

FESCT - A BRIEF HISTORY

Between 1918 and 1943, the English Catholic Teachers in the Montreal Catholic School Commission were represented by two associations, one for men, the other for women.

In 1943, the two associations amalgamated to form the Federation of English-Speaking Catholic Teachers which received its charter under the Quebec Companies Act. The Charter members were: Rudolph Stoeckel, Michael Collins, Hannah Healy, Mary Ann Rusk, Helen O'Regan, John Hart and Emmet Kierans.

FESCT was issued a bargaining certificate in 1944 to represent all teachers in the English Schools of the MCSC and teachers of English in the French Schools of the MCSC. L'Alliance des Professeurs was issued a similar certificate at the same time.

In 1949, FESCT and l'Alliance went on strike. The MCSC forced them back to work under threat of dismissal and the Labour Relations Board revoked the two bargaining certificates. Five years later, FESCT was issued a joint bargaining certificate with a splinter group of l'Alliance. L'Alliance challenged this and the certificate was suspended.

Finally, in 1959, FESCT and l'Alliance were granted a joint certificate "to act jointly and severally as the bargaining agent for lay teachers (male and female) of the MCSC." This was further clarified in 1975 when the Quebec Superior Court ruled that both syndicates could negotiate separately at the local level.

In 1967, FESCT and l'Alliance went on strike. The Government passed Bill 25 which terminated the strike and introduced provincial bargaining. Bargaining today is done at the provincial level as well as at the local level.

An important milestone in FESCT's history was passed in 1979 when the East End Teachers' Association (teachers in the English Sector of the Jerome Le Royer School Commission) merged with FESCT.

At its peak in the early seventies, FESCT's membership numbered over 2200. Then came declining enrolments and teacher surplus, and FESCT went through the eighties with a membership down to about 1500 of whom more than 30 percent were on availability. Availability has dropped considerably but so has the FESCT membership which now stands at about 1300 members.

The nineties has brought another significant change in the FESCT membership - a considerable growth in the adult education sector. Roughly one-third of today's membership are teachers in the adult sector.