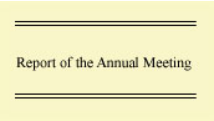
Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association
Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada



Presidential Address

Richard A. Preston

Volume 41, numéro 1, 1962

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300595ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/300595ar

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0317-0594 (imprimé)
1712-9095 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer ce document

Preston, R. A. (1962). Presidential Address. *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association / Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada*, *41*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.7202/300595ar

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS *

Richard A. PRESTON
Royal Military College of Canada

Some past holders of this office have, on this annual occasion, seized the opportunity to present their own considered philosophy or interpretation of history, especially of the history of our own country. Others have analyzed the concepts of their colleagues, with greater or lesser degrees of kindliness. But I believe that the address of my immediate predecessor, which aroused so much enthusiasm when it was delivered, and which we all awaited so impatiently to study in more detail in print, was the first in which a President of the Canadian Historical Association touched upon problems connected with university teaching. In the course of his address, Dr. Ferguson indicated the vital importance of the development, from the undergraduate level up, of the art of communication through the spoken and written word. Your immediate response to his remarks was no doubt stirred by the clarity of his own language; but it also showed that this question, one many of us meet regularly in our daily work, was something close to your interest. Yet the small amount of time that has been given in our meetings in the past to such problems would almost suggest that Canadian historians have been a little ashamed of the way they earn their living. Or perhaps they are afraid of being labelled as "educationists", as if it were necessarily a pejorative description.

This Association is not, of course, an organization of teachers. Most of our members are not professionally engaged in universities or schools, though teachers seem to be in a majority here tonight. But even for those of you who are not teachers, the continued excellence of the teaching of history in our universities must be of vital importance. Most of you were first aroused to an awareness of the fascination of history at one or another of our universities. And you will all agree that the full realization of the aims of this Association would be seriously affected if history teaching were to deteriorate. I make bold, therefore, to discuss another aspect of university teaching about which, as far as I am aware, there has been no previous discussion in a meeting in Canada drawing like this one from all parts of the nation. I want to say a little about the history curriculum in our universities.

There are, in fact, at least three major problems which, at this present, face Canadian universities in general, and faculties of history in particular, and each one separately foreshadows a crisis of major pro-

* *Breakers Ahead and a Glance Behind*, read before the Canadian Historical Association, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, June 7, 1962.

portions and could well be the subject, by itself, of an evening's discussion. The most obvious and urgent, and the best-known, is that caused by the so-called "bulge", the imminent increase of student enrollment. [1]

Obviously the swollen student body will cause many professorial headaches; and the danger of malaise and of a lowering of the general well-being is critical.

A second serious problem affecting the university and the department of history is the dangerous gap that has appeared between the sciences and the humanities. Two cultures are growing apart with an absence of mutual understanding. One possible link, the history of science, should be the concern of historians. This technological revolution of our time has thus presented Canadian historians with a second problem so serious that failure to solve it might impair much of the value of all their work.

The third problem facing university administrations and history departments today is, I believe, the most serious of all; and it is about this third problem that I want to talk tonight. It arises from the post-war emergence of new states and the freeing and revitalization of older civilizations. A few years ago, His Ecellency Toru Hagiwara, the Japanese Ambassador in Ottawa, told a Canadian UNESCO conference that, much as it might seem desirable to help the Orient to understand the West, in fact the effect of the age of imperialism had been that the Orient already knows much about Western civilization. It was this knowledge that had inspired the present generation of non-Westerners to hunger for Western technology and other aspects of Western life. On the other hand, the imperialist era had failed to convey to Westerners much appreciation of other civilizations and much knowledge about other parts of the world. This, intimated the Ambassador, is the direction in which the cultural exchange is in greatest need of development.

It is certainly true that we can no longer placidly expect, as our optimistic forebears of a generation ago seem to have expected, that the rest of the world will inevitably move to adopt our way of life in every aspect. Our universities, therefore, have an obvious duty to include the study of non-Western societies in their curricula. In this work, the opening up of new fields of history is probably the most significant contribution that can be made.

Already many steps have been taken in that direction in the universities of Canada. Courses have been introduced in Eastern-European, Slavic, Russian, Middle-Eastern, Moslem, Far-Eastern, South-Asian, and

[1] The particular impact of this problem upon one department of history in the country was discussed a few years ago in an article which included a history of the teaching of history in the university.

