

# The Tweedie Years, 1949–1975: Continuing Education Division The University of Manitoba

*William J. Kops*  
*The University of Manitoba*

## ABSTRACT

The Continuing Education Division at The University of Manitoba was established in November 1949 as the Department of Extension and Adult Education, with a major responsibility for providing advisory and coordinating services to adult education organizations in Manitoba. This paper marks some accomplishments of Stuart Tweedie over his 25 years as Director of Continuing Education at The University of Manitoba.

## RÉSUMÉ

La Division de l'éducation permanente de l'Université du Manitoba a été fondée en novembre 1949. À l'époque, elle portait le nom de Département de l'éducation permanente et aux adultes. Sa responsabilité principale était de fournir des services de consultation et de coordination aux organismes chargés de l'éducation aux adultes du Manitoba. L'article traite de quelques-unes des réalisations de Stuart Tweedie pendant les vingt-cinq années qu'il a été directeur de l'éducation permanente de l'Université du Manitoba.

The Continuing Education Division at The University of Manitoba was established in November 1949 as the Department of Extension and Adult Education, although extension activities had been ongoing at the University since the early 1900s. These early activities were in the form of an annual public lecture series, radio broadcasts, and nondegree credit programs offered through the Evening Institute. At this same time, the Faculty of Agriculture was also active in extension work, conducting public information meetings, giving radio talks, and providing answers to individual requests for information on agricultural topics. With the exception of the efforts of the Faculty of Agriculture, early extension activities were available primarily to people residing in Winnipeg.

Later, a variety of extension activities was undertaken by the University, with the most concentrated efforts occurring between 1941 and 1944 under the direction of Watson Thomson and the Adult Education Office. This office was very active during this period, developing varied arts and crafts, citizenship, and drama programs. The creation of study groups throughout the province was central to the program development approach of the Adult Education Office. As well, the Office established relations with national organizations and programs, including the National Film Board (NFB), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), and the Carnegie Corporation. After four very active years, Watson Thomson resigned and the activities of the Adult Education Office ended.

By the end of World War II, Manitobans were experiencing increasing prosperity. The farming community was gaining greater stability and income security through mechanization, crop diversification, and initiatives of the federal government like the formation of the Canadian Wheat Board. The isolation of rural and northern residents was being broken down as roads were improved and rural electrification became widespread throughout the province. A time of transition in Manitoba, it set the stage for a renewed role for the University in extension activities.

This renewed extension role for the University was based on a recommendation of The Royal Commission on Adult Education in Manitoba, established in August 1945. One of its recommendations, released in 1947, called for the creation of a Department of Extension at the University. The Minister of Education for Manitoba, C. Rhodes Smith, outlined the mandate of such a department in a letter to the University President, Dr. A. H. S. Gilson, on July 19, 1949, stating, in part:

... the Government has come to a decision on the general policy which it desires to follow in connection with Adult Education. It is the view of the Government that, in so far as Government sponsorship is concerned and public monies used, such a program should not have any partisan political basis, but should be conducted on a broad-scale objective basis with a view to providing the most all round educational facilities for our adult population. . . . To achieve this end, it has seemed the wisest course to bring the overall coordinating effort in adult education under the jurisdiction of The University of Manitoba. It is not our thought that a complex organization be established, to be run throughout the province by the University, but rather that the program set up under the University should utilize the experience and interest of the many organizations which are now doing work in the adult education field. . . . Our general thought is that the best adult education results will follow where we secure the greatest participation on the part of the people themselves.

In the same letter, Smith outlined the role for the director of this new department. A. S. R. Tweedie was hired as director and the Department began operation in November 1949.

