1971

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FOREIGN AND LOCAL INFLUENCES ON POPULAR EDUCATION IN UPPER CANADA, 1815–1844

by

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Department of History

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Canada
December 1970

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ABSTRACT

The point of this study is to record the nature of the debate over educational change in Upper Canada from the close of the War of 1812 to the assumption of office as Superintendent of Schools by Egerton Ryerson. During these three decades education was seen to have "shifting functions, meanings and purposes," to quote the Harvard historian, Bernard Bailyn. Who defined these functions, meanings and purposes for the colony, and why, form the substance of this study.

Factors promoting educational change were both foreign and indigenous. Foreign models were near at hand. For political and governmental reasons the English or Scottish model was predominant. But the proximity to the United States and the presence in the colony of many American settlers, from Loyalists to so-called British Americans (Americans of long residence), served to provide a persistent challenge to the predominant British model. By the 1830's thousands of British immigrants had entered the colony with the effect of strengthening conservative British attitudes. Nevertheless Tory and Reformer alike could not then, as now, escape the republican example to the South. Every
legislative proposal seemed to be a result of, or a reaction to, the current American practice. A high point was reached in the mid-1830's when the Assembly established a commission headed by Dr. Charles Duncombe to thoroughly investigate the educational systems of several American states. Typically Duncombe's recommendations were roundly condemned in some quarters for being too American.

During the period in question Upper Canadian society experienced some fundamental changes. From a frontier society in Simcoe's day, the colony reached the threshold of pre-industrial development by the 1840's. Neither popular concepts about education nor the functions assigned to it could be left unaffected by such social and economic changes. From Simcoe's contention that the children of the mass might be educated by their relations through Strachan's desire to retain Church of England control of public education, there finally emerged a commitment to common schools for all under state control even before Ryerson became Chief Superintendent in 1846. Instrumental in bringing about this fundamental change in popular opinion were various educational promoters, such as Charles Duncombe, Mahlon Burwell, and William Lyon Mackenzie. Their motives were varied, but one thing was certain: they all sensed that Upper Canadian society was changing and that consequently forms of public education must keep pace in
order to meet society's needs.

Most educational promoters focussed their attention on formal schooling. They often drew their proposals from foreign examples, particularly the school systems of Scotland, England and the United States. Sometimes they cited German states, such as Prussia and Württemberg, for their exemplary school systems. The main agency for effecting change in the colony was the legislative process. Thus this study follows closely the rationale behind and reaction to legislative enactments from the District Public School Act of 1807 through to the Hincks' Act of 1843. The formation and activities of the General Board of Education, the colony's first "Education Office," are examined, as well as the term of office of the Reverend Robert Murray, the colony's first Superintendent of Education.

A few educational promoters saw education as much more than just formal schooling. Mackenzie, James Lesslie and Jesse Ketchum talked of educating the working man through institutions like the mechanics' institute and through informal means like the weekly newspaper and public libraries. These men, likewise, drew inspiration and guidance from foreign examples, particularly the British. They cast a wide net, but all their efforts were directed toward one aim: to realize in Upper Canada a more educated citizenry.
Other educational promoters, for example, Thaddeus Osgood and Lieutenant-Governor Colborne, devoted themselves to what we would call today minority education. Motivated by intense humanitarian zeal they sought to bring formal education to Indians, Negroes, orphans, and the children of the poor. The means varied from special schools, like Sunday Schools and Indian schools, to insisting upon integration of Negroes into the common schools of the colony. Underlying the humanitarian impulse was a large measure of evangelical Protestantism which also played its part in the common school movement as well. Schooling and religion went hand in hand and the Protestant majority in its dominant position sought to ensure that the colony's schools would serve as a means of disseminating Christian principles and Protestant practices.

Various foreign examples were cited and drawn upon throughout the period from 1815 to 1844, but the extent of foreign influence cannot be accurately measured. Local conditions invariably combined with foreign ideas to effect a new synthesis. The end result left the colony with a moderate, reasoned school system which drew upon various examples, but clearly avoided at any time a radical stance. The tried-and-true of the Old World tended to be preserved over against the new ways of the American Republic to the south.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the advice and support of Dr. J. J. Talman and Dr. F. H. Armstrong of the Department of History of the University of Western Ontario who were unstinting in both time and effort during the research and writing of this thesis. Dr. J. L. H. Henderson, Huron College, University of Western Ontario and Dr. Robin S. Harris, Professor of Higher Education, University of Toronto, read sections of the thesis and offered helpful comments.

The kind assistance of numerous librarians and archivists is also deserving of mention. In particular the author would like to cite the following: the late Miss Anne Sexton, Regional Room, University of Western Ontario; Mr. Edward Phelps, formerly of the Regional Room, University of Western Ontario; Miss Edith Firth and her staff, Baldwin Room, Toronto Central Library; Mr. Glen Lucas, United Church of Canada Archives, Victoria University, Toronto; Miss Sandra Guillaume, formerly of the Ontario Archives, Toronto: Mrs. Anne Yandle, Special Collections, University of British Columbia; and the staffs of the Public Archives of Canada, Ontario Archives, University of Toronto Library,
Trinity College Library, Toronto, and the Legislative Library, Province of Ontario, Queen's Park.

For the provision of financial support to facilitate travel and research the author wishes to thank Althouse College of Education, University of Western Ontario and the Committee on Research, University of British Columbia.

The vicissitudes of typing the final draft were met and overcome in marvellous fashion by Mrs. Lillian Thirkell of Vancouver to whom I owe many thanks.
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

P. A. C.  Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa
P. A. O.  Ontario Archives, Toronto
P. S. O.  Provincial Secretary's Office
T. C. L.  Toronto Central Library
U. C. S.  Upper Canada Sundries located in Civil Secretary's Correspondence (1791-1840), Public Archives of Canada.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

During the time with which this thesis is concerned there were no "Anglicans" in Upper Canada. There were Churchmen or members of the Church of England or of the Scotch Church or Kirk. There were also dissenters, for example, Presbyterians or Methodists.
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CHAPTER I

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES ON EDUCATION IN UPPER CANADA

This study is concerned with the subject of educational change in a society emerging from a pioneering to a pre-industrial stage. As Bernard Bailyn, the noted historian of colonial America, has reminded us in his seminal volume, *Education in the Forming of American Society*, formal education must not be seen in *vacuo* but rather in relation to the society within which it operates. Failure to see educational development in this light will result in only a partial picture being drawn.

Bailyn's definition thus serves as an important guide to the historian of education. Education is thought of then "not only as formal pedagogy, but as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations." Consequently the vehicles of popular education discussed in this study are not confined to schools, colleges and universities; in addition an examination is made of other social agencies such as mechanics' institutes, newspapers and churches. Educational development is shown as an intimate segment of social and intellectual development of a particular society. Thus education is seen, as Bailyn suggests,
"in its elaborate, intricate involvements with the rest of society," while noting "its shifting functions, meanings, and purposes."¹

Education in Upper Canada has been moulded largely by the melting together of two forces—one British in origin, the other American. The differing values underpinning the British and the American societies contended for supremacy in the colony before 1841. Each persuasion had its outstanding representatives. Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe (1791-98) strove to make Upper Canada a model British colony, a microcosm of British society. To this end he promoted the establishment of a colonial episcopate and a "literary institution." Opposing him were many Loyalists and other American immigrants who demanded the American institutions to which they had become accustomed, such as town meetings. For the Loyalists, despite their fundamental support of the British crown, wished to retain the democratic North American institutions they had known at home. Later there were apostles of Jacksonian democracy, such as William Lyon Mackenzie, who favoured an egalitarian as opposed to an aristocratic society. For these individuals the model to be emulated was the American Republic and in particular the state of New York.

Prior to 1841 most of the colony's educational issues can be viewed as part of the struggle between these contending forces, for all recognized that the system of
education adopted in the young colony would go far towards forming the society in one image or the other. As long as the final shape of society and government remained undetermined, so also did the structure and content of the educational system. Thus the resolution of educational issues was inextricably intertwined with the solution of larger political and social problems. Once responsible government was assured, signalled by the summoning of Baldwin and LaFontaine to form a government in 1848, the main features of the colony's educational system, not surprisingly, came into clear focus. The Reverend Egerton Ryerson, the province's first superintendent of education, was responsible for drafting two significant school acts: one in 1846, which established the basis for the system associated with his name; the other in 1850, which laid the groundwork for free and universal education in the province. By mid-century a consensus had been reached on fundamental political and educational questions, marked respectively by the achievement of responsible government and the establishment of a basis for free schooling for all.

Because no consensus on educational issues was reached before 1841 attention has normally been focussed on the following decades. The point to note, however, is that essential questions regarding education and the relationship between education and society had been asked during the pre-1841 period when the functions, meanings,
and purposes of education were discussed and various proposals debated. Scottish, English and various New England and New York influences were considered, but always the pragmatic philosophy of the frontier played its part in the debate. Spurred on by the extreme localism of a frontier people, it is significant that the population of Upper Canada had committed itself to a concept of common schools\(^2\) before Egerton Ryerson's appointment to office in 1844. The point of this study is to record the nature of the debate over educational change and to establish the commitment to common schools that existed before Ryerson.

Upper Canadians adopted an essentially utilitarian position towards education, which, it was held, should be practical so as to solve every-day problems. The needs of a pioneer community were so immediate that few could see the value of education for some future society or some intangible rewards. In the face of practical necessities, a certain scepticism, if not outright contempt, existed for book learning, academic training, and intellectual pursuits. As a short-term resident in Upper Canada observed, "As soon as the young hero attains his seventh or eighth year, he is provided with an axe, instead of a primer."\(^3\) Or consider the Report of the Western District School for 1828:

The people in this vicinity is [sic] principally composed of worthy but illiterate farmers who are unable to appreciate the advantages of a liberal education, and consequently unwilling to have their children taught anything more than the first elements of learning.\(^4\)
Or the remark of a British traveller: "... as for Latin and Algebra, yea even common English and the multiplication table, they are not respected."^5

Under these circumstances it is not difficult to see that if education were to be accepted at all, it must lean toward the practical. The Reverend John Strachan, master of the grammar school at Cornwall from 1803 to 1812, grasped this requirement early. He realized that few of his students would enter university or the professions whereas all of them would have need for some practical knowledge, such as surveying. Thus he favoured a more practical course of instruction than the traditional English classical curriculum with its heavy emphasis on Latin and algebra. "Their parents," Strachan pointed out to his former mentor back in Scotland, "are anxious to get them introduced to business and they can seldom appreciate the advantage of a liberal system of education."^6

Another feature of Upper Canadian society which had a profound influence on popular attitudes towards education was extreme localism.^7 Settlements were so sparse and so isolated from each other that people found it natural to look for local solutions to their problems. Likewise there was an incipient distrust of any kind of central authority. Proposals for centralized systems of education were generally opposed out of fear that such a scheme would be linked in some way with ecclesiastical authority, such as the Church of England, or an unpopular
politically influential group, such as the Family Compact. Even if a centralized educational authority were desired, the small population (slightly over 95,000 in 1816), which was strung out over a narrow strip of more than 500 miles and separated by poor communications, could hardly be expected to make any central authority effective. Proof of this view can be seen in the inability of the General Board of Education to make any progress as a central body supervising education in the province in the decade following 1823, though the presence of John Strachan as president of the Board played its part in contributing to that body's ineffectiveness.

As late as the 1830's measures favouring a centralized system of schools, such as Mahlon Burwell's various bills before the Assembly, were roundly condemned. Whether more efficient or not, it was argued that schemes like Burwell's would make the common school "a mere engine of the Executive." By mid-decade, however, changes were afoot; the population was approaching 240,000 and communications were much improved. Both the number of roads and the possibility of travelling over them had increased. The Rideau and Welland Canals were also in operation, though the latter failed to come into regular use till the following decade. Another factor was that textbooks, some even published in the colony, were more readily available. Further, teachers were more numerous, and there was talk of allowing women to teach and of
establishing normal schools for teacher-training.

Local control of education was retained intact until the next decade. Ryerson's Common School Act of 1846 inaugurated a centralized, province-wide system of a type that had long been advocated by conservative Upper Canadians, such as John Strachan and Mahlon Burwell. Ryerson's system was to continue for a century before measures favouring decentralization began to reappear.

Where Upper Canadians showed some appreciation of schooling was in the realm of moral education. As Philippe Ariès, the French social historian, has shown in his stimulating book *Centuries of Childhood*, in the early modern period of European history parents began to show increasing concern for the moral welfare of their children. Children came to be seen as more than little adults as had been true in the Middle Ages and rather as beings in their own right facing an evil and immoral world. Increasingly it was felt necessary to put children through an incubation or quarantine period during which time the child would be prepared for eventual entry into the adult world. The preparation for the adult world was to be spent in a school where the child's moral and civic rectitude would be ensured.⁹

In this same connection the *Upper Canada Gazette* in 1799 carried an article entitled "Essay on the Necessity of Education" in which the author held that the purpose of education was to "eradicate those evil
impressions made on the child in its infant and tender state" and to train the "young and tender mind" of the child "in the way that he should go." Such aims of education were held to be valid for all children, but of course some parents, especially poor ones, "neglected" their children in the eyes of educational promoters. The state was not able to do much about this state of affairs until mid-century when Egerton Ryerson set the wheels in motion for eventual legislation requiring compulsory education for all children up to twelve years of age. This intrusion of the state into the traditional realm of parental rights amounted to a truly revolutionary step, and so the preliminaries to the attainment of universal compulsory education form an important theme in this study.

One should not construe from the foregoing account that there was not precedent in English history for government to act with regard to education. In the interest of protecting the familiar social order against threatening societal changes, Tudor governments adopted a long series of laws designed to reduce social dislocation. Persons taking up particular trades were required to observe the terms of apprenticeship. Perhaps the most notable of these laws was the Statute of Artificers of 1563, an early attempt to regulate the educational institution, in this case apprenticeship, on which orderly change seemed to depend. The interest in social
legislation in Tudor times was not confined to education but may also be found in regulations applied to deal with an increasingly visible pauper population.\textsuperscript{13}

Like Westminster, the Parliament of early Upper Canada made provision for the children of poor parents, in this case a system of indentured apprenticeship for orphans, abandoned children and those whose parents were unwilling or unable to look after them. By a statute, passed in 1799, the Courts of Quarter Sessions could bind a child as an apprentice up to twenty-one years of age.\textsuperscript{14}

In one typical case in 1817, the master was obliged to provide his six-year-old apprentice "with sufficient wearing apparel and victuals and teaching him or causing him to be taught, to read and write and at the expiration of his apprenticeship to furnish him with two suits of wearing apparel, a Yoke of Oxen worth Fifty Dollars with a Yoke and chain."\textsuperscript{15}

Education for civic ends was a well recognized aim of education by Ryerson's time in Upper Canada. In the United States public schooling was seen even earlier as an effective means of promoting order and social harmony.\textsuperscript{16}

It is interesting to note, however, that similar aims for education can also be detected in early Upper Canada. An 1810 editorial in the \textit{Kingston Gazette} phrased it as follows:

Habits of subordination acquired in well-disciplined schools essentially aid the administration of civil government. They introduce a
certain uniformity of manners, sentiments and character, which is a desirable object in any state of society and under any form of government and particularly important to this province, now in its youth, and not ripened into national manhood.\textsuperscript{17}

Education of the "citizen" as opposed to education of the "man" became an extremely important aim of education as the challenges of industrialization and urbanization were faced around mid-century.\textsuperscript{18}

**Outside Influences**

The question of outside influences on education in Upper Canada is an interesting but complex one. As J. M. S. Careless has established, Upper Canada was in a crucial geographical position to absorb influences from abroad. The St. Lawrence River acted as a "funnel facing Britain" while the impulse of the metropolitan centres of New York, and later Chicago was felt equally well. But "to a great extent," Careless warns, "the United States was still a cultural province of Britain."\textsuperscript{19} Thus in order to avoid the problem of having to isolate certain ideas and institutions in order to label them British or American one is wise to retreat from such a task and instead examine Upper Canada's experience in terms of J. B. Brebner's *North Atlantic Triangle*.

Despite the foregoing view the origin of some outside influences, it seems to me, can be pin-pointed. The English example, for instance, was continually present in
official quarters. It is perhaps best identified with the
colony's first Lieutenant-Governor, John Graves Simcoe.
An army man, a graduate of Eton and Oxford and a strong
supporter of the established church, Simcoe was a typical
Tory. The impact of his views on education allow us to
speak of a "Simcoe tradition" in Ontario education which
lasted long after his departure. Simcoe's attitude, to
which the Church of England subscribed, favoured proper
education for the select few—"the Children of the Princi-
pal People of this Country" as he put it—20—who would
eventually become the country's leaders. For the rest,
Simcoe held that "such education as may be necessary for
people in the lower degrees of life . . . may at present
be provided for them by their Connections and relations."21
A man of his times, the governor believed that the
resources of the colony should be concentrated on the
education of the few rather than spread thinly over the
population as a whole. In conformity with this view, he
stressed the establishment of classical grammar schools
on the English model and a university in the colony's
capital. For Simcoe, as for Strachan later, educational
institutions were an essential feature of the official
British system of a close interrelationship between church
and state.

Despite Simcoe's determined efforts to foster
grammar schools and a university, no significant advances
were made during his day. His superiors, the successive
Secretary of State Henry Dundas and the Duke of Portland, persisted in the view that schoolmasters in the elementary subjects would satisfy present needs; advanced students could go to Quebec, Montreal, or Nova Scotia to further their education. Dundas summed up his refusal to consider a university for Upper Canada by asserting, "the Country must make the University, and not the University the Country." In the circumstances interested parents were forced to depend upon itinerant teachers or private schools, such as John Stuart's in Kingston (from 1786) and John Strachan's in Cornwall (from 1803), for the education of their children.

All Simcoe's efforts were, however, not in vain. He did succeed in obtaining government support for two grammar schools, and in 1797, a year after his departure from Upper Canada, the colony's legislature sent a petition to George III requesting a land grant to provide for a grammar school in each district and a university in the capital. The next year authorization came for allocating 540,000 acres of land for these purposes, and the Executive Council dutifully set aside ten townships and parts of two others. Unfortunately the land grant system for the support of schools proved relatively ineffective in Upper Canada. Good land was still readily available and cheap, and so school lands stood vacant, with the result that no revenue was derived from them for the construction of schools and payment of teachers.
Scottish influence on education in Upper Canada can be seen most clearly in the organizational model of the parish schools of Scotland.23 Already by the early eighteenth century, Lowland Scotland possessed a network of parish and high schools offering education to both the poor and the wealthy. Under Presbyterian control popular education was underwritten by taxing landlords through a system of compulsory assessment as well as tenants. Thus, by the time Upper Canada was created, Scotland possessed a general system of popular education linked to a well-developed secondary and university system. It was this model which individual Scots, such as John Strachan, had in mind when they sought the extension of popular education in Upper Canada. The democratic outlook of Scotland's educational system originating with John Knox's *The First Book of Discipline* (1561) seemed made to order for the frontier environment.

American influences were held to be a mixed blessing, and of all outside influences were considered by the ruling authorities to be the most dangerous. Various steps were taken to curb the spread of "levelling republikan [sic] principles" originating in the United States. Hence many education reforms were not so much American imitations as measures of self-defence against American influence, a sort of reverse influence. Certainly the extent of the American example was not to be wondered at. Common ties of language and culture, common
environmental problems, the intermingling of the two populations and the very success of the American experience—all contributed to the American impact on Upper Canadian society. But to pursue the nature of American influence more deeply raises serious difficulties. For one thing, the United States received its original and basic stock of ideas from seventeenth and eighteenth century England. Spurred on by a Puritan mission and a founding fathers' myth, education in the United States assumed the attributes of both an ideology and a panacea for society's ills. The dynamism of American education was bound to have a profound impact on Upper Canada. Indeed like the rest of English Canada, the dilemma in early Ontario education was often seen, as one scholar puts it, "in terms of whether to opt in or opt out of the American Utopia." In the same fashion, J. M. S. Careless describes the Upper Canadian attitude towards the United States as evidence of a split personality:

As the power, success, and self-confidence of the United States attracted Canadian attention and aroused desires to imitate, so it overwhelmed as well, evoking fear and distaste and the desire to do things in a different way.

The "desire to do things in a different way" helps to explain the uniqueness of the Upper Canadian experience.

The impulse to reform education was, however, part of a much larger reform movement of the first decades of the nineteenth century found throughout the North Atlantic Triangle. Popular education was the cornerstone of this
movement, but penal reform, temperance, medical advances and abolition of slavery were also significant elements. Among reformers it was generally held that the education of the masses was essential before their strength could be mobilized in support of the other reforms. In England Henry Brougham and Joseph Lancaster\textsuperscript{29} fought for the achievement of popular education. Jeremy Bentham was a leading promoter of penal and legal reforms. British humanitarians, like William Wilberforce, worked in the cause of abolition and temperance. As one observer notes, the British Reformers were united by "the passion for an educated people."\textsuperscript{30} By mid-century the workhouse, the hospital, the prison and the school were the focus of reform attention.

Upper Canada had its proponents of British radicalism, Jacksonian democracy and liberal humanitarianism. Dr. Charles Duncombe, for example, was sent by the Assembly in 1835 to observe the system of education to be found in the United States. The following year he returned with a report calling for a revamped education system. His recommendations for change fell victim to the intense unrest of the 1837 rebellion, but many of his suggestions were later utilized by Ryerson. The growth of reform sentiment in general and not only in education is revealed by the fact that Duncombe was also asked by the Assembly to look into American asylums and prisons. Duncombe's report on prisons and penitentiaries with its
particular reference to the problem of vagrant children in the streets of Toronto anticipates the growing state concern over orphans, the insane, the indigent, and wayward women. Between 1841 and 1866 there was a dramatic increase in the number of charitable institutions receiving government grants.\(^{31}\)

One immediate problem the historian faces in attempting to assess foreign influences is that the models to which Upper Canadians looked for inspiration were provided by societies much further advanced economically. To attempt to draw an analogy between conditions in Upper Canada and those of contemporary Britain or the United States would be questionable. This is particularly true if comparisons are made with the more developed states of the American eastern seaboard. If one wished, more reasonable comparisons could perhaps be drawn with the United States mid-west.\(^{32}\) However, perception of a situation could be one thing, actual reality something else. The articulate minority in Upper Canada, whose opinions concern us most in this study, often perceived their situation to be similar to the current state of affairs in Britain, or Massachusetts, or New York State. Their perception may have been faulty but their thoughts and actions followed from this perception.
Local Influences

The structure of the government imposed by the British authorities was another major influence on education in Upper Canada. The views of the Lieutenant-Governors, as will be shown later, were extremely significant in directing educational decision-making. Further, the appointed Executive Council and Legislative Council usually found themselves in contention with the elected Assembly on matters affecting education. Measures finding favour in the Assembly were frequently vetoed by the Legislative Council. An illustration of the tenacity with which each group held to its opposing views in regard to education is to be found in the debate over the District Public (Grammar) School Act of 1807. The schools established as a result of this Act were modelled on the English public school and for various reasons were not well attended. Yet efforts on the part of the Assembly to repeal the Act and replace these schools with less exclusive ones were continually blocked by the Legislative Council. The Assembly was unable until 1816 to push through a bill providing a modicum of state support for a system of common schools, which even then supplemented rather than replaced the District Schools.

Another issue between the Councils and the Assembly concerned the disposition of the Clergy Reserves. The Constitutional Act stipulated that an amount of land
equal to one-seventh of the Crown lands granted was to be set aside "for the support and Maintenance of a Protestant Clergy." For years the last phrase was taken to mean the clergy of the Church of England. It is not surprising that this privileged position enabled the Church of England to attain a degree of power much in excess of the actual number of its colonial adherents. The conservative ruling groups, eventually known as the Family Compact, felt the full favour of Church power, especially when its employment was required against the palest evidence of radicalism among the mass of the people who were non-Churchmen. Reformers, who gained power in the Assembly for a two-year period, sought to dissolve the Church of England control of the Clergy Reserves, either by dividing the proceeds from the sale of the land among all the major religious denominations, or alternatively by putting the entire proceeds into much-needed public services such as roads and schools. Such proposals as the latter made allies of Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican, because, although the Catholic Church and Church of Scotland were opposed to Anglican pretensions to exclusive jurisdiction over the reserves, they feared even more a system of secular education erected from the proceeds of their secularization.

There is no doubt that by 1820 the need for urban services, including schools, remained small in Upper Canada. As the geographer Spelt has pointed out, "in
general a non-rural way of life could not be established
outside the two towns of Kingston and York; other agglom-
erated settlements had, by 1820, hardly passed beyond the
hamlet stage."\(^{34}\) By mid-century, however, the situation
had altered dramatically. The province had various
"industrial centres" defined by Spelt as manufacturing
operations on a scale larger than a family enterprise.\(^{35}\)
The growth of industries and urban centres changed the
way of life for many settlers. As they became less and
less self-sufficient, there grew up the need for special-
ized urban services including schools of a sophisticated
nature. Thus the education of children became more wide-
spread as the need for education became more widely recog-
nized. By mid-century a travelling "Englishwoman in
America" could firmly declare:

> More importance is attached generally to educa-
tion in Upper Canada than might have been supposed
from the extreme deficiencies of the first settlers
. . . . Acting on the principle that the first
duty of government is to provide for the education
of its subjects, a uniform and universal education
system has been put into force in Canada.\(^{36}\)

This quotation takes us beyond the chronological limits
of our story, but the achievement of a "uniform and univer-
sal educational system" was not arrived at overnight. The
groundwork was laid in the period prior to Ryerson's
appointment as assistant superintendent of schools in
1844.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


2 By "common schools" was meant the first and for most children only level of formal schooling in the nineteenth century. The one curriculum consisted of the 3 R's and little more. Some sort of religious and moral instruction was normal. Latin, the mark of grammar school education in nineteenth century England, was confined to the District Grammar Schools in Upper Canada. Ryerson's aim was to make common school education available to all Ontarian children.

