

# Health, Education, Economy: Philanthropic Foundations in the Atlantic Region in the 1920s and 1930s

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## Health, Education, Economy: Philanthropic Foundations in the Atlantic Region in the 1920s and 1930s

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION of New York in the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland during the period between the two World Wars was unorthodox. Or at least that was the feeling of Morse A. Cartwright, Director of the American Association for Adult Education, when he wrote to Carnegie Corporation president F.P. Keppel in 1936 to thank Keppel for showing him copies of letters received from the president of St. Dunstan's College. Cartwright, a frequent adviser of the Corporation in its programmes of support for adult education, went on to elaborate his view in some detail:

I have one comment to make, namely, that most of the adult education from that part of the world (due no doubt to the success of the Antigonish experiments) seems to be confused as to objective. It seems quite impossible to separate the educational and the economic goals. Perhaps in a pioneer and poverty-stricken country it is not desirable that they be separated and hence my comment is not one of criticism but merely of notation. It does not shock me in the least that oyster culture and religion and art in the home should all be combined in one program as they are on Prince Edward Island, but on the other hand I think that this mixture is in a sense evidence that the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland are exceptional and quite unlike the situations that ordinarily would be met in the United States. The economic urge is exceedingly strong and I am not at all sure that the interest manifested in education is not largely a reflection of the enlightened self-interest of the people translated into terms of bettering themselves materially.<sup>1</sup>

Cartwright's perception of the Maritimes and Newfoundland as "a pioneer and poverty-stricken country" was one that was at times reflected in the views of officials of the other major U.S. philanthropic foundation that was active in these areas during the 1920s and 1930s; that is, the Rockefeller Foundation.

1 Morse A. Cartwright to F.P. Keppel, 24 April 1936, St. Dunstan's College File, Carnegie Corporation Archives [CCA], New York. The research for this article was funded by the Small Towns Research Project of Mount Allison University, with the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The author wishes to thank the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Rockefeller Archive Center for providing access to archival material.

When, for example, the Rockefeller Foundation voted in 1929 to cooperate with the government of Newfoundland in the launching of a public health scheme, it cited the scattered distribution of population and the absence of organized local governments as factors that complicated a health situation characterized by high rates of tuberculosis, nutritional diseases, and high infant and maternal mortality rates.<sup>2</sup> When assessed in worldwide terms, moreover, the Rockefeller Foundation's public health initiatives in the Maritimes and Newfoundland were considered to lend themselves to comparisons with similar projects undertaken far from North American shores. A 1939 report on the foundation's public health activities in Nova Scotia, for example, commented that "the Nova Scotia project represents a type of service that the Foundation has often been called upon to undertake in...Brazil and other countries of South America, in Czechoslovakia and other countries of Europe, in India and other lands of the Orient . . .".<sup>3</sup>

Yet if in some respects the interventions of the two philanthropic foundations in the Maritime provinces and Newfoundland were perceived as excursions into underdeveloped areas, in other ways these regions were treated as part of the North American mainstream. Both foundations made substantial grants to higher education institutions for purposes of endowment. In the field of medical education, for example — and notably in the case of the \$500,000 granted in 1920 to the Dalhousie University medical school — the Maritimes and Newfoundland were expressly put in a North American context by the Rockefeller Foundation. Following the setting aside of \$5 million earlier in 1920, at the request of J.D. Rockefeller, for the promotion of medical education in Canada, the foundation had set about formulating "a Dominion-wide policy", including support for strategically-placed medical schools. Dalhousie, concluded the foundation's Division of Medical Education in recommending the grant, "is the medical centre of the Maritime Provinces...and includes in its territory Newfoundland. The nearest medical schools are McGill to the west and Dartmouth, Portland and Vermont to the south".<sup>4</sup>

Each of these different perceptions contributed to the reasons that prompted the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation to spend a combined total of more than \$4 million in the Maritimes and Newfoundland between 1918 and 1940. Indeed, when the two perceptions are considered together, a strong case could be made for regarding these regions as an ideal testing ground for new ventures. Of the Carnegie Corporation's involvement in the establishment

2 Proposal for Aid to Newfoundland, 1929, RG2, Series 427, Box 26, Folder 212, Rockefeller Foundation Archives [RFA], Rockefeller Archive Center, North Tarrytown, N.Y.

3 Report on Public Health Progress in Nova Scotia, 1939, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 23, Folder 218, RFA.

4 Records of Development of Medical Education in Canada, 1919-1925, pp. 2, 4-6, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 4, Folder 33, and History of Rockefeller Involvement with Dalhousie Medical School, 1919-1927, pp. 8-10, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 4, Folder 34, RFA.

of Memorial University College in Newfoundland, for example, Morse Cartwright wrote in 1927 that "the whole Newfoundland venture is a most interesting adult education (as well as a regularized education) experiment in a peculiarly pioneer field". Similarly, in recommending Rockefeller Foundation support for the founding of the Institute of Public Affairs at Dalhousie University in 1936, the foundation official Stacy May saw the project as "a control experiment against which to measure experiments supported in the United States", involving "sufficient variables...to serve as an interesting contrast and not so many (as in Europe) as to make the experiment irrelevant".<sup>5</sup> Yet whether informed by one or the other perception, or the combination of both, the actions of the two foundations also depended upon the policies and methods which they had evolved since being established earlier in the century.

