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Preface to the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Volume

Although it was founded in 1952, the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary volume of the *McGill Law Journal* (known as well since 1977 as the *Revue de Droit de McGill*) can be observed in 1979. The first two volumes of the *Journal* covered in effect more than two calendar years (1952-1957) — such are, sometimes, the uncertainties surrounding any new publication. There was no fanfare or ringing preface when the first number of the first volume appeared in the autumn of 1952,¹ and editors in the years since have shown similar restraint. They have wisely concentrated their efforts upon producing one of the substantively more interesting and attractively printed reviews published in Canada — “a professional journal . . . [whose] purpose is to promote the study of law in Canada and to help in the understanding of the Civil Law and Common Law systems which exist side by side in this country”.²

These purposes have been fulfilled ever since the early years of the *Journal*. In addition to a host of distinguished Canadian authors who have made significant contributions in these pages to the study of law and legal scholarship, there has been a steady series of contributions by eminent writers from France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the U.S.A. Subjects treated have ranged over most aspects of local, national and international interest.

The *Journal* has not always been able to function under the best conditions. After many years spent in a crowded attic room of Old Chancellor Day Hall (which I remember well from my own time

¹ The first editorial board was composed of Jacques-Yvan Morin (Editor in Chief), James A. Robb, John Bishop, J. J. Pepper, Natalie Fochs-Isaacs and Fred Kaufman.

² From the *McGill Law Journal* prospectus, *verso* of masthead.

on the Board), it has migrated to the basement of the same building in only slightly more spacious accommodation. Financial conditions, too, have been modest; the *Journal* — and this is not generally known — has survived, indeed flourished, with no direct financial support from McGill University or the Faculty of Law itself (save for “special” projects such as the cumulative index to volumes 1-20) and only occasional support from outside agencies. To their credit, successive editorial boards have always wished to retain this financial independence as well as their managerial and editorial autonomy. The *Journal* is, then, in my view, a source of real distinction for the students who have served on it and it is a distinction which inures to the Faculty and the University. In no sense is it an “in house” publication.

In the years ahead the *McGill Law Journal* will undoubtedly face new difficulties. There will be mounting costs. A dean, one day, may covet its office space. There may be pressure to merge with other law journals on the reasoning that there are too many legal periodicals in Canada or Quebec today. The law itself, increasing in volume and in complexity, will put the editorial skills of future editors to new challenges. I am confident that our students will meet these challenges because I know how very profoundly they believe in the value of their publication. Over the past twenty years — as a member of the junior and then senior Boards, as a former faculty adviser, and now as Dean — I have been involved in the welfare of the *Journal* and I have seen this belief and pride in the publication grow. This is good. It will be a strength for the future.

And so to the students of the past who conceived and launched the *Journal*, to present students who have the responsibility to maintain it and to the future students who will be called upon to continue its fine tradition, I extend all good wishes on behalf of the Faculty of Law and McGill University, as well as on my own behalf.

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