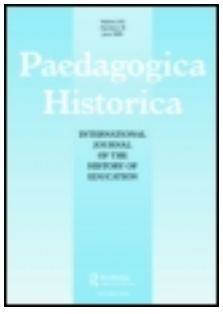

Paedagogica Historica
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cpdh20

Teachers' institutes in late nineteenth-century Ontario

Patrice Milewski [a]
[a] School of Education, Parker Building, Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON, Canada

Available online: 10 Oct 2008

To cite this article: Patrice Milewski (2008): Teachers' institutes in late nineteenth-century Ontario, Paedagogica Historica, 44:5, 607-620

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00309230802042862

Paedagogica Historica
Vol. 44, No. 5, October 2008, 607–620

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Teachers' institutes in late nineteenth-century Ontario

Patrice Milewski*

School of Education, Parker Building, Laurentian University, Sudbury ON, Canada

(*Received 4 January 2007; final version received 19 July 2007*)

Teachers' institutes for public elementary school teachers in Ontario began to be implemented in the middle of the nineteenth century as a result of the efforts of Egerton Ryerson Superintendent of Schools for Canada West as Ontario was then known. They were based on similar practices that Ryerson had observed on an educational tour in 1845 during which he visited the United States, the British Isles and a number of western European countries including Germany. After initial failures, the passage of the landmark School Act of 1871 provided the context for educational state officials to redouble their efforts to have teachers regularly attend teachers' institute meetings to further their professional development. After a series of revisions to the regulations and the appointment of a director in 1885, incidents of teacher absence began to be documented and reported to central state authorities. This resulted in a variety of disciplinary actions that culminated with the temporary suspension of Luella Dunn's – a teacher in rural Ontario – teaching certificate. Using the evidence available in the reports of inspectors, teachers' institute agendas, newspaper accounts and the annual reports of the Minister of Education, the author attempts to show that Luella Dunn and other teachers who ran foul of the regulations were produced as individuals through the effects of power. Through the regulations and procedures that defined their operation, teachers' institutes became important sites for the elaboration of pedagogy. In this role, the author will explore how teachers' institutes were a means for instilling what Minister of Education George Ross (1883–1899) termed a "self-culture" of the teacher.

Keywords: teachers; teacher training; regulation; pedagogy; subjectification

Luella Dunn was a public school teacher in Minto Township S.S. #7 in the North Wellington inspectorate of Ontario public school inspector David Clapp. There is nothing remarkable about this simple fact except that her failure to attend the County Convention of the Ontario Teachers' Association on 30 and 31 May 1895 resulted in the temporary suspension of her teaching certificate. The absence of Luella Dunn and other teachers from institute meetings was a matter of great interest to both local education officials and those at the highest level of authority in the Department of Education. North Wellington public school inspector David Clapp urged Deputy Minister of Education John Millar to consider that "unless something is done the evil will spread".[1] One wonders then about the nature of the "evil" that Luella would have been guilty of spreading if action had not been taken. But something was done; Luella Dunn's teaching certificate was temporarily suspended. Given the limited opportunities for a woman to gain a measure of independence and a livelihood in late nineteenth-century Ontario, losing employment as a teacher was no trifling matter.

*Email: pmilewski@laurentian.ca
[1]Archives of Ontario [*or* AO], RG 2–42–6741, Clapp to Millar, Harriston, 20 June 1895.

ISSN 0030-9230 print/ISSN 1477-674X online

DOI: 10.1080/00309230802042862
http://www.informaworld.com

This paper discusses a cluster of incidents involving teacher absence from institute meetings that occurred in the years after the regulations governing teachers' institutes were revised in 1884. This paper examines how pedagogical change, revisions of the regulations and administrative centralisation after 1871 created the conditions and mechanisms that enabled school authorities to challenge and, in some cases, discipline teachers who chose not to attend institute meetings regularly. I will call upon the evidence contained in the annual reports of inspectors, teachers' institute agendas, newspaper accounts, archival material and the annual reports of the Minister of Education to argue that Luella Dunn and other teachers who ran foul of the regulations were produced as individuals through the effects of power. This was facilitated through successive revisions of the regulations and practices that positioned teachers' institutes as unique state-sponsored institutions that also functioned as sites for the elaboration of pedagogy. The regulations and procedures that defined their operation became a means for creating what Minister of Education George Ross (1883–1899) termed a "self-culture" of the teacher in late-nineteenth-century Ontario.[2] This "self-culture" was aimed at producing the teacher as an ethical subject who would adopt a particular relationship to the self: the teacher as subject and object of knowledge.[3] Creating a self-culture of the teacher in late-nineteenth-century Ontario would involve questioning the self in all matters related to teaching, i.e. "the ability to teach intelligently every subject".[4] Ross claimed that this was necessary in order to avoid letting the mind fall into a "state of dullness or inactivity" that he claimed would be "fatal to all intellectual culture and development".[5]