When the Carnegie Corporation became in 1911 the latest of several philanthropic trusts established by Andrew Carnegie, its aims were avowedly educational: "to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge among the people of the United States". Shortly afterwards, the corporation was empowered by Carnegie to appropriate part of its annual income for similar purposes in Canada and in British overseas territories.<sup>6</sup> The aims of the Rockefeller Foundation, formally established in 1913, had been enunciated by Rockefeller as early as 1909: "to promote the well-being and to advance the civilization of the peoples of the United States and its territories and possessions and of foreign lands in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, in the prevention and relief of suffering, and in the promotion of any and all of the elements of human progress". Although this declaration was phrased generally, the specialization of the foundation in health-related activities was quickly established under the influence of Rockefeller's close adviser, the Baptist minister Frederick T. Gates.<sup>7</sup> As philanthropic agencies, therefore, the chief interests of the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation diverged. More minor differences also emerged over time. The Rockefeller Foundation, according to the opinion expressed in 1930 by F.P. Keppel, tended to have a larger full-time professional staff; Keppel attributed the difference to Andrew Carnegie's original business practice of working with a small staff, as opposed to Rockefeller's continuous

5 Morse A. Cartwright to F.P. Keppel, 4 March 1927, Memorial University of Newfoundland File, CCA; Stacy May, Notes on Dalhousie Project, 3 May 1936, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 33, Folder 345, RFA. For breakdown of the total grants by the two foundations, see Tables One and Two; these figures may be put in an overall Canadian context by reference to Robin S. Harris, *A History of Higher Education in Canada, 1663-1960* (Toronto, 1976), pp. 343-8.

6 Robert M. Lester, *Forty Years of Carnegie Giving: A Summary of the Benefactions of Andrew Carnegie and of the Work of Philanthropic Trusts Which He Created* (New York, 1941), pp. 57-8; Howard J. Savage, *Fruit of an Impulse: Forty-five Years of the Carnegie Foundation, 1905-1950* (New York, 1953), pp. 27-8; Stephen H. Stackpole, *Carnegie Corporation: Commonwealth Program, 1911-1961* (New York, 1963), pp. 3-4.

7 Raymond B. Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York, 1952), pp. 14-21.

reliance on expert advisers and organizers.<sup>8</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation also had closer and more frequent contacts with public authorities than did the Carnegie Corporation, largely because its public health work necessarily included cooperation with governments.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these differences between the two foundations, the characteristics that they had in common were more striking. Both depended for their endowments upon the wealth gathered by their founders during the late 19th century period of industrialization in the United States. Both were profoundly influenced by the "gospel of wealth" propounded by Andrew Carnegie in an essay in the *North American Review* of 1889. For Carnegie, any effort to reverse or to subvert through revolution the achievements of capitalist society constituted an attack on "the foundation upon which civilization itself rests". Yet the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few successful industrialists presented a moral and political difficulty if such wealth were selfishly used. Rather, argued Carnegie, wealth was to be regarded as a trust, and the wealthy individual as "the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren".<sup>10</sup> Both foundations had then had their high motivations publicly challenged in 1915 by the Congressional Commission on Industrial Relations, on the ground that they were essentially tools of corporate interests from which they sprang, and were able through their grants of funding to exercise a dangerous and irresponsible influence in such important areas as education and social services.<sup>11</sup> Both had responded in later years by recognizing the obligation of foundations as tax-exempt bodies to allow public scrutiny of their finances and activities, by denying that they wielded power other than a power to assist progressive causes, and ultimately by reaffirming a faith in the progress of human civilization regardless of class conflicts. In 1922, for example, the acting president of the Carnegie Corporation, Henry S. Pritchett, commented in his annual report that "the method that the founder emphasized is not that of the establishment and support of agencies operated under the direction of the trustees, but rather the intelligent and discriminating assistance of such causes and forces in the social order as seem to promise effective service...[in any] direction that ministers to the advancement of civilization".<sup>12</sup>

8 F.P. Keppel, *The Foundation: Its Place in American Life* (New York, 1930), pp. 69-70.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 43-4.

10 Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth", in Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Time-ly Essays*, ed. Edward C. Kirkland (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 14-49. On the influence of Carnegie on Rockefeller, see Fosdick, *Rockefeller Foundation*, pp. 14-21, and Keppel, *The Foundation*, pp. 20-1.

11 U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations: *Final Report and Testimony*, Vol. I, pp. 80ff., U.S. 64th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Documents, No. 415; Keppel, *The Foundation*, pp. 26-9. On the work of the commission, see also Graham Adams, Jr., *Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-15: The Activities and Findings of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations* (New York, 1966).

12 Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Report of the Acting President* (New York, 1922), pp. 7-8. For further discussion of Pritchett's concept of social progress, see Ellen Condliffe Lagemann,

The Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation can be closely compared not only in the general matter of their origins, but also in the origins of their interest in the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland. The 1920 plan of assistance to the Dalhousie medical school was in effect a joint project of the two foundations. As early as 1910, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching — a separate agency from the Carnegie Corporation, but closely related — had intervened vigorously in the current debates over the future of medical education in North America by publishing an exhaustive study of the subject that it had commissioned from Abraham Flexner. Flexner's report had made sweeping recommendations for rationalization of medical education along lines that emphasized scientific medicine, and henceforth this was one area where the interests of the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation overlapped.<sup>13</sup> Thus, by the time the Rockefeller Foundation voted its \$500,000 to Dalhousie on 26 May 1920, the Carnegie Corporation had resolved to contribute a further \$500,000 conditional on the provision of the same amount by the Rockefeller Foundation. Dalhousie would thus provide a strong central medical school for the Maritimes and Newfoundland, just as — so the relevant minute of the Rockefeller Foundation implied — Dalhousie as a university might ultimately be a central institution at least for all Nova Scotia: "although it [Dalhousie] is non denominational it receives no state aid...on account of the jealousies of the other colleges of Nova Scotia, all of which are practically denominational. It has made every effort to be considered the Provincial University but for the reason stated, thus far without success".<sup>14</sup>