### A. S. R. TWEEDIE: EARLY DAYS IN ADULT EDUCATION IN CANADA

A. S. R. "Stuart" Tweedie's work in adult education began earlier, when he was a student at the University of Edinburgh and involved with community development projects in the slums of his native Edinburgh, Scotland. At the outbreak of World War II, Tweedie joined the Royal Air Force where he continued to work in an educational capacity, first with the Army Education Corps, and later at the Air Intelligence School, with responsibility for officer training for the Southeast Asian front. As a result of an encounter with a Canadian officer at the Air Intelligence School, Tweedie was invited by Donald Cameron, Director of Extension at The University of Alberta, to join its Extension Department. Tweedie accepted the offer and worked for four years as the Principal Assistant to the Director of Extension at The University of Alberta. He spent much of his time travelling throughout Alberta, giving lectures and coordinating adult education activities with community groups and organizations much as his predecessors, Ottewell and Corbett, had done. He also performed

administrative duties in his capacity as an assistant to Donald Cameron, and during the summer months, he helped Cameron at the University's Banff Summer School. Tweedie's role in the development of the Banff Summer School (later, the Banff Centre) was limited, but, nonetheless, interesting. One experience he recounted with relish occurred at the close of the 1948 summer season when, with snow swirling and hands freezing, he held a surveyor's chain while Donald Cameron measured the site on Tunnel Mountain where the Banff Centre's first building was later constructed (Tweedie, personal communication, October 27, 1986).

Tweedie came to Manitoba in 1949, having experienced the strong extension tradition of The University of Alberta, and, in particular, the close relationship that existed between the University and the people of Alberta, which Tweedie described as a "tight, tight, tight fit into the community" (Tweedie, personal communication, October 27, 1986). He later described The University of Manitoba and its relationship to the community as a desert in comparison because of the limited efforts of the University to extend its resources into the community. Tweedie was convinced that his experience in Alberta had the greatest influence on his later work. He began work as Director of Extension and Adult Education at The University of Manitoba on November 14, 1949, with a budget of \$16,000 and one support staff person.

### GETTING STARTED IN MANITOBA: 1949–1959

Tweedie accepted the challenge set out for the new Department and began his term as Director of Extension with a clear administrative plan, a plan fashioned by the direction given to the Department by the provincial government, by his experiences in Alberta, and by his commitment to sound administration. He spent the first months meeting with people throughout the province to discuss their views on adult education. In the first of his monthly reports to University President Gilson, Tweedie (1949) stated:

... The main effort in the period under review [November 15 to December 31, 1949] was to make the acquaintance of the officers of the major organizations in the province interested in any phase of adult education, and to hear their views, and it is likely that this will continue to be the main effort for some time to come. (p. 1)

These efforts to establish contacts were in keeping with the style Tweedie used throughout his years as director. In his opinion, it was a style that fit both the mandate of the Department and his personal philosophy to provide support and advice to those who were interested in teaching adult students. In an interview in 1986, he described his approach in this way: “. . . We [Department of Extension] do not claim content knowledge, but we do know how to get the show on the road. Our job was facilitating, to be supportive and work with them [content specialists]” (Tweedie, personal communication, October 27, 1986).

In a broader context, some of his early efforts included reestablishing contact with National Farm Radio Forum and Citizens’ Forum, programs offered jointly by the CBC and CAAE, and initiating a cooperative venture with the National Film Board (NFB). He had seen the value of film as an educational tool, especially during his time at The University of Alberta, and he wanted to bring those benefits to Manitobans. The agreement with the NFB, formally approved in 1951, saw the new Department of Extension undertake responsibility for coordinating the distribution of NFB films in Manitoba, including the organization of a film library. An argument that Tweedie used to convince the University’s General Faculty Council (later, the Senate) to approve this plan was the natural link that would be created between the University and the people of Manitoba. This initiative allowed Tweedie to take a major step forward in providing adult education in the province in a manner that was similar to the work of extension departments at other Canadian universities, specifically, the University of Alberta and of Saskatchewan. The Department expanded in the early 1950s by taking over responsibility for the Public Lecture Committee and Radio Committee, and by providing assistance to the Evening Institute. At this same time, the Department began to fulfil its commitment to the people in rural Manitoba by screening films, holding exhibits at fairs, and sponsoring productions of The University of Manitoba Choral Society and String Quartet throughout the province. In the 1952–53 academic year, off-campus and correspondence degree credit courses were coordinated by the Department for the first time. In addition, the Director of Summer Session was given office space and clerical assistance within the Department, and the Department gained recognition as the central agency in Manitoba for professional advice and assistance to interested adult education agencies. In fact, these advisory activities were becoming so popular that Tweedie confessed in the 1952–53 Annual Report that they consumed an ever increasing amount of his time.

