

CHAPTER 3

DR. JACOB AND KING'S COLLEGE

Dr. Edwin Jacob was a stern and uncompromising master who effected staunch discipline throughout the college and achieved considerable respect in the eyes of his students, most of whom we should remember, were not only from the elite families, but also were supported largely at public expense at the college. Jacob was most certainly respected by his colleagues, not only by virtue of his position of authority, but also for his scholarship. He was a product of Oxford and thus rigorously grounded in the classics, stressed before that school had reached the depths of decay which were to follow a few decades later. As a member of the privileged church of England clergy; and a scholar in the old world tradition, transplanted to a hostile "frontier" environment, he found it difficult to involve himself in the social strata of the province. This aloofness was interpreted by the populace as further evidence of a scholastic system ill-suited to the needs of New Brunswick. Agitation against the college reached crisis proportions about a decade after King's College had been founded, resulting in a Provincial Act¹ in 1845 to abolish all religious tests, excepting for the Professor Theology, who was to be retained as head. The act was given Royal assent in 1846, but scarcely stemmed the tide of bitter criticism levelled at the college: it was more an assault on privilege than anything else, with, by now, much of the abuse directed towards Jacob himself. The latter worthy did what he could to

fan the flames of dissatisfaction, with public utterances equally condemning the opposition, and proclaiming that the college would not be changed.

At the same time, Fredericton was playing host to its first bishop, consecrated as Bishop Medley in 1845. Medley had soon undertaken to expand the influence of the Church at King's, suggesting to the College Council in 1846 that they establish the professional faculties of Divinity, Law and Medicine in an effort to improve the state of the college. The college council responded by appointing a committee consisting of the faculty to enquire into the suggestions. Their report², in part, stated: "That we agree with his lordship in thinking it extremely desirous (if it be practicable) that the college should be made more useful than it is in training young men for the several professions, especially for the ministry of the church. But we doubt very much the expediency of attempting to communicate much knowledge of the strictly professional kind in the course of instruction for the first degree. That course should, we think, continue to embrace, as it now does, such parts of learning as it is desirable that every gentleman possess, ...". The implication was clearly that the college council was not about to be swayed towards any of the professions by argument from any quarter. As subsequent events proved, the stance above mentioned became, over the next few years, a hardened policy position, to which all of the faculty adhered with alarming tenacity. The proponents of the church were fighting strenuously to maintain their influence over the College. It was only the year previous that agitation had resulted in a change in the charter effecting the removal of the Archdeacon of the Province as President of the college and replacing him with the Queen's representative as Visitor. Nor were faculty obliged henceforward to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles of faith, but had instead to take the oath³: "I do hereby solemnly profess, testify and declare, that I believe in the authenticity and Divine Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, and in the

Doctrine of the Holy Trinity". The College Council was, of course, as much opposed to amendments to the charter as to any other changes generally proposed for the improvement of the college. However, there was some evidence that a new political climate was becoming more manifest.

The geographical, religious and racial prejudices which had long divided the political conscience of the province, both physically and mentally, were giving way to a more cohesive rationale, effected by broader settlement, improved communications and the melting pot of time. As roads and travel improved further, a sense of purpose in politics was to become more and more evident over the next decade⁴. In this burgeoning climate, the new act to amend the charter to King's College was intended to remove the Lord Bishop from the office of visitor, substituting the Lieutenant-Governor in that role, with the Chief Justice of the Province as Chancellor. The restriction that the president be of the Anglican clergy was removed. A very stormy debate followed in the Legislature over the amendments, one of which was intended to remove Bishop Medley as ex officio member of the College Council. Perhaps as a sign of the awakening self-consciousness of the fledgling political movement, the Tories were defeated, allowing passage of the bill, although Medley retained his seat on the Council. George Fenety, a political writer of the time described one speech in the House⁵: "The Solicitor General denounced the proceeding by Bill to amend a Royal Charter as illegal, without the consent of the Corporation; as unconstitutional without the previous consent of the Crown; and as unprecedented at home or abroad, throughout the British Empire; and defied the supporters of the Bill to produce a precedent for such a proceeding. The honourable gentleman argued the question with all the zeal and acumen of a lawyer, and called upon every honest and true-hearted Churchman to oppose the Bill, as threatening the interests and prosperity of the Church."