The questions raised by examining incidents of irregular teacher attendance at teachers' institute meetings after 1884 resonate beyond the boundaries of Ontario. A parallel exists in the Australian context where the emphasis on creating the moral teacher and the exemplary classroom was, according to Bruce Smith, critical to the formation of centralised state administration in Australia.[6] The educational historiography of nineteenth-century Australia and Ontario indicates that the imperatives of a centralised educational state bureaucracy did not always prevail when confronted by the will, determination and the local practices of individual teachers and communities. Marjorie Theobald's analysis of the work of women teachers in Australia before passage of the Public Service Act in 1883 is but one example.[7] R.J.W. Selleck's account of how Mary Helena Stark's objection to her classification as a junior assistant after the passage of the aforementioned act led to a victory in the Privy Council in London and resulted in the reclassification and compensation of many female teachers in Australia is another.[8] Theobald's account of the Julia Flynn affair during the interwar years highlights the continuing struggle of women teachers and the shifting terrain on which it occurred.[9] Theobald identifies how men could "manipulate the machinery of the meritocratic

[2]AO RG 2-42-0-594, Minister of Education "Circular" 10 November 1885.
[3]See Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of a Work in Progress," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hemeneutics*, ed. H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 229–52.
[4]AO RG 2-42-0-594, Minister of Education "Circular" 10 November 1885.
[5]*Ibid*.
[6]Bruce Smith, "William Wilkin's Saddlebags," in *Family, School and State in Australian History*, ed. M. Theobald and R.J.W. Selleck (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990).
[7]Marjorie Theobald, "Women's Teaching Labour, the Family and the State in Nineteenth Century Victoria," in *ibid*.
[8]R.J.W. Selleck, "Mary Helena Stark," in *Women who Taught*, ed. Alison Prentice and Marjorie Theobald (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
[9]Marjorie Theobald, "Women, Leadership and Gender Politics in the Interwar Years: The Case of Julia Flynn," *History of Education* 29, no.1 (2000): 63–77.

society to exclude those who did not fit their own image".[10] In the similarities there are also differences and this paper explores how successive revisions of the regulations, reform of institute programmes and the expansion of inspection in Ontario created the mechanisms by which a central authority prevailed over local practices and called teachers to account for their absence. It provides a glimpse into how the operations of the educational state were carried out. In one of these operations, teachers' institutes were sites for the circulation and materialisation of pedagogical discourses that variously formed and defined the teacher and her practice. Ian Hacking's notion of dynamic nominalism argues that human subjects and human acts come into being "hand in hand" with the ability to invent new ways to name them and allows us to consider that in one of the above identified operations teachers' institutes served a role in the production of different kinds of teacher subjects.[11]

The practice of having teachers' institutes in Ontario began in 1850 and was due largely to the efforts of Egerton Ryerson, Superintendent of Schools for Canada West as Ontario was then known. They were based on similar practices that Ryerson had witnessed on an educational tour that he undertook in 1845 during which he visited the United States, the British Isles and a number of western European countries including Germany. Teachers' institutes were organised under the auspices of the teachers' associations that state authorities promoted as a general means of organising teachers. Typically, institute sessions were held on consecutive days of the school year and required the closing of schools during the time that teachers attended meetings. Harry Smaller's account of Ryerson's first efforts to implement teachers' institutes in 1850 focuses on understanding how they were one of the means by which school authorities sought to improve schooling and regulate and discipline teachers.[12] He argued that outside what school authorities may have desired as outcomes for teachers' institutes, the coming together of teachers during the summer of 1850 led to the formation of independent and separate teachers' associations and "helped create a new spirit among teachers in Upper Canada" that formed along the lines of resistance to centrally imposed policies.[13]

Elsewhere, Smaller argued that despite the passing of new regulations in 1877, little had changed since 1850 in terms of teacher participation, attendance and general reception from the first attempt to implement teachers' institutes in 1850.[14] A similar conclusion was made concerning the efficacy of teachers' institutes after the passage of the revised regulations in 1884.[15] However, in subsequent work, Smaller suggested that while that teachers' institutes meetings served as sites of resistance on the part of some teachers they also proved to be "influential" in regulating both "the role of teaching, and teachers" in the province.[16] This paper takes the view that despite earlier failures, pedagogic reform, consolidation of centralised state control and revisions to the regulations in 1877 and 1884 created the statutory framework that made teachers' institutes a regular feature of the school year until 1939.

[10] *Ibid*., 77.
[11] Ian Hacking, "Making up People," in *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, 113.
[12] Harry Smaller, "Teachers' Institutes: Instituting Proper Teaching," *Ontario History* 80, no. 4 (1988): 275–88.
[13] Smaller, "Teachers' Institutes," 287.
[14] Harry Smaller, "Teachers' Protective Associations, Professionalism and the 'State' in Nineteenth Century Ontario" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1988), 190.
[15] Smaller, "Teachers' Protective Associations," 199.
[16] Harry Smaller, "Regulating the Regulators: The Disciplining of Teachers in Nineteenth Century Ontario," in *Discipline, Moral Regulation, and Schooling: A Social History*, ed. Kate Rousmaniere, Kari Dehli and Ning de Connick-Smith (New York: Garland, 1997), 114.

