

THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN QUEBEC: 300 YEARS PRODUCING AND USING SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

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ABSTRACT

This author suggests a basic history of the develop of school textbooks in Quebec, starting from the 17th century, especially those produced by the Brothers of the Christian Schools as users, producers and regulators in this area. The article becomes an invitation to develop this kind of analysis in the other countries where the Lasallian Institute has worked in the area of education, as a contribution to the history of education.

Key-words: school textbooks, editorials, teaching, catechism, Public Education, Brothers of the Christian Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Quebec is like a laboratory particularly rich in possibilities for comparative studies involving other cultures. Issuing as it did mostly from two great migratory currents from Western Europe, and having managed more or less to digest these inputs from abroad, Quebec society has attempted to create its own model by including those cultures which were already occupying the land before that and also those which more recently have arrived to give new colour to the landscape. This mixture, not to say ambiguity, characterises all its cultural products, beginning with the written material which has been used in education here for the past three centuries.

Major producers and users of school textbooks here in Quebec, as they are in the rest of the world, the Brothers of the Christian Schools have played their part in this trend, and they began by using the textbooks they had in France before publishing their own pedagogical works adapted to the local needs of Quebec.

The following reflections on the development of school textbooks in Quebec and the part played in this by the Brothers of the Christian Schools revolve around the three axes or pivots for educational publications, namely the users, the producers and the regulators.

It would be tempting to brush aside the period of *Nouvelle-France* — when the territory of present day Quebec was part of the French colonial empire— by referring to the fact that there a complete absence of any printing and a lack of any state structures governing schools, and to conclude that there were no textbooks. But although it was still in embryo, the school system did offer an array of possibilities including both «*grandes écoles*» [secondary] and «*petites écoles*» [primary] and even vocational schools.

There were not many potential buyers for a product that came inevitably from outside the country. For example, the *Catéchisme du diocèse de Québec* by the second bishop of Quebec was published in Paris in 1702 and had been largely composed by a Frenchman, Mgr. de St-Vallier. It had a rather limited circulation in the colony due to the hazards of the War of the Spanish Succession. Thirty years later, when it was impossible to get copies of that first catechism, Mgr. de Pontbriand brought in the catechism of the diocese of Sens. The bishops were not the only ones to import French textbooks into Quebec. Antoine Forget, a French layman, came to Montreal in 1701 and taught in the school run by the Sulpicians, having been trained in the college for country schoolmasters run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Paris. He was given the promise that his former teacher and college Director, Brother Nicolas Vuyart, would send him whatever he requested for his pupils. From other sources we know that according to the *Conduite des écoles*, the official directory of the Brothers in educational matters, the books intended for the pupils at that time comprised a prayer book, an ABC, a book on reading cursive script, a treatise on politeness and a Psalter. We can therefore infer that these were the books that Forget would have asked for from his former mentor. However, that is about as far as we can go for the moment in formally identifying the textbooks in circulation in the «*petites écoles*».

We also get a glimpse of the presence of Brothers on the educational scene in *Nouvelle-France*, thanks to the library catalogues. In Montreal, François Charon founded a community dedicated to providing shelter and education. The 1747 catalogue for the community Library includes *Les règles de la bienséance* ‘five copies’ and *Les devoirs du chrétien*. The similarity of these titles with those of the works published by the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1703 does not allow us to state with certainty that we are dealing with the same works, but the circumstances do argue in favour of the hypothesis. Between 1707 and his death in 1719, François Charon made several voyages to France to strengthen his growing community. He even met those in authority among the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and they thought seriously about sending Brothers to *Nouvelle-France*. There was no follow-up to this first attempt, but negotiations were resumed twenty years later and resulted in the sending of two Brothers in 1737 on a voyage of exploration. We can note that this voyage took place ten years before the date of the library catalogue of the Charon community, and although the analysis of the situation made by the two emissaries resulted in a decision not to found a community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the fact remains that the links between the two communities could provide the explanation for the presence of these two Lasallian textbooks in a Montreal library in the first half of the XVIII century.

To the names of the producers and the users of school textbooks, we must add those of the regulators. In *Nouvelle-France*, education was surprisingly a matter for the Church. An ordinance of Supervisor Dupuy in 1727 reminded people that in order to take up any teaching activity it was necessary to have the permission of the bishop. Not only did the bishops see that the schools were supplied with catechisms, but they also supervised all the printed matter that was put into the pupils’ hands. The *Rituel* of Mgr. de St-Vallier in 1703 states that the *grand-vicaire* [major vicar of the diocese] should, when visiting the schools, make sure that the pupils are not reading any bad books.

The upshot of 150 years of (interrupted) French presence established on the soil of Quebec was more than minimal: a few dozen schools, a few thousand pupils using a certain number of textbooks about which we know very little. The change in allegiance in 1763 altered things completely. Not only did the new masters have a different religion and a different language, but the transfer of *Nouvelle-France* to English possession meant the arrival of a new wave of immigrants, who would also want to be taught in their own language. In short, there were two major changes. First, the installation of the first printing press in Quebec (brought from Philadelphia) meant it was now possible to produce teaching materials locally. Secondly, the arrival of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Montreal in the autumn of 1837 can be seen as the beginning of the major influence of religious congregations on the Quebec educational system.

1763-1839

The eighty years prior to 1840, were marked by the appearance of the first efforts of the government to give the work of the schools some structures which, while being ephemeral and serving only a population in embryo, nonetheless indicated the direction in which teaching was due to develop.

This new phenomenon of state intervention in the sphere of education showed itself timidly to begin with and included the publication and use of school textbooks. Regulations stated that it was foreseen that there would be “a uniform system in the schools which would prescribe as far as possible the books to be used according to a list drawn up for the schools belonging [sic] to each Church, by the officials of the respective institutions, being members of that Church”. For the first time, concern was being shown for uniformity in the textbooks, and this would not be the last time. Moreover, the two recognised Churches were given the task of ensuring that this policy was implemented. The law of 1829 required the inspectors to include in their reports a list of “the books being used”. Another example of state intervention is seen in the way the parliament financed the publication of two textbooks: a book on arithmetic by William Morris in 1833 and a translation into French of a treatise on agriculture by William Evans in 1836.

The writers of these textbooks had not waited for the state to intervene before setting about their work. Between 1765 and 1839, 142 textbooks were printed in Quebec; that is on average a little less than two a year. This averaged doubled during the 1830's, and this was an obvious indication of the increased size of the *clientèle*, thanks to the new schools that were opened as a result of the law of 1829. Fewer than 12,000 pupils were attending primary schools in 1828, but seven years later there were more than 50,000. There was a market, and so the producers appeared.