(D. G. Creighton and J. B. Conacher, "The Plateau : 3. The Specific Problem at the Departmental level", *Varsity Graduate*, October, 1956, pp. 159-162, 178.)

Latin-American studies. Some faculties are now turning to Africa. The whole structure of the university curriculum, the backbone of our culture, is therefore changing as we watch. And the teaching of history is directly affected. Everywhere there are new courses, or new departments, or new institutes for area or special studies. These new courses we may call, for want of a more apt term, the *exotica*.

Have the implications of the changes now being introduced been thought through from sound premises to logical conclusions? For instance, what consideration is being given to the obvious danger that, in providing students with the means to know something of other civilizations, we may produce succeeding generations that know all too little about our own? Are our students not likely to become less informed about those great achievements that made possible, not only the essentials of our own way of life, but also our discovery of, and our contact with, other peoples who apparently lacked the qualities that have given the West its position of leadership? In other words, is there not again a danger of dilution and of the lowering of quality? It is not surprising that one Canadian university has reacted by setting up an institute for the furtherance of Canadian studies. But there has also been a noticeable trend towards dropping English history, which is surely of central importance for the English-speaking world, in favour of other courses which are peripheral. And this development has not been challenged.

There is, however, an added complication. The three problems I have mentioned face us just at the time when Canadian universities are seeking to turn to graduate work on a much larger scale. Canadian universities, attempting to add American-type graduate schools, are moving away from that former emphasis upon undergraduate teaching which they inherited from Britain. This, by itself, would have imposed great strain upon faculties which are already amply occupied by undergraduate teaching. For if graduate work is to be done properly, entirely distinct from undergraduate classes, it should mean substantial addition to the professorial establishment. Otherwise, in seeking to train specialized university teachers in the manner of the United States, we may endanger the century-old educational system that has hitherto compared favourably with that of our great neighbour. And the new venture at the graduate level may not measure up to American standards. The normal yardstick of good American universities is that graduate students will not normally be exposed to a professor who has not yet published either a book, or a substantial body of scholarly articles. Will our Canadian history departments meet that standard?

It is strange that Canadian historians have not made a historical study of the background of these developments in the university curriculum. A history of the teaching of history in Canadian universities, from which conclusions could be drawn for policy-making for future de-

velopment, is sadly lacking. The causal relationship between what has been imparted in the history class-room and the way in which it has been imparted, on the one hand, and the story of the growing Canadian awareness of Canada as a nation, of Canada's provincial and ethnic complexities, of Canada's social and economic problems, and of Canada's world responsibilities, on the other, remains still to be worked out. Does the lack of a history of historical teaching mean that Canadian historians have so little faith in their own work that they think that the politicians, traders, soldiers, preachers, and writers about whom they have taught and written so much, have had that much more influence in fashioning the mind of Canada than they have had themselves? There are many here tonight, and many more who have already passed on, whose contribution has been great. Surely this is a story worth the telling. It can only be assumed that the Canadian historians are overmodest. The longer the task is delayed, the less valid the findings are likely to be. For, not all of the influence of a teacher appears in his learned publications. Much of his doctrine is verbal and finds its way only into his students' minds (or sometimes only into their notebooks).

As the older workers leave the vineyard, the possibility of making a complete record declines. The official source of information about the content of university courses is the calendar. But what more inadequate primary source could one find anywhere? And who can discover anything about the personality of a teacher from a calendar ? One would almost think that university calendars were deliberately designed to create booby traps for the future researcher as well as to confuse present-day students. But what other source material will there be for the future historian? Wallace Notestein, whose great contribution to the constitutional history of England in the seventeenth century was based on private parliamentary diaries, used to tell his students that it was their duty to posterity to keep a personal diary. How many here tonight are providing that kind of raw material for future historians?

So far, then, there has been no comprehensive, full, and detailed account of the teaching of history in Canadian universities. We have not provided the university statesmen (or as some cynics would call them unkindly, the "campus politicians") with the material for analysis of the background of the problems now facing the teaching of history in Canadian universities. We have left them to build upon a foundation derived from their own imperfect memories and from oral tradition and legend.

