canada: The Man and His Controversies", *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Study Sessions*, 35 (1968), p. 74.

an Oblate priest in 1894. That same year, he earned a doctorate in Divinity at the Gregorian College of Rome.<sup>14</sup>

Upon his ordination, Fallon returned to Ottawa to teach English literature at his alma mater. In 1896, he was named the Vice Rector of the University. The school had been the scene of an Irish-French Canadian power struggle within the administration for years. By 1898, this rising star served as an English professor, rugby team coach, and pastor of St. Joseph's church, the city's largest English Catholic parish. However, Fallon's promising career suffered a crippling setback when, in early 1898, H. A. Constantineau replaced J.M. McGuckin as Rector of the University of Ottawa, and reintroduced a bilingual education program. Shortly thereafter, Fallon, an opponent of this new policy, lost his position as Vice Rector. Just three years later, in June 1901, Charles Tatin, the superior of the Oblate Order, transferred the ambitious young priest to a parish in Buffalo, New York. According to Fallon, this appointment was not a promotion as some French Canadians suggested, but rather part of a sophisticated plot to silence his vocal opposition to bilingual education.

My removal in 1898 as Vice Rector of Ottawa University, and my subsequent removal in 1901 as pastor of St. Joseph's Church was the result of a deliberate conspiracy... Reverend Tatin told me himself in Buffalo in 1904 that it was the same hostile influence which prevented me from being named rector of Ottawa University...<sup>15</sup>

A group of twenty-four Irishmen petitioned Ottawa's Archbishop Joseph Thomas

Duhamel, criticizing the University's discrimination against anglophone Catholics.

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<sup>14</sup> John K.A. Farrell, "Michael Francis Fallon", (Master's Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1964), p. 75.

<sup>15</sup> Bishop M.F. Fallon to Darcy Scott, in the *Ottawa Free Press*, March 20, 1916; also quoted in Choquette, *Language and Religion*, p. 15. For a more complete history of Fallon's battles with the francophone Oblate hierarchy at the University of Ottawa, consult Roger Guindon, *Coexistence menacée: La dualité linguistique à l'Université d'Ottawa*, (Ottawa: Les presses de l'université d'Ottawa, v. 1, 1989; v.2, 1992).

Lamenting the shortage of professors who spoke English as their mother tongue, these disgruntled followers protested Fallon's transfer. Two of the protestors pledged to make an annual donation of five thousand dollars if Fallon were reinstated and appointed rector. The Archbishop dismissed the accusations and refused to entertain the requests of the petitioners.<sup>16</sup> He blamed Fallon for the agitation of the parishioners of St. Joseph's, since he failed to discourage their campaign protesting his transfer.<sup>17</sup> Fallon likely harboured a grudge towards francophone militants thereafter.

Fallon's appointment as bishop of the diocese of London exacerbated the latent tensions between the province's Church hierarchy and French-speaking Catholics. Long renowned as a vocal opponent of bilingual schools, he was selected, ironically, on account of his bilingualism for a diocese where fully half of the Catholics were of French descent.<sup>18</sup> As Fallon settled his affairs in Buffalo and prepared to assume his new position, events in Ottawa added to the acrimony. The gathering of the first Congress of the Association Canadienne-Française d'Éducation de l'Ontario in Ottawa in January 1910 had reignited the long smouldering debate over bilingual schools. The Association's calls for recognition of francophone rights to bilingual schools, and the extension of such schools to the secondary level were too radical for their outspoken opponent. Both Bishop Fallon and the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, Pellegrino Stagni

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<sup>16</sup> Choquette, *Language and Religion*, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> Archbishop J. Thomas Duhamel to Cardinal Ledochowski, 1903, 5pp., CRCCF, University of Ottawa, Fonds Gustave Lacasse, P37/8/2. Duhamel wrote, "Le Réverend Père aurait pu empêcher le mouvement si peu catholique de ses paroissiens; il n'avait pour cela qu'un mot à dire... Il ne l'a pas dit."

<sup>18</sup> The rival candidates for the Bishop of London's mitre were all unilingual Anglophones, thus propelling Fallon into this prestigious post.

believed that the ACFEQ had been the instigator of the ensuing trouble over provincial schools and funding.<sup>19</sup>

### The Hanna-Pyne Letter

On May 22, 1910, just one month after his consecration as bishop, Fallon waded into the bilingual schools controversy while on a visit to Sarnia to see William Hanna, the secretary to the provincial minister of Public Instruction, Dr. R. A. Pyne. In a letter to his superior, Hanna outlined the nature of his conversation with the bishop.

Bishop Fallon said he would like to see me personally on a matter of great concern to this section of the province. This arranged, he proceeded at once to review the whole question of bilingual teaching in the schools.

...the question was one of great practical importance, in fact, he regarded it as dominating all questions so far as the welfare of the people of his diocese was concerned. He has not come to his conclusion suddenly, but he determined so far as in him lay to wipe out every vestige of bilingual teachings in the public schools of this Diocese.

...he was assured that in certain sections of the [Essex] County, there were children going in the public schools who could not speak English and this after three generations of their forefathers in that County...we are an English speaking province on an English speaking continent, where the boys and girls going out to fight the battle of life must be equipped first with English...if on top of that they are able to learn French or Italian or Pole (sic), or any other language, all well and good, but the grounding in English was absolutely essential.<sup>20</sup>

Fallon's views, expressed in private with Hanna, were to be reiterated again and again in public throughout the bishop's twenty-two year episcopal reign. The bishop's advocacy of the cultural integration of francophone children into the greater English-speaking society was part of a larger vision of the common good for the Catholic Church. In effect, to survive, the Church and its separate schools had to be active players in a secularizing, urbanizing and industrial society where the homogenizing forces of modernization were already breaking down cultural and linguistic barriers. Hence, rather than turning its back on the modern, secular state as Pius IX had suggested, the Church

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<sup>19</sup> *The View from Rome: Archbishop's Stagni's 1915 Reports on the Ontario Bilingual Schools Question*, ed. by John Zucchi, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. xliii.

<sup>20</sup> W.J. Hanna to Dr. R.A. Pyne, Minister of Education, 5pp. May 23, 1910, CRCCF, P37/8/3.

would embrace this emerging society as a means to ensure its continued relevance and survival, as prescribed by Leo XIII. Fallon clearly imparted this view to William Hanna.

The publication of the Hanna-Pyne letter in the press infuriated francophone militants throughout the province. Fallon and government officials blamed Canayen Henri "Harry" Maisonville of Walkerville, the private secretary of Public Works Minister Joseph O. Réaume, for leaking the document to reporters upon the advice of his old pastor, Lucien Beaudoin. Hanna's letter emphasized Fallon's hostility towards French Canadian nationalism.

I mentioned to him (the Bishop) that, as I understand it in these localities where the French were numerous and spoke the French language, it was thought desirable that the teacher in such a public school would be better able to lead the children from the French to the English language. His reply was that this was a fallacy, that if true theoretically, that this was never honestly carried out, that the argument or the necessity of the French teacher in French localities was the argument of the clerical agitator or the political agitator, and shaking his big arm and fist at me, he said, 'the clerical agitator I pledge myself to take care of, but the political agitator I have no control over...'<sup>21</sup>

Fallon's pledge would be prophetic. The bishop aimed to enforce this new Church position on cultural integration. As time would illustrate, Fallon would indeed crush those clerical agitators who opposed his education policy and the subsequent provincial regulation on bilingual schools with a heavy hand.

Hanna's letter also reflected the fact that Fallon honestly believed that he was working in the best interests of the local francophone community. The bishop was convinced he recognized the concerns of mainstream francophones in the Windsor border region. He asserted that in fact the French teacher had been forced on to these sections « in spite of the wishes of the parents and against the interests of the pupils. »<sup>22</sup> Fallon's

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<sup>21</sup> Hanna to Pyne, May 23, 1910, CRCCF, P37/8/3.

<sup>22</sup> Hanna to Pyne, May 23, 1910.

perception of the situation was not without merit, for indeed, as noted in previous chapters, Inspectors' reports from the area did suggest that some francophone parents did not see the value of a French language education in a region that was becoming progressively more English. What remains unclear is whether Fallon was actually speaking for the "mainstream" opinion. Whatever the case may be, the bishop certainly believed that the cultural integration of the French speaking population into the anglophone majority would serve their greater well-being. He left a lasting impression on the provincial secretary, including a veiled threat if the status quo were upheld :  
"...there is no doubt about it, he is a wonderfully strong character and is very much in earnest on this question as I could not but be impressed with the idea that on what may happen in this connection will turn his whole support or opposition throughout the diocese."<sup>23</sup>

In June, 1910, Fallon summoned his priests to an ecclesiastical retreat at Assumption Chapel in Sandwich, Ontario, just west of Windsor. According to Beaudoin, he delivered a forceful speech here on July 14.

First, I warn you to have nothing to do with the newspapers. I have suffered a great deal recently, following the appearance of articles in the newspapers of Detroit and Windsor. I will set the tone in this diocese and not the reporters, nor the laymen, nor the priests, nor even the bishops. I alone will run this diocese.

I am opposed to bilingual schools because they cannot give an appropriate education to our needs. There is a conspiracy against the Separate Schools....our enemies seeing the division that exists over the bilingual schools will use it to weaken our cause and take away our schools.<sup>24</sup>

Fallon elaborated on his opposition to the bilingual schools in a press conference at Goderich, Ontario, declaring these institutions to be « pedagogically unsound, resulting in

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<sup>23</sup> Hanna to Pyne, May 23, 1910.

<sup>24</sup> Resumé of instruction delivered by Mgr. Fallon during a retreat of the clergy, as recorded by Rev. L.A. Beaudoin, and published by ACCEO, 3pp., CRCCF, C2/93/1, July, 1910.

inadequate training in both languages...encouraging incompetency, giving a prize to hypocrisy, and breeding ignorance. »<sup>25</sup> The bishop deplored the fact that the desperate lack of qualified teachers in the English-French schools had persisted for decades, denying many children an adequate education in either English or French. These weaknesses provided ammunition for opponents of the separate school system as a whole.

Problems also plagued the English schools of the region. In fact, the shortage of certified teachers was a widespread problem in the separate schools of Essex and Kent counties. According to Fallon's personal secretary, J. Mahoney, the bishop deplored all cases where children were deprived of a good education.

Fallon's attack on these schools was not confined only to the French. The Sacred Heart nuns had a system of education of their own, by which they prepared young ladies to make a good marriage. Fallon told them to change their system of education. The nuns refused to follow his order. Fallon brought a group of religious to London, the Ursulines from Chatham, to teach. He was following the same principle that the English nuns were not properly preparing the English girls with the proper education needed at that time. This was a similar situation with the bilingual issue in Essex County.<sup>26</sup>

Fallon dealt firmly with both English and French Canadian nuns who opposed his agenda to reform educational standards.

Fallon's determination to raise standards, however, challenged some long-accepted beliefs among francophone militants, including some members of the French Canadian clergy. The bishop denied the assertion that the French language could serve as a pillar of the faith.

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<sup>25</sup> *Catholic Record*, October 22, 1910; *Toronto Globe*, October 17, 1910.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Monsignor J. Mahoney, in Marcel Dagenais, "Bilingual Education in Ontario: Issues and Perspectives Influencing Development," (Ph.D. Thesis, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1988), p. 207.

I do not admit the principle that to lose one's language is to lose one's faith. Look at the Germans, they kept their language but lost their faith. The Irish lost their language, but thank goodness, they kept their faith. Teach your children one language only, be it English or French.<sup>27</sup>

Fallon clearly intimated that the adoption of the English language was not, contrary to the claims of ultramontane French Canadian clerics, a disaster for the faith, but rather a positive good. Although this proposal may have seemed sensible to English-speaking Ontarians, it clearly offended many francophones. For them, English was a necessity in the rapidly urbanizing industrial society of the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, they felt a longing to preserve the language of their parents and grandparents. For Fallon, the ultramontane credo of the French language as the guardian of the faith was simply outdated. The necessity of English, and the ability of Catholics to preserve their faith in a modern society superseded narrow cultural concerns that divided a faith community at a time when unity would be required to survive. The francophone priests of the London diocese were divided over his controversial stance. As mentioned in Chapter 1, of twenty-five francophone priests, Fallon identified at least eight who clearly disagreed with his position, whereas the other 17 had not given him cause for concern. Seven of the eight Canayen priests, eight of the sixteen French Canadian priests, and the two French priests rallied loyally to their bishop. In the case of the Canayen priests and some of the French Canadian priests, it is likely that their lifetime residency in this English-speaking region convinced them that the English language was a vital necessity to their congregation's financial security. Indeed, for their congregations, issues of faith and economic stability stood above the question of the French language in the bilingual schools. As for the eight priests who opposed Fallon, fully seven of the eight were

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<sup>27</sup> Resumé of instructions..., L.A. Beaudoin, July, 1910.

French Canadian priests who had lived and been educated in the province of Quebec. Their leaders in the upcoming confrontation, Lucien Beaudoin and Alfred Emery, filled their letters with dialogue reminiscent of the prevailing perception in that province that the French language and faith were inseparable. Naturally, for these priests, the bilingual schools question was of the utmost importance.

Fallon's crusade against the bilingual schools began in 1910 with a calculated attack on the French language colleges of Montreal for promoting nationalist indoctrination. Throughout his 21 years as bishop, Fallon refused to permit many Quebec-educated seminarians and priests from serving in the diocese.<sup>28</sup> Fearing the effects that these schools were purportedly having on his French Canadian clergy, he ordered all future aspirants to the priesthood to attend his diocesan schools, such as Sandwich College. This English language classical college, established in 1858, had been operated by the Basilian priests to serve young men who wished to enter the Catholic priesthood and serve in the area<sup>29</sup>. This stance coupled with his new insistence on attendance at the English language institution in Sandwich, fuelled suspicions that he was anti-French. In fact, his agenda was to eliminate further French Canadian militant reinforcements to his francophone clergy. Fallon concluded his 1910 retreat at Sandwich with a warning of the dire consequences for those bilingual school militants who opted for disobedience. He declared,

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<sup>28</sup>Beaudoin to Charlebois, Sept. 26., 1910. Fallon instructed his priests as follows, "Sandwich college is my diocesan college...I ask you to support this college by sending your children there; I will choose with preference for the priesthood those subjects from that institution."

<sup>29</sup>L.A. Beaudoin, resumé to Reverend Charles Charlebois, Sept. 26, 1910, CRCCF, C2/93/6. For more information on Sandwich College, consult Michael Power's three volume history on the school.

There are my principles....You are free to accept them in theory, but you must observe them in practice, whether they please you or not. My motto is *Justitia et Pax*. There is not a man on earth who desires peace more than I, and to obtain it, one must be armed for war, and if there's war, I will be the conqueror.<sup>30</sup>

Fallon's opposition to bilingual schools was more than a mere act of simple cultural chauvinism; it was rooted in a deep-seated fear. At work, the bishop believed, was a secret movement to sweep away Catholic rights in the province of Ontario. He outlined his thoughts in a letter to the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, Pellegrino Stagni, reiterating the concerns of previous Ontario prelates.

The Catholics of Ontario received their schools from the good nature of their Protestant neighbours, and even though we have the right to Catholic schools in virtue of the constitution, everyone knows that the Parliament of Ontario could, without infringing in the least on our constitutional rights, put us in the impossibility of maintaining our schools.<sup>31</sup>

The bishop argued that the provincial government could simply cap funding for separate schools indefinitely to starve the system of the funds necessary to run first class institutions. The sheer existence of "second-rate" bilingual schools, which stigmatized the whole separate system and divided the Catholic population into English- and French-speakers, jeopardized the limited state funding by providing opponents with legitimate criticisms. The recent example of Manitoba, where confessional schools were replaced by a single non-denominational English system clearly signaled the potential danger.

Fallon was not alone in his opposition to the bilingual schools. On August 15, 1910, the anglophone bishops of Ontario assembled to discuss the bilingual schools question. Archbishops Charles Hugh Gauthier of Ottawa<sup>32</sup> and John McEvay of Toronto, Fallon and the other bishops came to the general consensus that the "substandard"

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<sup>30</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, Sept. 26, 1910.

<sup>31</sup> Mgr. Fallon to Pellegrino Stagni, Apostolic Delegate to Canada, May 13, 1913, 6pp., CRCCF, P37/8/6

<sup>32</sup> Charles Hugh Gauthier, in spite of his French name, was in fact, an Anglophone of mixed French-Scottish parentage.

bilingual schools would serve as a pretext for abolishing the entire confessional system of schools, as Manitoba had done twenty years earlier. This concern, coupled with the fear of a backlash in anglophone Ontario to the demands of the French Canadian congress in Ottawa in January 1910 led the bishops to adopt a unanimous resolution delegating Fallon to meet with Premier Whitney to impart the express opposition of the bishops to these demands.<sup>33</sup> Fallon himself later reiterated the fact that the other bishops had supported his initiative.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Apostolic Delegate Pellegrino Stagni in his report to Vatican officials in a 1915 document argued that Fallon's assessment of the bilingual schools question, even if somewhat provocative, did deserve serious consideration, since his intention was ultimately to preserve the Catholic separate school system.<sup>35</sup> He deplored the fact that the Congress delegates "lacked moderation" in their demands:

the French Canadians of Ontario were not content with the exercise of rights and advantages that they enjoyed. The fact is that they were not content with that. The Congress made claims for official recognition on the part of the government of English-French bilingual schools; for the expansion of the system; for the creation of *secondary* bilingual schools, as well as bilingual normal schools for the formation of bilingual teachers.<sup>36</sup>

Stagni argued that the Congress's demands exceeded any demands made by the advocates of the existing separate school system, thus placing the separate schools in

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<sup>33</sup> M.F. Fallon to P.F. Stagni, Apostolic Delegate in Ottawa, May 1913, CRCCF, P37/8/6.

<sup>34</sup> M.F. Fallon, "Memorandum", 24 January, 1917, CRCCF, 1p., P37/8/10. Fallon declared in his defense, "I wish to make clear the fact that, in my attitude concerning the bilingual schools, I was only the representative and the delegate of the bishops of Ontario. When in the month of October 1910, these things became public, I bore the weight of the mystifications and abuse, without revealing the fact that my colleagues were in union with me on this affair. The Most Rev. C.H. Gauthier then Archbishop of Kingston, called a meeting of the Bishops of the ecclesiastical provinces of Kingston and Toronto at Kingston, August 15, 1910. His Grace, who presided over the meeting introduced the question of the danger that threatened our schools. The matter was thoroughly discussed and the following resolution adopted."

<sup>35</sup> *The View from Rome*, p. xliv.

<sup>36</sup> Stagni to Cardinal Giovanni de Lai, Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, November 19, 1915, translated text, in *The View from Rome*, p. 13.

general at risk by irritating the Protestant fanatics.<sup>37</sup> When news eventually became public that Fallon had the support of his brother bishops, many francophones expressed their dismay with the Catholic hierarchy in general. Stagni's support for Fallon's position did not become public knowledge.

Fallon presented the bishops' resolutions to Premier Whitney on August 16, 1910.<sup>38</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, this action prompted the Whitney government to launch a provincial inquiry, led by Dr. F.W. Merchant, to determine the actual gravity of the situation in the bilingual schools. The public anticipated new provincial restrictions on French instruction in the schools. While the bishops quietly supported Fallon's initial public stance on the schools question, over time their silence gave the clear impression that he was the sole instigator of the crusade and that they indeed were reluctant to embrace his increasingly brazen public opposition.

News of Fallon's opposition to the bilingual schools in the press took on a far more painful meaning for the francophones of the Windsor border region. Rumours abounded that the bishop had ordered the eradication of all French instruction in the separate schools. Such fears appeared to be confirmed in April 1910 when Mother Superior Vincent of the St. Joseph's Sisters in Walkerville revealed to Beaudoin that Fallon had indeed ordered an end to all French instruction

D'après l'ordre de Mgr M.F. Fallon il leur est expressément défendu d'enseigner un seul mot de français dans les écoles françaises de Walkerville et de Belle Rivière. C'est maintenant à l'Association d'Ottawa de nous aider à sortir de cette impasse. Je n'ai de sauf que deux écoles,

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<sup>37</sup> Stagni to de Lai, November 19, 1915, in *the View from Rome*, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> Fallon to Stagni, May, 1913.

une séparée, et une autre publique où l'enseignement du français sera de première classe d'après la loi d'Ontario.<sup>39</sup>

The Mother Superior reiterated her remarks to the separate school trustees at the beginning of September, 1910.<sup>40</sup> Coincidentally, the Ursuline Mother Superior of Belle River offered similar news to Pierre L'Heureux and the separate school trustees.<sup>41</sup>

The situation in the city of Windsor was no more promising. In the spring of 1910, Fallon cancelled a teaching contract with the Holy Names Sisters at St. Alphonsus school. He also ordered the closure of the new Sandwich normal school they had operated since 1909 to train bilingual teachers. The bishop argued that the nuns were not running a teacher's college but rather a Victorian finishing school for girls. He replaced them with the Ursuline sisters of Chatham, an English-speaking order, under the pretext that the Holy Names Sisters looked to their mother house in Montreal, which was outside of his jurisdiction. The move infuriated several French Canadian priests, most especially J. Edmond Meunier, pastor of St. Alphonsus church in Windsor, who had invited the nuns to sign a contract with them when he served as administrator, or acting bishop of the diocese in 1908.<sup>42</sup> Windsor's school trustees, half-Irish and half-French, initially refused to accept the bishop's decision, whereupon Fallon forbade the Montreal-based order from teaching in any of the city's schools. In September, 1910, the Ursuline sisters arrived at St. Alphonsus school, and eliminated French instruction from the curriculum. Two other

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<sup>39</sup> Beaudoin to Judge Constantineau, April 30, 1910, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

<sup>40</sup> Sworn testimony of Sandwich East School Syndics, Alex Saint-Louis, Marc Bontront et al., 2 September, 1910; also sworn testimony of Walkerville School Syndics, Oscar Duquette, Ferdinand Desmarais et al., Walkerville Ontario, 20 September, 1910, 1p; See also *La Patrie*, le 29 septembre, 1910.

<sup>41</sup> Adéland Gauthier, Belle River School Syndic to "Cher Monsieur", ACFO, 8 octobre, CRCCF C2/93/6.

<sup>42</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, July 5, 1911.

Windsor schools, St. Edward's and Immaculate Conception, dropped French instruction as well.<sup>43</sup>

This school controversy soon worked its way to the press, with Quebec newspapers hurling accusations at Fallon without delay. Citing a school board member from Our Lady of the Lake parish, Walkerville, *La Patrie*, of Montreal wrote of the Bishop's alleged orders to ban French instruction altogether.

Je crains que Mgr. Fallon ne puisse se disculper de l'accusation qui pèse sur lui d'avoir défendu l'usage du français dans les écoles de son diocèse. L'édit de l'Evêque a créé du trouble dans toutes les écoles séparées du Comté d'Essex.<sup>44</sup>

Fallon would later accuse Beaudoin of being the author of the series of press leaks accusing him of being hostile to French instruction in his Catholic schools. The Bishop declared,

I have never issued, nor caused to be issued, directly or indirectly, verbally, by writing, or in any other way, any order or mandate or even expression of opinion concerning the teaching of French or of any other language in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario.<sup>45</sup>

These statements openly challenged the comments made by the Mothers Superior of the Saint Joseph and Ursuline Sisters. Fallon's publicly declared opposition to bilingual schools made this refutation seem suspect.<sup>46</sup> The bishop would later argue that he directed his nuns to teach in accordance with Regulation 12, enacted in 1890 by the Mowat government, explaining

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<sup>43</sup> Beaudoin to Belcourt, Nov. 8, 1910. . « À Windsor, ... l'on continue à ne pas enseigner le français dans l'école St Alphonse, St Edouard et Immaculée Conception. »

<sup>44</sup> *La Patrie*, le 29 septembre, 1910.

<sup>45</sup> ACFEO report on Bilingual Schools, 6pp., CRCCF, P37/8/3.

<sup>46</sup> ACFEO Report, CRCCF, P37/8/3. Beaudoin added that while on the diocesan retreat on July 14, 1910, Bishop Fallon made the following statement: "I am opposed to bilingual schools because they cannot give an education appropriate to our requirements."

...though under no constitutional obligation to do so, the Province of Ontario makes generous provision for the teaching of French. Where the French language prevails, schools may be established with the privilege of teaching under what is known as Regulation 12.<sup>47</sup> For Fallon, since the French language did not prevail in Windsor, it was not unreasonable to expect such instruction to disappear from the schools, *in accordance with the provincial education laws*. Beaudoin lost no time in organizing resistance to the new English-only curriculum in many area schools. However he admitted that his efforts to change things met with frustration even in his own parish schools at the end of the first month of this new policy, « Rien n'a changé à Walkerville. Pas de français. »<sup>48</sup>

Beaudoin's efforts to resist the Bishop's education agenda required the spirited support of francophone militants. No organization in Essex or Kent County did more to inspire pride in French heritage than the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society. An institution in the area since 1883, the SSJB began to speak out against the enemies of the bilingual schools two full years before the first provincial measures were enacted restricting instruction in the mother tongue.<sup>49</sup> The call for a county-wide assembly of the SSJB at Tecumseh on September 25, 1910 aimed to show a united front against the bishop. The expected storm did not materialize as their assembly attracted a mere six or seven hundred protestors.<sup>50</sup> To make matters worse, militants disagreed over a motion to petition Church authorities in Rome for redress regarding French instruction, and a second motion accusing the bishop of extremism and injustice towards the francophone

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<sup>47</sup> "La Question des Langues dans l'Ontario", Mémoire de Monseigneur Fallon, Bishop of London, at the Episcopal Meeting of Ottawa, January 24, 1917, CRLG, P56/D, 12, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Beaudoin to Cloutier, September 29, 1910.

<sup>49</sup> *Congrès d'éducation des Canadiens français d'Ontario*, Rapport officiel, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 26, 1910.

communities. Both resolutions failed to gain unanimous support. Two prominent members of the society expressed their opposition.

Le Père Pierre Langlois [pastor of Tecumseh] et Gaspard Pacaud de Windsor, réunis en comité avec les représentants de l'Association Saint-Jean Baptiste y furent opposés. Ils considèrent que Mgr. Fallon ayant lancé sur les journaux une lettre où il se déclara innocent...il fallait mieux attendre. Tout de même, l'assemblée de Tecumseh a fait un bien injure à la cause canadienne.<sup>51</sup>

The two opponents of the petition clearly saw the pitfalls in such a public breach with the Bishop so soon after his arrival in the diocese. First, Langlois expressed concern that Fallon would see this protest on his church grounds as a sign of the Canayen pastor's approval of this public insubordination to the bishop. For Pacaud, his Catholic faith, a lucrative provincial appointment and his political ambitions provided motive enough for restraint. Any overtly militant action on his part would clearly compromise him in the eyes of the non-francophone electorate and hurt his chances of a political comeback. The calls of these two influential men for moderation successfully blocked any meaningful resolution against the bishop. Fallon dismissed this meeting as insignificant and refused to back away from his education agenda, insisting that most francophones were in fact in support of his initiative.<sup>52</sup> The radical militants' efforts, like those of Beaudoin to make a show of force against Fallon were a complete failure.

Although the move to forward a petition to Rome was scuttled, news of this assembly illustrated the first rumblings of francophone opposition to the bishop. In London, the St-Jean-Baptiste Society (SSJB) and the francophone communities in general came to be regarded with increasing suspicion. Indeed, just one day after the assembly in Tecumseh, Fallon mailed a letter to Langlois warning him to steer clear of

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<sup>51</sup> Rev. L.A. Beaudoin to Rev. C. Charlebois, September 30, 1910, 2pp. CRCCF, C2/93/6.

<sup>52</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 26, 1910.

the SSJB.<sup>53</sup> The Bishop's growing consternation with his francophone priests was only beginning, with his chief adversary about to launch a more serious attack. Just five days after Langlois successfully reined in the SSJB, Beaudoin believing that the petition should have been passed and sent to Rome, forwarded the following declaration on behalf of the bilingual teachers,

Que la Réverende Mère des Sœurs de Saint-Joseph de cette paroisse, Mère Vincent vint à la résidence du Curé soussigné [Beaudoin] se plaindre le 24 septembre 1910, de la lettre de Mgr. M.F. Fallon, Évêque de London, dans laquelle il déclarait qu'il n'avait jamais donné ordres de ne plus enseigner la langue française dans les écoles de son diocèse.

Qu'à la retraite annuelle des Sœurs de Saint-Joseph, dit la Réverende Mère Vincent, Mgr. Fallon fit venir les Religieuses pour leur commander de ne plus enseigner la langue française.

...Que la question en litige, après la lettre ouverte de Monseigneur M.F. Fallon laissait passer les Sœurs de Saint-Joseph pour des menteurs aux yeux du public et des syndics d'école.<sup>54</sup>

Beaudoin's decision to wade into the French language controversy was aimed in part to restore the Mother Superior's reputation. It also served to embarrass the Bishop. Clerical militants were clearly not of one voice in their opposition to Fallon.

In the midst of this growing controversy, Fallon journeyed to Stoney Point on October 1, 1910, for his annual confirmation visit. Beaudoin also participated in the confirmation ceremonies. Much to the priest's surprise, the Bishop delivered a sermon criticizing Beaudoin's parishioners for their defense of the bilingual school system. He rejected the allegation of *La Patrie* that he had banned French instruction in the schools, while insisting on the inefficiency of the bilingual schools. It was at this time that Fallon

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<sup>53</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, Sept. 26, 1910.

<sup>54</sup> Sworn testimonials of L.A. Beaudoin before H. Robinson, Justice of the Peace, 30 Sept. 1910, CRCCF, C2/93/6; O. Duquette, F. Desmarais, et al., Walkerville, September 19, 1910; Marc Bontront, Oscar Duquette, and Alexandre St. Louis, Sandwich East, September 26, 1910, CRCCF, C2/93/6.

came to openly accuse Beaudoin of being the leading militant against Church authority on the language issue.<sup>55</sup>

Beaudoin confronted Fallon in the church rectory later in the day. At issue was the question of the bishop's orders to the teaching nuns. Beaudoin called on the bishop to settle the French language issue immediately with the Mothers Superior to dispel public confusion. Fallon dismissed Beaudoin's concerns, and vowed to settle the matter himself with the women in question. Fallon reiterated his denial that he had banned French instruction on his next confirmation visit on October 2 in Belle River.<sup>56</sup>

Beaudoin and Mother Vincent of the Saint Joseph Sisters were not alone in believing that Fallon had forbidden all French instruction. School trustee and physician, Adélarde Trottier of Belle River swore that the Ursuline Mother Superior informed him of orders from the bishop to stop teaching French to students in the second and third forms.<sup>57</sup> There remains some conjecture regarding whether the two Mothers Superior misunderstood the bishop. If such were in fact the case, this would not be the only time that a francophone militant misinterpreted Fallon's stand on French language instruction. Beaudoin also referred to the Hanna-Pyne letter in the following fashion, « Avez-vous lu le fameux écrit ou rapport d'Hanna où il me dit que Mgr Fallon demandait l'abolition de la langue française? »<sup>58</sup> In actuality, the Hanna-Pyne letter did not refer to a ban on all French instruction in the schools of the province. For a proud French Canadian like

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<sup>55</sup> L.A. Beaudoin to Charlebois, October 2, 1910.

<sup>56</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 7, 1910.

<sup>57</sup> Adélarde Trottier, Statement, Belle River, Ontario, October 8, 1910, in Memorial of February 1, 1911, Fallon Papers, Archives of the Diocese of London, as quoted in Choquette, p. 128.

<sup>58</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, October 2, 1910.

Beaudoin, any initiative to phase out the bilingual school system amounted to an end to instruction in the French language. A decision from the Holy Roman Rota several years later would attribute the entire dispute to a misinterpretation of the bishop's directions. This decision however, while sufficient in explaining the Belle River and Walkerville incidents, which were eventually rectified, did not adequately address the more exceptional plight of the francophones of Windsor which was never corrected.

The francophone community of Windsor appealed to the Roman Catholic Separate School Board to honour its longstanding commitment to the bilingual schools, by reinstating French instruction. The petitioners placed their emphasis on the need of francophone children to practice their faith and pray in French, as they had been taught by their mothers. They warned of the consequences of insisting that they practise their faith in English at school.

One can easily imagine the effect on the child's mind. He first loses respect for his mother's teaching, next comes contempt for things at home, then disobedience, then the usual list of crimes that follow as a natural consequence.<sup>59</sup>

This petition by 476 francophones illustrated the fears of many families that the education system was now portraying their culture in a negative light. For many, the denigration of French in the classroom by some teachers jeopardized their whole system of faith, morals and traditions. The petition compelled the Apostolic Delegate to intervene and urge Fallon to reintroduce prayers and catechism in the French language.

In neighbouring Walkerville, Beaudoin did not wait for a response to act upon his concerns for the cultural and spiritual future of the youth. He counselled parents to

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<sup>59</sup> Petition presented to the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board, October, 1910, by 476 French Canadians. CRCCF, C2/223/2.

educate their older children outside the diocese. Fallon accused Beaudoin of fomenting dissent in the diocese. He charged that Beaudoin was indeed responsible for supplying *La Patrie*, with statistics to suggest the francophones of Walkerville and the Windsor Border Region in general were being oppressed in the separate schools of the diocese.

Fallon warned Beaudoin,

If you desire to retain this position or any other, I invite you to mind your own business. I shall take care of the interests of the diocese.

Is it true that on a recent occasion you interfered with the action of a sister in your school in connection with the saying of prayers? And if it is true, will you tell me on what authority you so acted?<sup>60</sup>

Beaudoin responded to Fallon's allegations, reassuring his Bishop that he had nothing to do with the provision of statistics to *La Patrie* or other newspapers.<sup>61</sup> He also defended his intervention with the Sister in question, noting that as pastor and school board president, it was his duty to defend the bilingual nature of the parish school, and have all prayers recited in French in a school where ninety-five percent of the student body was in fact, francophone.<sup>62</sup> He reserved the right to intervene when the Sisters chose to conduct prayers in English only in what was supposed to be a bilingual school.

While Fallon deplored the leaks to the press, he was determined to use the media to get his own position across. On October 16, 1910, in an interview at Goderich, Ontario, he deplored the poor quality instruction typical of the bilingual schools of Essex and Kent counties.

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<sup>60</sup> Mgr. Fallon to Beaudoin, October 3, 1910, CRCCF, C2/93/6.

<sup>61</sup> Beaudoin was in fact, a source of information for *Le Devoir*, and even invited its editor, Henri Bourassa to visit the Windsor area in 1914. He even reassured his friend and confidante, Rev. Father Charles Charlebois of Ottawa, "Je crois que *Le Devoir* sera bien renseigné sur notre cause..." Beaudoin to Charlebois, 26 septembre, 1910.

<sup>62</sup> Beaudoin to Fallon, October , 1910.

French Canadian parishes of Belle River, Big Point (Grande Pointe), French Settlement, McGregor, Ruscomb, Staples, Stoney Point, Paincourt and Tilbury with separate schools and upwards of 2000 on the rolls passed a total of 10 pupils at the recent entrance examinations. It is from some of these parishes that the loudest noise comes regarding my insistence that these conditions are a disgrace.

Is it any wonder I should raise my voice on behalf of all the children who live in what might be called the bilingual belt of my diocese? And is it not malicious that for so doing I should be charged with hostility to the French language and to the interests of the French Canadian people? In the schools that are inflicted on these children, neither English nor French is properly taught or decently spoken. The regulations of the Education Department are in many instances utterly disregarded. Because of the conditions...children are either not sent to school at all or are withdrawn in the face of difficulties.<sup>63</sup>

For Fallon, the duty of Catholic schools was to prepare children for social advancement in the English speaking society of Ontario. The bilingual schools' poor standards had left francophones in a chronic state of vulnerability.

It was with this frame of mind that Fallon admitted to opposing board efforts to return two of Windsor's schools to the bilingual program:

Windsor is the one presentable spot in the County of Essex. Its separate schools passed 30 pupils on a total registration of about 600. And now the Department of Education contrary to the wishes of the teachers and the interests of the pupils, and at variance with the spirit of its own regulations, proposes to imperil even the relative efficiency in the Windsor Separate Schools by imposing on them a bilingual inspector, and thereby list them in the discredited column of alleged bilingual schools. Against that proposal I protested privately when it was first broached, and I protest publicly against it now.<sup>64</sup>

The bishop's vocal protest prevented the reintroduction of French in the schools of Windsor. Fallon continued his argument suggesting that the entrance examination was a crucial certificate to any meaningful career. He added that placing children in conditions where this certificate became unattainable did not simply deny them their statutory rights, it also served to undermine the public good.<sup>65</sup>

Some prominent Protestants and Catholics in the Windsor border region shared Fallon's views on the bilingual schools. F.P. Gavin, the Protestant principal of the

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<sup>63</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 17, 1910.

<sup>64</sup> *Toronto Globe*, October 17, 1910.

<sup>65</sup> *Toronto Globe*, October 17, 1910.

Windsor Collegiate Institute with twenty years' experience, concurred with the prelate that the lack of qualified teaching personnel in the bilingual schools created handicaps for francophone students facing the high school examinations.<sup>66</sup> An Irish Catholic respondent from Windsor endorsed the bishop's indictment of the bilingual schools and the call for a provincial commission to study the problem.

I am glad, and every Catholic should be glad that attention has been directed to the bilingual schools....The investigation that must come will bear out Bishop Fallon even if the report concerning the strictures were true. English is not taught properly; graduates are not equipped with the language of the Canadian people, and are encouraged to restrict their studies to suit the designs of French enthusiasts. What I say applies most closely to rural schools, but the city separate schools are also guilty in degree.<sup>67</sup>

Support for Fallon's criticisms went beyond the Protestant and Irish Catholic population to include some francophones of the Windsor Border Region. One schoolteacher, in a letter to the *Record*, admitted that some of her colleagues were in fact incompetent, and declared that reforms would actually be welcomed.<sup>68</sup> H.N. Casgrain, a French Canadian physician and former Conservative candidate for Essex North publicly acknowledged the validity of Fallon's criticisms that these schools were 'inefficient' and 'lamentable' but he rejected Fallon's proposed medicine. Casgrain suggested instead that the employment of qualified teachers from the St. Joseph, the Holy Names, and the Ursuline sisters in all of the separate schools would be a most effective remedy.<sup>69</sup> According to the *Record*, this French Canadian voice stood out from the majority of francophones who were in vocal opposition to Fallon on this issue.

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<sup>66</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 17, 1910.

<sup>67</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 19, 1910.

<sup>68</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 17, 1910.

<sup>69</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 17, 1910.

Fallon's public pronouncements on the bilingual schools prompted a swift rebuttal from some francophone opponents. H.J. Rocheleau, a retired Canayen teacher from Stoney Point took exception to Fallon's statement:

In the first place, I know by experience that French pupils who have attended bilingual schools have made just as good a showing at examinations as any who have attended English schools. For example, take the separate school at Stoney Point. I would like to know where he can find a school in the whole province that has made a better showing at the last entrance examination. Out of four trying they all passed, with quite a number of marks to the good. Last year five tried and they all passed. I think this instance alone is enough to show his Lordship that his statement is not correct.

...I believe that Bishop Fallon should have started by getting the parents to send their children regularly to school and then he would not have the trouble of changing or trying to have the bilingual system of teaching changed.<sup>70</sup>

Rocheleau was not the only one to challenge the reliability of the bishop's statistics.

Others noted that Fallon had compared radically different environments, since the English schools cited were the urban graded schools of London, Woodstock, St. Thomas and Sarnia with large staffs and highly qualified and well-paid teachers, where the students in question all possessed English as their mother tongue. In contrast, the bishop cited the ungraded, rural bilingual schools of North Essex, with one or two underpaid and under-qualified teachers, where many of the students spoke no other language but French upon arrival, and attended only when they were not helping out on the farm. These bilingual teachers decried Fallon's comparison as utterly unfair.<sup>71</sup> In February, 1911, in outright defiance of the bishop, 128 parents in Stoney Point signed a petition to Rome attesting to the success of their children at the high school examinations.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 20, 1910. The *Record* found another instance of a teacher who reported eight successful entrants to high school in the previous two years, November 2, 1910.

<sup>71</sup> See *Windsor Evening Record*, October 20-24, 1910.

<sup>72</sup> Windsor memorial to Pellegrino F. Stagni, Feb. 1, 1911, Fallon Papers, ADL, as quoted in Choquette, p. 129

Beaudoin disagreed vehemently with Fallon's comments as well. On the very day the Bishop's interview appeared in the paper, Beaudoin expressed his frustrations in a confidential letter to Charlebois. Beaudoin dispelled Fallon's charges stating,

...le comté d'Essex peut figurer avec avantage avec beaucoup d'autres comtés. Oxford, par exemple, près de London passait d'après les rapports officiels il y a quelques années comme le comté où l'on faisait le plus de fautes d'épellation. Je crois que l'on va lui répondre sur toute la ligne d'idées. C'est extraordinaire comment il se fait que cet évêque consacré le 25 avril sache le 21 mai suivant que nous sommes les ignorants.<sup>73</sup>

Others shared Beaudoin's criticism of Fallon's sweeping judgment. One figure in particular stepped forward to respond publicly.

Longtime North Essex bilingual school inspector David Chenay, on the defensive, replied to the bishop's criticism in an interview with a journalist for the *Windsor Evening Record*. Citing his thirty-five years of experience in the area's bilingual schools, including a decade as inspector, Chenay admitted that the system in question had its flaws, but argued that the problems were unfairly exaggerated by the new bishop. Chenay noted that after less than a month as bishop, Fallon had not had time to inquire adequately into the actual conditions in the schools. While the Inspector conceded the fact that illiteracy continued to afflict the francophone population, he argued that the cause was the indifference and apathy of many French people living in poor circumstances towards education as a whole. Chenay then proceeded to address the issue of English instruction in the bilingual schools.

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<sup>73</sup> Charlebois to Beaudoin, October 17, 1910; Beaudoin added that Fallon's statistics regarding the entrance exams were incorrect, noting that in actuality in Stoney Point, four students had passed the entrance examination and out of 124 students for confirmation, only two could not read. As for Belle River, Beaudoin noted that at this confirmation visit, among 116 students, classified as illiterates by Fallon, only six could not read: one girl being blind and deaf; two boys living far from the schools; and three boys kept at home for work on the land. Beaudoin to Charlebois, 27 and 28 October, 1910, CRCCF, C2/93/6.

It is claimed that English is not taught enough in our schools, but I do not think that claim is justified. Along the riverfront the French schools are just as good as the English schools in our neighbourhood. I have no hesitation in saying that our best French schools will compare favourably with the best English schools. The fact is that our bilingual schools are becoming largely English. In this district, I do not think there are more than six departments in which French is taught more than English... I also think that Bishop Fallon lays too much stress on the number of pupils who fail to pass entrance examinations. To begin with, I do not admit that his figures are correct. ...Frequently children are sent up by their parents before they are ripe, which explains why so many of them fail....

Another reason why the proportion of failures is so large is that the children are so often kept from school to work in the garden or on the farm. In some districts any excuse is good enough for the absence of the pupils. Bishop Fallon would have you believe that the failures to pass the entrance examinations are confined to the French schools. Why I could take you to an English school seven miles from here where three teachers with normal school certificates are employed, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in ten years, only one pupil of that school has passed. I do not say it is the fault of the teachers. They do their best under the circumstances, but I simply point out that there is a school where not a word of French is spoken.<sup>74</sup>

Chenay's rebuttal cast doubt on the bishop's sweeping classification of the bilingual schools as inefficient. The Inspector demonstrated a thorough understanding of the serious shortcomings within the system, most notably the problems of illiteracy, parental apathy, and persistent truancy.<sup>75</sup> His comments offered a more complex explanation to counter Fallon's oversimplification. Nevertheless, Chenay likely felt the bishop's attack directly called into question his performance as the School Inspector. The *Windsor*

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<sup>74</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 21, 1910; see also *Toronto Globe*, October 21, 1910. Chenay's criticism echoed comments from an Essex County school teacher in a letter to the editor, declaring, "Bishop Fallon has obtained his information from a cursory examination of the field, gained from one journey. Even with that his information of conditions was gained at second hand, and then from parish priests, whose knowledge of the bilingual schools was often lamentably weak..." *Windsor Evening Record*, October 20, 1910.

<sup>75</sup> The *Record* reported another educator who decried the rate of truancy in the bilingual school she was teaching in.

"Farther east stands another school, a one roomed public school, with a woman teacher, a French girl, but with a competent knowledge of English. She does not hold a Normal certificate, but is a graduate of the bilingual Model school, which was established at Windsor [sic-Sandwich] last year. The average attendance for the past month has been twenty one pupils. Glancing over the roll one saw several cases where a child had not put in one half-day's attendance for a whole month or more; other cases showed gaps of three or four days some weeks. The teacher in this school has nine candidates for the entrance in the last three years, and of these eight have been successful. The only failure was last year when the candidate went down in composition. That notorious question asking for arguments pro and con on a given debate floored this child. Remember, he knew no word of English only a few years ago, and it may help you to a realization of the handicap teachers and pupils are working under here." *Windsor Evening Record*, November 2, 1910.

*Evening Record* endorsed Chenay's assessment of the bilingual schools, and suggested like the school inspector, that the bishop's exaggeration was due to misinformation provided by ill-informed advisors and his recent arrival. With reason, the newspaper considered the inspector's 35 years of experience in the area schools the essential element to an accurate depiction of the situation.<sup>76</sup>

In a letter to ACFEO president Senator N.A. Belcourt, Beaudoin expressed his discouragement over the absence of French in some area schools. He felt unable to attend the province-wide ACFEO special assembly on bilingual school resistance on November 15, 1910, since he was living under Fallon's watchful eye. He added,

Une lettre reçue depuis quelques semaines m'avertit de garder la résidence et de me mêler de mes affaires, sinon je perdrai ma paroisse, serai chargé et même placé ailleurs. Il faut être prudent, car autrement on pourrait nommer à Walkerville pour me remplacer un prêtre irlandais. C'est pourquoi mon monsieur, vous pouvez comprendre que dans les circonstances, il vaut mieux pour l'Association et pour moi de rester sur place afin de défendre la situation.<sup>77</sup>

Fallon's warning to Beaudoin of a potential transfer from his francophone parish effectively hamstrung this radical militant. Nevertheless, the priest could be comforted by the fact that French instruction had at least been restored to all of the classes in his two parish schools. As for Fallon's repeated insistence that he made no order to ban or reinstitute French instruction in Walkerville, Beaudoin determined to secure a sworn legal deposition from the nuns under his care to uphold their standing in the eyes of Roman officials.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, November 4, 1910. The Record also reported that poor teaching salaries likely contributed to the existing state of sub-standard teaching. F.W. Merchant's 1912 report on the bilingual schools would confirm that 31 of 53 bilingual school teachers were paid between \$200-250, 16 received \$300-350, and just 6 received \$400 or more.

<sup>77</sup> Beaudoin to Senator N. A. Belcourt, November 8, 1910, CRCCF, C2/93/6.

<sup>78</sup> Beaudoin to Belcourt, November 8, 1910.

With a growing rift in the Church, Fallon took steps to re-establish his reputation. During the week of October 17, the Bishop sought out his priests to have them sign a collective letter in support of him. Fallon then reported to the press that

To intimidate me and make me pass for a liar [regarding his denial that he banned French instruction] the Hanna memorandum was published....it was stolen by an officer from the Department of Public Works and given to a priest of this diocese who in turn gave it to an ecclesiastical dignitary.<sup>79</sup>

Fallon accused a parishioner of Beaudoin's Our Lady of the Lake Church, Henri "Harry" Maisonville of stealing the letter in question. Maisonville was a Windsor-born newspaper man turned civil servant working for Joseph O. Réaume. Fallon alleged that it was Maisonville who leaked the news to the press on the advice of Beaudoin.<sup>80</sup>

#### The Division of Our Lady of the Lake Parish

Beaudoin's troubles worsened in January 1911, when Fallon paid a secret visit to the town of Walkerville, with the purpose, so Beaudoin maintained, of dividing his parish. Beaudoin feared that this division would strip him of his wealthiest parishioners, nearly all of whom resided in Walkerville. Dispelling Fallon's allegations that he was anti-English, Beaudoin noted his commitment to anglophones by contributing \$9000 of his own money to establish St. Edward's school for children of mixed English-French marriages. He suspected that his control over the school would now slip away. Beaudoin complained that the division would only destabilize its already shaky financial state of

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<sup>79</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 17, 1910.

<sup>80</sup> Maisonville confessed that he had indeed leaked the letter to the press, possibly to protect his former pastor, Lucien Beaudoin. "In taking the steps which indirectly led to the publication of the letter, I was acting on my own responsibility alone, and not in an official capacity. As a French Canadian of the county of Essex, the teaching of the French language in these schools is dear to my heart." *Windsor Evening Record*, October 14, 1910.

the parish. Indeed, the church was still able to welcome several hundred new parishioners before reaching its capacity.<sup>81</sup>

Beaudoin also expressed concern for the cultural well-being of his Walkerville parishioners, and the linguistic character of the proposed church.

La population catholique de Walkerville compte 500 à 550 âmes dont 85% sont des Canadiens-français. Je serai bien surpris que l'on y nommait un prêtre de langue française aux idées ardemment catholiques qui ne chercheront pas à anglifier [sic] nos nationaux.<sup>82</sup>

For Beaudoin the arguments to justify the division of the parish were unfounded.

Relying on an informal census, Beaudoin argued that at least 2000 of his parishioners were French Canadian while only 350 were English-speaking. Census statistics for 1911 suggest that Beaudoin's projections of the francophone numbers for Walkerville and Sandwich East were relatively accurate. However, his analysis of the entire parish population underestimated the anglophone numbers.

By using the official census statistics for 1911, the historian can determine whether Fallon's decision to create an English-only parish in Walkerville was in fact justified. Anglophone numbers in the town clearly indicate that this minority was large enough to warrant proper ministering from an anglophone priest, to ease English-French conflict, as had been done at St. Alphonsus Parish in Windsor. However, Fallon broke with past methods of handling bicultural tension by creating an all English parish in response to a petition by 35 Anglophones; this decision illustrated utter disregard for the majority of the town's Catholic population, who were in fact, francophone (Tables 3.1.a,

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<sup>81</sup> L.A. Beaudoin to P.F. Stagni, Apostolic Delegate to Canada, January 3, 1911, CRCCF, C2/92/8.

<sup>82</sup> Beaudoin to Stagni, January 3, 1911, CRCCF, C2/92/8. Beaudoin's numbers were not accurate, since francophones numbered 462 out of a total of 824 souls in Walkerville. There were 333 Anglophone Catholics in the town.

b). Beaudoin and many of his parishioners were justified in feeling that the bishop's plans were little more than a reprimand for his involvement in the bilingual schools controversy.<sup>83</sup>

**3.1.a. Linguistic breakdown of the Walkerville Catholic Population in Our Lady of the Lake Parish-Future Site of St. Anne's Parish, 1911**

Total population: 824	Total population of French descent: 570
Total francophone population: 462 <sup>84</sup>	
Groups	Total/ Percentage of the Catholic population
Francophones	462 (56.1%)
Anglophones (including Irish)	333 (40.4%)
Polish	19
Others	8
Russian	2
Total	824

Source: Canada Census, 1911

**3.1.b. Population Breakdown of Roman Catholic Parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake Parishioners in Sandwich East (excluding Walkerville), 1911**

Total Catholic population	2402	(100%)
Anglophones:	289	(12.2%)
Francophones:	2049	(85.3%)
Others:	64	(2.5%)

Source: Canada Census, 1911

<sup>83</sup> Beaudoin to Stagni, January 3, 1911. Census findings reveal that an absolute minimum of 56% of Walkerville Catholics used French in the home. Fallon could have followed the established tradition of appointing an Irish or Anglophone associate pastor to Beaudoin's church to accommodate the English speaking parishioners. Instead, Fallon created an English-only parish in a town where the vast majority of Catholics were francophone!