Around sixty authors writing books for schools have been formally identified. Fifteen or so were members of the clergy, including a bishop who wrote the catechism of 1765 and seminary professors like the *abbés* Pigeon and Holmes or the Sulpicians Rivière and Houdet. What is surprising, given the embryonic state of the school system, is the number of teachers who were editing textbooks. More than half the authors held teaching posts. Some of them were like Joseph Laurin, a notary by profession who once taught at the college of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière and who wrote books in order to repay the debts contracted during his studies. Others were pioneers of a tradition by which professional teachers, who found that school books were either defective or non-existent, sought to fill the gap by writing works based on their own experience in schools.

To editing we must join its twin, namely publication. Starting out with a single publisher in 1765, the production of school textbooks involved sixty printers/publishers by the end of the 1830's, which testifies to the cultural phenomenon of an increased readership and to a socio-economic feature by which the English speaking publishers continued for some time to be responsible for the majority of textbooks, regardless of the language in which they were written. The shift from French to English colonial power had changed the state of play. From now on, it would be necessary to take account of a new linguistic situation. During this period, thirty two out of 142 titles (i.e. 22%) were in English, starting with a catechism for the English Catholics in 1778. The publishing of school textbooks was not automatically confined to one or other of the linguistic communities, and English-speaking publishers produced a good number of textbooks in French, according to the demands of the market, while some French publishers did the same in return, Dupont of Quebec for example. The industry began to get used to this situation, and the latter Quebec firm called itself «*Nouvelle imprimerie*» or «New printing Office» depending on whether it was publishing a text in French or English. The first bilingual textbook appeared in 1828.

While some authors from Quebec (or at least authors working in Quebec) began to write textbooks from an early date (e.g. in 1770 the French Jesuit La Brosse published a book of prayers which also served as a reading text for the Montagnais), still the scarceness of material made it necessary to look overseas. 26% of the books used by the pupils came from France and 13% came from England plus a first one sourced in the USA. In these figures, we are counting for comparison only those books that were printed or reprinted in Quebec, leaving out deliberately those bought abroad as advertised in the press. Just like the local authors, those based overseas were mostly either teachers or ministers in one or other of religious denominations.

Not only was there an increase in the numbers of pupils, and hence the numbers of purchasers, but the range of disciplines on offer was also broadened, as is evident from the publication in Quebec of books dealing with the new subjects. Mention has to be made of the first examples: a French Grammar in 1778, a Latin grammar in 1796, a French reader 1800, a book on general geography in 1804, ancient history and arithmetic in 1809, French as a second language in 1810, English as a second language in 1811. And they were not all for beginners. For more advanced students there was a first textbook in astronomy in 1824, not to mention trigonometry in 1827 and even philosophy in 1835.

The broadening of the field of education introduced another milestone. For the first time scholars of Quebec began to share their ideas on schools and education, entering into the, for them, wholly new science of education. The first to make his mark in this domain was Joseph-François Perrault, who later became a prolific author of textbooks. However, his first contribution in this area was rather surprising. To counter the problem of the scarcity of textbooks and their high price, beyond the pupils' means, he suggested as early as 1822 that instead of books large scale charts should be printed for the teaching of reading. In fact Perrault was here adopting a suggestion made previously in a government report published ten years earlier, which was itself openly inspired by the English educationist Lancaster. It was claimed that a single chart would obviate the need to print 600 textbooks!

Very soon, however, people agreed on the need for textbooks and began to demand uniformity in them while deploring the cruel lack of them. Two years after pleading the case for charts, Perrault published his first ABC book. Another source of discussion and disquiet were the foreign elements in the Quebec textbooks which «regaled the pupils with information of foreign lands and ancient history rather than the history and topography of North America.»

What about the Brothers of the Christian Schools who came from France to Quebec in 1837? Firstly, let us mention a Lasallian text published in Quebec before the arrival of the Brothers when the Quebec publisher Fabre printed *Les règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne* in 1829.

Less than six months after their arrival in Montreal, the Brothers published a *Nouveau traité d'arithmétique* in 1838, followed in the next year by *Réponses et solutions des 400 questions et problèmes contenus dans le Nouveau traité d'arithmétique* [Answers and solutions to the 400 questions and problems contained in the New Treatise on Arithmetic]. It was in fact a rerun of the textbook already published by the Brothers in France, simply replacing the metrical system with the English table of measurements. At the same time, since they were not yet used to the mechanics of publishing, the Brothers entrusted the production of their textbooks to a printer-publisher of Montreal. In that same year of 1838, the Brothers planned another kind of overseas collaboration, by ordering a set of geography books printed but not bound so that all they had to do was to replace the section on France with a few pages about the English colonies and the United States. It appears likely that the plan was not followed through, but the idea was floated and would be taken up again in 1875. Both these initiatives illustrate a solution to which the Brothers in Quebec would have frequent recourse, namely to reuse the textbooks produced by their *confrères* in France, sometimes with adaptations, sometimes without. The practice fitted in with the desire for uniformity within the Institute, as was explicitly expressed in the Circular by Brother Philippe in 1840. «The Brothers] are asked not to adopt any others, in order to maintain among us the uniformity which is so necessary for good order and management.» Moreover, the first Brothers in Quebec were French, and therefore familiar with the textbooks concerned. Finally, the practice made it possible to remedy without delay the lack of textbooks published in Quebec, and it was made easier by the almost total absence of any government framework for the world of education.

The years 1765-1840 saw the appearance of the first textbooks and also of the first administrative structures which tried to regulate the practices of teaching activity, although the latter were in fact not very constraining, given the shortage of personnel to oversee them.

1840-1875

The creation in 1840 of the position of Superintendent of Public Education, followed by the first Council for Public Education in 1856, signaled a major change in the government's handling of the organisation of schools. From then on, teaching would be subject to strict regulations issued by permanent offices with responsibility for that. School textbooks were immediately affected. As a first step in 1841, the choice of textbooks was entrusted to the new School Commissions, which controlled the local schools in every town or village. Later, in 1846, it was specified that ministers of religion, Catholic or Protestant, had the right to supervise the textbooks used in the teaching of religion or morality. While the Superintendent (initially Jean-Baptiste Meilleur) was the sole government authority, we know that a great amount of latitude was given to the local school commissions. However, in 1856, a body was created having responsibility for controlling the management of schools throughout Quebec, and some powers were transferred to it which had until then been delegated to local authorities. Thus the law of 1856 conferred on this brand new Council for Public Education the power to draw up a list of books which teachers were allowed to use. This was the beginning of the political control of the approval of textbooks which is still in force after 150 years.