To recount the history of the history curriculum that is now being challenged is too big a task for an after-dinner talk. It is only possible to point to a few of the salient features of the story. The first discovery that one makes is that in the earliest days of the older Canadian universities, and even in the beginning of some of the newer ones, modern

history had no place at all. Up to the nineteenth century history at our oldest university, Laval, stopped with Julius Caesar. The historian of McGill tells us that in the middle of the nineteenth century the only history taught there was a little classical history. In 1845 there was *no* history in King's College, Toronto. In 1847 Queen's had only "Church History and Biblical Criticism".[2] And in 1853 Daniel Wilson, newly appointed to teach history at University College, Toronto, wrote in his diary, "Tomorrow I dine with Dr. McCaul, a clever lively Irishman. I suspect I shall have a battle to fight about my chair. He wants to make it a chair of ancient history . . . But I have not the slighest intention of being dictated to by anyone as to how I shall teach."[3] Modern history *was* apparently taught at Vancouver College, an affiliate of McGill which was founded in 1899, but no courses were offered at McGill, British Columbia, which existed from 1906 to 1915, except Greek and Roman History as part of the classics course, and European History as part of the course in English. At that late date and even afterwards, modern history was not yet well established.[4]

A second point about the early teaching of modern history is that it was, as in the case of McGill, British Columbia, quoted above, usually associated with another discipline or was a subordinate course in another department. In 1856 French and German History at Toronto were taught "with those languages" which, according to John Squair, were "under the care of a very worthy pudding-headed old Italian."[5] This was Dr. Forneri who, as a veteran of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, could at least have taught part of the course from first-hand knowledge.

The creation of separate departments for the teaching of history came very slowly. At Laval in 1854, Abbé J. B. A. Ferland was called "Docteur de Lettres, d'Histoire du Canada et de l'Amérique en Général." Not until 1864 did he drop the literary side of his teaching. His was one of eleven chairs which in 1858 were intended to form the future Faculty of Arts at Laval. General history, modelled on French ideas, had become a separate subject at Laval not long before 1852; but the full organization of the autonomous teaching of history there had in fact to wait until 1955 when *l'Institut d'Histoire* was formed by dividing *l'Institut d'Histoire et de Géographie* which itself only dated from 1946.

The first full chair of history in English-speaking Canada was established at Dalhousie in 1879 with the Reverend John Forrest as incum-

[2] Cyrus Macmillan, *McGill and its Story, 1821-1921* (London: John Lane, 1921), p. 215.

[3] "Diary of Sir Daniel Wilson", September 21, 1853, typescript in the University of Toronto Library.

[4] Henry T. Logan, Tuum Est : *A History of the University of British Columbia* (Vancouver: U.B.C., 1938), pp. 16, 23.

[5] John Squair, *Autobiography of a Teacher of French* (Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1929), p. 11.

bent.[6] But the 1882-3 Dalhousie Calendar shows Forrest as "George Munro Professor of History and Political Economy"; and these subjects were not separated until 1911. That same combination was to be found at British Columbia when it was founded in 1915.

A separate department of history did not appear at Toronto until George M. Wrong was given his chair in 1895 after being lecturer for three years. McGill's first full-time history professor was Dr. Charles C. Colby, who was appointed also in 1895. At U.N.B. an independent status for history was not achieved until the appointment of Dr. A. G. Bailey in 1938, history having been taught there always as an adjunct of some other discipline.[7]

Most of the early professors of history in Canada were not specialists. Many were clergymen. At Queen's two of the early lecturers taught without salary. They were John Machar, Jr., a son of the Principal, and the Reverend J. A. Allen, father of the poet, Grant Allen.[8] Daniel Wilson, it is true, already had a reputation in England for his publications in history, but he was not really a historian in the modern sense, partly because he dabbled in many related disciplines. He taught ethnology, archaeology, anthropology, as well as history and English literature; and he also administered both University College and the University of Toronto.[9] When Wilson tried to divest himself of the burden of teaching both history and English in 1882, he wanted to keep English himself. That was his real love. Through what he labelled "politics", he failed to secure the appointment of a Dalhousie Professor of English, one Dr. Jacob Gould Schurman, to be Professor of History, Constitutional Law, and Jurisprudence at Toronto. Wilson was therefore compelled to keep history himself and to find someone else to lecture in English. It should be noted, that if Wilson's plans had succeeded,[10] not only would a Professor of English have been appointed to teach history at Toronto, but history would have become associated with law.

In these circumstances, as one might expect, the method of teaching history in Canada was rudimentary. Courses consisted of lectures with readings in textbooks that would today be considered unsuitable even for schools. Thus the classics professor, who gave history lectures at the University of New Brunswick, prescribed Sir William Smith's *Student His-*

[6] Chester Martin, "Professor G. M. Wrong and History in Canada", in R. Flenley, ed., *Essays in Canadian History presented to George MacKinnon Wrong for his Eightieth Birthday* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1939), p. 4.