The funding of the Dalhousie medical school was not the first involvement of either foundation in the Atlantic region. The Rockefeller Foundation had responded to an appeal for assistance at the time of the 1914 Newfoundland sealing disaster by recommending that a personal donation be made by Rockefeller; the foundation had also been involved in an advisory capacity in relief work following the Halifax Explosion and in the ensuing public health work of the Massachusetts-Halifax Health Commission.<sup>15</sup> The Carnegie Corporation, meanwhile, had already made grants to Dalhousie University amounting to some \$45,000, and had also in 1919 granted \$50,000 to St. Francis Xavier University for the endowment of a professorship in French, at the behest

*Private Power for the Public Good: A History of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (Middletown, Conn., 1983), pp. 21-36.

- 13 Savage, *Fruit of an Impulse*, pp. 105-7; E. Richard Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men: Medicine and Capitalism in America* (Berkeley, 1979), pp. 142-56.
- 14 History of Rockefeller Involvement with Dalhousie Medical School, 1919-1927, p. 8, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 4, Folder 34, RFA; H.S. Pritchett to R.M. Pearce, 21 May 1920, Dalhousie University File, CCA.
- 15 E.H. Outerbridge to S.J. Murphy, 20 April 1914, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 3, Folder 25, RFA; Jerome D. Greene to J.D. Rockefeller, Jr., 27 April 1914, *ibid.*; on the Rockefeller Foundation's involvement in Halifax relief work and the Massachusetts-Halifax Health Commission, see the extensive files in RG1.1, Series 427, Box 2, Folders 14-21, RFA.

of the university's vice-president, J.J. Tompkins.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the large grants to the Dalhousie medical school were for both foundations by far their most important interventions, and furthermore established centralizing principles that were once again to be brought forward by the Carnegie Corporation in the following year. It was in May 1921 that the Carnegie Corporation approved the sending of a small commission "to examine and report upon the educational situation in Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces of Canada, in order that the Corporation may have reliable data upon which to base any action looking toward appropriations for educational institutions in the region mentioned".<sup>17</sup> The president of the corporation, J.R. Angell, was not sure that the Maritimes and Newfoundland did in fact constitute a single region; in Newfoundland, he believed, the corporation itself might well intervene directly to institute a system of higher education, whereas in the Maritimes the existing institutions could be supported, provided they could be encouraged to adopt "any practicable forms of co-operation".<sup>18</sup> In the event, the commission — consisting of W.S. Learned of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and K.C.M. Sills, Nova Scotia-born president of Bowdoin College, Maine — directed its recommendations chiefly at the Maritimes. The Maritime colleges, they recommended, should be centralized in a federation located in Halifax. They envisaged too that the new institution, supplemented by a junior college in St. John's, would draw students from Newfoundland, and would "furnish this remote population the best of service".<sup>19</sup>

Thus far, the interventions of the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation in the Maritimes and Newfoundland had been closely comparable. Remote and backward as these regions might be considered to be, the two foundations were convinced that large-scale centralizing schemes aimed at the modernization of medical education and of higher education as a whole were capable of bringing standards into conformity with those prevailing elsewhere in North America. Nevertheless, the roles played by the respective foundations were to differ in the ensuing years, for reasons that lay chiefly in the diversity of perceptions within the provinces themselves as to their needs. The Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation ultimately established their closest contacts with, and drew their most influential advice from, different groups within the social and intellectual milieu of the Maritimes and Newfoundland.

The Rockefeller Foundation was the simpler case, for its activities in the

16 Robert M. Lester, *Review of Grants in the Maritime Provinces of Canada and Newfoundland, 1911-1933* (New York, 1934), pp. 31-4; J.J. Tompkins to J. Bertram, 3 December 1919, St. Francis Xavier University File, CCA.

17 Lester, *Review of Grants*, p. 8.

18 J.R. Angell to H.S. Pritchett, 10 August 1921, Maritime Provinces Educational Federation File, CCA.

19 William S. Learned and Kenneth C.M. Sills, *Education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada* (New York, 1922), p. 48 and *passim*.

Maritimes and Newfoundland continued to be directed at the development of health-related programmes at Dalhousie University, and at working with provincial governments in the field of public health.<sup>20</sup> For the foundation, these were conventional lines of operation, and in the case of the relationship with Dalhousie they proceeded smoothly and successfully. The original grants of 1920 were supplemented in 1921 by a further allocation of \$50,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation (matched by a similar grant from the Carnegie Corporation) to enable the Salvation Army to complete the construction of its Grace Maternity Hospital in Halifax, which was to serve as part of the clinical facilities of the medical school. Smaller grants of \$5,000 were made in 1928 and 1929 to supplement the teaching staff in the Department of Hygiene, and then in 1933 an allocation of \$44,000 was made to be used over a five-year period for teaching in public health and preventive medicine. This grant was supplemented by a further \$21,400 voted in 1938 to be payable over three years.<sup>21</sup> Finally, in a venture that went outside the confines of the medical school, although still retaining a connection with public health, the Rockefeller Foundation agreed in 1936 to fund a programme of training and research in the field of public administration. Leading to the establishment of the Institute of Public Affairs at Dalhousie, this was the first initiative of the foundation in the public administration field outside of the United States.<sup>22</sup> The programme not only led, according to Dalhousie president Carleton Stanley, to immediate success in "breaking down the artificial barriers between department and department and faculty and faculty", but also to sponsorship of province-wide conferences and courses in areas such as industrial relations and municipal administration.<sup>23</sup> The continuing connection with the field of public health was reaffirmed in 1937 and 1938 when major studies were initiated of death rates and the availability of medical services in Cape Breton and in Yarmouth.<sup>24</sup>