3 Edward Allen Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canadas (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1824), II, 196.


6 Strachan Papers, P. A. O., Strachan to Brown, July 13, 1806. In his A Concise Introduction to Mathematical Arithmetic for the Use of Schools, which was the first school text published in Upper Canada in 1809, Strachan underlined the need for practical arithmetic by suggesting that multiplication be applied to the measuring of timber and that household expenses and forms of bills and receipts be introduced in teaching subtraction and division.

8 Christian Guardian, January 15, 1834.


10 Upper Canada Gazette, July 13, 1799.


13 "An Act for the Relief of the Poor," 43 Eliz. 1, c. 2 (1601).

14 Statutes of Upper Canada, 39 Geo. III, c. 3. This legislation may be termed the first truly educational legislation in Upper Canada.


16 See Katz, Irony ..., passim.

17 Kingston Gazette, September 25, 1810.


21. Ibid., I, 143. Simcoe to Dundas, April 28, 1792.

22. Ibid., IV, 319. Dundas to Simcoe, July 12, 1792.

23. For a detailed account of Scottish educational history, see H. M. Knox, *Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Scottish Education* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953).


25. See, for example, Clarence J. Karier, *Man, Society and Education* (Glenview, III.: Scott, Foresman, 1967), ch. 2.


29. Lancaster, a proponent of a system of monitorial schooling, stands as a personification of the triangle since he worked at promoting his monitorial schools in England, the Canadas, and the United States. From 1829 to 1832 he operated a school in Montreal.


33 31 Geo. III, c. 31.


CHAPTER II

BEGINNINGS OF EDUCATION IN UPPER CANADA, 1783-1815

The Loyalists

The struggle between British and North American forces to mould a society to their liking began with the first major group of settlers in Upper Canada, the United Empire Loyalists.¹ Driven from their homes by revolutionaries or prompted by a desire to continue to live under the British Crown,² approximately 6,000 Loyalists had settled in Upper Canada by 1786. The majority installed themselves at the end of the Niagara Peninsula, along the north shore of the upper St. Lawrence, and about the Bay of Quinte. These settlers, mostly of humble origin, came from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. In his volume Loyalist Narratives, J. J. Talman underlines the social admixture of the Loyalist emigration, in this case from New York.

Thus it appears that the Loyalists of New York had within their ranks persons of all social positions . . . of all grades of intelligence from the ignorant agriculturalist to the president of the only college in the province . . . the party included leaders in culture, religion and society . . . many of the solid business men and also much of the brawn and muscle of the common people.³
On the surface every Loyalist vehemently upheld British institutions; after all, had he not left his home or been forced to do so for just this reason? Deep down, however, the Loyalist was conditioned by the society he had come from—a society based not on privilege and class as was British society, but on democratic and egalitarian principles fostered by the frontier and the New World. As Bernard Bailyn insists, the culture of the American colonies was an integral part of Atlantic civilization, closely associated with England. Yet it was different in essential ways. It was provincial: drawn between the attractions of cosmopolitan sophistication and native simplicity, it was equally and actively disdainful of decadence and rusticity; part of an ancient civilization, it was fresh, naive, aspiring, and acutely self-conscious.

Although the New England Loyalist cherished a strong belief in private and local initiative, he was also accustomed to state intervention in matters affecting education. Legislation making the provision of schools compulsory upon towns had appeared as early as the mid-seventeenth century. Behind the desire to have children formally educated were conceptions of the child as potentially moral and of society as generally corrupt. The frontier environment with its immediate threat to civilized society affected almost all of the colonial leaders and prompted a "self-conscious, deliberate, aggressive use of education." Thus New England Loyalists were fully aware of the importance of formal education as a means of inducing in the young appropriate modes of
behaviour in society. Moreover, it was considered normal that schools should result from a combination of local initiative prodded by state intervention.

It was not surprising then that one of the first Upper Canadian Loyalist petitions to Lord Dorchester, the Governor-General of British North America, concerned the matter of education. The document, instigated by Richard Cartwright, a prominent Kingston merchant, was drawn up in 1787. It lamented the deplorable state of education for the children of Loyalists and requested "a school in each district ... for the purpose of teaching English, Latin, Arithmetic and Mathematics." Likewise a two-man committee appointed by Lord Dorchester to investigate the situation reported that those who came to Canada counted on enjoying the same "expectancies" to which they were accustomed in the Thirteen Colonies. These included the tradition of the common school maintained by the community.

Failure to have their petition granted led those Loyalists who upheld the value of schooling to support the opening of a number of privately operated schools beginning with the Reverend John Stuart's in Kingston in 1786. The first Loyalist school in Leeds and Grenville was located in a log building within the old French fortification at Pointe au Baril (Maitland). Before the turn of the century similar schools sprang up in Fredricksburg, Napanee, Hay Bay, York, Dundas, Port Rowan, Newark
(Niagara-on-the-Lake), Ancaster, Adolphustown, St. Catharines, Belleville, and Port Hope. One observer estimates that there was a total of twenty-two private schools before 1800. An early visitor to the colony found time, though his stay was brief, to comment on the schools around Kingston in 1795: "In this district there are some schools, but they are few in number. The children are instructed in reading and writing, and pay each a dollar a month." 

The teachers of these schools were for the most part clergymen. The early garrison schools at Kingston and Newark were conducted by army chaplains. Church of England clergymen, like the Reverend Robert Addison at Newark, and Presbyterian clergymen, like the Reverend John Burns, his successor, predominated. But there were outstanding lay teachers as well. W. W. Baldwin, father of the more famous Robert, opened a classical school at York in 1802. Richard Cockrell, English-born but American-influenced, opened a school in Newark in 1796 and then moved to Ancaster to establish another school before finally publishing a newspaper. Cockrell's ability received praise from no less a critic than John Strachan who described his school as "an excellent mathematical school." Among Cockrell's first students was William Hamilton Merritt, whose father was so pleased he sent his son to Ancaster to continue his schooling with him. Cockrell was also responsible for writing an
interesting pamphlet on education entitled * Thoughts on the Education of Youth.* According to J. J. Talman, this pamphlet, published in Newark in 1795, was the first non-governmental publication in Upper Canada preceded only by Simcoe's speech at the opening of the first Parliament and the laws passed by the first and second sessions of that Parliament.¹⁵

Most of the early schools were day schools restricted to teaching the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. Boarding schools could be found in Kingston and Newark.¹⁶ Only a few schools taught the classics and higher mathematics: Stuart's at Kingston, Strachan's at Cornwall, and Baldwin's at York. The typical curriculum was confined to "the art of spelling--reading--writing and arithmetic."¹⁷

The education of His Majesty's loyal Indian subjects was not neglected. The Six Nations Indians who had left upstate New York after fighting alongside the British settled both in the Bay of Quinte and along the banks of the Grand River. In the Bay of Quinte they were provided with a teacher in one William Bell and a grant of £30 from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S. P. G.).¹⁸ Just as in the American colonies, the S. P. G. was the missionary arm of the Church of England and one of its main concerns was the conversion of the Indians. Although the school was provided, it appears the Indians were not much interested.
Attendance was so sparse that in 1802 the S. P. G. funds were cut off. Among the Six Nations on the Grand River, Governor Haldimand set aside an allowance of £25 per annum for a schoolmaster for the Indians and promised to build a schoolhouse.¹⁹ At Fairfield on the Thames River an Indian school was opened in 1793 among the Delawares by the Reverend David Zeisberger, a Moravian missionary.²⁰ Both English and Delaware were taught and books in both languages were read including Zeisberger's Indian and English spelling book.

Post-Loyalists

The concern of some Loyalists about proper education for their children was almost immediately reinforced by an influx of post-Loyalists (often erroneously called "late" Loyalists) many of whom held the same view of education. Paradoxically, while Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe sought to make of Upper Canada a British bastion in North America, he was forced at the same time to launch a campaign to attract "true New England Americans" as colonists. Determined to create a "vigorou colony" he realized the impossibility of achieving this goal on the basis of 10,000 inhabitants, including both Loyalists and non-Loyalists. His most pressing need was an increased population. Because of Britain's involvement in the French Revolutionary wars and Irish preference for emigration to
the United States, the latter became the only country from which settlers could readily be procured. Consequently efforts were made to attract American settlers to Upper Canada by the offer of free land grants.

In pursuing this immigration policy, Simcoe was, of course, creating a challenge to his desire to establish a "British country." Regardless of the obvious suitability of Americans to frontier conditions, they nevertheless had American ideas of republicanism and democracy, which were anathema to the concept of the ideal state held by Simcoe and the Executive and Legislative Councils. The "Levelling Spirit" was not long in making its appearance. As early as 1792 the Surveyor-General, David W. Smith, warned: "our House of Assembly for the most part have violent levelling tendencies which are totally different from the ideas I have been educated with. The neighbouring states are too often brought in as patterns and models which I neither approve nor countenance." The influx of American settlers was such that by 1812 an American traveller in Upper Canada could estimate that four-fifths of the population were post-Loyalist Americans. A more recent authority suggests that in four of the eight districts into which the province was administratively divided, American immigrants outnumbered all other inhabitants two to one. Among these immigrants were many individuals who later became prominent in the public life of Upper Canada.
Dr. Charles Duncombe, an American-born doctor arrived in the colony in 1820 and took up residence first in St. Thomas, then in Burford. Along with Dr. John Rolph he conducted the St. Thomas Dispensatory, the first medical school in Upper Canada. In addition he sat as a reform member of the Legislature for three terms, and composed the famous Duncombe Report (to be discussed in detail in Chapter VII). Another post-Loyalist of prominence in the colony's public life was Mahlon Burwell. His family arrived in Upper Canada from New Jersey in 1797, and settled in Bertie Township (Welland County). Later on Burwell moved to the Talbot Settlement where he soon became right-hand man of the notorious Thomas Talbot. All the while he showed a consuming interest in education, and struggled in the Assembly to establish an efficient system of schools, which he considered must be dependent upon a proper scheme of finance and control.

In this early period the American model can be seen in evidence in several Upper Canadian communities. In some cases it appears to have had a direct influence; in others the exigencies of the frontier would seem to have promoted similar results in both countries. Around 1800 a number of German-speaking Mennonites and Quakers from Pennsylvania settled north of York (Toronto) off Yonge Street in York and Markham Townships. There they erected the first community-supported schools in the area. One Timothy Rogers of Vermont brought a group of Quakers
to Yonge Street in King Township near the present town of Newmarket. They were joined by others from Pennsylvania and by 1804 had formed the Yonge Street Meeting of the Society of Friends. One of their first tasks was to establish a school with Timothy Rogers, Jr. as teacher. Other early Quaker schools were opened on Yonge Street in 1809, and in Pelham (1811) and West Lake (1816).

At about the same time the first "publicly built school" in Port Hope followed a New England practice. The log school was built through local community effort and the scale of fees to be paid was determined at meetings of freeholders in the neighbourhood. This practice resembled very much the New England town meeting, but all evidence points to its evolution without reference to the foreign example. Thus the tradition of local control of schools appears to be a result of both foreign and indigenous influences.

Concern about American influence generally focussed on education, specifically the role of American teachers and textbooks. There were many Americans who served as teachers in Upper Canada in the years before the War of 1812, particularly in the rural areas since the town-centred grammar schools provided for by the act of 1807 were usually staffed by Anglican or Presbyterian clergymen from Great Britain. Most of the Americans were little more than adventurers or drifters who moved from place to place wherever they could gather a few students in return
for room and board and, if they were lucky, a few shillings. Despite their intellectual and occasionally moral deficiencies, the American teachers gave many children the only instruction they ever received. Their efforts, however, aroused strong criticism from some quarters. One prominent resident complained of the activities of two American schoolmasters in his neighbourhood north of York: "They use all their efforts to poison the minds of the youth by teaching them in Republican books . . . . Youths educated in such books will by and by have the privilege of voting members for our own assembly and filling the House with their own kind, and when that is the case what may the governor and council expect but trouble." 28 Another contemporary account refers to "books . . . imported from the United States which are completely calculated to train up our children as citizens of the Republic, and to divert them from every affection and respect for the parent country." 29

The need to counteract subversive American influence both at home and abroad was acknowledged from the start by Upper Canadian officials. Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe urged upon Secretary of State Dundas the necessity for a university in the colony "as, owing to the cheapness of education in the United States, the gentlemen of Upper Canada will send their children there, which would tend to pervert their British principles." 30 Simcoe's concern was echoed by Bishop Jacob Mountain, of Quebec, which diocese included Upper Canada until 1839. It was
important, the bishop stressed, to counter "all the mis-
chiefs that may eventually rise from the necessity of
sending our youth for education to the schools of Foreign
America." 31 From a positive standpoint Simcoe argued
that "the completion of a liberal education would be most
useful to inculcate just principles, habits and manners
into the rising generation" and would "contribute to that
intimate union with Great Britain." 32

Among the American immigrants coming into the
colony, Bishop Mountain had particular contempt for
Methodists. Moreover, those who became teachers were, in
Mountain's view, downright dangerous since they were "a
set of ignorant enthusiasts, whose preaching is calculated
only to perplex the understanding, and corrupt the morals
and relax the nerves of industry, and disolve [sic] the
bonds of society." 33 Such concern in official quarters
led Simcoe in 1795 to urge the Duke of Portland, Dundas'
successor as Colonial Secretary, to "preclude those who
have borne allegiance to any foreign power, or state,
from the participation of the privileges of His Majesty's
Subjects" unless resident in the colony for seven years. 34
In the same year a contemporary observer made note of a
renewed policy of caution about American immigrants.

The authorities are cautious in receiving
Republicans from the States, and wish only to en-
courage husbandmen and labourers. Clergymen,
lawyers, physicians and school-masters are not the
first characters who would be fostered. Many
congregations would have been formed and schools
opened if the policy in this respect had been different. 35
Simcoe's plans to use religion and education to build a strong British colony met with little success during his term of office; Upper Canada received neither a bishop of its own nor an endowed university, as he had hoped. The governor did succeed in obtaining government support for two grammar schools, but in 1796 Portland opposed this policy on the grounds that Montreal and Quebec were more suitable locations for grammar schools.  

In 1796 Simcoe left the colony for good although he retained the title of lieutenant-governor for another two years. A year after his departure the colonial legislature sent a petition to George III requesting a land grant to endow grammar schools in each of the four administrative districts into which the province was then divided and a university at York. The practice of setting aside lands for the support of education was not new: in Nova Scotia it dated back to 1732. A more recent example was the case of the Northwest Ordinance of 1785 in the United States, whereby one lot in each township was reserved for the support of public schools. The Executive Council of Upper Canada was clearly aware of this example as the following excerpt indicates:

A General Reservation of lands producing gradually a School Fund, instead of partial endowments, is supported by the example of such of the neighbouring States as have attended to the raising of a permanent Fund for the purpose of Education, and doubtless from its superior advantages in simplifying arrangements and facility and cheapness of management.
The next year on the assumption that permission had been granted by the Colonial Office, the Executive Council set aside ten townships and parts of two others, altogether a total of 540,000 acres of land, for the future support of grammar schools and a university. William H. Merritt, the St. Catharines businessman, later observed that this action was in accordance with "plain common sense" and with "the sentiments of almost every person throughout the province." It is significant to note, however, that no provision was made for the endowment of elementary education, which meant in effect education for the lower classes. It was assumed that elementary education was the responsibility of the family and the church rather than the state. As Simcoe had phrased it, "being less expensive," the education of the lower classes, "may be provided for by their connections and relations." For his part Portland favoured very small state aid in the remuneration of teachers of reading and writing with the main source of income from student fees, which, of course, many parents could not afford in a pioneer society. Not until 1816 did the legislature of Upper Canada pass into law a measure providing state aid for elementary education.

In the meantime the colony's reliance on revenue from school lands proved misdirected. "More lands have already been granted," Lieutenant-Governor Hunter, Simcoe's successor, wrote Portland, "than will in all probability
be occupied and settled for half a century to come."42

Good land was being given away to United Empire Loyalists or in payment of surveying services and the going price for land was 9d per acre. At the end of 1798 the Executive Council concluded that if all school lands had been sold at this price, the sum would not have been sufficient for the decent support of two grammar schools. The Council Report continued:

If the institutions [schools] . . . be deferred until they can be provided for from the annual income of any quantity of land that can be appropriated for them, they will be deferred either until they have been superseded by other institutions, or until four or five generations of ignorance and vice have rendered them useless.43

The dire predictions were soon borne out by events. In 1800, 81,000 acres of the original grant sold for £411, just 16s more than the usual fees and payments would have brought the government for granting that quantity of land.44 In contrast, in New York State, 500,000 acres were set aside in 1805 for the purpose of forming a permanent fund for the support of common schools. By 1812 this fund was collecting $50,000 per annum in interest alone.45 Here, of course, there was no free land and by this time in the state's development, land was in great demand.
District Public School Act of 1807

The years following the land grant of 1798 were marked by a lack of public action in the field of education. However, in 1804 the Assembly formed a committee to investigate the administration of public affairs in the province. The report presented by the committee contained a resolution recommending that "seminaries for the education of the youth are highly necessary in this Province."\(^{46}\)

One of the most active Assemblymen at this time was an Irish-born American immigrant named William Weekes, M.L.A. for Durham, Simcoe, and East York, who later died in a duel. In the 1806 session he argued strongly for the need to establish "seminaries for the education of youth."\(^{47}\) To this end he moved a bill which successfully passed the Assembly entitled "An Act for the more general dissemination of learning throughout the Province;" it was defeated in the Legislative Council.

The first concrete step to involve the state in educating the young was taken in 1807 with the passage of the District Public (Grammar) School Act. This act, which remained in force with slight modifications until 1853, provided for the establishment of a grammar school in each of the eight districts of the province. (Actually only three schools were immediately opened and four more before the outbreak of war in 1812.) The teacher of each school was to receive from the provincial treasury £100 to be
supplemented by fees charged the pupils. Here was the first example of acceptance by the legislature that the duties of the government included public provision of a means of educating the young, even though in this case it meant only some of the young.

The district schools, as they were called, were firmly in the Simcoe tradition of establishing schools for the "sons of gentlemen." They were intended to be "the means, not only of communicating useful knowledge to the Youth of the Province, but also of instilling into their minds principles of Religion and Loyalty." From the outset it was apparent that only children of the well-to-do could afford to attend these schools because of the high tuition charges. Even more significant was the distance between the schools and the outlying regions of each district which made it impossible for parents to send their sons to school and still have them available for work at home. In the economy of scarcity which prevailed then a society's productive capacity had to be utilized to the fullest. Thus attendance at school had little priority. Even when the child attended school it was only for a few years and he was expected to work at home on the farm after school hours. The location of the district schools thus precluded any educational opportunity for most children in pioneer Upper Canada and this factor, so an 1829 report averred, was "the cause which operates most against these schools."
Opposition to the 1807 Act was not long in making itself known. The London District, for instance, was torn into rival camps over the location of the school, one faction favouring a site in the eastern half of the District, the other in the western. A petition was even made for permission to divide the District grant so that four schools might be built instead of one. Some inhabitants in the Newcastle District urged repeal of the act so that "provision may be made to encourage Common Schools throughout the District" since the appropriation for grammar schools was "entirely useless to the inhabitants of this District." A petition from the Midland District in 1812 made the point that "instead of aiding the middling and poorer classes," the Act of 1807 merely "casts money into the lap of the rich." "A few wealthy inhabitants [in the District]," the petition continued, "and those in the Town of Kingston, reap exclusively the benefit of it [the Grammar School]." Even at that, the expense of fees, books, and board and lodging was often greater than that incurred by sending children out of the country for their education. It was ironic that "sons of gentlemen" of the colony were sent to the United States for higher schooling despite the establishment of schools intended to foster the British tradition.

As noted, another exclusive feature of the early district schools was their denominational character. Initially the schoolmasters were invariably Church of
England clergymen or laymen. Later on, the presence of Presbyterian clergy and laity as district schoolmasters became more common. It was rare, however, to find a Methodist or Baptist teacher in a grammar school. This situation was brought about by the fact that grammar schoolmasters were, wherever possible, chosen from candidates who had at least some university training; Methodist and Baptist clergymen normally did not. Masters, therefore, were likely to be members of the English or Scottish churches.55

Opposition to the Grammar Schools Act also came from the Assembly where several members launched bitter attacks in which they demanded its repeal or attempted to block its extension. Leading opponents were Benajah Mallory,56 an American settler who was to fight with the American forces during the War of 1812, David Rogers, an early Loyalist who sat for Prince Edward County and Northumberland, Thomas Dorland, member for Lennox and Addington, and Peter Howard, member for Leeds. It is interesting to note that the last three represented "Loyalist" counties and that both Rogers and Dorland were Quakers.57 Another leading opponent was Joseph Willcocks, erstwhile Sheriff of the Home District. While member for Lincoln and Haldimand he waged a consistent campaign to repeal the Act of 1807. Eventually a bill he sponsored passed the House of Assembly on February 11, 1811, but was rejected by the Legislative Council.
Despite the efforts of the Assembly to alter the act, the Lieutenant-Governor, and the Executive and Legislative Councils upheld the schools as constituted. Their virtual independence remained unaltered since the Lieutenant-Governor who held effective control did not attempt close supervision and the Assembly had no control whatsoever over them. One important result arising from discontent over the district schools was the move to set up private academies for both elementary and secondary education. Such institutions were established at Bath and Newcastle in eastern Upper Canada in 1811. The Bath Academy, under the direction of the "experienced preceptor" Barnabas Bidwell, who had, among other things, been a college tutor in Massachusetts prior to his arrival in Upper Canada, was to gain favourable reputation throughout the colony. Among its graduates were several notable political figures, including Peter Perry, Christopher Hagerman and Marshall Spring Bidwell. Another example of local initiative is the Midland District School Society incorporated in 1815 by an act of Parliament "to promote the education and moral improvement of the poor."\textsuperscript{58} Thus the growth of private local educational institutions, a characteristic of American education, was duplicated in Upper Canada.

The extent of opposition to the district schools has been ascribed by some historians to the predominant "Americanness" of Upper Canadian society. Numerous
contemporary accounts can be cited to illustrate the point. One observer deplored the "habits and manners" of the inhabitants which, to his mind, were imbued with "the characteristic roughness of the neighbouring Republicans." More specifically E. A. Cruikshank has pointed to the fact that during the Assembly's Fifth Parliament from February, 1809 to May, 1812, fully two-thirds of its members were natives of the United States. Official concern about the danger of American predominance in Upper Canada can easily be documented. Lieutenant-Governor Gore in a letter to Sir James Craig in 1807 warned:

I have also to observe that, excepting the inhabitants of Glengarry [county] and those persons who have served in the American War and their descendants . . . the residue of the inhabitants of this colony consists chiefly of persons who have emigrated from the States of America, and of consequence retained those ideas of equity and insubordination much to the prejudice of this government so prevalent in that country.

There were constant complaints regarding the preponderance of Americans. The establishment figure D'Arcy Boulton, Sr. of York observed, "the bulk of the inhabitants are Americans." And, the traveller Michael Smith recounted how the settlers of the Talbot settlement by 1812 were "almost altogether natives of the United States." Speaking of "the manners of the common people here," John Strachan explained that "they are almost all Americans either refugees from the States at the end of the Colonial War, or emigrants since that time." It was this situation which led Strachan and others to sign
an address urging "the necessity of introducing some check
to the admission of strangers from the neighbouring States
in proper time before their numbers become formidable and
the evil incurable." 65

Effects of the War of 1812

The loyalty of the colony's essentially "American"
populace was sorely tested in the War of 1812. In one of
his first commentaries on the war General Brock spoke of
the "essentially bad" nature of the population particu-
larly to the west of York. "A full belief possesses them
all that this Province must inevitably succumb," he con-
tinued.66 Brock's victory at Detroit, however, served to
rally the settlers and led many of them to commit them-
selves to the British cause.

War's end left a bitter legacy of anti-Americanism,
which contributed to a two-fold development. On the one
hand many residents holding pronounced American senti-
ments fled the country during the war.67 On the other,
deliberate efforts were begun to restrict the immigration
of American settlers into Upper Canada. Lord Bathurst,
the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, sent
specific instructions to the governors of the Canadas to
refuse the granting of land "to subjects of the United
States and . . . to prevent their settling in either of
the Canadas." 68 The government launched a general
campaign against everything American including teachers, textbooks and ministers. This campaign reached a high point during the tenure of office of Sir Peregrine Maitland (1818-1828) who inaugurated a system of monitorial schools in order to combat "the baneful influence" of American teachers and "their republican apparatus."69

One of the most devastating critiques of the dangers of American influences at this time was to be found in a series of letters written under the pen name of "Palemon" and appearing in the Kingston Gazette in the autumn of 1815.70 Books imported from the United States, he began, "are all intended in every page to raise the merit of their own country, Laws and Constitution at the expense of Great Britain . . . . These books are Morse's Geography,71 the American Preceptor, Columbia Orator, American Selections, and the lives of some of the heroes of the Revolution." "Thus," he continued, "our children in the Canadas . . . are taught as if they were within the jurisdiction of the United States . . . . The unavoidable consequence of all this is, that in the course of time we shall be American citizens in sentiment and customs, and nothing but strong self-interest and force will keep us in subjection to the venerable British Constitution." Instead of American books, "the books we put in the hands of our children should be calculated to furnish their minds with correct ideas on Religion, Morality, the Customs, Manners and Laws, of our own
country." But herein lay the problem: there was no demand for British books "because there is not a sufficient number of good British Teachers through the country to recommend them, and to refuse all others." Palemon's solution was simple: "the Provincial Legislature should make some regulations respecting both imported school books and imported teachers, especially in the schools that are supported by the government." It is significant that just such measures were taken respecting teachers in the Common School Act of 1816 and respecting books by the Act of 1824.