The educational historiography of nineteenth-century Ontario identifies the middle decades of the century as particularly significant in terms of the organisation of the state apparatus, the means of governing the population and the creation of state schooling in Ontario. Alison Prentice identified how schooling in mid-nineteenth-century Ontario underwent significant changes between the *School Act of 1841* and the watershed legislation that comprised the *School Act of 1871*. She described this period as one in which legislation and regulations "wove a pattern of tightening controls" so that, by the 1870s, much of the schooling of children passed from the hands of parents and local school authorities to that of the central state.[17] Prentice also argued that "school promoters" sought to position schooling/education as both a sign of and means to creating a "respectable" population; this involved a broad range of class-based normalisations in the domains of language/speech/manners, morals, dress and hygiene.[18]

Bruce Curtis argued that education reform between 1837 and 1846 should be viewed as a dialectical process whereby the outcome of conflict in civil society led to the creation of a state educational administration. This resulted in the building of state knowledge and created a "new field for information gathering in the administrative organs of education".[19] Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Curtis suggested that educational reform during the 1840s can be viewed in terms of how it sought to "transform the subjectivity of the body politic".[20] Thus, the political crisis of the 1830s and ensuing educational reform of the 1840s was linked to creating a sphere that could be ruled by the state.[21]

In *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836–1871*, Bruce Curtis made the argument that in the period after 1850 a "circuit of power/knowledge" was formed between local and central school authorities that contributed toward the process of state building and the organisation of educational administration.[22] This led to the formation and functioning of what Curtis has described as "a web of practical administrative controls over the occupation of teaching".[23] While regulatory features such as the centralised control over teacher certification, policing and examination of teachers, and separation of the teacher from local community engendered conflict on a local level, these strategies resulted in the (re)definition of the teacher as an "agent of the state".[24]

The changes that occurred after the passage of the school legislation of 1871 were of equal or greater significance than those of the mid-nineteenth century.[25] Between 1871 and 1900 the tendencies towards centralisation, expansion of teacher training, inspection and pedagogical change were intensified. The network of provincially controlled normal schools that began with the establishment of the Toronto Normal School in 1847 was expanded with the opening of the Ottawa Normal School in 1875 and the London Normal School in 1900. County Model Schools that began to appear in 1877 had, by 1901, expanded to 55. In 1890,

[17]Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart), 17–18.
[18]*Ibid*., 66–84.
[19]Bruce Curtis, "Preconditions of the Canadian State: Educational Reform and the Construction of a Public in Upper Canada, 1836–1847," *Studies in Political Economy* 10 (1983): 113.
[20]*Ibid*., 114.
[21]*Ibid*., 115.
[22]Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836–1871* (London: Althouse Press, 1988). 236.
[23]Curtis, *Building the Educational State*, 242.
[24]*Ibid*., 222.
[25]Robert Stamp argued that the 1870s were decisive for schooling in Ontario and Canada in general. Robert Stamp, "Education and the Economic and Social Milieu: The English Canadian Scene from the 1870's to 1914," in *Canadian Education: A History*, ed. J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 290–312.

the School of Pedagogy for the training of high school teachers opened in Toronto. The expansion of schooling and teacher training was accompanied by an increase in the number of public school inspectors.[26] Between 1871 and 1885, the number of public school inspectors increased from 41 to 74 – a number that increased by only two at the beginning of the twentieth century. During this time, state expenditures on schooling by the Government of Ontario more than doubled from $420,511 in 1872 to $918,162 in 1903.[27] The changes that were carried out between 1871 and 1900 occurred during 34 years of uninterrupted Liberal rule that ended in 1905 when then Premier and former Minister of Education George Ross was defeated by the Conservatives led by Sir James Whitney.

In 1871, the number of women employed as public school teachers rose to just slightly over 50% (50.2) and increased steadily so that by 1901 women comprised almost three-quarters of public school teachers in Ontario – a proportion that has changed little since then.[28] Kari Dehli examined how the introduction of kindergarten classes in Toronto in 1883, spearheaded by chief inspector of Toronto public schools James Hughes and his spouse Ada Marean Hughes, was linked to the feminisation of pedagogy.[29] She noted how this form of schooling regulated the lives of women trained to teach kindergarten classes and how this training and pedagogy relied on assumptions about female "nature". More importantly, Dehli connected the institutionalisation and popularisation of kindergarten classes with state formation, especially at the level of local politics and administration.[30]

Between 1871 and 1900 a great deal of emphasis was placed on reforming teachers and teaching and was not unlike what occurred in Australia during this period. Hacking's concept of dynamic nominalism discussed earlier is useful in this context. Teachers were formed as the subject/objects of pedagogical discourses in ways they had not been previously. The Ontario Educational Association (hereafter, OEA) was an important site for the materialisation and circulation of educational discourse and its published proceedings offer numerous examples of this.[31] In 1875 Revd William Caven, president of the Ontario Association for the Advancement of Teaching, spoke about elevating the status of the teaching profession by raising the academic, moral and character standards for teachers. Acknowledging that teachers faced such "discouragement" as a lack of community support and poor pay, Caven nevertheless urged them to "preserve and strengthen their attachment to the profession" by constantly seeking to improve their qualifications.[32] This would elevate the position of teacher so that "the true teacher will be no more a 'hireling' than the true pastor".[33] In 1877, the principal of the Canadian Literary Institute, Revd Doctor R.A. Fyfe, wrote that preaching the gospel and teaching were the only two professions that were "exclusively devoted to the