<sup>84</sup> This figure represents only those people of French descent who actually claimed French as the language or one of the languages most commonly spoken in the home. This classification allows for the possibility that in fact, more people of French descent actually could understand and speak French but did not do so commonly or consistently in their households, or that they simply did not indicate this to the enumerator, or that in fact the enumerator himself failed to record this pertinent information. Therefore, 462 should be viewed as a minimum base number of possible francophone Catholics residing in the town of Walkerville. All of the enumerators of the Walkerville districts were Anglophone Protestants.

**3.1.c. Total Catholic Population Breakdown of Our Lady of the Lake according to Language Most Commonly Spoken in 1911 (including Walkerville)**

Anglophones	622	(19.3%)
Francophones	2511	(77.8%)
Others	93	(2.9%)
Total	3226	100%

Source: Canada Census, 1911

**3.1.d. Breakdown of total Anglophone population of Our Lady of the Lake Parish(1911)**

Irish	195
Anglicized French	173
English	149
Germans	44
Americans	22
Others	39

Source: Canada Census, 1911

Fallon's decision to establish an English-only parish in Walkerville did little to dispel accusations that he was anti-French. Contrary to his protests that most of the French population of the town was anglicized, census statistics suggest that a decisive majority (81%, or 462 francophones out of 570 people of French descent, Table 3.1.a) continued to use their mother tongue in the home. Clearly, more than three quarters of this French population, and nearly half of the parishioners of the new church would be denied any service in their language, a number far greater than the English-speaking cohort at Our Lady of the Lake parish.<sup>85</sup>

On January 25, 1912, the new English-only parish of St. Anne's of Walkerville held its first mass in St. Edward's School. As pastor of the new parish in Walkerville, Fallon appointed H.N. Robert, a francophone. Perhaps sensing the trouble the decision would unleash, the Bishop outlined the following counsel to the Catholics of the town :

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<sup>85</sup> Fallon's actions were reminiscent to those of Thomas Hendricken, Bishop of Providence, who frequently opted to appoint Anglophones, especially of Irish background, as pastors to parishes in predominantly Franco-American communities. See Roby, pp. 127-130.

It is quite possible for one reason or another that some Catholics living within the limits of the municipality of Walkerville may desire to still retain their affiliation with, and or perform their religious duties in the Church of Our Lady of the Lake, Sandwich East. I direct that the freedom of choice of such people be not interfered with and I am sure that you will find no difficulty in abiding this direction.<sup>86</sup>

In spite of this concession, the division infuriated Beaudoin, since the Bishop had made no mention of the division to him. When Robert celebrated his first mass in the new parish, he offered a sermon and weekly announcements in English only, in spite of the clear francophone preponderance among the town's Catholics. Beaudoin appealed Fallon's decision to the Roman courts.<sup>87</sup>

On February 15, 1912 under the advice of Joseph Gignac a canon lawyer from Montreal, Beaudoin issued a sworn testimonial, petitioning that the division of his parish was an unjustified act. In this declaration he mandated Vincenzo Sacconi of Rome to serve as his legal representative to the Sacred Consistorial Congregation (SCC).

Beaudoin commissioned his counsel to appeal to the SCC to bestow the necessary authority upon the Apostolic Delegate, to inquire into and judge the case.<sup>88</sup> The priest was openly challenging the decision of his bishop. Five days later, the French Canadians

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<sup>86</sup> Fallon to Robert, 2 January 1912, C2/92/9, CRCCF, 2pp.

<sup>87</sup> According to the Bishop, rising land prices compelled him to divide the parish in haste. Fallon feared that the US Steel Company's plan to build a factory in Walkerville would spawn a flurry of real estate speculation. Hence, he opted to move discreetly, purchasing the land without notifying the resident pastor. Beaudoin responded by taking legal action. On January 6, he served notice to Fallon of his intention to challenge the decision in court. The Apostolic Delegate attempted to discourage the embittered priest, counselling him to exhaust all avenues towards an amicable arrangement before resorting to more controversial measures, since the salvation of souls should supercede the battle of personalities. He added that should Beaudoin find the outcome of the misunderstanding to be unsatisfactory, he should turn to Rome directly and appeal to the Sacred Congregational Council or the Holy Roman Rota for redress. Peregrino F. Stagni, Apostolic Delegate, to Lucien Beaudoin, January 6, 1912, CRCCF, C2/92/9. This development made matters especially difficult to accept, given the fact that Beaudoin was the title holder of the mortgage on the St. Edward's school. It was extremely hard for the pastor to see a school he had financed with his own money fall into the hands of interests he deemed to be hostile to bilingual education. Robert's supporters would later insist that he could not even speak English until he was seven years old. *The Catholic Record*, April 17, 1915.

<sup>88</sup> Beaudoin to Count Vincenzo Sacconi, 15 February, 1912, 2pp., CRCCF, C2/92/9. Gignac later expressed surprise that Stagni had initially considered the case to be beyond his jurisdiction.

of Walkerville petitioned in favour of Beaudoin, declaring their opposition to the creation of St. Anne's Parish.

### Fallon's Statistical Analysis of the Francophones of the Windsor Border Region

The continuous round of petitions to London and Rome, and the Bishop's inaction on French language issues eventually compelled the Holy See and the Apostolic Delegate, Pellegrino Stagni to inquire into the situation. With regard to the lingering frustration of many francophones with their English-only Catholic schools, Fallon justified his inaction in the following analysis to Roman officials in July 1911 prior to Regulation XVII:

The total population of the City of Windsor is 17,534. Of these, the people of French *origin*, which is a very different thing from the people of French *language*, number 3092. Fully one third of the people of French origin do not speak a word of French; ninety percent of them use English as the regular medium of communication, and the knowledge of French only is confined to a very small number.<sup>89</sup>

After the introduction of the school edict, Fallon sent a second letter to the Apostolic Delegate in May, 1913 refuting the claims of his dissident priests in their petition. He declared that French was not commonly spoken by more than 10 000 of London's 65 000 Roman Catholics.<sup>90</sup> A close examination of the 1901 and 1911 census rolls utterly

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<sup>89</sup> Fallon to Peregrino F. Stagni, London, July 8, 1911, 4pp., Fallon Papers, Archives of the Diocese of London (ADL), as quoted in Choquette, *Language and Religion*, p. 122.

<sup>90</sup> Fallon to Stagni, London, May 30, 1913, *Libellus*, 61pp., Fallon papers, ADL, as quoted in Choquette, p. 129. On a third occasion, Fallon sought to convince church officials in Rome that a considerable number of Franco-Ontarians could not speak French. In a memorandum on the language question forwarded to Rome following the publication of *Commisso divinitus* Fallon wrote the following erroneous analysis: "The total population of the province of Ontario is 2,523, 274, of whom 202, 442 or 8% are of French origin. It would be an entire fallacy to assume those of French origin are all either of the French language or Catholic faith. The vast majority are undoubtedly Catholics, but certainly not one half of them, that is fewer than 100, 000 understand and speak the French language." Memorandum of the Rt. Reverend M.F. Fallon, Bishop of London, before the bishops and archbishops of Ontario", p. 20, Wednesday, January 24, 1917, CRLG, P56/ D.12. A simple examination of the isolated Windsor francophones illustrates Fallon's numbers to be utterly false, lacking any supporting evidence. See Tables in Chapter 1 on language transfer rates.

discredits Fallon's figures. First, Fallon downplayed the actual number of people of French origin in Windsor by using the number 3092, when the 1911 census statistics indicated that in fact there were 4113 people of French origin-an underestimation of 33%! In addition, Fallon's claim that only 33% of those people of French descent (10 000 of 30 000) commonly used the language in Essex and Kent counties could not be substantiated by the 1901 and 1911 census. These statistics clearly indicated that a bare minimum of 70% of Windsor's population of French descent continued to use their mother tongue commonly within the home in 1901. Ten years later, rather than showing signs of serious language transfer as implied by Fallon, this population was reinforced by an influx of francophones from the nearby countryside, eastern Ontario and Quebec. Consequently, instead of declining, the proportion of francophones within the population of French descent grew to more than 76%.(Table 3.2.d) The greatest growth occurred in ward 4 where the minimum number of francophones grew from 609 to 1996 in just ten years, or an increase of more than 300%.(Table 3.2.e) Indeed, the French population of Windsor was not in decline, but was actually becoming increasingly francophone during Fallon's first full year as bishop of London.

Of especial interest in the census is the language most commonly spoken in the home; it is noteworthy that most francophone children under the age of six in the surrounding communities outside of Windsor could speak only French. This suggests that French was the regular language of communication for francophone families in the home. Furthermore, in every francophone community outside of Windsor, the usage of French within such families was predominant, usually surpassing 90% of such

households in the 1901 census. It is highly doubtful that all of these francophones abandoned the mother tongue en masse just ten years later. Indeed, an examination of the rapidly urbanizing township of Sandwich East in 1911 indicates only a minor decrease in the French language retention rate from 97.9% in 1901 to 93.5% ten years later. In addition, the proportion of francophones to the total population of this township declined only slightly from 76.3% to 75.1% over this ten year period (Tables 3.2.a., 3.2.b). In other words, the bishop's argument for resisting demands for more French rested on unreliable numbers that completely denied the growing French proportion of Windsor's population and the resiliency of the francophone reality that persisted in Essex and Kent counties. Indeed, even the francophone proportion of the Windsor population grew from 12.3 to 17.8% between 1901 and 1911. (Tables 3.2.c, 3.2.d) Whether by accident, error or deliberate falsification, the statistics Fallon sent to Rome regarding the francophone population were inaccurate and misleading. The bishop's numbers conveniently served to justify his hardline refusal to address the desire of Windsor's francophones to secure the one hour of French instruction allowed under Regulation XVII. This growing population would certainly have been justified in resenting the bishop's insensitivity.

**3.2.a. Population Breakdown of Sandwich East minus Tecumseh-(Our Lady of the Lake Parish only) 1901**

Total population : 2052	Total population of French descent : 1599
Total francophone population : 1566	French language retention rate : 97.9%
%francophones/Total population : 76.3%	
Groups	Population
Canayens	1020
French Canadians	565
Anglophones	290
Irish Catholics	63

African Canadians	44
Others	56
French	14

Source: Canada Census, 1901

**3.2.b. Population Breakdown of Sandwich East minus Tecumseh- (Our lady of the Lake Parish only) 1911**

Total population: 3337	Total population of French descent: 2679
Total francophone population: 2506	French language retention rate: 93.5%
%francophones/Total population: 75.1%	
Group	Population
Canayens	1304
French Canadians	1228
Anglophones	412
Irish Catholics	195
Franco-American	96
French/Belgian	51
Others	51

Source: Canada Census, 1911

**3.2.c. Windsor's Population of French Descent(1901)**

Total Population: 12 153	Total population of French descent: 2133
Total Francophone population: 1493	French language retention rate: 70.2%
%Francophones/Total population: 12.3%	
Canayens	787
French Canadians	629
French	41
Other	41
Total	1498

Source: Canada Census, 1901

**3.2.d. Windsor's Population of French Descent (1911)**

Total population: 17 829	Total population of French descent: 4113 <sup>91</sup>
Total francophone population: 3168	French language retention rate: 76.4%
%francophones/Total population: 17.8%	
Canayens	1683
French Canadians	2125
Franco-Americans	166
Belgian/French	30
Mixed	84
Undetermined	56

<sup>91</sup> This figure is drawn from the 1911 Census. My compilations put the actual total at 4144 not 4113.

Total	4144
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Source: Canada Census, 1911

### **3.2.e. Comparison of Francophone Growth in Ward 4, Windsor, 1901-1911**

1901 Total Francophone Pop.	609	1911 Total Francophone Pop.	1996
Canayens	295	Canayens	822
French Canadians	290	French Canadians	1162
French	24	French	12

Source: Canada Census, 1901, 1911

### The Bishop and the Bilingual Schools Agitation

Concern for the fate of young francophones also compelled some parents in the Windsor parishes of St. Alphonsus and Immaculate Conception to petition Bishop Fallon in the summer of 1911 for the reinstatement of the Montreal-based Holy Names Sisters as the teaching order in their schools. They protested that the Ursuline teachers were in fact, scarce, and were forced to rely on lay support staff. These parents wished for the return of the Holy Names sisters since “ces religieuses ont été subséquemment remplacées par des maîtresses laïques ignorant le français...”<sup>92</sup> Children were even expected to learn their catechism and prayers in English in a school where half the student body was French Canadian.<sup>93</sup> The parishioners’ request for French at the end of the school year would be left unanswered throughout the years to come. The Bishop’s immovability on this issue made it hard to believe that his real agenda for the separate schools was not the assimilation of Windsor’s francophone children.

In this atmosphere of hostility and suspicion, the priests of the diocese assembled with their Bishop for the July 13 retreat weekend. On July 14, in Assumption chapel,

<sup>92</sup> Petition, Windsor French Canadian parishioners of St. Alphonsus Church, August 1911, CRCCF, C2/222/1, 2pp.

<sup>93</sup> Beaudoin to Jules Tremblay, June 7, 1911, CRCCF, C2/92/8.

Sandwich, the Bishop addressed the problems facing the separate schools of the province and placed the failure to gain a share of the corporate tax rate squarely on the ACFEO Congress held in Ottawa in January 1910. Fallon argued that the aggressive demands of the delegates destroyed any hope of success in this endeavour, forcing provincial officials to retreat before the Orange Order outcry. Fallon proceeded to condemn the behaviour of the Canayen pastor of Tecumseh, Pierre Langlois, for sanctioning a St-Jean-Baptiste Society meeting at his parish that openly attacked the Bishop. He then condemned all those French Canadian priests who actively promoted the ACFEO's membership subscription campaign which siphoned off money that should be designated for church sponsored endeavours. Fallon warned his priests one last time to steer clear of the bilingual schools issues.<sup>94</sup>

Fallon's sermon failed to quell the growing dissent regarding his education policy. The Bishop's orders to his priests aimed to suppress the calls for more French in the area's schools and churches. At St. Alphonsus parish in Windsor, he instructed J. Edmond Meunier to warn Canayen parishioner and school trustee Patrice Ouellette to cease any further agitation. The priest was to divest Ouellette of his prestigious role as music director if he chose to ignore the directive.<sup>95</sup> Fallon had but one response for the bilingual school militants: submission.

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<sup>94</sup> Resumé of MF Fallon's retreat speech as recorded by L.A. Beaudoin to Rev. C. Charlebois, 13 July, 1911. Beaudoin introduced the resumé in a letter, noting, "Je vous envoie ci-inclus, conférence de Mgr. Fallon donnée à la retraite ecclésiastique. Je me suis renfermé à huis clos avec M. le Curé Landreville, et nous avons rédigé ces notes qui sont la traduction fidèle des paroles de notre digne évêque. C2/92/8.

<sup>95</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, July 25, 1911, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

Beaudoin was not alone in his crusade for the French language. His closest allies, a few of his fellow priests, were a small group indeed. Beaudoin himself discouraged the ACFEO from sending circulars to some French Canadian pastors, such as H.N. Robert of Windsor, A.J. Côté of Sandwich, and F.X. Laurendeau of London. Beaudoin referred to these men as « des hommes dangereux et anglifiés ». As for the rest, he declared, “Généralement parlant, les curés sont bien disposés et sont unis pour la cause canadienne. On s’occupe du français dans les écoles...”<sup>96</sup> In March 1912, militants in Immaculate Conception parish of Windsor launched a new petition for more French at the 9 o’clock Sunday morning mass and the reintroduction of French in the parish’s separate schools. One woman canvasser declared, “There are about 500 families connected with the church, of which about 400 are French, so I think it is quite right that our demands should be considered.”<sup>97</sup> Fallon ignored the request.

#### Bishop Fallon and Regulation XVII

The introduction of Regulation XVII by the Whitney government caused further grief for Bishop Fallon. Indeed, suspicions abounded that Fallon was the architect of the new restrictions of French instruction. This suspicion was not without some foundation, given the events surrounding Fallon’s rant against English-French schools during his interview with secretary Hanna. The bishop’s replacement of the Holy Names Sisters with the Anglophone Ursulines at St. Alphonsus school in Windsor in 1910 prior to the advent of Regulation XVII gave such allegations greater credibility. The decision to drop

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<sup>96</sup> Beaudoin to Rev. Charles Charlebois, July 18, 1911, ACFEO papers, CRCCF, C2/93/1.

<sup>97</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, March 21, 1912.

French instruction in two other Windsor separate schools in 1911 simply added to such speculation. With local school board elections pending, *Le Progrès* deplored the higher salaries and taxes incurred by the employment of the Ursulines, and called on the school trustees to bring back the Holy Names sisters or return to lay teachers, regardless of the potential costs. Some school board trustees deplored Fallon's intervention which stripped the elected trustees of their ability to hire teachers who could meet the needs of Windsor's francophone children.<sup>98</sup>

In August, 1912, pending the introduction of Regulation XVII, the Catholic school trustees of the Town of Walkerville openly went on record for the restoration of French instruction at St. Edward's School. French Canadian trustees Oscar Duquette and Thaddeus Forton motioned that prayer and catechism be taught in French in every classroom. Trustees Gilbert Forton and Albert Desjarlets resolved that all students in the third and fourth form receive at least one hour of French instruction per day in grammar, literature, and composition on top of the half hour of religious instruction. Furthermore, the trustees notified H.N. Robert that his services would no longer be required as superintendent of St. Edward School.<sup>99</sup> The trustees had reason to be concerned. In September, 1912, in the wake of Regulation XVII, accusations abounded that Robert was catechizing the children in English only. Worse still, a number of francophone children were following an English-only curriculum. Beaudoin wondered despairingly,

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<sup>98</sup> *Le Progrès*, c. September, 1912.

<sup>99</sup> Minutes, Meeting of the Walkerville Catholic Trustees, Sec. Treasurer, A.J. Lassaline, August 28, 1912, CRCCF, C2/93/8, 2pp. There were no Canayen trustees involved in this school issue.

Que deviendront mes enfants canadiens français de Walkerville? Et les prières et le catéchisme à enseigner à des enfants qui ne savent pas lire! C'est donc la persécution qui commence. Le délégué [Apostolic Delegate] ne pourrait-il pas être instruit de ce qui se prépare dans London?<sup>100</sup>

In Windsor, the situation was even worse. Under the "hitherto" clause of Regulation XVII, the three previously bilingual schools in Windsor, would never be allowed to reintroduce French to their francophone pupils. Fallon's intervention in 1910 ordering the Ursuline teachers to follow the terms of Regulation 12 had prevented French-speaking children from receiving any instruction in their mother tongue after 1912.<sup>101</sup> For board president Gaspard Pacaud, the disappearance of French instruction from the separate schools following Fallon's arrival in 1910 was made permanent with the introduction of Regulation XVII.

Le fait que par un acte arbitraire et lâche, l'enseignement du Français fut pour un temps éliminé de nos écoles, a suffi au gouvernement pour nous dire par son action, que le Français n'avait jamais été enseigné.<sup>102</sup>

This published letter underscored restrictions for French instruction in Windsor that were far more discriminatory than anywhere else in the province. Despite Fallon's previous claims not to oppose French instruction, just bilingual schools, the bishop made no visible effort whatsoever to intervene and secure a one-hour French lesson in these schools.

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<sup>100</sup> Beaudoin to Charlebois, September 28, 1912, C2/93/8.

<sup>101</sup> Anonymous school syndics' letter, November 1913, as published in *Windsor Evening Record*, "Colonne française", January 3, 1917. "Les contribuables canadiens français des écoles séparées, protestèrent et demandèrent à leurs représentants sur le Bureau de l'éducation de prendre action. Mais ces syndics ne pouvaient alors commander une majorité et les choses durent en demeurer là jusqu'aux élections suivantes alors qu'une majorité de canadiens-français fut élue. Mais par ce temps-là, le département de l'éducation avait passé ses fameux règlements et les adversaires de l'enseignement du Français prirent position que vu que le Français n'étaient pas enseigné lors de la passation des règlements, nos écoles n'étaient pas des écoles Anglaises-Françaises et que l'enseignement du Français dans ces écoles ne serait pas la réinstallation de l'étude de cette langue, mais la création d'une innovation . »

<sup>102</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, January 3, 1917.

Outside of the border cities, some francophones were not abiding by the new strictures of the provincial school regulation for bilingual schools. Francophone militants deplored the intrusion of the Protestant school inspector as an affront not just to the French Canadian culture, but to the Catholic school system as a whole. Bishop Fallon once again spoke out publicly against what he termed the bilingual schools agitation. In his mouthpiece, the *Catholic Record*, Fallon wrote an indictment of the whole militant rationale for the resistance. The bishop defended the appearance of Protestant school inspectors in the separate schools.

That the regulations of the Department of Education were not enforced by the French inspectors, is evident from Dr. Merchant's report. It was necessary to appoint men who would enforce these regulations....To object to such officials on the ground of their being Protestants is puerile; but it is something more, it is a dishonest attempt to obscure the issue, to make a question that is purely and exclusively a question of language, one that involves religion and the right to Catholic separate schools.

...The trouble has been that there was too evidently the desire upon the part of many to make the bilingual issue but a part of a sectarian struggle, in which it properly did not belong at all. And when this was done, the real issue had to yield place to an entirely different one.<sup>103</sup>

Fallon emphasized the state's need to insist on a quality education in English. The bishop argued that as long as these agents of the government did not interfere with the religious aspect of the school and its Catholic curriculum, no objection could lawfully be made to such inspections. Apostolic Delegate Pellegrino Stagni would later support Fallon's position in a report to Vatican officials, considering the contents of Regulation XVII to be reasonable and adding further that it was the duty of every Catholic to conform with the government ordinance to maintain the efficiency of their schools, avoid any unnecessary confrontation, and ensure the continued existence of the separate system.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *The Catholic Record*, November 12, 1912

<sup>104</sup> Pellegrino Stagni to Cardinal Giovanni de Lai, Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, November 19, 1915, translated text, as quoted in *The View From Rome*, p. 49.

For Fallon and Stagni, the willingness to cooperate with ministry officials indicated a Catholic commitment to full integration into Ontario's English-speaking society.

#### Fallon's War with his Militant Priests

The French language dispute among Windsor's Catholic school trustees reflected existing tensions within the clergy as well. The bishop of London exacerbated the trouble by sending a highly controversial letter in his defense to the Holy Roman Rota, the legal body in Rome reviewing Fallon's decision to divide Father Beaudoin's parish.

The Reverend L.A. Beaudoin, the plaintiff in the case is a trouble-making priest. For the past two years, he has done all in his power to undermine or prevent Episcopal action, both in his parish and in other parts of the diocese of London... The Abbé Beaudoin is incompetent in the English language; several English-speaking Catholics are already lost because of him; several others are just as threatened...<sup>105</sup>

The Bishop was unaware that the accusations he placed in the letter against Beaudoin would only unleash further dissension within the ranks of his militant francophone priests.

Unbeknownst to Fallon, his accusations became public, and a scattering of priests rallied behind Beaudoin to counter the Bishop's accusations and attest to the character of the beleaguered *curé*. On March 20, 1913, eleven priests signed a petition in Beaudoin's favour, outlining that contrary to the accusations, during his twenty-two years of service in the diocese, he had served competently in both English and French as a pastor to all of his parishioners. In addition the petitioners noted that Beaudoin had never opposed a bishop's direction, with the one exception of Fallon's order to cease all French

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<sup>105</sup> Bishop Fallon to the Holy Roman Rota, as quoted in a letter, N.D. St-Cyr to Pope Pius X, August 8, 1914. CRCCF, P37/8/6.

instruction.<sup>106</sup> This position openly challenged Fallon's public denial of identical claims made two years earlier.

At first glance, it would appear that the militancy of a few priests was at the root of the problem in the diocese. However, such an assertion would be an oversimplification, since the petition in Beaudoin's favour contained the signatures of three Irish clergymen, two of whom were Catholic: Mугan and Quinlan. Moreover, the bishop's style of leadership and strong convictions left little room for compromise. He could tolerate no opposition from his priests. As bishop, Fallon invoked his authority and demanded their strict obedience to his stance on the bilingual schools. Upon ordination, priests swore an oath of obedience to their Bishop.

Fallon's problems were not limited to a few French Canadian priests. In effect, shortly after assuming the mitre in 1910, he became embroiled in a conflict with Father Joseph Gnam, a Dutch priest and pastor of Wyoming, Petrolia and Oil Springs in Lambton County. Gnam had served more than 25 years in the area when Fallon abruptly transferred him to a parish in London. His parishioners protested this transfer, and Gnam himself challenged the decision, suing for damages and defamation of character. Gnam further accused Fallon of appearing on November 20, 1910 at his church and "threatened to take [Gnam] by the back of the neck and physically throw him from the

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<sup>106</sup> "Que pendant son long ministère paroissial, la seule direction épiscopale à laquelle l'abbé Beaudoin se soit opposé est celle de Monseigneur M.F. Fallon, l'évêque actuel, défendant d'enseigner la langue française aux enfants des Canadiens français, et de prêcher en français à cette nationalité" Déclaration to Rome was signed by J.E. Meunier, Pierre Langlois, P. L'Heureux, J.A. Loiselle, N.D. Saint-Cyr, A.D. Emery, Theo Martin and L. Landreville. This declaration in favour of Beaudoin was also signed by three Anglophone clergy: Fathers P. Quinlan of Strathroy, P. Corcoran of St. James Church, Walkerville, and Jason Mугan of St. Michael's Church in Ridgeway. March 1913.

rectory in which he the plaintiff was then living.”<sup>107</sup> Gnam also alleged that Fallon had failed to give him two warnings before suspending him. In his attempt to remove Gnam from his church, Fallon took recourse in a Toronto Divisional Court. The court ruled that Gnam was within his rights in remaining at Wyoming parish. The priest subsequently sued Fallon for \$100 000 in damages and won his case before the Ontario Supreme Court.<sup>108</sup> Alongside this embarrassing court drama, the long string of petitions from Windsor, and the bilingual schools controversy, Roman officials through Cardinal De Lai felt some action was necessary. Accordingly, on April 16, 1913, he urged Fallon to accept a transfer to a larger English-speaking diocese in the United States.<sup>109</sup> De Lai’s letter indicated that Pope Pius X believed that the protests and court cases against the Bishop would quickly disappear following such a transfer. Fallon’s American citizenship facilitated his move south of the border.

Fallon rejected this suggestion outright, considering such a transfer as little more than an official rebuke. Instead he outlined his stand on the bilingual schools in a letter to Canada’s Apostolic Delegate. Indeed, he saw his public stance as the principal reason for the actual misunderstanding. This issue had been a particularly controversial point among Fallon’s most vocal critics. Fallon fought back, noting,

The Bishops of Ontario, guardians of the interests of Catholic education, clearly foresaw that the system of Catholic schools was in danger and we had to avoid another campaign against our schools; we had to demonstrate clearly to the government that the cause of separate schools was one thing, and the French language essentially another.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Statement of Claim, Ontario Supreme Court, October 25, 1912; *Language and Religion*, pp. 135-37..

<sup>108</sup> Statement of Claim, Ontario Supreme Court, October 25, 1912; *Language and Religion*, pp. 135-37.

<sup>109</sup> Cardinal De Lai to Rt. Reverend M.F. Fallon, April 16, 1913, 2pp., CRCCF, P37/8/6; also quoted in Choquette *Language and Religion*, p. 137, “To remedy this state of affairs, the Holy Father thinks it wise to transfer your Greatness to another see (more important) in the United States.”

<sup>110</sup> M.F. Fallon to Pellegrino Stagni, Apostolic Delegate to Canada (Ottawa), May 1913, CRCCF, P37/8/6.

When De Lai suggested that he accept a transfer, Fallon refused to shoulder the blame for the bilingual controversy alone.

In my attitude concerning bilingual schools, I was only the representative and the delegate of the Bishops of Ontario. When in the month of October 1910, these things became public, I bore the weight of the abuse, without revealing the fact that my colleagues were in union with me on this affair. I am completely disposed to bear this weight, but I am not disposed to see myself compromised before the Holy See as if I was the only one responsible; and I insist that my rights and my character as bishop who works for his brother bishops and in their name, be reasonably safeguarded and I insist as well that the other bishops of Ontario share with me the praise and the blame, according to the case.<sup>111</sup>

Fallon felt betrayed by the conspicuous hush of his brother bishops in his hour of need.

Indeed, did their silence leave him as a convenient scapegoat, or had they begun to distance themselves from his controversial public pronouncements? Whatever the case may be, it is important to note that Fallon was not alone among Ontario's bishops in his opposition to the bilingual schools.

While recovering from this Roman reprimand, Fallon faced a further onslaught from the militants. Nearly 1500 petitioners signed a request for "national parishes" for French Canadians in the border region, criticizing Fallon's inaction on requests for more French during church services. Experiencing troubles similar to his brother bishops in New England, Fallon refused to countenance the creation of any such parishes.<sup>112</sup> The legal appeal would be forwarded to the Pope, causing further stress for Fallon. It would subsequently be rejected.

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<sup>111</sup> Fallon to Stagni, May 1913.

<sup>112</sup> In New England, Bishop Thomas Hendricken of Providence opposed the formation of national parishes, since these would necessarily slow the pace of assimilation among Franco-Americans. See Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre : Rêves et réalités*, p.125-6. Bishop Louis Walsh of Portland was also accused of being hostile to francophones when he became embroiled in a tug of war over the Maine Corporation Sole controversy from 1906 to 1916.

As francophone militants laboured to sensitize the population to the plight of the French language, they were forced to deal with pressing school issues. As president of the newly incorporated Ford City Separate School Board, Beaudoin faced obstacles in the very school he had built from his own personal funds.

By reason of a resolution passed by the Board of Trustees requesting that instructions be given to the teachers to teach the French language in accordance to regulations of the Education Department in St. Edward's School.

...such instructions were given to Sr. Irene while acting as principal-teacher of said school, but in reply stated that it would be impossible for the teachers to comply with such a request owing to the orders received by his Lordship the Bishop of London to the contrary.<sup>113</sup>

Clearly, Fallon's shadow influenced the decision making of educators in this bilingual school. This denial did not discourage the school trustees. Just one week after being turned down, Beaudoin wrote to Mother Celestine, Superior of the St. Joseph Sisters. In his letter, he requested bilingual teachers for the instruction of French grammar, composition and catechism. The Mother Superior reversed this local decision and granted his request for bilingual teachers in all classes at both Notre Dame in Ford City, and St. Edward's school in Walkerville.<sup>114</sup>

In July 1913, prior to setting sail for Rome to defend his case against Beaudoin over the division of Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Fallon sought out the support of his priests. During the annual ecclesiastical retreat held in June, Fallon requested that his priests sign a testimonial listing his good works for the diocese. For the area's militant francophone priests, the Bishop's methods were highly suspect.

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<sup>113</sup> Sworn testimony before Justice Charles J. Montreuil, by School Trustees Ferdinand Desmarais, Gilbert Forton and Oscar Duquette, June 25, 1913. CRCCF, C2/93/8.

<sup>114</sup> Mother Celestine to A.J. Lassaline, secretary, Walkerville Separate School Board, July 9, 1913, CRCCF, C2/93/8.

Pour obtenir ces signatures, l'on a dû recourir aux prières, aux menaces, et à de faux prétextes de sorte que ces requêtes sont loin de donner le vrai sentiment du clergé et du peuple chrétien à l'égard de leur Évêque.<sup>115</sup>

Clearly concerned about his image in Rome, Fallon had required his priests for the second time in just three years to sign a letter of support in his favour.

While the autumn of 1913 witnessed the continued resistance of some francophones to the school restrictions, new problems erupted for the local French Canadian clergy. The Bishop of London, on his visit to Rome, learned of the letter that a number of Beaudoin's colleagues had signed on his behalf for his case before the Holy Roman Rota. Just weeks later, Beaudoin, sent a strongly worded letter denying claims made by the Bishop to the Roman court that he was not competent to minister to his English speaking parishioners. Beaudoin added, « Les catholiques sont en grande majorité de langue française. Une vingtaine de personnes plus ou moins compromis par des mariages mixtes veulent une église, dit-on. »<sup>116</sup> Beaudoin complained that this element built its own church without paying its share of the existing debt on the recently reconstructed Our Lady of the Lake church following the 1908 fire. To make matters worse, they had taken over St. Edward's school in Walkerville, occupying its rooms, while persisting after 18 months to rely on Ford City's parish school board to pay the bills.<sup>117</sup>

Among the most scathing criticisms levelled against the unsympathetic bishop were those that involved his open campaign from the pulpit against those clerical militants for the bilingual schools. During the first decade of his episcopate, the bishop

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<sup>115</sup> French Canadian priests to Cardinal De Lai, July 10, 1913. CRCCF, C2/93/8.

<sup>116</sup> Sworn testimony, Lucien-Alexandre Beaudoin, 12 December, 1913, Ford City, CRCCF, C2/93/10.

<sup>117</sup> Sworn testimony, Beaudoin, 12 December 1913.

openly chastised several priests before their own parishioners. Beaudoin referred to himself and his brother priests as he sought relief from this situation. « Que Mgr Fallon cesse de tyranniser ses prêtres dans ses lettres, dans ses sermons et ses discours. Il ne peut les rencontrer sans les insulter ». <sup>118</sup>

On March 3, 1913, at Ford City, at the annual meeting of the St-Jean-Baptiste Societies of Essex and Kent, Beaudoin and the organization's leaders forwarded a secret petition to the Apostolic Delegate and canon lawyer Father Gignac of Montreal. In it, the signatories listed a litany of grievances against Fallon and requested the division of the diocese. This petition would be the first of many requests for the removal of Bishop Fallon. <sup>119</sup> Beaudoin clearly initiated the movement. His leadership assumed tremendous risk when in January 1914 he organized a signed declaration criticizing Fallon's public stance on French instruction in the schools. Referring to the bishop's verbal assault on the members of the Walkerville School board during the ecclesiastical retreat, Beaudoin prompted the Board members to take their case to Rome for damages.

Fallon had always been wary of the pastor of Our Lady of the Lake. When he learned of the letter Beaudoin's comrades had signed on his behalf during his visit to Rome Fallon sent each of the signatories a letter confronting them on the issue. Without a doubt, the bilingual schools question stood at the forefront of this quarrel. On February

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<sup>118</sup> Sworn testimony, Beaudoin, 12 December 1913, CRCCF, C2/93/10. Alfred Emery also refers to Fallon's public chastisement of his priests from their parish pulpits. Emery to Groulx, January 5, 1915, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1270. A number of parishioners also attested to Fallon's tactics. Author's interviews with Hazel Delorme, November 8, 1987; Monsignor Jean Noël, October 21, 1987; and Agnes Marleau Buckley, October 25, 1987.

<sup>119</sup> Beaudoin to A.T. Charron, March 11, 1914, CRCCF, C2/93/10.

23, 1914, Joseph Loiselle of River Canard (Loiselleville) received the following ultimatum.

In March 1913, you signed the following document which contains two accusations against your bishop : a. that he forbade teaching French to French Canadian children.  
b. That he forbade preaching in French to Catholics of that nationality.  
You will be good enough to furnish me with proofs in writing of the above accusations before the 10th of March.<sup>120</sup>

Fallon posted similar letters to J. Edmond Meunier of Windsor, Pierre Langlois of Tecumseh, Alfred Emery of Paincourt, Theo Martin of Tilbury North, L. Landreville of Grande Pointe, Pierre L'Heureux of Belle River, and Napoleon St-Cyr of Stoney Point.

After deliberating together, the priests decided to withhold all information from the Bishop. Each man sent a letter similar in tone to that of Loiselle.

...avant de vous donner les explications demandées, Votre Grandeur trouvera sage, sans doute, que je lui demande une copie de cette lettre, certifiée par la personne ou le tribunal qui en possède la copie originale.<sup>121</sup>

The priests sought to determine the origin of the incriminating correspondence that Fallon had acquired. It was clear that the confidential declaration in Beaudoin's favour sent to the judges of the Holy Roman Rota had fallen into the hands of Fallon. The Bishop was determined to clear his name by dealing firmly with his militant priests.

At the beginning of April, Fallon took legal action against the signatories. Instead of responding to the priests' request to provide certified copies of the petition to Rome, he established a diocesan tribunal. In each summons, Fallon forwarded the following accusations:

That on or about the 20 March 1913, the defendant signed a declaration which falsely/maliciously states that the Bishop forbade French language instruction to French Canadian children and to

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<sup>120</sup> M.F. Fallon to J.A. Loiselle, February 23, 1914, as quoted in J.A. Loiselle to P.F. Stagni, Apostolic delegate to Canada, 14pp., CRCCF, Fonds Gustave Lacasse, P37/8/7, May 12, 1914.

<sup>121</sup> Rev. J.A. Loiselle to Mgr. M.F. Fallon, c. March 3, 1914, as quoted in Loiselle to Stagni, 12 May 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7.

preaching in French to that nationality...The plaintiff denies these accusations and made every effort to obtain proof, but to no avail.

...The plaintiff alleges false charges were maliciously attempted to mislead the Holy See and to grievously injure the Bishop.<sup>122</sup>

Each of the defendants was summoned to appear before the diocesan officialty, a church tribunal, at St. Mary's Rectory in London. Fallon's close friend, Denis O'Connor was selected by him to preside over the proceedings. The defendants were to substantiate the two charges against the bishop.<sup>123</sup>

At the prescribed hour, each of the signatories appeared before the tribunal. The Officialty consisted of five members: J.A. Hanlon, François X. Laurendeau, P.J. McEwen, D. Foster and Denis O'Connor. Bishop Fallon appointed all of the judges on the tribunal. Much to the surprise of the accused however, there was an unexpected addition to the officialty. The plaintiff, Bishop Fallon, sat not only as the aggrieved, but assumed the roles of judge and prosecutor as well.

J. Edmond Meunier of Windsor was the first of the defendants summoned before the court. His signature on the petition was especially damaging for Fallon given his many years of service in the diocese. Indeed, Meunier had served as diocesan administrator, or acting bishop, prior to the appointment of Fallon. After listening to the officialty's charges against him, Meunier stood and read a declaration of exception against the court on the pretext that the Beaudoin-Fallon dispute was still before the Roman courts. Fallon objected to this and was sustained by the tribunal. Upon this, Meunier quit the room. In response, the Bishop ran after him and uttered a sentence of

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<sup>122</sup> Statement of Claim, Bishop M.F. Fallon, April 2, 1914, as quoted in Loiselle to Stagni, 12 May 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7.

<sup>123</sup> D. O'Connor, President of the Diocesan Officialty, and François X. Laurendeau, Secretary to Reverend J.A. Loiselle, April 1914, quoted in Loiselle to Stagni, 12 May, 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7.

suspension upon Meunier declaring him in contempt of court.<sup>124</sup> The priest returned to the chamber, and for two hours the tribunal subjected him to a barrage of questions. Upon seeing the trouble he had brought down upon himself, and noting that he was obviously outnumbered, the besieged cleric mumbled in regret of the petition, "I am sorry for it." The Bishop and the tribunal accepted this to be a retraction.<sup>125</sup>

Joseph Loïselle of River Canard was the second priest to appear before the tribunal on Friday, May 8, 1914. Upon hearing the accusations made against him, he requested permission to read a short note he had prepared to present to the court in his defense. After some deliberation, the judges consented. The accused then objected to the court, noting a double exception, relating first to the incompetence of the tribunal to try a case already before a superior court, while also objecting to the partiality of a tribunal appointed by the plaintiff. For Loïselle, the tribunal had no right to interfere in a case currently before the highest church courts in Rome. He reasoned that the petition in question related directly to the original dispute awaiting a decision overseas. Loïselle then announced that he would only answer before a judge superior to that of his bishop and his tribunal.<sup>126</sup> Upon completing his prepared text, Loïselle left the room. Fallon, taken by surprise, uttered a series of threats to no avail. Reaching Loïselle at the bottom

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<sup>124</sup> "Cause des curés dénoncés, diffamés, ou suspendus," unpublished manuscript, ACFEO, 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7, pp. 3-4.

<sup>125</sup> "Cause des curés...", p. 4.

<sup>126</sup> Loïselle read the following declaration before the tribunal,

"Je refuse péremptoirement de justifier le témoignage que j'ai rendu en faveur de l'abbé Beaudoin dans la cause actuellement devant la Sainte Rote Romaine jusqu'à ce que jugement soit prononcé par ce tribunal dans la dite cause. De plus, je récusé absolument la compétence du tribunal devant lequel j'ai l'honneur de comparaître en ce moment, et je ne consentirai à répondre que devant un juge supérieure à mon Ordinaire et à ses représentants." Loïselle to Stagni, May 13, 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7.

of the stairs, he issued a sentence of suspension on the grounds of contempt for the diocesan officialty and his accusations regarding the French language.<sup>127</sup>

In his letter to the Apostolic Delegate, Loiselle considered his suspension to be a reprisal for his testimony on behalf of his friend Beaudoin.<sup>128</sup> He argued that the court proceedings were an effort to intimidate or silence all supporters of the priest in question on the bilingual schools issue, and Loiselle was unwilling to desert his colleague of many years. For Loiselle, the humiliation of suspension after twenty-two years of service in the priesthood without blemish was a bitter blow. Perhaps even more painful was the fact that his sentence was leaked to the Associated Press just a few hours later. The newspapers broadcast the scandal of Loiselle's suspension nationwide.<sup>129</sup> The parishioners of River Canard responded to Loiselle's suspension with shock and indignation. A band of his followers organized an assembly at which all male heads of families participated. Here the parishioners decided to resist the arrival of their pastor's temporary replacement, as appointed by the Bishop. As his last official act, Loiselle directed his followers to accept his successor peacefully.

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<sup>127</sup> M.F. Fallon to J.A. Loiselle, May 8, 1914, cited in Loiselle to Stagni, May 12, 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7. The censure declared, "For refusing to justify or retract your declaration that I had forbidden the teaching of French to the children of French Canadians and that I had forbidden preaching in French to Catholics of that nationality, as well as for contempt of the Diocesan Officialty, I hereby remove you from your priestly faculties until such time as you comply with the conditions above disobeyed."

<sup>128</sup> Loiselle to Stagni, May 12, 1914. "La simple perspective d'être molestée à cause de son témoignage, voilà sûrement un grave obstacle à la bonne administration de la justice... C'est pourquoi intimider un témoin, avant qu'il donne son témoignage, ou le molester après l'exercice de ses pénibles fonctions, est un acte que l'on peut qualifier de contrer à la morale sociale... sur ma vie de prêtre on a imprimé une tâche, une censure canonique et une censure suppose un grave délit, un crime. Quel a été mon crime, mon délit? Rendre justice à un confrère, et refuser de me soumettre à des procédés illégaux".

<sup>129</sup> "Cause des curés...", p. 6; for examples of the publicity surrounding the suspension see also *Toronto Star*, May 13, 1914; *Windsor Evening Record*, May 12, 1914.

Pierre L'Heureux of Belle River appeared before the tribunal the week after Loiselle. In similar fashion, L'Heureux read a declaration of double exception against the diocesan officialty. In response, Fallon suspended the priest. The scandal broke more slowly, receiving publicity in the Windsor paper a full two weeks after the event.<sup>130</sup> L'Heureux and Loiselle, despite their humiliation, had been spared the worst punishment. A more dreadful fate awaited Napoleon Saint-Cyr of Stoney Point.

Saint-Cyr followed Loiselle and L'Heureux before the diocesan officialty at the end of May, 1914. The elderly priest offered the same double exception to the tribunal and refused to cooperate. At this point Fallon vowed, "I will chase you from this diocese." At the summer retreat of his priests at the end of June at Sandwich College, Fallon summoned Saint-Cyr to his quarters. There the bishop gave Saint-Cyr three weeks' notice of his pending expulsion from the parish of the Annunciation, Stoney Point and the diocese, after more than twenty-two years of service. The bishop justified his decision by noting that the sixty-five year old pastor had never been properly incardinated, or legally admitted in writing into the diocese.<sup>131</sup> Saint-Cyr had nowhere to turn. His diocese of origin in Nicolet Quebec, refused to take him back, fearing the burden associated with supporting an aging priest.

Upon his expulsion, Saint-Cyr travelled from Montreal throughout Quebec and eventually settled in the small town of Alfred, Ontario, on the Ottawa river. There, Saint-Cyr lived off the financial assistance of his old parishioners and the charity of brother

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<sup>130</sup> *Evening Record*, June 1, 1914.

<sup>131</sup> Napoleon Saint-Cyr to Pope Benedict XV, August 8, 1914, CRCCF, C2/93/10.

priests, most especially Pierre Langlois. He appealed to Rome through the Sacred Consistorial Congregation to determine to which bishop he belonged, since both London and Nicolet had disowned him. He also requested reinstatement to his old parish in Stoney Point. In addition, Saint-Cyr appealed for remuneration from the Ecclesiastical Trust of the diocese of London for his annual contribution of \$300 a year to the pension program. He suggested that a sum of \$300 a year would be an adequate stipend.<sup>132</sup>

On July 19, 1914, Saint-Cyr returned to London in an effort to resolve his differences with the bishop. He pleaded with his superior to arrive at a peaceful resolution. The bishop refused, condemned Saint-Cyr's dissidence, and eventually brought the priest to tears at his doorstep on a summer's night. Saint-Cyr would never serve in the diocese of London again.<sup>133</sup> Fallon's hard line with his militant priests certainly heightened emotions. Just three days after Saint-Cyr's expulsion, the parishioners of Stoney Point assembled to express their disappointment and regret with his removal. In a petition signed by 393 people, they recalled Saint-Cyr's many years of service, in which he oversaw the construction of a church and rectory, and endeavoured to ensure that children received a Catholic education. It was their express hope that Saint-Cyr might return to his beloved parish.<sup>134</sup> The parishioners forwarded a copy of their petition to Pope Pius X.

Fallon's punishment of his militant priests fuelled allegations he was hostile to francophones and their culture. On a confirmation tour through Essex County, the

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<sup>132</sup> Saint-Cyr to Pope Benedict XV, August 8, 1914.

<sup>133</sup> N.D. Saint-Cyr, "Ma dernière rencontre avec Mgr. Fallon", unpublished manuscript, London, Ontario, July 19, 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7.

<sup>134</sup> Petition, parishioners of Stoney Point to Pope Pius X, July 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/7.

Bishop attempted to answer these charges. Before 200 candidates at St. Francis Church in Tilbury, Fallon addressed the congregation stating that newspaper reports regarding his attitude on the bilingual question were nothing less than false and calumnious and he protested his friendship to the francophone community in general.<sup>135</sup> Fallon's sermon revealed that the francophone agitation against him had forced him into a damage-control campaign.

The two parishes of Belle River and River Canard were of particular concern to the bishop, for it was here that Fallon had suspended the priests, and a crisis was brewing. While arriving for confirmation ceremonies at River Canard and later at Belle River, the Bishop found himself confronted by hundreds of irate parishioners. Spokesmen came forward and requested that the Bishop lift his suspension against the priests. According to Alfred Emery, the parishioners of River Canard had resolved not to allow Fallon to confirm their children if he refused to reinstall their pastor Loiselle. A band of passionate militant parishioners had even more nefarious plans. They intended to throw the Bishop in the river if he refused to consider their demands.<sup>136</sup> Anticipating trouble, the Bishop agreed to allow Father Loiselle to sign a retraction denying any accusation he had forbade French instruction and French preaching to francophone children. A similar confrontation by the parishioners of Belle River was quelled in the same fashion. These emotional public protests by francophones in favour of their local pastors foreshadowed future trouble. On these occasions however, the confrontations ended peacefully, with

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<sup>135</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, June 25, 1914.

<sup>136</sup> Emery to Groulx, January 5, 1915, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1290.

the Bishop even receiving applause from some River Canard parishioners for reinstating Loiselle.<sup>137</sup> Although Fallon did reinstate the priests, his controversial leadership would again provoke widespread outcry among francophones in the Windsor border region.

Not everyone in River Canard was as forgiving of the bishop. Indeed, the morning after the mass protest against Fallon's suspension of Loiselle, in the midst of a heavy spring downpour, the bishop's automobile, carrying him on the dirt road from River Canard to McGregor, slid into a ditch. The chauffeur sought the assistance of a nearby farmer named Bissonnette to help dislodge the car. Thinking to impress the farmer, he declared that the vehicle belonged to the bishop. At the mention of Fallon's name, the man's charitable mood suddenly vanished. He snapped, "La voiture de Fallon est dans la boue? Qu'elle reste dans la boue! C'est tout ce que mérite son maître pour la misère faite à nos curés canadiens-français!" According to local *Canayen* lore, the bishop's automobile still lies in a ditch somewhere between River Canard and McGregor.

During the unforgettable events of 1914, other militant priests faced a public reprimand from Fallon. While L'Heureux and Loiselle felt the stinging rebuke of suspension, and Saint-Cyr outright expulsion, other priests, such as Alfred Emery of Paincourt, and Pierre Langlois of Tecumseh received a tongue-lashing from the pulpit of their own churches. From May to June of 1914, during his annual confirmation tours, Fallon delivered sermons denouncing the signatories as slanderers.<sup>138</sup> Parishioners watched in disbelief as their long-time pastors were referred to as liars and criticized for

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<sup>137</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, Monday, June 29, 1914.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Hélène Lacasse Guibord, daughter of Senator Gustave Lacasse, August 25, 1988. Interview with Claire Janisse, daughter of Stanislas Janisse, pioneer parishioner of Our Lady of the Lake parish, October 17, 1987.

their disloyalty. At Alfred Emery's large parish in Pain Court, only about sixty francophone parents showed up to allow the Bishop to confirm their children.<sup>139</sup> At one church, Fallon even offered \$25 000 to anyone who could prove that he was anti-French.<sup>140</sup> The bishop's new *softer* approach failed to endear him to francophone Catholics. In July 1914, the parishioners of St. Anne's, Tecumseh rose up in defense of their pastor, Pierre Langlois, signing a petition to be forwarded to Pellegrino Stagni, the Apostolic Delegate to Canada. The parishioners aimed to inform the Vatican of their wholehearted support for Langlois, but they equally sought to acquaint senior Church officials in Rome with the bishop's campaign of threats and public chastisement from the pulpits of his militant priests.<sup>141</sup>

Beaudoin also experienced the reprimand of the bishop before his parishioners; however, he still waited for his day before the diocesan officialty. Beaudoin recalled that the bishop, in his Sunday lecture on retreat at Sandwich College July 1914, had singled out and criticized those priests who were opposed to him. The bishop then directed his threats towards the pastor of Our Lady of the Lake. "L'évêque a annoncé qu'il ferait un nouveau procès aux prêtres, et qu'il me réserverait pour le dessert."<sup>142</sup>

After a long-awaited trial, the Holy Roman Rota rendered its decision on the Fallon-Beaudoin case. On April 17, 1914, the Rota upheld the Bishop's right to divide Our Lady of the Lake parish. However, it also ordered the newly-created parish of St.

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<sup>139</sup> Emery to Groulx, January 5, 1915, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1290.

<sup>140</sup> *The Detroit News*, June 15, 1914.

<sup>141</sup> Petition of Ste. Anne's parishioners to Monsignor P.F. Stagni, c. July 1914, (over 400 signatures), CRCCE, P37/8/6, 3pp.

<sup>142</sup> L.A. Beaudoin to Alex Grenon, Secretary of ACCEO, 2pp, July 16, 1914, CRCCE, P37/8/6..

Anne's in Walkerville and the diocese to pay \$7000 in debt owed to Our Lady of the Lake parish for the construction of St. Edward's school. While the decision of the Rota upheld Fallon's authority, Ford City's French Canadians took solace in the financial settlement for the school. While both sides claimed victory in the press, Fallon appealed the decision. Beaudoin's parish would never be indemnified.<sup>143</sup>

While francophone militants basked in the moral victory of the court case, they were stricken by the news of a devastating loss. One of the key figures of the resistance, J. Edmond Meunier of Windsor, suffered a stroke and died suddenly in September, 1914 at the age of 57.<sup>144</sup> Aside from Beaudoin, Meunier was the only other leading clerical militant in the Border Cities. No other priest, save Lucien Beaudoin, could command the necessary respect to challenge the Bishop.