Similar complaints about American schoolbooks derived from other quarters as well. Father (later Bishop) Alexander Macdonell, the Catholic priest and spokesman of the Scottish Highland settlers of Glengarry County castigated "these foreigners" and their "Republican books." These books, he charged, were "artfully tinctured with the principles of their government and constitution and holding up their own worthiness as perfect patterns of every moral excellence, whilst our public and private characters are represented in the most odious and disgusting light."72

Deliberate measures to meet these "deleterious influences" were taken during the next decade. Prominent in the campaign against American influences were both John Strachan, soon to become Archdeacon of York, and Sir Peregrine Maitland. This campaign, following in
the wake of the War of 1812, was immensely aided by the inadequacy of British settlers, many of them government-sponsored, who embossed on the province a British and conservative character it was to retain for decades.

This is not to say, however, that American immigration was in fact curbed. On the contrary it continued into the early 1830's when the numbers dwindled because of a re-direction of migration into the burgeoning American mid-west. As Hansen and Brebner have noted: "It is a tribute to the irresistible trends of North American migration that Americans continued to pour into a province [Upper Canada] where the laws were hostile and where some of them could normally acquire lands only by private purchase."  

By 1815 it is safe to say that the general population of Upper Canada was more concerned about clearing the land than "learning." Nevertheless, an American traveller recorded prior to the outbreak of war, a total of twenty-three schools in Norfolk County alone. Another estimate placed the number of private schools in operation by 1816 at close to 200. The education available in these schools was limited; there were no regulations affecting curriculum, admission requirements, graduation, or attendance. The reason for the dismal state of elementary education before 1812 was simply stated by Michael Smith: "the greater part of the inhabitants of Canada are not well educated for as they
were poor when they came to the province, and the country being but thinly settled for a number of years, they had but little chance for the benefit of schools." 77 But the war's end brought the dawn of a new era for public education in Upper Canada.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 The first white settlers in Upper Canada were French Canadians. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries clusters of French Canadians settled around Fort Frontenac on the site of Kingston, at Fort Detroit, and also at Sault Ste. Marie and Fort Rouille (Toronto). At the time of the fall of New France in 1760 there were a few hundred French-Canadian families living in the present territory of Ontario. Thus as the Loyalists entered, there was still a distinct French presence in the region. Arthur Godbout, "Les Franco-Ontariens et leurs écoles de 1791 à 1844." Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, XXXIII (1963), p. 246.

2 For a representative study of Loyalism during the American Revolution see A. C. Flick, Loyalism in New York during the American Revolution (New York: Columbia University Press, 1901).


4 The influence of the frontier in disrupting the institutional structure of society is discussed in Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society, Part I.

5 Ibid., p. 84.

6 See Ariès, Centuries of Childhood for historical development of this concept in Europe and Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society for the British colonies in America.

7 Bailyn, p. 39.

8 Petition of Western Loyalists to Lord Dorchester, April 15, 1787. A. Shortt and A. G. Doughty (ed.), Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1907), I, 648.

10 That same year Abbé Dufaux opened a school in his parish of Sandwich which used French as the language of instruction and was staffed by two women sent from Quebec by Bishop Hubert. The first French school in the colony, however, was opened at Fort Frontenac 110 years earlier.


15 Richard Cockrel [sic], Thoughts on the Education of Youth (Newark: G. Tiffany, 1795). Reproduced by the Bibliographical Society of Canada (Toronto, 1949).

16 Upper Canada Gazette, March 8, 1797, p. 2.

17 Articles of Agreement between Alexander William Carson, Schoolmaster, and several citizens of York, April 30, 1805. T. C. L., Baldwin Room.

18 D. H. E., I, 37. In 1791 the famous Indian agent, John Norton, taught at Deseronto for a year.

For an account of the Fairfield settlement and Zeisberger's work among the Indians, see John Morrison (ed.), "Extracts from the Journals of David Zeisberger," Papers and Records, XII (1914), Ontario Historical Society, 176-198, and Elma E. Gray, Wilderness Christians (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956), part II.


Kingston Gazette, September 19, 1815.


34 E. A. Cruikshank (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Graves Simcoe*, IV, 53. Simcoe to Portland, July 31, 1795.


36 P. A. C., U.C.S., Portland to Simcoe, June 22, 1796.


38 The 1797 request for a land grant, it turns out, was not really granted. This state of affairs went unnoticed until 1819 when a new request was submitted to the British government. D. H. E., I, 151. W. D. Powell to Maitland, January 7, 1819.


40 Cruikshank (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Graves Simcoe*, I, 143. Simcoe to Dundas, April 28, 1792.

41 P. A. C., U. C. S., Portland to Simcoe, June 22, 1796.

42 P. A. C., G. Series, 466. 4. Hunter to Portland, July 25, 1799.


46 Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, February 27, 1805, in Ontario Archives, Eighth Report, 1911 (Toronto, 1912), p. 46.

47 D. H. E., I, 52.

48 Journals of Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, February, 1807, in Ontario Archives, Eighth Report, 1911 (Toronto, 1912).

49 The contrast with to-day's "economy of abundance" is most revealing. See David M. Potter, People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1954).


51 The point at issue was the distance some students would have to travel to get to school, and, of course, parents wanted the school close by for the reasons indicated above. For details see J. A. Bannister, An Early Educational History of Norfolk County (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1926), chap. XII.

52 August 11, 1811. D. H. E., I, 76.

53 January 6, 1812. Ibid. 77.

54 First Report of the Select Committee on Education, 1829. Ibid., 269-70.

55 Results on my own research on this matter were confirmed in conversation with Dr. J. L. H. Henderson of Huron College, London, Ontario, in January, 1968. Henderson is the author of the most recent biography of John Strachan published by the University of Toronto Press in 1969.

56 Although Mallory was the seconder of the 1807 bill, he soon came to oppose it once it was put into practice.

57 The Quaker respect for formal education is underlined in Arthur G. Dorland, The Quakers in Canada: A History.
58 Geo. III, c. 18. For a description of the Midland District School Society, see chapter VI.


60 Cruikshank, "Immigration from the United States into Upper Canada, 1785-1812," p. 275.


64 Strachan Papers, P. A. O., Strachan to Rev. Dr. James Brown, October 27, 1803.


68 Wood (ed.), *Select British Documents* . . . , III, pt. 1, 509.

69 C. O. 42/366, Maitland to Bathurst, January 4, 1821.

70 The letters, first published in the Montreal Herald, appeared in the *Kingston Gazette* on successive weeks between August 22 and September 19, 1815.

71 Morse's Geography was known as the "first American geography." For details see Clifton Johnson, *Old-Time Schools and School-books* (New York: Dover 1963, first published 1904), ch. XII. It was typical of those books which devoted little space to Canada and tended to
enlarge the image of the United States. In its pages for example, the State of Rhode Island was allotted more space than Upper Canada and Lower Canada together; yet the book was widely used in Upper Canada.


73 Largely because of this fact the population of the province actually doubled between 1818 and 1828.


75 Smith, A Geographical View ..., p. 52.


77 Smith, A Geographical View ..., p. 44.
CHAPTER III

JOHN STRACHAN AND EDUCATION, 1815-1833

Common School Act of 1816

Immediately following the close of the War of 1812, the battle over whether education should be designed for the classes or the masses, the few or the many, was joined once again. The opposing viewpoints were best represented by the Legislative Council on the one hand, and the Assembly on the other. Largely from its fear that a system of common schools could only be established at the expense of grammar schools, the Council clung to its conviction that the latter were the most advantageous institutions of education in the colony at the time. The Assembly, for its part, continued its pleas of pre-war days for a modification of the Act of 1807 and for the introduction of a system of common schools for the "middling and poorer classes." The Assembly's main opposition to the district schools arose from their exclusive nature and their expense to parents. As an alternative they wanted common schools maintained wherever needed throughout the province rather than having schooling

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confined to the district town. Under such a system students could reside and work at home while attending school part of the day, thereby terminating a situation where few people outside towns could afford the cost of private education or the district schools, and fewer still could afford to do without their children's labour at home.

In 1816 the Assembly's agitation on the question of district schools finally bore fruit. At the opening of the Legislature on February 6, Lieutenant-Governor Francis Gore made an important reference to schools in his Speech from the Throne:

The dissemination of letters is of the first importance to every class; and to aid in so desirable an object, I wish to call your attention to some provision for the establishment of schools in each township, which shall afford the first principles to the children of the inhabitants and prepare such of them as may require further instruction to receive it in the district schools.¹

Gore's support led to the setting up of a select committee on education which three weeks after its formation presented a hastily drafted bill proposing the establishment of common schools, that is, elementary schools supported by public monies, throughout the province. The bill passed through both Houses quickly, for the Council consented to it on condition that the district grammar schools should remain undisturbed. The Common School Act of 1816 was of tremendous significance in the educational development of Upper Canada. In it we have
the first evidence of recognition on the state's part of its responsibility to ensure facilities for the education of the common people.

One of the significant factors contributing to a changed attitude about common education was a report on education submitted by the Reverend John Strachan to General Sir Gordon Drummond, the administrator of the province, in 1815. The report was in essence a comprehensive plan for education in the province. Among his proposals Strachan called for the creation of a system of common schools to provide basic education for the children of all inhabitants; an improvement and extension of the existing grammar schools; a superintendent or board of education under whom control of elementary and secondary education would be centralized; and the establishment of a university for the youth of all denominations.

Many of Strachan's ideas concerning common school education are readily discernible in the Act of 1816, drafted by a committee of which Strachan was a member.² The most notable omission and one that Strachan deplored was the rejection of centralized control. The Assembly's opposition to a central body administering education is not difficult to comprehend. In the first place, the members feared that a centralized system would be tailor-made to the wishes of the Church of England and thus facilitate that institution's attempts at gaining the
same control over the common school system that it already possessed over the district grammar schools. Secondly the colony's small population--slightly over 95,000 in 1816--was strung out over more than 500 miles. In addition communications still were very poor. A third problem was the scarcity of both teachers and textbooks; without these basic tools of education effective central control was impossible.

The Act of 1816 was based upon the principle of local option. If the residents of any town, village, or township desired a school, the Act enabled them to hold a public meeting to decide the question. If twenty students could be collected the government would make an annual grant of £25 to help pay the salary of a teacher. But there was no government grant to build or maintain the school; money for this purpose had to be raised by voluntary subscription or fees. The effective administration of the school remained highly decentralized too. Local school matters were to be tended to by three popularly elected trustees whose duties included hiring and firing teachers, making rules for the operation of school, choosing textbooks or making no stipulation on texts, and collecting fees from parents, usually $2 to $3 per quarter. All their decisions were subject, however, to the approval of the Board of Education of their District, which consisted of five members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor.
The hiring of teachers was not left completely in the hands of local trustees. An important clause in the Act stipulated that all teachers must be natural-born subjects of Great Britain or have taken the oath of allegiance. Such a provision was intended to be an effective means of curbing the practice of hiring American teachers with their "pernicious" ideas and "deleterious influence." But in the wake of the War of 1812 the measure in question was still not sufficient to satisfy Attorney-General J. B. Robinson:

The trustees have a discretion and were I a trustee I should feel very little inclined to appoint anyone to the situation who has not given a better proof of his allegiance [than the oath of allegiance].

Despite its significance the Act of 1816 had its defects. Parents in many areas found it difficult, even impossible, to pay the fees required to supplement the legislative grant. A year after the bill's passage Robert Gourlay, Ontario's first educational statistician, calculated that the average cost of student fees for common schools was about $10 per pupil annually, then a very large sum. A second weakness lay in the unsystematic apportionment of the annual legislative grant: some school districts had money they never granted, while others could have used more than they received. In some Districts, there was also an unnecessary duplication of schools because of the provision in the Act for the establishment of a school wherever twenty students wanted
to attend. Moreover, the elected trustees, charged with
the appointment of teachers, were often careless in their
choice, and too frequently chose teachers who would work
for the lowest remuneration. Finally, there was not much
financial incentive for the common school teacher. While
£100 was contributed from public funds towards the salary
of the grammar school teacher, the amount allowed for the
support of his common school counterpart was only £25.
Four years later even that was halved.

One Canadian historian, Gerald M. Craig, has argued
that the incentive for educational reform in Upper Canada
arose from one of two sources: either as a reaction
against Church of England supremacy in education, or from
an attraction towards the school system of American
states, particularly New York. Both contemporary
observers and later scholars have maintained that the Act
of 1816 was a typical example of just such American in-
fluence on Upper Canadian legislation. Robert Gourlay
in his *Statistical Account* claimed that the Act was
"borrowed in substance" from an act passed in New York
State in 1812 which became the foundation of the New
York State system. Advocates of this position explain
that the establishment by the Upper Canada act of District
Boards of Education charged with superintending schools
was copied from the provision in the New York act
creating the first state superintendent of common schools
and popularly elected trustees. But Upper Canada had no
provision for a superintendent and the Board trustees were appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor not elected. Moreover they were not empowered to inspect or supervise and could only veto regulations made by local trustees, which they rarely did. More importantly the New York act was characterized by centralized control of education whereas the Upper Canadian measure confirmed the practice of local authority already in existence. That practice was a reflection of the isolation of the scattered communities of the province as much as anything else. It was not till 1846 that the essentially decentralized nature of Upper Canadian public education was brought to an end by the erection of Ryerson's uniform system.

In this connection it is interesting to observe John Strachan's support of a measure of strong central control in the Act of 1816. In his 1815 plan he had advocated the establishment of a comprehensive system of education including common schools throughout the province for all classes, the retention of district schools, and the creation of a university. But he insisted that the entire system must be regulated by a central board or superintendent responsible to the executive branch of government. Throughout his career Strachan remained attached to the notion of an interconnected "ladder" system of education for Upper Canada. He thus envisaged the type of system for which his rival Egerton Ryerson was later to gain credit.
Strachan's commitment to centralization (and his own preferment) is amply borne out in a significant letter written to Chief Justice W. D. Powell in 1817. In it he admitted an earlier approach to Lieutenant-Governor Gore asking to be made Superintendent of Schools. The superintendent's duties, as he saw them, were to produce uniformity of System, establish the same books, enforce the propriety of frequent examinations, and see, that the laws are complied with. To keep up a correspondence for these purposes with the Boards of Education, and Trustees of the District Schools. To suggest improvements from time to time, and draw up reports of the State of Education for the information of the Legislature.  

Shortly afterward with the arrival of Maitland as governor, Powell lost his influence and Strachan, as the new power behind the throne, was able to have most of these suggestions incorporated in the General Board of Education organized in 1823, including his own appointment as the Board's president.

Another major strength of the 1812 New York act which is nowhere to be found in the Upper Canada act was the method of raising revenue to ensure financial support for common schools. In New York provision was made for a local contribution derived from property taxation equivalent to that made by the state treasury. The noted American educator, James B. Conant, has stated in reference to United States public schools that "our educational history is bound up with the reluctance of the taxpayer to pay taxes."  

The same might be said
for the educational history of Upper Canada. It certainly seems patently clear that the Act of 1816 would never have been passed had it required tax-supported public education as did the New York act. Such property taxation for the support of schools was not provided for in Upper Canada until 1850.

Despite its defects the Act of 1816 does seem to have promoted "a spirit of improvement," to quote Gourlay's Statistical Account. The London District Board of Education for example, reported that the number of common school students had risen considerably. The report continued:

... parents in general seem inclined to avail themselves of the encouragement held out to them by the Legislature. The facilities for instruction afforded by the Act now in operation, seem to have diffused a spirit of emulation, that cannot fail to be productive of the most beneficial consequences for the Community.

With respect to grammar schools, Strachan was instrumental in persuading the Legislature to pass in 1819 an important amendment to the Grammar School Act of 1807. The amendment provided for an annual public examination of each school, annual reports to be made to the Lieutenant-Governor, and provision for tuition-free education for ten students from poorer families at each of the eight grammar schools. The last was a special point with Strachan who considered that grammar school education should be extended beyond the sons of gentlemen to all children who showed promise. In fact, had
it not been for the objection of the Legislative Council, Strachan might have succeeded in securing tuition-free grammar school education, an aim he had set forth in 1815. Here again the influence on Strachan's thinking of his democratic Scottish background is apparent.

Strachan's support of scholarships for lower-class boys forms part of a system Lawrence Stone calls "sponsored mobility," whereby "efficiently stratified society makes allowance for upward mobility by a handful of lower-class children." In this way the recipients of scholarships were selected and controlled by upper-class patrons. Strachan phrased it this way: by extending scholarships to promising boys, "the door to a liberal education [would] be opened to poor inhabitants, and we might live to see the children of the farmer and mechanic filling the highest offices in the Colony."

Maitland and National Schools

The arrival in 1818 of Sir Peregrine Maitland to replace Lieutenant-Governor Gore served to raise Strachan's fortunes, as he quickly gained Maitland's respect and admiration. Maitland's ten-year term of office marked the hey-day of Strachan and his cohorts, that group of men who, Lord Durham charged, through its influence in the Executive Council, "wielded all the powers of government." Strachan was a leading figure
in this group, so much so that he has sometimes been referred to as the province's first un-official prime minister. From this new-found power base as a confidant of Maitland and leader of the oligarchy, Strachan experienced the most successful years in his career as a politician and educationist. Surrounding himself with many of his former pupils, such as John Beverly Robinson and George Herkimer Markland, Strachan managed to cut an unmistakable swath through Upper Canadian affairs.

It is only fair to add that this above interpretation of Maitland-Strachan relations has been recently challenged by Maitland's biographer, Francis Quealey. Quealey contends that both opponents and defenders of Strachan have overstressed the extent of his influence on Maitland. "Maitland retained a remarkable amount of independence," Quealey argues, "and it was he and not Strachan who administered Upper Canada in the 1820's .... If anything [Strachan] was more effective under Colborne than under Maitland." When treating this period, one must keep the results of Quealey's research in mind, but this writer would find it difficult to deny that the decade or so after 1815 was Strachan's most successful period as an educational reformer. His success can be noted in the 1816 school act, the 1819 amendment to the Grammar School Act, his support of Maitland's National Schools in 1820, his appointment as president of the General Board of Education in 1823, and the acquisition
of a royal charter for King's College in 1827. That same year he was named Archdeacon of York and by this appointment automatically became first president of King's College.

Like Simcoe before him and Colborne after, Maitland made some significant contributions to education in the province. For him the basic aim of education was to inculcate a love of God and the King. A corollary of this was the importance he ascribed to proper instruction in preserving the "Britishness" of Upper Canada.

To diffuse religious and moral instruction among the people would produce more than anything else, a distinction between our population—and that of the United States, and it would be a growing distinction by which in time a complete separation of views and habits would be produced.18

The above quotation underlines Maitland's desire to make Upper Canada distinct from the United States with its democratic and republican institutions. Education was to be a prime means of combatting American influences. Ironically, and tragically in Maitland's mind, the province's common schools, created by the Act of 1816, were actually fostering American ideas with their American teachers and texts. Alluding to the Assembly's role in the 1816 act, he was convinced that the common schools were "studiously composed with a view to instilling principles into the pupil's mind unfriendly to our form of government."19
Maitland was certain that his educational aims could best be attained through the introduction of Bell's system of monitory schools throughout the colony. Unlike the Lancasterian schools, Bell's system was based on the teaching of Church of England doctrine. The attempt to create a monitory school system was assisted by the passage in 1820 of a new common school act that largely neutralized the gains of the Act of 1816 by reducing the total annual legislative grant from £6000 to £2500. This meant a reduction in each common school teacher's salary from £25 to £12/10 per annum. Maitland tried to allay public concern by saying he believed the same benefit could still be provided by the reduced grant. Such a statement was patently false as Strachan himself revealed the year before when he affirmed the necessity of three times as much provincial revenue in order to carry out the provisions of the Act of 1816. Under Church of England auspices, the monitory system was not only intended to rival the non-denominational common schools created by the Act of 1816, but to counteract dangerous American influences which persisted despite official countermeasures. Maitland believed the system would "instruct all the youth of the province to the exclusion, not only of American masters, but of their republican apparatus of Grammars and Lesson books." To alleviate these dangers the masters were to come from England and be members
of the Church of England.

Strachan, too, was pleased with the "National Schools" as they were sometimes called in reference to the society which operated them in England ("The National Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales"). Not only did they provide a cheap means of educating the masses, but more important in Strachan's view, they included religious instruction in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England. For Strachan, religious instruction was an essential ingredient of education, for "knowledge if not founded on religion is a positive evil." The National Schools, moreover, formed part of Strachan's "silent policy," as he called it, whereby "the command and direction" of education "must . . . be concentrated in our Clergy."

The first school under Maitland's plan, called the Upper Canada Central School, was opened in York in 1820. Its establishment had been recommended by the Executive Council but had not been approved by the Colonial Office or the Upper Canada legislature. The Assembly was angered at Maitland's failure to seek their consent especially in view of his alleged unjust treatment of a York common school teacher named Thomas Appleton. Appleton was described as "a good teacher and a kind man, held in equally high esteem by the pupils and their parents." Yet in 1820 the government grant to Appleton
was withdrawn, allegedly as a result of the reduced appropriation allowed by the 1820 act. Critics of Maitland, however, saw a deliberate attempt to replace a regular common school with what amounted to a church school functioning under the National System. Unfortunately for Maitland, Appleton refused to leave gracefully. His case was picked up by the Reformers and, once in the political arena, soon became a cause-célèbre as evidence of executive high-handedness. The minutes of the General Board of Education in March, 1830, seem to bear out Maitland's intention. In a reply to a petition from Appleton it was decided to say "his allowance had been discontinued in consequence of the establishment of the Central School." The case was finally settled in the plaintiff's favour with Appleton receiving the sum of £85/4.

Despite Maitland's plan to open schools similar to the one at York in every town in the colony, National Schools proved a singular failure in the province. Spragge estimates that at the most four or five were attempted; only the Central School in York survived any length of time. Not only was the Bell system with its Church of England bias unacceptable to the vast majority of Upper Canadians, but also the Assembly vigorously opposed the schools which appeared to them as an attempt to circumvent their triumph, the common schools. Both factors contributed to the abandonment of the plan to establish
more monitoryal schools throughout the province. The Assembly then set about assuring the retention of the common schools by obtaining passage of the Common School Act of 1824. This act also made provision for Sunday Schools for children unable to attend the daily common schools and made available government grants for Indian education. Up to this time support for Indian education had come from the King and missionary societies.34

General Board of Education

Disappointed by the avoidance of a centralized authority over education in the Act of 1816, Strachan's efforts in this area were finally successful in February 1822 when Maitland submitted to the Colonial Office a plan for a General Board of Education recommending Strachan as president. A year later the Board was constituted with Strachan in the position he felt his due along with five other members all of whom were former pupils or close associates of his. The Board (officially the Board of General Superintendence of Education) was charged with supervising school lands and finances, controlling teacher appointments, and choosing textbooks. At last Strachan was in a position to mould a system to his liking, free of the vagaries of the political arena. However, because of his insistence that education come under the control of the Church of England, the General Board
proved unpopular and bore the brunt of attacks from the growing ranks of Reformers who objected to Tory, Anglican dominance. Strachan himself soon after turned his attention to higher education.

Technically the Board held control over all schools supported by public funds. Maitland's design was clear: "it is hoped that this will lead to the establishment of a general system of public education for the whole Province." To this end Maitland directed that all communications concerning public schools should be sent to Strachan as president of the General Board of Education. The main reason favouring a "general system" was that students would thereby be enabled, once the university was opened, to advance easily from one level of education to the next and thus overcome the "dissimilarity in the private systems of education." Thus an embryonic integrated system of education had been set up. The difficulty centred on the unpopularity and lack of leadership of the General Board of Education.

The Board's minutes reveal how little of value was actually accomplished. Its concern extended to land transactions, the erecting of buildings for Upper Canada College, and Joseph Spragge's role as a less than exemplary teacher at the Central School. Although the Board was charged with purchasing "books and tracts designed to afford moral and religious instruction," its minutes record only one authorization for common schools,
Moreover between 1826 and 1828, according to the Board's treasurer, the £150 per annum allowance was never drawn upon.

Two opponents of Strachan and the General Board spoke, however, as if that body were indeed exerting a strong influence on the colony's youth. The upstart journalist, William Lyon Mackenzie, objected to the "permanent public provision out of the province's funds [of $600 a year] for purchasing Episcopalian books and tracts to convert the youth of the colony to the established faith." Two years later in 1830 he specified that a sum in excess of £1000 had been spent by the Board on Church of England catechisms and on Strachan's favourite primers. This charge conflicts with the treasurer's statement cited above unless the expenditures were made after 1828. Another critic was equally specific in his charges:

I am informed that the Dr. [Strachan] purchased six hundred copies of Dr. Bell's System of Education at one time. There being only one school of that kind in the province, it is thought that so many copies of that book were not wanted. And it appears very suitable, and what might have been expected, that from a grant made from the funds of the province books suitable for all denominations of Christians would have been obtained; but those only which are peculiar to the Church of England have been obtained.