[7] Desmond Pacey, "The Humanist Tradition", in A. G. Bailey (ed.), *The University of New Brunswick Memorial Volume* (Fredericton: The University, 1950), p. 67.

[8] Queen's University, "Domesday Book", 1863-4, 1865-6.

[9] Chester Martin, "Wrong and History in Canada", p. 3.

[10] H. H. Langton, *Sir Daniel Wilson: A Memoir* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1929), pp. 156-59. Dr. Schurman was later appointed President of Cornell.

tory of England and Smith's *Student History of Rome* as texts.[11] In the early 1870's the Reverend George Ferguson at Queen's used the Reverend James White's *Eighteen Christian Centuries* and his *Lectures on the English Constitution.* However, by the 1890's there was more substantial fare. At Queen's the number of prescribed books had risen from two to nearly a dozen and one of them was Hallam's *Middle Ages.*

Canada was thus a step or so behind other countries in the teaching of history in the 1870's and 1880's. From 1857 on, the influence of the "father of modern history", Leopold von Ranke, had been flowing strongly in the United States. In 1866 Bishop Stubbs had been appointed Regius Professor at Oxford, the first trained historian to hold that appointment. This was in striking contrast to "the other place" where, in conformity with a century-old tradition at both universities, the poet Charles Kingsley had recently been given the Regius professorship. Stubbs, in his inaugural, said, "The study of modern history is, next to theology itself, the most thoroughly religious training mind can receive"; and his charters became the sacred books of English historical scholarship. In American graduate schools seminar teaching in history and political science, with emphasis on primary sources and individual effort, was well established by the 1870's. Soon afterwards, when Seeley and Acton had successively occupied Kingsley's chair at Cambridge, a porter of one of the colleges was heard to say, "Once the men who used to go in and out of these gates were gentlemen. Now they are scholars."

The tidal wave of such "ungentlemanly scholarship" reached Canada in the 1890's. George Wrong, an Anglican clergyman who was a true gentleman, even to the use of snuff, had been inspired at Oxford to teach history in the modern way; and although he began his career at Wycliffe College, he soon moved to the University of Toronto. One of his early students, who came from Queen's, tells in a letter that Wrong not only made him read general works on medieval and early American history, and write essays on the Peasant's Revolt and the Black Death, but was also "trying to get [him] accustomed to Medieval Latin by means of the Chronicles & the Selden Society publications." "All this," wrote that student, "is practically independent work." He went on to say "Professor Wrong never . . . attempts to group his facts by broad generalizations that the students could grasp, and that would show them where they are . . . The province of a lecturer . . . he believes . . . to consist not of *guiding,* which he thinks cannot be done to any extent by lectures, but of *interesting,* and so inducing the students to go on for themselves . . ."

Oddly enough this young man went on to say that this was "a theory which a Queen's man can scarcely be expected to accept"; and he declared

[11] K. W. McKirdy, "The Formation of the Modern University", in A. G. Bailey, *U.N.B. Memorial Volume,* p. 36.

that he preferred what he himself called the "barreness" of Professor Ferguson of Queen's. But the former Queen's student was writing to a Queen's professor; and he seems to have been merely getting his loyalties a little mixed. [12]

Wrong, of course, introduced into the history department at Toronto a modified version of the Oxford tutorial system, with essay groups which have endured to this day, but which, as I understand, are now being weighed against seminars. It may be of interest that, in 1895, the same year as Wrong's appointment to the chair at Toronto, Carles Colby, who had been trained at Harvard Graduate School, introduced the "seminary" method at McGill. Both of these Canadian universities were at that time chiefly concerned with undergraduates. Colby's seminaries, and Wrong's tutorial groups, although borrowed from American graduate school practice and English undergraduate teaching, respectively, were probably actually very similar in operation in Canada when they were applied to undergraduate teaching.

There was, for a long time, no very significant amount of graduate work in Canada. The Canadian universities, following English precedents, stressed undergraduate teaching and introduced at that level a degree of specialization, through honours courses, that was rare or unknown in the American college level course.