Appraisals by the Rockefeller Foundation of the results of its grants to Dalhousie University were consistently favourable. The programme of teaching in the field of public health, with the establishment at the university of a Public

20 Not included here are the substantial personal gifts of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to Acadia College; see the correspondence in J.D. Rockefeller, Jr., Papers, RG2, Educational Interests, Acadia University, Folders 123, 124, Rockefeller Archive Center.

21 History of Rockefeller Involvement with Dalhousie Medical School, 1919-1927, pp. 13, 144, Box 4, Folder 34, Minute on Dalhousie University: Public Health and Preventive Medicine, [1938], Box 5, Folder 43, Series 427, RG1.1, RFA.

22 Stacy May, Notes on Dalhousie Project, 3 May 1936, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 33, Folder 345, RFA; see also the other relevant material in this folder.

23 Carleton Stanley to Donald Mainland, DAL/MS/1/3, Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University Archives [DUA]. See also the documentation in the related files, Institute of Public Affairs-Dalhousie Bureau of Industrial Relations, and Institute of Public Affairs-Municipal Consulting Bureau.

24 Minutes on Dalhousie University Morbidity Studies, 5 August 1937 and 30 June 1938, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 32, Folder 341, RFA.



Health Centre, was singled out for special praise. "With Foundation aid", read an internal report of the foundation in 1938, "the [Dalhousie Medical] School has been singularly successful in establishing itself and the Center as part of the community"; it was, the report continued, "the only medical school in the four Maritime provinces — Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island".<sup>25</sup> The achievement recognized, therefore, was the provision of modern, professionalized medicine on a central basis to a region perceived as comprising the Maritime provinces and Newfoundland. Efforts to work individually with the provincial governments in the generation of public health programmes were regarded as less uniformly successful. In accordance with normal foundation policies, the intervention of the foundation was directed at launching programmes which would eventually be carried on by governments out of their own resources. Grants for the establishment of a new sanitary engineering organization within the Nova Scotia Department of Health in 1934, and for the setting up of a model public health district in Cape Breton in 1936, were favourably appraised in 1939; so successful was the first public health district that the province had subsequently decided to establish a second district centred on Yarmouth.<sup>26</sup>

Other efforts met greater difficulties, or were conceived on a lesser scale. The early success of the Massachusetts-Halifax Health Commission in using the Halifax-Dartmouth area to give a "demonstration of what the introduction of public health methods could do for a community" — a venture with which the Rockefeller foundation was closely connected in giving advice and recommending personnel, though it did not contribute funds — was not long sustained after the commission phased out its work during the mid-1920s. Hopes that the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, and the province, would provide for its continuation were never entirely fulfilled, and many trained public health workers thereupon left for the United States.<sup>27</sup> In New Brunswick, a Rockefeller Foundation grant of \$27,000 voted in 1922 "for the purpose of carrying out a rural health program" was hindered by lack of investment by the provincial government, although a further effort was made in 1928.<sup>28</sup> In 1929, after cor-

25 Minute on Dalhousie University: Public Health and Preventive Medicine, [1938], RG1.1, Series 427, Box 5, Folder 43, RFA.

26 Minute on Nova Scotia Bureau of Sanitary Engineering, 27 October 1934, Box 23, Folder 218, Minute on Nova Scotia Local Health District, 19 September 1936, Box 19, Folder 176, Report on Public Health Progress in Nova Scotia, Box 23, Folder 218, Series 427, RG1.1, RFA.

27 Minutes of Massachusetts-Halifax Health Commission, 23 March 1928, MG20, Vol. 197, Public Archives of Nova Scotia [PANS]; G.F. Pearson to V.G. Heiser, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 2, Folder 20, RFA; Kathryn M. McPherson, "Nurses and Nursing in Early Twentieth-Century Halifax", M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1982, pp. 17, 98-101, 110-11.

28 See the correspondence of 1922 in RG5, IHB, Series 1, Sub. II, Series 427, Canada 1922, Folder 1865, RFA; W.F. Roberts to F.F. Russell, 11 September 1923, RG5.2, Series 427, Roberts 1923 and 1924, RFA; G.G. Melvin to C.N. Leach, 31 July 1928, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 24, Folder 227, RFA.

respondence with Sir Wilfred Grenfell as well as with the government of Newfoundland, the foundation resolved to cooperate in a public health initiative with the Board of Health in St. John's, but this project apparently failed to get underway.<sup>29</sup> On Prince Edward Island, meanwhile, the foundation's first initiative was a small vote of \$15,300 over a five-year period, 1939-43, for support of a public health laboratory.<sup>30</sup>

In giving support to Dalhousie University, and in efforts to promote public health schemes in the Atlantic region, the Rockefeller Foundation was following its customary practices. This is not to say that these interventions were unimportant, or that their success or failure did not influence prevailing standards of education and health. Yet they were transactions largely governed by a commitment to the professionalization of health care and were arranged in consultation with government and university officials or health professionals whose assumptions did not essentially vary from those of the officials of the foundation.<sup>31</sup>

