

13. FRIDAYS ON THE MCGILL FACULTY, MONTREAL, EARLY 1950s

Once back from Chicago I set myself to the serious pursuit of the doctorate. Having only three quarters of residence I had plenty to learn before I could face the prelims, examination on the vast field of sociology. Every available moment went into this. On one business trip to New York I was able to use evenings and a weekend at the New York Public Library. I bought books; I borrowed books from friends.

Once the prelims were taken and passed, I applied the same effort to the dissertation. It was submitted and there remained the oral examination with the Department. It looked as though a trip to Chicago was going to be necessary; that represented a not inconsiderable drain on my resources. But while I was brooding about this the DBS needed me to attend a meeting in Canberra, Australia. I phoned the Department and asked whether the examination could be set at such a date that I could take it on the way down. The Department obliged, and I not only did the hearing but managed to take in some final formalities on the way back. I received the doctorate in 1952, just ten years after John Robbins stopped me in the hall of the DBS and proposed that I write a letter to William Ogburn.

Once a certified sociologist, I was a property of some value. The first time this appeared was in 1955 when I was offered a once-a-week lectureship at McGill, in which I was to go down to Montreal on Thursday evening, and teach sociology in two courses given on Fridays. All this was planned by Carl Dawson, long-time chair, practically proprietor of the Sociology Department. I fell in with it enthusiastically, and the problem was to persuade Herbert Marshall, then head of the DBS. He demurred at first, but then consented, and the plan was in effect for two years.

Then Marshall said that this must stop, and he arranged an increase in pay in compensation. All this time I was thinking in terms of the depression, though it was long over, and hesitated to do anything that would lead to my departure from the Bureau--even though in fact jobs were plentiful, and I could have easily found another if I had dropped the Bureau..

It tells something about bureaucracy that Marshall wanted my whole time. I really did not have much of a function even during the four days of the week that I was present in the Bureau, but it hurt him not to be in full charge of my office time. To divide me, his property, with McGill was an offense to his full ownership of the Bureau.

So what did I do in my Fridays at McGill? I had a small but very good class, including Elise Boulding, wife of Kenneth Boulding, at McGill for a year or two. Open discussions with no holds barred were a new experience to me. Oswald Hall was a close friend, and rare was the Friday when we did not lunch at the McGill Faculty Club, a new kind of institution for me. I got

to know Burton Keirstead, and Ben Higgins in the economics department, people in political science, in mathematics, in English. Every moment of this academic life was new and exciting.

I typically returned on the fast train of Friday evening that made it back to Ottawa in two hours. On one occasion I got to talking to Nicole (whose surname I do not recall), a charming young Francophone and invited her to our house. She had a boyfriend by the name of Jones; the only thing I remember of him is that having gone upstairs to relieve himself he tripped on the stairs returning to our living room and came down much faster than he intended.