At the undergraduate level, by the turn of the century, some Canadian history departments were giving critical attention to primary sources. But a quarter of a century was to pass before Canadian universities were to begin to emulate American practice on any appreciable scale at the graduate level. Queen's, indeed, had offered the Ph.D. in History in 1890, and Toronto in 1897. But Queen's first doctorate in history was not conferred until 1921 and the second not until nine years later. Toronto gave doctorates from 1925 and McGill from 1938.

The development of the modern curriculum was almost as belated as the development of departmental organization, of teaching method, and of graduate instruction. For a long time courses were very general surveys far removed from the modern period and from the Canadian scene. Soon after Wilson began teaching at Toronto in 1853, the Vice-Chancellor called his department "really ridiculous" because he only taught the history of Egypt to Cleopatra, of Spain to Ferdinand and Isabella, and of England to Henry VII. Ridiculous or not, this was the prevailing pattern at that time.

In 1854, it is true, Ferland was teaching the history of New France at Laval. His *Cours d'Histoire du Canada*, published in 1861-5, was

[12] Cecil F. Lavell to Adam Shortt, December 2, [18]94, Shortt Mss., Douglas Library, Queen's University.

based on his lectures. Nevertheless, for twenty years after Ferland had ceased teaching in 1865, Laval had general history only, and the history of Canada did not reappear until 1887 with M. Joseph Beaudouin. After his tenure of the chair, there was another gap until M. Amedée Gosselin came in 1899.

In the English-speaking universities, Canadian history came much later. There was no Canadian history at Queen's in the B.A. course for many years. Lectures were devoted almost exclusively to medieval history; but in 1890 it was announced that students would also be examined on outside reading in J. G. Bourinot's *Constitution of Canada.* This must have been in *A Manual of the Constitutional History of Canada to 1888* which had appeared in 1888. At the same time, among six other books recommended for reading by Queen's history students, but apparently without the sanction of an examination, was Kingsford's *History of Canada.* This was only the first volume which had just appeared in 1889. In 1892 lectures on the Constitution of the United States were introduced; and in 1895 on the British Constitution and the Canadian Constitution. In the same year were given the first lectures at Queen's on Canadian history; but they were in the Department of Political Science when Adam Shortt began a course on Canadian Economic History.

When George Wrong came to his chair in the University of Toronto in 1895, his first plea was for the place of medieval history in the university curriculum. Yet in 1898 his department announced that there would be special emphasis on the History of England, of the United States, and of Canada. Mr. Wrong, however, believed in wide sweeps of history. His courses were all called "Chief Movements in . . ." and covered in four successive years Ancient, Medieval, Modern Europe and America, and Europe and America since 1763. In 1904 Bourinot's *Canada* (probably *Canada Under British Rule, 1760-1900,* published in 1900) was listed as a text. And two years later, in 1906, one of the optional special periods introduced in the fourth year at Toronto was a "History of Canada" with a long list of reference books.

Although Colby of McGill is best known to students today for his volumes in the *Chronicles of Canada* series, he taught no Canadian history in his first ten years or more. He gave five or six courses, and two summer reading courses, and every one of them was in European History; moreover, Colby's Europe does not seem to have included Britain — which does not fit in with my picture of McGill at all. The first departure from this pattern at McGill came in 1900 when, with Dean Frederick Parker Walton of Law, Colby introduced a course called "Constitutional Law and History" which consisted of the "Constitutional History of England to Edward I" and the "Constitutional Law of Canada".

In 1901 Colby was joined in the Department of History by Stephen Leacock. The number of courses offered was increased from five to nine.

One announced in advance for 1902-3 was "Canadian History, 1608-1791". When that session began, however, this Canadian course was deferred a year and its place there was taken by "The Political and Constitutional History of the United States". It sounds like a Leacock whimsey, especially as Leacock is reputed to have said that he would like to boot the Americans out of Canada. Next year the promised course on Canadian history was combined with that on the United States; but this combined course was marked in the Calendar, "omitted in 1903-4". In 1904-5 the United States was back again, and alone; and now the Law Department introduced a course in Canadian Constitutional History. There were more promises of Canadian history, and more non-starters. It was only in 1907-8 that "Canadian Government and Public Policy" was finally given by the McGill Department of History. The next year the "History of Canada, 1760-1837" was introduced. But again it was marked "omitted"!