By the end of the 1953–54 academic year, the Department was operating in three areas: (1) credit courses by lecture and correspondence, (2) noncredit program activities, and (3) advisory and coordinating services to agencies working in adult education in Manitoba. To further the coordination of agencies working in the province, the Department convened a conference in May 1954, which resulted in the formation of a Joint Planning Commission. The purpose of the Commission was to foster greater cooperation and information exchange among the various adult education agencies operating within Manitoba. The Department added another service in 1955 when the Extension Library was formed as a result of the transfer of the Provincial Library Service from the Department of Education.

Manitobans began to adopt a more optimistic outlook by the mid 1950s. Changes in lifestyles were beginning to occur, in part, because of the increasing availability of television and the use of modern household appliances that, in particular, began to change the role of many women. Changing government policy and new economic development took place, especially in northern Manitoba, with the development of the Thompson area by the International Nickel Company. Changes were also happening at the University, with the consolidation of all programs (except those in the health sciences), including the Department of Extension programs, at the Fort Garry campus on the southern perimeter of Winnipeg, and with the installation of Dr. Hugh Saunderson as president. Tweedie later described the new president as having treated the Department of Extension with benign neglect (Tweedie, personal communication, October 27, 1986).

It was about this time that the Department of Extension began to experience its first growing pains in terms of finding adequate teaching staff and office space. As full-time day student attendance at the University rose, more resources were required to meet this demand, which in turn put a strain on the limited resources, particularly teaching staff, available to the Extension Department. These conditions frustrated Tweedie and his plans to expand and strengthen the Department; the resource squeeze was exacerbated by the fact that Tweedie himself was now devoting more time to administrative activities. Several solutions were proposed, including adding staff to both the Department of Extension and the teaching departments, reducing and/or modifying extension activities, or developing a new centre for continuing study in the style of the Banff Centre. Although some additional staff were eventually added to the Department of Extension and the number of faculty members in teaching

departments was increased, the primary course of action chosen to solve the resource shortage was to modify the program offerings of the Department of Extension. The Evening Institute reduced its enrolment through a decision to reduce class sizes and concentrate on higher level courses. The Popular Lecture Series came to an end after 49 years, and the Radio Forums, which continued to be sponsored by the Department, declined in participation naturally.

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH: 1960–1969

In 1958, the long-standing Liberal government of Premier Douglas Campbell was toppled by Duff Roblin's Progressive Conservatives; a year later, in a general election, the Conservatives were returned with an even greater majority. By 1960, Manitoba was on the move and Manitobans, generally, were enjoying new-found prosperity.

The Department of Extension and Adult Education responded to these changing conditions. In the Annual Reports of 1958 and 1959, Tweedie outlined plans to develop a program of adult education that would, in part, capitalize on Manitoba's expanded television network and pay more attention to rural community development. He continued to push for a Centre for Continuing Education at the University and an increase in the staff of the Department. On the staffing issue, he made a distinction between extension staff (those doing program development activities) and adult education staff (those providing advice and assistance and training in the wider field of adult education). At the same time, the Department's programs were increased in number and changed to meet the community demands. Substantial increases in participation occurred in correspondence courses and the revised Evening Institute programs. New initiatives were undertaken to develop custom-built courses, especially for professional groups and associations, and to offer programs to new target groups, including a rural leadership program. Efforts were made to develop programs with the Alumni Association of The University of Manitoba, which Tweedie hoped would gather support for the proposed Centre for Continuing Education. The Department streamlined the service provided by its Audio-Visual Division by deleting titles not related to adult education. Even though support from within the University was less than enthusiastic, the Department was gaining positive community support by keeping pace with changes occurring throughout Manitoba.