The organisation of education was explicable at least in part by the increase in numbers involved. They went from fewer than 5,000 pupils in 1842, (which was below the numbers in the preceding years) to

more than 240,000 in 1875. The same amazing increase justified the increase in the number of publications and their diversity. In a period of three decades, 376 new textbooks were produced relating to no fewer than 49 subjects. Not only were there more children in school, but the range of courses offered to them grew, as is evident from the appearance of textbooks for the new disciplines of physics (1841), botany and differential and integrated calculus in (1848). On the other hand, it is a constant source of surprise to note the high level of publication of books in English - 46%, which was more than twice the figure for the years prior to that. The use of textbooks did not necessarily follow the lines of linguistic division in Quebec society. In a village where the French-speaking population was probably 100%, such as St-Jean-Chrysostome de Lauzon, they were using *Murray's Spelling Book* in 1847

The explosion in the market was reflected in the proliferation of writers. In these thirty-five years, no fewer than 145 new names appear in the title pages of the textbooks half of which operate, in one way or another in the sphere of education. Some illustrious names are among them, such as that of the national historian François-Xavier Garneau who agreed to produce a *résumé*, in a catechetical style, of his monumental *Histoire du Canada*, or that of the architect Charles Baillairgé on trigonometry, the future politician Joseph Cauchon with a textbook on science, or the future renegade Charles Chiniquy, for the moment in the good graces of the authorities, with his *Manuel de tempérance* which was used as a reading book at least in the schools in Montreal and Quebec, and not forgetting the future bishop of Rimouski, Jean Langevin, with his treatise on differential calculus.

The continued reprinting of textbooks from overseas, although it decreased slightly when compared to previous years (27% against 39%) still gave evidence of an insufficient local production as well as the desire to remain identified with one or other of the two cultures from which the people of Quebec came. It is not surprising to see France occupying the high ground with 42 titles, closely followed by England with 38. At the same time, one should note the appearance of new players on the scene in the shape of the USA and Ireland. In both cases, the arrival of strong contingents of immigrants from the countries concerned explains at least in part the need that was felt for reprints of textbooks which would help them to maintain their links with the cultures of their countries of origin. Besides those reprints that were more or less exact reproductions, there was a huge playing field of adaptations which were more or less explicitly stated as such. Such borrowings were an ethical problem as well as an ideological one. In his very first report as Superintendent of Public Education in 1842, Jean-Baptiste Meilleur deplored the use of textbooks imported from the United States which extolled the virtues of a republic as opposed to a monarchy.

Whether published here or borrowed, more or less faithfully, from abroad or even purchased over the border, school textbooks occupied and ever increasing place in the book industry and the book trade. This, too, is mentioned in the report by Meilleur when he sees the growth in publishing for schools as the driving force for the publishing industry as such. The figures show he was right. Between 1840 and 1875, almost 150 firms had a go at being publishers of school books, and of these more than two thirds used a trade name of an English nature. The possibilities were attractive enough to tempt the government, and the law of 1859 allowed every new Council for Public Education to acquire authorship rights for textbooks and other teaching equipment such as wall charts. The Department for Public Education (the executive arm of the Council) not only showed an interest in publishing, but it even planned to take on the writing of textbooks, as superintendent Chauveau announced in his report of 1860. The fact that these plans were not carried out does not negate the fact that the authorities clearly wanted to extend their hold over every stage in the production of textbooks. Having failed to carry out its plan to write textbooks, the Council adopted a different tactic for increasing its control over the contents. In 1871, it announced, with great pomp, the organisation of a competition for writing a series of reading books.

Fortunately, the increase in production was matched by intensification in the thought that went into the products. People speculated about the place which textbooks should have in teaching, and even went so far as to question their utility. The principal of the Jacques-Cartier Training College, the *abbé* Verreault, without excluding books entirely, revived the line of argument put forward by Perreault fifty years earlier and proposed that systematic use should be made of wall charts to make up for the shortage of textbooks which was mostly due to the fact that they cost too much. There was another harmful effect resulting from a shortage of a different kind. When only one textbook was available for studying a particular discipline, the pupils were condemned to drag that book around with them year after year. This was remarked on by Inspector Lanctot in 1857 with regard to the excessive use of the Brothers' text *Traité des devoirs d'un chrétien* for the teaching of reading. "A child who has been at school for three years will have read it and reread it *ten times*. He will have seen the same ideas in the same words over and over again, until he becomes tired of them and loses all taste for reading."

What was the place of the textbook in the twin processes of comprehension and retention of ideas? The numerous catechisms openly favoured memorisation, because they present their ideas in the form of questions and answer. The technique was used in other disciplines beside religious education. In 1851, the *abbé* Mailloux expected the pupils to learn the catechism by heart under the direction of their parents before the parish priest began to explain the contents to them. It is easy to understand the aberrations that such a practice would lead to, and we find a condemnation of it in the *Journal de l'instruction publique* of 1869 in an article bearing the evocative title "A vice in our lands". The question was not settled, however, and the *pros* and *cons* of unremitting memorisation were pitted against one another in a debate organised by the Jacques-Cartier training College of Montreal in 1873.

Another subject for discussion was the existence of numerous textbooks for each discipline. In plain terms, the question was whether there should be just one textbook for each subject throughout the Province. In a report on the state of education in 1853, mention was made of the complaints from teachers that "every child brings a different book to school". The teachers themselves were taken to task by Superintendant Chauveau in 1856, who remarked that every teacher chose which books to use and that a change of teacher meant that new books had to be bought. Nonetheless, there was no lack of denunciations of the harmful effects of too great a diversity, denunciations made by people whose credibility cannot be doubted, starting with Meilleur in 1846, who established a link between uniformity in textbooks and progress in teaching. His successor was less dogmatic, and he delayed making any decision. It was only as a result of pressure by the teachers that the Council for Public Education, in 1860, adopted the policy of approving only two or three textbooks for each subject, a policy which is still in force.

Although uniformity could be defended in the interest of the affordability of education, it posed problems at another level, namely the diversity in religious affiliations, since Protestants could hardly be expected to read texts in praise of Rome. In 1841, a lawyer called Mondelet, who had the ear of all the political figures, thought he had found a solution when he proposed that, at least for beginners, there should be a single textbook acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants because it would be composed of extracts from the Bible. Needless to say, the plan was not put into operation. A few years later, another lawyer called Morin suggested more realistically that the English-speakers could use a text drawn up in Ireland which had the reputation of being completely neutral in matters of religious confessions.