It has sometimes been said that Canadian history was introduced into Canadian universities as a result of the growth of national feeling in Canada, particularly after the Venezuela incident. If there was any such nationalist stimulus it is more likely that it was the Alaska Boundary controversy of 1903. Meanwhile, however, Canadian lawyers had been demanding Canadian history, especially of the Constitution, for their own practical needs. At McGill, the Department of History seems to have been pushed into Canadian history by the lawyers. The same is not as clearly the case in Queen's, where the Faculty of Law had already, in 1883, "died peacefully", to quote the Queen's *Journal*. Yet even there a constitutional emphasis is noticeable and one suspects that the need to service lawyers was important.

In between the two world wars, the curricula of history courses in Canada came to include appreciable amounts of Ancient, Medieval, English, Canadian, and American history. Your university, McMaster, Mr. Chairman, was one of the first to institute what might be called the balanced programme of our day. The date was 1912-13, and the agent a young lecturer named Stewart Wallace. The curriculum in Canada thus came to be considerably more evenly balanced than that in the United States, where American history had a heavy preponderance, and than that in Britain, where American was unknown and Medieval history still held sway. If there was any bias in Canada, it was towards English constitutional history. At least that was the trend in Toronto. Probably this was due to British influence. There was certainly no undue emphasis in our universities on Canadian history. For instance, apart from optional special periods, only half of a compulsory course was devoted to Canadian history at Toronto until after the Second World War.

In the twenties and thirties, when history teaching had fully developed in Canada, although all Canadian historians did not go as far as Harry Barnes in the belief that history, as the key to the social sciences,

must become pragmatic and have practical utility, there were some who were close to that belief. And most saw history's purpose to be the co-ordination of other branches of knowledge, especially of the social sciences and humanities.[13] However, the wide spread of the Canadian history curriculum obviously imposed a great strain. Notwithstanding, it was fully accepted by Canadian historians that the student must not only cover wide surveys in all the major fields but must also dig more deeply in special fields. Chester Martin wrote, in 1936:[14]

> With the growing complexity of the modern university, the function of modern history has profoundly changed... The more highly specialized and diversified other departments in the Social Sciences have become, the more history has broadened out. *Specialization has been necessary here also,* but I think we must all recognize the necessity for some integrating factor, responding to the same general perspective and sense of direction.

He thus indicated, obliquely as was his wont, that specialization in history was also important.

There were few departures from this prevailing pattern of compulsory general surveys and optional special periods located in the main fields of Western history. One that is, perhaps, not so very far off the central theme was a natural result of the contemporary quest for a peaceful world: an interest in international relations. Further afield, the existence of an ethnic group in a university's parish led to the introduction of an "exotic" course: Professor Simpson at Saskatoon learned Russian in order to introduce, in 1937, "The History of the Slavic Peoples of Europe". This was the kind of exception that mainly serves to prove the general rule of adherence to the main areas of Western culture. However, another attempt to get outside it, General Currie's desire to introduce Far Eastern studies at McGill, met with no lasting success.[15]

There is one other important departure from Western studies. The existence of courses in "missionary hygiene" *(Santé missionnaire)* explains the purpose of certain university departments which taught Oriental and Latin-American courses including some history. In both English and French-speaking universities these were needed to prepare clergy for the mission field. Such departments, however, placed their greatest emphasis on those courses that had practical value for their theology students; and they did not, as a rule, develop historical teaching, much less teaching in other social sciences, to a high degree. Perhaps because of their earlier proclivities, such departments have not as a rule expanded to meet the

[13] Harry Elmer Barnes, *History and the Prospects of the Social Sciences* (New York: Knopf, 1925), pp. 1-53; F. Flenley, "History and Its Neighbours Today", *Canadian Historical Review* (1953).

[14] Chester Martin, "Wrong and History in Canada", p. 20.

[15] Hugh M. Unquhart, *Arthur Currie: The Biography of a great Canadian* (Toronto: Deve, 1950) p. 310.

challenge of the new age, though many of the men who trained in them are now leaders in the new movements.

Apart from these minor departures, Canadian universities, and their departments of history, concentrated upon Western culture. In so doing they have provided at the same time a sound intellectual disciplinary programme. History was studied for training the mind as well as for content; and the training was probably the more important. It is this combination that is now challenged by the need to bring in more about the non-Western world. For what is perhaps the most serious danger is that dilution might depreciate the position of history teaching in our universities. It is a strange fact that we historians have not set out clearly our faith in the value and place of historical studies in the university as an argument for the defence of our position.