[26]For an analysis of inspection in Ontario before 1871 see Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
[27]The file is located in AO RG 2-42-0-3725.
[28]Curtis, *Building the Educational State*, 252.
[29]Kari Dehli, "They Rule by Sympathy: The Feminization of Pedagogy," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 2 (1994): 195–216.
[30]*Ibid*., 196.
[31]For an analysis of the role of the OEA in shaping educational policy and practice see N.J. Christie, "Psychology, Sociology and the Secular Moment: The Ontario Education Association's Quest for Authority, 1880–1900," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 25, no. 2 (1990): 119–43.
[32]Willliam Caven, "The Teacher's Love for his Profession," in *Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Ontario Association for the Advancement of Education* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1875), 34.
[33]*Ibid*., 40. Quotations in original.

elevation of the human race".[34] According to Fyfe, the "mission" and success of the teacher lay in the ability to stimulate the minds of pupils and "arousing their attention, and awakening their ambition".[35]

At the OEA annual convention in 1887, James Hughes, a well-known proponent of Froebelian educational methods, identified the role of teachers in the failed aims of public education.[36] He argued that the "misconception and mistakes of the past" were largely the result of the failure on the part of teachers to "recognize clearly the proper relationship that exists between the two great elements of power that they have to deal with", namely children and the knowledge that was to be communicated to them.[37] According to Hughes, setting public education on a clearer path would require that teachers fulfil the duties demanded by a method based on the Froebelian maxim that: "We learn by doing". Advocates of Froebelian philosophy such as Hughes sought to initiate a break with schooling practices associated with classical education such as rote learning and cramming. Reforming teachers was critical to reforming schooling and would require inventing new ways to speak about teachers, schooling and schools. Teachers' institutes would provide the forum and institutional structure for disseminating new and different ways to be a teacher.

Despite earlier failures, the school legislation passed in 1871 provided the impetus for Egerton Ryerson to once again raise the question about the desirability and need for teachers' institutes. According to Ryerson, the need for the creation of teachers' institutes was the result of "a great desire" that had "been felt" amongst the teachers in the province.[38] Whether this "great desire" was real or imagined is an interesting question. Nevertheless, Ryerson made good on his vow to utilise the provisions of 1850 to once again conduct teachers' institutes. In 1873, J.H. Sangster, former Head Master of the Provincial Normal School, was engaged for the purposes of conducting teachers' institutes across the province; that year, Sangster organising no less than 138 teachers' institute lectures that were attended by 2055 of the Ontario's 2128 teachers.[39]

At the time of the passage of the regulations in 1877, attendance at teachers' institutes was low. Department of Education records indicated that barely 20% of the almost 6500 teachers in the province attended institute meetings that year. However, within five years, attendance had increased to 65%. Evidently, the increase in participation in teachers' institutes after 1877 was deemed unsatisfactory because in 1884 the regulations were once again revised. The regulations passed in 1884 contained provisions for compulsory attendance that the previous regulations did not. They stated that it "shall be the duty of every teacher to attend continuously all the meetings of the Institute held in his [*sic*] county or inspectoral division … and in the event of his [*sic*] inability to attend, he shall report to his Inspector, giving reasons for his [*sic*] absence". These same regulations prescribed a duty for each inspector to provide the secretary of the Department of Education with a list of teachers in the inspectorate which would form the roll that would be called at the beginning of each

[34]R.A. Fyfe, "Teachers and Their Mission," in *Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Ontario Association for the Advancement of Education* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1877), 24–32.
[35]*Ibid*., 26.
[36]James Hughes was the author of numerous books and was a frequent speaker at educational conferences in Canada and the United States.
[37]James Hughes, "The Aim and Scope of Public Education," in *Minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Ontario Teachers' Association* (Toronto: Hill & Weir, 1887), 45.
[38]J. George. Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, vol. XXIII (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1908), 249.
[39]Department of Education. Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario [hereafter Annual Report] 1872. "County Teachers' Institutes," 79.

meeting.[40] The new regulations were instrumental in the making of an institutional and administrative hierarchy; they prescribed particular duties for each subject position that owed as much to the whole as to the position above and below.

The following year Dr J.A. McLellan, a Methodist preacher, former Director of Normal Schools and member of the first Central Committee on Education for the province, was appointed as full-time director of teachers' institutes. McLellan was responsible for the organisation of programmes and scheduling of institute meetings and reported directly to the Minister of Education. Either McLellan or his colleague Model Schools inspector J.J. Tilley were often the key lecturers at institute meetings and one has to consider that to be in their presence was to come under the scrutinising gaze of the individuals through whom power in the Ontario school system was exercised.