As the court case in Rome was pending, Fallon found himself fending off the attack of an Anglo-Montrealer by the name of John C. Caine, a member of the Quebec Legislative Assembly, who accused Fallon of being anti-French and of being subsequently responsible for the existing militant agitation in Ontario. The Bishop replied,

The charge that I am hostile to French Canadians is too grotesque to deserve notice. That I have stood strongly for the efficiency of public education...I hold rather a credit than a blame. That I shall not be intimidated by pestilent nationalism I have already publicly demonstrated.

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<sup>143</sup> *The Evening Record* trumpeted on its front page, "Bishop Fallon Must Pay Priest \$7000 Indemnity", March 31, 1915, while the *Catholic Record*, April 5, 1915 charged that this was factually incorrect, and that it was the new parish that would be expected to reimburse the pastor. Aside from the \$6350 owed on the school mortgage, the court directed the new parish to pay \$274 in interest on the debt, and \$510 in overdue contributions from Walkerville churchgoers who had been in arrears on their donations to the 1908 reconstruction of Our Lady of the Lake church.

<sup>144</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 14, 1914.

That I regard the much discussed Regulation XVII as eminently fair and just, I have already stated publicly and privately, and am prepared to do so again, should the occasion require it.<sup>145</sup>  
For Fallon, accusations of chauvinism failed to account for his passionate promotion of quality Catholic education as a means to preserve the province's separate schools.

Some French Canadian militants secretly applauded Fallon's outspoken opinions. His actions and comments had helped to reawaken the militant spirit in many and hence produced the desired outcome. A. J. Curotte, a priest from Montreal and one of Beaudoin's closest confidantes, declared

Pourquoi ne pas dire que c'est l'attaque brutale de Monseigneur Fallon contre le français qui a réveillé les énergies endormies, qui a déchainé toutes nos forces nationales?... Il aurait mieux fait d'endormir les Canadiens français par le cloroforme des paroles moelleuses et procédés douceureuses [sic]?<sup>146</sup>

For Curotte, Bishop Fallon served as the perfect foil for francophone militants. He was the catalyst needed to ignite latent passions for the French language in the Windsor border region. In time his persona would rally thousands of francophone militants.

On February 2, 1915, Beaudoin and Fallon had a second confrontation in the rectory of St. Alphonsus church in Windsor. Without informing Fallon that he had a copy of the Rota's decision on the division of the parish, Beaudoin asked Fallon who would pay for the debt and fees of St. Edward's school. According to Beaudoin, Fallon assured the priest that he would pay nothing for the school in question. Beaudoin accused the bishop of seeking the disappearance of this bilingual school, and vowed that French Canadians would rise up to save Catholic education for their children. He then

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<sup>145</sup> Bishop Fallon to the Honourable John C. Caine, 3pp., c. July 1914, CRCCF, P37/8/8.

<sup>146</sup> Reverend A. Curotte to L.A. Beaudoin, 28 January 1915, 3pp., CRCCF, C2/94/3.

proceeded to call for French at the new parish church of St. Anne's in Walkerville, where a majority of parishioners were in fact francophones.<sup>147</sup>

Fallon warned Beaudoin to refrain from meddling in issues that did not concern his own parish. He then declared that Beaudoin would soon stand before the diocesan officialty to answer charges that he had accused his superior of persecuting French Canadian priests and of making trips to Toronto to abolish the French language.<sup>148</sup> Beaudoin refused to recognize the authority of the Officialty while his case was still pending in Rome. He informed the Bishop that he would appeal the measure before the Apostolic Delegate.<sup>149</sup> Beaudoin concluded with the prediction that he, Langlois and Emery would likely be suspended by the Diocesan Officialty.

On February 16, 1915, Bishop Fallon initiated legal proceedings against Beaudoin and Alfred Emery through his diocesan officialty. Fallon condemned Beaudoin's allegations that his visits to Toronto were designed to work for the abolition of the French language. What probably perturbed Fallon most about Beaudoin was his resolute disposition. The bishop wrote, "On the said date, February 1, 1915, you refused to retract the charges you had made, contenting yourself with saying, 'I will die by my affirmations.'" <sup>150</sup> Facing the bishop's summons to appear before the officialty, both Emery and Beaudoin vowed to remain mum.<sup>151</sup> The bishop responded by demanding that the priests provide substantial proofs of their accusations in writing within fifteen

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<sup>147</sup> L.A. Beaudoin to Alex Grenon ("Bien cher monsieur"), c. February, 1915, 10pp., CRCCF, C2/94/3.

<sup>148</sup> Beaudoin to Grenon, c. February, 1915.

<sup>149</sup> Beaudoin to Alex Grenon, c. February, 1915; and Bishop M.F. Fallon to Pellegrino Stagni, May 26, 1913, 33pp., CRCCF, C2/94/3.

<sup>150</sup> Monsignor Fallon to Rev. L.A. Beaudoin, February 16, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3, 2pp.

<sup>151</sup> Fallon to Beaudoin, Feb. 16, 1915.

days or face the diocesan tribunal. The long ordeal that followed embittered their two congregations for years to come.

All evidence suggests that Fallon had correctly determined that Beaudoin was the ringleader of the francophone resistance. The priest had indeed written a series of articles on the French language situation in the diocese of London for such Quebec newspapers as *La Patrie*. He had inspired school trustees to resist the bilingual school regulations, and had invited ACFEQ officials in Ottawa to assist local militants in their efforts to support the bilingual schools. His criticism of the bishop had been directed to officials in Rome in an effort to challenge his education agenda. Naturally, Fallon sought to suppress Beaudoin's activities and clear his name in light of these attacks.<sup>152</sup>

Beaudoin responded to Fallon's terms by emphasizing that the Sacred Consistorial Congregation had appointed a Special Commissary to investigate whether he had maliciously or falsely accused the Bishop. The Consistorial Congregation granted a special mandate to Pellegrino Stagni. Unbeknownst to both parties, Stagni subsequently refused to accept this mandate. Beaudoin placed his trust in the Church's superior court to protect him from the proceedings of the diocesan officialty. Noting in a letter to Fallon that the Holy See had suspended the Bishop's jurisdiction in their dispute by referring the case to the Apostolic Delegate, Beaudoin refused to abide by his request for written proof of his previous allegations.<sup>153</sup> Fallon's personal secretary, Monsignor

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<sup>152</sup> Joseph Gignac to L.A. Beaudoin, Feb. 16, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3; see also *La Patrie*, "Monseigneur Fallon est condamné à Rome", le 20 février, 1915.

<sup>153</sup> Beaudoin to Fallon, February 27, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3. Emery also refused to comply with Fallon's demands. Emery to Groulx, January 5, 1915, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1270.

A.P. Mahoney claimed that in fact, the Bishop did not learn of the Roman court's actions until a much later date.<sup>154</sup>

In February 1915, the Roman Courts delivered a second decision regarding the division of Our lady of the Lake parish. Fallon addressed a letter to the Catholics of Walkerville. The Bishop gave notice that Beaudoin would lose any remaining jurisdiction over Walkerville's Catholics. Immediately, Father Blair of St. Anne's Walkerville launched a door-to-door campaign to inform francophone families to abide by the definitive ruling of the Rota and begin attending their new parish. Much to the dismay of a significant number of parishioners, Blair ignored the French language and served the congregation only in English.<sup>155</sup> In essence, francophones were being directed to stop worshipping in their language. Fallon did nothing to correct this situation.

The legal dispute over the division of Our Lady of the Lake parish also proved to be significant for another reason; it left a profound impression upon the congregation. Militants had grown increasingly attached to their pastor of twenty-three years; many parishioners saw the division as a thinly-veiled reprimand by the bishop. Fallon's refusal to abide by the entire decision of the Roman courts only annoyed them further. Fallon and his new parish had yet to remunerate Beaudoin and Our Lady of the Lake parish for the sum of \$7000 for the loss of St. Edward's School in Walkerville. Fallon refused to pay, arguing that the court ruling had actually indicated that the new parish was

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with Monsignor A.P. Mahoney, 1986, in Marcel Dagenais, "Bilingual Education in Ontario: Issues and Perspectives Influencing Development", (Ph.D. Thesis, Wayne State University, Detroit, 1988), p. 108.

<sup>155</sup> Declaration by the French Canadians of Walkerville, over 200 signatures, 2pp., CRCCF, C2/94/3, c. March 1, 1915.

responsible for this debt. For Beaudoin's parishioners, it appeared that the bishop was openly defying Rome, for he did nothing to compel the St. Anne's parish to make payments during the remaining three years of Beaudoin's life.

As the weeks passed, Fallon continued his legal proceedings against Beaudoin. On March 17, 1915, discounting the priest's legal recourse to the Holy Roman Rota and his legal counsel, Count Vincenzo Sacconi, the Bishop wrote,

...I do not recognize any authority whatever in « Comte Sacconi ». All ecclesiastical tribunals rest on the same foundation, viz... : the authority of the Church. And to establish my case against you, I lay my complaint before the Diocesan Tribunal, as Canon Law directs.<sup>156</sup>

Three weeks after receiving this correspondence, the diocesan officialy directed Beaudoin to retract unconditionally all statements alleging that Fallon had forbidden instruction in French. The priest would also have to apologize for accusing the Bishop of being an oppressor of French Canadians. Finally, he would assume all court expenses incurred in connection with his legal battles with Fallon. The diocesan officialy gave Beaudoin ten days to comply with the terms of the judgment.<sup>157</sup> Emery was also ordered to retract his signature from his letter of support within ten days.

If Beaudoin had conceded to the demands of the Bishop's appointed tribunal, he would have assumed sole responsibility for the French language controversy in the diocese. Had he accepted, Beaudoin would have absolved Fallon of any role for the existing strife in his parish. The priest would never abide by the ruling of the officialy. Conversely, his parishioners would never forget the tribunal's persecution of their pastor. They labeled the French Canadian secretary of the tribunal, François Xavier Laurendeau,

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<sup>156</sup> M.F. Fallon to L.A. Beaudoin, March 17, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3.

<sup>157</sup> Communiqué, Diocesan Tribunal of London, D.O'Connor, Presiding official, and F.X. Laurendeau, secretary, to L.A. Beaudoin, April 8, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3.

a turncoat, and hatchet man of the bishop. For Alfred Emery, who had vacationed with his old school chum, “Frank” Laurendeau and future Quebec historian Lionel Groulx on previous occasions, this development changed the nature of their relationship dramatically: Laurendeau’s participation on Fallon’s tribunal as secretary put an abrupt end to their long friendship.<sup>158</sup>

On April 9, the date on which they received the ultimatum, Beaudoin and Emery responded to the demands put forth by the diocesan tribunal. The priests objected first to the nomination process for the judges, who were appointed by the plaintiff, Fallon. They also objected to the tribunal on the grounds of incompetence, since the whole case was to be judged by the Holy See.<sup>159</sup> In spite of this protest, pressure mounted on both priests to retract their statements before the fateful tenth day. If they resisted beyond the April 19<sup>th</sup> deadline, they would likely face suspension from their priestly duties. Incredibly, on the eve of this ominous deadline, Beaudoin received news from his legal counsel in Montreal, Father Joseph Gignac.

Sacconi [Beaudoin’s lawyer in Rome] cabled me yesterday that the Roman tribunal just sent new decree forbidding Monsignor [Fallon] any new measure against you or friend [A.D. Emery], as you enjoy both its protection. For God’s sake keep firm, you and friend as future justice and truth rest on you both, don’t sign or retract anything.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Alfred Emery and François Xavier Laurendeau had studied at the Collège Sainte-Thérèse alongside the future historian Lionel Groulx. All three men had vacationed together and both Laurendeau and Emery had personally contributed funds to Groulx’s education in Europe. Emery to Groulx, January 5, 1915, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1270. See also Lionel Groulx, *Correspondance 1894-1967: Un étudiant à l’école de l’Europe*, (Montréal: Éditions Fides, 1989), pp. 538, 543, 551, 615, 617; Michel Bock, *Quand la nation débordait ses frontières : les minorités françaises dans la pensée de Lionel Groulx*, (Montreal: Editions Hurtubise HMH, 2004), p. 238. Curiously, Groulx would never go as far as his friend Emery in criticizing Laurendeau’s failure to take the militant side in the dispute with Bishop Fallon.

<sup>159</sup> Declaration by L.A. Beaudoin to D. O’Connor, April 9, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3.

<sup>160</sup> Telegram, Joseph Gignac to L.A. Beaudoin, April 18, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3.

Rome's intervention in the proceedings of the diocesan officialty brought a dramatic halt to Fallon's kangaroo court. Beaudoin and Emery were now protected from their bishop.

On the next day, Beaudoin wrote to Denis O'Connor, presiding judge of the officialty, making direct reference to the intervention of the Holy See.

Je r cuse l'Officialit  de London comme incomp tente, parce que Sa Saintet  Benoit XV par un r crit pontifical, a d f r  ma cause et celle de mes confr res au Tribunal de la S. Rote romaine. Il serait donc injurieux au Saint-Si ge qu'un tribunal inf rieur fut saisi de cette m me cause pour la conna tre et la juger.<sup>161</sup>

The intensity of the conflict between Beaudoin and his Bishop receded for the time being.

While the official basis of the dispute was the division of Beaudoin's parish, the underlying issue remained the priests' resistance to Fallon's bilingual schools policy.

Significantly, this conflict required the direct intervention of Rome at the eleventh hour to spare Beaudoin and Emery from Fallon's questionable tribunal. An uneasy ceasefire had been imposed by Rome, but it would not last.

Within a year, Rome would once again wade into Ontario's bilingual schools controversy. Pope Benedict XV issued the encyclical *Commisso divinitus* to the archbishops and bishops of Canada on September 8, 1916. The document sought to settle the discord between the Irish and French Canadian factions within the Catholic church over the bilingual schools question. To appear balanced, the pontiff weighed both viewpoints. With respect to the French Canadians, he wrote,

They wish...that priests should be appointed to the churches in due proportion to the number of Catholics of both languages, in such ways that in places where the French Canadians form a majority, a priest of their language and race should be selected and that in parishes where they are in a certain number, French should be used in preaching and in the exercise of other sacred offices

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<sup>161</sup> L.A. Beaudoin to D. O'Connor, April 19, 1915, CRCCF, C2/94/3.

in the same way as English and finally they desire that in the separate schools, the children should be more fully and suitably taught the French language after their own manner.<sup>162</sup> In this letter, the Pope defended the right of linguistic minorities to instruction and catechism in their mother tongue. While weighing the grievances of the French, the Pope also considered the concerns expressed by Anglophones from areas where they formed a clear majority. He wrote,

It is added that too often the French Canadian priests are deficient in their knowledge of English, or speak it imperfectly, or neglect it out of preference for their own tongue, and thus their ministry is of little efficacy or unequal to local exigencies. Then as regards separate schools, it is pointed out that if French were taught in the manner claimed by French Canadians, it would be greatly detrimental to the proper teaching of English which is the language of the province, and prejudicial to the parents who would be obliged either to provide at their own expense that which is wanting in order that their children should be thoroughly and completely instructed in the English language, or else to abandon Catholic schools and send their sons to the public or neutral schools, which would be totally wrong. Finally, it is contended that this system of education may provoke the ill-will of the state authorities against the separate schools on the ground that they prove inadequate to the needs of public welfare, and thus endanger the benefit of the law authorizing Catholics to have their own separate schools.<sup>163</sup>

The Pope lamented the divisiveness of the dispute. He urged his bishops to “make every effort in peace and charity to restore agreement and concord amongst the faithful.”<sup>164</sup>

In light of the opinions held by opposing factions in the church, the Pope recommended a spirit of conciliation.

Nobody can deny that the civil government of Ontario has the right to exact that children should learn English in the schools and likewise that the Catholics of Ontario legitimately require that it should be perfectly taught...Nor, on the other hand, is there any reason to contest the right of the French Canadians living in the province to claim, in a suitable way however, that French should be taught in the schools attended by a certain number of their children; nor are they indeed to be blamed for upholding what is so dear to them. Nevertheless, let the Catholics of the Dominion remember that the one thing of supreme importance above all others is to have Catholic schools and not to imperil their existence. How these two requirements are to be met, namely a thorough knowledge of English and an equitable teaching of French for French Canadian children, it is obvious that in the case of schools subject to the public administration, the matter cannot be dealt with independently of the

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<sup>162</sup> Letter of Our Most Holy Lord, Benedict XV to the Archbishops and Bishops of Canada, (Rome, 1916), as quoted in Michael Fitzpatrick, “The Role of Bishop M.F. Fallon in the Conflict Between French Catholics and Irish Catholics in the Ontario Bilingual Schools Question,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1969), p. 146.

<sup>163</sup> Letter, Benedict XV, in Fitzpatrick, p. 146.

<sup>164</sup> Letter, Benedict XV, in Fitzpatrick, p. 146.

government. But this does not prevent the bishops in their earnest care for the salvation of souls, from exerting their utmost activity to make counsels of moderation prevail with a view to obtaining that what is fair and just should be granted on both sides.<sup>165</sup>

Many French Canadians took solace in the notion that the Pope had spoken out in their defense. On the other hand, Anglophone Catholics expressed relief at the notion that the preservation of separate schools should be paramount in the minds of all the faithful, overriding concerns about language or culture. Bishop Fallon embraced the latter interpretation, discarding any notion of equitable teaching of French for francophones in Windsor. This message prompted an open letter to the Pope by Archbishop L.N. Bégin of Quebec City. Bégin openly rejected Fallon's argument that the struggle for bilingual schools posed any threat whatsoever to the Catholic right to publicly funded confessional schools in Ontario.<sup>166</sup> In short, the papal letter failed to end the in-fighting within the Canadian Catholic Church over bilingual schools, exposing ethnic divisions within the very hierarchy of the Church.

On January 24, 1917, the bishops of Ontario met in Ottawa to discuss the contents of the papal letter. Here, Fallon sought to defend himself before his peers, by dismissing accusations he was anti-French. He offered two arguments for his previous positions on the bilingual schools. Fallon asserted that French-speaking Catholics had no lawful cause for complaint against Regulation XVII, with regard to French language instruction. In addition, he noted that the educational needs of francophone Catholics in Ontario were far more generously provided for than the religious and educational needs of English-

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<sup>165</sup> Letter, Benedict XV, in Fitzpatrick, p. 150.

<sup>166</sup> Letter, Archbishop L. N. Bégin to Pope Benedict XV, c. printemps, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

speaking Catholics where French Canadians exercised the authority as bishop<sup>167</sup>. Fallon relayed his thoughts to the public via the *Catholic Record*. In his opinion, the pope's encyclical had discredited the unlawful francophone agitation. Moreover, the bishop argued that, "any action of ours that would in the public mind be judged as sympathetic with the dying agitation would go far to nullify the good effect of the papal letter."<sup>168</sup> In short, the papal letter did nothing to compel Fallon to redress existing francophone grievances regarding French instruction.

*Commissio divinitus* disappointed many militants, including Alfred Emery.<sup>169</sup> The pope's insistence that Catholic schools must prevail even over concerns of language could hardly be presented as a victory for francophones, since it echoed Fallon's main arguments. The Vatican's agenda of accommodation with secular states, was coupled with a philosophy that embraced cultural integration with but a limited sympathy for minority language rights. To complicate an already deteriorating situation, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council shortly thereafter ruled that the province was indeed within its jurisdiction in imposing Regulation XVII. These two losses, coupled with the weak resistance movement in the schools themselves, only added to militant frustrations. Indeed, within a year of these two devastating decisions, the Chief Inspector for Essex declared all but one of the bilingual schools to be in compliance with Regulation XVII.

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<sup>167</sup> Fallon, as quoted in Fitzpatrick, p. 150.

<sup>168</sup> *Catholic Record*, October, 1916, as quoted in Fitzpatrick, p. 151.

<sup>169</sup> Emery was greatly disappointed with the ruling from Rome, but he was hardly surprised. In February 1915, he had predicted that "Je crois bien à la religion catholique mais je commence à avoir des doutes sur son administration. Rome semble ne vouloir qu'une chose: l'autorité. La justice et le bien des âmes viennent bien loin après." Emery to Groulx, February 1, 1915, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1270.

(see Chapter Two) These court battles served as evidence to francophone militants that Fallon was winning the war over the bilingual schools question.

In 1920, a Commission of Inquiry conducted by the Holy Roman Rota (the Church's highest court) found no evidence to prove that Fallon had ordered the teaching nuns to cease French instruction.<sup>170</sup> The Roman tribunal, relying on the investigative work of Pellegrino Stagni declared that a misunderstanding had taken place: "If certain sisters abstained from teaching French in the schools *for a time*, that is by no means to be attributed to an order...of Bishop Fallon, but only to the misunderstanding of the Superior of the Sisters."<sup>171</sup> Witnesses testified that no order was given to cease reciting prayers and teaching catechism in French. Instruction in this language was suspended in some schools while the nuns attempted to determine what the requirements of the Department of Education were. The findings of the court are enlightening as much for what they do not say as for their rationale in supporting Fallon. Indeed, testimonials

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<sup>170</sup> Holy Roman Rota, Decision, Beaudoin vs. Fallon, June 15, 1920, as published in the *Catholic Record*, June 11, 1921. The judges of the Rota declared, "...the appellants were far from able to prove the truth of the assertion contained in the declaration, viz., that Bishop Fallon by his episcopal direction had forbidden the French language to be taught to children of French Canadian parents and preaching in French to Catholics of that nationality, because from the whole process, by the evidence of witnesses brought forward by the appellants themselves and by documents produced by them, it is evident that the declaration in question is a fabrication and altogether foreign to the truth"; several witnesses interviewed testified corroborating this interpretation, including Joseph O. Réaume, who declared, "Je crois que dans la bouche de Mgr Fallon, cette expression veut dire qu'il est contre l'enseignement bilingue comme système, mais qu'il n'est pas contre l'enseignement du français. Dans la bouche d'autres personnes que j'ai entendues, l'exclusion de l'enseignement bilingue équivaut à l'exclusion du français."; with regard to allegations that Fallon had ordered an end to all French at the children's mass at St. Alphonsus in Windsor, Euclide Jacques, Dominic Gourd and Christina Menard, all three of whom signed the famous 1914 petition of Windsor French Canadians requesting the creation of national parishes and the division of the diocese in two, all of them stated that there had been no change whatsoever in the language used at the children's mass for several years, since the arrival of J. Edmond Meunier in 1901. Joseph Réaume, Euclide Jacques, Dominic Gourd, Christina Menard, testimony to the Holy Roman Rota, c.1919, Pellegrino Stagni, legal scribe, Vatican Archives, as found in Pasquale Fiorino, "Bishop Michael Francis Fallon: the Man and His Times, 1910-1931," (Ph.D. Thesis, Gregorian Pontifical University, Rome, 1992), p. 170.

<sup>171</sup> Fiorino, p. 170.

suggest that Fallon directed the sisters to follow the existing school guidelines on French instruction under the terms of Regulation 12<sup>172</sup>, in 1910, when determining whether to teach in French. What the Rota's decision did not mention was that, unlike their fellow sisters in Belle River and Walkerville, the Ursuline sisters of Windsor did not stop French instruction *for a time*, following their appointment by Fallon, but permanently. Under Regulation 12, French was to be used in schools where the language was predominant, and therefore, since Windsor certainly did not have a predominantly francophone population, the justification could be made, after this short omission to the course of study, that according to the terms of the laws of the province, French should not be part of the curriculum. Such an interpretation overlooked the fact that all of the Separate schools in Windsor had traditionally included French in their daily instruction until 1910. Fallon's direction could conveniently hide therefore behind the letter of the law as a means to abolish French, rather than observe the spirit of Regulation 12, which had always allowed for French instruction in schools where urbanization had engulfed a previously francophone community.

G. Howard Ferguson's own response in the Legislative Assembly even suggested that the definition of a preponderantly francophone community allowed for some flexibility with regard to the "hitherto" clause in Regulation XVII.

We assume that where a French community grows on to an English community in the province of Ontario that the French language is the prevailing language. When French prevails they operate under regulation 15. They have the right; it is not a question of toleration. If it were possible to plant an entire French community somewhere isolated by itself the word 'hitherto' would apply, and then it would be designated and come under regulation 17. <sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Regulation 12 was introduced in 1890 under the Liberal government of Oliver Mowat. See chapter one.

<sup>173</sup> *Evening Record*, April 12, 1916.

Few could dispute that the francophones of Windsor formed a community on the shores of the Detroit river prior to the appearance of the English-speaking urban centre of Windsor. The Rota, perhaps unaware of this unique situation, never mentioned the fact that Fallon, to restore a spirit of good will with francophones, could have intervened to work for the reintroduction of a French lesson into the daily routine in Windsor's separate schools rather than restore an entirely bilingual curriculum per se. Fallon would never make any attempt to do this. Thus, the Bishop's protestations that he was not against French instruction, just against bilingual schools collapses. Fallon's aim was to integrate the francophone community into the greater Anglophone society. The Rota's ruling endorsed the authority of a Bishop whose credibility had clearly been damaged in the eyes of many francophones. Coincidentally, it also upheld the greater interests of the Church by maintaining its traditional structure of authority. It did nothing whatsoever to undo a flagrant injustice.

The Rota's decision also endorsed Fallon's suspension of Loiselle, and his expulsion of St. Cyr, but it did criticize the bishop on two counts. First, it declared his suspension of Fr. L'Heureux to be improper, since Fallon had not first warned L'Heureux in writing regarding his agitation. More importantly, the Rota condemned the bishop's inappropriate role during the trials of his priests before the Diocesan Officialty. Fallon's active role as a judge and prosecutor in a case in which he was actually the plaintiff raised serious questions regarding procedure and impartiality. Accusations of suspicion against Fallon made by his rebellious priests were in fact sustained by the Rota, who accused him of using his authority in an undue fashion.

...particularly from the nature of the case and its peculiar circumstances, and above all because the Ordinary [Fallon] instead of having the Fiscal Promoter [ O'Connor] bring the action, preferred to conduct it himself as plaintiff, to be present personally at the sessions of the Tribunal, towards whom he also had the relation of Ordinary, decreeing by his authority that the defendants should be cited.<sup>174</sup>

This ruling is troublesome, for while the Rota supported Fallon's sanctions against St. Cyr and Loiselle, both men were charged with contempt for walking out of proceedings that the court itself deemed to be dubious. Officials in Rome were clearly upset at Fallon's abuse of authority in persecuting clerical militants whose ultimate sin was their refusal to agree with the bishop's opinions regarding bilingual schools. However, Fallon was not without his allies. Some Church officials in Rome and Ottawa sought to keep Fallon in London, because of his commitment to evangelize the Protestant population in a Canada that was becoming increasingly English-speaking. Apostolic Delegate Sbaretto had lobbied to place Fallon in the bishop's chair in London. His successor, Pellegrino Stagni laboured to keep him there even after the Ford City Riot in 1917.<sup>175</sup> Even though the Rota clearly aimed to uphold Fallon's authority as a Catholic bishop, it did state with regard to this controversy, that his opinions on the bilingual schools were "not without error".<sup>176</sup> Publicly, Fallon left most of this information out of his public commentary and address to Catholics of the diocese. Instead, he emphasized the support of the Rota and the pope for his position that issues regarding French instruction should not jeopardize the survival of Catholic schools in Ontario. His omission conveniently ignored his abuse

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<sup>174</sup>Holy Roman Rota, Decision, Beaudoin vs. Fallon, June 15, 1920, in the *Catholic Record*, June 11, 1921.

<sup>175</sup> Choquette, pp. 257, 260. See also Roberto Perin, *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

<sup>176</sup> Holy Roman Rota, Decision, Beaudoin v. Fallon, in the *Catholic Record*, June 11, 1921.

of authority in crushing the clerical militants leading the bilingual schools resistance.

The controversy over Fallon's tribunal would linger for years to come.

### Conclusion

Bishop Fallon played an important role in the successful implementation of Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region. However, Fallon was part of a line of Irish bishops in Ontario, beginning with Toronto's John Joseph Lynch, who rejected the notion that language was a protective barrier for the Catholic faith, and advocated integration into the anglophone majority. This stance found favour with the Holy See even before Fallon arrived in the diocese of London. In this context, we might see his controversial meeting with Education official William Hanna as part of a strategy of quiet diplomacy with the state to secure Catholic school rights. Indeed, Fallon acted as the delegate of most of Ontario's Catholic bishops in his lobby for the elimination of bilingual schools with Premier Whitney. Fallon's campaign was part of a larger movement to preserve the separate schools and the place of the Catholic Church in a rapidly modernizing and secularizing society. His removal of the bilingual Holy Names sisters in the spring of 1910 against the express wishes of the Windsor separate school trustees, coupled with the suspicious disappearance of French from several bilingual schools in the border region soon thereafter all laid the groundwork for the successful application of Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region. Fallon's public condemnation of the bilingual schools just weeks after his arrival in the diocese of London also served the same purpose: abolition of these schools. Petitions to Fallon to restore French instruction met with only limited success, leaving three of Windsor's four

separate schools with an English-only curriculum for the next two decades. The bishop's orders to his francophone priests at the Sandwich retreat of June 1910 to submit to his stance on the bilingual schools for the sake of saving the Catholic separate schools effectively exposed a split among francophone priests; two-thirds of the priests opted for obedience perhaps to save the separate schools, and a minority of eight or so chose to resist.

For those priests who opposed Fallon, an ultramontane coupling of language and religion commonly seen in Quebec fuelled their zeal. The Catholic faith was closely associated with the preservation of the French language and a francophone, if not French Canadian identity. Such a stance left the priests, especially Lucien Beaudoin, open to the accusation that they were insensitive to the needs of their English-speaking parishioners. Indeed, Beaudoin spent much of his time consumed in the bilingual schools resistance. Given their small number, the militant priests' task was made especially difficult.

These competing Catholic worldviews were incompatible and destined to clash. The bishop moved swiftly to punish the leading militant, Beaudoin, for working to undermine his crusade against the bilingual schools. Census statistics clearly suggest that Fallon's decision to divide Beaudoin's parish and create an English only-church, could be interpreted as an attempt to punish the priest, since it ignored Walkerville's francophone majority. The bishop's threat to move Beaudoin to another parish further limited his ability to play a leading role in the bilingual school resistance.

The bishop's hard line approach to the schools issue paved the way for conflict. His outspoken support for Regulation XVII in 1912,<sup>177</sup> coupled with his public condemnation of his clerical detractors from their parish pulpits irritated many otherwise complacent francophones. His decision to prosecute these priests before his diocesan officialty for accusing him of working to abolish all instruction in French emboldened a growing number of French-speaking Catholics to take action, as witnessed in the parish petitions, and most notably the mass protests at Belle River and River Canard in 1914. The bishop's poor handling of this issue clearly worried his superiors in Rome. To dispel concerns that he was being insensitive to francophone needs, Fallon forwarded dubious statistics to Rome to justify his hardline refusal to address parental requests for French instruction in Windsor's schools. For the bishop, Windsor was under the jurisdiction of Regulation 12, an 1890 school edict that denied francophone families access to French instruction for their children in a predominantly English-speaking city under specific circumstances. The bishop created those circumstances in part with his appointment of the Ursuline sisters to Windsor's St. Alphonsus school. When the religious orders ended a 130 year regional tradition of French instruction in three of the city's schools in 1911, just one year after Fallon's arrival, francophones protested this injustice to no avail. The introduction of Regulation XVII the following year made these changes permanent. The bishop claimed to be open to instruction of French as a subject, and he could very well have used his influence on provincial officials to address this injustice. Instead, he opted to do nothing. Fallon's claim to friendship with the French Canadian was akin to that of

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<sup>177</sup> *The Catholic Record*, November 12, 1912.

Lord Durham: both aimed to lift francophones out of their “economic backwardness” by integrating them into the greater Anglophone population. Church officials would express concern for the bishop’s troubled leadership and would eventually suggest a transfer for Fallon to another diocese where francophones were conspicuously absent.<sup>178</sup> Such an opinion was hardly a ringing endorsement of the mitred warrior’s performance as bishop. Nevertheless, Fallon did convince authorities in Rome that the inefficiency of the bilingual schools posed a serious threat to the survival of the Catholic separate school system. Both Fallon and francophone militants in the region considered the release of Benedict XV’s encyclical, *Commisso divinitus* to be a victory for the opponents of the bilingual schools. The preservation of Catholic schools and peaceful relations with civil authorities prevailed over questions of language and cultural identity. Within a year of the encyclical’s release, most Catholic francophones in the Windsor border region had abandoned the provincial resistance movement to Regulation XVII. A second encyclical, *Litteris Apostolicis* was released in October, 1918 criticizing the unjust nature of Regulation XVII, but it was too late to reverse the damage to the resistance.<sup>179</sup>

While Fallon could declare victory over the bilingual school resistance with the 1916 publication of *Commisso divinitus*, the Holy Roman Rota’s 1920 final decision regarding Fallon’s use of the diocesan officialty to crush his clerical militants could

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<sup>178</sup> See Fiorino, pp. 177-184. Stagni notes that Roman officials first suggested an American diocese, (much larger) for Fallon, to appear as a promotion, and later offered the bishop the diocese of Calgary and St. John’s Newfoundland. None of these choices involved a considerable population of francophone Catholics. The Vatican, according to Fiorino, was under pressure from the Quebec hierarchy to act. In the end, Vatican officials, especially Stagni, defended Fallon, for fear of encouraging the divisiveness associated with French Canadian nationalists.

<sup>179</sup> *The View From Rome*, p. xlix-l.

hardly be considered a clear-cut victory. Still, the Holy See refused to sanction the behaviour of the priests and ultimately upheld Fallon's authority as bishop in public at least. Fallon used his authority to wage war against the bilingual schools of Ontario. Aside from publicly condemning their academic standards, the bishop intervened in Windsor to prevent the reintroduction of French instruction. After successfully splitting the ranks of his francophone priests over the question of preserving the separate schools, the bishop set his sights on the leading clerical militants. His vow to secretary Hanna to crush the clerical agitator had been carried out through his dubiously constructed diocesan tribunal. Within six years of launching this ruthless crusade, all of the clerical agitators were silenced. By muzzling his militant francophone priests, Fallon had successfully used his authority to strip the bilingual school resistance of some of its most passionate, educated, and talented speakers. This suppression, while ensuring the long-term success of Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region, actually fired the emotions of many otherwise passive francophones, temporarily spawning a far more radical movement within the bilingual schools resistance and triggering more troubles with lay militants.

## Chapter Four: Popular Uprising: The Standoff at Our Lady of the Lake Parish

### Introduction

By August of 1917, Bishop Fallon was well on his way to crushing francophone resistance to Regulation XVII. Following his disciplinary action against five militant priests and Pope Benedict's encyclical *Commissio divinitus*, nearly all public resistance to the school edict in Essex and Kent counties disappeared. These setbacks, coupled with the legacy of failed parish petitions for more French, had apparently broken the spirit of many militants. However, a series of events in the summer of 1917 served to re-ignite the passion of francophone militants. The issue of conscription, which had long been a source of contention among French- and English-Canadians, erupted into a full-fledged national crisis when Prime Minister Robert Borden returned from an overseas trip to the front lines promising to introduce compulsory military service. A second emotional issue of a more local nature- the death of the region's leading militant priest-left a francophone parish in a state of heightened uncertainty. Fallon's controversial replacement tied the bilingual schools issue to a religious matter that would normally have been an exclusively administrative decision. The subsequent public showdown over this pastoral appointment and its violent climax would require the intervention of Rome to calm the tensions. The Bishop's actions spawned an era of spirited demonstrations and new petitions to Rome. The militancy of the resistance following the Ford City riot eventually subsided and proved incapable of preventing the eventual collapse of a relatively well-orchestrated parish boycott. Fallon's questionable pastoral appointment to Our Lady of

the Lake Parish would provoke a dramatic crisis and violent confrontation that would rock the diocese of London for more than a year.

### An Atmosphere of Tension

In the summer of 1917, just as Borden introduced the matter of conscription to a war-weary Dominion, francophone militants faced their own crisis. The resistance to Regulation XVII was collapsing and editorials in the local daily newspaper denigrated francophones for their enlistment numbers in the war effort. As anti-conscriptionists turned to an ailing former prime minister to lead the campaign for voluntary enlistment, proponents of the bilingual schools in Essex and Kent counties searched for a leader of their own. On August 19, francophone militants lost their most passionate clerical crusader when Lucien Beaudoin died suddenly of a stroke in a Montreal hospital while recovering from a bout of phlebitis. His death was overshadowed by the escalating tension between French- and English-speaking Canadians nationwide. Beaudoin, while frustrated with the apathy of some of his own parishioners, had successfully instilled in many of his congregation an unwavering pride in their French heritage. His legacy would foster future tension and challenge both his pastoral successor and his bishop.

Regional tensions arose in part due to a series of articles appearing in the French Column of the daily newspaper, the *Windsor Evening Record*, just prior to Beaudoin's death. Columnist Gaspard Pacaud revealed to the public for the first time that the Ontario bishops had in fact supported Fallon's overtures towards the provincial government

regarding the bilingual schools.<sup>1</sup> Pacaud reported that this secret coalition of English-speaking bishops in 1910 bore great fruit. Fallon alone could not be blamed for the trouble. Indeed, all of the English-speaking bishops had “abandoned” the province’s francophones and joined forces with a government intent on eliminating the bilingual schools of Ontario. Such an exposé could only have angered an already beleaguered militant leadership.

Pacaud encouraged militants to stay on their guard against future alliances with Irish priests and prelates. Indeed, he urged his confreres to push more vigorously for separation into ethnic parishes, and dioceses.

Il n’y a plus d’entente et de paix possible, entre catholiques de langue française et de langue anglaise, que dans une séparation complète...

D’instinct, les Canadiens français de l’Ontario devinaient depuis longtemps qu’au nombre de leurs ennemis les plus puissants et les plus acharnés figuraient les évêques de langue et de mentalité anglaise. L’alliance irlando-orangiste était chose connue.

...Jamais le mot de César n’aura meilleure application: Toi aussi Brutus?<sup>2</sup>

Pacaud’s open attack illustrated the growing frustration of militants with the role of the Catholic hierarchy in opposing their aspirations. The old Rouge reiterated the injustice facing Windsor’s francophones at a time of national crisis over the conscription issue.

Fallon rejected the claims of Pacaud and others by suggesting that much of the ensuing disharmony between English and French was actually the work of outsiders. He was not alone in professing this perception. An editorial in the local daily also emphasized that agitators from Quebec were responsible for the trouble in the Windsor border region.

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<sup>1</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, June 13, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, June 27, 1917.

The French people here were not up in arms. Few of them made any complaint until 'egged on' by extremists in Quebec, who were more concerned about the effects of Regulation 17 than most of the French people in Ontario.

.... We were getting along in harmony and concord until Nationalist 'fire eaters' in Quebecmen like Bourassa, Lavergne and Senator Landry began to stir up strife and discord.

... The happy relations that existed were almost completely severed when Senator Landry and his retinue made their tour de force of Essex and Kent counties, holding meetings in Tecumseh, Tilbury and elsewhere... What was looked upon as a slight disagreement over bilingualism became an open rupture as the war progressed, and Quebec failed to respond as the other provinces were doing.<sup>3</sup>

The conscription debate in the late summer of 1917 heightened francophone sensitivities and the heat was not about to subside with the coming autumn.

### Confrontation at Our Lady of the Lake

The agitation for French rights exploded with full force in the border city of Ford in the waning days of August 1917. While priests from around the diocese gathered to attend a funeral mass for Beaudoin in L'Assomption Quebec, the parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake church attended a requiem mass conducted by Denis O'Connor, the new Vicar General of the diocese of London. To the surprise of the parishioners, another priest accompanied O'Connor to the mass. Just before the service, the parishioners learned that Fallon had appointed François Xavier Laurendeau as Beaudoin's replacement. Reports of the new pastor's identity spread rapidly through the congregation. Many of the parishioners, grieving the loss of their curé of 25 years, were shocked by the news. The public indignation was instantaneous. The new pastor was indeed the same man who had been a member of the diocesan officialty that had suspended two French Canadian priests and expelled a third from the diocese. Even more serious however, was Laurendeau's involvement in a string of suspension threats

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<sup>3</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, July 5, 1917.

issued against Beaudoin that had left the latter a broken man.<sup>4</sup> It was during this public drama that Beaudoin's health began to deteriorate.

Immediately following the funeral mass, the parishioners rushed over to the rectory behind the church and formed a human chain blocking its entrance. Their numbers easily filled the gallery and steps as well as the grounds in front. As Laurendeau and O'Connor left the church in their vestments, they encountered an angry crowd. One of the parishioners snapped, "You can't go in there."<sup>5</sup> The two men were denied access to the residence.

To heighten the tension further, a few parishioners discovered the priests' suitcases in the house and hurled them into the street. The clergymen proceeded back towards the church where they learned that the building had been locked and that 1200 parishioners had formed a second chain to block their access there as well.<sup>6</sup> One of the parishioners declared that nobody would be granted access to the presbytery but Fr. Joseph Emery, who had been administering the parish in Beaudoin's absence. The priests, faced with this outrage, and barred from the rectory, were compelled to change their vestments outside. They then departed for Windsor. A long standoff had begun.

In an interview with a few participants of the church blockade, a reporter from the *Windsor Evening Record* discovered that resistance to Regulation XVII was at the heart of the dramatic confrontation that day. When asked what the objection was to accepting Laurendeau as their new pastor, one of the guards quipped, « Well we understand he is

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<sup>4</sup> "Le Cas du Curé de Notre Dame du Lac", ACFO circular, 17 pp., CRCCF, C2/201/1, January 1, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 23, 1917.

<sup>6</sup> *The Detroit Free Press*, August 23, 1917.

opposed to teaching French in the schools. »<sup>7</sup> Indeed, after years of declining francophone interest in the bilingual schools question in the Windsor border region, Fallon's controversial appointment of Laurendeau was akin to striking a hibernating bear. Parish dissidents immediately recognized Laurendeau for his participation in the suspension of a number of French Canadian priests in 1914 over the bilingual schools question. They attributed his role as secretary to Fallon's diocesan tribunal as incriminating evidence that he was anti-French. Laurendeau spoke out against these accusations, declaring, "On the other hand, in my private capacity, I tried to save them and restore harmony."<sup>8</sup> Laurendeau claimed to have interceded in an attempt to secure signed retractions and avoid public scandal for his colleagues. Whatever intentions Laurendeau tried to convey during the trial, he was unable to convince the parishioners of his good will. This pastoral appointment triggered such an emotional outrage, that it apparently revived Beaudoin's longtime crusade for the preservation of the French language. The parish revolt certainly left an impression on the new pastor, who quipped to a reporter,

Personally, I am not anxious to remain. I came here in obedience to my bishop. What they say about me is unfair and untrue. I cannot think that the statements made against me are the sentiment of the parish. I have always been absolutely fair.<sup>9</sup>

Accusations against Laurendeau would emerge as part of a larger strategy among some militants to portray the priest as a lackey working for the Bishop's integrationist agenda. Such a portrait surely demonized Laurendeau in the eyes of many churchgoers.

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<sup>7</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 23, 1917.

<sup>8</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 23, 1917; also found in Michael Power, *Bishop Fallon and the Riot at Ford City*, (Windsor: Essex County Historical Society, Occasional Paper, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 23, 1917.

Some parishioners tied Laurendeau's appointment as pastor to the unresolved dispute involving the 1912 division of Our Lady of the Lake parish. One parishioner stated that Fallon's refusal to obey a Roman court order to pay a \$7000 debt owed for the construction of St. Edward's school in Walkerville, lay at the heart of the nomination. Many parishioners suspected that Laurendeau would release the Bishop from his responsibility to repay the outstanding balance. "A school trustee stated that Fr. Laurendeau was getting his reward for favouring the Bishop and if he were allowed to succeed Fr. Beaudoin, the award would likely be dropped."<sup>10</sup> These comments greatly distressed the new pastor. In addition, allegations that he was Irish forced him to emphasize his French Canadian heritage. In fact, Laurendeau had been born near the town of Chatham, and his mother could not even speak English. In light of this stressful initiation, and in utter exasperation, he declared, "I think the people in Ford might have given me a chance so that they know my sentiments...I can go back to my own parish, it is a better one than this."<sup>11</sup> As time would reveal, Laurendeau's lack of enthusiasm was well founded.

On the evening of August 22, more than 1200 parishioners assembled in the parish hall to adopt a number of resolutions. First, they demanded that Fallon name a priest who was not merely French Canadian in name, but a pastor who was animated by the same mentality and aspiring to the same ideals as the majority of the parishioners, in the spirit of Beaudoin. The parishioners claimed that Laurendeau's past actions had

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<sup>10</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 23, 1917.

<sup>11</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 23, 1917.

rendered him incapable of accomplishing such a task. They assembled and elected a committee to coordinate and organize their resistance. They chose as president Stanislas Janisse, a 66 year-old Canayen founder of the parish and farmer whose roots in the county dated back to the French colonial period. They selected French Canadian Alexandre Beausoleil, a 56 year-old separate school trustee and employee of the Peabody Bridge Company as secretary. Both men still had children involved in the community's bilingual schools.<sup>12</sup> The parishioners designated Damien Saint-Pierre, a Cornwall native, as official spokesman.<sup>13</sup> Police constable Marc Bontront, 25, a native of France, and Emile Lappan, 48, a French Canadian farmer and hotelkeeper, also served on the protest committee, illustrating that the revolt appealed to a cross-section of francophones in the parish.<sup>14</sup>

The committee moved immediately to establish a picket schedule of three eight hour daily shifts which they assigned to volunteers. That first day, fifty men and thirty

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<sup>12</sup> Beausoleil still had three school aged children and Janisse's twenty-one year old daughter, Claire was a bilingual Catholic school teacher of a junior level classroom. See 1911 Canada Census, Sandwich East district; and English-French School Inspector's Reports, Ford City, 1916-1917, Ministry of Education Files, PAO, microfilm RG102-0-1. The author of this work interviewed Claire Janisse shortly before her death in 1990. She remained reluctant to disclose many details and was embarrassed to admit her role in the blockade and riot, and her subsequent job loss. School records indicate that Janisse either resigned or was dismissed from her teaching position following the church blockade and subsequent riot. Ten years later, her name still did not appear in the inspection rolls. She never married. Interview with Claire Janisse, October 25, 1988.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre, "Règlement XVII: Mgr. M.F. Fallon, Évêque du Diocèse de London, Ontario, 1909-1931", in *Le Carrefour*, 3, (Ottawa, 1964).

<sup>14</sup> Emile Lappan was a successful entrepreneur in the emerging municipality of Ford City. His small hotel flourished in the midst of a growing housing shortage during the industrial boom in Walkerville and Ford. According to census records, Lappan's reported annual income jumped from a respectable \$750 in 1901 to \$3000 in 1911. A widower with seven children, Lappan may still have had a son and a daughter in the local bilingual school at the time of the riot. See 1911 Canada Census, Sandwich East district.

women mounted a guard around the rectory.<sup>15</sup> For these militants, a whole way of life was changing. Their longtime protector and pastor, Father Beaudoin was dead. From their perspective, Laurendeau was incapable of soothing their growing cultural insecurities. The time had come to take a stand. Indeed, one parishioner insisted, « sa nomination serait la continuation du système d'anglicisation et de persécution introduit par Sa Grandeur Mgr Fallon. »<sup>16</sup>

The Ford parishioners did not forward their resolutions to the bishop and apostolic delegate alone. Rather, they chose to express their feelings publicly in the local daily newspaper as well. This decision could only have infuriated Fallon, who struck back on August 25 in a public letter to the *Windsor Evening Record*.

The Reverend François Xavier Laurendeau has been named by competent ecclesiastical authority pastor of the parish of Our Lady of the Lake, Ford City, pastor of that parish he shall remain ....Mob rule can meet with no support from either church or state....the scandalous trouble which exists in Ford City and which is so disedifying to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, is the result of the efforts of some local malcontents aided and abetted by a few imported agitators. If however, in this belief I am mistaken, and it should appear that any considerable portion of the parish prefers to follow rebellious leaders, then it shall be my duty to adopt such further measures as will effectively protect episcopal authority and emphatically establish Catholic principles of Church government.<sup>17</sup>

Fallon's letter offered one unequivocal message to the parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake. The blockade of the church and presbytery was illegal, and therefore the parishioners had a responsibility to submit to the authority of their bishop. For Fallon, the blockade was a purely legal question, and as prelate he was certainly on the side of justice. His appointment of Laurendeau was indisputably within his power as bishop.

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<sup>15</sup> Alexandre Grenon, secretary, ACFEQ report, "Le Cas du Curé de Notre Dame du Lac de Ford City", 17 pp. CRCCF, C2/201/1, January, 1918.

<sup>16</sup> "La question de Ford City", ACFEQ circular, 7pp., Ottawa, 1918, CRCCF, C2/201/1. The probable author was Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre.

<sup>17</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 25, 1917.

The *Catholic Record*, the official news organ of the diocese of London, echoed the Bishop's point of view. The newspaper stated that the blockade posed a serious challenge to the established legal authority of the Church.

There is not a Catholic anywhere who will not recognize that the ill-advised conduct of the Ford parishioners is subversive of the very basic principle of Catholic church government. There is only one possible outcome.<sup>18</sup>

While the Bishop and the *Record* were absolutely correct in their interpretation of Church law, they never addressed the issue of the pastoral needs of the parish. This perspective served as the cornerstone of the militant parishioners' perspective.

The parish committee responded swiftly to the bishop's letter. Their reply revealed a bold defiance of Fallon and recalled his own controversial behaviour. This war of words once again found its stage in the columns of the *Windsor Evening Record*. Responding to the Bishop's call to submit to church authority, they declared,

Frankly we had long entertained the thought that the word submission in church matters had gone out of usage in the London diocese. This disappearance strangely enough synchronizes with your advent to the See of London of any discord between diocesan and Bishop that gave cause for scandal ...

... We cannot help but notice with what promptness you responded to the decrees of the higher ecclesiastical tribunal of the mother church, which had to affirm one judgment four times in awarding an allowance to the lamented Father St. Cyr whom you deprived of a parish after he had served his maker as pastor of the flock for twenty years, which allowance is still unpaid.

... In closing, may we be permitted to say ... no collective misunderstandings among groups ever existed until your advent to the bishopric of London diocese.<sup>19</sup>

While the committee's letter to the bishop did not address the legality of the church blockade, the emotional content of the letter was instructive. The growing bitterness towards the bishop was palpable. Many of the parishioners were hardly concerned with the legality of their stand. For them, the blockade was an emotional gesture of objection towards a system of perceived tyranny. Many parents believed the growing disrespect of

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<sup>18</sup> *Catholic Record*, September 1, 1917.

<sup>19</sup> *Evening Record*, August 27, 1917.

their children found its seeds in Regulation XVII and the denigration of French in the schools by certain English-speaking sisters.

Some parishioners harboured bitterness for the premature deaths of Fathers Beaudoin, Meunier and Saint-Cyr. One elderly Ford parishioner later recalled the perception among many that Beaudoin had died of a « broken heart » following a series of threats and a public humiliation by his bishop.<sup>20</sup> The local English language daily even noted the popular association between Beaudoin's death and the bilingual schools issue.<sup>21</sup> This reasoning had a psychological effect on some parishioners. The now-deceased defenders of language and tradition came to be looked upon as martyrs. The threat to francophone cultural survival evolved into a more simplistic and singular element, for it now came to be personified in Bishop Fallon.<sup>22</sup>

On August 26, Fallon departed for Baltimore and West Virginia to conduct a series of retreats for the areas' religious orders. On September 1, he addressed a pastoral letter to Joseph Emery, Beaudoin's temporary replacement at Our Lady of the Lake parish. Fallon directed Emery to read out its contents from the pulpit at the Sunday masses. The bishop issued this long-distance ultimatum,

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<sup>20</sup> Interview, Hazel Marie (Lauzon) Delorme, November 9, 1987.

Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre, Father Beaudoin's personal physician, during his final illness encouraged such speculation, stating, "Le curé Beaudoin, constamment obsédé par la persécution de Mgr Fallon, en fit une maladie grave qui causa sa mort. Les témoignages des médecins font foi que ces troubles avec Mgr Fallon ont largement contribué à sa mort." Saint-Pierre's claims are open to question given his public animosity for Fallon. Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre, "Cas du curé de Notre Dame du Lac", ACFEQ circular, c. November, 1917, 9 pp.

<sup>21</sup> The editor noted that parishioners believed Beaudoin and his colleagues had been "worried into the grave" by the bilingual schools controversy. *Windsor Evening Record*, August 24, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> The parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake were not the only ones to blame Fallon for the premature deaths of Beaudoin, Saint-Cyr and Meunier. Father Emery of Paincourt levelled the same accusations, underscoring the intense emotions Fallon inspired in many francophone Catholics. Emery to Groulx, July 2, 1918, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1270.

Unless opposition to the appointment of Reverend F.X. Laurendeau as parish priest is immediately withdrawn, the priest actually on duty at the parish, Fr. Emery will be withdrawn and the church ordered closed.<sup>23</sup>

While tension mounted between the bishop and the francophone parishioners, the blockade stood firm.

In a mass meeting held on August 29, at the church, Damien Saint-Pierre made the following declaration on behalf of the parishioners :

...ce n'est pas à l'église catholique que les paroissiens de Notre Dame du Lac font la lutte...C'est contre un système néfaste qui tend à écraser les aspirations d'un peuple, à éliminer les prêtres canadiens-français, pour les remplacer par des prêtres de langue anglaise.<sup>24</sup>

During the two-week blockade, the parishioners turned to the ACFEO leadership for guidance. Saint-Pierre and Joseph De Grandpré, a Montreal-born lawyer and newcomer, kept the provincial organization abreast of developments in Ford City. The secretary of the provincial ACFEO Alexandre Grenon wanted to use the blockade to reignite smouldering militant sentiment in the neighbouring parishes.

Il serait très opportun, même nécessaire, de vider l'abcès complètement maintenant qu'il est ouvert. Généralisez la population contre le système, en demandant par exemple aux Canadiens-français de Windsor de faire sortir les enfants à la messe de 9 heures, si on refuse de leur parler français, tout en leur disant pour commencer de rentrer après le sermon. S'il était possible de faire dénoncer le système par les paroissiens des autres paroisses de Kent et Essex sans compromettre les curés, cela contribuerait beaucoup à démontrer l'odium populi de Fallon. ...En passant, permettez-nous de vous dire que la réponse à la lettre de Fallon, tout en étant substantiellement bonne, était un peu trop cavalière dans le ton.<sup>25</sup>

This recommended strategy failed to produce results on the following Sunday in Windsor's churches. In spite of this, the blockade leaders continued to look to the ACFEO executive for advice on how to proceed. The Association counselled firmness of

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Power, *Bishop Fallon and the Riot at Ford City*, p.19; also quoted in the *Windsor Evening Record*, September 3, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> "La question de Ford City", p. 2, CRCCF, Fonds Gustave Lacasse, P37/8/11-13.

<sup>25</sup> Alexandre Grenon, Secretary of ACFEO to Joseph de Grandpré, September 1, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

resolve in the face of the bishop. « Continuez à ne pas laisser pénétrer Laurendeau dans le presbytère ou l'Église. »<sup>26</sup>

The implications of rebellion against Catholic authority overshadowed the militants' strategy. The potential consequences of leading such a blockade were not lost on its leaders Stanislas Janisse and Saint-Pierre. Fearing an official Catholic reprimand, they resorted to a series of code names and encrypted messages in their correspondence to protect their identities for two years henceforth. All of the leaders were aware of the risks involved in such subversive behaviour: excommunication.<sup>27</sup>

While all of the reasons for the stubborn persistence of the parishioners in the face of such serious consequences may never be clear, the intense animosity towards the bishop and his pastoral appointment were undoubtedly a common denominator for all those involved. Moreover, the overriding sense of outrage and injustice among militants towards Fallon for his role in the introduction and enforcement of Regulation XVII was also an overriding factor. Peaceful efforts to bring reform, by way of petitions to London and Rome had failed to produce any meaningful results during Fallon's seven years as bishop. Denied any democratic expression within the framework of the Catholic church, hundreds of Ford City's francophones revolted with a blockade. Much like Gerald Friesen's analysis of the peasant uprisings in New France, for the Ford City

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<sup>26</sup> Edmond Cloutier, "Junior" to "Windsor", Joseph de Grandpré, September 5, 1917.

<sup>27</sup> In 1928, Pope Pius XI excommunicated a group of Franco-American militants, notably Elphège Daignault, editor of *La Sentinelle* for their disobedience to Bishop Hickey of Rhode Island over the issue of the French language and Catholic education. See Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1790-1930*, (Sillery, Quebec: Les éditions du Septentrion, 1990); Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterres: Rêves et réalités*, (Sillery, Québec: Les éditions du Septentrion, 2000).

parishioners, “demonstrations were the only manner of political expression among the poor habitants- the only collective means by which the habitants and lower classes could influence those in authority...”<sup>28</sup> Public action was organized by word of mouth in the church itself and founded on a consensus that a great injustice had been committed against the parishioners. The widespread, spontaneous and lasting nature of the blockade following the funeral requiem mass utterly discredits the suggestion by Church officials that the protest was orchestrated by a group of outsiders.

To add to the general anxiety, the Canadian Parliament was in the midst of a very divisive debate over conscription. On August 28, during the blockade, the Military Service Act received royal assent. At the height of their own local crisis, Ford City’s francophones were also witnessing a crisis at the national level. The tensions between local English- and French-speaking parishioners could only have worsened.

As the blockade dragged into its third week, the parishioners grew increasingly preoccupied. No one knew exactly what course of action to take should Fallon act upon his threat to close the church and withdraw the associate pastor, Joseph Emery.<sup>29</sup> At a parish committee meeting in the church hall, the congregation resolved to act only after a decision by a majority of the male heads of families. Following a show of hands, the committee determined to “fight the battle to the finish and to make the principles of justice, right and charity prevail.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Gerard Friesen, *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication and Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 100.

<sup>29</sup> Coded letter, Marc Bontront, parishioner, Our Lady of the Lake to Reverend Charles Charlebois, ACCEO, September 3, 1917, CRCCE, C2/201/1. Joseph Emery was the nephew of Alfred Emery.

<sup>30</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 4, 1917.

As the leading parish militants worried about pending battles, the average parishioner took their turn standing guard at the church. French native Marc Bontront, a local school board trustee and police constable, recounted that the women of the parish played a key role in maintaining the church blockade. A significant number of women passed their days in rocking chairs on the presbytery veranda knitting or embroidering, awaiting any sign of trouble. The general alarm for concern, the church bell, was sounded as well for baptisms, and this inadvertently resulted in a mob of men arriving in their shirt sleeves and armed with clubs.<sup>31</sup> The growing suspicion of the parishioners that a move would be staged by church officials kept the entire community in a heightened state of anxiety.

Bontront also noted the considerable time the blockade leaders sacrificed to ensure the impenetrability of the church buildings. Indeed, their task did not simply involve the organization of shifts for volunteers. Their role also included raising funds at the mass meetings, as well as soliciting food from the parish families to feed the men and women who participated actively in the guard. In addition, they composed and issued a series of communiqués to the press to inform the population of the reasons for their audacious stance.

On September 5, parish militants received support from a surprising voice. Newspaper columnist Gaspard Pacaud severely criticized the See of London for its handling of the standoff at Our Lady of the Lake.

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<sup>31</sup> Marc Bontront and Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre to Fr. Charles Charlebois, 5 September 1917, 3pp, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

I know of the imbroglio what I have read, and that is enough for me to believe that the attitude taken by my compatriots of this parish is significant ...  
Because a power exists is it necessary to exercise it with arrogance and in an arbitrary manner...?  
What responsibility for those charged by God with a great mission, who ruin the success of this mission through the insubordination of a proud and arrogant nature and who refuse to follow the example of the Master.<sup>32</sup>

On September 6, the parish committee notified Fallon of its intention to petition Rome to reverse his pastoral appointment of Laurendeau. The parishioners hoped that this tactic would prevent the Bishop from withdrawing Emery and closing the church until the Roman courts had rendered a decision.<sup>33</sup> The rebels received their legal counsel from the Monsignor Joseph Hallé, the future vicar general of Hearst. Hallé instructed the rebels to forward a carefully worded letter of protest to Fallon.<sup>34</sup> Hallé's discreet intervention exposed the rift that existed within the French and Irish factions of the Church hierarchy. His counsel clearly indicated his tacit support for the parishioners' rebellion. In 1920, he became the bishop of Alexandria, Ontario.<sup>35</sup>

On September 6, Fallon responded to the parish committee's August 26 open letter to the local newspaper, and demanded a complete retraction. He accused Stanislas Janisse and other committee members of making libellous remarks against him. He subsequently cabled his vicar general Denis O'Connor from Baltimore and had him engage the services of a law firm McKillop, Murphy and Gunn to undertake legal proceedings against the committee.

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<sup>32</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, Wednesday, September 5, 1917.

<sup>33</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 7, 1917; see also Michael Power, *Bishop Fallon*, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> Reverend Charles Charlebois to Joseph de Grandpré, 2pp., September 3, 1917, CRCCE, C2/201/1. Halle through Charlebois counselled the parishioners wrote the following statement: "Nous avons l'honneur de vous avertir par les présentes, que nous portons la cause de la nomination de M. l'abbé F. X. Laurendeau comme curé de la paroisse de Notre Dame du Lac, Ford City à Rome. C'est par le Souverain Pontife que nous allons la faire juger."

<sup>35</sup> Robert Choquette, *Language and Religion: A History of English-French Conflict in Ontario*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1975), p. 234.

On the morning of Friday, September 7, with the overall situation deteriorating, the rebels prepared for a putsch by London officials to take back the church. Bontront's account of that day pointed towards a pending confrontation. When Arthur Manly, an intermediary for Laurendeau approached the protestors and asked them what they would do if the priest arrived with a police escort, De Grandpré assured him that the parishioners would not allow the priest to enter. At this, Manly asked if the protestors would accept Laurendeau pending a decision from Rome if Fallon abandoned his civil suits. De Grandpré responded in the negative. Manly then informed the protestors that Laurendeau's return was imminent. St. Pierre confirmed this news after receiving a similar telephone message from the *Detroit Journal*. The reaction was instantaneous. The bells began to ring, and the grounds of the church filled with well-armed parishioners. Bontront wrote,

Quelques minutes plus tard, après le départ du capitaine [Manly], Downey et Laurendeau arrivèrent en auto en face de l'église, mais comme des bords étaient fortement gardés, ils passèrent tout droit pour revenir quelques instants après et continuèrent leur chemin. Comme on le voit, ils n'ont pas cessé de tenter d'installer l'élue de César [Fallon] contre la volonté des paroissiens. Inutile de vous dire que la garde est bonne et qu'il faudrait de la violence pour que cet homme puisse s'installer.<sup>36</sup>

Manly's peace initiative had the adverse effect of making the parishioners more anxious.

The passing visit of Laurendeau and Downey on the Friday afternoon only confirmed the congregation's fears that the pastor would be installed by force. By inspecting the church grounds, and refusing to speak to the guards, Laurendeau and Downey did nothing to calm the situation. In fact, a confrontation between the clerics and the parishioners now

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<sup>36</sup> Marc Bontront to Reverend Charles Charlebois, September 7, 1917, CRCCF, C2.201/1.

seemed probable. Bontront's assertion that the priests would need to use force to secure entry to the rectory would ring true just hours later.

### The Ford City Riot

The atmosphere at Our Lady of the Lake Church was unusually tense on the morning of Saturday, September 8. At nine o'clock, the relief shift arrived to replace the night guardsmen on the parish grounds. The women installed themselves in their rocking chairs on the veranda of the rectory and applied themselves to their knitting. The men paced the grounds, smoked and talked of the previous day's events. The militants were on the alert for trouble.<sup>37</sup>

In the early afternoon, around 1 :30, Saint-Pierre sped up in his Model A Ford. He informed the guards outside of the church, a band of nine or ten people, that the police were coming to take possession of the rectory, by force if necessary. At that point, Adolphus Saint-Pierre, the doctor's father, who was perched in the belfry, began to ring the church bells.<sup>38</sup> The parish grounds filled instantaneously with the faithful from the surrounding neighbourhood.<sup>39</sup>

At 2:15, a squad car pulled up in front of the church with four police officers. Sizing up the crowd of parishioners, the officers turned back. The crowd continued to grow, approaching three thousand. At 3 :00, four vehicles returned with a squadron of

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<sup>37</sup> The evening prior to the riot, a journalist for the *Windsor Evening Record*, September 8, declared that everyone at the parish was expecting some sort of confrontation.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Dr. Gaston Saint-Pierre, son of the famous local nationalist leader, Ottawa, August 24, 1988; interview with H el ene Lacasse Guibord, daughter of Senator Gustave Lacasse, and niece of Dr. Damien Saint Pierre, Ottawa, August 25, 1988 as previously referenced in Jack Cecillon, "Bishop Fallon and the French Language Controversy", *Ontario History*, LXXXVII, 4, December, 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Sworn testimony, H el oise Rondeau, October 10, 1917, before Joseph de Grandpr e, Notary, at Ford City, C2/201/3.

twelve constables to accompany Laurendeau and O'Connor to the rectory.<sup>40</sup> While most of the throng preferred merely to witness the event, some resolved to deny the priests access to the presbytery. To make clear their intentions, the officers drew their billy clubs and proceeded to make their way through a timid link in the crowd. Tension mounted, as militant parishioners felt the police gesture meant that they intended to use force. In the midst of the pushing, shoving, yelling and general frenzy, someone struck the first blow. The result was a full-scale riot.

Amid a shower of bricks, stones, chairs, shovels and other missiles thrown by the rebellious parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake Parish, some officers drew their revolvers, but no shots were discharged. With persistence, the police reached the veranda of the rectory. The easy part of the task was over. The officers now faced their fiercest rivals: a small band of elderly women, who, in the words of one journalist, "shared the will of the Russian regiment of Death." Armed with broomsticks and clubs, they proved far more resistant than most of the men. The police inspector encountered an unexpected shovel blow to the head. "Detective Sergeant William Reid of the Windsor force was attacked and had some exciting moments." After the officers smashed in the side door the female guards were driven out of the rectory. They reassembled on the veranda and taunted the constables. When O'Connor reappeared on the veranda the women jeered and mocked him.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Sworn testimony, Willie Surprenant, Jacques Deschênes, Pierre Larivière, Marc Bontront, and Alfred Trudel, October 10, 1917, at Ford City before Joseph de Grandpré, CRCCF, C2/201/3.

<sup>41</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917. According to parish rebels in a communiqué to *Le Droit*, September 12, 1917, there was no resistance whatsoever until the police began to use their billy clubs to clear a path in the crowd.

As the police chief Topsy Maisonville attempted to secure the church, Laurendeau joined him and tried to address the crowd, in vain. Saint-Pierre and an excitable throng of women and children shouted him down in a mantra of "Ave marias". When Mayor Charles Montreuil of Ford arrived to read the Riot Act, some of the women shouted out, "En français!"<sup>42</sup> After four or five attempts to read out the law, the mayor stopped and addressed the women in French, explaining the nature of the law. Eventually Montreuil succeeded in reading out his law, which seemed to calm the crowd momentarily. Then, in open defiance, a dozen women appeared on the church steps in front of the mayor and began reciting the rosary. "One young woman, with a flushed face, radiant like a Joan of Arc, intoned the chant and the others joined in with responses." This action so infuriated O'Connor that he came out and instructed the police officers to drive off the female zealots. A Windsor police officer approached the women and ordered them to desist, "but they only moved a few steps towards the sidewalk and resumed their prayers with fanatical zeal."<sup>43</sup>

As the police secured the church, they evicted a second group of parish dissenters. Marc Bontront emerged from the rear exit rescuing a French tricolor from the basement to enthusiastic cheers, and unfurled it from the presbytery veranda. Dr. St. Pierre, making reference to the tricolor as an emblem of liberty, announced that it would be to the British flag and the Crown that the parishioners of Ford City would turn for their vindication. To prevent an act of revenge against the priests, civil authorities dispatched

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<sup>42</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917.

<sup>43</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917.

a squadron of 100 soldiers from the 21<sup>st</sup> Essex regiment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel S.C. Robinson to guard the property.<sup>44</sup> The troops arrived just after four o'clock, but found the grounds abandoned.

As the crowd dispersed, reporters performed a post-mortem. Most of the people assembled watched and jeered as the case might be. The riot had lasted twenty minutes, left ten people seriously injured and prompted the arrest of nine men. French Canadians Pierre Larivière and Alfred Trudel were arrested before Laurendeau's entry into the presbytery, on the charge of resisting the police officers.<sup>45</sup> Trudel, 33, an employee at Hiram Walker's distillery in Walkerville and the father of three school aged children, was not the only member of his family to make the headlines following the riot. His elderly father, Joseph Trudel, 85, lost consciousness after he was struck in the head with a police billy club.<sup>46</sup> It is likely that one of the Trudel men became involved in a tussle with police following the distress of their loved one. Frenchman Jules Brutinot, Canayen Charles Renaud, and French Canadians Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre and Jacques Deschaînes faced similar charges after the priest's successful installation in the rectory.<sup>47</sup> Brutinot, 48, a

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<sup>44</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917.

<sup>45</sup> Neither Pierre Larivière nor another arrested man, Willie Surprenant, nor their family names appear anywhere in the 1911 Canada Census rolls. Both men had French Canadian names that likely hailed from Quebec or eastern Ontario. It is plausible that both men were recent arrivals to the Windsor border region, barring an enumerator's error.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*; see also *Le Droit*, September 11, 1917; The Canada Census, 1911 rolls for Sandwich East indicate that Alfred Trudel's widower father Joseph resided with him and his wife Ella and their three school aged children. Unlike most French Canadian mothers, Ella Trudel worked at the nearby Peabody Bridge Company.

<sup>47</sup> At the time of the 1911 Canada Census, Jacques Deschaînes was still living with his widower father, Eli, who was also an autoworker with Ford's. While Eli Deschaînes was born in Ontario, Jacques and his six brothers and sisters all listed the United States as their place of birth. Given Eli's place of birth and their existing place of residence, Jacques and his siblings have been classified as French Canadians rather than Franco-Americans.

farmer and immigrant from France who had four school aged children, also suffered injuries during the mêlée, receiving a gash to his right cheek. Charles Renaud, a 55 year-old farmer from Sandwich East with a wife and a school-aged daughter, Marguerite, 11, also received cuts to his face and head. He was the only Canayen man specifically implicated in the day's events.<sup>48</sup> Six of the nine men arrested were of French Canadian background. The arrest of Constable Marc Bontront was likely the most embarrassing. The accused, a 25 year old immigrant from France, claimed to have abstained from any civil disobedience throughout the riot. Fifteen minutes after Laurendeau's successful entry into the presbytery, the police apprehended Bontront, read him his rights, and escorted him to the Ford City jailhouse next door. Three weeks later, Bontront was suspended from the police force. All of the prisoners were incarcerated for about two hours. Anticipating potential trouble, Colonel Robinson detailed some of his soldiers to guard Saint-Pierre's residence from any acts of retaliation by disapproving Catholics.<sup>49</sup> The troops remained at their stations until noon on Monday, September 10.

Church officials, the press, and even provincial ACFEO officials all emphasized the scandalous nature of the riot at Our Lady of the Lake parish. The ACFEO and the local press highlighted the fact that several of the injured parties during the incident were elderly women. One case in particular involved a French Canadian widow and washerwoman from Windsor, Héloïse Rondeau, 74 years of age, who recounted her

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<sup>48</sup> One newspaper, *Le Droit*, September 11, actually alleged that an eight-year-old Canayen boy, George Renaud, was also arrested after interrupting Ford City's mayor, Charles Montreuil, as he read the Riot Act. He was released on parole later that day!! Such a report could not be confirmed in other newspaper sources.  
<sup>49</sup> There appears to have been little vocal criticism by the local Irish population to the events that occurred. Perhaps their minority status, or their need to keep the peace in the pluralistic Catholic parishes restrained their public reaction. The Irish population in Walkerville and Ford City was quite small.

misfortune during the riot, “J’étais assise à ce moment sur la galerie en face de la porte principale d’entrée, et je fûs renversée par terre et frappée à coup de bâton par un des dits policiers.”<sup>50</sup> The local newspaper also identified Aglaé Poupard, a white-haired 72-year-old woman, who received a severe cut above her left temple from one of the police clubs. In spite of her blood-soaked hair, she “refused to leave the front line but remained until the battle was over.”<sup>51</sup> Both women were unilingual francophones.

Other women were injured in the struggle to secure the church rectory. French Canadian Adéline Desjardins, 51, a mother of three school-aged children may very well have been on the porch during the confrontation since she was the only other woman struck by a police billy before being crushed underfoot by the unruly crowd.<sup>52</sup> One young mother, Rose Mousseau, 22, was a recent Quebec migrant who found herself in the middle of the excitement:

Mme Jean Mousseau, forced backwards and forwards between the police and the crowd was finally thrown face downwards on the presbytery steps and was severely bruised...  
...Mme A. Bourdon complained that besides being crushed in the hustling by the police, an officer had threatened her unnecessarily with a revolver held to her face.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Sworn testimony, Héloïse Rondeau, October 10, 1917, Ford City before Joseph de Grandpré, CRCCF, C2/201/3. Both Madame Rondeau and Madame Poupard were French Canadians. The 1911 Canada Census rolls for Windsor ward 3 indicate that Héloïse Rondeau was a poor widow who was forced to work as a washerwoman to earn a meagre 200 dollars a year. To make ends meet, she lived with her sister-in-law Angéline Rondeau, a stenographer. She indicated Quebec as her place of birth. As for Aglaé Poupard, she was the widow of Léon Poupard and a resident of Sandwich East, It is unclear whether she was an old stock Canayen who married into a Quebec family or whether she herself belonged to a French Canadian family from the border region. Most of the members of the Poupard/Poupard family were recent arrivals from Quebec. According to the census, both women were illiterate and unilingual francophones.

<sup>51</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917.

<sup>52</sup> Adéline Desjardins was a busy mother of nine with several young children still under her care. Along with her husband, Jean, an employee at the local brassworks factory, she may have brought her children to observe the pending drama unfold. It is plausible she could in fact have been one of the female defenders on the rectory veranda since she, like Rondeau and Poupard, was the only other woman to be on the receiving end of a police billy club. *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917; *Le Droit*, September 11, 1917.

<sup>53</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917. According to the 1911 Canada Census, Rose Mousseau and her husband, 22 year-old carpenter Jean were raising a four year-old daughter in Sandwich East district

Quebec native and new mother Julia Ranger, 22, injured her side when she was thrown across a row of chairs.<sup>54</sup> French Canadian Florence Trépanier claimed that she had her leg badly hurt by a flying brick from the crowd. Another recent arrival from Quebec, Aimé Dupras, 45, a bridgeworker and father of two school children, also experienced a deep wound to his scalp during the riot.<sup>55</sup> On the police side, the only constable to be seriously hurt during the riot was Provincial Detective James Smith, who suffered a severe scalp wound from an errant brick or shovel.<sup>56</sup> Aside from Saint-Pierre, Bontront and Brutinot, all of the francophones identified with the riot were from working-class families.

The leaders of the blockade effectively exploited the shock of the parishioners at the forced entry of their unwanted pastor. Aglaé Poupard, 72, was encouraged to testify in the media campaign against the bishop that followed. She declared, “je n’ai jamais dans ma vie vu ou entendu parler des choses qui m’ont aussi profondément

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in what was to become Ford City. Neither Mousseau nor her husband indicated an ability to speak English. As for Madame A. Bourdon, neither she nor her family name could be located in the 1911 Census for the Windsor border region and she may very well have been a recent French Canadian arrival.

<sup>54</sup> Like Rose Mousseau, Julia Ranger was a 22 year old mother and a recent migrant from Quebec, along with her 31 year old husband, Gilbert, an autoworker at the Ford Motor Company. This working class couple, like the Mousseaus, did not indicate an ability to speak English. See 1911 Canada Census.

<sup>55</sup> Aimé Dupras and his wife Adéline had two children, Luc, 12 and Louise, 7. A bridgeworker earning \$650 annually, Dupras and his wife lived in Windsor’s predominantly francophone ward 4, and both were literate and bilingual according to the 1911 Canada Census

<sup>56</sup> Pierre Larivière, Willie Surprenant and Florence Trépanier, all had French Canadian names. While Trépanier’s name could not be located in the 1911 Canada Census, members of the Trépanier family could be found throughout Essex county. All of them had recently arrived from Quebec. Neither Larivière, nor Surprenant could be located in the census rolls, as was also the case for their family names. Barring an omission or error by enumerators, it is plausible that all three were recent arrivals to the area.

scandalisée.”<sup>57</sup> Héloïse Rondeau summed up the sentiments of many francophones with her caustic remarks.

Je suis âgée de soixante-quatorze ans, et je n’ai jamais vu ni entendu parler dans ma vie de choses aussi révoltantes que celles qui se sont passées dans la circonstance en question; c’est la première fois que je voyais un curé s’emparer d’une paroisse par la violence et par le bâton des policiers.<sup>58</sup>

These testimonials emphasized the magnitude of the “scandal”. That night, in a mass meeting on the grounds of Canayen farmer Theodore Pratt, parishioners pledged to stay faithful to the Church, but committed to walking out if Laurendeau officiated at mass.

This boycott was reminiscent of a similar strategy employed by Franco-Americans in Danielson, Connecticut in 1888 against their new pastoral appointment by the bishop of Hartford.<sup>59</sup>

#### Parish Boycott

On Sunday morning, Laurendeau said mass for a mere handful of churchgoers. The other parishioners, Canayens, French and French Canadians alike assembled by the thousands at the farm of Theodore Pratt that evening.<sup>60</sup> Francophones from all parts of the county braved a cold drizzle and a piercing wind to hear several speakers castigate the bishop and his acolytes. Former Sandwich East reeve, Laurent Parent, a Canayen

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<sup>57</sup> Sworn testimony, Aglae Poupard before Joseph de Grandpré, October 10, 1917 in Ford City, CRCCF, C2/201/3.

<sup>58</sup> Sworn testimony, Héloïse Rondeau, October 10, 1917.

<sup>59</sup> Franco-American parishioners protested against the nomination of Thomas Preston as their pastor and boycotted all masses celebrated by him. They appealed their case to Rome, when the Bishop of Hartford, Monsignor McMahon, refused to consider their petition. Their appeal failed. See Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, p. 136-8.

<sup>60</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917. Pratt belonged to an old Canayen family that had held farmland in the Windsor border region for generations.

farmer, presided over this first mass protest meeting.<sup>61</sup> Following opening statements from Parent, the leading speaker, Damien Saint-Pierre took the podium, emphasizing that this movement was not directed against the Irish people or any creed or nationality, but was simply to resist what he termed Fallon's personal abuse of power. At this quasi-political rally, the committee of parishioners issued an official statement to the press.

On the very day of the funeral of our beloved pastor, Fr. L.A. Beaudoin, His Lordship Monseigneur M.F. Fallon selected as a successor, Fr. Laurendeau, one who had played an important role in that series of incidents which resulted in the premature death of Father Beaudoin.

Against this selection, which has been deemed not in the interest of the parish, the congregation of Our Lady of the Lake Church has been aroused to an expression of spontaneous indignation, of which this gathering is but a respectful, but energetic manifestation.<sup>62</sup>

The association of Fallon with the premature death of Beaudoin underscored the emotional intensity of the militants in the aftermath of the Ford City riot. Indeed, the dramatic imposition of Laurendeau by force appeared to unite the Canayen, French Canadian and French members of the parish in outrage. Few if any parishioners attended the church in the weeks to come. Journalist Gaspard Pacaud expressed optimism that their appeal to Rome for the recall of Laurendeau would elicit a positive response.<sup>63</sup>

Church officials lost no time in responding to these damaging allegations. Vicar general, Denis O'Connor, emphasized that the real scandal involved parishioners who used violence to defy the will of their bishop. He attributed the trouble at Ford City to a small band of imported malcontents whom he named publicly in the London press.

I am fully satisfied that all the trouble at Ford City is due to the activities of outsiders. Every possible means to settle the matter amicably was used. The three ringleaders are Dr. Saint-Pierre,

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<sup>61</sup> Laurent Parent was a forty-eight year-old Canayen farmer in Sandwich East, who, like Stanislas Janisse, could trace his roots in the Windsor border region to the old French regime. He too, was a father of four school aged children. 1911 Canada Census, Sandwich East.

<sup>62</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 10, 1917.

<sup>63</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 12, 1917. (colonne française)

who came there two years ago from Quebec, Monsieur de Grandpré of Windsor and formerly of Quebec, and Henry Maisonville, whose previous record is known.<sup>64</sup> O'Connor's allegations would become an oft-repeated theme by Fallon and his supporters: the militant leaders of the Windsor border region were unwelcome troublemakers, outsiders, whose roots lay elsewhere.

The demonized leaders of the Ford City Riot responded to O'Connor's accusations the very next day in the local Windsor paper.

You have raised the question of origin of the three persons whom you hold responsible for all the disaffection... Pardon us, when we say that Dr. St. Pierre was born near Cornwall, which also enjoys the distinction of being the birth place [sic] of Monseigneur Fallon. Dr. St. Pierre has spent all his life in Ontario, with the exception of such time as he spent at study in the province of Quebec- Montreal to be exact- which is also the place where you [O'Connor] acquired your theological education. For over three years, Dr. St. Pierre has been practicing in the parish of Our Lady of the Lake.

Mr. Joseph de Grandpré came to Windsor from the district of Ottawa, and has been in the County of Essex for two years. Mr. Maisonville, has, with the exception of five years spent in Toronto, always lived within two miles of Ford City.

So we are not outsiders.<sup>65</sup>

It was indeed an oversimplification for O'Connor to suggest that the riot was due to a small band of outsiders who succeeded in exciting an otherwise peaceful population.

While de Grandpré and Saint-Pierre did indeed hail from parts elsewhere, Stanislas Janisse, the secretary of the Ford parish committee, was part of an old Canayen family that traced its origins to the French regime. Likewise, Henry Maisonville was also part of the old Canayen community, and he too played an active role in the parish resistance. Indeed, even Marc Bontront and Emile Lappan, two of the members of the blockade committee had resided in the parish for more than fifteen years. Nevertheless, this notion that the rebel leaders were troublemaking outsiders would find roots in the soil of the Windsor border region.

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<sup>64</sup> *The London Advertiser*, September 10, 1917.

<sup>65</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 11, 1917.

For the militants, ecclesiastical authorities in London were clearly to blame for the ensuing riot. Even the local newspaper noted that O'Connor had freely admitted to making preparations for the ensuing trouble:

Father O'Connor...went down to Ford City on Friday and anticipating trouble, made arrangements to meet it.

"I got in touch with Crown Attorney Rodd on Friday afternoon," he said, "and was promised all protection necessary. In his office, I met Provincial officers Hanna and Smith. On Saturday afternoon at two o'clock, the police were to go to Ford. I met Father Laurendeau on his arrival at 2:40. It seems that there was a prearranged signal to call out the crowd. The church bell was to be rung at Ford city and as soon as we started, it rang and a great crowd collected in a short time. I had asked the police to look after the bell, but someone got into the church before they did and rang it. The first arrest followed this, the man being held on a charge of arresting [sic-resisting] an officer."<sup>66</sup>

O'Connor's comments to the press revealed the important role of law enforcement officers and provincial government officials prior to the events of September 8. Some parishioners asserted that it was in fact the police who set off the riot by drawing their billy clubs when protestors blocked their path to the presbytery.

The leading militants, infuriated by O'Connor's remarks, were also annoyed by his allegations that a small band of malcontents had stirred up all of the trouble.

We note from the *Windsor Record* of this evening a telegraphic despatch from London wherein you do us the honour of being the ringleaders who are able to gather crowds of 1200 to 3000 by mere organizing genius and forensic ability. We have already stated that you overwhelm us with a tribute of which we are undeserving and which modesty likewise forbids us accepting. We submit that this generosity to us is 'eminently unfair' to Bishop Fallon, whose actions [against Fr. Gnam] at Wyoming[Ontario] as well as at Ford have made it an easy matter to assemble crowds in protest against his erratic actions...<sup>67</sup>

Saint- Pierre and his colleagues, all played an important role in the parish resistance, but the participation of the average parishioner in the blockade, riot and subsequent protest meetings suggest that the resistance had genuine mass appeal.

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<sup>66</sup> *The London Advertiser*, September 10, 1917.

<sup>67</sup> D. Saint-Pierre, J. de Grandpré and H.C. Maisonville to Monsignor O'Connor, as quoted in the *Windsor Evening Record*, September 11, 1917.

The relatively long duration of the blockade from August 22 to September 8 required organization and direction. Parish patriarch Stanislas Janisse and bridgeworker Adolphe Beausoleil of the blockade committee assisted the other leaders by arranging schedules, issuing public statements, organizing meetings, and supplying the blockade guards with donations of food and words of gratitude and support. Now with the blockade over and the more challenging parish strategy of a boycott on the agenda, the francophones at Theodore Pratt's protest meeting selected a new organization committee. Once again, parish patriarch Janisse and French Canadians Emile Lapanne and Adolphe Beausoleil assumed a leadership role, joined by Canayen bridgeworker, Joseph D. Réaume, 64 and his son Clément Réaume, 33, the father of four school aged children, and a foundry worker for the Ford Motor Company. Recent arrivals Saint-Pierre and de Grandpré worked behind the scenes, writing the committee's public letters and generating support for the protest. This "backroom" strategy illustrated the potentially persuasive impact of O'Connor's accusations that outsiders were actually piloting this local agitation.

Although leadership was indeed important, the organizers needed legitimate issues of popular discontent to appeal to the people. Given the French language controversy in the local schools and churches, and the suspension and public humiliation of their priests since the advent of Fallon's bishopric, their task was not a difficult one. Fallon, while certainly not the sole architect of this tense atmosphere, did much to antagonize the border cities' francophones. The militant leadership had few problems in convincing them that the bishop of London represented a serious threat to their language

and culture. Years of failed petitions for French in the schools and churches of Windsor had heightened the frustration of militants. Fallon's appointment of Laurendeau appeared to be the final humiliation. Indeed, the public participation of Canayen, French Canadian and French parishioners in the blockade, riot and boycott committees clearly indicated just how much Fallon had successfully united such a diverse population.

Women played a key role in sustaining the enthusiastic support for the parish boycott of Laurendeau. Militant leaders must have been impressed by the initial success this controversial strategy received. Indeed, just one week after the riot, Philomène Beaudet, the 51 year old Franco-American wife of an auto factory worker, spearheaded her own movement to endorse the parish boycott.

A gathering of 150 women which met at the home of Mrs. Beaudette [sic] Friday afternoon when a permanent organization was formed with the subject of keeping up the blockade against the church. Each one of the women gave a verbal undertaking to attend the religious services elsewhere than Our Lady of the Lake until peace is declared.<sup>68</sup>

The francophone women who had so passionately resisted Laurendeau's entry into the church presbytery delivered their vocal support to the boycott of the new pastor. The parishioners were now at war with their pastor and their bishop.

After the riot, ACFEQ provincial officials kept church leaders and allies in Quebec City and Montreal up to date on developments in the Windsor border region.<sup>69</sup> ACFEQ officials urged local leaders to provide sworn testimonials of their experience.

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<sup>68</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, September 15, 1917. According to the 1911 Canada Census, Beaudet and her husband Edmond had four sons and one daughter, all of whom had finished their school years. Beaudet would later lead the door to door canvass against Jean Durand, a heretical priest who would proselytize disaffected francophone Catholics.

<sup>69</sup> Telegram, Senator Landry to Joseph Hallé, Quebec City, and Lucrezio Caro, Rome, September 10, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1. . In a telegram to Lucrezio Caro a highly placed Roman official, Senator Philippe Landry stated, "Laurendeau imposé samedi par police en présence de prêtres irlandais plusieurs blessés paroissiens vont à la messe ailleurs. Exaspération. Soldats gardent l'église et le presbytère."

Senator Landry pledged to visit the Windsor region just one week after the trouble at Our Lady of the Lake parish. Saint-Pierre emphasized the urgency to rally the francophone population behind the resistance movement in the aftermath of the riot. To capitalize on the existing emotional state of the people, he recommended the immediate launch of a new French language weekly. He requested that the ACFFO send an experienced representative from Ottawa's *Le Droit* to make such a plan reality. The failure to follow through, argued Saint-Pierre, could have incalculable consequences for the future.<sup>70</sup>

Some local Irish Catholics were disturbed by the riot at Ford City. One elderly parishioner declared in a letter of appeal to Saint-Pierre,

... Your parish trouble is I believe that you want a pastor who will preach in French (I may be in error here). Cut out the French and the Dutch, the Irish and every such rot and be practical Catholics. It is all God requires of us. Yes in honour of the Holy Name come down off your fool perch.

... Your actions are an outrage on civilization much less the Catholic religion, and I remind you that the essence of religion is obedience.... In my time I've seen a few Catholics do public penance for the scandal they caused. I earnestly ask you my brothers who are leaders in this wretched affair to do the same... No one will be as much pleased as I to see you Doctor taking a leading part in fixing up this matter as you have been in opposition.<sup>71</sup>

This effort to shame the militant leadership of the region to recanting and submit to the authority of the bishop did not produce the desired effect. It is likely that most of the Irish population of the parish opted to remain silent rather than upset the francophone majority of their neighbourhoods, given the dispersed nature of their settlement in Ford city and their relatively small numbers.

Following the riot, a series of public assemblies were held to rally popular support for the parish boycotters and petition Rome for the removal of Laurendeau. Francophone

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<sup>70</sup> Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre "Vir" to "Bien Cher Padre", Reverend Father Charles Charlebois, c. September 10, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

<sup>71</sup> Letter, Joseph O'Brien to Damien Saint-Pierre, September 10, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

militants clearly aimed to use the dynamic created by the riot to advance their militant agenda. On September 9, parishioners braved a dreadful storm to condemn the church imposition of the new pastor of Our Lady of the Lake. On the following Sunday, Laurendeau spoke out against the rebels from the pulpit at mass. His voice, which echoed through the near empty church, accused a small clique of malcontents for the trouble. Since the riot, the vast majority of parishioners had boycotted all services where the pastor officiated. Laurendeau condemned the boycott leaders, and suggested that if they were afraid to come to him, he would willingly go out to them upon invitation.<sup>72</sup> Learning of Laurendeau's sermon, Saint-Pierre telephoned the priest and invited him to speak to a parish assembly to be held that Sunday afternoon. The doctor added that in this manner, Laurendeau could speak directly to the parishioners instead of the empty church pews. After some hesitation, the forlorn pastor agreed, on the condition that Saint-Pierre and his colleagues endeavour to save him from public insult.<sup>73</sup>

At three o'clock, Laurendeau appeared at the farm of Theodore Pratt on the outskirts of Ford City. Courageously, he took centre stage on the crude podium to address an audience that approached 5000 souls. Saint-Pierre invited the anxious audience to listen respectfully to the words of their guest speaker. The priest argued that in all circumstances he had acted in obedience to his bishop. This admission included his controversial role as the secretary of the Diocesan Officialty in 1914 and 1915, as well as

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<sup>72</sup> Dr. Saint-Pierre, to Albert Foisy, editor of *Le Droit*, September 16, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

<sup>73</sup> Marc Bontront and Damien Saint-Pierre to Albert Foisy, September 16, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

his new role as pastor of Ford City.<sup>74</sup> He conceded that the Officialty had acted illegally in the case of the suspended priests, but noted that all legal proceedings came to a halt when Rome spoke out against the tribunal. This admission met with ridicule from the crowd. One parishioner cried out, "Comme ça, si Rome n'était pas intervenu, vous seriez encore à piétiner sur les Canayens!"<sup>75</sup> These remarks visibly embarrassed the priest. It became increasingly evident that Laurendeau had erred in accepting Saint-Pierre's invitation.

Laurendeau persevered, actually opening the event up to questions following his address. Almost immediately, the meeting degenerated into a forum for accusations and insults. Saint-Pierre recounted the situation.

Au moment où Laurendeau parle du scandale disant, "Savez-vous qui est le responsable de ce scandale?"(voulant nous indiquer), la foule crie à pleins poumons, "C'est Fallon! Fallon! Fallon!" Un autre paroissien lui demanda, "Entrerez-vous au ciel avec vos bâtons répandus de sang?" Notre homme [Laurendeau] était coulé!<sup>76</sup>

The animosity of the crowd towards Laurendeau completely overwhelmed the new pastor.

Saint-Pierre then took up the speaker's position, reminding those listening of the fate of their fallen pastors.

On crie au scandale aujourd'hui, mais on ne criait pas scandale quand [ les Pères] Meunier et Emery furent humiliés devant les tribunaux; ou quand Saint-Cyr, larmes aux yeux fut expulsé du diocèse. On laisse mourir les prêtres malades refusant des vicaires.<sup>77</sup>

Saint-Pierre lambasted Bishop Fallon for his role in the current affair. He publicly questioned how the bishop could preach a retreat in the United States when his French-speaking subjects were in rebellion and wondered how Laurendeau could serve on a

<sup>74</sup> Bontront and Saint-Pierre to Foisy, September 16, 1917.

<sup>75</sup> Bontront and Saint-Pierre to Foisy, September 16, 1917.

<sup>76</sup> Bontront and Saint-Pierre to Foisy, September 16, 1917.

<sup>77</sup> Bontront and Saint Pierre to Foisy, September 16, 1917.

tribunal that he knew to be illegally formed. Saint-Pierre charged that Laurendeau was only bound to obedience in reasonable and legitimate situations. He raised questions regarding the trustworthiness of the priest. « Nous avons raison de craindre qu'il [Laurendeau] continuât à en agir de même si nous lui permettons de rester Curé de Ford City. »<sup>78</sup> Indeed many townspeople suspected that Laurendeau would be little more than the bishop's puppet. For militants, accusations against Laurendeau served a larger strategy: they offered parishioners a target for their hostility towards the Bishop.

A series of petitions and resolutions were signed by francophones across Essex and Kent Counties. Organizers held assemblies in Ford City on September 16, Tecumseh on September 22, and Stoney Point on September 30 which attracted large crowds ranging from 3000 in Ford City to 10 000 in Tecumseh. The resolutions at each open air meeting resembled those proposed by Windsor alderman Euclide Jacques and seconded by Essex North Liberal MPP Sévérin Ducharme at Tecumseh.

We the French-speaking Catholics of the diocese of London, united in general assembly, assure the parishioners of Ford City of our complete sympathy, and protest against Reverend Laurendeau and the undignified manner in which he took possession of the church and the rectory.<sup>79</sup> These mass demonstrations presented an unprecedented show of solidarity among the francophones of the Diocese of London.

At the enormous Tecumseh protest rally, participants endorsed a proposal for a public inquiry into the allegation of a conspiracy against the blockade leaders that precipitated the riot.

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<sup>78</sup> Bontront and Saint-Pierre to Foisy, September 16, 1917.

<sup>79</sup> Petition, E. Desmarais, E. Jacques proposed, supported by Sévérin Ducharme and T. Bélanger, September 23, 1917 at Tecumseh, CRCCF, C2/201/1, in both English and French versions.

...the residents of the Counties of Essex and Kent in open meeting assembled resolves that a humble petition be sent to the Honorable I.B. Lucas, Attorney General of the Province of Ontario, requesting that he direct a free, careful, thorough and impartial inquiry into incidents leading to the alleged riot, that responsibility may be fixed upon the person or persons at fault.<sup>80</sup>

This motion clearly underlined the controversy surrounding O'Connor's public admission that he had planned a police intervention to install Laurendeau in the rectory in Ford City.

This large assembly also endorsed a radical resolution pledging not to have their children confirmed by Fallon, and to boycott any visit by the bishop to their respective parishes.<sup>81</sup>

For a few short weeks, the francophones of the Windsor border region appeared to be of one voice in their opposition to Fallon and his bilingual schools agenda.

Henri Maisonville made the formal request on behalf of the assembly for an inquiry into the riot. If indeed there had been a conspiracy, the plotters would be subject to terms of seven to fourteen years in prison.<sup>82</sup> Much of the public suspicion in Ford City centered around the reluctance of anyone to take responsibility for ordering a dispatch of police to the church on the day of the riot. The mayor, Charles Montreuil alleged to have acted upon the instructions of the Crown Attorney J.H. Rodd. The Crown Attorney in turn, alleged to have received his orders from the Attorney General. Attorney General Lucas, however, denied ever issuing any such instruction. Vicar General Denis O'Connor declared that he had prepared the police intervention with Crown authorities on the day before the actual riot. Saint-Pierre alleged that Rodd admitted to giving the police the order to secure the grounds. He asserted that when the police were notified that a tumultuous illegal assembly had erupted at the church, there had been no such

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<sup>80</sup> Petition, Desmarais, Jacques et al, September 23, 1917.

<sup>81</sup> *Le Droit*, September 27, 1917.

<sup>82</sup> Marc Bontront and Damien Saint-Pierre to A. Foisy, September 16, 1917, CRCCF C2/201/1.

occurrence. Indeed, Saint-Pierre noted that the parishioners only descended upon the church grounds once they learned that the police were on their way.<sup>83</sup> He noted further that the riot erupted only after the police had arrived at the church to escort Laurendeau into the presbytery. While church officials did not necessarily advocate the use of violence to secure the presbytery, Saint-Pierre noted that the police decision to draw their clubs in the midst of the frenzied atmosphere had precipitated the riot.

As the month of September wore on, the militant parishioners faced a storm of criticism from their fellow Catholics. On September 22, the *Catholic Record* ran a front page story condemning their conduct. It emphasized the disrespectful nature of the public letters the Parish Committee had addressed to Fallon.

If they had occasion to rebuke publicly a sexton or a janitor, they could not have spoken more contemptuously to him than the way they spoke to their Bishop. The situation is intolerable; and no one who knows the first principles of the Catholic religion can justify it.<sup>84</sup> The *Record* deplored the revolutionary attitude of the parish committee and forecast a schism if such behaviour were allowed to prevail. The newspaper questioned the rationale of the militants.

It is not disputed that the man he sent there is a Catholic priest. There is therefore no question between Bishop Fallon and the parishioners of Ford City. They defy him; that is all; and that raises the question between them and the church. They claim the right to veto the Bishop's appointment. They must recede from that position or go out of the church....  
... We address these remarks not only to the Catholics of Ford City, but to all French Canadians... It is a time for plain speaking. Why do not our French friends speak up?<sup>85</sup>  
The Catholic press emphasized the scandalous nature of the riot and blockade as acts of disobedience to legitimate episcopal authority. The rebels' use of force in the seizure of the church and their organization of the blockade warranted a response from the bishop.

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<sup>83</sup> Bontront and Saint Pierre to Foisy, September 16, 1917.

<sup>84</sup> *Catholic Record*, September 22, 1917.

<sup>85</sup> *Catholic Record*, September 22, 1917. See also the *Antigonish Casket*, September 22, 1917.

Therefore, Fallon was justified in acting to preserve his authority from this unlawful challenge.

Once the initial storm over the riot had settled, Ford City militants organized a petition against the bishop to be sent directly to the pope. ACFEO officials in Ottawa warned Bontront, Saint-Pierre and de Grandpré of the seriousness of their endeavour.

Ne passez pas votre discours à aucun représentant de journal...À la suite de ce discours, vous pourriez peut-être faire présenter la résolution contre Monseigneur Fallon. Faites-la présenter, proposer et seconder par les maires et les vieux des environs de Pointe-aux-roches.<sup>86</sup>

The ACFEO advice to have one of the French Canadian mayors or elders of Stoney Point propose and second the resolutions against Fallon once again illustrated the concern that accusations from the Catholic hierarchy in London that outsiders had duped local francophones into disobedience had to be countered.

Charlebois and ACFEO officials also provided Ford City militants with advice regarding their pending legal problems. Bishop Fallon sued the Ford City parish committee in October, 1917 for libel. Information concerning Fallon's civil suit against the committee was transmitted to Ottawa, and legal strategy was devised there and subsequently forwarded to Ford's rebels.

“Que Saint-Pierre et de Grandpré nous avertissent avant de sommer les témoins, si Fallon continue ses poursuites pour libelle au civil. C'est important...Envoyez-nous copie de tout ce que vous recevrez concernant cette poursuite, pour que nous puissions vous aider dans votre défense.”<sup>87</sup>

Without the ACFEO in Ottawa, it is difficult to imagine how the leaders would have coped. The rebel chiefs wrote the ACFEO almost daily during the first months of the boycott.

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<sup>86</sup> Reverend Charles Charlebois to Dr. Saint Pierre undated correspondence, c. September 24-28, 1917, CRCCE, C2/201/1.

<sup>87</sup> Charlebois to Saint-Pierre, September 24, 1917.

On September 30, the day of the Stoney Point meeting, organizers successfully assembled a crowd of 6000 to brave the wind and rain. As the speeches were about to start, part of the crowd began to chant, “ Long live the Church! Down with Fallon!”<sup>88</sup> Sévérin Ducharme, the local MPP, addressed the crowd and argued that Fallon lacked the necessary tact to administer the diocese, vowing to work toward the removal of the prelate from the diocese.<sup>89</sup> De Grandpré recalled the Bishop’s illegal use of the diocesan officialty to prosecute these priests and try Beaudoin. He added that Laurendeau’s role in this nefarious scheme had rendered him utterly unacceptable to Ford’s parishioners. Finally, de Grandpré declared that a formal request was pending for a full and impartial government inquiry into whether there was a conspiracy to incite a riot in Ford City to arrest the leaders of the blockade. On October 7, 1917, at River Canard, a Canayen assembly petitioned Attorney General I. Lucas to investigate these charges.<sup>90</sup>

Shortly after the Stoney Point rally, the parishioners outlined their grievances in a petition to Pope Benedict XV. The wording clearly underscored the desire to rid the border region of the influence of both Fallon and Laurendeau.

La nomination de Sa Grandeur Monseigneur M.F. Fallon au siège de London a marqué le commencement de l’ère des dissensions qui ont créé le malaise profond dans le diocèse et dans la province; sous le couvert de protestations sympathiques en faveur des Canadiens français, Sa Grandeur a inauguré une campagne contre leur langue et leur clergé...

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<sup>88</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 1, 1917.

<sup>89</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 1, 1917.

<sup>90</sup> The leading dissidents had their attorney draw up the following testimonial,

“It is asserted that the Bishop and Vicar General of the diocese and the local Crown Attorney, Mr. Rodd, influenced to some extent by political motives, decided to deal harshly with the French parishioners and more especially to cause the arrest of certain individuals, including Dr. St. Pierre, who were considered to be the leaders of the demonstration.” Sworn declaration, J. Durocher, C. Chauvin, D. St. Pierre et al, September 1917, CRCCE, C2/201/2.

Le jour même où notre vénéré pasteur, l'abbé L.A. Beaudoin recevait sa sépulture, Sa Grandeur nommait pour le remplacer, un prêtre qui est notoirement connu dans le diocèse comme un des plus fervents disciples de l'évêque dans son œuvre contre les catholiques de langue française. Contre cette nomination, qui était jugée injurieuse à la paroisse, la congrégation s'est soulevée dans un mouvement spontanée d'indignation.<sup>91</sup>

This petition to Rome ended the first month of the standoff with Bishop Fallon.

In the days leading up to this and the following assemblies, women from Ford City raised funds for the erection of a monument to Beaudoin.