History differs from all other disciplines in two important respects. Firstly, it stresses the paramount need for one to discover what happened in the past before one attempts to understand the present or to plan for the future. Secondly, it is concerned with the whole of human experience and not with just a part of it. With its insistence upon looking backwards, it looks down the other end of the telescope from all the other social sciences that are concerned primarily with the present. And history's telescope is the only one with an all-embracing field of vision. The aphorism "history is past politics" is misleading. History is, indeed, also past economics, past society, past philosophies, and past theologies. It is even past technologies.

Two things automatically follow. History can give the student of every other discipline a better sense of the perspective of the relation of his own specialty to human development as a whole. But the very magnitude of the field of vision presents problems of selection if history is not to be the most superficial of surveys. This selection may be guided by the needs of teaching history as a service to other disciplines; but it must be governed by the need to provide values that can be imparted by the teaching of history intrinsically, and by history alone, to an adequate number of history specialists.

As it is taught today, as a specialized honours, major, or graduate study, history has certain features that distinguish it from all other university disciplines. It stands midway between the humanities and the social sciences and possesses some of the values of both. It seeks to do more than merely retail to new customers the story of the past. At all levels, from the freshman to the writer of a doctoral thesis, it provides ample experience for the student to search for facts, to establish their validity as evidence, to select those which are pertinent and significant, to analyse and arrange them in logical sequence, to present them in persuasive form, and to develop a thesis which has value in relation to

former knowledge and experience. Although history has now come to place greater emphasis upon scientific methods of scholarship, historical writing has not neglected its earlier call for literary style in exposition. It is, for instance, freer from a jargon unintelligible to non-devotees of the mystery than are some other social sciences. Therefore, specialization in history provides an excellent intellectual discipline of general educational value. And, as a result of history's comprehensive scope, this is a broad liberal education, and not a narrow specialized one.

I myself would go further, though all may not agree. In my opinion, history is more than an intellectual discipline, more than the training of the mind. It has a moral value. As many historians and philosophers have pointed out, the social development of man has been brought about by the abnegation of self, as well as by man's individual urge to improve his lot. The operative forces in international society are, to use E. H. Carr's labels, "utopianism" and "realism". Inside the state also, idealism, altruism, morality, and social convention are creative forces as important as law, authority, and self-interest. Toynbee believes that no one can belong to any school of historians at all who is unable to perform the self-transcending feat of endeavouring to break out of the self-centredness that is innate in every living creature. [16] We may be painfully aware that all our fellow-historians are not entirely free from self; but if Toynbee is correct, history must always have a moral lesson to convey.

At this point we should recall that the fragmentation of the Christian world, and the spread of Western scholarship and education outside Christendom, have destroyed the possibility of a universally acceptable "Queen of the sciences". Scientific method in the physical sciences is, of course, universal and may seem now to have become the key to all knowledge. But, quite apart from any doubts the metaphysicians may have about such a claim, the application of the scientific method in the field of social science has serious limitations. Surely, in these circumstances, the one field of social study which is essential to all others is the accurate establishment of the facts of the past in every field of human endeavour, that is to say, history.

In view of these intellectual and moral gains which, as I have suggested, can be derived from history, and in view of the importance of history to all scholarship, it is tempting to assert that history today comes closer than any other discipline to that central position once occupied in the classical educational world by philosophy, and in the medieval educational world by theology. Although we may not be able to persuade our colleagues to recognize this claim to an absolutist crown, we can at least demonstrate that our position in the whole structure of the university is

[16] A. J. Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion* (London: Oxford U.P., 1956), p. 135

important, unique, and even essential; and perhaps we may gain from them an admission that we are akin to presidents or constitutional monarchs. But we cannot persuade them unless we maintain our cause vigorously.

The history of history teaching in Canadian universities shows how slow was the development of the concept of history as a separate discipline. It grew in response to a real general need; but its development was obviously conditioned by local circumstances, particularly the initiative of an individual or the availability of specialists. It came to possess a key place in the whole university curriculum. No one will deny that there is now a requirement for further change to meet the challenges of out time. But, since we are historians, should we not try to learn from our own historical background? Should we not be wary lest, in response to pressures from zealots or popular enthusiasms or publicity-hungry administrators, we destroy in a careless moment a curriculum-structure that has been matured by time?