Again Wells' statement above is called into question.

For its part the Assembly was particularly vociferous in its opposition to the General Board. The Board was responsible not to the Legislature but to the
Executive Council; control of school funds was not in the Receiver-General's hands but rather the Board's treasurer, Colonel Joseph Wells, one of Strachan's favourite cohorts,\textsuperscript{42} and the Board was too closely associated with the Church of England. This complaint was made specific in an Assembly Committee report: "the General Board of Education stood for the supremacy of the Established Church in the field of public education even going to the extent of using school land for the endowment of Church of England National Schools throughout the Province."\textsuperscript{43}

The Assembly's campaign finally bore fruit when the Colonial Office was persuaded to dissolve the Board in 1833. Thus Strachan's plan for a national system of education was crushed. Significantly the Reformers were unable to agree upon a suitable replacement for the despised General Board, whose functions for the time being were transferred to the Council of King's College, which Strachan also dominated.

\textbf{Strachan's Report of 1829}

In this context mention should be made of Strachan's Report as president of the General Board of Education in 1829. This report, like his earlier plan of 1815, enshrined much of his educational philosophy. In this respect it resembles in many ways Ryerson's 1846 \textit{Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada}. 
As in 1815 Strachan once again made a strong appeal for universal education—schools for all.

"... there is no object of greater importance in Legislation, or possessing a more imperative claim upon the public revenue than the establishment of schools for the public which must ever be the basis upon which the peace, good order and prosperity of society are to rest."

Here we see a common early nineteenth century argument favouring the extension of education—one which was used by conservative and reformer alike. Law, order and general prosperity might all be ensured with an educated population. As an American scholar has phrased it, "In a land where the people was king, it was essential to educate the sovereign." The people were not yet sovereign in Upper Canada, but Strachan and others saw an educated populace as a benefit not a danger to society. "Neither the sick nor the destitute," he continued, "have higher claims upon the public than the ignorant. The want of knowledge brings all other wants in its train." Thus it was most urgent that "the blessings of education be extended to all classes." Simply a practical education was not enough to suit Strachan. Always a firm advocate of a liberal education, he insisted that children must know more than "how to read and cast accounts;" rather, like the sons of the well-to-do, all children ought to "enjoy the pleasure as well as the advantages of intellectual enjoyment."

To ensure this superior sort of education, the calibre of teachers must be radically improved, Strachan
argued. Only well qualified, respectable persons of exemplary conduct should be allowed to hold the office of teacher. At the moment, however, "superior teachers desert the Common Schools as soon as they can procure any other employment;" others looked on teaching as a "temporary expedient." How could the "best talents" be procured "for an income below that of common mechanics?" At this point Strachan turned to a discussion of how best to finance education, a ticklish point but a crucial one nonetheless.

Although normally anti-American, Strachan saw much to admire in the New York system of financing education. He especially favoured the requirement of matching local contributions whereby the state grant must be equalled by the local community. In his 1829 report for the General Board of Education, he even went one step further. He applauded the practice of several other states, such as Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine where "no district appropriation is made by the Legislature, but the schools of each township are entirely supported by a local tax." In this respect as in many others, Strachan was well ahead of his time. The financing principles he favoured did not receive even partial legislative sanction in Upper Canada until 1850 when school support based on property taxation was made voluntary to school boards.
Why did Strachan have so little success in getting his ideas accepted? The main reason was no doubt his attachment to the Church of England and placed against that fact the numerical superiority of non-Anglicans in the province. His political opponents also became more numerous, one of the most outstanding being Sir John Colborne. The latter wrote the Bishop of Quebec, the Rt. Rev. Charles James Stewart that "the political part he [Strachan] has taken in Upper Canada destroys his clerical influence, and injures to a very great degree the interests of the Episcopal Church and, I am afraid, of religion also."  

A neutral observer, Bishop Macdonell of the Roman Catholic Church, saw clearly the rift between the two while underlining Colborne's independence of Strachan's guiding hand.

In fact he [Colborne] has completely broken asunder the leading strings of his predecessor and appears resolved to walk on his own legs. This is truly mortifying and most humiliating to a certain Honourable and Reverend little great man who thought himself so well calculated for directing the councils not only of this Province but of the whole British Empire.

Strachan apparently grew to detest Colborne for his opposition.

But there was a trend of the times to take into account too, a growing democratization of Upper Canadian society which was reflected in a Reform victory at the polls in 1828. The next decade was to see numerous proposals for educational change made in the Assembly.
Some of them resembled Strachan's 1829 proposals but they were not associated with his name and thus received a fairer hearing. These proposals will be examined in Chapter VII.

On balance Strachan has probably never received the credit he deserves as an educational innovator. His often very sound ideas fell on rocky soil because of their association with a man well known for his attachment to the notion of an established church for Upper Canada and because of his personal quest for power.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 D. H. E., I, 94.

2 Strachan later commented upon his prominent role in drafting not only the common school legislation of 1816, but also the district school Act of 1807. "... having been instrumental under the Colonial Government in drawing up the laws establishing District and common schools by which the instruction of the whole population is virtually under the guidance of the Church I am naturally anxious to finish the building." P. A. O., Strachan Papers. Strachan to Church Missionary Society, February 27, 1827. Elsewhere he spoke of "my connexion with all the school bills." T. C. L., Toronto Papers. Strachan to Powell, December 23, 1817.

3 For verification of the validity of this concern, see Strachan's first statement in the preceding footnote.


7 Gourlay, Statistical Account, II, 379-80. See also London, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, pp. 64-65.

8 For a later amplification of this notion, see P. A. C., U. C. S., Strachan to Maitland, on the subject of a university for Upper Canada, March 10, 1826.
9. T. C. L., Toronto Papers. Strachan to Powell, December 23, 1817. One week later Strachan sent almost exactly the same letter to the Administrator, Colonel Samuel Smith together with the request that he be named Superintendent. P. A. C., U. C. S., Strachan to Smith, December 29, 1817.


Maitland's most recent biographer, Francis Quealey, maintains that this mutual admiration began to wane by the time of Strachan's Bishop Mountain funeral oration in 1825, and from the publication of his Ecclesiastical Chart two years later, Strachan was actually in disfavour. "It was only because of crises over clergy reserves and the university," Quealey asserts, "that Maitland worked with him at all during the final months of his administration." Quealey, "The Administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968), p. 616.

17. Ibid., pp. 117, 137.


The main distinctions between the Bell and Lancasterian systems are outlined in Wilson et al., p. 35. Joseph Lancaster's defence of non-sectarian religious instruction in schools closely resembles the non-Conformist position later taken by Egerton Ryerson while he was Superintendent of Schools: a school under any auspices could inculcate "a reverence for the sacred name of God and the Scriptures of truth, a detestation of vice, a love of veracity, a new attention to duties to parents, relations, and society, carefulness to avoid bad company, civility without flattery, and a peaceable demeanour . . . without violating the sanctuary of private religious opinions in any mind." Sarah Trimmer, A Comparative View of the New Plan of Education Promulgated by Mr. Joseph Lancaster (London, 1805), pp. 7-11.


Christian Recorder, April, 1819. In D. H. E., I, 156.

P. A. O., CO42/366. Maitland to Bathurst, January 4, 1821, p. 3.

"We anticipate the greatest benefits from the general diffusion of the National System throughout the Province. We are convinced that our excellent Governor could not have conferred a more precious gift upon us." Christian Recorder, September 1820. In D. H. E., I, 248. A decade earlier Strachan had commented coolly on the Bell and Lancaster plans, but specifically in pedagogical terms. "There is little or nothing in either of their plans, which most Schoolmasters did not know, and frequently practice before . . . . . P. A. O., Strachan Papers, Strachan to James Brown, October 21, 1809.


P. A. C., U. C. S., Report of Executive Council re establishment of National Schools in the province, August 18, 1820.

29 Credence is lent to the critics' charges by reference to a statement Strachan made to Maitland's secretary in 1823: "But the Board [of Education for the Home District] had another reason for withholding assistance from the School [Appleton's]--His Excellency the Lieut. Governor has been pleased to Establish in the Town of York a National School to which the Children of all the Inhabitants may have access, thus affording them a greater benefit than is enjoyed in any other part of the Province--." P. A. C., U. C. S., Strachan to Hillier, December 13, 1823.

30 For a more detailed account of the case, see D. H. E., I, 176-7; 244-54, or Ernest J. Hathway, "Early Schools of Toronto," in Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, XXIII (1926), pp. 322-27.

31 P. A. O., Minutes, General Board of Education, March 17, 1830.

32 P. A. O., Minutes, General Board of Education. Extract of despatch from Maitland to Bathurst (enclosed under letter to General Board from Major Hillier), May 13, 1823.

33 Besides the Central School, Spragge lists another one at York under William Spratt, the Midland District National School, one at Richmond, and possibly one at Peterborough. Spragge, "Monitorial Schools," p. 106. The Central School closed in 1844.

34 For details on Indian education, see Chapter VI.

35 Much correspondence concerning educational matters was still directed to Maitland or his secretary Hillier. See P. A. C., P. S. O., Educational Papers.


37 P. A. O., Minutes, General Board of Education, Annual Report for 1828, p. 52. Appendix C bears out the popularity of Mavor's Spelling Book.

38 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Joseph Wells to Lieutenant Mudge, May 4, 1829. Critics' statements below contradict Wells.

39 Colonial Advocate, July 3, 1828.
Ibid., February 25, 1830.

P. A. C., Educational Papers. Osgood to Colborne, December 9, 1828.

Wells was a favourite crony of John Strachan. At one
time he was treasurer of the General Board of Education
and Upper Canada College, bursar of King's College and a
trustee of Upper Canada Central School. In 1839 Wells
was seriously implicated in a scandal involving malver-
sion of £13,000 of King's College funds. Strachan
himself had "borrowed"about £5,000 from the funds.
P. A. C., Colborne Papers. G. A. Arthur to John Colborne
July 12, 1839.

Report of Assembly Committee, 1829. William Buell Jr.,

P. A. O., Minutes, General Board of Education,
February 5, 1829, p. 64.

For example, see Christian Guardian, April 23, 1831:
"Education among the people is the best security of a
good government and constitutional liberty; it yields a
steady unbending support to the former, and effectually
protects the latter. An educated people are always a
loyal people to good government--and the first object of
a wise government should be the education of the people.
An educated people are always enterprising in all kinds
of general and local improvements. An ignorant popula-
tion are equally fit and liable to be slaves of despots,
and the dupes of demagogues . . . . Education, like
seeing, is one of the most fruitful sources of public,
social and individual happiness." Or the Hamilton Free
Press (quoted in Christian Guardian, September 25, 1833):
"It [education] is . . . an effectual security against
the encroachments of despotism, and the devastating
ravages of anarchy and licentiousness."

David B. Tyack (ed.), Turning Points in American
Educational History (Waltham, Mass: Blaisdell, 1967),
p. 121.

P. A. O., Minutes, General Board of Education,
February 5, 1829, p. 66.

Ibid., p. 63.
49. Ibid., p. 66.

50. Ibid., p. 61.

51. Ibid., p. 56.

52. P. A. C., Colborne Papers. Colborne to Bishop of Quebec, February 13, [1829].


54. A few years after the heat of the controversy over Colborne's opposition to King's College had died down, Colborne wrote Sir George Arthur saying: "Dr. Strachan has now forgiven me ... [but] I believe he detests my name and whole face." P. A. C., Colborne Papers. June 20, 1839.
CHAPTER IV

TEXTS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS, 1820-1836

Texts

Although John Strachan saw merit in certain of the arrangements for financing education south of the Lakes, he was less than impressed by other influences coming from the United States. He was particularly concerned about the presence throughout the province, but mainly in the western end, of American teachers and textbooks. Americans were to be found in the common schools where their "cheapness" and their willingness to "board 'round" were ideally suited to the wishes of parsimonious school trustees. Strachan was by no means alone in his concern. Several contemporary observers held similar reservations about American teachers and textbooks in Canada. Dr. Thomas Rolph, who travelled in Upper Canada in 1832-3, said in reference to the state of schools in the province at the time:

It is melancholy to traverse the Province and go into many of the Common Schools; you will find . . . historical reading books decribing the American population as the most free and enlight-ened under heaven; insisting on the superiority of
their laws and institutions to those of all the world . . . and American Spelling Books, Dictionaries and Grammars, teaching them an anti-British dialect and idiom although living in a Province and being subjects of the British Crown. ¹

Another critic, Father Alexander Macdonell, the future Catholic bishop who was spokesman of the Scottish Highland settlers of Glengarry County, also castigated "these foreigners" and their Republican Books."²

Maitland himself referred to the "mischief [that] might result from instructions by American schoolmasters and from the use of American schoolbooks," and Strachan feared the way American schoolbooks "breathe hatred to everything English."³

Examples of the American schoolbooks that caused concern to Upper Canadian authorities are not hard to find. One book printed in Boston and, according to the local historian, J. A. Bannister, used in the District of London included the following catechism:

'What is the best government on earth?'

'A republican Government like that of the United States,' reads the next line.

'What is the worst government on earth?'

'A Monarchical Government like that of England and Canada.'

'Will you, if occasion arises, rise up and rebel against such a government as yours, and join the States?'

'Yes, with all my power and influence.'⁴
Similar glorification of the United States, its people and institutions was commonly found in these textbooks. Olney's *A Practical System of Modern Geography* (1847), widely used in the province's schools, provides an interesting example of this inculcation of patriotism:

The United States are the most interesting and important division of the western continent. They are distinguished for the excellence of their government—the rapid increase of the population—and for the intelligence, industry and enterprise of the inhabitants.  

Another geography text, *Morse's Geography*, was also typical of those books which devoted little space to Canada and tended to enlarge the image of the United States. In *Morse*, for example, the State of Rhode Island was allotted more space than Upper Canada and Lower Canada together.  

A third geography by George Van Waters spoke of the United States "as being the largest, most enlightened and powerful republic on the globe."  

The reason for the prevalence of American texts was simple—the proximity of the United States. American texts were, therefore, cheaper and more readily available. In 1829 Strachan observed how difficult it was to procure textbooks in the province particularly in the remote areas where the added factor of cost also came into play. The shortage of books generally had been noted earlier by Edward Allen Talbot, who picturesquely observed in 1824 that "the scarcity of books in the country parts of Canada is nearly as great as that of pineapples on the
summit of Snowdon." So in many cases American texts were used because there was nothing else to be had. David Mills, the one-time federal cabinet minister, recalled that as a child in Kent County the only textbook he possessed when he started school was an American edition of *Cobb's Spelling Book.* There were only two geographies for the whole class, Olney's and Woodbridge's, both American.

Various legislative efforts were made to improve the textbook situation. The Common School Act of 1816 authorized the District Boards of Education to spend certain amounts in the purchase of textbooks and to distribute them. Since the legislation remained permissive, however, little came of it. Eight years later, the Act of 1824 provided an annual grant of £150 for the purchase of books for religious and moral instruction. The sum was to be shared equally among the Districts, and the District Boards were to supervise the selection of books.

As concern mounted about American texts, a simple solution suggested itself, namely, to publish Canadian ones to offset those from the United States. Some attempts were made in this direction as early as 1824 when a few books were printed cheaply at a press in Lanark County. Five years later Alexander Davidson of Port Hope completed the first copyrighted book in Upper Canada, a speller entitled *The Upper Canada Spelling Book.* Davidson's work on the book, the result of
seven years' experience as a teacher, derived from his opinion that "unless some proper elementary books be got into general circulation, common school education will continue to be little better than a mere farce, and a useless expenditure of public money." He noted that nine out of ten books in use were from the United States. In fact in his neighbourhood, he reported, "for several years past no English Books could be procured . . . so that I am led to believe that the supply from England is precarious, and not at all equal to the growing demands of the Province."

In 1827 the Kingston printer J. A. Macfarlane sought through Maitland the "patronage" of the General Board of Education in order to proceed with a new edition of Murray's English Grammar. The need seemed readily apparent—to Macfarlane at any rate.

The American Spelling Books, it is well known, are at present almost exclusively used in the Country, and as there are many things contained in these publications not very suitable to our Constitution and Government, it has occurred to me that an edition of some approved English work of this kind would meet with the approbation of the public . . . .

Three years later Macfarlane's appeal for state support was couched in different language. Now instead of warning against American influence he pointed out to Colborne the advantage of a teacher's having one grammar for a whole classroom instead of the "six or more different editions" normally found "in a school where twenty or thirty boys are studying English Grammar." This
very notion was one of the main arguments Ryerson utilized in promoting the province-wide adoption of the Irish National Series two decades later. That the number of Upper Canadian-printed schoolbooks was increasing in the 1830's is evidenced by the advertisements for such works appearing in the newspapers.¹⁸ (See also Appendix C.)

Teachers

Maitland had hoped that a system of National Schools headed up by Church of England teachers would succeed in counteracting the "mischief" of American schoolmasters. But their obvious lack of success led to the inclusion in the Common School Act of 1824¹⁹ of a clause requiring teachers to obtain certification of qualifications from a more central and better qualified body than local trustees—better qualified, in Strachan's opinion, because they were selected by district boards which were appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor.²⁰ This was not a new suggestion. Efforts to this end dated back to 1799 when it was government policy "to exclude [from Upper Canada] schoolmasters from the States lest they should instill Republicanism into the tender minds of the youth of the Province."²¹ A commission was established to examine and license teachers, and insure that they were British subjects or had taken the oath of allegiance. The Upper Canada Gazette considered this
measure a worthy innovation, one which would prevent the entry into the classroom of "itinerant characters [presumably Americans], who preferred that to a more laborious way of getting through life." 22

But the hiring of American itinerants did not abate. A letter to the editor of the Kingston Gazette in 1811 welcomed the establishment of district schools throughout the province in the conviction that they would be presided over by "well educated teachers." "They will ultimately preclude," the letter continued, "the admission and employment of itinerant and illiterate pedagogues, who to the disgrace of our country and the injury of our youth, impose themselves as teachers on the community." 23 Such sentiments about the itinerancy of teachers at this time were further amplified by another statement in the same newspaper that "in every township, a teacher of twelve months standing is a prodigy; one of as many weeks the most common." 24 Another observer declared that teachers "in this part of the country... are either strolling vagabonds or so Illiterate that they cannot without great difficulty read a passage in the Old and New Testament with any degree of accuracy." 25

The next step in trying to limit the number of American teachers was taken in 1816. The school act of that year, in the wake of the recent struggle with the United States, ruled that a teacher must henceforth be a British subject by birth or naturalization or have
taken the oath of allegiance. But American teachers continued to be common in Upper Canada schools. Father Macdonell commented to Bathurst, undoubtedly exaggerating the point, that "with the exception of 8 District Grammar Schools, which are principally taught by Clergymen of the Established Church, the education of youth of both sexes in Upper Canada is exclusively entrusted to American Teachers." Some of these were competent men. One of them, a man named Forsyth, was the first teacher in Brant County. He gained a favourable reputation although he used American textbooks exclusively. About the same time Captain Owen, a settler on Yonge Street, wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Gore in praise of "a young man, an American, [who] is seated near us as a schoolmaster, whose system of education in my opinion does him credit." Another American by the name of Hoag, who taught near Hamilton around 1820, is credited with having "taught many a young girl's and boy's budding ideas to shoot forth." Then at St. Catharines there was another exemplary teacher, one John Huston Clendennan, a native of Pennsylvania. His obituary notice in the St. Catharines Journal of May 5, 1836, records that he was actively engaged for twenty-five years in conducting an English school. "The successful issue of his indefatigable exertions in his vocation, is apparent in the advancement of many of his pupils to the Magistracy of
this district, and other offices under Government, and in their otherwise becoming influential members of the community."

Despite the few excellent American teachers, by and large they were incompetent. School boards often found that transient Americans were the only ones willing to take on a job which paid so poorly. The Act of 1816 provided for a basic salary of £25 a year for the common school teacher; four years later that was halved and by 1833 a select committee of the House of Assembly could report that in some districts no more than £4 of £5 was being given to any one teacher. By that time even an ordinary artisan could earn £75 a year.

Because of the low wages, it is not surprising that those least capable often took up teaching. One report referred to them as "worthless scum ... more alive to ... the stipend than to the advancement of the education of those placed under their care." Another spoke of the country schoolmaster as

an insignificant contemptible being, a mere cipher in society ... no man has ever, within the sphere of my acquaintance educated his son, unless he were a dunce and consequently good for nothing else, to be a schoolmaster. Our schoolmasters are, therefore, composed of untaught boys; or of dunces that are unfit for business and too lazy to live by the "sweat of their face." No wonder then that the profession is reduced to the utmost contempt.

Anna Jameson, wife of the vice-chancellor of Upper Canada, in observing in 1838 that a number of wayside schools
between Port Talbot and Chatham were closed for lack of schoolmasters (many of them may have been implicated in the Rebellion), queried:

Who that could earn a subsistence in any other way would be a schoolmaster in the wilds of Upper Canada? Ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-paid, or not paid at all--boarded at the houses of the different farmers in turn--I found indeed some few men, poor creatures! always either Scotch or Americans--and totally unfit for the office they had undertaken.36

Certainly the status of a teacher in Upper Canada remained low. As late as 1835, it could be noted that in Toronto, "the profession of schoolmaster bars all association with Aristocracy of the city. This unique distinction is doubtless borrowed from . . . neighbour Jonathan who respects his [schoolmaster] just as much as one bear does his hunters, or another the fine arts."37

One of the most biting commentaries on the lowly state of teaching and the involvement of Americans was made by William Cosgrave, a trustee in the Western District. He complained about the pittance paid to teachers which provided little incentive to men of talent. Instead common school teachers were generally disabled persons unable to labour or old men, usually veterans or half-pay soldiers, with only a limited education. He continued:

The result of this system is that a great number of these schools are conducted by persons from the United States who are unacquainted with the principles of the British Constitution or its jurisprudence, & who inculcate on their pupils a greater love for a republican Government than that of a monarchy & these Youths advance in life with the seeds of Republicanism thus sown in their minds to the disadvantage of the British Government.38
Concern about the presence of Americans in the schools of the Western District reached the point where an enraged reader of *The Canadian Emigrant* in Sandwich demanded in a letter to the editor an explanation of why the District Board of Education should pay the salary of an American teacher "who is opposed to Sir John Colborne and the present administration, who supports Mr. Mackenzie's grievance petition and who reads and recommends the *Colonial Advocate*?"³⁹

**Schools**

Besides the origin of texts and the calibre of teacher, there were other factors which mitigated against educational progress in Upper Canada. An important one was the popular view of the value of formal education. Basically the frontier seemed to generate an emphasis on the practical. Schooling might have a place if it could be shown to produce immediate and direct results, but otherwise it was held suspect. Professor Kandel has attributed the growth of such attitudes to the conditions of life associated with the frontier.

The exigencies of the frontier which demanded individual initiative and resourcefulness, immediate action rather than theory, cultivated a certain shrewdness and capacity in the individual to turn his hand to any task, and developed, as a consequence, a certain faith in the untutored intelligence trained by direct and immediate grappling with a concrete situation rather than by the normal agency of the school or books. At
the same time, the great variety of activities in which the conquerors engaged produced a type of versatility and flexibility before which no task appeared too formidable and which engendered some scepticism, if not actual contempt, for book learning, intellectual pursuits and academic training.

For the same reasons learning was held in low repute in Upper Canada. As another British traveller remarked, "no one will care whether you educate your children or not . . . and as for Latin and Algebra, yea even common English and the multiplication table, they are not respected." William Canniff in his chapter on "Early Education in Upper Canada" expressed a similar sentiment about the slight interest in education:

Among the old, sturdy farmers, who themselves had no learning, and who had got along without much, if any learning, and had no books to read, there obtained a belief that it was not only unnecessary, but likely to have a bad effect upon the young, disqualifying them for the plain duties of husbandry.

A common school teacher and newspaper publisher, Edward Allen Talbot of London, noted the parents' reluctance to pay for education, a commodity of dubious value. "Being convinced that it is not in the nature of book-learned skill," he observed, "to improve the earnestness of their sons in hewing wood, or the readiness of their daughters in spinning flax . . . they consider it a misapplication of money to spend any sum in obtaining instruction for their offspring."

In a new country where even children's labour was needed, it is not surprising that formal education was
given so little priority. Child labour was so valuable to
the farmer that most of them could not conceive of releas-
ing a child for any extended period of months during the
school year or of allowing him to prolong his education
beyond a couple of years. Quite simply, the family func-
tioned as an economic unit. A resident of the London
District, writing in 1832, estimated that ten or twelve
years of age was the limit beyond which parents could not
afford to allow their children to attend school. Even
when children were in regular attendance teachers often
found parents kept them at home "whenever they found them
useful." Attendance consequently was always higher
during the winter months.

Of course some Tories held it to be unwise to
encourage education among the poor in any case. It might
in fact be dangerous to do so. Mrs. Anna Jameson
thought so.