In the case of the initiatives launched by the Carnegie Corporation, however, this was not necessarily true. Undoubtedly, the report published by Learned and Sills in 1922 was based upon an intelligent appraisal not only of the situation of education in the Maritime provinces but also of the political and societal characteristics of the region. The commissioners noted, for example, the sense of injustice that informed the Maritime rights movement:

In all the provinces, a condition of actual prosperity is translated into a feeling of comparative poverty for the reason that all the other Canadian provinces have inherited great resources thru [sic] the vast extension of their original territory, while for the Maritime Provinces there is no opportunity for expansion. It is thus possible for Ontario to finance an elaborate educational program without resorting to general taxation, while good schools in the Maritime Provinces must be paid for largely out of the earnings of the people themselves. The adjustment of this inequality is now an issue in Canadian politics, or at least in that aspect of it that especially interests the Maritime Provinces.<sup>32</sup>

Learned and Sills also commented upon the importance of small-town and rural societies within the region, which they linked with the strength of organized religion:

Undisturbed by foreign immigration and maintaining a conservative,

29 See the correspondence in RG2, Series 427, Box 26, Folder 212, RFA; and H.M. Mosdell to J.A. Ferrell, 28 April 1930, Box 43, Folder 356, RFA.

30 Minute on P.E.I. Public Health Laboratory, 1936, RG1.1, Series 427, Box 23, Folder 221, RFA.

31 On the earlier evolution of the medical profession in the Maritimes, see Colin D. Howell, "Reform and the Monopolistic Impulse: The Professionalization of Medicine in the Maritimes", *Acadiensis*, XI, 1 (Autumn 1981), pp. 3-22.

32 Learned and Sills, *Education in the Maritime Provinces*, p. 5.

chiefly small-town and rural life, the people are thoroughly denominationalized, only a small fraction of one per cent of the population giving no specific religious affiliation in the census. Furthermore, these various groups form the best understood and most actively motivated social organizations in a small town régime, and wield relatively much larger influence than in large cities. People, including the men, go to church.<sup>33</sup>

Yet the commissioners did not allow these characteristics to influence significantly their findings or recommendations. For them, the principal justification for the reforms they advocated was that the cause of educational efficiency would be advanced. A by-product would be "an illuminating experiment almost certain to succeed" which would "serve as a model appropriate to many existing American situations".<sup>34</sup> What Learned and Sills did not anticipate was the extent to which support for their plan would be influenced by the notion that economic justice and educational development were directly and inseparably linked, and the extent to which opposition would focus on whether centralization was an appropriate strategy for a rural and small-town population struggling to cope with economic dislocation. These two concerns would eventually have an important influence on later schemes supported by the Carnegie Corporation in the Maritimes and in Newfoundland.

The events that led to the ultimate failure of the Learned/Sills university federation scheme are well known and need no repetition here.<sup>35</sup> Whether what Learned privately described in 1925 as "the foolish but tenacious notion of the wicked exposure of tender youth to the wicked influences of a bad city" caused the lack of response by most Maritime colleges and universities to the Carnegie Corporation's expressed willingness to contribute \$3 million to support the expenses of implementation, or even the unreasoned opposition of "the poorer and weaker rural brethren", there was no doubt that opposition to centralization was a crucial issue in the debate.<sup>36</sup> At its most rational level, the argument could be made that to force young people to travel long distances to one central institution was not a sound way of attempting to provide educational opportunities given the economic and social circumstances of the day. Yet when Learned called, as he did in writing to the chairman of the Dalhousie board of governors, G.F. Pearson, in July 1922, for "frequent and thorough-going discussions [of] the strictly educational features of the proposed union", he was asking for more

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>35</sup> For one treatment, and bibliography, see John G. Reid, "Mount Allison College: The Reluctant University", *Acadiensis*, X, 1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 35-66.

<sup>36</sup> Learned to Keppel, 2 March 1925, Maritime Provinces Educational Federation Files, CCA; Learned to G.F. Pearson, 14 July 1922, *ibid.*; see also Lester, *Review of Grants*, pp. 11-13. For discussion of the issue of centralization in the wider context of the overall activities of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, see Lagemann, *Private Power for the Public Good*, pp. 179-93.

than many of the scheme's most vigorous supporters were willing to give. Some advocates of the scheme, such as Presidents A. Stanley Mackenzie of Dalhousie University and T. Stannage Boyle of King's, were evidently influenced by academic, as well as possibly by institutional, motivations; although even Mackenzie was not averse on occasion to linking the federation scheme with Maritime rights, and citing the achievements of the large western universities in the fields of research and extension work.<sup>37</sup> For many of the most vigorous and publicly committed supporters, however, the economic argument was paramount.

For J.J. Tompkins, for example, who waged a constant battle to rally opinion behind the federation scheme even after he had been relieved of his duties at St. Francis Xavier University in late 1922 and sent as parish priest to the outlying port of Canso, the federation scheme represented a final opportunity for the Maritime provinces to regain their prosperity through self-help. His sense of urgency was well expressed in the summer of 1922 in a letter to his ally, the Halifax lawyer and newspaper editor Angus L. Macdonald:

Get your coat off in good earnest. We have the best case in the world and no better cause ever was placed before the people of these provinces.... We *ought* to win and it will be *our own fault* if we don't. Failure will spell disaster for us all. Success will bring a new and glorious era to these provinces and give our poor people a chance for life in these strenuous days.<sup>38</sup>

The popular aspects of the scheme, and their relation to socio-economic issues, were continually stressed by Tompkins. Whether corresponding with the Cape Breton labour leader J.B. McLachlan in an effort to organize a "Labor College" within the federation, building on the existing programmes of the Workers' Educational Club in Glace Bay, or dismissing with near-contempt the inclination of Mackenzie and Pearson to work through established political channels, Tompkins consistently regarded popular support as the key to the federation issue. "The Labor idea", he wrote in September 1922, "is growing like a snowball. It is going to get the *people* on the run . . .".<sup>39</sup>

In his predictions of success for the federation scheme, Tompkins was over-optimistic. Yet even in defeat, the scheme had important consequences. One result of the negotiations was the allocation of substantial grants to individual universities: although Dalhousie and King's, as participants in the only actual

37 See, for example, A.S. Mackenzie to G.J. Trueman, 26 April 1926, DAL/MS/1/3, Mount Allison University: University Federation, DUA.