Femmes organisent souscription pour ériger monument Sacré-Cœur en l'honneur de Père Beaudoin si nous gagnons notre cause. Elles font dire des messes, neuvaines, etc., pour le succès de la cause.<sup>92</sup>

Sympathy for the Ford City militants' movement against the bishop clearly extended beyond the confines of the border cities. The successful turnout at the protest rallies in the Canayen village of River Canard and the French Canadian farming towns of Tecumseh and Stoney Point proved to be a clear testament of this widespread support. In a likely related event, the *Windsor Evening Record* reported a case of arson in the burning of the parish hall and attempted destruction of the Ursuline convent at St. Clement's Church in the Canayen village of McGregor. While Fallon and O'Connor declined any comment regarding this episode, a journalist with the *Record* observed that

It is stated among the Catholics here that the French-Canadian congregation at McGregor objected strongly to the sisters being sent there to teach, and the building they are to occupy was deliberately fired. A government investigation has been asked for in the fire.<sup>93</sup>

The timing of the fire so shortly after the riot, coupled with the recent cross county protests, suggest that francophone hostility towards the Bishop's education policy had

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<sup>91</sup> Petition, Our Lady of the Lake Parishioners to Pope Benedict XV, October, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/2.

<sup>92</sup> Telegram, D. Saint-Pierre to Albert Foisy, September 21, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/2. The women would raise the money necessary to build a cemetery stone for Beaudoin. In fact, Beaudoin instructed in his will that his heart be sent back to Ford City to be with his parishioners. The heart would remain in the basement of the presbytery until Laurendeau's death in 1942. Then it was entombed in Our Lady of the Rosary cemetery in Windsor, beneath a small marble monument to the priest who had died in 1917. According to Monsignor Jean Noël, Laurendeau had the heart secretly placed in the basement to prevent its exploitation by militants in a memorial event to stir passions.

<sup>93</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 5, 1917.

clearly been reignited by the recent trouble in Ford and spanned beyond the parish borders of Our Lady of the Lake to include both Canayen and French Canadian communities.

The month of October saw a continuation in the frenetic activity of the francophone resistance in the Windsor Border Region. At a mass assembly in Ford City on October 9, de Grandpré stated that the time had come for parishioners to take back the legal title of the church property from the bishop and place it in the hands of the congregation. In the province of Quebec, the church wardens held title to each parish church, on behalf of the interests of the congregation. In Ontario, all Catholic parish property belonged to the bishop of the diocese. As long as Fallon held the legal title to the church property of Our Lady of the Lake, any attempt by a congregation to occupy a church, rectory or parish grounds would be considered illegal if not sanctioned by the Bishop. Franco-Americans in Portland, Maine launched a similar battle against their Bishop earlier in the decade, only to fail.<sup>94</sup> This strategy would require changing the laws of the province.

One week later, the leading rebels boarded a Grand Trunk rail car and ventured on the Wabash train to Paincourt, in Kent County. A crowd of about 1500 people awaited them. The leading parishioners of this town then put forth a new resolution to the pope:

The resolution to the pope, declaring the 'boycott' of Bishop Fallon as far as not permitting the children of the diocesans of Paincourt to be confirmed by him, was passed and is now reality;

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<sup>94</sup> In 1909, Franco-Americans used such a strategy against Bishop Walsh of Portland Maine, with an appeal made to the State Legislature. It was rejected in 1911. See Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, pp. 184-188.

likewise is the understanding that the parishioners there will remain away whenever and wherever bishop Fallon happens to be.<sup>95</sup> Like the previous meeting in Tecumseh, the parishioners' refusal to have their children confirmed by Fallon was unprecedented. This controversial decision to boycott Fallon and abstain from the Catholic sacrament of confirmation escalated tensions and evoked an indignant response from many francophone Catholics throughout the diocese.

### Divisions in the Militant Ranks

In early October, the first public signs of division appeared. The French Canadian Liberal member of provincial parliament for Essex North, Sévérin Ducharme, distanced himself from the Ford militants' radical behaviour. He wrote,

In the issue of your paper of the first inst., I am reported as being wholeheartedly supporting the campaign resulting from that incident, which is now being carried on in several parts of the county. Will you please announce, through your columns, that that report is not according to my views and say that I cannot approve of the methods and the manner in which that campaign was set on foot, promoted, and is being carried on, nor can I approve of the doctrines that are preached thereat by some of the speakers.<sup>96</sup>

This decision sent shockwaves through the resistance movement. Ducharme had long been considered a moderate sympathizer of the bilingual schools resistance.

Militants expressed their dismay at this about-face by Ducharme. Saint-Pierre felt a sense of betrayal, but offered a possible reason for this behaviour.

Il fait volte-face. Vous allez en juger vous-même. On se propose bien de le ramener à l'assemblée demain et si c'est possible d'aller faire une assemblée à Belle-Rivière dimanche prochain, mais c'est un endroit passablement inaccessible. C'est la plus apathique des paroisses d'Essex.<sup>97</sup>

Saint-Pierre's criticism of Ducharme was tempered by the recognition that his hometown of Belle River clearly lacked enthusiasm for the bilingual cause. Ducharme was from the

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<sup>95</sup> *The Windsor Evening Record*, October 17, 1917.

<sup>96</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 5, 1917. CRCCF C2/201/3.

<sup>97</sup> Damien Saint-Pierre to Charles Charlebois, October 6, 1917.

vicinity, and his stance seemed to dampen the expectations that a vigorous resistance could be mustered here.

Ducharme elaborated on his position at the end of October in an interview with the *Windsor Evening Record*. Responding to a wave of queries regarding his disapproval of the Ford City resistance, he offered this commentary :

I attended the Tecumseh and Stoney Point meetings upon the invitation of citizens of those places. I went there in good faith, thinking I might be of some assistance in bringing about some adjustment of the matter in the dispute, but I was much disappointed, to observe that the discussions at those meetings were not of a nature to adjust difficulties, but rather to aggravate them.

At those meetings, I expressed the opinion that his Lordship, Bishop Fallon, was not possessed of the tact necessary to successfully administer the diocese of London, as he appeared to have lost control of a part of his diocesans, but qualifying statements to that assertion, did not reach the press. I had in mind and said that his lordship proceeded hastily in forming his opinion and coming to his conclusions, and making his declarations regarding the bilingual schools in this province, so soon after he took charge of the diocese, and that, in a large measure, in my humble opinion, he has engendered disagreements from which the present trouble can be traced. But while I say that his Lordship appeared to me to be hasty in his discussion of the bilingual schools, I cannot honestly deny the privilege of any citizen of the province to discuss educational matters in the province.<sup>98</sup>

Ducharme's public statement and subsequent accusations against the Ford militants

related primarily to his disapproval of the manner in which their campaign was

conducted. He argued that he sought an accommodation or a peaceful resolution when the

radical militants sought to wage war against the Bishop.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, Ducharme even

suggested that the speakers deliberately aimed to deceive the crowds to advance their

crusade against the Bishop. However, like his rivals, Ducharme upheld the "noble goals"

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<sup>98</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 27, 1917.

<sup>99</sup> A similar phenomenon occurred in the diocese of Providence, Rhode Island in 1922, when Franco-American moderate and radical militants split over whether to wage war against their bishop, William Hickey, for his advocacy of a more aggressive plan for cultural integration, with greater control over all parochial schools, including those with a bilingual curriculum. See Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, pp. 241-249.

of preserving French language education and Catholic schools. This similar philosophy compelled him to explain his position further.

Some may ask, « why are you against us in this case? » We are fighting a dignitary of our church who would proscribe French? My answer is, I am not against you, I am for you....I am trying to divert you from the disgraceful path in which you are being led. Some say I am going back on my compatriots. I am not going back on them, but I am trying to get them to advance and not to retrograde.

...Please bear in mind that these observations are not directed against the parishioners, nor against the people who attend the meetings, but against the recognized leaders, few in number.

I was in sympathy with the parishioners of Ford City, and I am yet, because I believed they sincerely thought they had some case or justification in trying to retain possession of the church, but my heart pains when I feel impelled by duty and honour, for the sake of peace and justice to all parties, to say that while the leaders in this campaign preach at the several meetings that Bishop Fallon conspired against the guards around the church and that provoked a riot, the same leaders admit that they knew the posting of guards was a wrongful and illegal act, but that it was a maneuver, knowing the high temper of the Bishop, to provoke him to use force against them.

...Now Catholic men, I entreat you to seriously consider the result of those meetings; while these preachers pretend to avenge the memory of departed priests, they do not reflect upon the future they are preparing for the living ones.<sup>100</sup>

Ducharme's criticism of the Ford City radicals was the first open attack by a prominent local French Canadian on the parish resistance movement. The argument would filter throughout the Windsor border region, and work against the rebels. Like Church officials, he too argued that a few people were responsible for stirring up trouble. In his view, the leaders' motives for their confrontational behaviour were less than noble. As to the veracity of Ducharme's claims, there is no concrete evidence suggesting that the militants intentionally provoked a confrontation. The initial reaction to Laurendeau's appointment during the memorial mass, and the subsequent blockade appeared to be fuelled more by emotion and surprise than as part of a well-calculated plan to stage a showdown with the bishop. The lack of a premeditated defensive strategy is illustrated by the militants' clumsy defense of their controversial actions, which held little credence before Church law, something a lawyer like Joseph de Grandpré must have known.

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<sup>100</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 27, 1917.

Ducharme completed his letter with a warning of the spiritual risks the francophone population faced in adhering to such a wayward movement.

The following dogmas, doctrines, and morals are taught there: Keep out of the church, do not support but remain good members of it. Go surreptitiously, if need be, to a neighbouring priest to have the sacrament of baptism administered to your child. Go surreptitiously if need be, to have the marriage of your son or daughter solemnized. Do not permit your children to receive the sacrament of confirmation as long as Bishop Fallon is at the head of the diocese. Sundays are not observed as commanded by the church in the service of the lord, because the leaders convene the people away from the church, and there they are asked to contribute a purse of gold, and made to listen to some hateful, vilifying and abusive language of some of the speakers. I may be severely criticized for what I have said.... Even at the peril of my political life, I will stand for the dignity of my church. Even at the peril of my political life I will try to save my compatriots from being drawn into public disrepute.<sup>101</sup>

With Ducharme's public criticism of the Ford City rebels, it became clear to the militant leaders that the apparent united front against Bishop Fallon was over. As a politician, Ducharme must naturally have worried about being associated with such a radical faction in a riding where francophones were by no means a majority. The methods of the Ford dissidents had begun to alienate some francophone moderates. Ducharme and other moderates feared that the radical militants' aggressive strategy would discredit the francophone population in the eyes of other Catholics and hurt their struggle for bilingual schools. Such divisions would only hurt the already weak resistance movement against Regulation XVII.

In the face of this frustrating public rift, Saint-Pierre maintained a brave face. In a letter to ACFEQ leaders in Ottawa, he declared, « Notre politicien est coulé et en vérité, je crois qu'il doit s'être engagé pour bien gagner le prix de sa trahison, à nous dénoncer

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<sup>101</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 27, 1917.

dans le journal sous la forme d'une lettre filandreuse. »<sup>102</sup> Saint-Pierre saw in

Ducharme's public condemnation an opportunity to enlist new recruits to his movement.

La volte-face de Ducharme va nous rallier les quelques partisans non immédiatement intéressés à son salut, et par conséquent, nous aider à continuer la lutte. En effet, nous tiendrons une assemblée à Belle Rivière dimanche.<sup>103</sup>

In response to Ducharme's criticism, the Ford resistance organized a mass meeting in his home town of Belle River. In spite of the large turnout, Ducharme would never recant his earlier remarks.

Shortly thereafter, another figure broke ranks with the rebels. Like Ducharme, Gaspard Pacaud was a politician who expressed little admiration for Fallon. However, he refrained from the harsh criticism aimed at Laurendeau.

Monseigneur Fallon a été jugé et condamné par la grande masse des Canadiens français de son diocèse. Je ne crois pas que ce fut tout simplement à propos de la désignation du Révd Père Laurendeau comme successeur du regretté Père Beaudoin à Ford que tout ce qu'il y a de canadien français dans Essex s'est soulevé. Je crois que le Revd. Monsieur est plus ou moins le bouc émissaire de l'administration de Monseigneur. L'installation du Reverend à la cure de Ford n'a été que l'étincelle qui a mis le feu aux poudres....<sup>104</sup>

Here was a second prominent French Canadian Liberal, with roots in Quebec but many years of residency in the area, objecting to the excessive hyperbole of the open air assemblies. For Pacaud, Laurendeau had emerged as a convenient scapegoat against whom the militants could rally the crowds. Such demonizations would be necessary to sustain a successful parish boycott. They would fail however to maintain a united francophone front against Fallon, the professed enemy of the bilingual schools.

In light of these divisions, the leaders would be hard pressed to maintain the spirit of the resistance. Saint-Pierre remained optimistic about the prospects of a prolonged

<sup>102</sup> Saint-Pierre to Grenon, October 27, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/3.

<sup>103</sup> Saint Pierre to Grenon, October 27, 1917. CRCCF, C2/201/3.

<sup>104</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 30, 1917.

boycott of Our Lady of the Lake. He also took solace in the tireless efforts of the women of the parish, who led a door-to-door campaign to fill a petition for the recall of Laurendeau. He did, however concede that some defections were already occurring.

Le mouvement de blocus ou de vide autour de l'abbé Laurendeau se tient encore très bien...un très grand nombre de familles n'iront pas à l'Église, même si la résistance devait durer tout l'hiver. Quant aux défections, je crois qu'elles ne seraient pas nombreuses. En effet, nous avons préparé nos gens à la dernière assemblée à s'attendre à ce que le cas ne soit pas réglé avant plusieurs semaines voire même plusieurs mois.<sup>105</sup>

Saint-Pierre attempted to prepare the parishioners for the long wait for Rome's decision.

Most parishioners opted to attend mass in neighbouring Walkerville or Windsor throughout the winter. Some families even ventured to Detroit via the river ferry to attend mass. Meanwhile, Laurendeau continued to celebrate mass at the near empty church of Our Lady of the Lake.

As the autumn leaves fell, and the weather grew colder, the parish militants' rallies drew to a close. On Sunday, October 22, the cold, wet conditions and washed out roads affected the crowd's numbers at Tilbury with only 2000 people attending.

Nevertheless, *Le Droit* painted a rather encouraging picture.

Fait assez intéressant, et qui montre bien l'intérêt que les diocésains portent à cette campagne, c'est qu'un très grand nombre de dames se firent un devoir d'assister à l'assemblée toute entière. Il y en eut même des braves pour rester là au froid qui nous transperçait avec des enfants dans les bras.<sup>106</sup>

The existing photographs of the mass rallies do indeed suggest that some women took time out of their busy domestic schedules to participate in the militant rallies.

Saint-Pierre offered ACFEQ officials in Ottawa reason for hope. Speaking of the many parishioners who had previously been indifferent to the language and schools troubles, the doctor noted a certain cultural reawakening :

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<sup>105</sup> Damien Saint-Pierre to Charles Charlebois, November 18, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/3.

<sup>106</sup> *Le Droit*, October 25, 1917.

Les paroissiens tiennent bon. Si la mauvaise température ne peut pas les décourager, ils semblent bien déterminer d'aller jusqu'au bout. Des gens qui étaient tout-à-fait indifférents à tout mouvement en faveur de la langue française sont maintenant les plus forts dans la lutte. Exemple : Un père de famille dont les enfants parlaient toujours anglais et qui, lui-même, disait que c'était inutile de parler français, a défendu à ses enfants, sous peine de les mettre à la porte, de dire un mot en anglais à la maison. D'autres se tortillent la langue en trente six croches pour pouvoir parler français.<sup>107</sup>

This reawakening among some parishioners edified the militant leaders at a time when public attention focused on the first prominent defection from the movement. This hope would be sorely tested.

### The Stratford Retreat

As the Ford City Riot became the topic of conversation among Catholics and non-Catholics alike in the fall of 1917, Fallon took steps to protect himself from the embarrassing media coverage. In the days that followed the Paincourt rally, the mitred warrior summoned his priests to a retreat at the deanery in Stratford. At this assembly, the priests of the diocese discussed the uprising of the francophones of the Windsor Border Region. As their retreat drew to a close, Dennis Forster proposed a resolution that Fallon had acted in the best interests of the parishioners, « both temporal and spiritual » in appointing Laurendeau as pastor of Ford City. It added,

In the actual circumstances, ...we feel called upon to deplore and condemn the spirit of insubordination and lawlessness which found expression in the disorderly, disgraceful and scandalous conduct of a section of the parishioners on the occasion of the requiem mass for the late Rev. Fr. Beaudoin, and again at the installation of the Reverend Father Laurendeau, the duly appointed parish priest of ND du Lac. We desire further to express emphatically our unreserved reprobation of the ensuing campaign of turbulence, slander and sedition.<sup>108</sup>

This declaration divided the area's francophone clergy. Even Loiselle of River Canard signed the document, admitting he was opposed to the holding of a meeting of the Ford militants in his parish, and that he was never in sympathy with the rallies. Langlois of

<sup>107</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, October 6, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/3.

<sup>108</sup> Resolution, Reverends Downey, McCabe, Forster et al., to his holiness Benedict XV, October 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

Tecumseh, on the other hand, admitted to journalists that he had felt pressured to sign, but had still refused.<sup>109</sup> More than twenty francophone priests had signed the resolution in favour of Fallon. Only four refused to sign the resolution: one Canayen and three French Canadians.

Alfred Emery of Paincourt, one of the last stalwart priests of the region, recorded his account of the October 25 diocesan assembly. In a letter of appeal to the Apostolic Delegate, the priest alleged that in fact, Fallon had intimidated his priests into signing the resolution. According to Emery, as the priests considered signing, Fallon who was present in the assembly warned, "Remember that you are with your bishop or against your Bishop, that you are with the Church or against the church."<sup>110</sup> The following day, the press announced to the public the identity of the four recalcitrant priests. This initiative represented the third time that Fallon had garnered public support from his clergy to shore up his image with officials in Rome. The diocesan assembly adjourned with the public censure of Alfred Emery, Pierre Langlois of Tecumseh, Pierre L'Heureux of Belle River, and Lucien Landreville of Grande Pointe. Alfred Emery defended his refusal to comply,

En conscience, je ne puis pas approuver Mgr Fallon de m'avoir forcé à comparaître devant son tribunal et de m'y avoir insulté injustement. Jamais je ne l'approuverai d'être venu me traiter de menteur public dans mon église, en présence des enfants de confirmation et des paroissiens lors de sa visite de confirmation de 1915.<sup>111</sup>

Emery faced an agonizing dilemma throughout his years of service under Fallon. A devoted adherent to the philosophy that linguistic and cultural preservation were

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<sup>109</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, October 25, 1917.

<sup>110</sup> Alfred Emery to Peregrino Stagni, Apostolic Delegate, November 2, 1917, CRCCF, C2/211/1.

<sup>111</sup> Emery to Stagni, November 2, 1917, CRCCF, C2/211/1.

concomitant to faith preservation, his charge must have been difficult indeed. How was a priest to reconcile himself with a bishop's integrationist agenda when it clashed with his belief system? Emery eventually retreated into a self-imposed isolation for the remainder of Fallon's episcopate.<sup>112</sup> As for Loiselle, he later issued a sworn testimony repudiating his signature, suggesting he had no intention of endorsing the administration of the diocese by Bishop Fallon.<sup>113</sup> By exercising his authority as bishop, Fallon had once again successfully divided the francophone priests of the diocese. Now only four priests or five priests stood against the bishop. The publication of the militant clerics' names was once again an attempt to shame them for their non-compliance.

#### Hostility Towards Fallon

Fallon did little to improve his image among the francophones of his diocese in the weeks to come. Indeed, the bishop reiterated his public endorsement of the Borden government's conscription platform during the most controversial election campaign in Canadian history. His speech was eventually printed in flyer form and posted in English and in French on the grounds of every church throughout the diocese. Many militants resented Fallon's outspoken position on an issue that divided English and French Canadians so bitterly. In Paincourt, following the recent public humiliation of Emery in the press, the reaction to the bishop's flyer was hostile. Parishioners ripped down the pro-conscription manifesto posters sporting Fallon's face and shredded them, trampling

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<sup>112</sup> Emery to Lionel Groulx, October 6, 1924, CRLG, P1A/1270.

<sup>113</sup> Sworn testimony, Reverend Father Joseph A. Loiselle, River Canard, before Joseph de Grandpré, October 29, 1917, CRCCF, C2/205/7, Loiselleville.

them under foot.<sup>114</sup> Public hostility towards the bishop had not dissipated with the suppression of the Ford City riot. Despite the distance between these two communities, it was clearly evident that the trouble in Paincourt suggested that francophones there had also come to regard the Bishop with contempt.

Saint Pierre condemned the public spectacle surrounding the Stratford meeting's endorsement of Fallon and its reprimand of the four francophone priests. He added,

Le certificat de confiance de la part de son clergé ne peut pas effacer les basses intrigues de Monseigneur Fallon auprès du gouvernement et auprès des pires ennemis de l'Église; ce certificat ne peut pas couvrir les sentiments qui se manifestent de la part des fidèles qui préfèrent laisser la voiture de l'Évêque en panne dans une ornière de chemin, que de lui aider à sortir de ce mauvais pas ou encore, qui s'informent si ce serait péché de le jeter dans la rivière pour se débarrasser à tout jamais d'un persécuteur aussi sournois et tyrannique que lui.<sup>115</sup>

Saint-Pierre's comments revealed that the contempt of local francophones for their bishop had descended to a whole new level.

Saint-Pierre's letter indicated that the growing antagonism towards Fallon had been bordering on violence for some time. Prior to the Ford City riot, in the winter of 1916, a small band of militants considered silencing the bishop once and for all. According to Gaston Saint-Pierre, the son of Damien, local figures arranged an automobile accident involving the bishop. The plan included a man who volunteered to chauffeur Fallon to River Canard from Amherstburg. During the shuttle, the driver was to veer into the icy river on a suicide mission to kill Fallon. To the dismay of the leaders of the plot, the chauffeur lost his nerve.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Alfred Emery to Alexandre Grenon, c. December 10, 1917, CRCCF, C2/211/1.

<sup>115</sup> Damien Saint-Pierre to A. Foisy, editor of *Le Droit*, November 7, 1917, CRCCF, C2/201/1.

<sup>116</sup> Interview, Dr. Gaston Saint-Pierre, August 24, 1988, Orleans, Ontario; Interview, Robert Gauthier, former bilingual school inspector of Essex County, Ottawa, Ontario, August 26, 1988.

### Conscription Crisis

In the midst of the Ford City turmoil, the population of the Windsor border region played its part in the national debate over compulsory military service. The federal Conservative incumbent MP for Essex North, Ernest Wigle, endorsed Prime Minister Robert Borden's controversial legislation at a time when English- and French-Canadians voiced their disagreement in the public forum of the press. For the region's Liberals, the question was not so clear cut. Many English-speaking Liberals agreed to support the Prime Minister's call for a national union government. For those Liberals who refused to abandon Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his opposition to conscription, the selection of a winnable candidate seemed critical for the upcoming election. Francophone militants Joseph de Grandpré, Gustave Lacasse and Damien Saint-Pierre all participated in the ensuing negotiations among party members for an acceptable standard-bearer. These militant leaders were in agreement that the winnable candidate would have to be an Anglophone. All three men threw their support to William Costello Kennedy, who subsequently took the nomination, in spite of rumours that Gaspard Pacaud might run. Throughout the late autumn campaign, Kennedy steadfastly supported Laurier, although his stand on conscription could best be described as ambivalent. On election night, Kennedy would be one of a handful of Laurier Liberals to win an Ontario seat in the House of Commons. He narrowly defeated Unionist Ernest Wigle by a vote of 7164 to

6718. The francophone villages of Lake St. Clair and Ford City voted overwhelmingly Liberal and played a pivotal role in tilting the balance in Kennedy's favour.<sup>117</sup>

#### Setbacks for Ford City's Militants

In January 1918, some of the more radical militants rallied around Joseph de Grandpré's campaign for a seat on the Windsor separate school board. The barrister and outspoken advocate of the ACFEO who had played a prominent role in the blockade, riot and subsequent parish boycott of Ford City challenged longtime School Board president Gaspard Pacaud, who was a former member of the ACFEO executive turned critic of the provincial organization. Pacaud defeated his rival by a decisive margin.<sup>118</sup> The rough and tumble of politics left lasting wounds between the two men, as illustrated in Pacaud's less than tactful analysis of the campaign. The school board veteran viewed the vote as a verdict on the behaviour of the Ford rebels: « la défaite de M. de Grandpré est une condamnation de la part des canadiens français du mouvement de protestation de Ford. »<sup>119</sup> Pacaud's increasingly harsh criticism of the Ford resistance, likely the product of de Grandpré's blatant political challenge, illustrated the appearance of public divisions in the francophone leadership at a time when unity against a common enemy was essential to sustaining the nascent bilingual schools resistance.

This feud between Pacaud and de Grandpré appears to have been due to at least three factors: first, the former newspaperman's past public criticism of the provincial

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<sup>117</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, December 18, 1917.

<sup>118</sup> While many radical militants saw Pacaud as a traitor to the cause, the Windsor separate school board passed a resolution and successfully reintroduced French prayers at the end of the school day under his leadership in 1917.

<sup>119</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, January 16, 1918.

ACFEO; second, Pacaud's sympathetic portrayal of Laurendeau as a scapegoat; and lastly the inaction of the school board on the French language issue in three of its schools. With more than forty years of experience in the French language battles of the border cities, Pacaud continued to hold public support as leader of the separate school board. His years of experience likely forced him to come to terms with the art of the possible in minority language politics. Despite his past journalistic bombast, Pacaud had evolved from a radical to a moderate militant around 1910 when he assumed a position of importance in the provincial licensing office. De Grandpré, on the other hand, was a highly idealistic newcomer to the region and to politics, and had yet to lose any of his passion for the French language. Given Pacaud's decisive victory among Catholic voters, it seems unlikely that de Grandpré's radical militancy resonated with most Windsor francophones. The conflict between these two men would resurface in the months to come.

Aside from de Grandpré's defeat, the month of January, 1918 brought a series of discouraging setbacks for Ford City's militants. On January 11, 1918, the secretary to the Attorney General of Ontario investigating the events leading up to and including the riot delivered his findings. In his report, he quashed all hopes of a formal provincial inquiry into the matter.<sup>120</sup> While the parish radicals feared what the Roman courts would do with their petition, they had always believed that a civil suit would place them on an equal footing with the Bishop.

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<sup>120</sup> N. Currey, Private Secretary to the Attorney General, to Adolphe Beausoleil, secretary of the Parish Committee, Ford, Ontario, January 11, 1918, CRCCF, C2/222/3.

Just two days later, the Ford militants received more discouraging news. The Apostolic Delegate turned down their request to sue Fallon in civil court.

...il est de mon devoir de vous rappeler à vous catholiques, que les causes du clergé sont réservées à l'autorité ecclésiastique, et que celles des évêques surtout sont du ressort exclusif du Saint-Siège de façon qu'il convient à tout catholique de s'abstenir autant que possible de poursuivre devant les tribunaux civils un membre du clergé.<sup>121</sup>

This combination of news clearly discouraged the leaders of the Ford City boycott. The Bishop appeared to be winning on all fronts.

When some parish militants wrote back complaining of the existing double standard where a bishop could sue his Catholic subjects but the converse was forbidden, Stagni replied

En réponse, il est de mon devoir de vous dire que je n'ai pas le pouvoir de vous accorder l'autorisation pour intenter des poursuites contre Sa Grandeur, l'évêque de London devant les tribunaux, pouvoir réservé d'une manière toute spéciale au Saint-Siège.<sup>122</sup>

The boycott leaders realized that the Ford City parishioners would hardly entertain yet another legal appeal to the slow-moving courts of the Church in Rome against the bishop when the first had yet to be decided.

The militants suffered further losses on other grounds as well. The effectiveness of the boycott lost its vigour with every passing week. The pessimism of some dissenting parishioners appeared to be spreading.

Il faisait très beau aujourd'hui, moins froid que la semaine dernière, et cependant on m'affirme de source certaine qu'à la grande messe il y avait plus de monde que d'ordinaire. Il n'y a pas de doute que la patience de certains de nos canayens s'épuise déjà et que malgré notre dernière assemblée où on a retrouvé le même enthousiasme que jadis et où nous avons insisté plus que jamais sur la nécessité absolue de persister à aller à la messe ailleurs et à faire le vide autour de Laurendeau, nous perdons quelque peu de terrain, pas beaucoup mais même assez pour encourager Laurendeau à persister à s'imposer. J'ai rencontré aujourd'hui des personnes revenant de la messe

<sup>121</sup> Monsignor Pellegrino Stagni to Dr. Saint-Pierre and Joseph de Grandpré, January 13, 1918, CRCCF, C2/222/3.

<sup>122</sup> Stagni to De Grandpré and Saint-Pierre, January 21, 1918, CRCCF, C2/222/4.

ici qui étaient très embarrassées de me voir sur leur chemin et qui sont des premiers à assister à nos assemblées et à applaudir à tout rompre.

Ces mêmes personnes nous disent qu'elles sont âgées et comme elles ne peuvent pas aller ailleurs et qu'elles ne veulent pas manquer la messe, elles vont à Ford se mettent au bas de l'église et ne donnent pas un sou. Il faut qu'à chacune d'elle nous recommencions de nouveau une dissertation complète sur l'importance de faire le vide, etc., etc., etc.

Assurément, il nous faudrait des nouvelles de Rome aussitôt que possible pour rassurer ces pauvres gens qui ne sont pas habitués à la lenteur des tribunaux ecclésiastiques et qui peuvent être sous l'impression que la question est pratiquement réglée à notre désavantage.<sup>123</sup>

The sheer disinterest of some, and the frustration of others with the interminable wait for a Roman court ruling, along with the growing suspicion that the boycott would effect little real change, contributed to the swelling number of parishioners who returned to the Ford City church. De Grandpré deplored the laissez-faire attitude of parishioners who had so quickly forgotten the resolutions they had enthusiastically supported at a popular assembly just a few weeks earlier.

### La Défense

To counter the weakening spirit of the parish rebels, Saint-Pierre, de Grandpré and Dr. Gustave Lacasse of Windsor met in late 1917 to launch a weekly newspaper. Poor coverage of the Ford City boycott in the *Evening Record* and *Le Droit* after the last of the autumn protest meetings underscored the need for a tool to reach the francophone population. The ACFEO sent writers from *Le Droit* to assist them in starting the enterprise. The first edition of the new militant paper, christened *La Défense*, appeared in March, 1918.

In its first issue, *La Défense* outlined its role as the voice of the francophone community of the Windsor border region in defiance of Regulation XVII and Bishop Fallon. Assessing both the local religious and educational struggles, and the national

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<sup>123</sup> Vir (Saint-Pierre) to Junior (Grenon), January 20, 1918.

issue of conscription, the maiden editorial focused on the existing climate at Our Lady of the Lake Parish.

...M. Laurendeau est bien installé à Ford contre le désir ardent de tous les paroissiens, ou au moins de la grande majorité.

La majorité de la paroisse comprend qu'il est très important de faire le vide autour de l'abbé Laurendeau qui est entré dans le presbytère en se servant de la force brutale et en ne se faisant pas de scrupule de marcher dans le sang des paroissiens.<sup>124</sup>

Early editorials aimed to bolster the spirit of the church boycott and remind the parishioners of the rationale behind their struggle. Throughout its two year history, *La Défense* had a singular agenda: to reinvigorate the resistance movement in the Windsor border region against Regulation XVII and its alleged author, Bishop Fallon. Its editors aimed to link the Ford struggle clearly to the ongoing battle for bilingual schools.

Ce n'est pas, comme on a tenté de le faire croire, contre un homme que les gens de Ford se sont soulevés, mais contre un système, un plan savamment combiné d'anglicisation à outrance. Les paroissiens de Ford City ont eu connaissance de la détermination bien arrêtée chez Mgr Fallon dès mai 1910, quelques jours après son sacre, « de faire disparaître jusqu'aux traces mêmes de l'enseignement bilingue dans son diocèse. » Ils ont constaté et souffert ensuite d'une manière particulière la mise à exécution de cet engagement par le règlement 17, si fortement approuvé par Mgr l'Évêque de London...

Exaspérés par tant d'injustice et de persécutions, et voyant leurs craintes se réaliser, les paroissiens de Ford City, n'y purent plus tenir, et organisèrent la résistance. Ils refusèrent de donner leur confiance à un homme [Laurendeau] qui avait été l'instrument docile entre les mains du chef du système de persécution contre les prêtres canadiens-français, et en particulier contre leur curé, le cher Père Beaudoin. Ils ne voulurent pas que la victime fut remplacée dans leur cœur par un des instruments serviles du système d'anglicisation...<sup>125</sup>

The parish radicals now had a public French voice to reach the larger francophone population.

### Failure of the Boycott

In the spring of 1918, a new dilemma confronted the parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake. Many agonized over where they should fulfill their religious obligations for Holy Week and Easter. Area francophones now understood that Easter duties had to be

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<sup>124</sup> *La Défense*, March 14, 1918.

<sup>125</sup> *La Défense*, March 28, 1918.

performed at one's own parish to be a good Catholic. The result struck a severe blow to boycott morale. On a brief visit to Windsor, ACCEO provincial secretary Alex Grenon offered this pessimistic assessment of the Ford City situation.

Les choses ne vont pas très bien à Ford. Un bon nombre de personnes retournent à l'église. Le jour de Pâques on nous dit que l'Église est remplie et que c'était la même chose à l'office du vendredi saint. Mon Dieu que c'est donc difficile de faire entendre raison à nos canadiens. Ils se disent lassés d'attendre, que nous n'obtiendrons rien, malgré tout ce qu'on peut leur dire... Ces déflections découragent les chefs.<sup>126</sup>

Ford City's Catholics had grown impatient with the boycott and its goals. A sense of defeatism descended upon many of the participants.<sup>127</sup>

For those adults who could not bring themselves to receive the sacraments from Laurendeau, Joseph Emery, the associate pastor, filled a necessary ministry. The boycotters turned to Emery in the event of a funeral or a wedding ceremony. Increasingly however, Laurendeau replaced the associate in the latter's inexplicable absence. Indeed, the resistance leaders even began to suspect Joseph Emery of lobbying support for the new pastor of Ford City. In the spring of 1918, Fallon promoted Emery to head the parish in Grande Pointe, Kent County. He did not fill the vacancy created at Ford by Emery's departure. Consequently, Fallon left Laurendeau alone to minister the sacraments to his congregation, signalling yet another setback for the boycott.<sup>128</sup>

As the militant parishioners adjusted to Joseph Emery's departure, matters worsened further. A growing number of disaffected francophones began to attend the

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<sup>126</sup> A. Grenon to 'Elieude' [C. Charlebois], April 4, 1918, CRCCF, C2/222/3. The return of Ford's parishioners compelled Laurendeau to warn the wayward of the upcoming penance they would be required to perform to gain absolution. Emery to Groulx, May 8, 1918, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1270.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Jean Noël, priest, October 21, 1987. Fr. Laurendeau's persistent openness towards his parishioners, coupled with his use of both English and French at all masses slowly lured many Catholics back to the fold.

<sup>128</sup> Telegram, Monsignor Edmond Cloutier to Reverend Beaulieu, June 20, 1918, CRCCF, C2/201/3.

services of Jean Durand, a renegade French priest from a schismatic Catholic sect in a nearby rented hall in Ford City.<sup>129</sup> Saint-Pierre, fearing the irreparable damage such an association would do to the parishioners' boycott, summoned the support of the women of the parish. In a door-to-door campaign, he and his canvassers warned the congregation of the dangers that this priest posed to their spiritual welfare.<sup>130</sup> Similar behaviour by Franco-Americans in North Brookfield, Massachusetts in 1899-1900 ended with Bishop Beaven's excommunication of an entire congregation in rebellion.<sup>131</sup>

The door-to-door initiative unveiled some rather disconcerting news. At many of the houses, the canvassers encountered the same response : "Puisque le Pape ne veut pas nous enlever Laurendeau, c'est parce qu'il ne s'occupe pas de nous et par conséquent, il est bien indifférent à ce que nous pourrions faire en matière religieuse."<sup>132</sup>

In spite of the pleading of the militant leadership, some of the faithful willingly turned their backs on the Church to express their displeasure.

The remaining parish militants attempted on Sunday June, 16, 1918, to attend a Syrian rite mass in the basement of Immaculate Conception Church in Windsor. Many parishioners had been worshipping there since Laurendeau's appointment as pastor. This arrangement was about to end. Just prior to the mass, Fallon's newly appointed pastor, H.N. Robert entered the church and ordered all Ford parishioners to leave the premises. The Syrian mass, conducted by Fr. Armaly, would not begin until their departure. The

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<sup>129</sup> Saint-Pierre to Grenon, May 5, 1918, CRCCF, C2/201/3.

<sup>130</sup> Saint-Pierre to Grenon, May 5, 1918.

<sup>131</sup> Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, pp. 140-142. The Franco-Americans in question, upset at their inability to secure the nomination of a French Canadian pastor, engaged the services of a renegade Belgian priest and built their own chapel.

<sup>132</sup> Saint-Pierre to Grenon, May 5, 1918.

people refused to move, and Saint Pierre argued vigorously that they had the right to attend mass where they pleased. Realizing that his orders were not producing the desired results, Robert called the police. The officers ordered the Ford radicals to leave or face arrest for trespassing. The constabulary escorted Marc Bontront, Jules Brutinot and Madame Joseph Parent, out of the church.<sup>133</sup> Following this expulsion, the police stationed a guard outside the doors to prevent their reentry. The bishop's recent string of pastoral appointments was effectively undermining the struggling boycott.

The incident at Immaculate Conception split the remaining boycotters into several factions. The first bloc broke down and returned to the Ford City church, accepting the sacraments from Laurendeau. A second group continued to slip into the other parishes whenever possible. Another faction chose to stop attending mass altogether, rather than receive the sacraments from Laurendeau. A small cluster of parishioners even continued to attend the religious services of the schismatic priest. The leading dissidents found it increasingly difficult to unite the parish boycotters. Eventually, a few militants would find refuge in the new Polish church of Windsor, where they were warmly welcomed.<sup>134</sup>

De Grandpré instructed a group of patriotic French- Canadian women of the border cities to circulate a door to door petition to reintroduce French in the separate schools of the towns. His letter indicated his real agenda.

Faites signer une pétition demandant l'enseignement du français dans votre école. Faites-la présenter à la commission scolaire par une délégation des contribuables. Vous verrez comment elle sera acceptée, quels seront ceux qui voteront en faveur et vous connaîtrez alors vos amis. Il

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<sup>133</sup> See *La Défense*, le 5 juillet, 1918.

<sup>134</sup> *La Défense*, le 5 juillet, 1918. Dr. Saint-Pierre and his family began to see the Polish priest Fr. Andriewski for the sacraments. Interview with Dr. Gaston Saint-Pierre, August 25, 1988.

est temps que vous sachiez qui, parmi les vôtres est en faveur du français. Le temps est à l'action non aux paroles.<sup>135</sup>

While the petition did garner widespread support within the city, it was not an unqualified success. Furthermore, two prominent Windsorites declined to sign it : Gaspard Pacaud and Joseph O. Réaume. Both advocated that quiet diplomacy would likely advance their agenda more successfully in an anglophone city like Windsor than an aggressive confrontation. This disagreement regarding strategy on the French language instruction issue led to a dramatic confrontation between radical militant leaders on one side, and the president of the Windsor Separate School Board on the other, in May, 1918. De Grandpré led a large delegation to present a request for French instruction before his former opponent in the January school board elections. Pacaud recorded the exchange in the weekly French column of the *Windsor Evening Record*. Pacaud emphasized that the eight member school board, composed of seven francophone trustees, had spent years trying to find a legal solution to the existing problem with the school regulations.<sup>136</sup> “La loi était là dans le chemin. Comment surmonter l’obstacle? Il fallait travailler à faire disparaître cet obstacle. En attendant, nous ne pouvions passer.”<sup>137</sup> De Grandpré replied that the school trustees should act in spite of the existing education law as in Ottawa. The trustees rebuffed this request, warning that no action should be taken without consideration of the costs to the children who would be affected.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, Pacaud and his colleagues expressed fear for the future of their Catholic schools. They resented the

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<sup>135</sup> *La Défense*, July 19, 1918. De Grandpré offered his version of the conflict over French with the School Commission to respond to previous remarks made by Gaspard Pacaud in the *Evening Record*.

<sup>136</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 22, 1918.

<sup>137</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 22, 1918

<sup>138</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, May 22, 1918.

allegations of radical militants that they had done nothing to restore French language instruction. Ironically, both men claimed to desire the restoration of French instruction, but their disagreement appeared to be a matter of strategy and degree rather than of actual substance. This clash of personalities clearly played a role in this dramatic confrontation in the French language press. Pacaud, now faced a new editorialist whose pen could flow with the same venom. De Grandpré condemned the board inaction, arguing that by abstaining from action, the board had in effect, sided with the persecutors.<sup>139</sup>

Pacaud responded by publicly criticizing the machinations of the ACFEO in the Windsor area and the potential damage its work was likely to yield. He condemned the role played by ACFEO secretary Alexandre Grenon in recruiting French Canadian women for a petition signing campaign to pressure the separate school board.<sup>140</sup> The French columnist of the Windsor daily clearly indicted Grenon as an unscrupulous organizer who exploited the militant ardor and devotion of many local women in their petition for more French from the school board, when he already knew that the board, composed of seven francophones did not possess this authority. Pacaud suggested that in fact, Grenon knew the outcome in advance, and merely aimed to excite sentiments to further the cause of the provincial movement, at the expense of these women's dreams of an education for their progeny. In short Grenon was deliberately acting in bad faith with

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<sup>139</sup> *La Défense*, May 30, 1918.

<sup>140</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, June 12, 1918.

his work behind the scenes.<sup>141</sup> In Pacaud's opinion, the existing divisions in the local community were due to the ACFO campaign against the school board.

The string of failures experienced by militant leaders in 1918 came to a crushing finale in the autumn. The Sacred Consistorial Congregation in Rome, weighing in on the Ford City issue, handed down its decision. Fallon delivered the news of the court judgment. After some reflection, the bishop composed a letter to be read aloud at all of the Roman Catholic churches in the border cities on Sunday, October 13. Fallon wrote,

In view of the fact that several petitions have been sent before the Apostolic See for the purpose of having François Xavier Laurendeau, priest, removed from the parish of Ford City, and that various motives were alleged to bring about such removal, their eminences, the fathers of the Sacred Congregation, by order of our Holy Father, having in full assembly examined the case and maturely weighed everything, decided and decreed that no account could be taken of the aforesaid petitions, and that Father Laurendeau, priest, must be retained in charge of the parish.<sup>142</sup>

The Roman court ordered the parishioners to cease all opposition and submit to their bishop. Francophone militants suffered another defeat at the hands of their bishop.

The Roman decree clearly underlined the authority granted to the bishop to enforce the court's decision, leaving no doubt regarding the meaning of the message.

It will be the duty of the Right Reverend Bishop of London to make these things known officially to the faithful of the parish of Ford City and authorization is granted him to repress those who resist according to the tenor of the sacred canons.<sup>143</sup>

In short, the parish dissidents of Ford had to submit to this decision, return to their church and accept Fallon's appointment of Laurendeau as their pastor or face excommunication.

In the newly christened replacement of the *Evening Record*, the *Border Cities Star*, Gaspard Pacaud, in pirouette fashion, offered this assessment.

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<sup>141</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, August 7, 1918.

<sup>142</sup> See *Décision de la Sacré Congrégation Consistoriale, CRCCF, C2/201/3; Border Cities Star*, October 15, 1918; *La Défense*, October 25, 1918.

<sup>143</sup> *Border Cities Star*, October 15, 1918.

Il y en a qui sont grandement étonnés de cette décision. Je ne le suis pas.... On alla à Rome plutôt pour demander la ratification d'une action prise que pour solliciter une action à prendre. ....En prenant l'attitude qu'ils prirent, les fidèles de la paroisse de Notre Dame du Lac assumèrent une responsabilité à laquelle ils n'avaient aucun droit. Ils se constituèrent en tribunal, rendirent jugement, prononcèrent et exécutèrent la sentence, puis s'adressèrent à Rome pour mettre son sceau sur cette usurpation de pouvoir.

Est-ce que Rome pouvait permettre cette méthode de procédure?

Je puis concevoir la chaleur du sentiment intime qui se développe au contact de ce qu'on conçoit être la raillerie de la tyrannie, mais c'est là l'épreuve qui se dresse devant toute revendication. La maîtrise de soi-même en tout et partout, est toujours essentiel à tout succès, car avec elle, il est toujours facile de demeurer dans les sereines régions de ses prérogatives et de reconnaître même au prix du sacrifice d'une injustice subi si nécessaire, la suprématie des pouvoirs des gouvernements de l'État et de l'Église.<sup>144</sup>

For Pacaud, as for many francophones, opposition to Ford City's new pastor had been stretched beyond acceptable limits. The blockade, the riot, and the boycott had embarrassed many who felt more peaceful measures would have promoted greater success. The mass meetings across the region had only worsened the situation by providing a stage for inflammatory language, unCatholic behaviour, and disrespectful personal attacks. These controversial rallies served to divide the francophone population.

Many francophones disagreed with Pacaud's interpretation of the situation. The parish militants rejected his allegation that the defeat of their cause had been inevitable. They expressed their opinion of the Roman decree in the pages of *La Défense*.

Nous n'avons pas gagné, il est vrai, mais nous avons fait avancer une cause plus importante : celle de faire connaître aux plus hautes autorités de l'église, la vraie situation dans laquelle nous sommes obligés de vivre. Ce seul fait devrait suffire à nous combler de joie.<sup>145</sup>

With the decision in hand, the parish leaders now counseled their followers to submit to the court ruling at an assembly on October 20.<sup>146</sup> The next day, Saint-Pierre, Janisse, Maisonville, Bontront, their families, and their followers assumed their pew benches at

<sup>144</sup> *Border Cities Star*, (Colonne française) October 17, 1918.

<sup>145</sup> *La Défense*, October 18, 1918.

<sup>146</sup> *La Défense*, October 18, 1918.

mass for the first time in over a year.<sup>147</sup> Their submission to the ruling of the Roman courts solicited an antagonistic response. Gaspard Pacaud doubted whether the leaders would refrain from further trouble on the education front, despite their protestations of obedience to the Church.<sup>148</sup>

### Conclusion

With the court decision from Rome, the standoff at Our Lady of the Lake between the francophone militants of Ford and Bishop Fallon came to an end. Once again, the Bishop could declare victory over those who challenged his appointment of Laurendeau. This parish battle, which pitted the bishop's right to appoint a pastor to a parish against a congregation's wishes, was actually rooted in the dispute over the bilingual schools of the Windsor border region and Fallon's overall integrationist agenda. The new pastor, François Xavier Laurendeau, the secretary of Fallon's diocesan officialty, had earned the enmity of francophone militants for his role in punishing five radical clerical advocates of the bilingual schools for their refusal to abide by the bishop's contentious education policy, including their beloved Beaudoin. Militants leveled accusations against Laurendeau as part of a larger strategy to maintain the supremacy of the French language in the parish, as promoted by Beaudoin. For militants the choice was black or white, either one accepted this tradition or one was against it. Laurendeau's submission and obedience to Fallon placed him on the dark side of this divide.

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<sup>147</sup> *La Défense*, October 25, 1918.

<sup>148</sup> *Windsor Evening Record*, November 2, 1918.

The emotional explosiveness of Fallon's pastoral appointment and its association to the heated bilingual schools issue could hardly be contained by arguments in favour of the Bishop's legal authority. A conciliatory gesture might have averted the pending disaster, but instead Fallon selected the least palatable candidate among thirty francophone priests to assume the job and openly antagonized a sensitive and grieving population. This controversial decision exemplified Fallon's excessive authoritarianism, lack of empathy and poor judgment. The Bishop's awkward handling of this situation contributed to the trouble that followed.

No reasoning can excuse Fallon's callous disregard for the emotional state of the Ford parishioners. It is likely his selection was rooted in a desire to crush French language militants rather than to address the spiritual welfare of a Catholic parish mourning the loss of their pastor of 26 years. His inept choice stirred thousands of francophones to express their outrage in public protests. The parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake were not manipulated by a group of outsiders, as alleged by church officials. In fact, denied the right to any meaningful democratic expression of their opposition within the framework of the Church government, the francophone Catholics of Ford City spontaneously revolted in response to Fallon's decision, as witnessed by the swift action following the funeral requiem mass. Rash decision-making and the dismissal of countless parish petitions by Church officials regarding their grievances triggered a parish rebellion, not unlike the Métis uprising of 1885 following their failed attempts to

elicit a Canadian government response to their petitions.<sup>149</sup> By harshly suppressing the blockade, Fallon succeeded in doing what Regulation XVII had failed to do- he rallied thousands of francophones in the Windsor border region, however briefly, behind the militant leadership. Workers and farmers, professionals and young mothers, elderly women and small boys, French Canadians, French and Canayens, all stepped forward to protest against the actions of their bishop. The excessive hyperbole of the Ford parish leaders, as exemplified in the radical decision to boycott the sacrament of confirmation from Fallon proved to be too much for some devout Catholics to accept. Ambitious political figures, such as Severin Ducharme and Gaspard Pacaud clearly sensed that their association with such radical rhetoric could only damage their electoral prospects in a region where francophones constituted a decided minority. Their decision to bolt from the ranks, did little to help their own cultural community, and opened the gate for other defections. In time, the militant leaders' hyperbole, coupled with apathy and the discouragingly long wait for a court decision from Rome contributed to a growing sense of disillusionment with their cause and divided the francophone Catholics of Ford City. The decision of hundreds of parishioners to return to Our Lady of the Lake to do their Easter duty illustrated how matters of faith could trump the language question.

While Rome did eventually uphold Fallon's decision in the courts, effectively handing yet another defeat to an already exhausted group of francophone militants, Church officials did chide the bishop for his poor decision-making and antagonistic method of handling this crisis situation. When Cardinal de Lai of the Sacred Consistorial

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<sup>149</sup> Friesen, p. 96.

Congregation suggested yet again that Fallon consider Rome's offer of a transfer to another diocese, the message was clear: the bishop's leadership had been seriously called into question.<sup>150</sup> In addition, de Lai recalled the firestorm of controversy Fallon had caused with his public call for the abolition of bilingual schools, criticizing him for taking any initiative at all on such a sensitive issue. With respect to the troubles in Ford City, De Lai did not dispute the legitimacy of Fallon's appointment of Laurendeau as pastor. However, he deplored the violent fashion in which the priest was installed in the rectory. He attributed the Bishop's troubles to callous decision making.

It is always a question of the way you do things...It would be best ( and this is an order from the Sacred Congregation) that in the future you act with more consideration and moderation, that you speak more guardedly, and that you write more carefully.<sup>151</sup>

De Lai's warning did not bring Fallon's resignation, but it was a clear repudiation of his decision-making. It did usher in a quieter period in diocesan affairs.

The change in atmosphere in the Diocese of London related directly to a subtle change in leadership style. Fallon illustrated this new approach in his communiqué to Ford City's parishioners following the decree from the Sacred Consistorial Congregation. In this circular, the bishop opted to refrain from comment on the contents of the decree, passing up the opportunity to sow further bitterness by publicly basking in the glory of victory. To aid matters, he quietly dropped his lawsuit against the parish committee. This approach proved to be wise, for it made it easier for the parishioners to return to Our Lady of the Lake Church.

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<sup>150</sup> Gaetano de Lai, Cardinal to M.F. Fallon, Rome, June 7, 1918, Letter No. 378118, 4pp., Fallon Papers, London Diocesan Archives, as quoted in Robert Choquette, *Language and Religion*, p. 152. He wrote, "If you are persecuted in one city, flee to another."

<sup>151</sup> De Lai to Fallon, in Choquette, p. 152.

De Lai's letter also limited Fallon's ability to act. Although the decree had publicly granted the bishop the power to excommunicate, the Cardinal instructed him to refrain from exercising this power before first consulting Rome. Hence, while the Church publicly supported Fallon, in private it expressed serious concerns over the current troubles in the London diocese. Fortunately for the bishop and the diocese, this correspondence remained private. Francophones in the Windsor border region never had occasion to exploit this message. Tensions eventually waned, and one of the most momentous episodes in Canadian Church history gradually faded into memory.