The evidence seems to suggest that the appointment of a director in 1885 and the compulsory features of the new regulations had the desired effect. In 1885, Oxford County public school inspector William Carlyle wrote to Minister of Education George Ross to report that attendance at both annual meetings was large. He attributed this to "compulsory feature of the new Act and the novelty and attraction of a Departmental Director".[41] Carlyle wrote that the new directors were "infusing an amount of interest which was unknown before not only among teachers but the general public".[42] About the teachers' institute meetings held in his jurisdiction in June 1885, Dufferin County public school inspector N. Gordon wrote that "the popularity of these meetings is on the increase which is owing in a great measure to the wise Regulations of the Department in appointing Directors" and the "desire to hear McLellan's able lecture was so great that the larger Town Hall was filled to its utmost capacity".[43] In the same year, North York public school inspector David Fotheringham, stated that the "efficiency" of the teachers' institutes had increased since his last report. He noted that "the attendance, the work and spirit at the June Convention last year were good" and added that "over eighty of one hundred [teachers] were in attendance".[44]

Institute meetings had a ritual component that was invariable throughout the province. The programmes, agendas and newspaper accounts from the 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s indicate that teachers' institute meetings would begin with opening exercises that included the rituals of scripture reading, prayer and a roll call as mandated by the new regulations.[45] Daily sessions for teachers also included an evening lecture to which the public was invited. Contemporary newspaper accounts provide evidence of how teachers' institutes played a role in constructing an educational public – a precondition of making the Canadian state as outlined by Curtis.[46] The *Durham Chronicle* published the following report about the evening lecture of the South Grey Teachers' Institute meeting held in Flesherton on 25 October 1888:

> Long before the appointed hour, the hall was crowded to overflowing. The citizens of Flesherton know how to appreciate a good intellectual treat and they turn out accordingly…. Dr. McLellan gave a public lecture on English Literature and its value in Education. The lecture was a grand success. All went away pleased and edified. "Best lecture ever given in the

[40] *Annual Report*, 1885: 39–50.
[41] AO RG 2-42-0-6734, Carlyle to Ross, Woodstock, 12 December 1885.
[42] *Ibid*.
[43] AO RG 2-42-0-6722, Dufferin County Teachers' Association, Inspector's Report.
[44] AO RG 2-42-0-6773, Inspector's Report, 1885.
[45] The *Durham Chronicle* report on the South Grey Teachers' Institute meetings in 1888 indicated that meetings began with Scripture reading, prayer and a roll call. "South Gray Teachers' Institute," *Durham Chronicle*, 1888, located in AO RG 2-42-0-6886.
[46] Curtis, "Preconditions," 115.

> Village". "The best I ever heard". "The most interesting I ever heard" … etc., etc., were some of the comments heard on the street next day.[47]

After 1884, teachers' institutes were conducted in accordance with a centrally planned and more tightly controlled agenda that focused on pedagogical techniques and knowledge that defined the thresholds or limits of pedagogical knowledge. William Houston, who succeeded James McLellan as Director of Teachers' Institutes in 1892, made it a priority to establish a "knowledge culture" in the teaching profession and schools in general. Houston's aim was not far removed from George Ross's notion of creating a "self-culture" of the teacher. In his first report to George Ross, Houston stated that his lectures would be aimed at changing teaching methods and classroom practices and creating different experiences for teachers and students. His work would focus on securing "the maximum of 'culture' for the pupils, with the minimum of uninteresting drudgery for the teachers". Houston wrote that:

> The "culture" obtainable from a wise use of the school curriculum – apart from the physical and moral training – is of three easily distinguishable kinds: the culture of skill, the culture of knowledge, and the culture of taste. The first of these may aptly be designated "artistic," the second "scientific," and the third "esthetic".[48]

The practices of South Essex public school inspector D.A. Maxwell provide a good example of how teachers' institutes could be used to examine or test teachers. Maxwell used part of the programme to examine teachers on readings that had been assigned previously. He sent circulars to teachers in his inspectorate in advance of institute meetings so that they could prepare for the questioning that was part of his examination of teachers. In 1899, Maxwell asked teachers to prepare themselves to ask the following question: "What should be the main purpose in the study of any subject – to gain knowledge or to gain power? Discuss the question".[49] He stated that he "took charge" of that portion of the programme and endeavoured to "keep matters at a white heat by dropping questions on those who are seemingly losing interest or who I know will oppose the theory or practice of the question, or who are specially prepared to discuss the question".[50] According to Maxwell, this made for "lively interrogation" and caused "a great nervous strain on all present but more particularly on the conductor of the exercise".[51]

In 1888, South Gray public school inspector N.W. Campbell reported to George Ross that whenever he observed a teacher who had developed "a good method of teaching any subject, or securing order, etc., etc., I try to prevail on him (or her) to show the method at the next meeting of the Institute and in most cases I succeed".[52] The questions and practices adopted by Maxwell and Campbell are examples of how institutional imperatives to create a "self-culture" of the teacher were put into operation. In the example above, the teacher as an ethical subject was required to engage in self-examination and rituals of self-improvement deemed necessary to being a teacher. The attempts to instil a "self-culture" of the teacher in the later decades of the nineteenth century was an extension of the process of subjectification Curtis identified as being an important feature of educational reconstruction in the 1840s, one that sought to transform the individual's relation to the self.[53]

[47] *Durham Chronicle* in AO RG 2-42-0-6886.
[48] *Annual Report*, 1893, "Report of the Director of Teachers' Institutes for 1893," 218.
[49] AO RG 2-42-0-6892. Inspector's Report. "Circular of Questions to be Discussed,"
[50] AO RG 2-42-0-6892. Maxwell to Ross, Amherstburg, 24 October 1889.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] AO RG 2-42-6886. Campbell to Ross, Durham, 5 November 1888.
[53] Curtis, "Preconditions," 114.