38 Tompkins to Macdonald, 30 July 1922, Angus L. Macdonald Papers, MG2, Cabinet 5, Folder 1348, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, [PANS].

39 Tompkins to Learned, 5 October 1922, J.B. McLachlan to Tompkins, 4 October 1922, Tompkins to Learned, 21 February 1923, Maritime Provinces Educational Federation Files, CCA.

union to result from the federation scheme, enjoyed the major share of such grants, Acadia and Mount Allison also benefited.<sup>40</sup> Less obvious than endowment grants, but also of great significance, was the way in which the scheme had brought into continuing contact with the Carnegie Corporation a number of supporters of federation who put a high priority upon the economic significance of education. These supporters had favoured the proposal not because of a desire for centralization *per se*, but because of the opportunities which they had expected would be offered to small towns and rural communities, as well as to cities, by the existence of the federation. As well as Tompkins and Angus L. Macdonald, this group included Tompkins's colleague at St. Francis Xavier, M.M. Coady, and the Newfoundland deputy minister of education, Vincent P. Burke.<sup>41</sup>

As the 1920s went on, new proposals were generated in the Maritimes and Newfoundland, based on the assumed linkage between education and economy, and found support from the Carnegie Corporation. The creation of Memorial College in St. John's, influenced by Burke among others, was facilitated by a grant of \$75,000 over a five-year period from the Carnegie Corporation, which was voted in 1924. From the beginning, the new institution recognized an obligation to extend study opportunities throughout Newfoundland, and specific grants were made during the early years to provide for a summer school and for extension of library service to "those living in small, isolated settlements". In writing to Keppel in 1928 to request renewal and increase of the corporation's funding of Memorial College, Burke cited the need of young people in Newfoundland "to prepare to take their regular places in the development of those great resources in the midst of which they have always lived but, owing to lack of the necessary educational advantages...very few of them indeed have had the training required".<sup>42</sup> The connection between educational and economic issues was even more explicit in the work of the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University, which during the formative years 1931-1937 received the major part of its revenues in the form of grants from the Carnegie Corporation, voted at the urging of Coady and Tompkins in support of the department's main purpose as enunciated by the university's board of governors: "the improvement of the economic, social and religious conditions of the people of Eastern Nova Scotia".<sup>43</sup>

40 See Table Two.

41 See M.M. Coady to A.L. Macdonald, 1 December 1922, Macdonald Papers, MG2, Cabinet 5, Folder 1348, PANS; also [A.L. Macdonald] to V.P. Burke, 9 January 1923, Folder 1348A, PANS.

42 V.P. Burke, Traveling Library, Second Announcement, September 1928, and Burke to Keppel, 17 May 1928, Memorial University of Newfoundland Files, CCA; see also Lester, *Review of Grants*, pp. 23-4.

43 F.P. Keppel, Notes of Interview with M.M. Coady, 12 April 1929, Keppel, Notes of Interview with Coady, 8 October 1931, J.J. Tompkins to R.M. Lester, 12 November 1931, and Proposal of Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University, 11 December 1931, St. Francis Xavier

In the winning of Carnegie Corporation support for the Antigonish experiment, and for other extension, co-operative, and travelling library projects in the Maritimes and Newfoundland, the personal prestige of Tompkins was one important factor. Tompkins's tireless advocacy of the federation scheme, his fortitude when exiled to Canso, and his continuing zeal on behalf of the cause of education in the region were enough to prompt the normally matter-of-fact president of the corporation, F.P. Keppel, to declare in a letter of 1939 that "he [Tompkins] is, quite literally, a saint and he is at the same time one of the most ingenious and adroit practical men I have ever known".<sup>44</sup> There was more to the relationship, however, than personal influence. Although a severe critic of unrestrained capitalism, Tompkins had long advocated a non-Marxist solution to labour-capital conflicts and to general economic problems in the Maritime region. Study and self-reliance, he believed, promoted by such educational ventures as the "people's school" he inaugurated at St. Francis Xavier in early 1921, were the routes to progress for the labour movement and for all who sought individual or communal self-improvement.<sup>45</sup> This emphasis was continued in subsequent educational ventures supported or influenced by Tompkins, and it was one that had clear affinities with the underlying philosophical principles of the philanthropic foundations. The commitment of both the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation to human progress by means other than class struggle, and their insistence that their own role should be essentially that of a catalyst, agreed well with the concept of self-help through study and cooperation. In view of Andrew Carnegie's well-known reluctance to assist denominational institutions, there was a certain irony in that the Carnegie Corporation's support should so readily be given to projects closely associated with a Roman Catholic university. Tompkins had remarked in a letter of 1927 that the time was past "when a good christian was supposed to make a choice between God and Carnegie". The secretary of the Carnegie Corporation, J.B. Bertram, expressed support in 1931 for the corporation's funding of the St. Francis Xavier extension programme in terms that showed that he too was untroubled by any such supposed antithesis: "if we can help people to help themselves instead of putting out a life line to the Red Cross or their fellow tax payers' pockets every time they get in a jam, we shall be carrying out the ideas of the Founder".<sup>46</sup>

University Extension Department File, CCA. On the revenues of the Extension Department, see *Mobilizing for Enlightenment: St. Francis Xavier University Goes to the People* (Antigonish, n.d.), Appendix B, copy in St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department File, CCA.