Men of aristocratic birth thought that to
educate the poor would lead to strife and con-
fusion—that ignorance was their normal condi-
tion, and that any departure therefrom would
increase their misery and discontent. Some education for the poor might be permissible—a little
reading, writing and arithmetic—"but an exclusive atten-
tion to these objects is both unwise and injurious, for
they were not designed for the whole business of their
lives."
The Common School Act of 1820 with its reduction in the annual legislative grant from £6,000 to £2,500 was bound to have an impact on the state of the common schools in the province. We have already noted its effect on teachers' salaries. District Boards of Education were quick to respond to the unfavourable effect of the act. The number of common schools in the District of Ottawa, for example, was reduced from seven to four within the space of six months after the act's passage. The Home District Board complained that many students desiring admission to district common schools "cannot be admitted on account of the small sum allowed to the District for remunerating Teachers." 50

By the mid-1820's the picture looked much brighter. The number of common schools had almost doubled between 1817 and 1826. 51 The actual expenditure of government on common schools rose from £2,500 in 1820 to £4,150 five years later. For the next seven years there was a drop in the annual grant, but in 1833 a grant of £8,800 rising to £12,000 in 1835 signalled a renewed government commitment to popular education. 52 The 1826 report of the General Board of Education detected a rising estimation of education among the populace.

Tho' [sic] scattered over a vast wilderness the inhabitants are becoming more and more alive to the great advantage of educating their children and are seconding with laudable zeal the exertions of the Legislature in so much so that the Schools supported by subscriptions are perhaps not fewer in number than those established by Law. 53
This opinion still did not mean that all children were attending school. In 1831 John Strachan estimated that no more than one out of four children between five and sixteen years were "receiving any sort of Education through public Institutions." 54

By 1830 a commonly heard complaint related to the calibre of the common school trustees. The schools reflected the calibre of the trustees. In a pioneer community the trustees inevitably reflected the thinking of the community, and when the community had little interest in education the trustees could not be expected to be any different. A common charge, however, centred on their readiness, indeed their preference, to hire cheap teachers. 55 Another complaint concerned the process of selecting school trustees. They were, one petition stated, too often "restricted to one class of Society" and had no "direct interest in the efficiency of the school." The same report blamed the selection of such people as trustees for the "exclusive and selective nature" of the school which served to inhibit the "diffusion of education among the sons of the industrious artisans and yeomanry." 56 Another report summed up the problem quite simply: many of the trustees are "unfit for the duties they have to perform." 57 William Crooks of Grimsby expressed it this way: the trustees are in many cases "too careless, and I might almost add too ignorant to discriminate right from wrong . . . . It is therefore
not to be wondered at why the parish (common) school system should meet with almost universal reprobation from most discerning men."  

This incompetence or neglect of duties on the part of school trustees had unfortunate results not only for the pupils in the schools but also for the teachers themselves. An editorial in the Niagara Gleaner in 1823 complained that teachers, "the most useful class in the community," were in the Niagara District deprived of even the "pittance" owing them "by the neglect of the Commissioners appointed." "Many 100 dollars," the editorial continued, "remains locked up, only because, those Gentlemen do not choose to attend to the business."  

The district grammar schools were also called into question. Only one out of every three students was engaged in studying the classics. The rest might just as well have been studying in common schools. There was no efficient system of inspection and the schools were alleged by non-Churchmen to be too closely linked with the Church of England. The United Presbytery of Upper Canada made a specific charge to this effect in 1829, insisting that the district school trustees were "almost exclusively" appointed from one religious denomination. Moreover the Conference was unaware that "a single Clergyman of any denomination, other than the Church of England, has ever been appointed as a Trustee of the District Schools."
In 1819 there had been eight district schools with a total enrollment of 228 boys. A decade later there were eleven schools and 372 students. All considered, the influential newspaper *Christian Guardian*, edited by Egerton Ryerson, felt obliged to appeal for a careful investigation into the "state and manner of conducting" the grammar schools because "with very few exceptions" they are "deplorably inefficient."

The decade of the 1830's was to usher in a period of intense reform activity centred on the common school. This topic will be examined in Chapter VII. In the meantime, what was the state of adult education in Upper Canada?
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1 Thomas Rolph, Observations Made during a Visit, in 1832, 33, together with a statistical Account of Upper Canada (Dundas: G. H. Hackstaff, 1836), p. 262.


3 P. A. O., Minutes, General Board of Education. Extract of dispatch, Maitland to Bathurst, May 13, 1823; P. A. C., U. C. S., Strachan to Maitland, March 10, 1826. Strachan's protégé and successor as Bishop of Toronto, A. N. Bethune, admonished the presence in the schools of both American teachers and texts which "tend to insinuate the poison of disaffection." P. A. C., Educational Papers. Bethune, "Remarks on Common Schools," October 5, 1827.

4 J. A. Bannister, Early Educational History of Norfolk County, p. 46.


6 Jedidiah Morse, Geography Made Easy . . . for the Use of Schools and Academies in the United States of America 18th ed. (Boston: Thomas & Andrews, 1816), pp. 77-82. Concerning religion in Upper Canada, Morse made the rather shocking statement that although Methodism was the prevailing religion, "for the greater part, the country is destitute of regular religious teachers, and many of the inhabitants appear to have no religion." Ibid., p. 80. Morse also incorrectly placed the capture of Quebec in 1754. Ibid., p. 81. Ryerson, however, had kind words for Morse; he termed it "the best of the kind that I have seen in any country." Canada, Journal of Legislative Assembly, VI, (1847), app. No. 2. Morse's Geography as a result, was tendered the sanction of the Council of Public Instruction despite the School Act of 1846, which banned all foreign books from use in the schools. The sanction was upheld until 1865 when the first Canadian geography appeared. D. H. E., XIX, 67.
George Van Waters, The Poetical Geography Designed to Accompany Outline Maps or School Atlases to which are added the Rules of Arithmetic in Rhyme (Louisville, 1851). For similar examples of the inculcation of patriotism, see Ruth Miller Elson, Guardians of Tradition: American School Books of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1964).

Edward A. Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canadas (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1824), II, 90.

Fred Landon, London Free Press, July 9, 1838. Mills was likely referring to Cobb's Juvenile Reader, No. 1 "designed for the use of small children". Subtitled "Interesting, Moral, and Instructive Reading Lessons," Cobb's No. 1 had large print, a few illustrations, and words of one or two syllables. By contrast, Cobb's No. 3, "designed for the use of larger children," had small print, no illustrations, and words of "a greater number of syllables." The two editions I examined were: Cobb's Juvenile Reader No. 1 (Oxford, N.Y.: Chapman & Flagler, 1832), and Cobb's Juvenile Reader No. 3 (Sandy Hill, N.Y.: David Howland, 1838). The former carried the signature "William B. D. Clarke" and the date "Aug. 6, 1843," but no place was mentioned.

I was unsuccessful in my efforts to uncover a copy of Olney's, but I did find a fourth edition of Woodbridge: Modern School Geography on the Plan of Comparison and Classification (Hartford: Belknap and Hamersley, 1846). The subject of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland was treated in three short pages, together with an illustration of the "Falls of Niagara." Besides establishing that "agriculture is not skilfully conducted" in the Canadas, Woodbridge commented: "The people of East Canada are chiefly French peasants, who are industrious, but very ignorant. West Canada is chiefly inhabited by British and Americans, who are better instructed." (p. 168).


15 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Macfarlane to Hillier, September 1, 1827. I could not find a copy of Murray's *Grammar*, but there was an edition of his *English Reader* published in Montreal in 1824 by Whiting and Mower. Certainly the popularity of Murray's books is attested to by reference to Appendix C. A Toronto edition of *The English Reader* was finally published in 1838 by Robert Stanton, and the following year an *Introduction to the English Reader* by Lindley Murray was published in Toronto by Eastwood and Company. (The copy of the *Introduction* I consulted was sold by T. A. Harton, "dry goods, groceries, boots, shoes," of Newmarket.) Murray claimed the *English Reader* was "designed to assist young persons to read with propriety and effect; to improve their language and sentiments, and to inculcate some of the most important principles of piety and virtue." (See title page, 1824 edition) A tall order, but nevertheless held to be realizable by educators of the day, for as children learned to spell and read they were supposed to imbibe good moral lessons as well.

16 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Prospectus seeking response to such a printing, June 18, 1827.

17 P. A. C. Educational Papers. Macfarlane to Colborne, November 20, 1832.

18 For a sample list, see Talman, "Social Conditions . . .," p. 173. A particularly interesting example because of its preface by John Strachan can be seen in the Baldwin Room, Toronto Central Library: William Phillips, *A New and Concise System of Arithmetic*, calculated to facilitate the improvement of youth in Upper Canada (York: Eastwood and Skinner, [1833]). (Under the patronage of Colborne, Strachan, and Principal Harris of Upper Canada College.)
19 Geo. IV, C. 8.


21 Smith, A Geographical View ..., p. 44.

22 Upper Canada Gazette, July 13, 1799.

23 Kingston Gazette, February 12, 1811.


25 O. A., Hodgins Collection. Letter signed "Seth" addressed to Mr. Miles [editor], Kingston Gazette, dated Fredericksburgh, November 29, 1815. An example of the near "illiterate" schoolmaster can be found in an advertisement in the Kingston Gazette of January 29, 1811, as follows: "You will also send books and pens and ink and a pennife, as I alway larne skolarls to make their own pens, but you need not send pens to them that you dont want to rite, nor books to them that you dont want to read, which they can do without them."

26 56 Geo. III, c. 36.

27 Macdonell to Bathurst, January 10, 1817. In Hodgins, Historical and Other Documents, I, 10-11.


29 P. A. C., U. C. S., Captain W. P. Owen to Gore, April 2, 1816.


35. "Palemon," Letter No. 1, Kingston Gazette, August 22, 1815. A later observer has concluded that in those days "a teaching post was commonly regarded as the last refuge of the incompetent, the inept, the unreliable." J. G. Althouse, The Ontario Teacher, 1800-1910 (Toronto: Ontario Teachers' Federation, 1967), p. 6.

36. Anna Jameson, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (3 vols., London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), II, 23. A similar report from the other end of the province was more restrained: "Teachers generally speaking are not men of good or liberal education." P. A. C., Educational Papers. Report of Common School Trustees, Eastern District, December 9, 1828.

37. Adam Fergusson, Practical Notes Made during a Tour in Canada and a Portion of the United States in MDCCCXXXI (Edinburgh, W. Blackwood, 1833), p. 76.


39. Canadian Emigrant (Sandwich), May 19, 1832.


43. Edward Allen Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canadas, II, 196.


47. Anna Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, II, 22. Robert Davis in *The Canadian Farmer's Travels* . . . (Buffalo, 1837) noted the same attitude of mind: "... the aristocracy dread the common people getting education, well knowing that knowledge is power, and that power which always destroys toryism."


52. For government expenditures on common schools in the decade between 1825 and 1835 see D. H. E., I, 183, 269; III, 138.


54. P. A. C., Colborne Papers. Memorandum respecting University of King's College under letter to Lord Goderich, December 19, 1831.

56 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Inhabitants of Peterborough to Colborne, May 12, 1834.

57 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Common School Report, Western District, December 20, 1830.

58 Gourlay, Statistical Account, I, 434.

59 Niagara Gleaner, June 21, 1823.

60 United Presbytery of Upper Canada, Minutes, 1830 Conference (York, 1831), pp. 4-5.


63 Christian Guardian, February 12, 1831.

56 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Inhabitants of Peterborough to Colborne, May 12, 1834.

57 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Common School Report, Western District, December 20, 1830.

58 Gourlay, Statistical Account, I, 434.

59 Niagara Gleaner, June 21, 1823.

60 United Presbytery of Upper Canada, Minutes, 1830 Conference (York, 1831), pp. 4-5.


63 Christian Guardian, February 12, 1831.
CHAPTER V

ADULT EDUCATION

Mechanics' Institutes, Literary Societies, and Evening Schools

Education in Upper Canada prior to Union was by no means restricted to formal educational institutions. Some of the Reformers, such as James Lesslie and William Lyon Mackenzie, saw public education in a broader sense, beyond the institutions of the school system as such. For them successful education of the public was the only way to lift society from one plateau to the next, and this elevation was accomplished through newspapers and the public platform as well as the school system. Some Reformers, like Lesslie, were also quick to emphasize the role of the mechanics' institutes as important vehicles of adult education, particularly for working class adults. For the Reformers, as for the British radicals, the education of the masses was essential before they could be mobilized in support of further reforms. Such objectives were not the only basis of the movement though, for it received the support of some Tories.

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First founded in the British Isles in the second decade of the nineteenth century, mechanics' institutes were designed to provide "mechanics"—which meant clerks, tradesmen, and workingmen in general—with lectures, classes and reading material on all manner of subjects. Their offerings were primarily intended for self-improvement, but there was a prevailing attitude among the movement's leaders, who tended not to be workmen, that more efficient workingmen would result.

Whether in Britain or Upper Canada, mechanics' institutes always revealed a reliance on the lecture as the main learning device. Lecture subjects tended to be drawn from science and were sometimes very esoteric. During 1833, for example, the York Mechanics' Institute heard lectures "on the principles of matter—attraction, cohesion, and repulsion; on astronomy—the nature and properties of the Sun, and the phenomena of the planets Mercury and Venus; on natural history—the cause and effect of climates, and on other matters of natural philosophy, such as electricity and pneumatics, with experiments and illustrations."¹ A similar emphasis on the lecture platform was evident in the lyceum movement in the United States at approximately the same time. As Theodore Parker, the American Unitarian clergyman and social reformer, observed: "The business of lecturing is an original American contrivance for educating the people. The world has nothing like it. In it are
combined the best things of the church and of the college, with some of the fun of the theatre." \(^2\)

Beginning at York in 1830, a number of mechanics' institutes sprang up throughout Upper Canada in both large and small urban centres. Their lofty goals were set forth in the following address, which serves to under-line the liberal humanitarian aims held out for education in the mid-nineteenth century.

To the young mechanic the advantages of connecting himself with the Institute are great, not only as a means of acquiring a more perfect knowledge of Arts and Sciences, but also as a means of securing him against the temptations to which the youth of our city are exposed, by opening to him the way to rational enjoyment, which cannot fail to strengthen his virtue while it mingles instruction with amusement . . . . Knowledge is the true secret of the Mechanic's Independence, and the rapid strides which it has enabled him to make of late, in giving him all but absolute power over matter, abundantly prove that it is a noble patrimony, and is, in the hands of the practical Mechanic, the true Philosopher's Stone. \(^3\)

Implicit also was a middle-class paternalism which under-lay a driving impulse to make the working class moral.

... by their [the directors'] efforts many young men are saved from the drinking and gambling saloons, from loitering at street corners or spending their time in idleness, during the most dangerous period of Life, and induced to habits of sobriety and study. \(^4\)

The city was dangerous, but many working-class youths, in any case, came from "homes entirely wanting in everything that could conduce to their mental or moral improvement." \(^5\) The mechanics' institute consequently was regarded by its supporters as an institution of cardinal importance in the betterment of Upper Canadian society.
There was an additional important aim, namely to allow mechanics "to make their importance felt and recognized as a corporate body."\textsuperscript{6} Besides giving them legitimacy and dignity as human beings, education at the mechanics' institutes allowed artisan groups to retain their identity. By the end of the century, sad to say, such groups had been largely absorbed by the factory and the new technology.

The York Mechanics' Institute had its first organizational meeting on December 24, 1830. John Ewart, Toronto's most prominent builder of the day, was named the first president. The secretaries were James Lesslie, described somewhat later by Sir F. B. Head as a "notorious rebel," and Joseph Bates, a watchmaker from London.\textsuperscript{7} Other office-bearers in the 1830's were Dr. William Warren Baldwin and Robert Baldwin, Dr. John Rolph, and the noted philanthropist Jesse Ketchum. In 1832 liaison was established with Dr. George Birkbeck, president of the London (England) Mechanics' Institute. A provincial grant of £200 was sent to Birkbeck to buy equipment, but Lesslie reported a general dissatisfaction with what was provided.\textsuperscript{8}

The Institute was by no means exclusively a Reform venture, for support for elevating the lower classes could be found among both Tory and Reformer, but, according to James Lesslie at any rate, opposition derived primarily from Tory quarters where the spread of knowledge
among the lower orders was considered a dangerous thing.

Lesslie confided to his diary:

The M. Institute is viewed with suspicion by some of our Gentry & some of its professed & warmest friends seem to be influenced by them. The intelligence of the lower Classes they and their system would if possible keep under—their Lord and Slave system is not to be grafted upon the people of Upper Canada, and their favorite maxim "Ignorance is Bliss" which was this day defended by one of them shows clearly the principle from which their opposition to the dissemination of knowledge arises.⁹

Kingston also had a mechanics' institute and in 1835, like that of Toronto, it received a government grant.¹⁰ The same year the third mechanics' institute in Upper Canada was formed in the town of London. The first president was a physician by the name of Richard Murphy.¹¹ By mid-century mechanics' insitutes had been incorporated in Stratford, Woodstock, Dundas, St. Catharines, Whitby and Simcoe.¹²

The first London Institute was short-lived, but was succeeded in 1841 by a second. Typically most of the officers were leading citizens of the employer class. The president, Marcus Holmes, an American by birth, was the owner of a carriage and wagon works; the first vice-president, Edward Matthews, an Englishman, was the community's leading builder; the second vice-president, Simeon Morrill, a New Englander, owned a large tannery and later a shoe factory. He was the first employer of labour on a large scale in London, and in 1848 became the town's first mayor. Like Jesse Ketchum in Toronto,
Morrill was also a temperance man. The corresponding secretary and the treasurer were likewise businessmen.\textsuperscript{13} The domination of mechanics' institutes by non-mechanics thus became a common feature in both England and Upper Canada.\textsuperscript{14} One serious obstacle in the way of the common workman's participation was the entrance fee for members of five shillings plus 1s3d per month thereafter. Such charges were too exorbitant for most workingmen. Nonetheless by mid-century a visitor to London, Ontario, could conclude: "The [London] Mechanics' Institute is believed to be one of the most flourishing in Canada, and is in several respects further advanced than any other in the colony."\textsuperscript{15}

During the year following the formation of the York Mechanics' Institute, John Strachan and some other Tories were responsible for founding the York Literary and Philosophical Society under the patronage of Lieutenant-Governor Colborne. It was considered a rival to the Mechanics' Institute in that the latter was promoted primarily by supporters of the Reform movement like James Lesslie and the Baldwins. Its purpose was stated to be to investigate "the Natural and Civil History of the Colony and the whole interior as far as the Pacific and Polar Seas . . . and to promote the cultivation of Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, the Fine Arts, and other Scientific and Literary pursuits." New members were to be elected by a ballot taken among the present
membership. The society lasted only a year. An earlier York Literary Society is worth mentioning. It was formed in 1820 "for the purpose of mutual improvement." Debate and discussion were entered into on all topics except controversial religious and political questions. Leading figures in the York Literary Society were Charles Baby, John Cartwright, Charles Ridout and R. B. Sullivan. A spiritual successor, formed in the mid-1830's, was the Toronto Literary Club which included among its membership the names of John Strachan and J. B. Robinson. Typical of its topics of debate were the following: "Was the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 a violation of the Law of Nations?", and "Is a standing army inimical to the liberties of a nation?" Two important literary societies of the forties were the Toronto Atheneum founded in 1843, of which the Reverend Henry Scadding was president for many years, and the Canadian Institute founded in Toronto in 1849. Again Scadding was a leading figure. The two merged in 1855 and form the Royal Canadian Institute of today. In 1852 the Institute began a regular series of publications.

Among formal educational institutions for adults there were many evening schools. Richard Cockrell's evening school at Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake), opened in 1796, was one of the first. Then in 1807 John Strachan, the district schoolmaster at Cornwall, offered evening lectures in natural philosophy, a practice he repeated in
York in 1818. In 1810 Charles McDonnell opened a "Nocturnal Study" school in York. In the late twenties and early thirties evening schools were conducted in York by Alexander Stewart (1827), Charles Vaux (1828), Thomas Appleton (1830) and William Ward (1832). In the late thirties Mr. Brethour ("of the District School"), Mr. Scanlon and Mr. Heffernan all taught evening classes. There may well have been many other examples of which no trace remains today.

The Newspaper

Another important means of adult education was an indirect one--the weekly newspaper which incorporated in its pages many features of the modern magazine and even television. In addition to news of purely local interest, most newspapers carried some international news largely concerning the British Empire and the United States, as well as book reviews and books published in instalments. A paper such as William Lyon Mackenzie's Colonial Advocate devoted many pages to information about agriculture, gardening, canal and road building and manufacturing. So did many Tory newspapers.

Upper Canadians read newspapers much more than they did books which were expensive and hard to come by since public libraries belonged to a future era. J. J. Talman records no less than 100 weekly papers published
at different times between 1815 and 1840, with at least thirty newspapers always in circulation during this period. The average circulation was 1000 copies an issue. Anna Jameson in her travels through the colony found the newspapers to be "the principal medium of knowledge and communication." Both formal and informal arrangements aided newspaper reading and exchange of opinion. The most common public place for such discussion was the tavern. Here those who could read would enlighten those who could not about current news and opinions. Lively discussions would follow. This was the sort of public education William Lyon Mackenzie approved of. For him the press was "a powerful means of preventing crime, and instilling just and generous sentiments into the minds of the community."

In 1832 a more formal setting was provided in York for reading and discussing newspapers. The organizers were a group of thirty men, mostly merchants, who each contributed £5. Centrally located and known as the Commercial Newsroom, its purpose was to make available for interested readers a variety of newspapers. Subscription fees ranged from 30s a year to 5s a month. Members of the Assembly not residing within ten miles of Toronto were admitted free, as were captains and pursers of steamboats. Strangers were allowed up to one week's access on personal or written introduction from a
Besides Blackwood's Magazine, the London Quarterly Review and the London Times, the Newsroom carried newspapers from New York, Baltimore, Rochester, Charleston and Boston in the United States, and from Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Hamilton, Cobourg, and Niagara. The importance of the Newsroom to Toronto in the 1830's was underlined by the Constitution in 1837.

The literary resources of Toronto are extremely circumscribed. It cannot boast of a public library, while it contains only two literary institutions ... The News-Room is, therefore, the only place of refuge, which is left to the stranger who is fonder of reading than idly perambulating the streets. The Mechanics' Institute of Toronto has been in existence for nearly six years, but I do not learn that much good has yet been effected by it.

The Newsroom later merged with the Toronto Athenaeum.

A popular reform cause of the day which made good use of the press and also public lectures as a means of propaganda was the temperance movement. From the formation of the first temperance society in Upper Canada in 1828 in Bastard Township, Leeds County, then in the Johnstown District, through to its first provincial convention in 1836, the temperance movement experienced a phenomenal growth. Garland and Talman record the presence in the province of 180 societies with a total of 10,000 members. To promote their cause and advance their principles twelve newspapers were published. Chief among these were the Montreal-based Canada Temperance Advocate, the Canadian Watchman, and the Temperance Record, founded by Jesse Ketchum in Toronto.
The temperance press made use of both formal and informal means of public education. To increase circulation, the price of the *Canada Temperance Advocate* was reduced by half in 1839—-and circulation doubled. For about five years copies were sent free to clergymen and school-teachers throughout the province. The intention was to utilize both school and church to further the cause. Again in 1841 a pamphlet called "Anti-Bacchus" was put in the hands of every magistrate, Member of Parliament, clergymen and school-teacher. Here we see the involvement of church, school, and the press as agents of public education.

**Private and Public Libraries**

In this period there were not very many public libraries, although individuals sometimes gathered together to make books available either for circulation amongst themselves or to the public generally. The Quakers off Yonge Street, north of York, for example, began operating a circulating library among Yonge Street Friends in 1816. Around 1812 the Reverend John Langhorn, Church of England minister at Bath, presented his personal library to the community to form the basis of a community library. In 1810 the *Kingston Gazette* urged citizens to subscribe a few shillings each so as to provide a "tolerable library" for "friendly intercourse and
sociability" as well as instruction and entertainment. Such institutions it reported, "are becoming an object of attention in various places." 32

One of the first community libraries was set up at Watson's Corners in Dalhousie Township, Lanark County, then in the Bathurst District, in 1821. Interested citizens formed a St. Andrew's Society and sought the patronage of the Governor-General, the Earl of Dalhousie. Dalhousie not only sent £100, but also a quantity of books including the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. In 1829 a log building was erected to house what amounted three years later to 500 volumes including Gibbon's *Roman Empire*, Hume's *History of England*, Blackstone's *Commentaries*, Scott's *Napoleon*, and *The Life of David Crockett*. Also included, quite appropriately considering this was a Scottish settlement, were seventeen volumes of the *Edinburgh Almanack*. 33

In Norfolk a group of citizens formed the Norfolk Book Society. It held regular meetings and determined what periodicals would be purchased from its funds. Among its subscriptions were the following consisting for the most part of British journals: *Blackwood's Magazine*, the *Edinburgh Review*, the *London Quarterly Review*, the *United Services' Journal*, the *Dublin University Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine*, monthly parts of the *Saturday* and *Penny* magazines, and of *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal*, the *Canadian Magazine*, and the *Upper Canada Farmer*. 34 In
Toronto Henry Rowsell's Circulating Library was well known among the literate. An 1834 newspaper advertisement announced the arrival of 2,000 volumes of English and French works to which more were constantly being added. Subscription costs were £2 a year.35

An early advocate of public libraries was William Lyon Mackenzie who used the pages of his *Colonial Advocate* to sing their praises. In his *Catechism of Education* published in 1830 Mackenzie underlined the beneficial effects of public libraries "for apprentices, mechanics, labourers, and others, who were not able out of their own means to acquire a select assortment of useful books."