## Chapter 5: Growing Divisions in the Resistance

### Introduction

Following the collapse of the Ford City boycott against Father Laurendeau with the court ruling from Rome, the bilingual schools resistance entered a new phase. The feverish atmosphere that existed in the aftermath of the riot at Our Lady of the Lake Parish had passed; the militant leaders no longer attracted thousands of francophones to rallies to attack Bishop Fallon or to clamour for their “rights”. Nevertheless, efforts to overcome Regulation XVII remained a driving passion for some francophones. The militant leadership encountered new obstacles as disputes over resistance strategy erupted in the post-boycott period, fostering divisions within the francophone community. A growing perception among francophones suggested that the leading militants were in fact a small group of professionals, who were not originally from the Windsor border region. The efforts of church officials to portray these figures as outsiders following the Ford City riot appeared to gain traction through the 1920s. Some francophones began to view the militant leaders as a group of troublemakers from Quebec and eastern Ontario who aimed to stir up troubles over language, while others remained receptive to the message of resistance. Since the strategy of resisting the English speaking chief inspector had failed, the militants shifted the emphasis of their strategy to launching new cultural projects in the area most severely hit by the existing policy: the city of Windsor. Here, the concentration of francophones was increasingly French Canadian. The change in strategy aimed to reach a divided francophone community: some had lost faith in the resistance cause; others believed that future strategies must be tempered with a go-slow

approach to regain the trust of those who were bitterly disillusioned by the failure of the Ford appeal to Rome; a third group believed in the need for bold action including projects that would inspire a new confidence in the resistance and restore their pride in being francophone. The most daring initiative involved the launch of an independent bilingual school, but militants also worked to found two new cultural associations as well. Ironically, the school project came to serve as a symbol of what divided francophone militants in the Windsor border region. These divisions within the militant leadership would only serve to undermine further this final act of resistance against Regulation XVII.

#### Assessing the early impact of Regulation XVII

Local frustration over the existing school regulations related in part to the cultural impact on families. As francophone children grew up under the new school regulations and under English-speaking teaching orders in separate schools, militants detected a change in their attitudes towards the French culture.

Afin de conserver ce qui est volé il faut que les petits canadiens français ne parlent pas le français. On ne leur défend pas de parler le français machinalement mais on arrange tout pour qu'ils ne sachent pas lire. De cette façon on obtient un résultat certain : ces enfants grandissent sans savoir lire leur langage, la langue de leurs parents ils n'osent la parler, ils en ont honte et en même temps ils ont honte de leurs parents, ils fréquentent les gens de langue anglaise .... Du reste ces jeunes gens qui apostasient leur nationalité sont déjà à moitié apostats de leur religion, ils se trouvent sans traditions, sans boussole dans un monde qui leur est étrange et ou en général on méprise tout ce que leurs parents aimaient et respectaient. ...

Dans les écoles on pousse le zèle jusqu'à enseigner le catéchisme verbalement en français à des enfants à qui on l'enseignerait bien plus facilement si on commençait par leur montrer à lire. Comment ces enfants pourront-ils continuer leur instruction religieuse dans leur langue s'ils ne la savent pas. Tout cela est évidemment fait pour amener ces enfants à mépriser leur langue et tout ce qu'elle entraîne de traditions...<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charles Charlebois, c.1920, CRCCF, C2/156/14.

Saint-Pierre's growing concern with the longterm impact of the English speaking religious orders and Regulation XVII on the francophone children related directly to signs they were losing their language and identity. He accused the St. Joseph's and Ursuline sisters of fostering disrespect towards their parents with their strict anti-French attitudes. "Vous avez ensuite des enfants qui grandissent sans le respect des parents qui n'aiment pas à dire la prière en famille..."<sup>2</sup>

In assessing the state of French in the town of Sandwich, Saint-Pierre noted the existence of a francophone element that had little sympathy for cultural survival in conflict with an element that sought its preservation. Aside from feeling the impact of the English atmosphere of the town itself, francophones suffered from fundamental weaknesses, most notably the failure to unite in protest under one leader.

À Sandwich, le curé, malgré son nom est anti-français. À propos je vous dis plus haut en rapport avec les messes les canadiens français sont furieux mais ne savent pas comment s'organiser pour faire leurs plaintes. Le peuple ici manque de leaders, de chefs là encore, l'Évêque Fallon et ses prédécesseurs l'ont bien guettés... Fallon continue à les guetter avec assiduité. Il ne veut pas que les enfants apprennent le français à l'école primaire. Lorsqu'ensuite ils entrent au collège de Sandwich, ils ne savent pas assez le français pour même lire et d'ailleurs l'enseignement français est tout en anglais, et on a la gracieuseté de leur enseigner le français comme langue étrangère. La plupart n'ose pas le parler ne sachant pas et du reste l'ayant en mépris, comme tout est arrangé pour leur faire mépriser.<sup>3</sup>

Saint-Pierre's analysis of the youth of Sandwich provides a fascinating look at the impact of the school restrictions on French. He claimed that the instruction of French, essentially as a second language by Fallon's anglophone nuns to the francophone pupils of Sandwich, served to hinder their proper acquisition of the language. Some children proved incapable of speaking their mother tongue correctly, and thus grew ashamed of the quality of their speech, or simply grew to despise the language of their parents after

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, c.1920, CRCCF, C2/156/14.

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, c.1920, CRCCF, C2/156/14.

experiencing years of disdain in the schools. Consequently, the French identity of some children began to break down, with many acquiring what Saint-Pierre termed a deformed mentality: an anglicized way of looking at themselves, their parents and their world.<sup>4</sup>

Saint-Pierre was not the only francophone to express frustration with the anglicizing nature of Windsor's schools. François.X. Séguin, a Quebec-born carpenter, was furious to learn that his daughter had forsaken her French Canadian identity after being entrusted to the bilingual nuns of the only Catholic high school in the city : St. Mary's Academy.

au lieu de lui apprendre du français et surtout de l'amour de sa langue et de sa race, on lui a appris la haine et le mépris de sa race et de sa langue...Je ne lui en ai parlé qu'une seule fois et j'ai pu me rendre compte que humainement parlant ma cause est bien perdue. Elle se joindra à nos persécuteurs et persécutrices, en automne pour faire la guerre à ceux de qui elle tient la vie après Dieu.<sup>5</sup> Séguin blamed the Holy Names sisters for failing to instill in his daughter a pride in the French language and culture and alienating her from the family. The girl in question subsequently opted to join the St. Joseph's sisters, an English-speaking order of nuns.

ACFEO officials in Ottawa, responding to complaints, contacted the Holy Names Sisters to express concerns regarding the employment of anglophone nuns at a bilingual school in Loiselleville (River Canard). This parish was homogeneously francophone and required the services of nuns capable of speaking both English and French. Some concerned parents reported the presence of an English speaking nun who aimed to anglicize their children under the terms of Regulation XVII.<sup>6</sup> Sister Marie Martin of the Montreal headquarters of the Holy Names rejected these allegations but did recognize the

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<sup>4</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, c.1920, CRCCF, C2/156/14.

<sup>5</sup> F.X. Séguin, Windsor, to Stanislas Brault, OMI, Ottawa, April 7, 1918, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>6</sup> J. Edmond Cloutier to the Superior General of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Montreal, March, 12, 1920. CRCCF, C2/222/1.

presence of one English-speaking sister of Canayen origin named Ouellette at the school. However she argued that all students received at least one hour of French instruction in catechism, reading, grammar and spelling. She added as well that Sister Ouellette did not work to anglicize the children, but rather focused her energies on improving the student performance on high school entrance examinations.

Les autres maîtresses enseignent le français chacune dans leur classe respective. Les prières du matin et du soir, la récitation du chapelet, les avis généraux ou recommandations aux élèves sont toujours en français dans chaque classe. Il en est de même du chant religieux ou patriotique. Soyez assurés, Messieurs, que la langue française est en honneur à Loiselleville plus que dans n'importe quelle école du comté d'Essex et que maîtresses et élèves tiennent à lui conserver le rang auquel elle a droit.<sup>7</sup>

Sister Martin's response emphasized that the mentality of the pupils was in no way tainted by the presence of a teacher whose principal language was English. The letter also indicated that in fact many of the pupils struggled with English, and required considerable assistance to prepare for the high school examinations. This growing suspicion among militant francophone parents towards bilingual teachers over Regulation XVII was but one more example of the divisions that plagued the key players in the resistance movement.

#### Breach in Militant Forces : The Proposal for an Independent Bilingual School

Divisions among militants only worsened in the early 1920s. For years Joseph de Grandpré had criticized Gaspard Pacaud and the other francophone members of the Windsor Separate School board for inaction on the language issue. De Grandpré's relationship with his compatriots in the Ford City struggle also reached the breaking point, shortly after the collapse of *La Défense* in 1920. The radical nature of the

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<sup>7</sup> Sister Marie Martin de l'Ascension, Superior General of the Holy Names of Windsor, to the Officers of the ACFEO, Ottawa, April 6, 1920. CRCCF, C2/222/1.

newspaper's editorials and its close association with the leaders of the Ford City parish boycott might have been one of the reasons for its failure. As historian Jeffrey McNairn notes in his work on the emerging nineteenth century press, it is possible that these amateur journalists did not initially grasp the need to dilute their political hyperbole. Given the considerable capital costs involved in the production and distribution of a newspaper, it was imperative for the editorial team to avoid offending large and powerful advertisers or any segment of a newspaper's mass audience.<sup>8</sup> Following the closure of *La Défense* after a two-year run, militant leaders reflected on the reasons for the paper's failure. Eighteen months later, two of them, Saint-Pierre and his brother-in-law, Gustave Lacasse resolved to launch yet another newspaper, with a more moderate tone, to keep French reading material in the hands of the people and lead them more gently towards the militant cause. However, de Grandpré broke with his colleagues on this gentler strategy and quickly denigrated the new publication, *La Presse-Frontière* as a weak replacement that he referred to as a « feuille de chou », or cabbage leaf. The newspaper's editors, Saint-Pierre and his brother-in-law, Gustave Lacasse, intentionally watered down the political rhetoric characteristic of their previous publication to reach a larger audience. Perhaps out of their own discouragement with past failures and perhaps to extend a hand to disillusioned and indifferent francophones, Saint-Pierre and Lacasse clearly shifted away from their initial radical militancy and embraced greater moderation. Their decision failed to unify francophones.

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<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 434.

De Grandpré's vocal criticism of *La Presse-Frontière* became public knowledge at a meeting of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society of the border cities. His comments obviously irritated the editors. By 1922, both de Grandpré and Saint-Pierre were temporarily sidetracked from school and language issues when a feud erupted within the ranks of the SSJB local. In 1921, de Grandpré had resigned or abandoned his post as President, and Saint-Pierre's brother, Tancrède, was elected as his successor. He immediately demonstrated his aptitude as an organizer injecting the local with new life. De Grandpré, perhaps out of jealousy for the latter's success, attempted to elect one of his supporters as president the following year. When he failed, de Grandpré and his band of followers resigned from the society and marched out. This event marked the beginning of a profound rift among militants.<sup>9</sup> The impact of the feud would have lasting consequences on the francophone community of Windsor.

While this dispute raged, the leadership was also divided over the issue of where the SSJB should hold its regional meetings. The new executive opted for the St. Alphonsus Church hall in Windsor, a selection that prompted lively criticism.<sup>10</sup> Some militants felt it would be improper for their organization to host a conference in Downey's church hall, since the priest had long been a close associate and disciple of Fallon. The Society's leaders, on the other hand, felt that the hall was the best place to accommodate such an event because of its central location between the various parishes.

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<sup>9</sup> A.P. Simar to J. Edmond Cloutier, March 12, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>10</sup> A.P. Simar to Cloutier, April 2, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

De Grandpré capitalized on this situation, mustering up a counter-movement to lure militants away from the St. Jean Baptiste Society. His establishment of the Ligue des Patriotes was marked immediately with great fanfare with the announcement of plans to open an independent bilingual Catholic school for September 1922.<sup>11</sup> The women's auxiliary launched a fundraising bazaar that May. For the first time in twelve years, the parents of francophone children in Windsor would have the option of educating their children in the French language. The initiative reached out to those radical militants who had grown impatient with the slow pace of the resistance against Regulation XVII. By all appearances, the movement took a dramatic step forward with de Grandpré's announcement. The ACFEO quickly endorsed the notion of an independent bilingual school for the Windsor border region,<sup>12</sup> and promised to offer help through a subscription campaign in the province of Quebec. Omer Héroux, the editor of *Le Devoir*, promised the backing of his newspaper in the fundraiser.<sup>13</sup>

The ACFEO's efforts to rally the francophones of the Windsor border region to the independent school initiative did not receive the warm reception witnessed by Jeanne Lajoie in Pembroke; rather, it encountered surprising opposition. A.P. Simar, a member of the Association and a director of the Windsor local of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society was emphatic : « De Grandpré –c'est un homme avec qui je ne peux pas avoir des relations d'affaires. Il est absolument incapable d'apprécier le point de vue d'un

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to J. Edmond Cloutier, April 9, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>12</sup> J. Edouard Cloutier to Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre, April 10, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>13</sup> Omer Héroux, editor, *Le Devoir*, to Reverend Charles Charlebois, April 12, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

autre. »<sup>14</sup> As for the possible emergence of another leader for the school project and the resistance movement, Simar offered a sombre analysis to the provincial organization.

Ici, nous manquons de leaders d'une façon désastreuse. Tancrède Saint-Pierre me paraît ce qui se rapproche le plus d'un leader par tempérament mais il manque d'idées, il manque de connaissance, et de l'entraînement. Son frère Damien dont il paraît suivre les conseils en tout est devenu, beaucoup trop gras, il a perdu le lean and hungry look...c'est pourquoi nous demandons un autre avocat canadien français.<sup>15</sup>

The lack of strong leadership compounded the magnitude of the emerging divisions.

The ACFEO proved enthusiastic about an independent bilingual school for the city of Windsor. The organization offered to help finance de Grandpré's project provided that there was no hope of restoring French instruction in Windsor's schools. In 1922, rumours abounded that the Drury government might consider withdrawing Regulation XVII. In the end the province did nothing. Subsequently, the ACFEO established a series of conditions for its support of a private school. It sought to determine how many ratepayers were ready to back a new *école libre*, given their existing legal obligations to the separate or public schools. In addition, ACFEO official Edmond Cloutier wished to know how many parents intended to enroll their children in the new school. With regard to accommodations, the executive asked de Grandpré to describe whether a facility had already been rented, and how long the term of the lease would be. Cloutier noted, « Le comité craindrait hasardeux d'entreprendre la construction d'une école. »<sup>16</sup> Before offering monetary assistance, the organization also required an approximate cost for maintenance of the new school, and the amount that the local population would be capable of supporting. Finally, it attempted to determine the nature of the relationship

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<sup>14</sup> A.P. Simar to J. Edouard Cloutier, April 23, 1922.

<sup>15</sup> A.P. Simar to Cloutier, April 4, 1922.

<sup>16</sup> Cloutier to de Grandpré, April 30, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

between the newly christened Ligue des Patriotes and the longstanding Saint-Jean Baptiste Society. Cloutier asked of the Ligue, « est-elle en communauté de vue et de sentiment avec la Société Saint-Jean Baptiste. Vos diverses sociétés nationales sont-elles favorables au projet? »<sup>17</sup>

Members of the SSJB did not welcome the news that their rival association intended to launch a private bilingual school. The Society's president Tancrède Saint-Pierre forwarded an important telegram to the ACFEO president, Senator Napoléon Belcourt, expressing his displeasure.

Assemblée exécutif Société Saint-Jean Baptiste tenue hier soir décide unanimement de vous faire connaître que notre Société nationale de Windsor bien qu'approuvant idée école libre française [bilingual] n'a rien à faire ni de près ni de loin avec Ligue des Patriotes. Cette Ligue n'a jamais consulté notre société. C'est notre conviction sincère que l'entreprise telle que promue est vouée à un insuccès désastreux que nous serions premiers à regretter.<sup>18</sup>

Saint-Pierre's telegram startled the provincial executive of the ACFEO, just days after their tacit endorsement of de Grandpré's plan.

Belcourt replied to Saint-Pierre the very day he received the telegram. The urgency of his message underscored the concern of the provincial organization with the growing chasm among the militants of the Windsor border region.

Je dois tout d'abord avouer que votre message m'a causé une impression pénible. J'étais en effet sous l'impression que tous les Canadiens-français de Windsor étaient favorables à l'établissement et au maintien de l'école libre projetée : Puis j'ajoute que je ne vois pas pourquoi il en serait autrement.

Il est bien difficile pour nous de l'Association à Ottawa de comprendre pourquoi aucun des nôtres pourrait avoir une objection quelconque...

J'en appelle à votre patriotisme et à votre clairvoyance, vous priant de ne pas oublier comme ce serait malheureux si le projet en question ne réussira pas. Il en résulterait pour toute notre cause un tort que je ne puis qualifier autrement que désastreux.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cloutier to de Grandpré, April 30, 1922??, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>18</sup> Telegram, Tancredé Saint-Pierre to Senator Belcourt, May 2, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>19</sup> Napoleon Belcourt to A.T. Saint-Pierre, May 2, 1922.

Belcourt's appeal to Tancrède Saint-Pierre to reconsider the decision compelled the SSJB to reconvene its membership for a second debate.

On May 4, 1922, Tancrède Saint-Pierre recalled his membership for an emergency meeting. After reading Belcourt's message to the gathering, a second discussion ensued. In spite of the intervention from Ottawa, the Windsor SSJB was unmoved.

Assemblée exécutif SSJB de Windsor tenue lundi bien que sympathique à l'idée d'une école libre française à Windsor ne reconnaît pas La Ligue des Patriotes et croit sincèrement que l'attitude de cette organisation n'est pas de nature à inspirer la confiance à nos compatriotes et si l'entreprise doit faire un fiasco la SSJB en subira les contrecoups et l'ACFEO également.<sup>20</sup>

The Society's concerns that Joseph de Grandpré would manage the school project served as a stumbling block to any union for a common cause.

Charles Charlebois of the ACFEO waded into the debate following the failure of Senator Belcourt's intervention. In a letter to Damien Saint-Pierre, the priest played upon the emotions of the SSJB executive while summoning them to a higher purpose. He called on the executive to work for the greater good, for fear of making the rift between the Association and the Windsor SSJB public. He also warned of the effect this breach would have on the enemies of French language education.

Jugez du coup de joie de ...Fallon et de toute la kyrielle. Mgr Hallé me disait avant hier : « C'est le meilleur coup que l'Association et nos compatriotes de là-bas ont fait. » Si je me trompe, votre frère Tancrède et vous-même m'aviez déjà parlé de la fondation d'une école libre. Et pourquoi cette entreprise ne serait-elle pas un succès? Il suffirait d'avoir l'entente pour y arriver. Une école libre avec une bonne maîtresse en tête, qui donnerait de bons résultats, démontrerait à nos attiédés qu'une école bilingue bien organisée peut donner des résultats infiniment meilleurs que ceux des écoles unilingues quelles que bonnes qu'elles soient.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Telegram, A.T. Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, May 4, 1922.

<sup>21</sup> Reverend Charles Charlebois to Dr. Saint-Pierre, May 5, 1922.

Charlebois's attempt to emphasize the good effect that this new school could have on the francophone population and the consequences of a failure for Bishop Fallon's agenda did not sway the SSJB.

Damien Saint-Pierre sought to justify the apparent intransigence of the SSJB in a telegram to ACFEO officials in Ottawa. He noted that Langlois and Emery endorsed the position of his brother Tancrède towards the Ligue des Patriotes. The doctor commented that de Grandpré's real agenda in forming the new association was not to build a school.

Le but principal n'est pas tant la creation d'une école que la satisfaction d'une vengeance personnelle en détruisant la SSJB. Nous sommes d'avis que Sénateur Belcourt aurait pu consulter SSJB Essex avant de la mêler au mouvement des patriotes.<sup>22</sup>

Damien St. Pierre criticized Belcourt's failure to consult with the SSJB before its public support of de Grandpré's school project, adding that it had frustrated many of the area's militants. The provincial ACFEO found itself caught in the middle of a very personal feud.

The ACFEO responded to the frustrations of the SSJB the following day underlining the need to present a united front so as not to discourage the fundraising efforts for the new school.

En autant qu'elle a pu contrôler les événements, elle [l'ACFEO] a, croyons-nous agi avec prudence et nous serions peinés de voir se répandre l'impression qu'elle a manqué de délicatesse pour la SSJB.  
Pour ne pas jeter de l'eau froide sur un projet que nous savions être cher à tous nos amis de là-bas et pour rendre service à ceux qui étaient déjà à l'œuvre, le président a écrit la lettre que vous connaissez. M. Elieude (Charlebois) dût supprimer un voyage auprès de son frère malade, pour revenir ici, faire rapport à M. Belcourt sur l'enthousiasme que soulevait parmi nos amis de Québec le projet tant désiré d'une école libre à Windsor.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Telegram, Dr. Saint-Pierre to J. Edmond Cloutier, May 5, 1922.

<sup>23</sup> J. Edouard Cloutier to Damien Saint-Pierre, May 6, 1922.

Provincial organizers attempted to reassure Windsor's SSJB militants that no slight was intended towards one organization in favour of another. Concerned Ottawa officials promoted efforts at a ceasefire between the feuding parties in order to break the impasse.

To complicate matters, De Grandpré lashed out at his rivals, openly accusing Damien Saint-Pierre, Gustave Lacasse, and Gaspard Pacaud of secretly collaborating with Father Downey. Damien Saint-Pierre responded to the allegations in a letter to the ACFEO. He detailed at length the reasons for the SSJB's hostility towards the rival Ligue. With regard to an independent school, he wrote that he seriously doubted whether its establishment could possibly meet with success.

Mais le plus gros de notre peine c'est de voir un mouvement aussi important que celui de la création d'une école indépendante fatalement voué à un échec... pour la bonne raison je vous l'avoue que l'opinion publique, même les plus sympathique des nôtres n'ont pas du tout confiance dans l'organisation qui a pris sur elle-même de jeter les bases d'une telle entreprise.<sup>24</sup>

Saint-Pierre suggested that the public hesitation to support an independent school rested primarily upon the hopes that the provincial government of E.C. Drury was intending to abrogate Regulation XVII. However, the pediatrician had other reasons for his reluctance to endorse such a bold project in the Windsor area.

Saint-Pierre claimed that his rationale was not rooted in a personal resentment of Joseph de Grandpré, but rather in the state of the current francophone population. Saint-Pierre sensed a deeply ingrained public hostility towards his fellow militants. Hence he termed his opposition as strategic rather than personal. His letter explained that de Grandpré's aggressive approach only highlighted the divisions among francophones and

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<sup>24</sup> Dr. Saint-Pierre to Reverend Charlebois "Elieude", May 8, 1922.

underscored the roots of the existing feud among the leading militants in the Windsor border region.

Nous avons et avons affaire à une population qui est extrêmement apathique, sinon tout à fait antipathique à l'idée française. Il fallait donc y aller graduellement. C'est pour cela que notre journal ne pouvait pas mettre des gants de boxe comme l'aurait voulu M. de Grandpré qui disait à Lacasse, « Bien, puisqu'il s'agit d'une feuille de choux, eh bien vous ne pourrez pas compter sur mon concours. »

Nous aurions voulu attendre la fin de la session de la législature à l'instar de Régula [ACFEO] pour commencer le mouvement de l'école donnant pour raison auprès des personnes que nous aurions voulu d'abord intéresser au projet que le gouvernement ayant définitivement refusé de nous rendre justice il ne nous restait plus qu'à fonder une école indépendante. Et si je ne me trompe sur une de vos dernières lettres vous me disiez que les nouvelles de Toronto n'étaient pas mauvaises. Nous n'avons donc pas encore raison de désespérer. Nous étions d'avis également qu'afin de ne pas réveiller le fameux cri contre l'outsider, il eût fallu commencer d'abord l'école nous-mêmes, même très modestement au début afin d'en faire aux yeux de nos gens cela va de soi une institution purement locale, quitte à faire un appel ensuite auprès de Regula pour continuer une œuvre déjà établie.<sup>25</sup>

Saint-Pierre was concerned that the francophone population of the border cities harbored suspicions towards French Canadian professionals who came from eastern Ontario and Quebec. The exact reasons for this distrust are not altogether clear, given the lack of written sources from the Canayen and French-Canadian working and farming classes. The bitter failure of the Ford parish resistance embarrassed a number of militants who lost their faith in the militant leadership. For Saint-Pierre, this breach between the leadership, largely from elsewhere, and the masses would require time to heal.<sup>26</sup> He believed that de Grandpré's introduction of an independent school with great fanfare would sour an already cautious and untrusting francophone population on the bilingual schools resistance. Both Fallon and O'Connor aimed to tar the leading Ford City rebels as "imports" or "outsiders". Such allegations worried Damien Saint-Pierre.

Par ailleurs, la bombe lancée par la Ligue des Patriotes je vous l'assure l'a réveillé le cri contre l'outsider et de toutes parts, on nous dit, « Mais l'on veut nous faire passer pour des quéteurs.

<sup>25</sup> Damien Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, "Elieude", May 8, 1922.

<sup>26</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, May 8, 1922.

Pourquoi s'adresse-t-on à l'extérieure pour régler des questions qui nous concernent, etc., etc., etc. Je ne vous dis pas ce que je pense, cher Elieude [Reverend Charlebois] mais bien ce que l'on dit.<sup>27</sup> Saint-Pierre believed that efforts to instill a militant spirit in local francophones depended on a gradualist approach, breaking down suspicions that had grown towards those resistance leaders whose roots lay outside of the Windsor border region

Pierre Langlois endorsed Saint-Pierre's approach. The Canayen militant priest placed the blame for the feud squarely on the shoulders of de Grandpré. Langlois warned the ACFEO that de Grandpré's abrasive leadership would doom the independent school experiment to certain failure.<sup>28</sup> In addition, he expressed grave concerns about the impact of brazen militancy upon an apathetic population. Many moderate militants feared that de Grandpré's radical approach would actually trigger a backlash against their cause. Langlois suggested that an alternative leader might be able to save the enterprise, but such a project would require careful guidance from Ottawa if it had any chance of success. Unfortunately, no individual emerged from the fray.<sup>29</sup> Langlois's analysis of the situation emphasized the gravity of the split among militant forces, and the desperate need for a mediator of exceptional talent. Charles Charlebois was invited to lead the negotiations. He remained one of the few individuals who continued to command the respect of both de Grandpré and the Saint-Pierre brothers.

Langlois began a slow, painstaking effort to bring the two warring factions together for the advancement of the greater good. The Windsor SSJB chaplain felt that de Grandpré's aggressive school campaign fostered division among francophones.

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<sup>27</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, May 8, 1922.

<sup>28</sup> Pierre Langlois to Charles Charlebois, May 9, 1922.

<sup>29</sup> Reverend Father Pierre Langlois to Fr. Charles Charlebois, May 9, 1922.

Le cri des outsiders sera encore bien plus fort que jamais. La SSJB commença à faire un bon travail à Windsor et Ford avec plus de mille membres qui paraissent se réveiller et vouloir travailler. Tout cela sera paralysé si la désunion augmente parmi les canadiens.<sup>30</sup>

The suspicion of outside meddling threatened years of hard labour to refashion a struggling resistance movement. The need for a rapprochement was critical. Langlois and Lacasse would emphasize this theme again and again. With the assistance of ACFEO secretary, Alex Grenon, the three attempted a peace parlay. Grenon counseled de Grandpré to accept Lacasse's proposal for joint management of the future school, underscoring the delicate maneuvering of the ACFEO to foster unity without alienating the Association from either organization.<sup>31</sup>

After intense negotiations at Langlois's Tecumseh rectory, de Grandpré and Lacasse arrived at a gentleman's understanding regarding the management committee for the independent bilingual school. Each society would name an equal number of delegates, and these delegates would elect a final committee member together. To avoid future acrimony, neither de Grandpré nor Tancredé Saint-Pierre would sit on the committee.<sup>32</sup> With the purported success of the negotiations, the ACFEO immediately launched its province-wide fundraiser around Quebec to garner the necessary funds to support the independent school initiative. Optimistic officials in Ottawa were unprepared for what came next.

Tancredé Saint-Pierre reacted immediately to the unexpected publicity of a tentative deal in the Quebec newspapers.

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<sup>30</sup> Langlois to Charlebois, May 9, 1922.

<sup>31</sup> Alex Grenon to Joseph de Grandpré, Windsor, May 26, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>32</sup> A.T. Saint-Pierre to Senator Napoléon Belcourt, May 16, 1922.

Inutile de vous dire que ce procédé [of announcing a new école libre by the Quebec press] a causé une très mauvaise impression chez les nôtres. Franchement, l'école française de Windsor n'est pas actuellement désirée par la majorité de notre population canadienne-française. Les esprits ne sont pas prêts; l'idée n'a pas encore atteint tout notre groupement français.<sup>33</sup>

The leaders of the SSJB were annoyed to learn that the deal had been broadcast publicly with great fanfare even before their membership had been consulted. Many local francophones were reluctant to endorse a project that was trumpeted in the Quebec press and the Windsor daily newspaper. Whereas radical militants under the leadership of Joseph de Grandpré enthusiastically welcomed the establishment of this independent school, moderate militants, claiming to be closer to the grassroots of the Canayen and local French Canadian populations suggested that this school publicity was an irritant rather than a source of ethnic pride. It is possible that some local francophones, still soured by the Ford City débâcle, were simply unwilling to embark on another politicized venture that would end yet again in humiliating defeat. The leaders of the SSJB believed that the state of francophone pride was just too fragile for another grandiose project. Failure might have devastating consequences for the fledgling post-riot militant movement nurtured by the SSJB. The population as a whole was simply too fatigued to digest more political battles before their anglophone neighbours. For more radical militants, such claims could not be countenanced-swift action would stir pride and enthusiasm in the population at large.

The school deal between Lacasse and de Grandpré collapsed after less than a week. Tancrède Saint-Pierre and other members of the SSJB executive repudiated the existing deal and insisted on a new condition to secure the Society's support: dissolution

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<sup>33</sup> Saint-Pierre to Belcourt, May 16, 1922.

of the Ligue des Patriotes.<sup>34</sup> The SSJB's about-face towards the school deal was a reaction to de Grandpré's publicization of an entente in spite of their concerns regarding the need to carefully manage the publicity of this militant endeavour. The attention of the Quebec press reinforced the growing spectre of the French-speaking « outsider » in the English language press and appeared to alienate vital francophone support in the border cities. The SSJB's new negotiating position however, illustrated the growing unwillingness of moderates to compromise with de Grandpré. Personal jealousies and rivalries naturally played a role in this inflexibility. Upon the bidding of the ACFEO, a last ditch effort to revive the school deal by Langlois and Lacasse ended in failure.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of the breakdown of the negotiations for a jointly managed independent bilingual school, de Grandpré forged ahead with his project. Relying on bazaars to raise badly needed funds, the Ligue des Patriotes determined to deliver on its promise of an alternative school for the border cities' francophone children. On September 5, 1922, with the national press present, de Grandpré reached the height of his influence over the militant faction of the French Canadian population, when Windsor's first independent bilingual school opened.

Il me fait plaisir de vous dire que l'ouverture de notre école en septembre est maintenant une certitude. ....

Il me fait plaisir de vous dire également que l'opposition qui nous avait été faite au début par quelques-uns a absolument cessé de se manifester depuis au-delà d'un mois.

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<sup>34</sup>« Que, si un comité d'école peut être organisé, il faudrait pour assurer le succès de l'œuvre que la Ligue des Patriotes disparaisse. Qu'étant donné l'état des esprits chez les nôtres de Windsor, surchauffé par le cri contre l'Outsider, et par une publicité maladroite dans les journaux anglais de notre ville au sujet de l'école la situation est devenue très critique. » A. Tancrede Saint-Pierre to J. Edmond Cloutier, May 23, 1922, C2/222/2.

<sup>35</sup> Telegram, Dolores [Langlois] et Loquace [Lacasse] to [Elicude] Reverend Charles Charlebois, June 6, 1922, C2/222/2.

Il me fait plaisir de vous dire que notre école qui s'appelle l'École Jeanne-d'Arc s'est ouverte mardi dernier, le 5 septembre...<sup>36</sup>

After a twelve-year absence, francophones now had an alternative to an English-only education for their children in Windsor. The opening of École Jeanne d'Arc should have signalled a promising new era in the resistance against Regulation XVII. Unfortunately, the event actually underscored the profound divisions among francophone militants before the public. A number of prominent leaders were conspicuously absent from an event that should have been the crowning achievement of their years of opposition to the provincial school regulations and Bishop Fallon. The Saint-Pierre brothers, Pierre Langlois and Gustave Lacasse all declined to attend the festivities.

#### École Jeanne d'Arc: The Struggle for Survival, 1922-1928

As the Ligue des Patriotes opened a new independent bilingual school in the city of Windsor, the ACFEO provincial headquarters' relations with local militants were strained at best, and verging on the breaking point. Only the most talented of diplomats could maintain a working relationship with the area's warring factions. In spite of this, there was new hope that an independent school could rekindle pride in the hearts of many francophones. One of the greatest challenges facing militants in the 1920s was personal conflict within the leadership; this fighting threatened to weaken the resistance movement further against Regulation XVII.

In 1923, de Grandpré successfully garnered the backing of the Montreal-based Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne française (ACJC) for his ambitious project. The ACJC launched a fundraiser in Quebec to assist this independent school and

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<sup>36</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to J. Edmond Cloutier, September 12, 1922, C2/222/3.

others across Ontario in the struggle against Regulation XVII. In time, however, the leaders of this association learned of the divisions within the local resistance movement over the new independent school. The ACJC president, Wilfrid Guérin then established firm conditions for future assistance to Ecole Jeanne d'Arc: including a rapprochement with the SSJB.

La Ligue des Patriotes aura besoin, d'une manière indispensable, du concours de l'ACJC pour recueillir des fonds nécessaires à la survie de l'école-concours conditionné par l'exécution des promesses faites ou devant être faites à l'Association d'Éducation. Les deux groupes de Windsor opéreront un rapprochement que la Providence ne saurait refuser à ceux qui le lui ont demandé. Mais, d'ici là, le comité central de l'ACJC n'est nullement prêt à rouvrir la souscription sans la promesse et la preuve de l'amélioration dans l'entente des chefs canadiens français luttant contre l'anglicisation par le moyen unanimement accepté d'une école libre catholique.<sup>37</sup>

In the months that followed, the leaders of the ACFEO worked with great care to convince Damien Saint-Pierre to accept a truce. On February 1, 1923, after several months of hard work, he announced that the SSJB would not oppose an official ACFEO visit to the independent school.

... il est bien entendu que le président de l'ACFEO pourra lundi avant-midi, le 12 février, s'il le désire faire une visite à l'école française...

Nous apprenons avec plaisir que probablement MM. Genest et Cloutier accompagneront M. le Sénateur [Belcourt].<sup>38</sup>

Saint-Pierre's attempt at a cease-fire came at a critical moment. The following week, with the blessing of the SSJB, the leaders of the ACFEO, with their president Senator Napoléon Belcourt and Samuel Genest, arrived in Windsor for an official visit, including among their stops, the new independent school, *École Jeanne d'Arc*.

In its first year *École Jeanne d'Arc* inspired excitement within the border cities.

On April 30, 1923, more than 840 people attended a fundraising soirée in Windsor

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<sup>37</sup> Wilfrid Guérin, President Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne-française to J. Edmond Cloutier, October 25, 1922, CRCCF, C2/222/5.

<sup>38</sup> Dr. Damien Saint-Pierre to Charles Charlebois, February 1, 1923.

exceeding the banquet hall's capacity. Participants enjoyed a dramatic presentation by the Cercle Amateur Canadien-Français. De Grandpré declared the event an unqualified success, « C'est vous dire que la masse de nos compatriotes de Windsor s'intéresse à l'école française et lui est sympathique, et veut aider à son maintien et à son développement. »<sup>39</sup>

This successful fundraising event drew the attention of ACFEO officials. De Grandpré called on the ACFEO to endorse the reprise of the ACJC subscription campaign begun the previous spring in Quebec. Unfortunately, by late August of 1923, the school founder had yet to hear from the ACJC regarding any plan to re-launch the door-to-door campaign. In the interim, school supporters relied on local fundraising, and held concerts, tag days, picnics and weekly card nights to pay the school's bills. The leader of the Ligue des Patriotes reassured ACFEO officials that the original mandate of the school, to promote and preserve the French language and Catholic faith would not be compromised despite rumours swirling of the imminent admission of English Protestant pupils.<sup>40</sup>

As he waited for outside support, de Grandpré grew increasingly agitated. Lacking a reliable locale to rent for the next school year, he arranged for the construction of a new school building, at a cost of \$15 000. Canayen electrician, Frank Réaume of Ford City offered his services to the school for free, "pour la cause du français".<sup>41</sup> To commemorate the opening of the new school on the corner of Catarauqui and Marion

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<sup>39</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to J. Edmond Cloutier, ACFEO secretary, April 29, 1923, CRCCE, C2/222/6.

<sup>40</sup> De Grandpré to Cloutier, April 29, 1923, C2/222/6.

<sup>41</sup> Dr. Saint-Pierre to J. Edmond Cloutier, c. October 26, 1923.

streets in Windsor, the Ligue des Patriotes organized a grand soirée gala for late October, featuring The Cercle des Amateurs in the play « Contre le Flot », while Senator Belcourt was called upon to deliver the opening day address.<sup>42</sup>

De Grandpré called upon the ACFEO to keep its promise to support the independent school as it continued to welcome new students, reaching an attendance roll of 103 students in October 1923. Phélonise Charlebois, an experienced schoolmistress from Quebec, assumed the responsibility for the senior grades, while Eva Paquette, a new teacher taught the younger children<sup>43</sup>. At night, the school remained active, with Paquette teaching French classes to adults. In spite of the growth of the independent French school, De Grandpré feared for its future. In actual fact, ACFEO secretary Alexandre Grenon, already caught between the two warring organizations, muted his enthusiasm for a second ACJC subscription campaign. He urged the Montreal fundraisers at the ACJC and *Le Devoir* to muffle any public promotion in support of the new school,<sup>44</sup> arguing that de Grandpré had separated himself from the principal patriotic movement of the Windsor border region. It is probable that Grenon, aiming to protect the ACFEO's stature among the region's militants, determined that no overt favouritism could be shown to either side.<sup>45</sup> This neutrality did little to help the independent school.

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<sup>42</sup> The Ligue des Patriotes had a small membership that included a number of Canayens, including Stanislas Janisse, Joseph Laframboise and Adhémar Charron, with M. Guillemin, a Frenchman, as president and French Canadian Joseph de Grandpré as secretary-treasurer.

<sup>43</sup> *Le Droit*, November 22, 1923.

<sup>44</sup> Alexandre Grenon, ACFEO official, to Alphonse de la Rochelle, secretary, ACJC, Montreal, October 4, 1923, C2/222/6.

<sup>45</sup> Alexandre Grenon, ACFEO official, to Alphonse de la Rochelle, secretary, ACJC, Montreal, October 4, 1923.

Nationalists in Quebec were baffled. The ACJC requested clarification. It hesitated to resume the project, explaining its desire to help, but not wishing to create division in the area.<sup>46</sup> The growing perception of division discouraged the school's sponsors in Montreal and Ottawa. Charlebois and Samuel Genest of the ACFEO provincial executive both cancelled their plans to attend the grand opening of the new school building. Belcourt expressed his regrets, citing as his reason, a recent illness due to exhaustion. *Le Droit* chose not to send a reporter to cover the festivities either. Indeed, even Abbé Gravel, a chaplain with the Ottawa newspaper, declined to bless the school. De Grandpré expressed his exasperation upon learning the news via telegram : « Abbé Gravel empêché de venir- donc personne! Absolument abandonné- tort incalculable à la cause de grâce, venez ou envoyez quelqu'un- réponse immédiate. »<sup>47</sup>

ACFEO officials, perhaps realizing the crisis they had created in attempting to appear impartial, had a change of heart and scrambled to save the grand opening from becoming a public relations disaster. Genest reversed his decision and agreed to preside over the event and deliver the keynote address. Damien Saint-Pierre even offered his blessing to the ACFEO officials to participate in the event. The ACJC now pledged to help Windsor's independent bilingual school. On October 25, ACFEO officials proudly christened *École Jeanne d'Arc* before a crowd of five hundred guests.<sup>48</sup> Once again, Saint-Pierre, Lacasse, and several other local notables were conspicuously absent. In solidarity with their compatriots further north, Mesdemoiselles Charlebois and Paquette

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<sup>46</sup> Alphonse de la Rochelle to J. Edmond Cloutier, October 22, 1923.

<sup>47</sup> Telegram, Joseph de Grandpré to Reverend Charles Charlebois, October 24, 1923.

<sup>48</sup> *Le Droit*, October 27, 1923; see also *Border Cities Star*, October 26, 1923.

raised \$25.00 in contributions from their students to donate to Jeanne Lajoie's new independent school in Pembroke.<sup>49</sup>

Despite these signs of resurgence, the persisting conflict among militants worked to undermine the success of de Grandpré's independent school. In November, 1923, the SSJB under the leadership of Tancrède Saint-Pierre hosted a social on the same night as the weekly card game fundraiser for the school. The event drew a considerable crowd, and hurt the attendance at the school benefit. To infuriate the Windsor lawyer further, members of the SSJB invited Raoul Hurtubise, one of the vice presidents of the ACFEO to visit the area. Unbeknownst to de Grandpré, Hurtubise toured the region and left without paying homage to the new school. De Grandpré expressed concern that the upcoming visit of MPP Aurelien Bélanger, a vocal opponent of Regulation XVII would be a replay of this unfortunate event. In reference to the Hurtubise incident, he remarked, « que certaines gens ont tenu délibérement à l'écart de l'École Jeanne d'Arc lors de son passage récent à Windsor, si bien que ce n'est que par les journaux que nous avons appris qu'il était venu ici. »<sup>50</sup> For de Grandpré, the actions of the SSJB amounted to nothing less than sabotage. The bitter rivalry between the moderate SSJB leadership and the more radical Ligue des Patriotes was effectively weakening the potentially resurgent resistance to Regulation XVII in Windsor.

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<sup>49</sup> *Le Droit*, November 26, 1923.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to J. Edmond Cloutier, November 22, 1923.

### The Club Lasalle: A Challenge to the École Jeanne d'Arc

Gustave Lacasse, with the help of his brother-in-law, Damien Saint-Pierre, Gaspard Pacaud and other members of the region's SSJB, worked towards the creation of the Club Lasalle in November, 1923. The aim of this new organization was to foster a greater appreciation for French Canadian culture and its preservation among both francophones and francophiles.<sup>51</sup> De Grandpré expressed concern that this new society would further weaken his efforts to foster French language education in the region. He lamented,

Le Club LaSalle, dont le but de plus en plus évident est de faire croire à nos amis de l'extérieur que ceux qui le composent sont les seuls véritables patriotes dans Windsor, et de tâcher de répandre la conviction, comme on l'a fait auprès du Dr. Hurtubise, qu'ils n'ont pas trahi et qu'ils ne trahissent pas la cause nationale en combattant l'École Jeanne d'Arc, mais que c'est nous qui servons mal cette même cause en continuant à travailler à une œuvre qu'eux ont toujours considérée comme prématurée et dont à cause de cela ils voudraient enrayer la marche ascendante.<sup>52</sup>

De Grandpré discovered, much to his dismay, that his earlier efforts to undermine *La Presse-Frontière* were coming back to haunt him. He perceived that the Saint-Pierre brothers were luring the leaders of the ACFEQ provincial away from any sustained endorsement of his independent bilingual school.

The official inauguration banquet of the Club Lasalle at Windsor's Prince Edward Hotel in late November, 1923 which featured Aurelien Bélanger, the MPP for Russell at Queen's Park as the guest speaker, was the scene to a little drama. As the evening drew to a close, an uninvited guest, Joseph de Grandpré, entered the hall to hand deliver a message of best wishes to Bélanger from the Ligue des Patriotes. The intrusion triggered

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<sup>51</sup> Damien Saint-Pierre to Lionel Groulx, October 29, 1923, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 3346.

<sup>52</sup> De Grandpré to Cloutier, November 22, 1923, CRCCF, C2/219/2.

a motion from the president to close the Club's inaugural event. However, the unsinkable de Grandpré persisted in continuing his dialogue with Mr. Bélanger, and this interruption erupted into an embarrassing shouting match to mar the night's proceedings. The incident indicated the magnitude of the growing militant schism in the Windsor border region. Saint-Pierre criticized De Grandpré's unwavering refusal to associate with the likes of Gaspard Pacaud and Groulx's old classmate, Laurendeau, two figures with whom the Ford City rebels had previously crossed sabres. He noted that Laurendeau was among those in the area who were now embracing the French language cause after having read Lionel Groulx's *L'Appel de la Race* and his journal, *Action française*. After the failures of the Ford City Riot and the radical militant newspaper, *La Défense*, Saint-Pierre and his followers embraced a moderate stance with a gradual but steady effort to convert lapsed and indifferent francophones to the cause. In order to ensure success, it was crucial to enlist people with roots in the area: the Canayens and the French Canadians as a whole; these new recruits could then be coached into positions of leadership. For St. Pierre, the impression had to be given that insiders from the border region were running the resistance movement.

Nous sommes forcés d'admettre qu'ici, il faut à tout prix procéder avec lenteur, donner aux insiders qu'avec tact nous réussissons à convertir graduellement les postes honorifiques, responsable mêmes quittes à les diriger à leur aider de toutes nos forces derrière les murs.<sup>53</sup>

Saint-Pierre intimated that de Grandpré's radical militancy would only serve to alienate potential converts to the cause since it was far too aggressive for the local population. Indeed, their strategy continued to show sensitivity to Fallon's accusations that the bilingual school resistance was run by a group of outsiders.

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<sup>53</sup> St. Pierre to Groulx, December 8, 1923, CRLG, P1/A 3346.

De Grandpré, on the other hand, suggested that the real problem with the state of the local resistance could be found with the leaders of the SSJB and Club Lasalle. He accused his former comrades, the Saint-Pierre brothers of sabotage.

...il y a à la tête du Club Lasalle et de la Société Saint-Jean Baptiste un tout petit groupe d'adversaires acharnés de l'école française qui par tous les moyens cherchent à enlever à l'école cette sympathie dont elle a besoin.

...Mais à ces visiteurs distingués et à ces hommes d'œuvres on tâche de laisser ignorer l'existence de l'École Jeanne d'Arc ou au moins de la représenter comme une institution inopportune et destinée à s'éteindre à brève échéance afin que s'en retournant là-bas dans le Québec ils puissent à l'occasion enrayer tout mouvement qui pourrait s'organiser pour nous prêter un secours moral ou pécuniaire.<sup>54</sup>

De Grandpré argued that the efforts of the Saint-Pierre brothers and their supporters to undermine the new bilingual school were effectively isolating it from needed support. Their strategy compelled him to crash the inaugural meeting of a club that he had wanted to join. Indeed, de Grandpré found it ironic that the keynote speaker at the Club Lasalle banquet, Aurelien Bélanger, focused his speech on the necessity of a bilingual education before a club that made no mention or allusion whatsoever to the existence of the only truly bilingual school in Windsor : École Jeanne d'Arc.<sup>55</sup> The tactics of these men were effectively weakening the one institution in the city that epitomized the resistance to Regulation XVII.

#### Lionel Groulx's Visit

In the spring of 1924, the rivalry between de Grandpré and the Saint-Pierre brothers swirled again around the visit of Lionel Groulx. Following a series of invitations from the rival groups, Groulx turned down his militant friend Alfred Emery of Paincourt, and accepted the offer of his old school chum, François Laurendeau to tour the

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<sup>54</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to Lionel Groulx, March 30, 1924, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 1623.

<sup>55</sup> De Grandpré to Groulx, March 30, 1924..

Windsor border region.<sup>56</sup> In April, the *abbé* came to Ford City and resided at the very rectory that proved the focal point of the riot seven years earlier. From there Groulx visited the Club Lasalle for a gala dinner and visited the SSJB sections of Tecumseh and Tilbury. In his speeches, Groulx related the contents of his new book *Appel de la Race* to the struggle facing the francophones of the border region. The tour served as a promotion of his new journal *Action française* among local admirers. Before departing, to the great pleasure of Joseph de Grandpré, Groulx paid a visit to École Jeanne d'Arc, providing the school with badly needed publicity.

Inspired by Groulx's works and his visit to the Club Lasalle, Saint-Pierre and his followers began to organize a series of monthly dramatic presentations to raise funds for the language struggle. As their first performance, the budding thespians offered their version of Dollard des Ormeaux, tying the story to an analogy of the bilingual schools resistance in Ottawa.<sup>57</sup> The evening ended with an address to stir the national pride of the patrons. In the ensuing week, the local schoolchildren of Tecumseh, Ford City and Riverside all organized and celebrated a Dollard des Ormeaux festival day.<sup>58</sup> Saint-Pierre ended his account of this successful evening with a personal request to the ACFEO provincial executive that suggested a hidden agenda.

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<sup>56</sup> F. X. Laurendeau to Groulx, February 19, 1924, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 2147.

<sup>57</sup> For further information on the mythical role of Dollard des Ormeaux during the era of Regulation XVII, see Patrice Groulx, *Pièges de la mémoire: Dollard des Ormeaux les Amérindiens et nous*, (Hull, Québec: Vents d'ouest, 1998), pp. 198-220, and Michel Bock, *Quand la nation débordait ses frontières: Les minorités françaises dans la pensée de Lionel Groulx*. (Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 2004).

<sup>58</sup> St. Pierre to J. Edmond Cloutier, May 27, 1924. In Patrice Groulx's work on the memory of Dollard, organizers in Quebec aimed to associate the mythical image of this young man with struggle and resistance as opposed to resignation. The message for the francophones of Windsor would have been hard to miss. In an article of the magazine *La Nouvelle-France*, the theme of struggle reappeared against the forces of materialism, Americanism and urbanism. See A. Dumont, "La fête de Dollard à Montréal", *La Nouvelle-France*, vol.9, no.6, (juin, 1910), p. 246, as quoted in Groulx, p. 205

Pour ce qui concerne l'institutrice la raison pour laquelle j'aurais voulu aller la quérir dans le Québec si possible c'est que je pourrais retenir les services d'une institutrice dans la province voisine à meilleur compte que dans notre propre province. Ce n'est pas que je veuille marchander mais parce que si je suis seul pour payer cette institutrice-ce qui est très probable- ça ne serait pas une besogne ordinaire de la payer sur le tarif d'Ontario soit environ un millier de dollars.<sup>59</sup>

Saint-Pierre's endeavour to hire a personal tutor for his children was actually a sign that the militant movement of the area had been irretrievably divided. Rather than send his children on the street car to the nearby independent bilingual school at a modest tuition of sixty dollars a year per child, the old Ford City rebel secretly planned to undertake a far more expensive project : the establishment of an alternative independent bilingual school. The successful fundraisers of the Club Lasalle gave Saint-Pierre the experience and confidence to launch his own experiment.

In June, having secured the services of Mademoiselle Major of Montreal, Saint-Pierre aimed to share the expense with willing neighbours. He discussed his plan with the ACFEQ provincial and his SSJB colleagues.

Il semble préférable d'organiser une classe privée qui produisant même dans une année de bons résultats nous permettra de trouver le moyen de préparer pour le plus tôt possible un déménagement complet.<sup>60</sup>

St. Pierre's dilemma was to determine where to establish his tiny private French class. To place the experiment in an English school would merely expose the children to another anglicizing environment. The desire to establish an experimental class would be part of a long-term plan to create a larger French language institution.<sup>61</sup> The discrete nature of Saint-Pierre's plan would have obvious consequences for the success of De Grandpré's nearby school; it is likely that the Ford City rebel hoped to surprise his adversary. St. Pierre's agenda gave credence to de Grandpré's accusations of sabotage.