This all comes down to the fact that the contents of the textbooks were closely scrutinised by the interested parties. In 1849, Meilleur reminded the commissioners of their obligation in this respect. "In

places with populations of mixed religious belief, it is important to use books in which the moral and religious principles do not offend the faith of anyone.” In spite of all this good will, it sometimes proved impossible to find textbooks that both confessions could be comfortable with. Consequently, in its first list of approved textbooks in 1861, the Council for Public Education specifies that certain texts were approved explicitly for use by Catholics and others for the Protestants. Friction arose, in spite of all the care taken to avoid giving offence. One of the leaders of the English-speaking minority called Dawson complained that at least one of the reading books for French Catholics published by the Brothers of the Christian Schools presented the English Protestants in an unfavourable light, although he added in the same breath that the publishers had promised him they would change the text in a following edition. Elsewhere, we find the principal of a school rebelling against the idea of obliging English Protestant candidates for the certificate of education to demonstrate that they had read the textbooks used by the French Catholics such as *Les devoirs d'un chrétien* of the Brothers of the Christian Schools or the *Abrégé de l'histoire du Canada* by Garneau.

While these differences of opinion manifested themselves over textbooks under the heading of religion, the same situation arose over the use of imported books. Whether they were straightforward imports or were produced abroad and reproduced in Quebec by translation, adaptation or even plagiarism, their use presupposed at least the acceptance of the practice and even an enthusiasm for it which was more or less explicit. It was nonetheless a fact that the practice gave rise to objections. This was another, and by no means the least, difficulty caused by the fact that the importations were not adapted to local needs. None other than Professor Norbert Thibault, a former Brother, in 1871 deplored the use of European textbooks in the teaching of agriculture.

Catholics and Protestants sat side by side in the Council for Public Education created in 1856, and they administered the public sector conjointly, although they sometimes divided into sub-committees based on religious confession when it came to approving textbooks. This dichotomy was formalised in 1875 when two separate and independent committees based on religion were set up within the Council. From that time on and until the major reform of 1964, schools were governed by a Catholic committee and a Protestant committee, each one operating according to its principles without reference to its counterpart. This had a profound effect on the world of textbooks.

After timid beginnings with two publications in 1838, the involvement of the Brothers in the production school textbooks began to grow. There were thirty in the 1840's, forty in the 1850's, fifty-one in the 1860's and one hundred and six between 1870 and 1875, giving a total of 227 publications during this period.

It starts with a master stroke: the *Devoirs du chrétien* in 1841. According to Superintendent Chauveau, it was being used in 193 municipalities from 1855 on. We know of more than sixty reprints stretching up to the beginning of the 20th century, and it was regularly accompanied by the *Règles de la bienséance*. The latter was an unchallenged best seller among school books in Quebec, and it served three generations of pupils as an introduction to reading. Moreover, the expansion of the Brothers to other parts of Canada outside Quebec also saw the diffusion of this textbook. When the Brothers spread to Nova Scotia in the east and Manitoba in the west, we find that the *Devoirs du Chrétien* being used in those places.

A dozen of these publications were openly recognised as complete reprints of books originally published in France, as is clear from the indications of authors' initials (L.C., F.P.B., F.J.O.P.) or the publishers details «Tours Mame, impr. Mame». The latter reference is used four times in connection with books of 1875, imported in loose-leaf form and assembled in Quebec with a new title page giving

the misleading impression that they were produced in Quebec. To these books which were manifestly of French origin, we must add a good number of other textbooks. Some of these were just reprints, even though the name of the French author was not indicated, as for example the *Exercices de calcul sur les quatre opérations de l'arithmétique*. Others were largely inspired by French sources, for example a book on general history published in 1841, to which the Brothers of French origin, who had landed only four years earlier, simply added a short history of Canada. Occasionally the Brothers found their sources elsewhere, as in *Pinnock's catechism of Geography*, 1853, which was an amended version of an English publication. We should recall that most of the people involved were from France, and that those born in Quebec would take over only after a period of establishing themselves as teachers. It is logical to conclude therefore that most of the textbooks produced in Quebec during this period, either local products or adaptations of French texts, were authored by French Brothers teaching in Quebec.

Although the school population in general, and the *clientèle* of the Brothers, generally only spoke French, half of the texts produced by the Brothers were in English. They involved either readers for the study of English, or translations of textbooks originally published by the Brothers in French for arithmetic, or the history of Canada, or the *Treatise on the duties of a Christian*, which had a rather modest circulation compared to that of its French original. We can see in this both an indication of the lack of textbooks for English-speakers in Quebec and also an attempt by the authorities to change their ways. The majority of the population, dating from the beginning of the XVII century, now had to learn the language of the newly arrived minority.

Up to the end of the 1860's, the Brothers identified themselves as the authors but entrusted the printing and publication of their textbooks to established publishers whose names appeared at the bottom of the title page. They took a first step towards being publishers in 1870 with *l'Introduction au traité d'arithmétique commerciale*. For the first time we see the publisher's details given as «Montreal, 50, rue Cotté, 50», which was the address of the Brothers' *Procure* and is never identified in any other way. In 1874, those who used the *First Reader* could see it was «Printed for the Brothers of the Christian Schools by Eusèbe Senécal». Printer and publisher were clearly distinct. The final step was taken in the following year with *Series of questions on the principal truths of religion*. The publisher is given as «The Brothers of the Christian Schools» without any reference to a printer, which would certainly have been a lay firm, since the Brothers did not yet have their printing press. After that date, the Brothers systematically identified themselves as the publishers, although continuing to operate in collaboration with other partners from time to time.

1876-1964

With the school population continually on the increase, first editions and reprints multiplied significantly. From the production of 588 textbooks in the 1870's, they rose to 2,046 in the 1950's.

One of the main contributors was the Committee for Public Education, and it pursued two goals in relation to textbooks for eighty years: uniformity and a lessening of the costs, eventually aiming at gratuity.

The campaign for uniformity in textbooks was probably the oldest of those conducted by the administrators of the school system. One can question its success, as can be seen from a memorandum of 1961 by the Federation of School Principals. "Uniformity in books does not exist, as everybody knows." Indeed, what kind of uniformity was meant? A circular demanding uniformity within a school was sent to inspectors in 1879 and reproduced in the *Journal de l'instruction publique*, with the evident

aim of bringing it to the attention both of officials and teachers. More ambitiously, the law of 1880 spoke for the first time about uniformity throughout Quebec. Some school commissions seemed to have complied with this law, but in Quebec in general the goal was far from being attained, as was admitted by Prime Minister Marchand in 1898, who went no further than to affirm that the government wanted to establish uniformity in textbooks gradually into the schools. The government could also count on an embarrassing ally in the shape of the Labour Party which had 20,000 members in 1910 and which demanded this measure in the name of fathers of families. The policy of uniformity applied equally to the English-speakers, as was stated by the *Montreal Daily Star* in June 1915 when commenting on the list of authorised textbooks for schools.