44 [F.P. Keppel] to R. Wilberforce, 11 April 1939, Newfoundland File, CCA.

45 See the article by Tompkins in *The Casket* (Antigonish), 29 July 1920, and the report of his speech to a regional conference of Rotary Clubs in *The Daily Times* (Moncton), 17 March 1922. On the "people's school" at Antigonish, see the documentation in J.J. Tompkins Papers, MG10-2, 5 (a), Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton.

46 J.J. Tompkins to H.J. Savage, 3 October 1927, *ibid.*, 6 (a); J.B. Bertram to F.P. Keppel, 31 December 1931, St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department Files, CCA. On Tompkins

For Bertram, however, the extension movement at St. Francis Xavier had an even wider significance. "This experiment in the Maritimes", he declared to Keppel, "is of more moment than merely to raise the people there out of their parlous condition; it may well be a demonstration of what is needed in many sections throughout the United States".<sup>47</sup> During the 1920s and early 1930s, the perception of the Maritimes and Newfoundland in the minds of officials of the Carnegie Corporation had undergone considerable change. Rather than being seen as remote areas that needed an infusion of modern progressive ideas in order to become fully North American, or even as convenient laboratories for carefully-controlled experiments, initiatives such as the Antigonish movement were now regarded as capable of generating their own methods and their own distinctive insights. During the 1930s, Prince Edward Island provided another example: with support from the Carnegie Corporation for public library development and for a chair of sociology and economics at Prince of Wales College, study clubs, cooperatives and credit unions proliferated.<sup>48</sup> To be sure, it would be easy to claim too much for the significance of such projects, either as part of the Carnegie Corporation's overall activities in the Atlantic region or in terms of long-term social and economic significance. The Carnegie Corporation's programmes were by no means entirely given over to projects that directly combined economic and educational impulses, as witness the large sums devoted to more conventional endowment grants to established institutions such as Dalhousie, King's, Acadia and Mount Allison. Furthermore, in retrospect it may seem that to place as much faith as did Tompkins and his associates in the economic value of education was naive, and substituted a simplistic remedy for the complexities of regional underdevelopment. Nevertheless, to a significant extent, the perception of the Maritimes and Newfoundland entertained by officials of the Carnegie Corporation had been reshaped through the influence of advisers within the provinces themselves.

For the Atlantic region, the inter-war period was a time of intractable socio-economic problems that defied easy solutions. The intervention of major philanthropic foundations in areas such as health and education provided one possible avenue to beneficial change. Initially, the definition of the kind of change that would be beneficial was determined in large part by the perceptions that prevailed within the foundations. Insofar as the foundations dealt with officials of existing universities and of governments, little modification of those

and his relationship with the Antigonish Movement, see Daniel W. MacInnes, "Clerics, Fishermen, Farmers, and Workers: The Antigonish Movement and Identity in Eastern Nova Scotia", Ph.D. thesis, McMaster University, 1978, pp. 158-70, 187, 216-21.

47 J.B. Bertram to F.P. Keppel, 31 December 1931, St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department Files, CCA.

48 See J.T. Croteau, *Cradled in the Waves: The Story of a People's Co-operative Achievement in Economic Betterment on Prince Edward Island, Canada* (Toronto, 1951); also J.A. Murphy to F.P. Keppel, 5 July 1937, St. Dunstan's College File, CCA.

perceptions was brought about, even though important changes were achieved in the health care and higher education systems. Yet through certain less orthodox ventures, officials of the Carnegie Corporation in particular saw their earlier perceptions refashioned by the influence of their local advisers. At a time when the regional economies were at a low ebb, the result of the dialogues with the Carnegie Corporation was to obtain support for movements that at the least gave evidence of social and intellectual vitality. For the officials who looked on from New York, the result was acceptance if not full understanding. "It seems to me", concluded Cartwright in 1936, "that the end justifies the means. The people there are receiving educational advantages, and far be it from me to enquire into their motives".<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Cartwright to Keppel, 24 April 1936, *ibid.*



Table One  
Grants Approved by Rockefeller Foundation for Maritime  
Provinces and Newfoundland, 1918-1940

Recipient	Year(s)	Purpose	Amount
Dalhousie University	1920	Medical school development	\$500,000
	1921	Medical school development	50,000
	1928	Teaching in Department of Hygiene	10,000
	1933-38	Teaching of public health	65,400
		LESS unspent balance in 1940	( 5,258)
		Institute of Public Affairs	61,200
	1936	LESS unspent balance in 1940	( 7,799)
	1937-38	Institute of Public Affairs, morbidity studies <sup>1</sup>	10,000
			683,543
New Brunswick, Government of	1923-24	Rural health programme	45,000
			45,000
Nova Scotia, Government of	1934	Department of Health, sanitary engineering	8,500
	1936	Department of health, local health district	33,400
		LESS unspent balance in 1940	( 16,597)
	1937	Department of Health, division of vital statistics	8,160
		LESS unspent balance in 1940	( 5,675)
			27,788
Prince Edward Island, Government of	1938	Public health laboratory	15,300
		LESS unspent balance in 1940	( 15,300)
			—
			\$756,331

Source: Rockefeller Foundation, *Annual Reports*, 1918-1940.