<sup>59</sup> St. Pierre to Edmond Cloutier, May 25, 1924.

<sup>60</sup> St. Pierre to Cloutier, July 3, 1924.

<sup>61</sup> St. Pierre to Edmond Cloutier, June 13, 1924.

The doctor argued that his plan was merely a response to the speaking campaigns by Senator Napoleon Belcourt and Abbé Lionel Groulx that had emphasized the need to preserve the faith and the language of their ancestors. The public response had been heartening, since many francophones better known for their apathy had attended and seemed to respond to the speakers. However, this enthusiasm was fleeting at best.<sup>62</sup> The moderate militant plans for a new French school failed to attract considerable enrollment.

After some cajoling by the provincial ACFEO, the SSJB president Stanislas Janisse consented to cede a piece of his farmland on Drouillard Road in Ford City to finance the project. The new school, christened *École Saint-Stanislas*, was established above the garage on Tancrède Saint-Pierre's property. Janisse's five nephews agreed to use their construction expertise to accomplish the necessary work on the makeshift classroom.<sup>63</sup> The school struggled for two years to pay the salary of its teacher, while maintaining roughly 30 students. The appearance of *École Saint-Stanislas* would only serve to fuel the existing rivalry between the SSJB and the Ligue des Patriotes.

In the midst of the frenetic activity to launch a rival independent school at Ford, Saint-Pierre and his SSJB entourage welcomed the arrival of another distinguished guest from Montreal. Henri Bourassa, the editor of *Le Devoir* began a week long visit to the border cities, taking up residence in the finest home in Ford City: the rectory of François

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<sup>62</sup> St. Pierre to Cloutier, July 3, 1924. Saint-Pierre added, "Notre population est souverainement apathique. La plupart des parents des enfants sont assez ignorés pour dire « Ah bien, je voudrais que mes enfants apprennent l'anglais, le français, c'est pas nécessaire. » In a previous letter to Groulx, St. Pierre repeated his pessimism, noting, « malheureusement, un trop grand nombre de français-tant laïques qu'ecclésiastiques-sont les premiers à abandonner...ne voyant de salut que dans l'anglicisation. » St. Pierre to Groulx, January 21, 1923, Fonds Lionel Groulx, CRLG, P1/A, 3346.

<sup>63</sup> St. Pierre to Edmond Cloutier, June 29, 1924.

Xavier Laurendeau! Groulx had arranged the accommodations with his old school chum from Collège Sainte-Thérèse. As Bourassa visited the region he was bombarded with invitations from de Grandpré and his fellow members in the Ligue des Patriotes. To avoid playing favourites, and embarrassed by the apparent jealousy and rivalry that separated the militant groups, Bourassa considered cancelling the remainder of his trip and returning to Montreal. Saint-Pierre pleaded with the nationalist leader to reconsider. In the end, Bourassa shortened his stay, most likely to escape the petty bickering and posturing of local militants. Laurendeau, visibly embarrassed by the behaviour of the SSJB and the Ligue des Patriotes informed Saint-Pierre that he would never again invite someone from Quebec to deliver a conference in the region.<sup>64</sup>

As the SSJB prepared to open its independent bilingual school in Ford City in September, 1924, *École Jeanne d'Arc* struggled to survive. The meager revenue raised by the tuition and fundraisers failed to cover the costs of the crippling mortgage, and the salaries of the teachers, secretary and custodian. In addition, the appearance of another independent French school threatened to siphon off desperately needed pupils to pay the school's mounting bills. News of the ACJC renewed subscription blitz in the province of Quebec emboldened de Grandpré to make a request for immediate assistance from the ACFEQ. In his letter, he asked for the independent school's fair share of the funds coming from the Quebec campaign to handle its \$15 000 debt. De Grandpré declared that the school would need \$7500 to cover interest, principal and ordinary school

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<sup>64</sup> "Vir" St. Pierre to Cloutier, June 29, 1924.

expenses for the current fiscal year.<sup>65</sup> When the ACFEO turned down de Grandpré's demand months later, he wrote back, asking for « une part raisonnable des fonds recueillis de l'ACJC. » He conceded that \$4000 would be just enough to survive the school year,<sup>66</sup> and reminded officials that the funds raised by the ACJC were earmarked for the independent school of Windsor and not the ACFEO provincial or any other cause. During that same month, November 1924, the ACJC announced it was suspending its fundraising activities after collecting just over 20 000 dollars.

ACFEO officials declined De Grandpré's second request, declaring that in fact,

le montant reçu a à peine suffi à couvrir les plus urgentes nécessités de l'Association, et des œuvres immédiatement sous son contrôle. Ces conditions étant, je m'étonne que vous ayez pu comprendre « que nous attendions la réaddition des comptes de l'ACJC pour déterminer la part qui vous revient...<sup>67</sup>

Cloutier advised de Grandpré to get a one year extension from creditors on the mortgage.

Unable to secure more funding, De Grandpré's letters degenerated into a series of accusations against ACFEO officials. The founder of the Ligue des Patriotes suggested that the ACFEO was denying the independent bilingual school the funds collected by the ACJC on its behalf, and accused the Association of having misled local militants into believing that the provincial organization would actually support the new school through financial assistance.<sup>68</sup> The nasty tone of De Grandpré's letter resulted in a collapse of his friendship with Cloutier.<sup>69</sup> In a follow up letter, Alexandre Grenon urged de Grandpré to

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<sup>65</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to J. Edmond Cloutier, July 13, 1924, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>66</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to J. Edmond Cloutier, November 30, 1924.

<sup>67</sup> J. Edmond Cloutier to Joseph de Grandpré, December 12, 1924, CRCCF, C2/222/1.

<sup>68</sup> Joseph de Grandpré to J. Edmond Cloutier, December 31, 1924.

<sup>69</sup> The actual correspondence written by de Grandpré on this occasion is conspicuously missing from the file, indicating the probability that such a letter was removed to save the parties involved from embarrassment.

regain his composure or risk losing the support of the ACFEO. In blunt language, he counselled :

Vos coups de nerfs nous ont déjà causé bien des embarras et si vous n'êtes pas capable de vous contrôler d'avantage vous pouvez vous adresser à d'autres qu'à moi. Nous sommes toujours disposés à faire aux nôtres tout le bien possible sans qu'il soit nécessaire de recourir à des procédés indignes d'hommes insensés.<sup>70</sup>

The ACFEO would subsequently forward a cheque for \$500 to help *École Jeanne d'Arc*.

Senator Belcourt disputed the accusations made against the ACFEO, and reminded de Grandpré of his unilateral decision to build a four room brick school house and assume such an onerous debt.<sup>71</sup> The strained relationship between de Grandpré and the ACFEO faltered. His correspondence with the organization tapered off quickly, ending altogether in the summer of 1925. From that point onwards, the new secretary-treasurer of the Ligue des Patriotes, Miss Ellie Gravel kept the provincial organization informed of the situation at the independent bilingual school. The troubling struggle of *Ecole Jeanne-d'Arc* was in marked contrast to the success story of Jeanne Lajoie's independent school of the same name in Pembroke. There, with Lajoie's leadership, a francophone minority's symbol of resistance flourished for the duration of Regulation XVII, without the bitter divisions that emerged in the Windsor border region.

#### Closure of *École Jeanne d'Arc*

While some militants sensed a reason to hope for better times ahead in Queen's Park, news on the homefront remained discouraging for the radicals. By the autumn of 1925, *Ecole Jeanne d'Arc* faced insolvency. De Grandpré returned to practice law in Quebec, maintaining a long-distance control over his project in Windsor. The school

<sup>70</sup> Alex Grenon to Joseph de Grandpré, January 23, 1925.

<sup>71</sup> Senator Napoleon Belcourt to Joseph de Grandpré, January 26, 1925.

languished into 1926. At its meeting of March 6, 1926, the Ligue des Patriotes confronted a number of serious problems. Among the most difficult, was the departure of the school mistress, Madame Bertrand, who « donne sa résignation après que, par son manque d'autorité, l'école a perdu de son efficacité. »<sup>72</sup> With her departure, the school saw a precipitous decline in the number of students, falling from over 100 to just forty. Phélonise Charlebois, the teacher responsible for the junior students, assumed the remaining pupils under her care. Nevertheless, the Ligue's trustees declared, « Elle non plus n'a pas l'autorité voulue. »<sup>73</sup> In the face of growing threats from the remaining parents that they would withdraw their children if the school atmosphere did not quickly improve, the Ligue requested Charlebois's resignation. To replace her, the Ligue trustees hired François Chauvin at a salary of more than 1000 dollars, or nearly twice the salary of his predecessor. Consequently, supporters needed to find a new spokesperson to rally support to the struggling school. Seeking out the most capable speaker in the region to save *École Jeanne d'Arc*, Ellie Gravel asked Gustave Lacasse to help.<sup>74</sup> As noted earlier, the doctor had previously shown some sympathy for the school and had attempted to reconcile de Grandpré and the Saint-Pierre brothers in the summer of 1922.

Fearing the collapse of the school, J. Edmond Cloutier visited Windsor to determine the gravity of the situation. He learned from François Chauvin in April 1926 that the school's enrollment had climbed by 5 students to 41, but still had seven divisions, making it impossible for him to accomplish his task appropriately. The teacher requested

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<sup>72</sup> Minutes, Meeting of the École Jeanne d'Arc, M. Joseph Parent, President, Mme E.L. Gravel, secrétaire-trésorière, March 6, 1926, CRCCF, C2/223/2.

<sup>73</sup> Minutes, École Jeanne d'Arc, March 6, 1926.

<sup>74</sup> Minutes, École Jeanne d'Arc, March 6, 1926.

ACFEO help to hire an assistant.<sup>75</sup> Shortly thereafter, Gravel appealed to the ACFEO, noting that the Ligue was using the sporadic student monthly tuition to cover its heavier payroll. If the situation persisted without help, Gravel warned, she would have to lay off the new teacher. The weekly card nights had raised some funds but could not keep up with the mortgage payments or maintenance costs.

To assist them in their plight, Senator Napoléon Belcourt intervened with a direct appeal to Georges Varennes and Stanislas Janisse, the president and past president of the Ford City SSJB to help save École Jeanne d'Arc. Tançrède Saint-Pierre, the president of the SSJB Windsor, offered to take over the school and assume the remaining mortgage debt in return for title on the property. The Ligue rebuffed the offer, since the outstanding principal had fallen to just \$6500. De Grandpré's association sought to sell the building at or near cost and maintain access to the school for its meetings. Saint-Pierre then counter-offered to allow the Ligue to manage the school, but surrender its use after hours. The school was the sole meeting place for the cash-strapped Ligue. The SSJB executive refused to shoulder the existing financial risk and the deal collapsed.<sup>76</sup> Bitter feelings inhibited a rapprochement.

As talks between the two militant movements over École Jeanne d'Arc broke down, the trustees of the independent bilingual school of Windsor learned that they had other troubles. After relying on Chauvin to finish the 1925-1926 school year, the Ligue des Patriotes found it impossible to extend his employment for another term since his

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<sup>75</sup> François Chauvin to Mme Ella Gravel, April 6, 1926, CRCCF, C2/223/1.

<sup>76</sup> Ella Gravel, Secretary Treasurer, Ligue des Patriotes, to J. Edmond Cloutier, August 9, 1926, CRCCF, C2/223/1. The Ligue refused to hand to surrender sole usage of the school after hours to the SSJB. Such a concession would have stripped the cash strapped League of a meeting place and precipitated its collapse.

salary of \$125 a month was simply too high.<sup>77</sup> Although the school enrollment had rebounded to 49 pupils, the Ligue's finances could not support the employment of a second teacher. Consequently, the trustees thanked Chauvin for his services and rehired Charlebois for the senior class. This decision ignited a firestorm. Thirty five parents signed a petition threatening to withdraw their children if Chauvin was not re-hired.<sup>78</sup> The trustees were forced to concede, but the Ligue's decision to rehire Chauvin came with consequences of its own. Likely insulted by the alteration of her initial contract from senior to junior teacher and its consequent salary reduction, Charlebois declined to accept a post at the school. Instead, she opted to take a position at the independent school in Ford City.

The SSJB's experiment with an independent school was no more successful. During the course of the 1926-1927 school year, the Ford City branch of the association found it could not afford Charlebois's salary of 1200 dollars.<sup>79</sup> By the end of the year, *École Saint-Stanislas* lost her services, when the SSJB failed to pay her. Ironically, she returned to work at *École Jeanne d'Arc*, when François Chauvin resigned following a dispute over his salary with the Ligue des Patriotes.<sup>80</sup> Charlebois worked as a fundraiser for the school, as she held a weekly card night to raise desperately needed monies. In January 1927, Secretary-treasurer Gravel complained that the \$86 raised that evening would do little to pay the bills for heat, maintenance, and salaries, all of which were

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<sup>77</sup> Ella Gravel to J. Edmond Cloutier, June 15, 1926, CRCCF, C2/223/1.

<sup>78</sup> Ella Gravel, Sec. Treasurer, Ligue des Patriotes, to J. Edmond Cloutier, August 9, 1926, CRCCF, C2/223/1.

<sup>79</sup> St. Pierre to Cloutier, undated letter, c. December, 1926, CRCCF, C2/223/1.

<sup>80</sup> Ella Gravel to Edmond Cloutier, February 2, 1927, CRCCF, C2/223/1.

already in arrears. In fact, the school faced a shortfall of \$885. Once again, Gravel appealed to the ACFEO for help. The organization advised the Ligue to negotiate a six-month extension with the mortgage creditor and a reduced payment schedule in the hope of settling the financial crisis. Such negotiations brought a stay of execution, as the creditor granted a reprieve of just three months, but insisted in return that the school would have to remit \$500! Gravel qualified this arrangement as utterly impossible.<sup>81</sup> The financial struggles faced by the École Jeanne d'Arc did little to encourage local faith in the future of the school. Persistent parental complaints over the calibre of instruction and discipline, as well as the rate of tuition, at 60 dollars a year played a role in the fluctuating school attendance. The inability of the school to pay an effective teacher and disciplinarian simply contributed to the downward spiral.

Dr. J.P. Parent, president of the Chatham section of the SSJB suggested that parents had other reasons for leaving the independent bilingual school of Windsor. He wrote,

J'ai appris une triste nouvelle à Windsor dimanche, si la chose est vrai, paraît-il qu'il n'y a plus qu'une classe à l'école Jeanne d'Arc. C'est bien malheureux de voir les canadiens français se décourager dans si peu de temps. On m'a dit que plusieurs avaient retirés leurs enfants croyant que le Règlement 17 sera bientôt aboli, et que la question du français serait alors réglée.<sup>82</sup>

There appeared to be at least two causes for the decline in enrollment at the Windsor French school. Some parents had grown discouraged with supporting an expensive school of dubious quality in order to preserve the French language and culture for their children, and abandoned the struggle. Others believed rumours that the provincial

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<sup>81</sup> Ella Gravel to Edmond Cloutier, March 5, 1927, CRCCF, C2/223/1.

<sup>82</sup> Dr. J.P. Parent, Chatham, to J. Edmond Cloutier, December 15, 1926, CRCCF, C2/88/6. Parent's cousin had been a founding member of the Ligue des Patriotes, and sat on its executive.

government was considering repealing Regulation 17. In anticipation of this event, many parents withdrew their children from *École Jeanne d'Arc*.<sup>83</sup>

The crippling financial obligations of *École Jeanne d'Arc* compelled the Ligue des Patriotes to reconsider the previous offer of the SSJB to take over the school. On April 12, 1927, the SSJB proposed to take possession of the school equipment and furniture in return for paying Charlebois's outstanding salary. In addition, the Society offered to assume the school's debts in return for its acquisition at the nominal sum of one dollar.<sup>84</sup> The sticking point to the negotiations revolved around the school's future: the SSJB insisted the Ligue continue to pay the salary of the teacher in question.<sup>85</sup> Even de Grandpré agreed to the transaction from his new home in Quebec, on the sole condition that French instruction at the school continue.<sup>86</sup> Shortly thereafter, as the school struggled for life, the Ligue des Patriotes learned that de Grandpré had died suddenly after a brief illness in Montreal in July, 1927 at the age of 46. His departure failed to save the school however. The SSJB delayed taking over the school, perhaps as a means of ensuring the penniless Ligue would collapse. On October 31, 1927, the *École Jeanne d'Arc* closed despite the last-minute appeals of the ACFEO. Gustave Lacasse informed officials in Ottawa that SSJB and Ligue members were still fighting over the terms of purchase until the very end.

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<sup>83</sup> Albert Gauthier, Ligue des Patriotes board member, to J. Edmond Cloutier, April 12, 1927.CRCCF/C2/223/1.

<sup>84</sup> Albert Gauthier, Ligue des Patriotes board member, to J. Edmond Cloutier, April 12, 1927.CRCCF/C2/223/1.

<sup>85</sup> Ella Gravel to J. Edmond Cloutier, April 24, 1927, CRCCF/C2/223/1.

<sup>86</sup> Ella Gravel to J. Edmond Cloutier, April 24, 1927.

### The Final Gasps of the Resistance

In the spring of 1922, leading members of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Societies of Windsor, Essex and Kent Counties filed a written report on the state of the French language and culture in the region. Their findings depicted a community in need of urgent assistance. Damien Saint-Pierre and his fellow authors noted that in the countryside francophones remained relatively attached to their language and culture, but the youth was becoming increasingly anglicized as a result of the school regulations. In the cities, those fifty and older preserved their French heritage, while the younger generations were generally more ambivalent to language questions, influenced by a largely indifferent clergy and the English education imposed in the schools. With regard to the francophones of the border cities, St. Pierre added,

l'ambiance dans laquelle ils vivent tendant absolument à atrophier leur mentalité française et catholique, à commencer par le théâtre, le journal, la revue, anglaise ou américaine, où ils puisent quotidiennement le mépris de leur race et les idées anti-catholiques, et jusqu'à l'église et l'école où en les dépouillant de leur mentalité française on leur enlève en même temps le sens catholique.<sup>87</sup>

The inroads of the American media in the 1920s promoted the attraction of a consumer culture, and aggressively competed against the fragile French language media. In 1920, in spite of considerable ACFEO provincial support in liaison with personnel from *Le Droit*, the local newspaper, *La Défense*, failed, for lack of resources. The foundation of another weekly newspaper, *La Presse-Frontière*, the following year, did not resolve the problem, for it closed the following year. Many local francophones showed little interest

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<sup>87</sup> Rapport sur la situation des Canadiens français des comtés d'Essex et Kent, Joseph de Grandpré, Damien Saint-Pierre, Stanislas Janisse, A.T. Saint-Pierre, Saint-Jean Baptiste Society, Windsor, Ford City, Essex, Kent, to Alexander Grenon, ACFEO Provincial Secretary, January, 1922, CRCCF, C2/97/12; see also Damien Saint-Pierre to J. Edmond Cloutier, January 18, 1922, CRCCF, C2/6/1.

in the French language press, opting instead for the English-language daily. The divisions within the community made the launch of new French cultural enterprises increasingly risky. Nevertheless, the SSJB endeavoured to revive francophone appreciation for their culture with the introduction of a series of monthly dramatic presentations and musicals. Leaders like Damien Saint-Pierre expressed surprise at the considerable response to this rare occasion to hear French in a public venue.<sup>88</sup>

Activity on the public stage was not confined to cultural undertakings. Saint-Pierre noted that francophones also played a role on the municipal councils of Ford City and Essex North. In the town of Sandwich, the mayor and some councillors were francophone. In contrast, however, the Windsor city council had not had a single francophone representative since the departure of alderman Euclide Jacques at the beginning of the 1920s. According to the SSJB, there was one reason for this pitiful situation : « Et la cause c'est le manque de cohésion et l'apathie du grand nombre qui ne se rend pas compte de l'influence qu'il pourrait avoir en s'affirmant davantage comme entité distincte.»<sup>89</sup> Many of the leaders lamented the growing dissociation of francophones from their cultural identity.

The SSJB of the Windsor Border Region attributed much of the problem to Bishop Fallon. It argued that some Separate School Board trustees like Pacaud feared that the expulsion of the English speaking teaching orders would provoke the wrath of Fallon, who was the principal steward of all separate schools. He held the power to close

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<sup>88</sup> Rapport..., January, 1922.

<sup>89</sup> Rapport..., January, 1922, p. 4.

the doors of any separate school that opted to defy the provincial school regulations. The SSJB emphasized that most of the French Canadian clergy proved to be indifferent or openly hostile to the organization. While some of the priests were true militants, most were either the anglicised products of Sandwich College or Fallon's new diocesan seminary of St. Peter's in London. Worse still, some priests openly sought to anglicize their own people.<sup>90</sup> In short, serious divisions existed between many of the francophone clergy and the leading militants over the bilingual schools question. Arguing first and foremost for the preservation of the province's separate schools, the clergy's active opposition to militant initiatives made the success of the resistance to Regulation XVII much more difficult than in other parts of Ontario. Once again, leaders pointed the finger at Fallon as the lead instigator in reinforcing such divisions through his rigid control of priestly ordinations through St. Peter's Seminary in London.

Most significantly, the SSJB argued that the court decisions from Rome had had a devastating impact on the morale of many moderate militants driving a wedge between them and their more radical counterparts. The struggle with Fallon had ignited their national pride, but the prolonged nature of the conflict had exhausted them.

Mais le grand nombre des nôtres subissent ce joug et cette persécution constante avec un esprit rempli d'aigreur et d'amertume. Ils ont espéré pendant quelque temps que leur revendications seraient entendues de Rome; mais ils en sont maintenant rendus pour la plupart à désespérer d'obtenir jamais justice. Il est vrai que Rome a parlé, mais l'évêque et ses satellites ont fait fi de la parole du Pape.<sup>91</sup>

The failure of the militants' legal case before the Roman courts weakened their resolve to continue the resistance.

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<sup>90</sup> Rapport, January, 1922, pp. 7-8.

<sup>91</sup> Rapport..., January, 1922, p. 8.

Conspicuously absent from the SSJB report and perhaps the most pressing matter within the militant movement itself was the need for reconciliation among the rival factions. Personal conflicts within the bilingual schools resistance had led to a schism in the SSJB and the formation of the Ligue des Patriotes. The latter movement, with its introduction of an independent French school had simply aggravated the hard feelings among militants. The refusal to address this matter in the report clearly suggested an unwillingness to face a significant problem that was crippling the resistance.

#### Regional ACFEO Elections

In April 1923, the ACFEO planned a province-wide congress. The Windsor membership held a special assembly to select a slate of participants for the event. For the first time since their momentous divorce, the members of the SSJB and the Ligue des Patriotes shared a room together. Saint-Pierre expressed grave concerns regarding the potential fallout of such a meeting. Once again, Pacaud and de Grandpré would face off. Pacaud attempted to explain the school board's inability to stage an Ottawa style protest against the province's school regulation, given the lack of popular support among Windsor Catholics. De Grandpré followed Pacaud on the podium. He vigorously refuted Pacaud's claims and called on those assembled to pass a motion recognizing the heroic conduct of the Ottawa Separate School Board against Regulation XVII.<sup>92</sup> In the eyes of the delegates, a resolution recognizing the Ottawa school resistance was certainly praiseworthy. However, de Grandpré's proposal was little more than a thinly veiled

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<sup>92</sup> St. Pierre to J. Ed. Cloutier, April 3, 1923.

public censure of Gaspard Pacaud's performance as school board president.<sup>93</sup> Saint-Pierre and Réaume identified the resolution as such and sought to head it off to restore a spirit of concord to the assembly to no avail. De Grandpré, on the other hand, aimed to pass his motion at all costs.<sup>94</sup> Moderate militants bridled at de Grandpré's controversial motion and the meeting threatened to break apart.<sup>95</sup> Attempts to avert the vote failed. The proposal exposed the existing divisions among the militants, with the Ligue des Patriotes' eight members voting against the rest of those assembled.<sup>96</sup> Any semblance of unity at this meeting was utterly shattered.

The prognosis for a future rapprochement between the competing organizations was bleak. Saint-Pierre refused to work towards any compromise with de Grandpré's radical militants in the future.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, participants at the assembly voted to send Joseph de Grandpré as one of the delegates to the upcoming Franco-Ontarian convention in Ottawa. This victory exasperated Saint-Pierre. He believed that the provincial ACFEO had to intervene and rein in the gregarious lawyer or risk paying an exorbitant price in the Windsor border region.

Pour ma part, je considère que la patience et la charité chrétienne ont des limites; je suis bien déterminé à ne plus laisser démolir l'œuvre de la survivance qu'avec des amis intimes...  
En ami sincère et inébranlable de Régula [ACFEO] je puis vous dire que si l'on ne musèle pas- et pour toujours- cet insupportable autocrate il aura tôt fait de mettre le dernier clou dans le cercueil de Régula dans l'Ouest ontarien.<sup>98</sup>

The assembly was a bitter disappointment for the organizers. Their attempts to unite militant francophones had actually exacerbated the divisions within the movement.

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<sup>93</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, April 3, 1923.

<sup>94</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, April 3, 1923.

<sup>95</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, April 3, 1923.

<sup>96</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, April 3, 1923.

<sup>97</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, February 3, 1923.

<sup>98</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, February 7, 1923.

Indeed, St. Pierre's dislike for de Grandpré ensured that he would not travel on the same train to Ottawa as his former friend.<sup>99</sup>

Saint-Pierre attempted to justify his animosity towards de Grandpré, upon learning of the fallout from the meeting a week later. Gaspard Pacaud announced his plans to skip the provincial convention, claiming the need to remain by his sick wife's bedside. Saint-Pierre expressed concern that his efforts to convert this prominent and longtime critic of the ACFEO to the militant cause would be lost. In the meantime he focused on proposing a careful balance of delegates from Windsor. A respected "insider", Joseph Réaume, the former conservative MPP and minister would be named as one Vice President for the regional ACFEO, while Gustave Lacasse, a Liberal organizer would occupy the second vice-presidency.<sup>100</sup> To entice Pacaud, Saint-Pierre offered him the final vice presidential position. The aim of the regional ACFEO organizers was to assemble 150 delegates for the Ottawa convention.<sup>101</sup> The doctor made no mention of his rival de Grandpré for the slate of the regional ACFEO executive. Pacaud would indeed attend the conference and become a loyal member of the ACFEO after years of acrimony.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, February 7, 1923. Saint-Pierre called on ACFEO officials to sacrifice de Grandpré for the greater good of the French language cause, since his behaviour had alienated key members from the movement.

<sup>100</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, February 7, 1923.

<sup>101</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, February 7, 1923.

<sup>102</sup> The ACFEO delegates representing Kent and Essex were Gilbert Campeau, Georges Campeau, Frank Réaume, F.P. Lalande, Alex Lauzon, Damien Gourd, Gaspard Pacaud, J. O. Réaume, Joseph de Grandpré, Raymond Casgrain, Urgel Jacques, U.J. Durocher, Maxime Saint-Denis, Raymond Marentette, Christophe Marentette, Arthur Déziel, Harry Maisonville, Henri Parent, Antoine Janisse, Fred Ferrari, Eugène Lassaline, A.T. Saint-Pierre, Raymond Morand, M.D., Alex Hébert, Victor Bensette, Guillaume Adam, Ernest Renaud, Louis Saint-Pierre, Victor Baillargeon, Odilon Desrosiers, Eugène Brault, Joseph Breault, Vital Benoit, Amédée Gignac, Frédéric Adam, Aldéric Cardinal, Théodore Drouillard, Henri Gignac,

The year 1923 offered hope to militants in Essex County, when Gustave Lacasse decided to contest a seat on the school board commission for Tecumseh. His subsequent victory appeared to breathe new life into the bilingual school resistance. However, Lacasse soon learned that his task would be difficult :

Oui je vous ai déclaré que je me proposerais en devenant syndic d'école de travailler à donner graduellement à l'enseignement du français la place qu'il mérite, c'est vrai. Mais j'ai dit graduellement, car il ne s'agit pas de se lancer à corps perdu dès les premiers mois de notre terme d'office et d'imposer nos volontés autocratiquement et à coups de provocations; il faut toujours tenir compte de nombreux préjugés locaux et il faut petit à petit éclairer l'opinion publique. « Prenez ces sœurs de Tégumseh par la capuche et jetez-moi ça dehors m'a-t-on conseillé avec une violence toute évangélique. »  
« Mais tout doux, mon cher monsieur S..., calmez-vous : telle n'est pas ma manière à moi de procéder, et à moins de circonstances exceptionnelles- comme à Ford autrefois, comme à Pembroke aujourd'hui- il paie toujours d'agir avec un peu plus de sang-froid. Vous verrez souvent qu'avec moins de brutalité on arrivera à un tout aussi bon résultat...<sup>103</sup>

Interestingly enough, Lacasse, a longtime critic of the Windsor Separate School Board's inaction on French-language instruction in the schools, now advocated a go-slow approach. Apparently, he sensed a grass roots antipathy to a radical militant stance. Lacasse believed that educating public opinion would dispel the degree of prejudice that existed against the resistance movement. His stance began to resemble that of the somewhat vilified Gaspard Pacaud. It stood in clear contrast to the aggressive strategy advocated by de Grandpré. Lacasse had entered the complex world of minority language politics.

### Towards a Lasting Solution

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Patrice Dufault, Stanislas Janisse, Damien Saint-Pierre, M.D. Joseph Belleperche, Philippe Grenon, Adolphe Janisse, Ernest Langlois, Edmond Poisson, Joseph Martel. Paincourt : Pierre Pinsonnault, J.B. Therrien, Alexis Roy, Delphis Trahan. Tecumseh : Paul Poisson, M.D., Colomb Morand, Maurice Renaud. *Le Droit*, April 12, 1923

<sup>103</sup> Gustave Lacasse to J. Edmond Cloutier, November 9, 1923, CRCCF, C2/219/2.

The fall of the Hearst government in 1919 gave francophones across Ontario reason to hope for an end to Regulation XVII. With the defeat of the Conservative regime at the hands of the United Farmers of Ontario, rumours surfaced that the new government of E.C. Drury would indeed withdraw the school edict. The following year, R.H. Grant, the new Minister of Education, recounted his interview with Bishop Fallon regarding the bilingual schools question. Grant noted that the bishop remained emphatic in his opposition to any concession to such schools. He referred to Fallon's warning that « if a cross was taken from a T or a dot from an I of Regulation 17 as it now exists, that he would set on foot another agitation similar to the one that existed since 1912. »<sup>104</sup> The Drury government would back away from making any changes to the school regulation, but this event failed to quell the pressure for its repeal.

On February 10, 1923, Senator Napoleon Belcourt began a week-long tour of the Windsor border region with the express purpose of summoning support for the cancellation of Regulation XVII. During his sojourn, he was the guest of the local Rotary Club, where he delivered a luncheon speech on the issue of national unity. The senator's speech, coupled with a discourse by S.D. Chown of Queen's University the following day at the Canadian Club, captured national headlines. The discussion of these two public figures centered on the need for greater tolerance between the two founding peoples, and a greater openness to learn the two principal languages of Canada. After years of division over foreign policy and conscription, a growing number of influential Protestant anglophones were endorsing the conciliatory message of the Unity League, an advocacy

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<sup>104</sup> R.H. Grant, Minister of Education to Arthur Tisdelle, October 26, 1920, CRCCF, C2/156/4.

group for improving French-English relations in Canada after the First World War. Among the most salient issues that the Unity League tackled, was the question of Regulation XVII.

Senator Belcourt's visit to the region stirred militant fires in some surprising circles. Joseph Réaume spoke enthusiastically about the need to respect French language rights at a local meeting of the Knights of Columbus. His call for tolerance and understanding caught the attention of Saint-Pierre who had written off the former provincial Conservative minister as an « anglifiée ». Saint Pierre marveled at the impact of the Belcourt visit,

Il s'agit en effet d'un certain nombre de nos canadiens anglicisés qui semblent ouvrir les yeux à la réalité...et par intérêt ou autrement seraient disposés à reconnaître sinon la nécessité absolue d'une formation française à l'école du moins une grande utilité.<sup>105</sup>

Saint-Pierre aimed to build bridges between a select group of moderate francophones to advance the cause of the schools struggle. He had two men in mind : Réaume, a Conservative, and Pacaud, a Liberal.

Jusqu'à présent nous avons gagné à notre cause deux chefs de groupe très précieux : M. Pacaud, Rouge, et le Dr. Réaume, (bleu). Nous nous efforçons à donner à ces amis les titres honorifiques...tous...quitte à obtenir d'eux des démarches vraiment encourageantes et de nature à entraîner une foule d'Insiders que les Outsiders ne pourraient gagner autrement.<sup>106</sup>

Saint-Pierre's newfound friendship and alliance with these former rivals rested on ulterior motives. Saint-Pierre, who had been effectively tarred with the brush of "outsider" by the bishop and press among others, knew he required the support of long-time high profile local icons in the border cities, like Réaume and even Pacaud, if militants were to stand

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<sup>105</sup> Saint-Pierre [Vir] to Cloutier, February 13, 1923, CRCCF, C2/97/2.

<sup>106</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, February 13, 1923.

any chance of a significant breakthrough among francophones.<sup>107</sup> Pacaud had been one of the most vocal critics of the ACFEO in recent years. This tactic of bringing high profile speakers to the area to bestow accolades upon Saint- Pierre's former rivals served as one method for healing old wounds among militants.

Saint-Pierre summed up his assessment of the Belcourt visit in a letter to his friend J. Edmond Cloutier. « Inutile de vous dire quel précieux souvenir nous conservons de votre voyage. Je souhaite de tout cœur que ce réveil de nos gens ait d'heureux lendemains. »<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, Saint-Pierre pledged to keep local militants on a vigilant footing against complacency. The signs of an awakening were vulnerable to the intervention of Bishop Fallon. Striking upon the recent visit, Saint-Pierre aimed to make a discrete intercession on the part of Belcourt before the Windsor Separate School Commission.

Par ailleurs, je connais le tabac qui se fume dans la ville de Windsor et je ne suis pas assez naïf pour croire que 3 [Fallon] et Crésus [Downey] vont s'endormir et nous laisser faire de la cabale auprès des commissaires de Windsor sans faire une contre-cabale qui pourrait avoir des résultats désastreux.<sup>109</sup>

The effort to re-enlist francophone school trustees in the ACFEO would require a great deal of care and discretion. The bishop continued to cast a long shadow over a fragile and uncertain resistance movement.

Saint-Pierre even recognized the role of some francophones, like Dr. Joseph O. Réaume and fellow Conservative party organizer Colonel Charles Casgrain in promoting a rapprochement between anglophones and francophones. Réaume had actually urged

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<sup>107</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, February 19, 1923, CRCCF, C2/97/2. Although Pacaud was originally born in Quebec, his forty years of service to the francophone community apparently held some weight.

<sup>108</sup> Saint-Pierre to J. Edmond Cloutier, Feb. 14, 1923, CRCCF, C2/97/2.

<sup>109</sup> St. Pierre to Cloutier, Feb. 18, 1923, CRCCF, C2/97/2.

the largely Irish Knights of Columbus to bridge the gap between the region's Catholics. At issue, was the possibility of using the Knights' Hall to host a forum for the keynote speakers of the Unity League. This gathering would emphasize a theme of reconciliation between Irish and French Catholics of the region and initially met with support from the Knights. However, an obstacle appeared to derail the project.

À force d'instances et finalement de menaces de la part du Dr. Réaume et du Colonel Casgrain la chevalerie permit l'usage de la salle à l'occasion de la visite Belcourt-Hughes-Moore mais le Grand Knight ne tarda pas à recevoir une lettre du State Chaplain lui enjoignant... 'keep away from any movement with which St. Pierre would have anything to do'.

In short order, the Unity League was uninvited to the Knights' Hall. This about-face in attitudes frustrated moderate militant attempts to foster a better understanding between English- and French-speaking Catholics in Windsor. Fallon, as the state chaplain of the Knights was the instrumental force behind this decision.

Casgrain and Réaume contributed to the effort to repeal Regulation XVII<sup>110</sup> following the return to power of the Conservatives under Howard Ferguson in 1923. Both men had served as loyal foot soldiers for the party through the darkest days of the bilingual schools controversy and conscription. Now they weighed into the schools question with a direct appeal to the federal party leader, Arthur Meighen.<sup>111</sup> They hoped that Meighen would apply pressure on the Ferguson government to reconsider the existing regulations for bilingual schools. Meighen hoped his intervention would restore his image among francophones following his controversial support for conscription in

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<sup>110</sup> For a detailed account of the government's modification of Regulation XVII, see Peter Oliver, "The resolution of the Ontario bilingual schools crisis, 1919-1929", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, VII, I, February, 1972: 22-45.

<sup>111</sup> Saint-Pierre to Cloutier, March 16, 1923, CRCCF, C2/97/3.

World War I. In a similar vein, such an effort could only help to rehabilitate Réaume in the eyes of his Windsor compatriots.

#### Merchant-Scott-Côté Commission

In the mid-1920s, as the result of continued resistance to the school regulation in other sections of the province, coupled with growing pressure from such movements as the Unity League and the Bonne Entente movement, Premier G. Howard Ferguson opted to conduct a review of the bilingual schools to measure the efficacy of Regulation XVII. In October 1925, provincial government officials once again called upon Dr. F.W. Merchant to lead the commission. This time, however, he did not work alone. Alongside this esteemed educator, were Judge J.H. Scott, a leading member of the Orange Lodge, and Louis Côté, a reputable barrister and Conservative from the Ottawa region. To assist them in their work, two secretaries were named, ministry official W.J. Kerr, and Aurèle J. Bénéteau. The latter was from a Canayen family outside of the town of Sandwich, who was educated at a local bilingual school, before venturing on to studies in French at Queen's and McGill universities, where he obtained a first class teaching certificate. Eventually Bénéteau returned to Essex county as a bilingual school teacher and later as a French instructor at Sandwich College's pedagogical school.<sup>112</sup> The commissioners traveled throughout the province interviewing the key stakeholders in the education system.

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<sup>112</sup> *Le Droit*, November 11, 1925.

Louis Côté's stance on the issue of Regulation XVII indicated an openness to the cause of bilingual schools. His approach was largely pedagogical. In a letter to Premier Ferguson, Côté remarked,

I daresay that if all the teachers in the bilingual schools of Ontario had been qualified to teach in 1913 that there would never have been any regulation 17, and a great deal of trouble and distress and hardships would have been avoided. Any amendment or alteration of regulation 17 must be supplemented by adequate steps to train bilingual teachers.<sup>113</sup>

The emerging results of the English-French School Inspection Reports addressed Côté's concerns for the improvement of pedagogical standards. At a meeting of the Inspectors' Superannuation Commission of March 21, Provincial Chief Inspector J.C. Humphries noted that compliance with Regulation XVII had improved provincewide. While the districts of Carleton and Prescott Russell continued to show serious resistance, two districts, one in the East and one in the Southwest offered reason for hope. In Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, 18 public schools had resisted the school inspection in 1915. In 1924, that number fell to just 6 schools. In Essex and Kent counties, the situation was even more optimistic. In 1915, officials reported that eight schools had publicly resisted Regulation XVII. In 1924, officials declared that all schools were in compliance.<sup>114</sup> The growing submission of Essex and Kent county francophones to the school regulations suggested one area of success for the Ferguson government's strategy.

In light of this progress, the premier indicated a growing openness to change his government's policy towards bilingual schools. The inflexible conditions of Regulation XVII were becoming increasingly apparent. The premier declared,

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<sup>113</sup> Louis Côté to G. Howard Ferguson, January 11, 1925, Ferguson Papers, PAO, MU 1021.

<sup>114</sup> Report, meeting of the Teachers and Inspectors' Superannuation Commission, March 21, 1924, J.C. Humphreys, Chair and Chief Inspector, Ferguson papers, PAO, MU 1021.

The amount of time (one hour per day per class room) provides ample measure in the ordinary graded school, where the teacher has but one grade. But there is, in my opinion, some reason for the complaint that it is not adequate in an ungraded school, or in a graded school where the teacher has charge of two or more classes.<sup>115</sup>

Ferguson's decision to establish the Merchant-Scott-Côté Commission to study the existing conditions in the bilingual schools signalled a pending change in the provincial policy.

Louis Côté visited the Windsor border region to collect data for the Commission in November, 1925. The ACFEO instructed Damien Saint-Pierre to coordinate strategy in Essex and Kent counties.

Nous savons que vous n'épargnez rien pour que les enquêteurs puissent se faire une idée complète de ce dont les Canadiens français de Kent et Essex se plaignent et surtout des changements qu'ils désirent. L'important est que dans toutes les régions on demande la même chose.

...Ce serait bon, si vous ne l'avez pas encore fait, de réunir tous les principaux canadiens français de Windsor, de Ford et même du comté pour vous entendre sur les points principaux à faire valoir devant la commission.<sup>116</sup>

The leading francophones of Windsor and Essex met with Côté in private and discussed their grievances against the school regulations. The ACFEO counseled local militants to express their unanimity in requesting the placement of francophone students in ethnically homogeneous classes and schools. They also requested provincial recognition of the new second-class bilingual certificate program offered through the École de Pédagogie at the University of Ottawa as well as the acceptance of certain certified teachers from Quebec. In addition, they requested a relaxation of the one-hour restriction currently placed on French instruction.<sup>117</sup> Finally, militants expressed their wholehearted support

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<sup>115</sup> Memorandum on the English-French General Situation, Ontario Department of Education, March 28, 1925, Ferguson Papers, PAO, MU 1021.

<sup>116</sup> J. Edmond Cloutier to Damien Saint-Pierre, November 13, 1925, CRCCF, C2/88/6. Cloutier provided similar directions to Joseph Parent of Chatham to advocate for Kent County's French Canadian population. J. Edmond Cloutier, to Joseph Parent, November 18, 1925, CRCCF, C2/88/6.

<sup>117</sup> Cloutier to Saint-Pierre, November 18, 1925, CRCCF, C2/88/6..

for the ACFEO provincial as the official advocate for all francophones in Ontario. On November 25, Saint-Pierre and a few close friends invited Côté to an intimate supper behind closed doors at the Club Lasalle of Windsor.

The meeting between Côté and the militants went exceptionally well. Saint-Pierre proudly announced that the talks went until three in the morning.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, Saint-Pierre's satisfaction with the meeting did not indicate that any long term commitments had been secured. In effect, he informed Côté that the ACFEO would have to be satisfied with the final results of the commission to ensure a cessation of hostilities with the Province over Regulation XVII.<sup>119</sup>

#### New Bilingual School Reforms

Just as all hope for the independent bilingual school and for French language education in Windsor seemed to vanish with the imminent closure of the insolvent Ecole Jeanne d'Arc, the provincial government announced its changes to the existing school regulations. On September 26, 1927 Premier Howard Ferguson named Aurèle J. Bénéteau, the Canayen secretary of the Merchant-Scott-Côté Commission to the newly created post of provincial director of French instruction. The elevation of the former Sandwich model school instructor and bilingual inspector for Essex and Kent to this position could not be lost on francophones. Regulation XVII's anti-French restrictions were rendered toothless. The provincial government had finally recognized French as a legal language of instruction in the province with the creation of this post. Anticipating

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<sup>118</sup> Dr. Saint-Pierre to Reverend Charles Charlebois, November 25, 1925, CRCCF, C2/88/6.

<sup>119</sup> Saint-Pierre to Charlebois, November 26, 1925.

her school's closure, Ella Gravel and the executive of the Ligue des Patriotes turned to Bénéteau in a desperate final attempt to open a bilingual class at an existing separate school in Windsor for the children still enrolled at the independent school.<sup>120</sup> Her request failed to elicit an immediate response.

By October 1927, all hope for the survival of *École Jeanne d'Arc* had vanished. Support for this small, symbolic outpost of resistance to Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region had collapsed even among its most vocal supporters. Internecine conflict undermined efforts to stir the francophone majority from its apathy. Aside from *École Sacré Cœur* of Windsor, the only school to offer a French lesson in the city when Regulation XVII was announced, none of the other separate or public schools in the city offered any French instruction whatsoever.<sup>121</sup>

Evidence of widespread francophone militancy and resistance to Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region in the 1920s is difficult to find. Considering the case of Windsor, the number of students in actual attendance at the two independent French schools never exceeded 130 out of close to 2000 francophone pupils in the border cities, representing less than 7% of the total population at its peak. Thus, more than ninety percent of francophones sent their children to English school, and according to the ACFO reports, many allowed their children to speak English in the home. Given the

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<sup>120</sup> Joseph Parent, President, Ligue des Patriotes (unsigned) to A.J. Bénéteau, Director of French, Department of Public Instruction, Toronto, September, 1927, . Parent's letter requested that this new class be taught in the spirit of the new education regulations modifying Regulation XVII, and be located at the nearest separate school to the existing *École Jeanne d'Arc*. CRCCF, C2/223/1.

<sup>121</sup> Little is known about the actual closure of *École Saint-Stanislas*, the independent French school of Ford City. All mention of this school disappeared after June 1926. The fragmentary record suggests that this school had never celebrated much success in recruiting students. It is likely that the most passionate parents advocating French instruction had already enrolled their children at *École Jeanne d'Arc*.

growing number of children of French descent unable to speak the language, it is clear that many of the parents did not even speak to their children in French. Without a doubt, all indicators suggest that the francophone resistance to the bilingual schools regulation was a failure in the Windsor border region.

When, on September 21, 1927, the Ontario government accepted the Merchant-Scott-Côté Report, it prepared to announce modifications to Regulation XVII. The commission declared that the school policy had been on the whole a failure.<sup>122</sup>

Premier Ferguson's decision to adjust the terms of Regulation XVII had its share of supporters as well as detractors. Loftus Reid, the Chairman of the Board of Education of Toronto, and a longtime supporter of the school regulation discussed the reasons for the changes while hailing its successes. In an address to the principals of Ontario's Public schools and their special guest, Premier G. Howard Ferguson, Reid praised its successes with special reference to the Windsor Border Region.

It is found that in the Counties of Essex and Kent the Regulation has, in substance, been adhered to with fairly satisfactory results. The French people there are not altogether newcomers but are largely the descendants of early settlers and who, true to form, have retained their own language. They are distributed throughout the southwestern 'belt' of the Province and, with this opportunity for association and willingness on their own part to comply with the requirements of the School law, it has been demonstrated that the objective sought in the rule is being realized.<sup>123</sup>

Provincial officials took solace in the fact that in the Essex-Kent County region, all of the bilingual schools were publicly complying with Regulation XVII, as supported by the

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<sup>122</sup> Peter Oliver, *G. Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 284-285.

<sup>123</sup> Address, Loftus Reid, Chairman of the Toronto Board of Education to the Ontario Public School Principals and G. Howard Ferguson, January 6, 1928, Ferguson Papers, PAO, MU 1021.

English-French school inspection reports for the 1920s.<sup>124</sup> The English language had come to prevail in the bilingual schools of the Windsor border region.

### Conclusion

Following the drama of the Ford City riot and its aftermath, many francophones of the Windsor border region lost their fervour for the militant cause. The string of legal defeats, beginning in 1916 with *Commissio divinitus*, coupled with the failed battles in the civil courts of Ontario and the ecclesiastical courts of Rome took a considerable toll on the bilingual schools resistance movement. By 1920, with the resistance clearly on the defensive, the militant movement searched for new strategies to reconnect with the disillusioned francophone masses. One faction, led by Damien Saint-Pierre and members of the SSJB softened the political rhetoric employed in *La Défense*, and launched an outreach campaign to the disaffected through a milder newspaper, *La Presse-Frontière*. These same men also established the Club Lasalle, an organization focused on fostering an appreciation of French culture through the sponsorship of a series of theatre productions and guest speakers. These moderate militants aimed to instill a new pride in anglicized and discouraged militant francophones. To ensure that this movement gained traction among the French-speaking masses, Saint-Pierre and his cohorts enlisted a number of high profile insiders, francophones with deep roots in the Windsor border region, to assume the key leadership positions in the militant organizations, such as the SSJB and more importantly, the ACFEO. There are some signs that this strategy met

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<sup>124</sup> English-French School Inspector's Report, Petite Côte, Essex County, December, 1920, Ministry of Education Files, PAO, microfilm, RG 2-43.

with some modest success. A second faction, led by Joseph de Grandpré, opted for a more radical strategy. Impatient with a gradualist approach, the Montreal native and his supporters broke away from the SSJB to found the Ligue des Patriotes. This new organization moved immediately to realize a long coveted goal of all francophone militants: the establishment of an independent bilingual school, in the belief that bold action would attract francophones back to the movement. De Grandpré's dramatic split from the SSJB, coupled with his grandiose manner of publicizing the new school project offended the sensitivities of moderates, who feared his approach would reinforce suspicions of outsider interference with the local bilingual schools situation, and doom any initiative to reestablish French instruction in the city's separate schools. The fears of yet another failed project for some, coupled with the outright animosity towards de Grandpré stripped this promising project of the vital support required for its success. In-fighting within the bilingual school resistance, rooted in disagreements over strategy and personality conflicts, left both École Jeanne d'Arc and its rival École Saint-Stanislas in a financially precarious situation at best. Rather than focusing their energies on recruiting students for an independent bilingual Catholic school, the leadership became embroiled in petty squabbles and likely succeeded in discouraging many francophones from taking another risk with the resistance movement. Indeed, these squabbles likely undermined an offer of sustainable financial assistance from the ACJC fundraising movement in Quebec. The inability of the resistance leaders to overcome their differences and unite to support one financially viable independent school ensured the failure of the most promising act of defiance in the city of Windsor against Regulation XVII.

One man deserves credit for exhibiting the boldness and the determination to launch an independent bilingual school when others said it could not or should not be done : Joseph de Grandpré. Out of jealousy and petty rivalry, his opponents shamelessly worked to sabotage his effort to reintroduce French instruction into the city of Windsor. However, de Grandpré's thirst for grandeur, and his inability to compromise and reconcile with his rivals alienated his erstwhile allies. His countless clashes with Pacaud, the SSJB executive, and eventually the ACFEO illustrate that his intractability was a contributing factor to the failure of his independent school. In effect, at a time when a collaborative effort was required, de Grandpré was a maverick who lacked the skills of a team player and coalition builder. Saint-Pierre's efforts at a reconciliation with Pacaud, Reaume, Laurendeau and even de Grandpré, and his understanding of the ACFEO's decision to participate in events supporting de Grandpré's school suggest his ability to see the greater good. The Windsor barrister appeared far less willing to stand aside gracefully, held longtime grudges, alienated potential allies, proved incapable of appreciating the sensitivities of disillusioned militants and the complexities of the local situation, and was more prone to feel slighted when officials in Ottawa failed to yield to his demands. This last personal weakness likely contributed to the eventual collapse of his relationship with the ACFEO. When de Grandpré finally showed a willingness to compromise as his school project collapsed, his rivals assumed his old intransigent position. Saint-Pierre's initial openness to compromise was now replaced with a desire to settle scores through outright sabotage. Subsequent studies by the ACFEO and the provincial government illustrated that the francophone masses, in spite of the wishes of

their militant leaders and perhaps tired of their squabbling, accepted the existing school decree, leading to the anglicization of many of their offspring. In 1928, with the school edict in its twilight, the Premier considered the implementation of Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region to have been a success. The divisions in the militant leadership certainly contributed to the defeat of the resistance.

## Conclusion

From the beginning of the Ontario bilingual school crisis in 1912, the resistance movement in the Windsor border region faced unique difficulties. It encountered a francophone population that was highly complex, and far more heterogeneous than elsewhere in Ontario. Unlike the situation in eastern and northern Ontario, the francophones of Essex and Kent County were divided into two principal subcultures—the older Fort Detroit Canayens, concentrated primarily on the Detroit River, and the more recently settled French Canadians from Quebec who settled near Lake St. Clair. While sharing a common language, they were in many ways quite different. Although they intermarried in the border cities and Sandwich East, in other rural communities their counterparts still maintained relatively separate lifestyles, both culturally and economically. With the introduction of Regulation XVII and the organization of the province-wide resistance movement, these rural communities did not respond in tandem. While several of the French Canadian communities near Lake St. Clair initially participated in the provincial campaign publicly defying the school edict, most of the Canayen communities moved quickly to comply. The only exceptions, the Canayen villages of Amherstburg and River Canard, were both in Anderdon township, the home of a leading militant French Canadian priest, Joseph Loiselle, and the bilingual Holy Names Sisters of Montreal. The 1914 election results for Essex North riding seemed to confirm signs of a subcultural dichotomy on the bilingual schools issue.