There was no lack of opponents to the idea of uniformity in textbooks for the whole of Quebec, starting with the Council for Public Education itself, which said that the law of 1880 had been passed without consulting it. Superintendent Ouimet summed up the Council's objections in his report of 1881: opposition by the adversely affected publishers, need for respect for the regions, the danger of setting up monopolies, the extent of this innovation which even the countries of Western Europe had never envisaged. In 1886 Brother Réticius, the energetic Superior of the Brothers saw in it a laicizing move on the lines of Jules Ferry. An educational argument was added to these objections. Absolute uniformity "would inevitably destroy all competition and emulation and thus would discourage real talent" as Brother Réticius wrote in his note to the Bishops' Assembly in 1894.

The Brothers found themselves unwillingly drawn into the battle over uniformity. When they arrived in 1837, in view of the almost total absence of regulations on the matter of textbooks, they had a free hand to reprint the textbooks of the Brothers in France. They did this for administrative reasons (not always expressed) so that the Brothers could use the books they were familiar with, but also for ideological reasons so as to foster the sense of belonging to a group. The Order's own policy of uniformity soon came into conflict with the policy of uniformity in the rest of the schools. This gave rise to the first disagreement between the Brothers in Quebec and their superiors in Paris. Brother Réticius, of French origin and superior of the houses in Quebec, had to argue fiercely to obtain the consent of the Paris authorities for the Brothers in Quebec to be allowed to use textbooks produced locally.

The other element in the government's campaign was that the textbooks should be available free of charge, which was closely linked to uniformity. It was first mentioned rather vaguely in a law of 1897. It was restricted to poor children and at the expense of the local school commissions by the law of 1899 and made universal but still at the expense of the commissions by the law of 1912. Gratuity really took shape in the law of 1944 when local authorities were assured reimbursement of three quarters of the bill by the government. Like all political uniformities, that of gratuity would arouse passions, often between its enthusiastic supporters, starting with the Conservative Chapais who said that "from the point of view of natural law the state goes beyond its competencies when it imposes an obligation to supply children with school books. The natural role of the State consists in acting in the general interest by doing those things which cannot be done so well by individuals or by families." When the law was adopted in 1944, the Jesuit publication *Relations* expressed its reservations: "whatever the method adopted for it, gratuity in the matter of books develops in children and their families a tendency to rely always on the State for everything."

In spite of hesitations and opposition, the government held its course towards gratuity and uniformity. It gave a major indication of this in 1900, when it started out on the great new venture of producing by decree its own series of textbooks which contained everything that was to be taught in the coming year and which would be distributed free of charge. The fact that only the book for beginners appeared (*Mon premier livre: lire, écrire, compter*) [My First Book: reading writing, addition] did not take away

from the fact that a larger series was planned. According to a circular sent out by no less a person than the Provincial Secretary Adélard Turgeon, they counted on great progress resulting from this new educational publication. “Thanks to this concentric programme, a child who has been at school for only one year will be capable of reading and writing and adding up to a passable standard. And while learning to read, he will have studied effortlessly at the same time the main lines of sacred history, the principal personalities of Canada, from Jacques-Cartier to Cardinal Taschereau, etc.” Despite lively opposition in some quarters, as shown by the epic battle in the press between the *abbé* Baillairgé and Deputy Langlois mentioned above, the operation was a success, although limited to the first year. The textbook was used at least up until 1938, and it was distributed freely to the tune of more than a million copies according to the correspondence of the Department of Public Education.

In order to have an even greater hold over the contents of the textbooks, The Council for Public Education tried to repeat the success it had with the series of readers by launching another competition for the writing of textbooks. Potential authors who best answered the expectations of the powers that be were guaranteed to have their works approved and therefore used. It was announced officially by Superintendant Ouimet in 1894 and prepared for by “a planning sub-committee for a single series of books for schools” The announcement was formulated in a way that made the intentions clear. The competition concerned the writing of textbooks in a dozen disciplines. The plan was shelved the following year after an intervention by two Catholic members of the committee, which by that time was chaired by a Conservative, Boucher de la Bruère. Once again, Thomas Chapais argued that “this committee is not prepared to accept the principle of uniformity in books. [Rather ways should be found] to avoid having thousands of books in the schools and to restrict as far as possible the diversity of books in the schools of the same district.” The idea of a competition aimed at ensuring a certain degree of uniformity while also serving to lower the costs was not entirely abandoned, and it reappeared in a memorandum of 1961.

With the same expectation of results, the Council for Public Education set out on another venture, namely that of becoming a bookseller, and it took the precaution of enshrining this initiative in a law of 1876 which created the book depository. Superintendant Ouimet was optimistic, and in the following year he shared his hopes in a circular to the inspectors. “The creation of a depository of books and school furnishings in the Department of Education will be the starting point of a very important reform, by which I mean the uniformity of teaching throughout the Province. How could we achieve this uniformity if the price of school books remained subject to market competition?” Naïvely, the good gentleman identified his adversaries publicly. The opposition from the booksellers was not slow in coming, and it was such as to lead to the formation of the first association in the sector. It was also expressed in among other things a legal memorandum which raised the possibility of a conflict of interests in a depository selling textbooks written by officials of the Department for Public Education.

The great battles fought by the administration over the orientations to be given to textbooks did not stop the writers from paying attention to the educational aspects of these teaching tools. Thus it was that in 1882 the Brothers published two geography courses in the form of printed exercise books with spaces for the pupils to fill in their answers. These were the first of their kind in Quebec, and they were another example, and not the least, of the influence which French textbooks had on education in Quebec, not just the reprints but also by occasional borrowings. Even if, after 1882, the Brothers in Quebec were no longer just doing reprints of the grammar books of their French *confrères*, they still continued to draw on this stock of resources, as is evident from the term «*grammaire*» itself which was borrowed from the French version written by L.C. and F.P.B. and published in Montreal in 1842. It appears word for word in the grammar books of the Quebec Brothers up until 1950.

It was certainly an educational tool, but also a financial device. The sixty or so publishers of the 1870's became a hundred by the 1950's, and this increase in publishers went hand in hand with an intensification in the numbers of titles, going from an average of eight titles per publisher to one of eighteen. This intensification was both necessary and advantageous in view of the costs and the benefits to be expected. Such concentration was a general trend in the world of publication, and Quebec did not escape from it. On the other hand, if there was something special and peculiar to Quebec in educational publications, it was certainly due to the contribution by religious orders in this field of activity. They published only a few titles in the middle of the XIX century, but they were responsible for 65% of the first editions in the 1920's, although the numbers gradually diminished subsequently.