While the regulations were there to be enforced, there is no doubt that some teachers found a way to navigate their way around them and avoid difficulties with the authorities. Nevertheless, the historical record reveals that after 1884 some teachers who chose not to attend institute meetings incurred consequences that invariably included intervention by officials in the Department of Education. The earliest date of a dossier concerning actual teacher absence from an institute meeting concerns a report of 30 teachers who did not attend the 9 and 10 June meetings in Northumberland County in 1887. At the request of public school inspector Edward Scarlett, a report by the president of the Northumberland Association listing the names and towns of residence of the 30 teachers was sent to Minister of Education George Ross. The president of the association indicated that the letter was being sent so that the Minister could draw the attention of the absent teachers to the "thirty second clause of the Public School Act" and warn them "against an irregularity of attendance" at teachers' institutes.[54] As is discussed below, another incident of teacher absence in Edward Scarlett's inspectorate five years later in 1892 provides evidence that an earlier intervention by the Department of Education set a precedent that, according to Scarlett, resulted in a "fine effect".[55]

In 1889, there were two incidents of irregular attendance at teachers' institutes meetings that were reported to the Department of Education. The first concerned six teachers in the North Wellington County inspectorate of David Clapp and the other involved a teacher in Dundas County where Arthur Brown was the inspector. In case of the former, the teachers were threatened with the suspension of their teaching certificate by David Clapp for not attending teachers' institutes meetings in Harriston on 7 and 8 February 1889 without a valid excuse. Clapp wrote to Secretary of the Department of Education Alex Marling informing the latter of his intent and expressing concern about the absence of Rachel Mitchell who was first assistant at the local Model School. He was concerned that Mitchell, by her absence, was exerting a "bad influence on them" (other teachers and students).[56] He concluded by asking secretary Marling to send a note to each of the absentees asking them to explain their absence.[57]

In March 1889, Clapp wrote to the Department of Education to indicate that he had received, "proper and sufficient reasons" for the absence of all teachers except two: John Gray of Moorefield and Rachel Mitchell of Mount Forest.[58] Clapp dismissed the excuse offered by Mitchell as "frivolous" pointing out that she did not attend the meetings in 1887 or 1888 and claimed that Mitchell declared that she "will not attend". Clapp also noted Mitchell had visited a school in Durham without the "sanction" of the trustees or "any other person" on the dates of the institute meetings in 1887. Clapp's ability to report on the whereabouts of the teacher on the days in question is suggestive of the extent to which the system of surveillance and inspection was able to account for the whereabouts of all teachers on any given school day.

The matter of Rachel Mitchell's absence from teachers' institute meetings between 1887 and 1889 was resolved in a letter she sent to Alex Marling in June of 1889 that was accompanied by a note from her physician. Mitchell wrote that she "regularly attended for years but received scarcely any benefit on account of the illness mentioned, which invariably compelled me to leave the room & [*sic*] spend hours in agony".[59] Her physician,

[54]AO RG 2-42-0-6848, C.A. Lapp to Ross, Brighton, 4 July 1887.
[55]AO RG 2-42-6741-0-6847, Scarlett to Millar, Coburg, 24 October 1892
[56]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Clapp to Marling, Harriston, 18 February 1889.
[57]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Clapp to Department of Education 18 February 1889.
[58]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Clapp to Marling, Harriston, 28 March 1889.
[59]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Mitchell to Secretary, Department of Education, Mount Forest, 12 June 1889.

Dr P. Yeomans, stated that Mitchell "invariably suffers from sickness at the stomach and vomiting – owing apparently to continued confinement in a close room often crowded – and also from sitting for some hours in one position".[60] While attending teachers' institutes may have made Rachel Mitchell ill, she was nevertheless compelled to account for her absence and to agree to attend future teacher institute meetings to avoid more serious consequences.

In the same incident, the absence of John Gray of Moorefield prompted a quick visit from inspector David Clapp and an exhange of letters between Clapp, teacher John Gray and, Secretary of the Department of Education Alex Marling. The letters reveal that Clapp questioned the excuses offered by Gray as explanation for his absence. Gray wrote that his absence was due to illness on the first day and impassable roads on the second day.[61] Clapp responded by pointing out that he had examined Gray's Daily Register and discovered that Gray had taught school on the days of the institute meetings, that the trains had been running, and the roads were passable. Clapp concluded that the reasons Gray had offered were "frivolous".[62] To resolve the matter, Gray received a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Education requesting an explanation for his absence.[63] In his reply, Gray wrote that he wasn't aware that it was necessary to send an explanation accounting for his absence if he had kept his school open. He also pointed out that he had sent a letter to Clapp as the latter requested but that it wasn't as detailed as the verbal explanation he offered when Clapp had inspected his school a week *after* the institute meetings.[64] Gray's letter to the Secretary of the Department of Education is the last correspondence in the file and by that stroke seems to have resolved the matter. All of the correspondence sent from the Department of Education by Marling contains references which suggest that Minister of Education George Ross was directly involve in making decisions about the course of the action to be taken in each case of teacher absence from teachers' institutes.