<sup>1</sup> These grants were not separately listed in the *Annual Reports* of the Foundation, but were taken from a fund designated for "grants-in-aid, social sciences, social security". See Minutes, 5 August 1937 and 30 June 1938, RG 1.1, Series 427, Box 32, Folder 341, RFA.

Table Two  
Grants Approved by Carnegie Corporation of New York  
for Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland, 1918-1940

Recipient	Year(s)	Purpose	Amount
Acadia University	1920-29	Endowment	\$275,000
	1927	Arts teaching material	5,000
	1928	Adult education	5,000
	1932	Emergency support	10,000
	1932	Purchase of books for library	15,000
	1933	Music study material	2,500
	1934	Development of fine arts	200
	1934-40	Fine arts work	11,000
	1940	Research in mathematics	5,000
			<hr/> 328,700
Central Advisory Committee on Education in the Atlantic Provinces	1924-40	Expenses of meetings <sup>1</sup>	<hr/> 19,771
Dalhousie University	1918-19	Repairs following Halifax Explosion	20,626
	1920	Endowment in medicine	500,000
	1921	Hospital teaching facilities	50,000
	1924	Payment of deficits	190,000
	1926	Arts teaching material	5,000
	1929	Books for dental school library	2,000
	1929	Endowment	400,000
	1932	Books for library	9,000
	1933	Endowment in geology	125,000
	1934	Professorship of German	8,000
	1934	Department of pathology	4,000
	1934	Research on pleochroic haloes	1,500
	1937	Medical school library development	50,000
			<hr/> 1,365,126

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Halifax Ladies College	1936	Music study material	<u>1,475</u>	1,475
Jubilee Guilds of Newfoundland	1935	Administrative expenses	<u>4,000</u>	4,000
Memorial University College	1924 1926 1927 1928-37 1930 1930 1932 1932 1938	Establishment of junior college Library service for isolated areas Summer session Support Additional equipment Scholarship fund Arts teaching material Books for library Music study material	75,000 5,000 4,000 185,000 7,500 7,500 5,000 3,000 1,325	
Mount Allison University	1932 1932 1933 1933 1936 1937	Support Books for library Arts teaching material Endowment in chemistry Music study material Professorship of Germanic Studies	10,000 4,500 5,000 125,000 2,550 5,000	293,325
New Brunswick Museum	1934	Educational Programme	<u>9,000</u>	152,050
Newfoundland Adult Education Association	1931-34 1937	Support Experiment in adult education	18,500 <u>1,000</u>	9,000 19,500

Newfoundland Public Libraries Board	1940	Books for travelling library programme <sup>2</sup>	<u>2,000</u>	2,000
Nova Scotia Regional Libraries Commission	1940	Purchase of books <sup>3</sup>	<u>10,000</u>	10,000
Prince Edward Island, Government of	1933-35	Demonstrations of library services	<u>95,000</u>	95,000
Prince Edward Island Libraries	1939	Arts teaching material	<u>2,000</u>	2,000
Prince of Wales College	1932 1933	Books for library Endowment in economics and sociology	<u>4,500</u> <u>75,000</u>	79,500
Public Archives of Nova Scotia	1934	Educational programme	<u>1,500</u>	1,500
St. Dunstan's University	1932	Books for library	<u>1,800</u>	1,800
St. Francis Xavier University	1919 1932 1932 1932-40	Endowment in French Support Books for library Extension activities <sup>4</sup>	<u>50,000</u> <u>10,000</u> <u>4,500</u> <u>65,000</u>	129,500
St. Joseph's University	1933	Books for library	<u>1,000</u>	1,000

Study by Learned and Sills	1921-24	Expenses	5,575
University of King's College	1922	Current Expenses	40,000
	1923	Institutional co-operation in Halifax	52,500
	1923	Endowment	600,000
	1925-27	Support	105,000
	1932	Books for library	3,000
			800,500
University of New Brunswick	1932	Books for library	4,500
			4,500
		TOTAL	3,325,822

Sources: Robert M. Lester, *Review of Grants in the Maritime Provinces of Canada and in Newfoundland, 1911-1933* (New York, 1934), pp. 31-3; Stephen Stackpole, *Carnegie Corporation Commonwealth Program, 1911-1961* (New York, 1963), pp. 39-49.

Notes:

- 1 Payments on behalf of the Central Advisory Committee to 1940 are calculated from the figure for 1924-42 in Stackpole, *Commonwealth Program*, by subtracting amounts paid after 1940. See R.M. Lester to G.J. Trueman, 5 August 1941, 2 December 1941, Trueman to Lester, 23 December 1941, Lester to Trueman, 20 May 1942, Trueman Papers, 7837-134, 7837-147, Mount Allison University Archives.
- 2 Of this grant of \$10,000 spread over five years, \$2000 was payable in 1940. See W.M. Woods to F.P. Keppel, 5 April 1940, Newfoundland Public Libraries Board Files, CCA.
- 3 Of this grant of \$50,000 spread over five years, \$10,000 was payable in 1940. See [H.F. Munro] to F.P. Keppel, 23 January 1941, J.J. Tompkins Papers, MG10-2, 5 (c), Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton.
- 4 In addition to Stackpole, *Commonwealth Program*, see also [R.M. Lester] to R.B. Fosdick, 28 February 1938, St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department Files, CCA.