One particular thing upon which we should insist is that the excellence of teaching in history, as much, if not far more, than in any other subject, can only be maintained if the proper proportion of faculty to students is maintained. Classes must remain small. The large formal lecture has its place. But small tutorial essay groups or seminars with less than a dozen students under expert professors are vastly superior to quiz-sections of twenty-five or thirty conducted by graduate students; and they are infinitely better than large lectures supplemented by objective tests or examinations marked by machines. Small classes, personal contacts, and close supervision of reading, writing, thinking, and discussing are absolutely essential if history is to maintain the unique values which it has hitherto been able to provide for the full intellectual development of the student.

One other problem that ensues automatically from venturing into exotic field of history must also be mentioned. It is the question of language. The need for mastery of languages has always been a hurdle in the study and teaching of history. In earlier days the knowledge of a few of the main languages of the Western world was adequate for almost the whole historical community in Canada to come to grips with primary material. It is now necessary to bring into the History Department, and into the University, men linguistically competent in remote Asiatic and Slavic languages. Research exercises will become dependent upon languages not generally known by Canadian students. Obviously advanced specialized study is less likely in these exotic fields. At the same time the teachers in those fields are less willing to share the teaching of general survey courses where their expertise is not required. One way to meet the language problem in the *exotica* would be to set up departments separate from the department of history. There is an additional compell-

ing motive. It is apparently easier to collect funds for a department dealing with the new fashionable area studies than for an old-time department of history. Area studies can pick up fondation money that passes history by. Therefore there is a great temptation to put all study of non-Western fields into special departments or institutes for area studies.

This problem of language has been met before. Classical history is frequently taught outside the history department, partly because of the traditional prestige of the classics, but also as a result of the language problem. Half of the courses given in our departments of classics are actually historical courses; and in many of them students see little primary material and then only in translation. Is it unfair to suggest that, in consequence, at least when it is taught outside the history department, classical history has less to provide in the way of educational value today than modern history?

The study of history outside the department of history is, of course, an old story. Quite apart from the case of classics mentioned above, departments of law, philosophy, languages and literature, economics, medicine, and the sciences have all ventured into teaching history at one time or another. Some are still doing it. They complain that history departments do not give what they require. Sometimes we are too specialized. Sometimes we don't give the particular specialization they want. But this often results in courses in which the value offered is not an intellectual discipline as historians know it and as historians seek to provide even in their wide survey courses, by use of primary sources and documents. History courses given by other departments are frequently merely exposure or informational courses lacking solid intellectual content.

Furthermore, the creation of departments for area studies means that they thus cover at least two, and often many more, disciplines. This in turn can mean confusion and stultification. To put it in its simplest form, if a department includes men of two disciplines, there is a built-in basic split that can destroy harmony and homogeneity. As the head of such a department must come from one or the other discipline, it is probable that one side will inevitably be stressed. A glance over the history of those departments of modern European languages which gave courses in "civilization" in former days will show that they have tended to move away from such courses and to concentrate upon the teaching of language and literature.

Exotic fields of history can, however, be introduced into the Canadian university by creating interdisciplinary committees. In the past these have often been disliked because they seemed sterile since they belonged to no one. If, however, they are dignified with the name of "institute", and if they are fattened with foundation funds, they should be able to pro-

duce more freely, Such "institutes" or "area studies" should, however, not have departmental status. They should not have the right to confer degrees, at least not the important degrees which in Canada are the Honours B.A., the Ph.D., and perhaps still also the M.A. Such degrees should be granted only by the department representing the particular discipline in the field in which the student specialized, be it history, economics, political science, sociology, philosophy, language, or literature. The faculty members of area-studies institutes should be members also of the departments of their own particular discipline. Only by following these principles will it be possible to preserve the values which have been developed over the years in the teaching of history.

Participation in interdisciplinary area studies, whether through institutes or otherwise, and whether for graduate or undergraduate studies will, however, still mean that history departments must add men in exotic fields. Interdisciplinary organization may help to minimize the dilution of the disciplines, but it will not remove the danger of the dilution of the content of history taught in Canada. Departments are usually smaller in this country than in the United States. They can therefore less easily afford to spread themselves. Moreover, as we have seen, they have in the past tried to maintain a rather more balanced spread over Western civilization. There is real danger, therefore, that expansion into non-Western fields will mean for Canada, more than will be the case in the United States, a weakening in education in essential Western concepts. This will diminish the student's grasp of the principles of the Western society of which he is a part. And it may affect even more seriously his sense of identity as a Canadian.

To sum up, in grasping for contact with the vast new world, we may jeopardise not only our intellectual strength but also, at the same time, our faith in Western liberal culture, our sense of Canadian identity, in fact the very things that have made us what we are.