Fenety observed that the Attorney-General had made a damaging disclosure during the debate. He pointed out that the original application to the crown for a charter was based on a draft much more liberal in its provisions even than the present one. Rather to the surprise of Sir Howard Douglas, the initiator of the application, the present charter, granted in 1828, was copied from one obtained through the machinations of Dr. Strocker of Upper Canada. So exclusive and illiberal was the copied version that Sir Howard could not be persuaded to lay it before the Assembly until shortly before his retirement from the province. In effect the changes in the actual management of the college were to be trivial. Dr. Jacob retained his Chair of Theology, and with it became the new principal of King's. As became obvious later, it was to the "head" that the opponents of the college were primarily objecting. But Dr. Jacob, for the time being, retained his privileged position, from which, every few years, on special occasions, he would descend to harangue his opponents and the populace in general on the evils of change at King's. Fortunately for posterity, some of the members of faculty possessed a greater sensibility of the times than did Jacob. They also exercised their responsibilities with more discretion than did the principal, who collected a double salary, one as superintendent of schools, but used it more or less exclusively for the upkeep of his estate at Cadogan.

Both James Robb and William Brydone Jack, two young members of the small faculty, had already earned a considerable reputation as worthy members of the community, attested to even by the staunchest of opponents of the college. Under the encouragement of the next Lieutenant-Governor this prestige was to grow even greater. Edmund Walker Head was born on March 21, 1805 near Maidstone. His father was a lawyer cum curate who had achieved prominence as a champion of the people's cause. Head's grammar school was at Winchester: it was either there or at Oxford that he made acquaintance with Charles Lyell, who later became an eminent geologist and naturalist, and was among the first to support Darwin's concept of

evolution. Head also counted Charles Babbage, the eminent mathematician, among his friends. People like Lyell and Babbage were to influence Head's perceptions on the roles of science and scientific investigation in later years, especially in matters educational. As a further clue to Head's personality it was said of him that he could recite poetry at length and at will in several languages, including Greek, Latin, German and Spanish. As he worked to prepare himself for a career in the civil service, he broadened his scope and mind to the extent that he could and did publish several books on the history and appreciation of differing schools of painting, as well as on various other subjects of academic and judicial interest.

After the failure of the Poor Law Commission⁶ in 1847, on which Head served, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, assuming office on April 11, 1848. During his administration, some of the most pernicious and difficult problems ever to befall the province were met and resolved: on his arrival the boundaries were still in dispute, especially between New Brunswick and Quebec; the railway era descended with a clatter on the province, taxing its public resources to the limit; the government came of age with the disappearance of the elitist family compact, the introduction of party politics, and finally, the achievement of a measure of independence from the Colonial Office in the administration of the affairs of the province. Not the least of Head's difficulties was the religious animosity prevalent at the time. This resulted in a violent eruption in Saint John, 13 July 1849, during the Orangemen's demonstration. On top of all this, there was still the matter of education, since it was very clear early in Head's tenure that King's College was in great danger of losing the province's support, having long ago lost the public confidence. Head's other activities included a very strong support of the development of the natural resources and agricultural opportunities in the province. In this endeavour, he had a most able assistant in the personage of Dr. James Robb who had been appointed to the Chair

of Chemistry and Natural History in October, 1837.

Robb had an excellent idea of the natural resources and capabilities of the province. He had kept meteorological records on precipitation and temperature for various towns over the years, and had made several tours throughout the regions of the province, producing in 1849 a geological map. The map was later incorporated into J.F.W. Johnston's Report of the Agricultural Capabilities of the Province of New Brunswick, in 1857. So great was Johnston's esteem for Head that he dedicated his voluminous work on North America⁸ to him, with the consequence that most of the work is on or about the Province of New Brunswick. Head worked assiduously to improve the agricultural potential of the province. On February 12, 1849 he addressed a letter to the Colonial Secretary and the College Council, requesting that a series of lectures in agricultural chemistry be given: "Mr. D'Avray, as I stated in my dispatch of Oct. 30, is to receive a salary at the rate of 80 a year for this discharge of his duties, and the other half of Mr. Housial's salary will thus for the present remain unappropriated. I am extremely desirous that a course of lectures on Agricultural Chemistry should be delivered at Fredericton during the sitting of the Assembly. Dr. Robb, one of the Professors of King's College, is perfectly competent to give these lectures, and is ready to do so, but in my opinion for such a course some remuneration over and above his salary as Professor of Chemistry and Natural History in King's would be due him, since the lectures, to be really useful, ought not to be confined to members of the College, nor perhaps delivered within its walls. Assuming the present arrangement respecting Mr. Housial's office to last for six months from the date of the expiration of his chair, the surplus of his salary would be sufficient for my object; at any rate I do not think the outlay would exceed 50 currency. Her Majesty has the appointment of the successor to Mr. Housial, and I should therefore hesitate to make any appropriation of a part of the salary of his office