The second incident of teacher absence from institute meetings in 1889 occurred in the Dundas County inspectorate of Arthur Brown where teacher P.B. Fetterly was "in the habit of closing his school upon the days of the Teachers' Institute and employing his time in getting up Pic-nics [*sic*] and baseball matches".[65] Brown wrote that his first impulse was to suspend the certificates of the teacher in question but hesitated to do so because it would mean closing a large school.[66] Arthur Brown expressed a number of frustrations about the situation, one of which related to the previous year when Fetterly sought to renew his third-class certificate. Initially, Brown declined to recommend Fetterly to the County Board of Examiners but relented when the latter promised to take up "professional reading" and attend to his duties more diligently. After his teaching certificate was renewed for three years, Brown observed that Fetterly did not take a *School Journal* and at the next teachers' institutes meeting in May of 1889, he and his brother (also a teacher) came to Morrisburg where they spent the afternoon playing baseball not far from where institute meetings were

[60]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Yeomans, MD. Mount Forest, 12 June 1888.
[61]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Gray to Clapp, Moorefield, 25 March 1989.
[62]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Clapp to Marling, Harriston, 29 March 1889.
[63]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Marling to Moorefield, Toronto, 3 April 1989.
[64]AO RG 2-42-0-6866, Gray to Marling, Moorefield, 5 April 1989.
[65]AO, RG 2-42-0-630, Brown to Marling, Morrisburg, 4 December, 1889.
[66]*Ibid*.

being held. According to Brown, this prompted a written complaint from two teachers who accused the brothers of "neglect of duty and unprofessional conduct".[67] The brothers were called before the local Board of Education in July of 1889 to explain why their certificates should not be suspended. Promising to mend their ways, the brothers were reprimanded and allowed to go.

Dissatisfied with the decision of the local board of education, Brown wrote to the Department of Education requesting clarification about how to proceed; he noted that it was "about the only case of the kind I have had in eleven years" and wanted to be advised about what he should do.[68] The memo in reply stated that the Minister had considered his report and suggested that the entire matter be submitted to a meeting of the County Board of Examiners and, if they advised a suspension of Fetterly's teaching certificate, Brown could "act there and then and have your action confirmed without needing another meeting".[69] Clearly, this gave Brown authority to act and yet that authority was conditional on meeting the local criteria for suspension. It also implies that central state authorities were not always prepared to overrule local interests especially if it meant closing a school for want of a teacher, even one possessing a third-class certificate.

The precedent of a previous incident of teacher absence in the Northumberland inspectorate of Edward Scarlett in 1887 was invoked when another such incident occurred in the same inspectorate in 1892. In his letter to Deputy Minister of Education John Millar, Scarlett requested that a "Departmental reproach" be sent to the teachers in question noting that this had been done once before with "fine effect".[70] The reply instructed Scarlett to inform the teachers that their absence had been noted and that their attention be drawn to the regulations governing teachers' institutes.[71] It is reasonable to conclude that what proved to be effective in 1887 proved equally efficacious in 1892. The example above suggests that interventions by Department of Education authorities and the sanctions authorised by regulations, i.e. suspension or the threat of suspension of a teaching certificate, were not to be taken lightly.

In 1895, Luella Dunn suffered the most severe penalty for missing a teachers' institute meeting when her teaching certificate was temporarily suspended. This incident near the end of the nineteenth century was dealt in manner quite unlike the previous incidents of teacher absence from institute meetings. The correspondence in the file indicates that there was very little leeway for negotiation. Quite simply: Luella Dunn had missed a meeting and her teaching certificate was suspended. The memo from the Department of Education to the secretary-treasurer of S.S. no. 7 Minto in Drew called the attention of the secretary-treasurer to the regulations that made attendance obligatory. It left no leeway for the local board to act in any manner that would contradict the consequences of the regulations, which now included a clause that provided the suspension of a teaching certificate.[72] The matter was resolved after Clapp sent the trustees a document for Luella Dunn to sign stating that she would, "hereafter attend faithfully" (all Teachers' Institutes meetings).[73] A small price to pay for the reinstatement of a teaching certificate but a lesson to be learned that the Department of Education was serious about its desire to have all teachers attend institute meetings. It is not unreasonable to conclude that any consequences incurred by a

[67] *Ibid*.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] AO, RG 2-42-0-630, Marling to Brown, Toronto, 5 December 1989.
[70] AO RG 2-42-6741-0-6847, Scarlett to Millar, Coburg, 24 October 1892.
[71] AO RG 2-42-0-6847, Education Department to Scarlett, Toronto, 4 November 1892.
[72] AO RG 2-42-0-6741, Millar to Whetham, Toronto, 22 June 1895.
[73] AO RG 2-42-0-6741, Clapp to Millar, Harriston, 20 June 1895.

teacher resulting from an "unauthorised" absence from institute meetings would find their way through the formal and informal teacher networks and would have a cautionary effect.

