

MCGILL UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Memorandum on the Training of High School Teachers

I. Introduction

This memorandum is, in the main, an attempt to state a policy to be followed by the University in the training of teachers for the High Schools of the Province of Quebec. There are many other functions that might be discharged by a fully-equipped Department of Education at such a University as McGill. But these must be left for consideration when the Department is more fully developed than it is to-day.

I confine myself to a consideration of the question of training High School teachers for good reasons:-

- i. The Department of Education originated from the necessity for such training.

I found arrangements to this end in operation when I joined the staff, and my first task was to take over responsibility for these and to explore possibilities of developing them.

- ii. Better provision for training High School teachers is the most urgent duty of the University at the moment in respect of its relation to the schools. || N.B.
Quite apart from the wider public responsibility, the University has the strongest reasons of its own for taking action. Standards of University work have risen and continue to rise, and the power of any University to adjust itself to the demand that arises in this way, is determined by the quality and attainment of the matriculants who come in from the schools.

There are obvious limits to what can be done by extending either the duration of the period of study for a degree, or the duration of High School training. On both sides, - that of the University and that of the school, - the situation calls for wiser economy of the time that is even now available. This will involve in the schools better classification of pupils, more flexible organization of groups, earlier selection of the abler pupils for intensive training, and more specialization of teaching. Most of all, however, it will require a supply of well-trained teachers, particularly of teachers properly qualified for work with senior pupils.

Pending changes in Courses of Study, when they take effect, will facilitate some at least of these desirable adjustments. It is all the more important, therefore, that schemes should be instituted without delay for training a supply of teachers qualified to meet the new demands and capable of carrying further the desired re-modelling of school arrangements.

- iii. A third reason for confining the present discussion to the training of High School teachers is the undeveloped state of the Education Department itself. At present I am single-handed and so have to limit my efforts to meeting the most urgent needs. Moreover, if the Department is to grow, I feel strongly that it ought to grow, not on the lines of a comprehensive blue-print plan, designed at the outset to cover all conceivable needs, but slowly and solidly in response to the proved needs of the situation. A satisfactory scheme for the training of High School teachers will afford a solid nucleus of work and organization, around which the later developments can grow.