He cited as an example the case of Scotland where many of the towns and larger villages had long had such libraries. As a result "the minds of the people have been enlightened, and their manners improved, by study and reflection."36

In the 1840's a firm advocate of public libraries was James Strang, chairman of the Common School Commissioners in Galt. He maintained that "no system of education can be regarded as complete without these libraries."37

By 1895 when the fortunes of the mechanics' institutes and public libraries were wedded by provincial statute,38 there were 268 mechanics' institutes. These were converted into either free municipal public libraries or association libraries under fee-paying private control. At about the same time the Carnegie Foundation in the United States in cooperation with provincial departments
of education began to promote public libraries for adult education. By the turn of the century, the dream of free public libraries was realized in most large Canadian cities and towns.

A footnote to the public library question was the vain attempt of Charles Fothergill to establish the colony's first museum. As a member of the Assembly, Fothergill tried in 1833 to interest that body in establishing a "Lyceum for Natural History and Fine Arts" at York. A grant of land was secured, and by 1835 he had accumulated a collection of stuffed animals, fossils, shells, minerals, and some pictures. He even hired a man, who had been employed in the British Museum, to prepare specimens. Two years later as the dream of a separate museum building faded, Fothergill requested the use of two long rooms in a building "at the south end of the Market Square" formerly used as a printing office. Here he proposed to set up an exhibition and in the centre mount an observatory "with a Telescope of superior power" and other instruments. But as Henry Scadding, a contemporary observer, has noted, "many of Fothergill's plans came to nothing for want of a sufficient body of seconders." A hint of the unhappy end of this project is given by an advertisement which appeared in the Patriot in October, 1838, under the heading "Lyceum of Natural History."
30 cases of stuffed Birds and Animals (just imported) to be sold by auction on Monday, October 29, 1838. Terms cash. Sale commences at 11.42

It was another two decades before a museum was successfully established in Upper Canada. That was the Canadian Education Museum, opened in 1857, following some indefatigable collecting activities and political manoeuvring by Egerton Ryerson.43
NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1York Patriot, March 4, 1834.

2Quoted in David Mead, Yankee Eloquence in the Middle West: The Ohio Lyceum, 1850-1870 (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1951), pp. 145-46.

3T. C. L., Broadside Collection. "Address of the Mechanical Institute of Montreal to the Mechanics of this City . . ." (Montreal, 1846).

4"Mechanics' Institutes, as Educational Institutions for the Adult Industrial Classes," The Journal of the Board of Arts and Manufacturers for Upper Canada, February, 1864, p. 33.

5Ibid.

6"Address of the Mechanics' Institute of Montreal to the Mechanics of this City . . ."

7Lesslie credited Bates with being the originator of the idea of a mechanics' institute at York. T. C. L., typescript of manuscript of James Lesslie, dated c. 1880, entitled "Résumé of events and people in Toronto, 1822-1838,"p. 2.

8Ibid.

9Dundas (Ont.) Museum, James Lesslie Diary, March 21, 1832.


13 The prominent role played by American immigrant businessmen in adapting this basically English institution to Upper Canada's needs seems noteworthy. Moreover, there is no evidence these Americans were influenced by the lyceum movement which was spreading into the American mid-West at this very time. See Louis B. Wright, Culture on the Moving Frontier (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), pp. 230-31, 233-34.


16 Colonial Advocate, February 3, 1831.

17 The formation of the Society led James Lesslie to remark in his diary: "Literature and Science are deemed by some as planted in a barren soil where church influence prevails not.--if this be true then this society will undoubtedly prosper." To which he added later in red ink "Became defunct in one year!!" September 5, 1832.

18 P. A. O., Education Department, Miscellaneous Material, Box 17A. Constitution of society.

19 P. A. O., Sir Charles Moss Papers, 1835-1912.

Patriot, September 13, 1836. Mirror, November 4, 1837; January 11, 1839; May 24, 1839.


23 Anna Jameson, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, I, 190.


25 P. A. O., Toronto City Council Papers. Petition, Toronto Commercial News Room, November 9, 1835. Among the early subscribers was Francis Hincks.

26 Upper Canada Almanack (Toronto: David Dwyer, [1835-36]), p. 19.

27 Toronto Patriot, July 16, 1838. Announcement of an auction sale of old newspapers and periodicals.

28 Toronto Constitution, February 8, 1837.

29 Most of this section is derived from M. A. Garland and J. J. Talman, "Pioneer Drinking Habits and the Rise of the Temperance Agitation in Upper Canada prior to 1840," Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, XXVII (1931), pp. 341-64. Support for the temperance movement came primarily from Methodists and Baptists, but Quakers were also favourable to the cause although they usually did not form societies. Even some St. Catharines Negroes formed the African Temperance Society in 1835. Ibid., p. 354.


32 Kingston Gazette, November 13, 1810.


35 Toronto *Patriot*, October 6, 1834.


37 P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. James Strang, Galt, to Murray, September 14, 1842.

38 58 Vic. c. 45, sec. 11. A few mechanics' institutes had transferred their property to public libraries in the previous decade under the provisions of 45 Vic., c. 22, sec. 10 and 46 Vic., c. 19, sec. 2. One such example was the Toronto Mechanics' Institute which was taken over by the new Toronto Public Library on July 1, 1883.

39 Announcement of proposed "Lyceum of Natural History" in P. A. C., Colborne Papers. Dated at Toronto, April 14, 1835. The announcement alluded to the fact that "whilst almost every town in the neighbouring Republic has its Museum—the metropolis of Upper Canada is without any establishment of the kind."

40 P. A. O., Toronto City Council Papers. Petition of C. Fethergill, July 31, 1837.


42 Toronto *Patriot*, October 23, 1838.

CHAPTER VI

THE HUMANITARIAN IMPULSE: INDIANS, NEGROES AND "DESTITUTE SETTLERS"

In addition to the mainstream of educational change with which to this point this essay has been concerned, there were minor areas of educational reform relating to the poor and orphaned, Indians, and Negroes. The religious revivals of the early nineteenth century gave birth to a number of humanitarian movements all associated with a special care and concern for the victims of misfortune or injustice. The onset of humanitarian effort coincided in Britain with the climax of the Industrial Revolution at the turn of the nineteenth century and in the United States with the onslaught of urbanization and industrialization in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century.\(^1\) The tenor of the era was caught in a short piece in the Boston Christian Examiner in 1825:

The present age is distinguished for public spirit and benevolent enterprise, manifested in every possible form. There is one way of doing good, in particular, which never before was carried to anything like the same extent—namely, by associating for this purpose. The consequence is that scarcely a month passes in which we are not called upon to form, or aid, some benevolent association.\(^2\)

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Societies were formed to promote temperance, anti-slavery, peace, the education of poor children, prison reform, and better treatment of the insane. Almost every American and English humanitarian society had its Upper Canadian counterpart. Sometimes, as in the case of the temperance societies, the Upper Canadian organizations associated with the American national union, in this case the United States Temperance Union. Sometimes American efforts to enlist Canadian support for humanitarian causes fell short of success. The Massachusetts Peace Society, for example, whose aim was "to promote 'peace on earth', and to abolish war, by enlightening the minds of men" tried unsuccessfully in 1821 to enlist the support of Lieutenant-Governor Maitland. The Society's aims and hopes are worth repeating as exemplary of a typical humanitarian movement devoted to universal enlightenment as the best means to attain universal peace.

... it is believed that in proportion as the minds of men shall be enlightened on the subject, both the frequency and the enormities of war will be diminished; and it is fervently and devoutly hoped that so much will be done as to prevent the recurrence of another war between Great Britain and the United States. ³

Such an association in the field of the education of poor children was the Midland District School Society (already mentioned in Chapter II). With the children of the poor in mind, a few gentlemen in Kingston, including the Reverend George Okill Stuart, banded together in 1815 to form this Society "for the purpose of educating
all children of both sexes unprovided with the means of education." Here we see an example of the transition from purely parochial interests centred on parents' own children and evident in the early private schools to a humanitarian concern which singled out for special care the children of the poor, Indians, and Negroes.

Opened late in 1817, the Midland school operated under the monitorial system using pupil-teachers called monitors. Originally they adopted the non-sectarian Lancasterian scheme, not Andrew Bell's system which included Church of England teachings. In November 1818, however, after being closed for several months, the school reopened and switched to Bell's system as used by the National Society in England. It thus became the first National School in Upper Canada. Maitland's role in this switch is not certain, but he did agree to become a patron of the Society about the same time. A more likely reason is that a suitable teacher, who happened to be "in some degree acquainted with the National System of Education," became available and was engaged. Despite Maitland's patronage the school functioned for only a few years more.

In 1837 the Midland school was re-opened, but this time with no formal attachment to a mode of teaching. Two schools were established, one for boys and one for girls. The Christian humanitarian concern was still present, it being argued that a school was needed for
children of poor parents and orphans because "our streets present such numbers of children growing up, it is to be feared, in ignorance of the true God, whom to know is life eternal." Moreover many children had parents who were "slaves of intemperance;" "they are out of reach of almost any other charity." Again it was hoped that besides "saving" the children "access" might be obtained "to hearts even of intemperate parents" who might yet "be led to repentance and reformation."9

The individuals who led these associations were in a real sense the precursors of the more famous mid-Victorian reformers.10 Rarely weak men, they were always convinced of the rectitude of their mission. They operated most often on the fringes of officialdom, trying to cajole and persuade public officials to aid their latest cause or at the very least to extend the benefit of their patronage. Driven as they were by moral imperatives, they always exhibited enormous energy in pursuing their work.

Thaddeus Osgood, Humanitarian Reformer

Typical of the Upper Canadian reformer of this type during this period was Thaddeus Osgood. Characteristically Osgood's interests were diverse: temperance, monitorial schools, Sunday Schools, education and training of Indians, care of destitute settlers, encouragement of
emigration (from England). Osgood seems to have been a controversial figure, almost from his first visit to Upper Canada in 1807. Much of his still extant correspondence is devoted to a defence of his character and his actions against aspersions cast by his enemies. ¹¹ Dr. George Spragge, commenting on the opposition Osgood encountered in Lower Canada from Bishops Mountain and Plessis, concluded that "on the whole the opposition to his rather hare-brained schemes seems justified." ¹² This harsh judgment certainly bears some scrutiny since the opposition to Osgood invariably came from established church and government quarters.

Born in the American colonies in 1775, Osgood was educated at Dartmouth College, licensed to preach in 1804, and ordained a Congregational minister in 1808. The following year he came to Canada and began to distribute tracts designed "to make amusement and instruction friends" for thousands of little children. ¹³ Shortly after he went to England to raise money for his activities. While there, his "missionary" efforts drew the ire of John Strachan who in 1814 warned a prominent Edinburgh resident, Archibald Constable, against "a Mr. Osgood [who] is going round soliciting assistance for the distressed in Canada." Strachan bluntly stated Osgood had no authorization from Strachan's organization, the Loyal and Patriotic Society, to solicit funds, and Mr. Constable could be assured Osgood was no man to
deal with since "all the more respec[ta]ble people in the Province" belonged to Strachan's society, "nor does [Osgood's] character . . . entitle him to such confidence."¹⁴

In the 1820's Osgood made his most pronounced impact on the colony. We see evidence of his main concerns—Sunday schools and Indian education—in the two societies with which he was closely connected. The first was the Sunday School Union Society which had Jesse Ketchum, the York tanner and philanthropist, as Treasurer; Indian education was the responsibility of the Central Auxiliary Society for Promoting Education and Industry in Canada. The Sunday School Union Society was a Christian but non-sectarian association with its parent the Sunday School Union in London. In an appeal for patronage to Lieutenant-Governor Maitland, Osgood expressed his preference for teaching the Bible or selected extracts from it rather than "any catechisms or human compositions."¹⁵

This indirect affront to the Church of England did not go unnoticed; Osgood and his society bore the brunt of many charges and accusations. A typical remark was directed to Maitland by the Reverend John Wenham of Brockville. He warned against granting any aid to Osgood's society because the committee backing it, he alleged, was composed of men "any thing but friendly to our Church."¹⁶ On another occasion Osgood pleaded innocent to a charge of "intermeddling with and disorganizing
three Sunday schools in the neighbourhood [York]." He denied being "unfriendly to the English church," although he admitted he was "educated and ordained a minister of the Congregational church."\(^{17}\)

Despite a lack of encouragement, if not opposition, from official quarters, the Sunday School Union Society managed to open four branches by 1828 in Niagara, Montreal, Kingston and York.\(^{18}\) The Society also lay claim to a branch in Vittoria, Norfolk, but any official connection was vigorously denied by that body.\(^{19}\) Shortly after Lieutenant-Governor Colborne's arrival in Upper Canada, Osgood took the opportunity to appraise him of the state of his Sunday school society and to explain to him why Sunday schools had not prospered in the colony. The main reason, he claimed, was Maitland's refusal to patronize them. As a consequence "very little has been done towards importing books, or establishing Sunday Schools in U. Canada." Moreover, Osgood continued, the General Board of Education, under the presidency of John Strachan, had been less than helpful. The School Act of 1824 had provided for an annual grant of £150 for book purchases. But "I am informed that the Dr. [Strachan] purchased six hundred copies of Dr. Bell's System of Education at one time. There being only one school of that kind in the province [presumably Upper Canada Central School], it is thought that so many copies of that book were not wanted." Surely "books suitable for all denominations
of Christians" would have been more suitable, but "those only which are peculiar to the Church of England have been obtained."²⁰

Books were an important point with the Union schools since subscribers to the society had the right to borrow a book or tract every Sunday. Moreover, officials were most desirous that subscribers should read the prescribed tracts because of the didactic nature of these books. Hannah More, the Evangelical, tract writer and distributor in early nineteenth century England, summed up the message contained in most of these tracts.

Beautiful is the order of Society when each according to his place--pays willing honour to his superiors--when servants are prompt to obey their masters, and masters deal kindly with their servants;--when high, low, rich and poor--when landlord and tenant, master and workman, minister and people... sit down each satisfied with his own place.²¹

As noted, Thaddeus Osgood's other main reform concern in the province related to the "promotion of education and industry" among Indians. To this end he was responsible for forming the Central Auxiliary Society for Promoting Education and Industry in Canada, an organization to which Maitland did in fact contribute. This society was committed to aiding the establishment of schools among Indians and destitute settlers.²² Most of the Indian schools mentioned by Osgood in his annual reports for the C. A. S. P. E. I. C. were serviced by missionaries sent out by the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.²³ Aid was given to Indians
at Rice Lake, Grape Island, Munseytown on the Thames, and on Lake Simcoe. In all cases the monies were directed to the erection or support of schools or Schools of Industry. The latter were designed primarily to teach Indian boys useful trades. Beyond the normal "civilizing" and "moralizing" benefits of such schools, there were additional practical advantages relating to the acquisition of useful skills such as shoe-making, carpentry, and cabinet making.

By the end of the 1820's, Osgood, the inveterate optimist, was looking forward to the establishment of some kind of school for training Indian teachers. "The plan of training up Teachers from among the Indians and Emigrants," he reported, "appears so very important that they warmly recommend the opening of a Seminary, as soon as funds and a suitable Instructor can be procured." But despite Osgood's exciting plans, the Society came to an end in 1829.

Once again Osgood seems to have suffered from lack of official encouragement. At any rate he certainly aroused a further storm of controversy. Moved by loyalty to King, country, and established church, a Brockville minister directed Maitland's attention to an address in which he claimed Osgood had sung the praises of "liberty" in an equivocal fashion. Could Osgood have been referring to American-style "liberty" and not "religious liberty"? Certainly he spoke of carrying his "mission" to the
United States of all places. He seemed, the critic continued, to be seeking "a union of the Indians of the United States and Canada." At the very least Osgood was undercutting the good work of the S. P. G. and of Maitland himself.26

A man of tremendous energy and dedication, Osgood was back in British North America again in 1835 after returning to England for a short time. He beat a trail to Sir Francis Bond Head's door and presented him with seven petitions "respecting the same objects for which I petitioned the King [temperance and Sunday Schools]."27 In 1838 he announced plans for a School of Industry "for the benefit of emigrants and others who may be destitute." His appeal was typically paternalistic and revealed a Victorian concern to counteract "idleness and vice" in the lower classes.

When we behold so many every year, especially among the children and young people, who are contracting habits of idleness and vice it is of great importance that the attempt [to found a School of Industry] should be made.28

It is not clear whether or not this project met with success.

The following year he was on to a new crusade, this time combining the promotion of emigration with schools of industry. Describing himself as the agent of the Friendly Union of Montreal, he wrote from England to an old enemy, John Strachan, seeking his intervention with Chief Justice J. B. Robinson who was at that time
visiting England. Osgood's plan was designed to assist both Great Britain and Upper Canada. Unemployment pressures in the Mother Country were to be relieved by encouraging emigration to the colony by granting free passage. Canada, in a current state of distress, would benefit from one year's labour required of each emigrant to consist of "clearing land and erecting cottages and workshops for destitute emigrants." A public notice addressed to "British Christians on Behalf of Canada" spoke of "the present state of Canada" as "very distressing;" "the only prospect of saving that interesting Colony from War and ruin, is by the promotion of Industry, Temperance and Christian knowledge, as taught in the Bible." The notice concluded with an appeal to Government and corporations to patronize "this work of moral reform" through the vehicle of "Friendly Unions for Suppressing Vice and Promoting Useful Knowledge, with Schools of Industry." Such was the missionary and reform effort of the Reverend Thaddeus Osgood, always civilizing and moralizing either the lower orders or Indians, always seeking official favour, but usually meeting with only limited success. Despite numerous obstacles, Osgood pushed forward from one project to the next intent upon elevating and enlightening the disadvantaged of society.

Another typical reformer was the American immigrant and successful York businessman, Jesse Ketchum.
His role in the formation of the York Mechanics' Institute in 1830 has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, and his involvement in the Sunday School Union Society is alluded to above. In the late 1820's he served as a trustee of the York Common School and in 1832 he set up an infant school for children seven and under. Ketchum was a convinced temperance advocate. At the founding meeting of the York Temperance Society on November 15, 1830, he was chosen vice-president, and in 1836 he established the Temperance Record to further the cause.

Scadding speaks favourably of Ketchum's practical interest in schools both in Toronto and his place of retirement, Buffalo. In Toronto he made a practice of supplying land for moral and religious uses. He also gave sites for a schoolhouse, Temperance Hall, and a children's park. Like Osgood, however, Ketchum came in for abuse from official quarters. Maitland called him "an illiterate man and by no means respectably spoken of as a British subject." Maitland's adverse opinion may well have derived from Ketchum's pronounced allegiance to the Reform cause.

Indians

The education of Indians in Upper Canada was always intimately concerned with religious and moral aspects. For the Indians to be civilized, they must be
turned from their pagan ways and made good Christians. But to ensure true conversion, it was felt necessary to make them literate first so as to enable them to read the Bible and prayerbook. Thus the conversion of Indians to Christianity and hence civilizing them was dependent upon making them literate and hence educating them. It followed that most dedicated missionaries sought to provide their flock with translations of at least some religious sources, although, as we shall see the matter of language of instruction was to become a burning issue. All considered, one can understand why most Indian schools were usually little more than "religious kindergartens." Later after conversion when the Indians' traditional livelihood based on hunting and trapping had gone into decline, concern developed over their failure to engage in productive activity. Reformers then promoted the idea of schools of industry in order to teach the natives useful skills like carpentry and cabinetmaking.

The first instruction of Indians in Ontario was conducted in French and Indian dialect by the Jesuit missionaries in Huronia from 1639 to 1649. The first known Indian school using English was set up by the S. P. G. for the Six Nations Indians at the Bay of Quinte in 1784. In 1793 another school was opened at Fairfield on the Thames River by David Zeisberger. In the latter both English and Delaware were taught and books in both languages were read including Zeisberger's
Delaware Indian and English Spelling Book. In 1801 the Moravian missionaries at Fairfield petitioned the government for an Indian agricultural school. Here was perhaps the earliest example of the "school-of-industry" concept. The aim was "to lead them [the Indians] on to a state of cultivation by keeping schools, teaching them to read, write, and cipher, and instructing them in agriculture, etc." Elma Gray in *Wilderness Christians*, the story of the Moravian mission to the Delawares, maintains that "much of the Moravians' success with the red man . . . resulted from the fact that they realized a teacher was more highly respected than a preacher."  

Among the Six Nations Indians on the Grand River a teacher was maintained by the government from 1785, almost from the time of their arrival in Canada. One report in 1792 described the current master as "an old Yanky" who "teaches English and arithmetic only" to sixty-six pupils. But a report in 1810 underscored the suspicion held by some of the elders about the value of formal education.

... many of the old men are not certain whether this School is of use or not--for some by learrng. to read not only become idle, but contract habits of Idleness which prevent them from excelling in the [* . . ?*] They also object & this is a remarkable objection, that while they are under the care of the Schoolmaster their manners are neglected; & again that many who have learnt to read & write are not the better for it unless they continue to read after they have left school. This is an objection of a nature which I fear is but too common; for they cannot have any great number of Books: & it is needless to add that the improvement of those who cannot get
access to these few, must necessarily be inconsiderable.39

Nevertheless the white man's growing commitment to schools could not be successfully challenged, and in 1818 another school was opened on the Grand River among the Tuscaroras, a Six Nations tribe. The benefactor in this case was not the government but a Church of England clergyman, the Reverend Ralph Leeming, who put up an endowment of $100. The following year he asked the new Lieutenant-Governor, Peregrine Maitland, to intervene with the S. P. G. for indemnification and future endowment. The enrollment of thirty to thirty-five students, Leeming argued, "some of them . . . learning to write," was sufficient proof of the school's success to date.40

In the 1820's increasing concern about the disposition and education of the province's Indian population was clearly evident. On the governmental level first Maitland and then Colborne lent a real impetus to these matters. Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Methodist clergymen, in particular John Strachan, Alexander Macdonell, and Egerton Ryerson respectively, gave leadership in this as in other realms of public education. Spearheading a crusade of his own, Reverend Thaddeus Osgood, as we have seen, was to make his own special contribution to the cause of Indian education.

Maitland's most recent biographer, the Reverend Francis M. Quealey of York University, leaves no doubt
about the governor's responsibility for Indian policy during his term of office. While the formulation of Indian policy remained the direct responsibility of Quebec and Whitehall, Maitland's role was apparent in the application of such policies as the Credit River settlement among the Mississaugas. This model Indian settlement became, according to Quealey, "one of Maitland's favorite projects." Launched in 1826, it apparently met with early success. Under Maitland's direction a village was built for the Indians, and skilled workmen and teachers sent among them. That the missionaries previously among the Mississaugas were not "desirable" is made clear by the following letter to Maitland from the commander of the Upper Canada militia:

The religious teachers of the Indians [on the Credit River] by whose means chiefly those who are Christians have been converted, are as his excellency [sic] is aware, Methodists and the greater part of them from the United States of America. Presumably Maitland's plan was designed in part to counteract this undesirable influence.

For his part John Strachan was pleased with the Lieutenant-Governor's efforts. In a report dated February, 1827, he praised Maitland for overcoming the Mississaugas' previous resistance to "every effort to instruct and civilize them." He could already report good progress being made measured by the fact that the Indians had "abjured intoxicating liquors."
measure of a good educational system for the Indians is significant. In a report written a decade later Strachan gave further commendation to Maitland's "general plan for the civilization and general instruction of the Indians of the Province." 44

Strachan himself played a considerable role in promoting Indian education. Besides encouraging Maitland's work, he appealed to the Church Missionary Society for aid in a programme of educating Indians. He wanted his proposed university, King's College, to extend its benefits to Indians so that they might be trained as missionaries and then return to their people to teach. He also hoped some white students there would learn Indian languages so that they might be able to minister to the Indians. 45

Strachan's views on who should instruct Indians were set forth in a long letter to Roman Catholic Bishop Alexander Macdonell. To begin with, the teachers should be Protestant, a point certain to displease the equally energetic Macdonell. Protestant teachers, Strachan averred, unlike Roman Catholic missionaries, "would instruct without influencing them [the Indians] in favour of any particular form or Doctrine." (Ryerson was likewise sanguine about the non-proselytizing capacity of Protestant teachers.) Of course teachers should all be British subjects "and of the same religious tenets [presumably Church of England]." Strachan strongly advised that teacher-missionaries should labour side by
side with Indians in the fields (Ryerson did so at Credit River),

for the Indians, if not encouraged [sic] in this way would become disgusted, whereas the assistance of their masters and superiors would be of great excitement. In many cases, the Indians, even those who are partially civilized, think it beneath them to perform drudgery when the example has not been set by the employers.46

In 1837 Strachan made an extensive report on Indian settlements in Upper Canada. This report gave credit to the initial efforts of Sir Peregrine Maitland and then spoke of the continuing work of the Society for Converting and Civilizing the Indians and Propagating the Gospel among Destitute Settlers. Organized in 1830 by the Church of England under Colborne's patronage, the society, Strachan reported, was "promoting its objects with as much vigour as its limited means admit." Travelling missionaries were employed except at Sault Ste. Marie where a permanent mission among the Indians was established under the supervision of the Reverend Frederick O'Meara. Both a day and Sunday School were in operation with the result that "many of the Indians could read" the prayer-book which O'Meara had translated into their language.47 In a communication to Strachan in 1839, O'Meara emphasized the importance of collecting the Indians into a village, as Maitland had proposed. Once settled in one place, the Indians were less "erratic," could more easily be converted and their children instructed.48
Generally speaking, Strachan was optimistic about the Indians. He reported them all to be "anxious to have their children educated," even if it meant leaving them behind while the men went off hunting. "These children are found as apt to learn as those of whites, and acquire the common branches of instruction and expertness in the mechanical arts with equal facility." The same report commented on their ready adaptability to the white man's ways, once they had been shown the desirability of these ends: "they are found to be docile ... and very soon become clean and tidy in their persons." The use of the children to reach the parents—a common assimilative device used by the nation-state in the last hundred years—found Strachan's approval: "the Church can reach the parents through the children, and even should she be less successful with the adults, she can gradually get possession of the rising generation, and, in half an age, the tribe becomes Christian." 49 Two decades earlier, Maitland had made the same point: in civilizing and Christianizing the Indians "little perhaps can be expected from grown-up Indians;" rather success "will chiefly depend upon the influence" to be "acquired over the young." 50

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Methodist involvement in Indian education. The main missions were at Rice Lake with a female school at Lake Schoogog [sic] from 1829, Munceytown on the Thames River, Belleville and later Grape Island on the Bay of Quinte, the Credit River, among the Mohawks on the Grand River, Lake Simcoe, and Majedushk on the Coldwater River near Penetanguishene.