Several factors explain this unique situation. The religious orders, especially the male orders which dominated the scene, were mostly founded in France. They brought with them their experience in this area, and they were able to reproduce in Quebec the textbooks of their *confrères* in France. They were professional educators, and they could draw on their own people not only to write the texts but also to test out the draft versions on the target audience. Since they were running hundreds of schools, they had available to them a natural, not to say captive, pool of consumers. As far as possible, they each used only their own textbooks, and this practice was made all the more easy by the law of 1909 which removed them from the powers of the schools commissions as far as the uniformity of textbooks was concerned. This situation was quickly condemned by a former member of the schools commission of Montreal who had moved on to become a judge. "In order to get approval for the principle [of uniformity] each congregation was given its share in the ownership that is to say in the profits, without regard to the respective values of their publications." The incursions of religious orders into the more profitable areas of publication posed questions about their relations with the lay publishers, relations which were ambiguous. There was no real problem when they entrusted the production of their textbooks to lay publishing firms, as was the case for example with the Marist Brothers and the firm of Granger or the Sisters of Notre-Dame and Beauchemin. However, conflicts arose when they used their printing presses to produce other material in addition to their own textbooks, as was explained by a journalist in 1938. The situation change radically with the arrival of publishing houses that specialised in textbooks but were not linked to a religious congregation. Thus a teachers' cooperative appeared in 1945, called the Centre for Psychology and Education, which marked the beginning of a decline in the part played by religious orders in educational publications, although some were reluctant to accept it.

After the 1940's, the growth in school attendance and the spread of secondary education encouraged more and more players to enter the field of textbook publication, and the rules of the game were not always clear, and in practice they even degenerated for the less wary. The situation was analysed and condemned by Maurice Bouchard in his report on the book trade in 1963. Almost all those involved came under fire from the commissioner. The Department for Public Education was reproached for its laxity which allowed the chairmen of committees on textbook approval to ensure the approval of books they had written, or let publishers' representatives sit on committees that had the task of evaluating their products. Lay and religious publishers alike, or at least a good number of them, were accused of making exaggerated profits. The remarks and recommendations of the commissioner certainly had a bearing on the purchasing policy adopted subsequently by the government.

The jungle of market forces did not stop authors and teachers from reflecting on the role played in teaching by printing and on the best way to make use of it. In 1881 the future principal of Laval Training Colleg, *abbé* Rouleau, wondered about the place that textbooks should have in primary schools. Magnan, who later became one of the most highly respected educators, recalled what he

described as the old routine that emphasised memorisation before attempting comprehension. He put textbooks after teachers because the teacher “is the living book for the class”. This position was shared by his English-speaking colleague and friend John Ahern. “Nothing can take the place of the living text-book, the teacher.” In an article in *Le Devoir*, 1930, *abbé* Tessier, the great guru of schools for domestic science, accused textbooks, or the misuse of textbooks, of damaging teaching. “Learning purely from books seems to be the main cause of the deplorable lack of vitality and intellectual curiosity that we can observe in the majority of our pupils.” Some months later, in the same periodical, Brother Marie-Victorin FSC said “if we are not careful, books and especially textbooks will soon change from being mirrors to being screens, and instead of enlarging understanding they can easily suppress it, restrict it and chain it up in a dreadful prison of words.” The discussion started out on a negative note (how not to use a textbook and what are the disadvantages) but fortunately it changed to a positive approach, as testified by the work of Richard Joly at the beginning of the 1960’s, explaining how to use them.

Textbooks, written for the most part by professional teachers, were controversial if not in themselves at least in their use. But were they beyond reproach in terms of the language they used? What was the quality of the French language in textbooks written by French-speakers for French-speakers? This was the gist of a long series of articles published in the periodical *L’enseignement* at the end of the 1950’s. Using hundreds of quotations in support, they condemned the poor quality of the French that was being used. So for example, the series of textbooks on arithmetic by Gérard Beaudry was singled out for its anglicisms and grammatical mistakes, its poverty of style and vocabulary, while the quality of the translation was also condemned. Three years later, a *mémoire* by the association of ladies of the universities of Quebec made a merciless attack on this situation, which seemed to them to be so serious that they came up with a quite remarkable suggestion. “Why could we not, from September onwards, simply adopt the textbooks that are used in France, Belgium, Switzerland or any of the twenty countries in Asia or Africa which use French as their language, for a limited number of years, that is until books of equal quality start coming out from our Canadian printing presses?”

There was, then, no *à priori* embargo on the importation of textbooks, even if the practice was in decline. Between 1876 and 1964, scarcely two hundred books appeared that were more or less straight reprints. They came from the usual sources plus the occasional new supplier, such as the Clercs de Saint-Viateur, who reprinted in Montreal catechisms written and published initially for the French-speakers of Illinois (USA). While the dependence on overseas sources was diminishing among the French-speakers, it was growing among the English-speakers of Quebec, who imported on a massive scale from the Canadian Province of Ontario and from England. When the war of 1914-18 caused serious problems for overseas supplies, the Protestant committee envisaged the creation of a book depository exclusively for the English-speakers, and they thought seriously about entrusting its administrations to the publishers Dent of London, who had a branch in Toronto, thus disregarding the firm Renouf of Montreal, the only publishers for English-speakers still in business at the time.

The reluctance to import was greater among the French-speakers, and this was due to several causes. In the first place, there was the old accusation, expressed by Magnan in 1904, namely that in the imported products “Our history is ignored, and likewise the geography of Canada.” The *abbé* Camille Roy expressed it more clearly twenty years later. “It is readily admitted that our secondary education would be more national, that is to say more adapted to the concerns of Canadian thinking, when our teachers are better equipped than they are today, and when they are able to produce for us the classroom textbooks our children need, especially in history and geography.” But there was a worse problem. Was it possible, at the start of the XX century, to trust the books produced in laicised France? Some years before, the Catholic committee had approved the grammars produced in France, notably the one by

Claude Augé published by Larousse. But now, in the wake of the new current of laicisation prevailing in the old motherland, the insidious messages being spread around rejected the traditional values of a religious kind. One anonymous attacker showed his indignation in the periodical *L'enseignement primaire*: "To appease the impious minds that govern France and control education in that country, the publishers of these books have replaced every Christian expression with terms that are purely profane, when they are not ridiculous. The grammar books of Augé and Larive & Fleury, which were *neutral or honest*, have been turned into vehicles of free-thinking." But was it right to reject textbooks which on other grounds were recognised as being valuable educationally? To obviate that danger, the *abbé* Desrosiers was given the task of quebecising and catholicising those grammar books, with results that were rather surprising. For example, in a text of ten lines in which the child is studying the letter «h», as an example of a country «*hérissée de montagnes*» [bristling with mountains] «Switzerland is replaced by» «Colombia» and a sentence is added on the inevitable «savages of Canada». On the other hand, the rules of the grammar are transcribed *verbatim*.