except on the condition that it meets with your approval. Your lordship is aware that a sum of 1100 currency is paid annually from the Civil list to King's College. Should you see no objections to applying the surplus of Mr. Housial's salary in the manner proposed, I will do my best to get it adopted by the College Council, and I will, if possible, stipulate with Dr. Robb, for a repetition of the lectures at some places besides Fredericton. I look upon the diffusion of scientific information relating to Agriculture as a most important object to this Province. His excellency is well aware that the decision on this question must rest with the College Council and he earnestly requests that body to consider the propriety of appropriating a sufficient portion of the surplus of Mr. Housial's salary in the manner described in this dispatch subject of course to the approval of such a proposition by the Secretary of State on Her Majesty's behalf in whom the patronage of the professorship is vested"⁹.

Perhaps Head had been kept in blissful ignorance of the true nature of the College Council and Principal. If so, he was very quickly disabused of any notion of the possibility of progressive co-operation in his objectives. Having perceived a mechanism for enhancing the reputation of the college, he now had to contend with the obstinate refusal of the council to embark upon a course conducive to popularization of the institution. The council refused to grant even 25 for the enterprise. Finally, long after Dr. Robb had begun to deliver the course of lectures, and with the College Council's total rejection of the entire principle behind the course of lectures on agricultural chemistry, Head ended the matter by paying for it himself, writing to the College Chancellor¹⁰ on March 19: "My Dear Sir: I received some time ago a copy of the resolution of the College Council to the effect that they felt themselves precluded from appropriating the sum of 25 currency to remunerate Dr. Robb for the course of lectures which he is now delivering at the Collegiate School. It might be wrong to say that such resolution was

adopted notwithstanding the approval of Her Majesty's Secretary of State. This resolution has been, I am informed, in fact confirmed and I do not learn that any explanation of the terms in which it is couched has been put on record. Since I had the honour of discoursing with you on this subject last, I have carefully considered the matter and am compelled to say that the sense which I then attached to the resolution appears to me still the natural one. The trifling amount of the sum asked for, forbids my attributing the refusal to pecuniary grounds, and I think that the resolution is in fact intended by some at least of the Council to imply that I have suggested and Lord Grey has approved of, a scheme at variance with the charter or with the fundamental tenets of the Institution. I draw this inference, because any obstacle arising from the statutes only could have been removed by the same authority as that which enacted the statutes, and because there is not in the resolution itself anything which would lead me to suppose that the word 'precluded' referred merely to rules which the Council were themselves competent in the wise words of the Charter 'to revoke, renew, augment, or alter, as to them shall seem meet and expedient'. I was induced to think that the powers of dealing with 'salaries, stipends, provisions and emoluments' of the professors, and the authority to take steps 'touching any matter a thing which to them shall seem good, fit and useful for the well being and advancement of the College, and consistent with the Charter' would have made this body as much authorized to vote 25 to Dr. Robb in the manner requested, as the University of Oxford is authorized to vote in Convocation a sum of money in aid of the society for the propagation of the Gospel, or as a gift towards the Cathedral Library of this Province. In this view I was totally wrong but as I am desirous of putting an end to all further discussion on the subject of the 25, I have thought it right to beg Dr. Robb's acceptance of a cheque of my own for this sum, since I am in fact responsible for the trouble which he has taken. You are at perfect liberty to show this letter to any member of the College Council".

In spite of the acknowledged ability of Robb to assist in the general education of the agriculture community, and his willingness to do so, the Council was unwilling to lend even a modicum of support to the enterprise. It must have been immediately apparent to Head that the short-sightedness of the Council would require Herculean efforts to overcome if there was to be any hope of preserving the College. The simple act of endorsing Robb's lectures and overtly assisting in their publication might well have preserved the institution from the beating it was about to take. But Jacob was adamant in his opposition to any technological innovation to the curriculum, and remained so during the ensuing struggle for the survival of the college. Much of his argument was no doubt attributable to his Oxford origins. Although an evangelical himself, he was aware of the Puseyite movement which had begun as the Oxford Movement¹¹ prior to 1833. There was little doubt that whatever might have been said originally of the lay character of Oxford, the colleges, which had become coextensive with the University, were, for the most part, in the intention of their founders, meant to educate and support theological students on their foundations for service in the Church of England. Dr. E.B. Pusey was an eminent Oxford scholar who supported this contention. He believed that ideally the whole life of the University should provide a devotional training and should be dedicated to the study of theology¹². He also advocated strongly a return to a more orthodox form of Anglicanism, which appeared to many to be too closely aligned with Roman Catholicism. It was natural that the Puseyite movement, as it came to be called, should have its origins at Oxford, where the only required study in the institution was of the theology of the Church of England, regardless of the program taken. There is some evidence that the first Bishop in Fredericton, Medley, was a Puseyite, or so Sir Charles Lyell stated in a letter from Fredericton to Leonard Horner in 1852. Medley was an ex officio member of the College Council. Hence his opinions were reflected to some extent in the decisions made by Council. The advent of the scientific method resulted