This sub-cultural division was but one of many fissures in a divided community of francophones. There does exist considerable evidence to suggest that both subcultural

communities were in fact divided over Regulation XVII. For example, only a minority of bilingual schools in French Canadian communities, eight in total, openly defied Regulation XVII. In similar fashion to Yves Roby's *Franco-Americans of New England*, the recency of settlement of these French Canadians seems to have played a role in the duration of the French language resistance. Indeed, many of the most vocal militants were recent arrivals, whereas most of those who sought to integrate more fully into the culture of the English majority were more likely to have lived in the region their entire lives.<sup>1</sup> This does not suggest that all of the region's francophones passively accepted these injustices. When provoked by Fallon's authoritarian desire to crush francophone militancy, both communities proved capable of rising up in protest, as witnessed in the mass demonstration of Canayens at River Canard, and the similar uprising of French Canadians at Belle River in 1914. What is clear is that in spite of these internal divisions and similarities, the French Canadian community did appear to be more prone to participate in militant crusades. In the 1913 Windsor petition for French instruction in the schools and separate francophone parishes, nearly 60% of identifiable signatories were French Canadian, even though the 1911 census put their proportion of the city's francophone population at just 51%. Like Roby's *Franco-Americans* in New England, the presence of many recent Quebec arrivals within this sub-cultural grouping would help

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<sup>1</sup> Roby notes the generational differences between recent Quebec arrivals to New England and second and third generation Franco-Americans over French language issues around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: "Les deux groupes n'ont pas les mêmes intérêts et ils font des choix différents." Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, (Sillery, Quebec: Les Éditions Septentrion, 2000), pp. 97, 114, 123, 266, 286. Roby notes that the discourse of radical militant leaders resonated best with first generation Franco-Americans on the eve of World War I. P. 286 This argument was first presented in David Welch, "The Social Construction of Franco-Ontarian Interests Toward French Language Schooling", Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1988, pp. 24-34.

to explain their propensity to embrace the militant cause.<sup>2</sup> This tendency was reflected among clerical militants as well. Out of nine militant priests, fully eight were French Canadian, with six having their birthplace in the province of Quebec.

In converse fashion, francophones whose families had resided for several generations in the region were less enthusiastic about the cause. The proportion of Canayen signatories to the 1913 petition more closely reflected their percentage of the city's francophone population, with both hovering around 40 percent. Just as historian Yves Roby illustrated a greater willingness to accommodate the need for coexistence with the English among the older established Franco-Americans, a similar mindset existed among some of the older Canayen communities; while not indifferent to the cause of the French language, they were probably more divided, given their long co-existence with anglophone neighbours, their greater detachment from the French Canadian nationalist influences of Quebec and their stronger appreciation of a mastery of English for their children, with some even considering French instruction to be of little use whatsoever. Interestingly enough, nationalist speakers like Lionel Groulx, Armand Lavergne, Napoléon Belcourt and Henri Bourassa, normally visited Windsor, Ford City, Tecumseh and Tilbury on their speaking tours through the region in the era of Regulation XVII. With the exception of Ford City, all of these communities hosted francophone populations that were predominantly if not overwhelmingly French Canadian. The sole exception, Ford City, had a substantial and growing French Canadian minority and a vigorous French Canadian leadership.

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<sup>2</sup> Roby, pp. 286, 311.

While divisions in the francophone community of the Windsor border region definitely played a role in the breakdown of the resistance movement against Regulation XVII, one must consider the pivotal role played by Bishop Michael Francis Fallon in this failure. The bilingual schools question only gained serious political traction with the bishop's arrival in the diocese of London in 1910, two full years before the introduction of the school edict. His intervention with provincial officials and the subsequent controversy regarding his alleged proscription of the French language in the region's bilingual schools marked the debut of a very turbulent era for the Canadian Catholic church.

Fallon represented part of a larger quarrel regarding Americanization within the Roman Catholic Church, in the spirit of Pope Leo XIII, that sought to come to terms with the emergence of 19<sup>th</sup> century states and their agenda of cultural integration.<sup>3</sup> The Vatican encouraged the integration of churchgoers into the larger English-speaking mainstream of North American society as a means of adapting the Church to a rapidly changing world. As demonstrated by Perin and Roby, numerous clerics, including Apostolic Delegates to the United States and Canada, as well as several Ontario and New England bishops, aimed to respond to the growing threat of an Anglo-Protestant nativism that viewed Catholic separate schools on the whole as a bastion of resistance to cultural integration. No institution better represented this resistance than the bilingual separate schools. Some of the most ardent supporters of these minority schools, Quebec's bishops

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<sup>3</sup> For an example of this cultural homogenization agenda outside of North America, see Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchman: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1976).

and the recent French Canadian arrivals from that province, sought to use language and the Catholic faith against the integrating forces of urbanization, industrialization and Anglicization. These two forces of integration and cultural survival(survivance) were destined to clash, and the Windsor border region provided one such forum.

Fallon's integrationist agenda ultimately aimed at saving the separate schools of the province from an Anglo-Protestant backlash following the 1910 ACFEO Congress in Ottawa. The bishop believed that the Church had to come to terms with the changing times, and the only way to do this was to integrate into the larger English-speaking society through a quality English Catholic education. Such a proposition was anathema for francophone militants. The bishop believed these elements posed the greatest danger to the Church's greater interests: survival in a secularizing modern society. Hence, Fallon stepped into the void, and with the support of his fellow bishops, lobbied the Whitney government to reject the demands of the ACFEO Congress. His intervention in Windsor's separate schools in 1910 would serve to prevent francophones from securing any French whatsoever under Regulation XVII in three out of four of the city's previously bilingual Catholic schools. When compelled to respond to the allegations that he was anti-French, Fallon used erroneous statistics to help defend his hard-line stand against restoring French instruction to what was in fact, a growing francophone population in Windsor. The bishop sought to present a francophone community in decline, when in actuality, that population was still being reinforced by newcomers from eastern Ontario and Quebec. While there were indeed indications that the long-time resident population was showing signs of Anglicization, the bishop's claims that fully

ninety percent of francophones commonly used English in Windsor, and that only 1 in 3 francophones in the entire region commonly spoke French are not supported by the 1901 and 1911 census. Fallon's reliance on dubious statistics to defend his inflexible stance before Roman officials regarding Windsor's francophones, allowed him to portray this population as anglicized and essentially in decline. His claims that most francophones did not support the militants were somewhat exaggerated and may have been rooted in wishful thinking. In essence, this population was divided over the bilingual schools question. Fallon's claim to be the friend of the French Canadians rested on a distorted view of their long-term wishes for their families. The bishop proved incapable of understanding the desire of many francophones to pass their language onto their children, as their ancestors had done in the area for more than two hundred years. Just as Fallon intervened in the predominantly francophone schools of Walkerville, Sandwich East and Belle River to redress their grievances, he could have so acted in the city of Windsor. Instead, he hid behind the terms of Regulation 12, ignoring the fact that these schools had continued to operate with French instruction from 1889 to 1910 under this school edict with few interruptions, and omitting to mention that his actions here had stripped and continued to deny the city's francophones of French instruction in the separate schools. His orchestration of the French language controversy in the city's schools by the appointment of the Ursuline sisters, his thorough understanding of the terms of Regulation 12 for francophones in predominantly English cities, and his refusal to intervene and reinstate French in the schools of Windsor clearly suggest that the bishop's real agenda was assimilation. When Regulation XVII was introduced two years later,

most francophones of Windsor were denied any right to request the prescribed hour of French instruction as outlined in the hitherto clause.

Fallon also played a pivotal role in the failure of the resistance movement against Regulation XVII through his effective suppression of the clerical militant leadership. Aided by the fact that nearly all of the Canayen priests and half of the French Canadian priests in the Windsor border region remained silent on the bilingual schools issue out of obedience if not outright support for their bishop, Fallon merely had to set his sights on eight recalcitrant priests. When his instructions at his annual retreats in Sandwich failed to dissuade some of these militant priests from meddling in the bilingual schools question, he used the full authority of his position to suppress their leadership. However, before the bishop succeeded in silencing the resistance, his rivals counterattacked with a litany of petitions to Rome that called attention to his controversial leadership style. In response, the Bishop suspended three of the eight militant priests : Loisselle, L'Heureux, and later Emery; and dismissed a fourth : Saint-Cyr. He openly scolded the remaining radical clerics before their very congregations.

Fallon's determination to crush the bilingual schools resistance among his clergy was well on its way to succeeding in 1917 when his chief adversary Lucien Beaudoin died. In dramatic fashion, his inept appointment of a pastoral successor who had previously been involved in the suspension threats against Beaudoin unleashed the wrath of a seething population, triggering one of the most dramatic Catholic parish protests in Canadian history. The bishop's brazen authoritarianism successfully roused a divided and somewhat disillusioned population to object against this decision, which they linked

directly to the bilingual schools question. Indeed, Fallon did what neither Regulation XVII nor any francophone militant leader in the Windsor border region was capable of doing: he successfully united thousands of French Canadians, old stock Canayens and French immigrants in protest, however brief this uprising would be. This revolt eventually caught the attention of Roman officials, including the pope. Notwithstanding this setback, Fallon eventually triumphed over his militant opponents in the civil and ecclesiastical courts. His very public and activist opposition to Ontario's bilingual schools, his suppression of the militant priests, and finally and most importantly, his ability to convince Roman authorities to uphold his authority and to accept his warnings that the Catholic separate schools were in danger, all enabled him to weaken the francophone resistance to Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region.

Despite his victories, Fallon's continuous dismissal of petitions for the use of French in the schools and churches, along with his public humiliation of several long-time French Canadian pastors earned him the lifelong enmity of many francophones. The bishop argued that a small group of agitators was responsible for the civil unrest. However, years of petitions and the mass protest meetings of 1917 suggest that language concerns troubled more than a few militants. In short, Fallon lacked the empathy and diplomacy to serve as the bishop of a diocese with so many francophones. While Regulation XVII alone failed to sow mass resistance, the bishop's public crusade against the popular French-speaking priest-defenders of the bilingual schools provoked a widespread, albeit short-lived uprising in support of these militants.

Francophone leaders also played a contributing role in the failure of the resistance movement against Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region. Tensions had existed ever since the introduction of Regulation XVII in 1912. Among the professional elites, Canayen Joseph O. Réaume actively served in the Whitney government defending Regulation XVII for establishing the legal right of francophone students to one hour of French instruction. His colleagues, H.N. Casgrain and Colonel Paul Poisson, both French Canadians, were also card-carrying Conservatives who publicly defended the government's education policy. In contrast, French Canadians Damien St. Pierre, Joseph de Grandpré, Gustave Lacasse and Euclide Jacques all took an active role in the resistance movement and became card carrying Liberals. The ACFEO leadership in Ottawa expressed its dissatisfaction with several francophone politicians in the city of Windsor. Initially, the inaction of such figures as Réaume, and school trustees Gaspard Pacaud, Alfred Saint-Onge, Joseph D. Deziel and Patrice Ouellet appeared to be motivated by personal ambition. Indeed, all indications suggest that the Windsor separate school board, which for four years, from 1913 to 1917, was represented solely by francophones, remained reluctant to embrace the province-wide resistance against Regulation XVII. However, these trustees were all vocal militants on French language issues in the churches and schools, and all played an important role in the petitions sent to Rome in 1911 and 1913. Pacaud himself had long held a keen interest in the city's bilingual schools and even sat on the ACFEO provincial executive at the time of its founding congress. This apparent paradox can be related directly to their unique perspective on the school edict.

For Windsor francophones, the situation of the French language had been exceptionally bleak since the advent of Bishop Fallon in 1910. Only one of four bilingual separate schools, École Sacré-Coeur continued to offer forty minutes or so of French instruction daily. Fallon's interventionism prior to Regulation XVII had eliminated French from Windsor's schools and served to divide the region's francophone community in the upcoming struggle against the school edict. Indeed, the prospect of one hour of French instruction for these school trustees did not represent a loss, as it did elsewhere in the region or province, but rather, an opportunity to secure this right for the neglected francophone children of Windsor's separate schools. Furthermore, the minority status of the city's francophones may have compelled its leaders to work quietly, so as to avoid the wrath of the Anglophone majority. As politicians, the actions of Pacaud and Réaume appear to suggest that both men were attempting to find a legal means of offering French instruction under Regulation XVII; securing this right would have represented a significant gain for the city's francophones and improved their election prospects, since both men continued to harbour aspirations to higher public office. Joining the province-wide resistance would only have served to antagonize the majority and undermine their lobby to secure the provincial government's support for French instruction. This strategy actually showed some signs of progress when in fact, on Réaume's request, the provincial government took steps to relax the restrictions for Windsor before getting cold feet. For several years, the francophone trustees would refuse to join the provincially coordinated resistance, even on the bidding of Joseph de Grandpré and the ACFEO in 1918. The provincial organization's inability to understand

the unique circumstances of Windsor resulted in a breach between the ACFEO and some local militants, who grew weary of this insensitive outside influence. Pacaud's decisive victory over de Grandpré's self-styled ACFEO candidacy in the 1918 school board elections suggest that the old school trustee better understood the unique conditions in which Windsor's francophone population found itself. The diverging priorities of this particular community ensured that the leadership and francophone population of the region would remain divided. Whereas most francophone militants outside of Windsor regarded the edict as a significant loss for their schools, some of the leading francophone militants of the city likely considered Regulation XVII to be a promising opportunity to restore French instruction to the city's schools. When all hope of securing this right appeared to be exhausted in the early 1920s, however, both Pacaud and Reaume responded to Dr. Saint-Pierre's invitations to return to the ACFEO fold by accepting positions on its executive.

Events following the Ford City riot contributed to the downfall of the bilingual schools resistance. Militant leaders used the occasion to channel public anger as much towards Regulation XVII as to Bishop Fallon and Laurendeau. To do so they launched a series of protest meetings across Essex and Kent Counties as well as a weekly newspaper, but ultimately, their strategy sowed the seeds of failure. By advocating a boycott of the sacrament of confirmation by Fallon, radical militants alienated those francophone Catholics of a more moderate stripe, beginning with Liberal MPP Sévérin Ducharme. With the eventual collapse of the parish boycott in 1918, and the failure of the Ford City legal challenges in Toronto and then Rome against Bishop Fallon, much of the

francophone grassroots lost faith in the militant leadership. These defeats, following the 1916 papal encyclical *Commissio divinitus*, marked a turning point in the bilingual schools resistance, and were too much for most militants to bear. Francophones relented and the last of the bilingual schools in Essex and Kent counties began to comply publicly with Regulation XVII. Nearly all signs of possible surreptitious resistance vanished by 1922.

By 1920, Windsor appeared to be the last remaining bastion of public resistance activity. Unfortunately, here too, the movement suffered from debilitating divisions. Indeed, from 1920 onwards, the local mood had changed from resistance to accommodation. The arrival of nationalist leaders and organizers from Montreal and Ottawa failed to incite the population to action. Efforts by outsiders to bind the local francophone population to the Association Canadienne-française d'Education d'Ontario encountered ambivalence and suspicion. Many of the area's francophones did not identify a common experience with their compatriots in eastern Ontario.<sup>4</sup> The most vocal

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<sup>4</sup> After Fallon's death and the changes to Regulation XVII, militant efforts to inspire the local French Canadian population met with continuing disappointment. In spite of the symbolic victory over the school edict, the region's francophones continued to look with suspicion on nationalist "outsiders". Local receptivity to the Ottawa-based ACFEO remained decidedly cool through the 1930s. French School Inspector Lucien Laplante reported,

On a Ottawa dans le nez d'après ce que je peux voir et ...c'est purement et simplement la faute du clergé. Les prêtres qui seraient bien disposés et qui, selon moi, seraient 100%, semblent avoir reçu l'ordre formel de rester bouche bée. Je me suis fait dire par un laïque, la semaine dernière, « que c'était inutile de vouloir faire de nos enfants des petits Canadiens français comme ceux d'Ottawa ou de Montréal. On ne veut pas de cela ici, parce que ça ne marchera pas. Ici, il faut que nous soyons mêlés aux Anglais; il faut que nos enfants soient plus anglais que les Anglais pour qu'ils puissent obtenir des positions plus tard. Tous les Canadiens français qui ont de bonnes positions aujourd'hui dans la région, ils les détiennent des Anglais. »

...Je vous le répète, la population adulte est perdue et c'est bien peu sûr de pouvoir sauver la génération qui pousse.

The new English-French Inspector of Separate Schools for Windsor and Essex county illustrated the cultural divide between the Franco-Ontarians of the Ottawa region, and the francophones of the Border

supporters of the resistance appeared to come increasingly from elsewhere. Throughout the 1920s, a number of them recognized the enormity of their task in inspiring a population jaded by failures. In sum, a certain disconnect had appeared between the militant leaders and the area's francophone grassroots.

Efforts to overcome this divide faltered in a dispute over strategy. Moderate militants, led by the Saint-Pierre brothers, advocated a soft-spoken, gradualist strategy in the early 1920s that aimed to instill pride among francophones through cultural endeavours. Their plan did bear some fruit among the previously disaffected before being derailed by a bitter dispute between moderate and radical militants over this go-slow approach. The radicals, led by Joseph de Grandpré, impatient with years of delay, sought to stir francophone pride through an aggressive strategy that involved the grand project of launching an independent French school. In the end, this endeavour, which should have been the crowning achievement of a successful nascent resistance in the border region, came instead to represent all that divided the militant leadership. The intense personal conflict between these men divided the militant movement into rival

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region. Antipathy towards overt national pride appeared to run deep in the region. Accommodation with the anglophone majority appeared to be the best strategy for French Canadians to advance socially. In effect, there appeared to be an inherent belief that the ability to pass for English served as a benefit in securing decent employment. Indeed even at *École Saint-Edmond* efforts to increase the amount of French instruction met with protests from the parents themselves for more English.

Laplante's experience in the bilingual schools of Windsor and Essex county had all the trappings of cultural shock. Local francophones manifested indifference to nationalist maxims, and preferred to embrace the majority culture around them. Laplante's fear of the pace of anglicization impacted directly on his daughter, who was enrolled in the Windsor bilingual school. So desperate was the situation, in Laplante's opinion, that his long term goal as English-French inspector of the Separate Schools of the Windsor border region was to be transferred elsewhere! Lucien Laplante to Charlebois, October 23, 1938.

factions and effectively destroyed the dream of a viable, independent French school in defiance of Regulation XVII. Windsor's francophone children paid the price for the in-fighting within the resistance forces.

Resistance to Regulation XVII in Essex and Kent Counties, while at times passionate and vocal, never unified the entire francophone population. It would require the drama of the Ford City Riot to rally francophones into widespread mass protests. At issue was no mere religious dispute, for the plight of the Ford parishioners intricately tied the dispute within the church to the bilingual schools resistance. Whereas Regulation XVII alone could not arouse the heterogeneous francophone population to action, Bishop Fallon's provocative authoritarianism briefly united this diverse population in righteous indignation. The failure of the militant leadership to capitalize on this opportunity had lasting consequences. The six month delay in launching a newspaper, the radical rhetoric employed at the cross county protest meetings, and the failure to channel this popular anger to reinvigorate the bilingual schools resistance all illustrate a lack of deftness and cohesion among the francophone militant leadership. The failure of their cause before the courts alienated the francophone grassroots, and divided the leadership over the strategy to employ to lure them back to the resistance.

The collapse of the resistance to Regulation XVII in the Windsor border region can directly be attributed to the divisions in the militant leadership and francophone community, as well as the interventionist role of Bishop Fallon on the bilingual schools question. While Fallon's initial interference in the schools and his suppression of the clerical militant leadership provided the necessary conditions to weaken the resistance,

this intrusion alone could not have broken the movement in predominantly francophone areas. The divisions within the clerical leadership itself corresponded directly with those French Catholic parishes that complied with or defied the school edict at its inception. While most bilingual schools immediately accepted the new restrictions to French instruction, eleven parish schools led by militant priests would resist Regulation XVII. Much of this resistance disappeared by 1917, and nearly all traces of dissent vanished from Essex and Kent counties by 1922, with the two modest exceptions of River Canard and Windsor. Fallon's success in isolating the militant priests played a role in this eventual capitulation, but a series of militant sources suggest that the francophone population itself was by no means united behind their clerical leaders, with many expressing indifference, apathy or outright opposition to the bilingual schools resistance. These divisions eventually gave way to outright submission. In the last bastion of resistance, Windsor, the very leaders of the movement ensured its failure through disagreements over strategy, and incessant personal bickering. Their project of an independent school would never reach more than a mere fraction of the francophone student body of Windsor. This combination of forces ensured that the Windsor border region would become the only francophone section of Ontario where the school inspectors reported full compliance with Regulation XVII.

Franco-Ontarian historians still have an unfinished task before them, when it comes to Regulation XVII. Ministry reports in 1928 clearly indicate that the Windsor border region was not the only area exhibiting signs of compliance with the school edict. However, as of yet, no comprehensive study has attempted to investigate the reasons

behind the failure of the resistance movement in some schools and communities and not others. Were francophones in other parts of Ontario really that united against Regulation XVII? Did francophone militant leaders in other parts of the province divide into factions over resistance strategy as occurred in the city of Windsor? Did other school boards comply with Regulation XVII when faced with a loss of their yearly provincial subsidy? Did the francophone masses elsewhere follow the directives of the resistance leaders, or did they exhibit the same social, political and cultural complexity and diversity as the population in Essex and Kent counties? Studies of Simcoe County's francophones indicate a clear subcultural division between the communities of Penetang and Lafontaine.<sup>5</sup> Did similar problems emerge here regarding the bilingual schools resistance? In other parts of Ontario, did the persistence of the public resistance to Regulation XVII correspond to the recent nature of settlement among some francophones as appeared to be the case in the Windsor border region? Such an analysis may give Franco-Ontarians more perspective regarding the existing trials facing today's communities. The emerging diversity of the province's francophone population may actually have antecedents. The monumental task of forging a common francophone identity may not in fact, be a new phenomenon after all. Only further research will help to shed light on this.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on the suggested differences between the francophones of Penetanguishene and Lafontaine, see Micheline Marchand, *Les voyageurs et la colonisation de Pénétanguishene(1825-1871). La Colonisation française en Huronie*. (Sudbury: La Société historique du Nouvel Ontario, Documents historiques, no. 87, 1989).

## APPENDIX A

### **1.9 Employment Breakdown for Francophones in the Border Cities 1911** **Sandwich East- Our Lady of the Lake Parish 1911(minus Tecumseh)**

#### **1.9.a. Sandwich East District #1 Census # 49**

Farmers	52
Walker's Distillery	17
General Labour	16
Railway	3
Hotel	3
Ford Motor Co.	3
Carpenters	2
Farm Labour	2
Tailors	1
Teamster	1
Butcher	1
Dairy	1
Telephone Operator	1
Machinist	1

#### **1.9.b. Sandwich East District #2 (future Ford City) Census #48**

Ford Motor Co.	48
Bridge work	41
Farmers	13
General factory	13
Carpenters	13
Construction	6
General labour	6
Sales	4
Fenceworks	3
Machinist	3
Grocer	3
Ironworks	3
Overall factory	3
Teachers	3
Brewery	2
Boarding house	2
Farm labour	2
Blacksmiths	2
Masons	2
Baker	1
Butcher	1

Cooper	1
Manufacturer	1
Customs	1
Chemist	1
Distillery	1
Real Estate	1
Boat captain	1
Merchant	1
Postal	1
Railway	1
Planing mill	1
Telephone	1
Domestic	1
Dressmaker	1
Insurance agent	1
Brassworks	1
Storekeeper	1
Street railway	1
Enginemaker	1

**1.9.c. Sandwich East District #3 (1901 Polling station #4) Census #51**

Fishing	29
Farming	26
Factory labour	11
General labour	9
Domestics	9
Hotel	6
Bartenders	4
Teachers	2
Printers	1
Shoemakers	1
Fireman	1
Machinist	1
Doctor	1
Baker	1
Carpenter	1
Clerk	1
Waiter	1
Insurance agent	1
Grocer	1
Florist	1
Train conductor	1

**1.9.d. Sandwich East district #2 1911 Census #52**

Farmers	57
Farm Labour	15
General Labour	7
Fruit growers	4
Dressmakers	3
Bottling factory	2
Bridge workers	2
Carriage maker	1
Teacher	1
Glassblower	1
General labour	1
Hotel keeper	1
Blacksmith	1
Stenographer	1

**1.9.e. Town of Walkerville**

Bridge work	34
Walker's Distillery	10
Auto factory	9
Clerks	9
Overall Factory	8
Brewery	7
Carpentry	7
Fence Co.	7
Cattle barns	5
Iron works	3
Seamstresses	3
Teamsters	3
Drug lab work	3
General labour	3
Carriage works	2
Machinists	2
Grocers	2
Lumber	2
Steel co.	1
Pipe fitting	1
Sales	1
Hotel	1
Jeweler	1
Barber	1
Engineer	1
Bartender	1

Teacher	1
Moulder	1
Blacksmith	1
Restaurant	1
Press	1
Farm labour	1
Gas co.	1
Total:	134

**1.9f. Male-Female Employment breakdown for francophones in the City of Windsor 1911**

	Total	Male		Female
Carpentry	129	129	(10%)	0
General factory <sup>1*</sup>	84	63	(6.5%)	21
Auto factory	78	78	(6.1%)	0
Bridge work	66	65	(5.1%)	1
General labour	50	50	(3.9%)	0
Nurses	51	0	(4.0%)	51
Teachers	41	3	(3.2%)	38
Railway	38	38	(3.0%)	0
Clerks	35	20	(2.7%)	15
Sales	29	18	(2.2%)	11
Construct/cement	28	28	(2.1%)	0
Dressmaker	26	0		26
Printing	23	21		2
Lumber yard	22	22		0
Boat labour	21	21		0
Grocer	21	21		0
Teamster	21	21		0
Button factory	19	11		8
Bookkeepers	18	5		13
Hotel labour	18	11		7
Painters	18	18		0
Stenographers	18	0		18
Blacksmiths	15	15		0
Foremen/Managers	15	15		0
Hotel proprietors	15	15		0
Tailors	15	14		1

<sup>1</sup> Windsor was teeming with new factories, most notably for the production of buttons, brass, sheet metal, fences, overalls, shoes, stoves, boxes, corsets, cereal, furniture and batteries. Women could be found working in the button, overall, box and stove factories.

Distillery	14	10	4
Machinists	14	14	0
Butchers	13	13	0
Pill factory/lab	13	9	4
Plumbers	13	13	0
Laundresses	12	0	12
Electricians	11	11	0
Fence works	11	11	0
Insurance	11	11	0
Utilities	11	11	0
Barbers	10	10	0
Boarding houses	10	1	9
Brassworks	10	10	0
Bakers	8	8	0
Janitors	8	8	0
Moulders	8	8	0
Ferry	8	8	0
Driver/chauffeur	8	8	0
Domestics	7	7	0
Storekeeper	7	7	0
Messengers	7	7	0
Customs	6	6	0
Farmers	6	6	0
Firefighters	6	6	0
Metal works	6	6	0
Engineers	6	6	0
Mechanics	6	6	0
Shoemakers	6	6	0
Carriage maker	5	5	0
Merchants	5	5	0
Harnessmakers	5	5	0
Street labour	5	5	0
Wine industry	5	5	0
Tinsmiths	5	5	0
Accountant	4	4	0
Doctors	4	4	0
Post office	4	4	0
Street car	4	4	0
Bank	3	3	0
Dockworker	3	3	0
Patternmaker	3	3	0
Police	3	3	0
Real estate	3	3	0

Shoe store	3	3	0
Telephone operator	3	0	3
Bailiff	2	2	0
Brewery	2	2	0
Cigar store	2	2	0
Coal dealer	2	2	0
Confectionery	2	2	0
Cooper	2	2	0
Fish monger	2	2	0
Furniture/cabinetry	2	2	0
Mason	2	2	0
Priests	2	2	0
Plasterer	2	2	0
Pool hall	2	2	0
Revenue office	2	2	0
Undertaker	2	2	0
Barrister	1	1	0
Bartender	1	1	0
Boiler maker	1	1	0
Cabinet minister	1	1	0
Caretaker	1	1	0
Cemetery	1	1	0
Chemical manuf.	1	1	0
Cigar roller	1	0	1
Debt collector	1	1	0
Decorator	1	1	0
Dredger	1	1	0
Dry cleaner	1	1	0
Elevator man	1	1	0
Government insp.	1	1	0
Gun shop	1	1	0
Horse dealer	1	1	0
Jeweler	1	1	0
License inspector	1	1	0
Milkman	1	1	0
Photographer	1	1	0
Registrar	1	1	0
Sewer worker	1	1	0
School inspector	1	1	0
Wagonmaker	1	1	0
Watchmaker	1	1	0
Total	1289	1040	249

### 1.9.g. Employment breakdown for francophones in the Town of Sandwich 1911

General labour	30 (8.37%)
Carpenters	27 (7.54%)
Fur Factory	18 (5.02%)
General factory*	18 (5.02%)
Salt industry	18 (5.02%)
Street car	16 (4.46%)
Sales	13 (3.63%)
Bridgeworks	13 (3.63%)
Farmers	11 (3.07%)
Auto factory	10 (2.79%)
Domestics	10 (2.79%)
Brick yard	10 (2.79%)
Dressmakers	9
Stenographers	9
Bookkeepers	8
Retired	8
Bartenders	7
Foremen/management	7
Wine industry	6
Hotel	5
Overall factory	5
Painters	5
Railway	5
Store clerks	5
Teachers (lay)	5
Boat labour	4
Construction	4
Customs	4
Printers	4
Storekeepers	4
Typists	4
Bakery	3
Lumber yard	3
Post office/mail	3
Street labour	3
Wireworker	3
Blacksmiths	2
Butchers	2
Coal agents	2

Dock labour	2
Grocers	2
Insurance Agent	2
Janitors	2
Laundry	2
Machinists	2
Tobacco house	2
Agric. Inspector	1
Bank teller	1
Barber	1
Breadwagon	1
Cemetary	1
Engineer	1
Engineer	1
Farm labour	1
Fireman	1
Furriers	1
Golf groundskeeper	1
Harnessmaker	1
Laboratory	1
Organist	1
Pipefitter	1
Priest	1
Ragpicker	1
Shoe shop	1
Tailor	1
Undertaker	1
Watchmaker	1
Total	358

\*General factory labour refers to work in the box, button, canning, cereal, and shoe factories.

\*\*\*\*One of the most striking things about Sandwich is the dramatic lack of middle class and professional positions of employment for francophones. In this town, francophones were either in agriculture or in some part of the growing unskilled and skilled working class.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Table 1.9.h. Petition by the Family heads of St. Alphonsus Parish, Windsor, January, 1911**

The Canayen and French Canadian masses do not appear to reflect the same militancy as their leaders in the city of Windsor. An examination of the January 18, 1911 St. Alphonsus petition offers some interesting findings. This petition to Monsignor J. Edmond Meunier, called for a reintroduction of French to all religious services, and that each nationality (English- and French-speaking) be accorded its own high mass. A total of 143 family heads (fathers) signed the protest and submitted it to Meunier, a purported militant himself!!

Interestingly enough, five of the first six names on the petition came from high profile professionals who were French Canadian, four of whom were actually born in Quebec. Only one Canayen, Patrice Ouellette, the music director of the parish, assumed a position of importance.

Among the total of 143 names, fully 89 of the names listed belonged to Canayen parishioners, representing 62.2% of the total number of signatories. This would indicate that the Canayens were in fact concerned with the fate of their mother tongue in a church they had built with their own labour and financial resources 55 years earlier.

#### **1911 St. Alphonsus Petition- Employment Breakdown**

Carpenters	10
Court/ government clerks	6
General labour	5
Hotel keepers	5
Railway	4
Doctors	3
Sales	3
Auto workers	2
Bailiffs	2
Bakers	2
Contractors	2
Farmers	2
Grocers	2
Harnessmakers	2
Plumbers	2
Teamsters	2
Undertakers	2
Blacksmiths	1
Bookkeepers	1

Brass finisher	1
Bread wagon	1
Music director	1
School inspector	1
License inspector	1
Customs officer	1
Shoe store proprietor	1
Wagon maker	1
Printer	1
Fish peddler	1
Carriage maker	1
Tobacco merchant	1
Medicine lab	1
Construction	1
Cooper	1
Government inspector	1
Driver	1
Patternmaker	1
Machinist	1
Wireworker	1
Ferry dock	1
Bridgework	1
Farmer	1
Storekeeper	1
Engineer	1
Cooper	1
Retired farmer	1
Boat labour	1

Only 86 of the 143 names of the 1911 St. Alphonsus parish register could be linked positively to the 1911 Canada Census. Of these names, fully 85 came from Windsor, with one farmer, Alex T. Janisse of Sandwich East also signing the petition. Of the 85 Windsor male francophone family heads who signed, 12.9% of the signatories were carpenters by trade. No other profession, aside from doctors attracted considerable numbers. Three of Windsor's four francophone doctors signed the petition. Interestingly enough, few shopkeepers signed the petition, perhaps out of fear of losing their non-francophone clientele. None of the three male lay teachers signed the petition either, perhaps out of fear of reprisals for involvement in such a political document. Considering that there were more than 800 francophone families in the city of Windsor, this petition failed to attract much support.

If one looks at the social breakdown of the petition, it is clear that the vast majority of signatories were working class, mirroring the social makeup of the larger Windsor francophone population. This finding suggests that working class francophones were not indifferent to the French language cause. However, this concern was the preoccupation of a minority of the population early in the reign of Bishop Fallon. Interestingly enough, the leading militant signatories were of the French Canadian middle class, while the majority of the signatories were of the Canayen working class.

## APPENDIX C

### Examining the December 1913 Petition of Windsor French Canadians to Pope Benedict XV

*Mémoire au sujet des Paroisses Canadiennes-françaises à Windsor.* (Centre Académique Canadien en Italie, Piazza Carelli no. 4-00186), à Son Éminence Le Cardinal Gaetano de Lai aux Éminentissimes Cardinaux de la Congrégation Consistoriale, Rome, 1914.

Methodology : The 3039 names on the petition were cross-referenced against the 4113 people in Windsor who were identified as being of French descent on the 1911 Canada Census. At first glance this number would suggest a participation rate of 73.9% among the city's population of French descent. However, the research revealed some surprising results : only 1562 names on the petition (51.62% of the total number of signatures on the petition) corresponded with actual names on the census. In addition, a total of 32 identifiable family names representing 164 individuals (5.4%) were of francophones who did not live in Windsor at all but did live in the greater border region i.e. François Comartin of Sandwich East, Frank Garand, Louise Tremblay, Louis Lébert and Noé Chevalier of Stoney Point, Ovila Ducharme of Saint-Joachim, Adelaide Paquette of Rivière-aux-Canards, etc. Therefore, this means that only 46% of the names on the petition can be verified as belonging to francophones recorded as living in Windsor in 1911. It also reduces the actual number of identifiable Windsor francophones signing the petition to 1398 names, or just 33.98% of the total population of French descent (4113). There are a number of possible explanations for this problem. One possible answer is that some militants may have been aiming to mislead church officials regarding the magnitude of the protest by signing fraudulent names. An alternative explanation to this would be that many parishioners refused to sign their real name for fear of possible future reprisals from church authorities in Rome or London. Some parishioners might have remembered a group of New England francophone petitioners who were excommunicated in 1900 following a bitter protest over language and a pastoral appointment.<sup>2</sup> A third reason for this problem could be related to this particular time

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<sup>2</sup> On September 17, 1900, Monsignor Beaven, the bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts, excommunicated a number of Franco-Americans who split from St. Joseph's parish without Beaven's approval and employed

period. Michael Katz ably represented the dramatic rate of transiency among the poorer classes of Hamilton. Is it possible that Windsor hosted a highly transient francophone population in search of short term, or long term employment to feed their families?

An examination of the identifiable individual signatories of the petition clarifies the subcultural breakdown and highlights the preponderance of French Canadian signatories. Roughly 41% (644 out of 1562)<sup>3</sup> of the total identifiable petitioners were of Canayen background, while just under 58% (903 of 1562) of signatories were French Canadians. If the 164 signatories from outside of Windsor are removed, the French Canadian percentage declines by less than one percent. While the results do not indicate a Canayen disinterest in the French language cause, it would be safe to assert that French Canadians were slightly more prone than Canayens to support the militants on such issues in the city of Windsor. If one refers to Table 3.2d (page 199) it becomes apparent that the number of Canayen signatories to the petition corresponds to their proportion of the Windsor population. In contrast, the number of French Canadian signatories on the petition actually exceeds its proportion of the population, if one adds in the Franco-American figure. The differences though, are not dramatic, and in fact fall within the margin of error. Just 16 names of French descent appear on the petition, garnering just over 1 percent of the total signatories. The French, who were the most prone to give up their mother tongue, signed in far smaller proportions than the other two subcultural groups.

What is certain is that only 46% of the city's francophones can be identified with certainty as having boldly affixed their own names to a petition requesting more French at the Sunday masses. Is the researcher then to assume that French language issues worried only half of the city's truly francophone population? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to this question, since so many of the names on the petition cannot be traced to individuals on the census. If such were in fact the case, the results do lend some credence to the complaints of militant leaders that many of the city's francophones were reluctant, afraid or even opposed to taking up the cause of the French language.

The researcher was also confronted with some other problems. Despite a thorough examination, some names on the 1911 census were virtually illegible, while in other instances the examiner was left to wonder whether nicknames and anglicized English names listed on the census corresponded with formal French names on the petition. In a few instances, the census enumerator or the respondent anglicized French names :

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a renegade Belgian priest, Jean Berger, in North Brookfield, Massachusetts. Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et réalités*, (Sillery, P.Q.: Les Éditions Septentrion, 2000), pp. 140-141.

<sup>3</sup> The discrepancy in the total number of identifiable signatories on the petition (1485 vs. 1566) is due to the many new arrivals in this fertile population. The total had to be adjusted to include young children and infants who were born after the 1911 census who appear on the petition of December 1913, but naturally do not appear in the census records.

Grandchamps for example, appeared as *Grandfield* on the census, Drouillard as Drulard, and Saint-Pierre appeared as *St. Peter*. On the petition, the French version appeared. In addition, the petition listed mothers of families by their husband's first initial, rather than by their own name as was the case with the census, which posed a considerable problem for widows, or women who signed the petition without their husbands.

The final problem with this petition revolves around the question of its legitimacy. Can a petition containing so many untraceable individual names still be considered a credible primary source? If one considers only those names that can be legitimately matched to the census, half of the names on the petition sent to Rome were not those of actual French-speaking Windsorites! Did the petition organizers pad the petition with extra names to give it extra weight in swaying Church decision-makers? If so, why did the petitioners fail to enlist the support of most of Windsor's francophone population?

While this petition may suffer from problems, claims by officials in the Diocese of London that the calls for more French came from a small group of outside agitators cannot be proven. Well over a thousand of the city's francophones publicly expressed their discontent with the existing situation, with many old stock Canayen names figuring prominently on the petition. Nevertheless, given the heightened emotions following the introduction of Regulation XVII and the recent disappearance of French from three of the city's four separate schools, militant leaders must have been somewhat disappointed that so many francophones did not sign the petition, or were too fearful to attach their own names to this official protest document. What is certain is that at least 26% of the city's population of French descent did not sign the petition. Conversely, at least 25% of the city's population of French descent did sign the petition.

**Table 1.9.i. Petition of French Canadian Parishioners of Windsor, 1913**  
Statistical Analysis

Professional breakdown of the Windsor signatories by household (329 household heads)

Carpenters	55	(14.90%)
Automobile factory workers	25	(6.77%)
General labour	24	(6.50%)
Bridge works	19	(5.15%)
Construction work/Contractors	16	(4.34%)
Seamstresses/Dressmakers	14	(3.80%)
General factory labour	13	(3.52%)
Grocers	9	
Lumber yard	9	
Rail workers	9	
Button factory	7	
City utilities/phone	6	

Insurance	6
Plumbers	6
Sales	6
Clerks	6
Bookkeepers	5
Blacksmiths	5
Farmers	5
Brassworks	5
Sheet metal workers	5
Shoemakers	5
Bakers	4
Ferry workers	4
Hotel	4
Painters	4
Stenographers	4
Tailors	4
Boarding houses	3
Distillery/wine industry	3
Teachers (music)	3
Butchers	3
Lab medicine	3
Shipworkers	3
Physicians	3
Barbers	3
Printers	2
Bailiffs	2
Cigar production/sales	2
Express company	2
Hardware stores	2
Teamsters	2
Fishmongers	2
Cemetery workers	2
Coach drivers	2
Laundresses	2
Shoe store employees	2
Street car conductor	2
Store keepers	2
Tinsmiths	2
Undertakers	2
Fence works	2
Architect	1
Harness maker	1
Night watchman	1

Barrister	1
Electrician	1
Domestic	1
Wagon maker	1
Dairyman	1
Fireman	1
Elevator operator	1
Foreman	1
Gardener	1
Postal	1
Bartender	1
Boat labour	1
Masons	1
Auditing officer	1
Coal yard driver	1
Day labour (farm)	1
Total	369

1562 individuals identifiable out of 3039 (51.62%)

1911 Census total number of French descent: 4113

A number of facts surface out of a statistical analysis of the petition forwarded to Monsignor Stagni, the Apostolic Delegate to Canada. The most noteworthy is that nearly half of the individuals listed on the petition could not be positively linked to the census for the Windsor Border Region. All townships, towns, cities and villages with any significant number of francophones were surveyed to situate the origins of each signatory. Nearly half of these names appeared nowhere, or the family names corresponded, but the given names did not. A total of 1398 names could be positively linked to residents of the city of Windsor according to the 1911 census.

While transiency over a three year period from the 1911 census to the 1914 petition could be one explanation for the identification problem, this reasoning is plagued by the fact that so many of the unidentifiable signatories had Canayen names that were native and sometimes uniquely linked to Essex county. It is plausible that some of these petition signers may very well have moved in and out of the area. The best example of an outsider signing the petition relates to the appearance of labour advocate William Irvine's signature on the document. Irvine was not a Catholic, let alone a francophone, but he was certainly a supporter of the underdog in a struggle. It is likely that some of the names on the petition were indeed those of visitors to the parish or the region. Another possible explanation for the failure to link more than half of the petition names to the census may relate to the simple fears of the parishioners in question. The struggle for the French language in the Windsor churches was not unlike previous battles in New England. As Yves Roby so ably demonstrated, Franco-American Catholics challenged

the authority of their bishops by the use of petitions and newspapers as well. In the end, a considerable number of parishioners were excommunicated when they refused to submit to the authority of a bishop they deemed hostile to their cultural survival (in 1900 and later in 1924). This lesson may have compelled the petition organizers, or the parishioners themselves to protect their families from church reprisals by altering the first names of their family members while leaving the family names in tact. It is worth noting that the vast majority of the family names listed on the petition corresponded to family names found in the census for the Windsor border region, whether French Canadian or Canayen. Therefore, it is plausible that some parishioners, believing the cause to be a just one, but fearing the potential reprisals for signing, opted for this surreptitious strategy. If such is the case, it is worth noting that the subcultural breakdown for those families that signed was relatively close. Identifiable French Canadian families who actually signed their real names totaled 201. The total number of Canayen families who actually signed their real names was slightly smaller at 183. Significantly, only five genuine European French names could be found, and one of these belonged to an 85 year old priest with little to lose!!! Therefore, out of the 389 identifiable authentic families that signed the petition, 52% were French Canadian, 47% were Canayen, and just over 1% were French. With regard to the French immigrants, it is possible that many of them had a far looser attachment to their language.

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From a professional standpoint, the statistics offer still more information regarding the petition signatories. What is most striking is the predominant number of carpenters who signed the petition. Fully 15% of family heads (55 in total) who signed the protest notice belonged to this profession. This is perhaps due to the fact that two of the key organizers of the petition were carpenters: Canayen Christophe Marentette and French Canadian M. Saint-Denis. It is possible that these skilled tradespeople, educated and largely from Quebec, expressed pride not only in their profession, but in their cultural background. If one compares this figure with the actual number of francophone carpenters in Windsor in the 1911 Canada census (10% of all those declaring employment), it appears that there is a slightly disproportionate number of carpenters that signed the petition. (Table 1.9.2)

A considerable number of bridge workers (20) also signed the petition. Is it a coincidence that Canayen Harry Maisonville, a man who had lost his provincial government job over the press leak of the Hanna-Pyne letter happened to have family operating a bridge works company out of Walkerville? Maisonville was renowned to be a passionate advocate of the French language. (incidentally, Henri Maisonville never actually signed the petition).

There may be signs of leadership by building contractors. It appears possible that there is a link between the considerable number of construction workers (17) and other building

trades who signed the petition and French Canadians Alfred Saint-Onge and Euclide Jacques, two construction contractors from Windsor. Jacques was a prominent alderman and St. Onge a school trustee; both were heavily involved in the organization of a previous petition to the Apostolic Delegate over French language issues at Immaculate Conception church in Windsor. The two men approached Fallon with that petition and recorded their fruitless dialogue with the bishop. Did the bridge workers and construction workers enthusiastically follow the lead of their bosses, or were they "persuaded" to sign the petition? Could it be that the carpenters in question were following the exhortations of Jacques and Saint-Onge to stand up for their right to hear French in a church they or their forefathers may very well have built? Given the connections between the trades in the home building industry, the appearance of plumbers, electricians, lumber yard workers, masons and real estate people on the petition may owe to the personal ties of the petition organizers. Whatever the case might be, it is apparent from the 1911 census that Windsor was clearly experiencing a veritable boom in employment during this time period, and the automobile and construction industries were fuelling this growth. If this was indeed the case, the skilled trades who signed the petition would have had little fear of dismissal, since their profession was in such demand.

In stark contrast, it is interesting to note the relative lack of shopkeepers and lay teachers on the petition (only 5). Perhaps these members of the society who depended on the patronage of a multicultural clientele had far more to risk in signing the controversial document than people whose livelihood seemed assured.

The petition is telling in that far more French Canadians were involved in the organization than were Canayens. This would continue to be the trend throughout the era of Regulation XVII. Chris Marentette would vanish from the scene of the trouble following this petition, possibly shying away from the public platform. Euclide Jacques and Alfred Saint-Onge would both be present at the mass protest meetings against Bishop Fallon in the autumn of 1917, with Saint-Onge on the parish blockade and boycott committees, and Jacques as a keynote speaker. Both men were recent arrivals from Quebec to the area. This scenario of recently arrived men of prominence assuming positions of authority would continue. Aside from Lucien Beaudoin, Joseph de Grandpré and Dr. Gustave Lacasse would also arrive from the Montreal area, and Doctor Damien Saint-Pierre hailed from Cornwall.

As for the Canayens, aside from Father Pierre Langlois of Tecumseh, only one prominent name appears consistently throughout the battles with the Bishop: Henry C. "Harry" Maisonville. This aide to Public Works Minister Joseph O. Réaume would be a vocal opponent of the school regulation, and he would reappear again during the Ford City parishioners' struggle with Bishop Fallon. Maisonville was the only Canayen to take a leading vocal role at the many protest meetings. Interestingly enough, Maisonville usually addressed the audience in English. His few pieces of correspondence with

ACFEO officials were in English only. In contrast, his Canayen mentor, Joseph O. Réaume, would be a loyal Conservative soldier throughout the years of Regulation XVII. Another Canayen, Stanislas Janisse appears on the scene around the time of the Ford City trouble, assuming the title of president of the parish blockade and boycott committees. All indications from the correspondence available suggest that Janisse was more of a titular head, given his prominent and longstanding place in the parish. A founding member of the parish, Janisse would remain a passionate but quiet militant, serving in the SSJB and Joseph de Grandpré's Ligue des Patriotes. Janisse would also be the donor of a piece of land used to finance the establishment of an independent French school in the mid-1920s christened, *École Saint-Stanislas*. It is possible that his marriage to a Quebec woman played some role in his important role within the resistance.

#### Militancy of Canayens and French Canadian masses

Most of the research has clearly indicated that among the elites, building contractors and professionals born in Quebec or eastern Ontario proved to be the most enthusiastic and outspoken of the moderate and passionate militants. Their numbers are far greater: Lucien Beaudoin, Joseph Loïselle, Pierre L'Heureux, J. Edmond Meunier, Euclide Jacques, Gaspard Pacaud, Joseph de Grandpré, Alfred Saint-Onge, and certainly Damien Saint-Pierre to name the most important.

The number of leading Canayen militants is more difficult to determine: Stanislas Janisse, Henri Maisonville and Pierre Langlois are the only obvious names to surface. MP Joseph Réaume was certainly interested in advocating for French language issues, but his name does not appear on the two Windsor petitions examined, nor did he challenge the introduction of Regulation XVII. Réaume's efforts to reintroduce French into the city's separate schools after his political defeat, while laudable, could be deemed as an attempt to rehabilitate himself before the francophone electorate. However, like other Windsor militants, he may very well have been representing another perspective regarding the school edict: three of the city's four separate schools, lacking any French whatsoever, stood to gain from Regulation XVII, rather than experience any loss, if they used quiet diplomacy.

**Appendix D**

**Table 1.9.j. Urbanization in Essex and Kent Counties  
1891-1921**

	1891	1891	1901	1901	1911	1911	1921	1921
District	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Essex North	18,054	13,469	17,385	16,033	14,053	23,953	33,433*	69,142
	57%	43%	52%	48%	37%	63%	33%	67%
Essex South	16,789	7,233	17,725	7601	21,143	8398	-*	-
	70%	30%	70%	30%	72%	28%		
Kent	N/A	N/A	37,137	20,057	34,436	21,559	33,144	25,582
			65%	35%	61%	39%	56%	44%

Source: Canada, Report on the Census, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921

\*As of 1921, the census takers began to classify Essex County as a single district as opposed to the previous classification of Essex North and Essex South.

**Appendix E**  
**Articles 3 and 4 of Regulation XVII**  
English-French Public and Roman Catholic Separate Schools

3. Subject, in the case of each school, to the direction and approval of the Supervising Inspector, the following modifications shall also be made in the course of study of the Public and Separate Schools.

The Use of French for Instruction and Communication

(1) Where necessary, in the case of French-speaking pupils, French may be used as the language of instruction and communication; but such use of French shall not be continued beyond Form I, who owing to previous defective training, are unable to speak and understand the English language.

Special Course in English for French-Speaking Pupils

(2) In the case of French-speaking pupils who are unable to speak and understand the English language well enough for the purposes of instruction and communication, the following provision is hereby made;

- a) As soon as the pupil enters the school he shall begin the study and the use of the English language.
- b) As soon as the pupil has acquired sufficient facility in the use of the English language he shall take up in that language the course of study as prescribed for the Public and Separate Schools.

French as a Subject of Study in Public and Separate Schools

4. For the school year of 1912-1913, in schools where French has hitherto been a subject of study, the Public or the Separate School Board, as the case may be, may provide, under the following conditions, for instruction in French Reading, Grammar and Composition in Forms I to IV in addition to the subjects prescribed for the Public and Separate Schools.

(1) Such instruction in French may be taken only by pupils whose parent or guardians direct that they shall do so.

(2) Such instruction in French shall not interfere with the adequacy of the instruction in English, and the provision for such instruction in French in the timetable of the school shall be subject to the approval and direction of the Supervising Inspector and shall not in any day exceed one hour in each classroom.

(3) Where, as permitted above for the school year 1912-1913 French is a subject of study in a Public or Separate School, the textbooks in use during the school year 1911-1912, in French Reading, Grammar, and Composition shall remain authorized for use during the school year of 1912-1913.



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