So the use of foreign products continued, but at the same time some Quebec products were exported. The Sisters de Sainte-Anne in Montreal printed a series entitled *Vocabulaire bilingue* destined for the schools of New England where they worked chiefly with the French-speaking Americans. However, the main focus of attention was on the French-speakers in other parts of Canada. For ideological reasons to begin with, sets of textbooks destined for the French schools in Ontario were produced in the 1950's, and then others for the Vancouver region. Commercial interests were also involved. For a long time the French-speakers of Western Canada had been studying history using the textbooks published in Quebec, principally by the religious orders.

Some raw statistics can give an initial idea of the place occupied by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the production of school textbooks in Quebec between 1876 and 1963. Of the 9,000 publications listed for that period, 1,469 (16%) were published by them reaching a high point of 21% during the 1940's and then starting to decline to the extent that the figure for the period 1960-1963 was hardly 8%.

The amount of production called for structures for publishing and distribution. In the XIX century, «a classroom books committee» or «committee for books» had been set up, made up of editors, even though their names rarely appeared on the printed books. They were almost all practicing teachers, who were given time off teaching to complete the work on their manuscripts. The operation was run by the «*Procure*», which acted at the same time as publisher, retailer and distributor to other booksellers in Quebec and later beyond it. Thus for the book entitled *L'art ornemental*, 1916, the details of the publisher are given as «Montreal, *Procure des Frères des écoles chrétiennes*».

Once writing and publishing were being done by the congregation, there only remained printing to give it control over all stages in the trade. In 1877, the *Procure* of Montreal bought a building situated across the street from them. The following year, they rented the place to the printer Chapleau with whom they had already done business. Their collaboration continued for more than six years and allowed the Brothers to become initiated in the printing trade. On a date which is hard to determine but which fell between 1888 and 1890, they bought the business from Chapleau. From then on, the directory for Montreal listed the building as being occupied by «Christian Bros., printers». The circle was complete. By the early 1890's, the order acted as writers, publishers, printers and distributors of textbooks. The printing press was never idle. The *Syllabaire – Premier livre* of 1872 was reprinted many times up to 1918, and it reached a total production of more than 950,000 copies for the two versions combined. Our source for these figures (*Livres de compte 1891*) does not go back beyond 1891, when the Brothers acquired their own press, and no mention is made of the reprints between

1872 and 1890. The same source lists indiscriminately a total output of 4,254,770 textbooks printed between 1891 and 1918, without counting the many other printing jobs undertaken by the press of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Montreal.

The increase in the numbers of Brothers meant the region was divided into two separate Districts in 1927. The new District of Quebec was now independent from the District of Montreal, and it adopted structures identical with those of the original District, including structures for the trade in textbooks. There was no duplication of, not to say intrusion on, the activities of the old District. Since the District of Quebec had been running a «commercial college» of great reputation for more than sixty years, the Brothers of the new District launched out into an area unknown to the *procure* of Montreal, namely accountancy.

Between 1935 and 1966 around twenty textbooks in accountancy appeared published by the «*Académie commerciale de Quebec*». Since most commercial transactions were done in English, the Academy set up the «*Concours bilingues canadiens*», the trade name that appeared on a dozen publications between 1944 and 1966. The commercial college flourished so well that the Brothers of Quebec sought university recognition, and a publication of 1952 used the title «*École supérieure de commerce*». The step was taken officially in 1955, and a textbook was formally attributed to the «Faculty of commerce» of Laval University founded in 1952 by the Brothers of the commercial college, in spite of the difficulties placed in their way.

Alongside publications by the commercial college, the Brothers of the District of Quebec organised a publishing firm modeled on that of their *confrères* in Montreal. In 1936, a textbook bore the inscription «*Quebec, Procure des frères des écoles chrétiennes*», and the formula was used sporadically up to the end of the 1940's. From 1940 onwards, they also used the formula «*Centre pédagogique*» as the trade name under which most of the textbooks of the District of Quebec appeared.

The productions of Quebec were distinguished from those of Montreal in two other ways. Firstly, the Brothers of Quebec did not have a printing press and preferred to use the network of printers in the region. Secondly, as opposed to the anonymity practised by the Brothers of Montreal, many of the publications of Quebec bore the names of their authors, usually teachers at the commercial college or later at the Faculty of Commerce of Laval University.

Like all the other publishers, the Brothers of the Christian Schools had to obtain the approval of the Catholic committee of the Council for Public Education, and nothing could be taken for granted. Despite the campaign he orchestrated, Brother Réticius did not succeed in obtaining approval for a textbook on drawing produced and printed by the Brothers in France. However, that did not mean that the book was totally excluded from the market. Research into the teaching of drawing shows that, in 1891, at least five municipalities were using the textbook of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, even though it was not approved. Similarly, Brothers were able to bypass the formal demands of the Council for Public Education. For example, the Brothers continued to omit the names of the authors of their *Leçons de langue française*, even though this was a condition for its approval.

In most cases, however, the Brothers followed the directives of the authorities in the matter of approval, even if only to facilitate access to a lucrative market. Thus for example, in 1880, they complied with the demand that they remove from their reading textbook a poem that was judged 'unsuitable'. It was about the «good, fat, English pig», and it was replaced by a fable on «the animals suffering from the plague». To improve their chances, they did not hesitate to make use of personal contacts. In 1923, the Brother Visitor personally sent a bundle of textbooks for which he wanted

approval to Bishop Rimouski who was a member of the committee in charge of approvals. In addition the order was able to sell their textbooks in all the schools under their direction, as a superintendant told the inspector of schools in 1877 in La Baie du Fèvre where the Brothers ran a school.

The influence of the French Brothers on the Quebec textbooks sometimes showed itself in the choice of editors. Brother Adelbertus arrived with the first contingent of Brothers in 1837, and according to tradition he was the editor of the textbooks on religion and geography published around 1880. This piece of oral tradition is supported by the fact that the copyright of these publications is registered in his name. Brother Romez arrived in Quebec at the beginning of the XX century following the Combe laws. He is thought to have edited half a dozen textbooks for French and arithmetic that were published between 1915 and 1925. After that, the Quebec Brothers no longer reprinted textbooks from France, though it was still possible to buy textbooks from abroad and to sell them on the local market, as was pointed out above with regard to the textbook on drawing.