in a struggle for survival within the church itself. Already many claims on the part of science had shaken the church foundations. The greatest was still to come: the eminent naturalist, Sir Charles Darwin published the Origin of Species only a few years later, in 1859. But the first publications on the subject had already occurred. Jacob, though not of the extremist Puseyite persuasion perceived his duty to be clearly to defend the faith. Although neither Medley nor Jacob saw eye to eye, they supported the College Council in its reluctance to fund Robb's agricultural lectures. Dr. Jacob staunchly refused to consider such instruction as scholarly, or even as bearing on the public charge to the College to provide higher education. Indeed, Dr. Jacob publicly defended the College position¹³. "For our purposes - they may, I trust, be all comprised in that one word, Duty - the faithful, diligent, and zealous discharge, - more faithful, (if possible) diligent and zealous than ever, of the obligations of our place and time. To those who would make the college a polytechnic institution we may not promise much more in the way of merely practical teaching; we must not listen to the cry which calls us from the pursuit of truth and virtue to the lower paths and grosser occupations of the multitude; we will not yield to the suggestions which would tempt us to pander to the unworthy passions, flatter the prejudices and vain conceits, or court the boisterous plaudits, of factions or the casual crowd". But times were rapidly changing both at home and abroad. The Oxford University Commission had begun its work in 1850, inquiring into "the state, discipline, studies, and revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford", with the objective of recommending appropriate *reforms¹¹. Both Head and his intimate acquaintance, Lyell, were aware of the Oxford Movement and, no doubt, saw the fallacy of argument from both those who would liberalize the institution without reforming it, and those who wished a return to the canons of the seventeenth century. Lyell was strongly of the opinion that science should be required in the curriculum: in his response to the Commissioners he wrote: "...in regard to Physics or Natural History, a great range of choice

ought to be permitted, whether in the matriculation, or any subsequent examination, and it ought to be indifferent to the University whether Astronomy, or some of the numerous branches of Natural Philosophy or Chemistry, or Geology, Mineralogy, Zoology, or Botany be preferred. But in the present anomalous condition of the University, where the laity are most inadequately represented, so that Oxford has acquired the character rather of a theological seminary than of a great national seat (of learning and science, that in canvassing for votes for a Professorship, whether of Poetry or any other Chair, the particular shade of opinions which a candidate may entertain on questions of sectarian or controversial theology may have more weight than any other qualifications, ...". Lyell believed that the University of London was embarking on a sounder course of action. Writing to George Ticknor at about the same time as he composed the above, Lyell remarked¹⁶ on the new approach at London, then went on: "The clergy must continue to be our real educational rulers in this country, which I believe is more parson-ridden than any in Europe except Spain, if we consider how the higher education as well as that of the lower orders, and how the laity as well as the clergy are under the influence of this ecclesiastical body. Ten years ago, before Agassiz had been many months travelling here, he told me he thought the prospects of science in England very poor because of the power of the English Church, and I was surprised that as a foreigner he should have seen so far". Head's response to the Oxford Commission was specific as Lyell's in regard to the sciences. He notes his own lack of knowledge, (due in part to his Oxford education): "With regard to the natural sciences, my ignorance of them is such that I dare hardly venture to give any decisive opinion; but it is clear that where the inspection of experiments and specimens is a material part of instruction, the Professorial system is the only one available for any good end; and it is also clear that the physical sciences have been most unjustly depreciated and discouraged at Oxford". Events were already conspiring to inhibit the domination the church had so long enjoyed over education in

the empire. The Loyalists so recently removed from south of the border had brought with them a sense of social justice along with considerable denominational tolerance. The flight to end the Church of England suasion over state-supported education had already been joined zealously in Upper Canada. The advent of the scientific method as a way of thinking acted further to loosen the grip of the church on education. Now the industrial revolution, with attendant change in social mores, acted in concert with the scientific revolution to overtake both spheres of the globe. Even the curriculum of King's College had come to be the mark of its professors, concentrating to a very marked degree on the study of natural sciences and mathematics in contrast to the exclusive classic curriculum of the British institutions.