The annual reports leave no doubt that the Methodist schools were primarily intended for converting the Indians to Christianity. "Nothing, in our opinion," an early report stated, "can rescue this people, but the power of the gospel." A later report made the same point about religion being a necessary base for true education: "the principles of true religion are the foundation of every other improvement, and all that is noble and excellent in the character of man." After conversion, the main purpose of educating Indians was to tender moral instruction. Indians must be led away from their uncivilized and depraved ways especially their proclivity to slothfulness and drunkenness. One report, however, very honestly questioned the effectiveness of education as a means of curbing drunkenness. A missionary at the Grand River found to his amazement that when pressed to embrace Christianity "pagan" Indians objected by saying, "the Christian Indians drink more whiskey than we." In any case by 1830 the Methodists had established an extensive educational mission among the Indians with eleven schools,
eleven teachers, and 400 students of whom 150 "can read in
the New Testament."55 "It was a sight most novel," one
report concluded," and to the friends of improvement very
animating, to witness the tents of a tribe of pagan Indians
pitched about the school for the purpose of affording to
their children the means of education."56

One of the burning issues associated with Indian
education was the question of the language of instruction.
Was it preferable to teach in the Indian or the English
language? For the Methodists in the 1820's it was consi-
dered wise to use English, "there being so few transla-
tions into the Indian tongue." Once English was known, it
would be "no difficult task to learn [sic] the scholars to
read their native tongue."57

A significant point in the teaching of English is
the fact that the Pestalozzian system was used.58 Through
what means this pedagogical system happened to come to the
attention of the Methodist missionaries is not clear, but
we do know it was not in general use in Upper Canada
until mid-century thanks to its promotion then by Egerton
Ryerson, the Superintendent of Schools. The advantages
of the Pestalozzian system were set forth in the annual
report of 1829.

[It is] a system which combines instruction with
amusement, and necessary bodily exercise with enter-
taining labour of mind, and renders the studies of
the children delightful, at the same time as it pro-
motes health and activity of body.59

The first Indian school to follow this plan was the Grape
Island school beginning in June 1828. Then the same year the Rice Lake school followed suit. The evaluation was most encouraging. "From the rapid improvement which the children in these schools have made, the committee are led to believe that the system should be introduced into the Native Schools generally." 60

As more translations in Indian languages became available, 61 the controversy over language instruction became more heated. The Mohawk Indians at Tyendinaga (Bay of Quinte), for example, requested of Bishop Strachan in 1843 to be allowed to have a school where the Indian language would be used as well as a second one with English. The late Bishop Stewart had apparently supported such a plan. They even offered to pay for the cost of printing Indian books for use in the school. 62 The opposing view as expressed by T. G. Anderson, a superintendent of Indian Affairs, has a decidedly present-day ring about it. He disapproved of Indian Testaments being used as textbooks "because the intercourse of the rising generation must be with the whites and it therefore appears to me that teaching them in their own language is time and labour lost." 63

After converting the Indians and teaching them to pray and read and pursue "moral" lives, the missionaries and reformers realized this was not enough. The Indians must be introduced to "industrious labour" and "the arts of civilized life." Prompting this concern was a
realization that the Indians' traditional mode of livelihood had been disrupted by the material advance of white society. As Strachan phrased it, "they could no longer live by hunting as the settlements were extending through every part of the Province and unless something was done to induce them to alter their mode of life they must inevitably" face destruction and ruin.\textsuperscript{64} Maitland's plan to put Indians in village settlements was a move in the right direction, it would seem, but efforts must be made to introduce "the various arts of mechanism among this people."\textsuperscript{65} Cooperage, shoe-making, chair-making, cabinet-making, blacksmithing, tailoring—these were the useful skills to be taught. And the girls would learn sewing, knitting, cooking, washing and laundry work.

Schools of Industry were set up at Grape Island, Credit River, Alderville near Rice Lake, and Mohawk village on the Grand River.\textsuperscript{66} The Conference minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1837 record adoption of a recommendation for the erection of a Central Manual Labour School for Indian Youth where their "religious, literary, mechanical and agricultural education" might be undertaken.\textsuperscript{67} The additional advantage of a Central School would be the removal of the Indian children "from their imperfectly civilized parents" and their placement "under the exclusive direction of their religious and secular Instructors."\textsuperscript{68}
In 1845 the Reverend Peter Jones, one of the most energetic missionaries among the Indians, collected enough money to establish the Mount Elgin Industrial Institution at Munceytown Reserve whose aims and objectives closely parallel those of the famous Hampton Institute for Negroes and Indians in the United States. The object of the Institution was "to Christianize and elevate the Indian youth of our country, to teach the boys useful trades, viz. shoe-making, carpentering and cabinet-making, as well as the correct principles of farming; and the girls, sewing, knitting, spinning and general house work." As to their moral and civic education, "the greatest care is taken to inculcate habits of industry and frugality, which are essential to the future prosperity and happiness of our Indians." The problems of adjustment to white society, it was thought, could best be met if Indians learned to hold and respect the same values as the white man, and these values were contained in the words "industry and frugality."

In the thirties the role of lieutenant-governors in promoting education among the Indians was significant. Both Colborne and Sir George Arthur stand out in this respect. Numerous reports testify to Colborne's efforts. One speaks of him as "the Friend and Benefactor of [the Indian] Race." Another acknowledges his co-operation with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in its promotion of the religious and moral improvement of the
Indians. For his part, Arthur pursued the policy of attempting to get the Indians settled in villages and then erecting schools for their instruction. On a visit to the Six Nations reserve at the Grand River he deplored the sight of "many children at the Indians' doors in the immediate neighborhood of the Mission, whom I thought ought to have been in school." He then admonished the missionaries to give immediate attention to the education of the Indian children, for "nothing can benefit them more, or be more pleasing to the Head of the Government."

Negroes

As Robin Winks has pointed out in a recent article Canadian Negroes came from diverse origins and had, with one exception, little in common beyond their colour. That exception was their progressive restriction from access to the public schools. The complaints of Negro parents in Upper Canada about the exclusion or ejection of their children from the public schools eventually led Ryerson in 1850 to authorize by the Common School Act of that year the establishment of separate schools not only for Protestants and Roman Catholics but also for "Coloured People." This provision led to the opening of several coloured schools in the western end of the province.

Winks estimates that the total Negro population of Canada never numbered more than 4 per cent of the colonial
aggregate, but in Upper Canada there were pockets of Negro population of a much denser concentration, particularly in Essex and Kent counties. In Chatham and Dresden, for example, they formed as much as a third of the population before the Civil War. In addition there were in the same period three significant all-Negro settlements at Wilberforce, Dawn and Buxton. The last of these was the most famous. Commonly known as the Elgin settlement it was founded by a white philanthropist and reformer, the Reverend William King, in a typical Victorian-liberal fashion.

References to "coloured people" in official correspondence in Upper Canada begin to appear in the 1820's. Francis Baby, for example, in a letter to Hillier in 1820 estimated there to be "perhaps fifty" in the Western District. By the end of the decade a petition for a block of land between Dundas and Guelph on the Grand River indicates Negro families in residence in St. Catharines, Ancaster, Brantford, Dumfries and Waterloo, Amherstburg and Sandwich.

As the Negro population of the province grew in size, Negro parents sometimes found their children rejected or ejected from the common schools by bigotted white parents and trustees. John Strachan noted this development during a tour of the province in the fall of 1828. Near Chatham he remarked on the prejudice against Negro children "which in general prevents their attendance" at
the common schools. The solution, as he saw it then, was to establish a school "particularly for the Children of the Blacks." The problem worsened as more Negroes entered the colony. In 1838 a petition to the Lieutenant-Governor from a group of Hamilton Negroes complained about "not having our Children and Youths freely admitted as pupils in the common schools . . . . Not only are they generally rejected, but in different instances, they have been ejected on account of colour." The result was that some forty-five Negro children were receiving no formal education. The petitioners, therefore, pleaded for government assistance in establishing a separate Negro school. When asked his advice by the authorities, John Strachan expressed opposition to the idea of separating Negro children from white, thus reversing his earlier stand. To support his position, he cited the happy integration of coloured children at the Upper Canada Central School in Toronto and the case of a "coloured young man [who] is distinguishing himself at the highest form of Upper Canada College." Instead of segregation he urged endorsement of the law which "made no distinction & recognizes no preference," and to that end urged the authorities to circularize the Boards of Education of the various Districts "calling upon them to remove the difficulties if any exist to the reception of coloured children at the Common and District Schools."
Nevertheless, appeals from Negroes for assistance in setting up their own schools continued. The all-Negro Wilberforce settlement near present-day Lucan petitioned Sir Charles "Baggot" through its founder and spokesman, Israel Lewis. The plan was to build a school on a farm. One-quarter of the student's time was to be spent in labour on the farm in order to offset costs. "All classes to be admitted from Ten to Fortyfive years old--and be permitted to remain till they can read and wright [sic]." Aid amounting to £300 was requested. 82

About the same time, the "coloured inhabitants of London" similarly requested assistance to form a coloured school. In this case a concerned white, one James Edward Alexander of the "14 Regt.", took it upon himself to "originate" a petition among the Negroes. As reason for his action, he noted that "the fast increasing coloured population here have for properly educating their children . . . no schools suitable for them" 83--certainly a discrete way of saying they were not admissible to the common schools, and therefore were receiving no formal education at all. The petition itself bears out this point. Alluding to their country of origin, in most cases, as the United States, the memorialists had hoped to find "under the British Government a much better position in Society, and greater protection to person and property than they experienced in the United States." Instead when attempting to place their children in the
white common schools, they found that, "owing to the American prejudice against their colour extending also to Canada (containing as it does so many white people from the States) it was impossible to continue their coloured children at these schools." Bagot's reply rejected the appeal.

Although Ryerson was responsible for authorizing establishment of Negro separate schools in 1850, his predecessor as Superintendent of Schools, the Reverend Robert Murray, had already taken steps in that direction as early as 1842. The case in point arose out of familiar circumstances: the refusal to admit Negro children to the common school in St. Catharines. The petition to the Governor-General called upon him to take steps to "secure to them their rights." Since they paid their taxes, there was no question of their right to the School Fund, but the question was how to put them in possession of this right. Murray's suggestion was both novel and significant. He advocated "dissent" from the regulations of the Common School Commissioners as authorized by section XI of the 1841 School Act, the so-called dissentient clause, which had been intended solely for religious dissent. In this way, Murray argued, the Negro parents "would have their own School, their full proportion of the School Fund, and the benefit of the school tax paid by themselves." In essence such were to be the provisions of section XIX of Ryerson's Common School Act.
of 1850.\textsuperscript{85}

In a separate letter to Moses Cochrane, the Negro leader in St. Catharines, Murray revealed an immense sympathy for the Negroes and an understanding of the delicacy of their current state.

But you must be aware that prejudices cannot be removed at once; no government can do it by an act of the Legislature; it must be the work of time alone. But it is not reasonable that your children should be deprived of education till time has performed the work. In order to prevent the excitement of feelings, so unpleasant, and so hurtful to the best interests of the Colored inhabitants of St. Catharines, I would earnestly recommend them not to contend against prejudices, but at once to open a School for their own Children, & to hold it under their own management.\textsuperscript{86}

Here we see the government rationale for acceding to Negro requests for assistance in establishing segregated schools. In a final letter to Atkinson in mid-January 1843, Murray urged the utmost haste in building or renting a schoolhouse, securing a teacher and opening a school.\textsuperscript{87} Such a school was founded three years later.

Towards the end of 1843 another case of racial prejudice was brought to official attention, this time in Hamilton. Again Negro children were denied admission to public schools even though their parents paid taxes. "We are called nigger," the complaint continued, "when we go out in the street, and sometimes brick bats is sent after us as we pass in the street." The petitioners not only found this cruel but also deeply disappointing, "because we were in hopes that prejudice
was not in this land" when "we left the United States." In his desire to remedy this treatment, Murray asked George Tiffany, president of the Hamilton Board of Police, to launch an investigation. Among several specific questions, Murray wanted to know the religious adherence of these Negroes. No doubt he was again thinking of proposing a separate school under the dissentient clause. Tiffany's reply pointed up a tense state of affairs.

There is a strong prejudice existing amongst the lower orders of the Whites against the coloured people. The several Teachers as well as others acquainted with the extent of this prejudice fear that if coloured children are admitted into the Schools the parents of the greater part of the White children will take them away.

His advice, based upon unanimous Board of Police opinion, was to avoid yielding to current white prejudice; rather the law ought to be enforced without distinction of colour. "If a firm stand be taken at first, the prejudice will soon give way." It is not clear what course of action was followed in Hamilton, but there is no evidence to indicate the "St. Catharines solution" was repeated. Most of the Negroes were reported to be Methodists and Baptists, just as the whites who wished to exclude them.

In 1840 a Negro version of the Indian Schools of Industry was established at the Dawn settlement (present-day Dresden). Under the name of the British and American Institute, the school was designed to train and prepare Negro youth for the "active duties of life." Some whites
and Indians also attended the school, but it was abandoned in 1858. Its spiritual successor was the Wilberforce Educational Institute which was established in 1872.⁹¹
NOTES TO CHAPTER VI


3 P. A. C., U. C. S., Noah Worcester, Secretary, Massachusetts Peace Society to Maitland, September 11, 1821.


5 P. A. C., U. C. S., R. Glaston, on behalf of Midland District School Society, to Hillier, November 28, 1818.


7 Glaston to Hillier, November 28, 1818.


9 P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. Daily British Whig, April 22, 1882. Article entitled "Education of the Poor."

160
Egerton Ryerson was just such a mid-Victorian reformer. For an enlightening study of a typical English example, Nathaniel Woodard, see Brian Heeney, Mission to the Middle Classes: The Woodard Schools, 1848-1891 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1969). Michael Katz in The Irony of Early School Reform singles out several American examples of the mid-nineteenth century social reconstructionist.

P. A. C., U. C. S., Osgood to Maitland, York, November 20, 1823.


Spragge (ed.), Strachan Letter Book, p. 60. Strachan to Constable, n.d. [1814 by context]. The Loyal and Patriotic Society was in fact an association concerned with striking war medals and not strictly speaking a charitable organization.

P. A. C., U. C. S., Osgood to Maitland, York, January 1, 1823.

P. A. C., U. C. S., Wenham to Hillier, Brockville, January 12, 1827. Wenham seems to fit the usual Tory stereotype if we are to accept one description of him as "a remarkable character, wearing a cocked hat, and a coat embellished with brass buttons." His brother was manager of the Brockville branch of the Bank of Upper Canada, Thad. W. H. Leavitt, History of Leeds and Grenville from 1749 to 1879. (Brockville: Recorder Press, 1879), p. 29.

P. A. C., U. C. S., Osgood to Maitland, York, January 8, 1825.

The York branch opened in 1823 thanks largely to the leadership provided by Jesse Ketchum. See E. J. Hathaway, Jesse Ketchum and His Times (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1929), p. 328. The Kingston branch was established in November, 1818. P. A. C., U. C. S., R. Glaston to Hillier, November 28, 1818.
Its secretary, J. L. Alexander assured Maitland that the Norfolk Sunday School Union Society originated from the first Sunday School in Upper Canada which came into operation in 1816; it was "not connected directly or indirectly with any Sunday School Society in this or any other country; all its officers and members are friendly to the established church . . . and a proposition to abolish the use of the Church Catechism in its schools would not be listened to for a moment." P. A. C., U. C. S., Alexander to Major Hillier, July 12, 1826.

P. A. C., Educational Papers. Osgood to Colborne, December 9, 1828.

Quoted in Richard Altick, The English Common Reader, p. 105.


The Annual Reports of The Canada Conference Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada beginning in 1825 are housed in The United Church Archives in Toronto. In 1833 the name was changed to the Missionary Society Wesleyan Methodist Church in British North America.

cf. Hampton Institute in the United States which catered primarily to Negro youth but also accepted Indians.


P. A. C., U. C. S., Reverend John Wenham to Hillier, Brockville, January 12, 1827.


P. A. C., Colborne Papers, Osgood to Colborne, April 28, 1838. He requested assistance from Colborne to the tune of £50.


33. Firth, Town of York, 1815-1834, p. 117. Maitland to Sir George Murray, September 18, 1828.

34. For details on Zeisberger's mission, see "Extracts from the Journals of David Zeisberger," Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, XII (1914), pp. 179-98.


P. A. C., U. C. S., Leeming to Maitland, Ancaster, June 13, 1819. Almost twenty-five years later a report on the Tuscarora School testified that "it is with great difficulty that even a few children can be induced to attend," and complained of continued parent apathy reflected in their unwillingness "to insist upon their [children's] regular, daily attendance." P. A. O., Strachan Papers. The Rev. Adam Elliot to Strachan, June 9, 1842.


P. A. C., Lieutenant-Governors' Correspondence. Givins to Hillier, York, January 26, 1827. He may have been referring, among others, to Egerton Ryerson, who spent some time as missionary to the Credit River Indians.

P. A. O., Strachan Papers. Strachan to Church Missionary Society, February 27, 1827.


P. A. O., Strachan Papers. Strachan to Church Missionary Society, February 27, 1827. In answer to Strachan's request the Society granted £100 annually for the maintenance of two scholarships and £100 for a Professorship of Indian Languages. Ibid., Church Missionary Society to Strachan, March 16, 1827.


P. A. O., Strachan Papers. O'Meara to Strachan, Sault Ste. Marie, October 3, 1839. O'Meara complained about the activities of Hudson Bay Company men who for commercial reasons preferred that the Indians not be settled in villages. Shades of Laval and the coureurs de bois!
49 J. Strachan, "A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto at the Triennial Visitation... (1844)" cited in J. L. H. Henderson (ed.) Documents and Opinions, p. 243-4. Reflective of the "civilizing" role of the school was the rule which adorned the wall of the Credit River school in 1830: "No blanket to be worn in School." D. H. E., II, 122.


51 Reports held at United Church Archives, Victoria University, Toronto.


55 1829-31 Annual Report (York, 1831), p. 3.


57 1829 Annual Report, p. 3.

58 The most important principle in learning, according to Pestalozzi, was sense impression. Consequently, learning, he argued, resulted from accurate observation of actual objects rather than from recitation and rote memorization. Pestalozzi also placed great emphasis on tending to the needs of the child, and thus stressed the active involvement of the child in learning through drawing, writing, singing, map making and field trips. These principles are basic to modern education. For a recent study of Pestalozzi and his method, see M. R. Heafford, Pestalozzi: His Thought and Its Relevance Today (London: Methuen and Company, 1967).

59 1829 Annual Report, p. 3.

60 Ibid., p. 4.
Two examples of such texts can be seen at the Toronto Central Library. *Spelling for the Schools in the Chipewyan Language* (York: Printed for the Canada Conference Missionary Society, 1828), and *A Hymnbook in Ojibwa Language prepared by Peter Jones* (Boston: Printed for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions by Crocker & Brewster, 1836). Jones was himself an Ojibwa convert.

P. A. O., Strachan Papers. Indians at Tyendinaga to Bishop of Toronto, September 7, 1843.


During one two-week period, the students at Alderville manufactured 172 axe handles, 6 scoop shovels, 57 ladles, 4 trays, 44 broom handles and 415 brooms. This fine effort was acknowledged by having the articles sent on a travelling exhibition to the United States. G. F. Playter, *History of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1862), p. 343.

Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada, 1824-1845 (Toronto: Anson Green, 1846), p. 160 (1837).


74 For the subsequent history of these schools, see Ibid.


76 For a recent biography of King, see Victor Ullman, Look to the North Star: A Life of William King (Toronto: Saunders, 1969).

77 P. A. C., U. C. S., Baby to Hillier, December 6, 1820.

78 P. A. C., U. C. S., Twenty-four names at St. Catharines, December 20, 1828; thirty-four at Ancaster, December 24, 1828; thirteen at Brantford, December 27, 1828; ten at Dumfries and Waterloo, n.d.; 201 at Amherstburg, n.d.; 201 at Sandwich n.d. (but last three formed part of same petition).


80 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Petition of Hamilton Negroes to Arthur, August 2, 1838.

81 P. A. C., Educational Papers. Strachan to John Macaulay, August 9, 1838. It is interesting to note that although Strachan opposed the segregation of Negroes in schools, he supported the separation of the sexes in grammar schools. "The admission of female children, he wrote, "interferes with the government which is required in classical seminaries." P. A. O., Minutes, General Board of Education, February 5, 1829, p. 59.
82 P. A. C., P. S. O., Israel Lewis to Sir Charles Baggot [sic], n.d. (but received February 28, 1842). Scribbled in margin was Bagot's response: "Say no funds. He can make his application to District Council or Bd. of Educ."

83 P. A. C., P. S. O., J. E. Alexander to Chief Secretary to Government, Kingston, October 17, 1842.

84 P. A. C., P. S. O., Memorial of coloured inhabitants of London, October 10, 1842. J. H. to Alexander, November 2, 1842.

85 P. A. O., Education Office, Letter Book "A". Murray to Reverend A. F. Atkinson, rector of St. Catharines, December 28, 1842. The actual wording to be used in making the request to the District Clerk of Niagara to come under the provisions of section XI is set forth in a letter from Murray to Atkinson, the Negro spokesman, dated January 6, 1842 (incorrect; should be 1843).

86 Ibid., Murray to Cochrane, December 28, 1842.

87 Ibid., Murray to Reverend Atkinson, January 17, 1843.

88 Ibid., The Coloured People of Hamilton to Murray, October 15, 1843. This incident is also related in Winks, "Negro School Segregation . . . ," pp. 171-2.

89 Ibid., Murray to Tiffany, October 19, 1843.

90 Ibid., Tiffany to Murray, November 9, 1843.

91 J. G. Hodgins (ed.), Historical and Other Papers and Documents of Ontario, III, 110.
CHAPTER VII

EFFORTS AT REFORM IN THE 1830's

Prelude

The year 1830 ushered in a decade of intense activity in the Assembly much of it directed towards educational reform. Some scholars have preferred to characterize this decade as a period of inaction. W. Pakenham in his treatment of the subject in Canada and Its Provinces says: "The story of elementary education between 1825 and 1840 is a story of petitions, reports, and doctrinaire proposals, or of captious criticisms and recriminations and always of legislative inaction." It is true that no major educational measure was written into law, but nevertheless the period was one of intense ferment. Educational reform was in the wind although actual changes were not to appear till the next decade. Educational change was obliged, as it turned out, to wait upon social change, and reforms in central and local government.

Contemporary accounts and reports underline the need for change. E. A. Talbot, a trenchant critic, noted in 1824 that "the great mass of the common people are at
present completely ignorant even of the rudiments of the most common learning." To support his case, Talbot mentioned the embarrassing situation which frequently occurred in the Assembly where the chairmen of committees found it necessary to have members read the bills before the committee for the sake of illiterate committee members. Partly to overcome this state of affairs a notice of motion was presented in 1830 for a bill to prevent persons who could not read or write from holding any public office, from serving on juries, voting at elections or contracting marriage. The bill was not a realistic one for the times, and so was never presented.

A select committee of the Assembly in 1831 underlined the need for reform when it announced: "there is in this province a very general want of education." It ascribed major blame to the insufficiency of the common school fund. Various means to overcome this insufficiency were suggested during the 1830's. These ranged from exclusive or partial use of the clergy reserves to emulating the New York practice of property assessment. By the end of the decade the solution was found in neither of these proposals since both for different reasons were too politically explosive. Rather, more funds towards the support of education were provided from the public treasury and the sale of school lands.

At the same time there was another significant pressure to take into account: immigration. Between
1825 and 1835 immigration to British North America doubled reaching a peak of 66,339 persons in 1832. As a rule at this time almost half these immigrants wound up settling in Upper Canada. This influx was accompanied by a growth in town as opposed to country living and also a marked increase in prosperity. The astute John Strachan made note of both these developments in a letter to his friend, the Reverend Dr. Brown, in 1833: "... the country is rapidly advancing in prosperity—towns growing up in all directions and thousands of acres of land transformed from forests into fruitful fields." The immigrants too "have in general been of a better description" by which Strachan may have simply meant that greater numbers were coming from the British Isles than from the United States. The Assembly could not afford to overlook the impact of these developments on the colony's educational needs.

Attempting to put the need into clear perspective, Strachan wrote a memorandum to Lord Goderich in 1831. He estimated the number of school-age children (from five to sixteen years) out of a population of 300,000 as not less than 68,000. Yet of this number, "not above one-quarter at the utmost are receiving any sort of Education through public Institutions." This deficiency Strachan and others, both Tories and Reformers, vowed to correct.