Two factors gave fresh impetus to such imports, namely the war of 1939-1945 and the increase in secondary school population in the same period, which required new textbooks. The response of the Brothers in Quebec, (whose colleges had always been big consumers of textbooks imported from France and now saw their source drying up), came in 1941-42, when the *Procure* of Montreal reprinted fifteen textbooks by their French *confrères*, almost all attributed to «*Une réunion de professeurs*». Ever since the General Chapter of 1928, it had been understood the local *procures* should pay the Paris *procure* a fee for this kind of activity. Obviously, the war prevented payment because all transatlantic communications were stopped. However, when communications were reestablished, the Brothers of Montreal «forgot» to put things right, even though the General Chapter of 1956 reiterated the directives of 1928 on this matter. It was only at the start of the 1960's that Montreal paid the fees for fifteen reprints of the *Cours d'algèbre*, and the Paris *procure* de Paris was informed by the firm Hachette, which had distribution rights for the French textbooks outside of France. There followed a strained correspondence between the two *procures* before the dispute was settled. Once things had been regularised, the publishing houses of the Brothers in Paris, Montreal and Quebec advertised themselves as co-publishers of a *Cours de géométrie* which was printed in France for the Quebec market.

As well as importing, they also did some exporting, although on a more modest scale. The major series «*cahiers de religion*» [religion exercise books] by Brother Cyrille published in Montreal in the 1940's, was translated into Tamil for Ceylon, and the French version was also used in the Congo. The series of textbooks on the history of Canada published in Montreal during the 1950's was adapted for the French-speakers of Ontario.

The *Procure* of Montreal also found a place in the American market. Between 1906 and 1908, they printed the covers of half a dozen French textbooks (including the inevitable *Traité des devoirs du Chrétien*) for the booksellers J.-A. Jacques of Worcester – one of the main centres of the French-speaking minority in the north-east of the USA. We cannot speak of new editions in that particular case, because the Brothers just printed new covers for their existing books. Nevertheless, through this one bookseller, the *Procure* of Montreal released into the American market nearly 250,000 copies of textbooks already written. The French Canadian market outside Quebec was likewise an important outlet, but we do not have the statistics for it.

Since the creation of the Ministry of Education in 1964, replacing the Council for Public Education, there has been little change in the textbook scene, and if anything the tendencies noted above have been accentuated, especially in the development in publications for education. The as yet unfinished catalogue of textbooks tells us there were 3,478 documents published in the 1970's and 4,165 in the 1990's. However, this statistic hides another fact. Up to now we could always link the increase in the number of publications to the increase in the number of pupils, but the school population has been increasing much less rapidly since the end of the schooldays of the post war baby-boomers. We should note that, other things being equal, there were fewer publishers by the 1990's, compared with the 1970's. This indicates a strong tendency towards concentration in production among the big firms. This phenomenon could be explained by, among other things, the investment costs involved for more and more pupils. The publishers Guérin, one of the largest firms in the business, recently calculated that an investment of up to \$1,000,000 was needed for the production of a new title.

Understandably, the change from the Department for Public Education to the Ministry of Education did not mean any lessening in the government's activity in the domain of textbooks. Far from it! Not only is the policy regarding approval still in force, but it is explained in detail in numerous texts addressed to the publishers and potential authors. It is the same old supervision, but it is aimed at different concerns. Certainly, the educational value of the textbook is assessed, but in a society which is increasingly multicultural attention is centred on the underlying ideology. They have become very sensitive over "the elimination of discriminatory stereotypes in the teaching materials", either racist or sexist.

In the world of education, the debate on the place of textbooks in teaching shows no signs of coming to an end. Thus, in *Quebec-français*, 2000, the question is asked whether we should have "Teaching with textbooks or without?" The question is all the more relevant in today's world of communication technologies, with CD-ROMs and the internets, which infringes on the traditional territory of printing and are favoured by the principal users, the children. Consequently the Ministry of Education has no choice except to "open the door [slightly] to digital material" which characteristically ignores the boundaries of the printed word.

One would have thought that, with the passing of years, the consumption of foreign products would have virtually disappeared, due to Quebec nationalism if nothing else. In fact things are quite the opposite. Certainly, France and England are less in demand, but recourse is made to English Canada. During the last fifty years, more than four hundred textbooks have come into the French-speaking schools from outside, especially books published in English-speaking Canada, and more than half of these foreign products are for the teaching of mathematics. *L'action nationale*, as early as 1967, condemned this dependence, referred to as '*anglomania*'. However, the practice is continuing, to say the least. There is one small piece of consolation in the fact that Quebec is paying back in the same coinage, at least partially. The reading method developed in the 1950's by a community of Sisters in Sherbrooke is being reproduced in English Canada, in France and even in French Polynesia. Also the publisher of Rimouski's textbooks has found an important outlet in French-speaking Africa.

While the production of teaching tools is in constant development, the same cannot be said for the contribution made by the religious congregations. This is shown clearly in the example of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Their 181 textbooks in the 1970's represented scarcely 5% of the titles on sale. The situation is due partly to the appearance on the school publishing scene of numerous firms specialising in this area. Up to 1945, the religious orders were the only publishing firms devoted

essentially to textbooks, until the diminution of their personnel came about as a result of major changes in Quebec society, often referred to as the «*révolution tranquille*» [quiet revolution]. The decrease in numbers obliged the Brothers, for the first time, to have systematic recourse to lay authors, something they very rarely did prior to 1964. This recourse to ‘outside’ authors had an important immediate effect on the viability of the publishing, because they had to be paid! It is easy to see why this chain of events led the Brothers to unload their publishing house in 1985 by selling the assets and installations to the Quebec publisher Guérin, one of the main firms in the business at the time.

Conclusion

The history of textbooks, in Quebec, and in many other countries, is in its infancy and requires a change in people’s attitudes towards the history of the world of schools. Among the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Quebec, interest in this is very recent. The history of the Institute in Quebec by Brother Symphorien-Louis of Montreal was published in 1921. It is three hundred pages in length and only devotes two pages to printing and publishing, even though the Institute was one of the principal publishers of textbooks, and the two pages on them are lost among the section on «*faits divers*» [other features].

The present text has attempted to describe the main lines of the way in which the Institute developed one of the largest publishing firms for textbooks in Quebec, notably during the first half of the XX century. A further step would be to carry out a similar analysis in those countries where the Institute has performed a similar role, with a view to arriving at a global overview of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as international publishers of school textbooks.

As the point of departure for any analysis of this kind, one needs a catalogue, and one could hardly begin to analyse any printing activity without a reliable list of the works printed. The present analysis of textbooks is based on a list containing 28,000 titles of educational books produced in Quebec since 1765, and it can be consulted at the following web address www.bibl.ulaval.ca/ress/manscol. The catalogue of school textbooks published in Quebec – including those by the Brothers of the Christian Schools – can be accessed by clicking on «*catalogue général*» while the catalogue of textbooks produced by the Brothers of the Christian Schools world-wide is accessible by clicking on «*diaspora*».

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