After the matter involving Luella Dunn in 1895, the archive concerning teacher absence from institute meetings falls silent. This is not to suggest that teachers ceased being absent from institute meetings. However, attendance records maintained by the Department of Education point to an average rate of attendance of 90% during the 1890s which seems to suggest that a threshold had been crossed and a measure of normalisation had occurred. By 1900, inspectors' reports and newspaper accounts indicate that even recently organised remote northern regions of the province such as East and West Algoma had complete attendance at the annual meetings.[74]

In 1912, the regulations governing teachers' institutes were revised once again. While retaining the compulsory features of previous regulations, the revisions of 1912 can be understood in the way they enunciated a shift in the register of discipline and regulation. The concepts of the self-culture of the teacher and teacher as ethical subject were augmented by statutory discourse that defined teachers as owing a duty to the self and a moral obligation to attend institute meetings. They stated that teachers' institutes were maintained for the "professional development of teachers" and that teachers owed it to the public and to themselves to attend.[75] This was accompanied by a broad expansion of the topics that could be formed by pedagogical discourse that is clearly evident in the programmes that were offered in teachers' institutes across the province. New ways had been invented to talk about teaching, teachers, learning and children. The educative process was divided up into its constitutive parts. In 1913 for example, over 200 topics were offered at teachers' institute sessions; they ranged across the curriculum from hygiene in the schoolroom and the training of memory, to sessions about the testing of pupil "mentality". This was quite different from the four or five topics that would be discussed during a typical daily session in the 1880s and 1890s.

With successive revisions to the regulations and programmes, teachers' institute meetings became a regular feature of the school year in Ontario until 1939 when the "in-service" model of teacher professional development began to be implemented. In a 1916 monograph that compared the preparation of teachers in Ontario and the United States, Frank Jones noted that teachers' institutes and inspectors' visits combined with the recent advent of summer school fulfilled an important role in the "after-training" of teachers.[76] Similarly in 1936, the inspectors of Ontario noted that since their inception teachers' institutes had provided an important role in developing the "teachers' knowledge of good methods and their application in the classroom".[77]

Conclusions

Teachers' institutes as state-sponsored institutions capable of functioning as disciplinary apparatus did not appear *tout à coup* or fully formed; it was through a process involving space and time that they gradually formed into a mechanism capable of producing

[74]AO RG 2-42-0-6731, Public School Inspector's Report of Teachers' Institutes held in the District of Algoma during the year 1900.
[75]*Annual Report,* 1912, "Teachers' Institutes, Circular No. 12," 311.
[76]Frank Jones, *The Preparation of Teachers in Ontario and the United States* (Ottawa: R.J. Taylor, 1916), 17.
[77]The Ontario Public and Separate School Inspectors, *The Training of Teachers-in-Service* (Toronto: Clark, Irwin, 1936), 111.

individualities such as Luella Dunn, Rachel Mitchell and others. The example of Luella Dunn and other "lost names of history" illustrates the consequences of failing to follow the regulations. It is reasonable to surmise that the regulations were not evenly applied and some teachers were not punished for failing to attend institute meetings. This speaks to the notion of agency and the varying attitudes that subjects in the hierarchy could take regarding the rules. The evidence has also shown that school officials such as inspectors, Maxwell, Clapp, and Scarlett – quite literally institutional men – who were colonised by the rules and regulations were ready to act in the interests of the educational state bureaucracy. That this hierarchy came to govern and regulate a predominantly female workforce speaks volumes about who was governed and how.

Teachers' institutes went beyond disciplining teachers; they were concerned with establishing particular kinds of order and hierarchy. Jacques Rancière has argued that "every institution is an *explication* in social act, a dramatization of inequality".[78] One has to consider then the extent to which teachers' institutes served to create and re-create – to borrow Foucault's concept – an order of words and things (*les mots et les choses*).[79] As institutional sites for the elaboration of pedagogy, teachers' institutes played a role in defining the thresholds of pedagogical knowledge in late-nineteenth-century Ontario – thresholds that defined the limits of what could and could not be said about schooling and pedagogy. In Foucauldian terms, the property of discourse, i.e. the right to speak, understand and have access to the body of statements and invest that discourse within institutions or practices, was limited to subjects in the educational state administration.[80] Subject positions such as director, assistant director and inspector entailed criteria of competences and knowledge that carried with it a presumption of truth in what was said and empowered those positions to define pedagogic norms.

The attempt to create a "self-culture" in the teaching profession was linked to a system of ethics that sought to outline the rules or techniques that defined what it meant to be a teacher in a domain that was increasingly professionalised. In one of its aspects, the professionalisation of teaching was attended by a proliferation of knowledge about teaching, learning and children. This was no more apparent than in the teachers' institute programmes of the twentieth century. To be a teacher required that one had to examine one's self and determine whether one was worthy of being a teacher. It also required that one had to undertake professional learning and utilise the latest techniques and knowledge in the preparation of lessons. This constituted a "care of the self" by the teacher in late-nineteenth-century Ontario that defined a terrain of subjectification which has continued into the present.[81]

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge David Levine for the numerous conversations about the approaches that could be taken in this paper. He is also grateful for the constructive comments made by the anonymous reviewers.

[78]Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 105. Emphasis in the original.

[79]*Les Mots et les choses* was the original French title of Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970).

[80]Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 68.

[81]See Foucault's analysis of the care of the self in Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self,* vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1988), 68.

Notes on contributor

Patrice Milewski is an Assistant Professor in the English Language School of Education at Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario. He worked as an elementary school teacher in the Toronto District School Board for 15 years before completing doctoral studies in education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. His research is focused on utilising Foucauldian methods of historical inquiry in the domains of schooling and pedagogy. Currently, he is secretary-treasurer of CHEA (Canadian History of Education Association).