As the Department continued to grow through the 1960s, staff were added, particularly in areas related to continuing professional education. Tweedie felt that one of the most successful parts of the Department, and one that contributed meaningfully to development in the province, was the business and management program area. Other professional development programs were offered in various professions, including engineering, nursing, social work, pharmacy, and education. These professional programs led to certificates, which were becoming increasingly popular.

Organizationally, the growth of the 1960s required a change in the structure of the Department. Separate divisions of Management Studies, Professional Studies, Community Studies, Audio-Visual, and an Evening Institute were established. At the same time this reorganization was unfolding, responsibility for credit-granting extension courses was removed from the Department and given to the faculties. Overall, the reporting relationship of the Department was changed in 1969, when the Senate agreed that one of its standing committees would deal with University Extension Services. The year before, the Board of Governors and the Senate had approved a change in title from the Department of Extension and Adult Education to the Extension Division. This change was more than simply a change in title; it indicated a decline of the adult education advisory and assisting roles originally assigned to the Department, and it created the anomaly of an academic unit called a "Division," something of a black sheep among the University's flock of faculties, schools, and departments.

While links with national adult education organizations were maintained throughout this period, the close ties and personal relationships were not as strong as in the earlier years. Referring to this change, Tweedie (personal communication, October 27, 1986) said that there was a gradual loss of personal contact with many organizations, such as the CBC and the NFB. On a provincial level, the Department provided administrative support to help establish the Manitoba Division of the CAAE in 1967.

### TWEEDIE'S FINAL YEARS: 1970–1975

The leadership of both the province and the University changed at the end of the 1960s. The New Democratic Party, led by Ed Schreyer, formed the provincial government in 1969 and began to bring its brand of social democracy to the people of Manitoba. The University of Manitoba, on the



other hand, appointed an administratively conservative president, Ernest Sirluck, at about this same time. According to Tweedie, the new president was neither a supporter of extension activities nor interested in establishing links between the University and the Manitoba community. However, by this time the Department (Extension Division) was firmly established throughout the province in terms of its programs and activities.

The emphasis during this period was to improve the quality of planning and program offerings of the Department. This emphasis extended support for the professional development of staff members, which Tweedie mentioned in his Annual Report of 1972:

. . . This [emphasis on quality] has become the more easy with the presence on the staff of an increasing number of colleagues who, in addition to a first degree, hold a higher degree in Continuing Education. Two staff members have been accepted into doctoral programs . . . others are laying plans to embark upon doctoral studies or contemplating entry into master's programmes of continuing education. (p. 1)

A move to new premises was an important achievement of this period. It not only met the need for additional space, but also improved the image of the Department because, for the first time in 20 years, its offices were not in a basement.

In 1975, a Senate report on Extension Services at The University of Manitoba acknowledged that an extension philosophy for the University had never been articulated, debated, and internalized by the Manitoba academic community. It went further to say that much of what was done by way of extension activities was the result of the work of the Extension Division and the initiative of various individuals. The report outlined a philosophy of extension and a set of principles to govern extension programs at The University of Manitoba.

Stuart Tweedie officially retired as Director of the Extension Division in 1974, but remained in the position until the summer of 1975 when his successor, Dr. David Lawless, was appointed. When Professor Tweedie left the Division in 1975, the activities in that year included 252 courses involving 7,637 students in six program areas: Management Studies, Professional Studies, Community Studies, Social Work, the Evening Institute, and Summer Language Programs. The Division staff numbered 25 professional and support staff, and the operating budget was approaching \$500,000.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE: SEARCHING FOR A USEABLE PAST

Stuart Tweedie accomplished much during his tenure as Director of Extension, not the least of which was the establishment of the presence of The University of Manitoba in communities throughout the province. Many of the initiatives taken by the Department under Tweedie's direction have been discussed in this paper, and he saw a number of his dreams for the Department fulfilled. One of these he described as "[seeing] a whole floor of our [continuing education] people who were well trained, both in a subject area and in adult education, working on adventurous projects in education for adults" (Tweedie, personal communication, October 27, 1986). While this was not realized by the establishment of a Continuing Education Centre, it was fulfilled, in part, when the activities of the Department were consolidated on the fifth floor of the newly constructed University Centre Building. Tweedie also had dreamed of a degree program within the Department of Extension that would train adult educators to work in various capacities within the province. He felt strongly that the program had to be based on part-time study in order to allow maximum participation of those employed in adult education. Although there was no support within the University for his idea at the time, a Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education was approved and implemented some years after his retirement, and it continues to be offered today. Tweedie had also hoped to bring a sense of order and strong administration to the work of the Department. This he did accomplish and, in his view, it was one of the lasting contributions he made to the work of the Department.

Finally, he had wished for a change in the stature of continuing education at the University and in the community. He had long dreamed of The University of Manitoba becoming more like the University of Alberta and of Saskatchewan in this respect. Even though he was not completely successful in achieving this during his tenure, he was gratified by the 1975 Senate report on Extension Services that outlined, for the first time, a statement of principles governing continuing education programs at The University of Manitoba. Tweedie felt that the report, which recommended many of the things he had advocated over the years, would "create a new ball game" for continuing education. Even though the ideas put forth in the

report were not new to him, he felt the time had come when continuing education would take its rightful place in the overall activities of the University. He stated, optimistically, in his final Annual Report (1975):

. . . One of the results flowing from this Report may well be a reduction in the amount of good-natured bewilderment displayed by faculty members as they sought to arrange their instructional and other priorities without knowing what the official attitude of the University might be towards its activities in the area of Continuing Education. Since the University had no stated attitude, their uncertainty was understandable. It can, however, no longer exist after formal declaration by the Senate and the Board of Governors that a Continuing Education Division will provide a central focus for continuing education services throughout the University and for general administrative procedures relating to continuing education programmes and services. (p. 1)

Tweedie had come to The University of Manitoba in 1949 and described the relationship of the University and the community as a desert, dry and uncultivated. During his 25 years as director, he worked to cultivate this relationship and succeeded in many ways. He succeeded, it would seem, in spite of a lack of consistently strong commitment from the administration of the University during his tenure. When he left the Division in 1975, the desert had come alive, although not as yet luxuriantly.

If the past provides an understanding of the present and guidance for the future, then leaders in university continuing education need to continue the efforts of Stuart Tweedie to cultivate the role of continuing education within the university and throughout the community. Tweedie's vision of a "whole floor of well trained academic staff, well trained in a subject area and in adult education, working on adventurous programs for educating adults" is important to the ongoing vitality of university continuing education.

Following his retirement from the University in 1975, Tweedie returned to the work for which he originally had trained—as a preacher in the Presbyterian Church. After several active years in Winnipeg, Professor Tweedie and his wife Bernice moved to Saskatoon to be closer to their daughter and her family. Stuart Tweedie, the first and longest-serving Director of Extension at The University of Manitoba, died in October 1994.

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In addition to the above references, it should be noted that the primary data sources for this paper were the published *Reports on Extension Activities* (later, the *Annual Reports of the Extension Division*) prepared by A. S. R. Tweedie, and an extended interview with Professor Tweedie (conducted by the author) in October 1986.

## BIOGRAPHY

Bill Kops is an Assistant Professor and the Director of Summer Session and General Studies at The University of Manitoba, Continuing Education Division.

Bill Kops est professeur adjoint et directeur des cours d'été et des études générales de la division de l'Éducation permanente de l'Université du Manitoba.