Hostility between the two branches of the Legislature has sometimes been held as the main obstacle to change in the thirties. Yet the fact is that the
Legislative Council sanctioned every common school money bill sent to it from the Assembly. It is true, however, that the Assembly tended to introduce school bills based on American models, particularly that of New York, whereas the Council, upholders of the British tradition, normally felt obliged to amend or veto such bills. Two major bills which proposed fundamental structural changes in the common school system were rejected on this basis.\textsuperscript{8}

W. L. Morton has a simple explanation for such actions.

That a colonial society should be derivative in its style, mind and taste was only to be expected. Indeed, the need of a new country was not to be original but to prove the old possible in the new, to reaffirm accepted modes in new conditions. The task was not creative, but re-creative.\textsuperscript{9}

This seems an entirely acceptable rationale for the motives of the Legislative Council as opposed to the usual charge of raging reaction. Their pronounced anti-American stance, moreover, coincided perfectly with a continuing heavy immigration from the British Isles. Immigration from the United States had declined markedly after 1830.\textsuperscript{10}

Moreover the man who might have been a radical in England often became a Tory in Upper Canada when he became a landowner.

For their part the Reformers' position on education was weakened considerably by their failure to present a united front in their thinking about what type of educational system would be best for the colony. Although they were quick to point to American models and to draw
from them those aspects which suited their purposes, such as popularly elected education officials and schools with no denominational influences, they conveniently disregarded those essential features which were unfamiliar or unpopular in Upper Canada. Central among these features were local taxation to pay for education and acceptance of a centralized educational authority such as a superintendent. The promotion of such ideas was left to acknowledged Tories like John Strachan and Mahlon Burwell of the London District. Both these men recognized the intimate connection between an efficient system of schools and a proper scheme of finance and control. The Reformers, consciously or otherwise, tended to overlook these unpleasant facts and resorted, as Ryerson did, to accusing schemes like Burwell's of making the common school a "mere engine of the Executive." The Reformers could rail against the failings of the Tories, but the fact remained that the common school system of the colony could never have attained the development it did in the United States without considerable financial support.

Most Reformers in the 1830's were more concerned about the lack of elementary education than of higher education, which was generally of greater concern to the Tories with their commitment to preparing society's new leaders. The Reformers concentrated their energies on the improvement of elementary education since the need
for higher education in their view was less pressing and facilities were readily available across the border. For youth to study there aroused no qualms among Reformers for whom American republicanism was not considered anathema as among the Tories. Charles Duncombe, the medical doctor from Burford and member for Oxford, voiced before the Assembly in 1831 his profound concern. The degraded state of teaching was a particularly sore point with him. Instead of regularly employed teachers he found in the schools

transient persons, or common idlers, who often stay but for one season and leave the Schools vacant until they accommodate some other like person, whereby the minds of the youth of this Province are left without due cultivation, or what is worse, frequently with vulgar, low-bred, vicious and intemperate examples before them in the persons of their monitors.¹²

The result of all this agitation and concern about education was the introduction in the Assembly in the 1830's of a number of school bills. Nearly all of them reflected efforts to improve the common schools in Upper Canada and made references to the New York school system.

William Lyon Mackenzie

A most resounding voice among the Reformers was the editor of the Colonial Advocate, William Lyon Mackenzie. His biting criticisms of the current state of education were enlivened by an element of utopianism
virtually unheard of in Upper Canada of the time. For Mackenzie a new country called for new ways and the country to emulate was not Great Britain but the United States. For example, in commenting on extracts of Governor Van Buren's speech on education to the New York legislature, Mackenzie had this to say:

The attention paid to Education in the United States is the grand secret of their power, and the most indissoluble bond of their Union. They form their own Universities and Common Schools; we, forsooth, must needs have ours sent out, cut and dry, from London, like Bonaparte's palace at Longwood.13

In answer to Strachan's concern about the dangers involved in sending students to the United States for higher education, Mackenzie retorted, "If . . . our children return to us from the United States impressed with ideas unfavourable to our institutions, it must be from some defect or defects in these institutions."14

Mackenzie never failed to insist upon the importance of an informed electorate and an entirely literate population. Education, he said, "is the palladium of a free state, the ark of national liberty, and will avail more for protecting and securing all rights public and private than even a free press."15 Instead of determined efforts on the part of the state to extend literacy to the entire population, Mackenzie found an undue emphasis on higher education. The Family Compact lent unfailing support to Strachan's King's College and also the eleven district grammar schools. The former with its
"sectarian tendency" Mackenzie condemned as "one of the most obnoxious chartered institutions on earth."\textsuperscript{16} The latter were far too exclusive, a point made valid by enrollment figures: in 1828 there were 372 students in eleven schools; ten years later only 311; attendance was reported "thin and discouraging."\textsuperscript{17} Thus the system favoured the rich and well-placed. "The sons of the yeomanry derive no benefit" from the system which instead "raises up and multiplies greatly . . . the friends and supporters of arbitrary and exclusive principles and institutions."\textsuperscript{18} To make matters worse, these sons of gentlemen—"sheriffs, judges, and customs house officials in embryo" had their education paid by the public.\textsuperscript{19}

To emphasize his point Mackenzie chose to compare the extent of schooling in selected countries with that in Upper Canada. He found that one person out of every nine was at school in Scotland, one in four in New York State, one in eighteen in Ireland and only one in twenty in Upper Canada.\textsuperscript{20} Sixteen states of the Union, he admonished, "have made ample provision for public instruction in their constitutions."\textsuperscript{21} By comparison in 1831 in the Home District of the province,

there is not at this time of the year more than one school of ten scholars altho' the number of persons between six and sixteen is over 600!!! [seems a low estimate] This is the best practical commentary upon Dr. Strachan's system of education for keeping the great mass of a people in ignorance, and educating and instructing a few sons of pensioners
and placemen to hold them in the chains of oriental bondage.\textsuperscript{22}

Mackenzie's solution was to establish a system of "national free schools." The results would be so fortuitous that no one could object: "additional stability would be given to free institutions; the sum of public and private happiness would be greatly increased; the power of the people extended; crime diminished; an inviolable respect for the laws maintained; a constitutional vigilance more increasingly exercised against all encroachments upon national or individual rights."\textsuperscript{23} All this was very fine, but how to finance such an elaborate system? Mackenzie had little to offer on this score. Herein lay his utopianism. The only proposal for support which he made appeared in his Constitution for the State of Upper Canada, the new republic to be formed after 1837. There provision was made, on the American model, to set aside 1,000,000 acres of the best land for the support of common schools.\textsuperscript{24} Such a proposal was easy to make, but the constitution was never implemented.

Amid the agitation and concern over education in Upper Canada, a rash of school bills were introduced in the Assembly. Among the politicians who introduced these measures three names stand out. All three were much removed in spirit and tactics from the fiery Mackenzie. Two of them, William Buell Jr. (1792-1862) of Brockville and Mahlon Burwell (1783-1846) of the London District,
proposed alternative ways of organizing and financing common school education. The third, Dr. Charles Duncombe (1792-1867) of Burford, presented in 1836 a much more comprehensive scheme of educational reform based on an extensive trip to the United States the previous year.

William Buell Jr.

William Buell Jr. sat for the county of Leeds and was editor of the Brockville Recorder. Though of Loyalist stock and a Presbyterian, Buell was a liberal in politics. He had been for some time on the fringes of the Reform movement. Elected to the Assembly in 1828 he showed a great interest in educational matters and took an active part in the debates. In 1829 he chaired a select committee of the Assembly charged with investigating the state of the grammar schools in Upper Canada.25

In 1831 Buell presented to the Assembly a draft bill on education which he had worked diligently to prepare. The bill proposed a continuation of local control of a system financed by provincial grants.26 While favouring local control, Buell opposed local taxation on the nineteenth-century liberal principle that taxation of persons who had no children or whose children were not in school was an infringement of personal liberty. The emphasis on local control with district boards directly under the control of local authorities pleased the
Christian Guardian and its young editor, Egerton Ryerson. It places the direction of education in the hands of those who are personally interested. This is the latest mainspring of that unrivalled success which distinguishes the common school system in the State of New York, and several other States, and which has received the unreserved approbation and commanded the almost enthusiastic applause of the best English Reviews and periodicals to which we have had access.27

Despite this support Buell's bill was dropped before coming to a vote. Thereafter Buell ceased to take a leading part in Assembly debates and he was defeated in the 1834 elections.

Mahlon Burwell

The second major educational reformer in the 1830's was Mahlon Burwell—surveyor, registrar of deeds, justice of the peace, master of a Masonic Lodge, churchman, general advisor to Colonel Talbot, and member of the Assembly. Burwell was an unlikely reformer. Colonel Talbot's right-hand man for many years, he was understandably conservative-minded. Robert Davis, the Nissouri Township farmer, who created such a stir because of his unfavourable comparisons between the United States and Canada, described Burwell as an "ultra Tory."28 But Burwell was sincerely interested in the question of education and sponsored several school bills, all of which drew heavily from the American example, particularly the New York one. Concerning his bill of 1832, for example,
Burwell was quoted as saying "it was framed nearly on the principles of the School Laws in the State of New York and some of the Eastern States, where Education was better supported than in any other parts of the world."²⁹ Like Strachan before him and Duncombe after, Burwell was a firm believer in formal education as a means of social control, for, as he said, "the true secret for managing people, is not so much to curb as to enlighten them; and that a moral is of far mightier operation than a physical force, in controlling the elements of political disorder."³⁰

Burwell was born in New Jersey in 1783 and presumably came to Upper Canada in 1797 to settle in Bertie Township.³¹ Later on he moved to the Talbot Settlement where he became registrar of land titles for the county of Middlesex. There is no evidence to show that Burwell's attitude to educational reform was appreciably influenced by his American background. For one thing he was in his early 'teens when he arrived in Upper Canada, and, moreover, New Jersey had a very backward school system well into the nineteenth century. The American educational historian, E. P. Cubberley points out that no state action in education was taken in that state until 1816 when a state school fund was begun and as late as 1828, one-third of the children in that state were growing up without the chance of any education.³² So Burwell's concern must have derived from other quarters.
There is no doubt, however, about his sincere interest in education. He took an active part in debate on all educational legislation in the Assembly from his election in 1812. In 1814 he introduced a bill to repeal the provisions of the District School Act of 1807, and repeated his assault on the grammar schools in 1818.33 In 1816 he was elected a member of the school board at Watson's Corners in Southwold Township near present-day Fingal. This board was instrumental in setting up the first school in Middlesex County34 (which then comprised both Elgin and Middlesex Counties.) By 1824 he was also a trustee of the London District Public School, became chairman of the London District Board of Education in 1832, and was named president of John Rolph's Talbot Dispensatory, the short-lived medical school set up in 1826 in St. Thomas. About the same time he donated land for the first school in St. Thomas.35 He was keenly aware of the failings of the province's educational system—"I cannot conceive anything more wanting in efficiency than our present system for common school education"36—and set about proposing a sweeping reform. After all, as he had once said, "the first object of any government ought to be the education of the people."37

The basic principle of Burwell's bill of 1832, and also of his subsequent bills in 1833 and 1837, was that all citizens be compelled to contribute financially to the support of education. The idea was derived from
the New York system, but was proposed not so much because taxation had proven effective there, but because it was a measure which Burwell believed would be beneficial to education in Upper Canada. The bill's justification was simple, to use the words of a supporter:

There were some people who would not send their children to School from a mistaken notion of the expense; but, if they were compelled to contribute to the support of the School, whether they sent their children or not, they would send them.\(^{38}\)

The rich should be made to contribute for the benefit of the poor, and thereby avoid the situation obtaining in some countries where "the rich often take advantage of the poor, and the educated of the uneducated."\(^{39}\) "The poor should have an education that would enable them to rival the rich."\(^{40}\)

Essentially, however, Burwell was ahead of his time. The principle of compulsory taxation, not surprisingly, proved unpopular. A typical opponent, the St. Thomas Liberal, a short-lived reform newspaper,\(^{41}\) voiced its fear that the bill was primarily designed to create more grammar schools and colleges. Taxation was unfair; the money should come from the Clergy Reserves not by taxing the people. Burwell, the editorial continued, was simply trying to protect the Clergy Reserves for the Church of England. The bill would not be to the advantage of the labouring class of people.\(^{42}\) After a lively Assembly debate, the bill was dropped.
But Burwell was not alone in advocating compulsory property assessment to finance common schools. "Tiger" Dunlop of the Canada Company also favoured free and compulsory education. "The system of New England of taxing all for the support of schools and compelling by law parents to send their children to school appears to me the only way to ensure education in the present circumstances of the country." And the St. Catharines businessman, William Hamilton Merritt, when asked to suggest improvements for the district or common schools, answered simply, "I would recommend them [the commissioners] to examine the method adopted in New York for Common Schools."

The next year, 1833, Burwell presented another bill to the Assembly, the distinguishing feature of which was the degree of centralization proposed. The General Board of Education was to be replaced by a "Provincial Board of Educational Commissioners," crown-appointed with supervisory powers and control over the local management of schools through crown-appointed district boards. Such a measure would keep education out of the arena of politics by retaining control of the schools in the hands of the executive branch of government. Strachan, naturally, had nothing but praise for Burwell's arrangement. It was, he averred, "by far the best measure for the establishment of Common Schools which I have seen." But Ryerson was displeased and criticized the bill for
making the common schools "mere creatures of the
Executive."  

Ryerson also questioned the ban on non-British
teachers in the colony's common schools. This was not a
new provision since similar obstacles had been placed in
the way of hiring non-British teachers in the acts of
1816 and 1820. His reasoning is worth citing in full.

And is such a prohibition even desirable in a
new province; where there is such a notorious paucity
of competent teachers? Ought not competent teachers
from any country be encouraged, in place of scores
of miserable ignoramuses and tipplers? We are not
afraid of the loyalty of any American, under a
wisely balanced and well administered government.

In the same article, however, Ryerson supported the prin-
ciple of local assessment set forth in this bill as in
the previous one. Such an idea, he argued, "has the
sanction of the best educated States of the American
Union." He concluded on a favourable note, agreeing
that the bill "contemplates the extension of education
to the poorer as well as the richer classes."  

Late in 1834 Burwell, like Buell, was defeated
at the polls. In a letter to William Hamilton Merritt
he explained that the margin of defeat was 139 votes,
"but very wealthy farmers in the County voted for me."  

Early the next year Burwell expressed his continuing
interest in education in a memorandum to Lieutenant-
Governor Colborne. He urged Colborne to exert all his
influence "to perfect such a system of Education for the
Province as the improved state of society requires." In
order to remedy the "totally inadequate" state of education in Upper Canada, he commended Colborne's attention to the Scottish and New York State systems and "the admirable systems" in Prussia and Bavaria.  

Burwell's efforts on behalf of education did not go unnoticed. Even the Christian Guardian, one of his severest critics, praised his "pains and labour in devising and maturing a plan of Common School Education." The same article acknowledged his intimate knowledge of "the most efficient and best" systems in the world—those of Scotland, Prussia and New York State. When returned to the Assembly in the 1836 elections, Burwell quickly set about proposing another school bill. This one resembled very closely his 1833 bill. The measure passed the Assembly on February 12, 1838, but was defeated in the Legislative Council because of the proposed provision for compulsory local taxation. The Council feared that "the proposed assessment for Common School education might be found burthensome in the present disturbed state of our public affairs."  

Another common feature of reform bills of the 1830's not yet mentioned was the inclusion of the American practice of popularly elected education officials. A bill in 1835 which passed the Assembly with only three dissenting votes might serve as a prototype. The crucial provision called for three paid superintendents in each township to be elected annually at a town
meeting. Although the bill omitted any reference to local property assessment, a sore point in earlier bills, the election of public officials smacked too much of American practice to suit a select committee of the Legislative Council. The committee argued that elections would bring too many unqualified persons into the system. "[We cannot] believe that a Town meeting is a proper place to select those who are to preside over the morals and intellectual improvement of the rising generation." The other responsibilities accorded the superintendents disturbed the committee which concluded that the qualifications required to perform these tasks "will not generally be found among the yeomanry of any country." 

Another bill, passed by the Assembly, which would have used the Clergy Reserve fund for educational purposes was vetoed by the Legislative Council. Tension mounted as the controversy between the two houses continued. Finally in the fall of 1835 the Assembly established a committee headed by Dr. Charles Duncombe to go to the United States to observe the systems of education to be found there. The precise terms of reference of the commission were very comprehensive indeed. They were to obtain:

the best information, plans and estimates of a Lunatic Asylum, and such information as they may deem necessary relative to the management and good government of such institutions, and also respecting the system and management of Schools and Colleges, and such other matters as are connected with the interest, welfare, and prosperity of this Province .... 57
Of the three commissioners selected, all of whom were doctors, only Duncombe went to the States. He returned with three reports—one on lunatic asylums, one on prisons and penitentiaries, and one on education. The last called for substantial changes in the education system of Upper Canada. It is for this reason that we count him the third major educational reformer of the 1830's.

Charles Duncombe

Duncombe was born in Stratford, Connecticut in 1792 and came to Canada in 1820 at twenty-six years of age. Prior to that he had attended the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York City, and received a medical diploma from the State of New York. He settled first at Delaware then moved to St. Thomas where he was joined by his father who taught school until his death in 1823. Duncombe soon became well known over an area of many miles. In an effort to prepare more doctors for the colony, he cooperated with John Rolph, the member for Middlesex, in opening in 1826 Upper Canada's first medical school, the Talbot Dispensatory. The school continued for only a couple of years. Duncombe went in 1828 to Burford where he continued to practise medicine; Rolph left the London District for Dundas and then in 1831 settled in York where he subsequently founded a
medical school known as the Toronto School of Medicine.

In the Burford area Duncombe quickly became a familiar and popular figure. It is not surprising then that he found himself sitting for Oxford in the Eleventh Parliament in 1831. He plunged into Assembly debates and quickly made his mark. The fact that he rallied a band of patriots in the Rebellion of 1837 should not lead one to conclude, however, that Duncombe was a radical. One scholar quite correctly calls him rather a social conservative.  

In a revealing statement made in "An Address to the Electors of Oxford," Duncombe admitted, "In politics, I am a warm advocate and a firm supporter of Reform, by every constitutional means, but as firmly and decidedly opposed to revolution and revolutionary principles." Another point to bear in mind is that although he may have been a democrat by some definitions, like Ryerson he certainly did not favour upsetting the current class structure of society. In a letter to his brother he lamented the expenses accruing from his three grown daughters: "but what shall I do--let them all marry mechanics?" Again his conservatism is underlined in his famous Report where he warns that change is not a panacea: "As antiquity is not always perfection, so innovation is not always improvement." Further evidence that Duncombe was no radical lies in the fact he was a commissioner of the Welland Canal like that illustrious
businessman William Hamilton Merritt. Such office may have led Mackenzie to include Duncombe on his blacklist of "Canadian True Blues" along with such notable Tories as Merritt, Mahlon Burwell, Sheriff W. B. Jarvis of York and William Morris of Perth. 64

Surprising as it may seem considering his busy life as a medical doctor and politician, Duncombe took an active part in Assembly debates on the subject of education. He assisted in the preparation of several reports on education submitted to the Assembly by select committees. Although he supported a modern "practical" curriculum as opposed to a classical one and was a proponent of female education, 65 he clung to typically conservative views about education. For him "the welfare and safety of the Government depend upon the national character of the inhabitants, and that national character depends upon their National Education." 66 The purpose of education was to stabilize society, to prevent crime, and to teach manual skills so as to promote individualism. His was the typical liberal answer to the pressing urban demands for social reform. Man "must be put on his own resources and must understand that if he is ever anything he must make himself and that he has within himself all the means for his own advancement." 67 Like Buell and Burwell, Duncombe was against "free schools;" only those who received the benefit from education should contribute. Duncombe, it would seem then,
was a logical choice as chairman of the commission to look into American schools, asylums and prisons.

During the final months of 1835 and the first of 1836, he travelled throughout the United States. He visited Lexington, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, New York City and Albany. Generally speaking, he was not impressed with what he saw, although he admitted "the Americans were in advance of us in their common school system." He found them "equally destitute of a system of national education with ourselves" and, more seriously, with schools "as defective as our own." In brief, where there were "good schools," they seemed to be functioning "upon bad or imperfect systems." Later in the appendix to his report, Duncombe became more specific and narrowed his praise to the schools of four or five states. The school systems of the other states he labelled "miserable, deficient, and defective." 68

New York State's system impressed Duncombe most. The arrangement of its school fund he found particularly attractive. Ideally he felt that each state should raise a school fund sufficient to support all schools including buildings, equipment, and teachers. But realizing this was an unattainable ideal, he favoured the New York system.

It pays above one-tenth of the whole expence of the schools. This usually is sufficient to make the people support a good school for three months, for unless they do this they cannot draw the public money. 69
Duncombe opposed compulsory local taxation and urged that it be left optional with parents whether they educated their children or not although they should be encouraged to do their duty in a fashion similar to the New York system. He went on in his report to caution against one of two extremes, namely offering too much state assistance or too little. He cited the case of Connecticut to prove the former and showed how there, the schools were supported by the annual income of the state fund until it was exhausted. The fund usually lasted six months and then the schools were closed for the remainder of the year. Duncombe found fault with this system for leaving no incentive for local support. As he argued, the school fund "does too much for people unless it does the whole." The other extreme was the school fund of Tennessee which was so small that its assistance was not felt and therefore there was no inducement offered to parents for making additional contributions.  

A special feature of the report was its support for both female education and female teachers. Duncombe detected an important change in attitude towards women; "instead of the fainting, weeping, vapid, pretty play-thing, once the model of female loveliness, those qualities of the head and heart that best qualify a woman for her duties are demanded and admired." Not only should women be educated in schools just as men were but they should also be prepared as teachers. Since men were
attracted to other professions with more prestige and money, it would be wise, Duncombe argued, to turn to women. Fortunately the very education "necessary to fit a woman to be a teacher is exactly the one that best fits her for that domestic relation she is primarily designed to fill." So Duncombe was prepared to promote the idea of female teachers—because of economic necessity—but presumably expected those very women to pursue a traditional domestic role.

Duncombe's report on prisons and penitentiaries deserves some passing mention because of the attention he drew to the problem of vagrant children in the streets of Toronto. Their condition, both physical and moral, was repulsive to him. Moreover, their idleness and bad habits presented a veiled threat to stable Upper Canadian society. Duncombe, the humanitarian reformer, shines through: "Is it possible that a Christian community can lend its sanction to such a process without any effort to rescue and to save?" Duncombe was vague on a plan for rescue; two decades later Egerton Ryerson was not. His solution for removing vagrant children from the streets was simple enough: put them all in schools.

In 1836 Duncombe proposed a common school bill based on his report. In urging central control through a general superintendent for the whole province and voluntary taxation of ratable property, his bill came close to duplicating the New York Act of 1812. In fact
it was noted in the Legislative Council that the bill was "nearly, if not altogether, a transcript" of New York school law. However, the fear of creeping republicanism inherent in imitating American practices was reinforced by the fact that the system proposed was well beyond the means of provincial revenue. The Legislative Council complained "... the change proposed goes too far, and the machinery by which the provisions of the bill are to be carried into operation appear much too complicated for our scattered population." Although Duncombe's ideas suffered immediate defeat, in the long run his proposals foreshadowed school legislation in Upper Canada up to the Act of 1871. Local property assessment, elective school boards, regular inspection of schools, curriculum changes, female education, female teachers, proper teacher-training, prescribed textbooks, and religious instruction of a non-denominational nature to be given by teachers—all became accepted policy in the period from 1841 to Ryerson's resignation in 1876.

Because of his involvement in the Rebellion of 1837, Duncombe was forced to flee the country in December of that year. The government of Upper Canada announced a bounty of $2,000 for his capture. Meanwhile, as reported by a family genealogist, Duncombe took part at a convention in Cleveland "about 1838" in framing a republican form of government for Upper Canada. Subsequent letters to family over the next few years place
him in Lockport, Rochester, and Philadelphia. He continued to practise medicine, but whether or not he remained politically active is unknown. Although granted a pardon in 1843, like M. S. Bidwell he lived out his life in the United States. Sometime about 1850 in the midst of the great Gold Rush, he moved, like many others, to California, and settled in Sacramento County. There in 1852 he was one of the founders of the Washington Lodge, A. F. & A. M. in Sacramento. Lodge records contain a set of Resolutions regarding him which indicate the high esteem in which he was held. Duncombe died "of old age" in Hixville, California on October 1, 1867. His obituary in the Norfolk Reformer records he held "several positions of trust and honor" in California, including member of the California Legislature. So died the individual who more than any other at the time saw most clearly the problems of education in Upper Canada and produced the most reasonable solutions, although they were not to be implemented until after his exile.

The various school bills of the 1830's, with few exceptions, betrayed an affinity for American models. During the next decade attention was focussed much more on European educational developments. The difference is most apparent when one thinks of Ryerson's lengthy stay in Europe in 1845-46 compared with his five-day stay in the United States on his education fact-finding mission.
Real educational change in the 1830's was blocked by Tory-Reformer animosity, the desire of Tories for Church connection, the lack of unanimity among Reformers about a suitable substitute system, the unwillingness of Reformers to face up to the high costs of financing a proper common school system, and the outbreak of rebellion in 1837. The Rebellion interrupted efforts for educational reform, and the troubles which followed made government authorities more aware about the need for jails rather than schools. Significant changes in public education came with the Act of Union in 1840.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VII


2. E. A. Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canadas, II, 114.

3. Journals of the Assembly, 1830, p. 71


5. See Helen I. Cowan, British Emigration to British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), Tables I and V.


7. P. A. C., Colborne Papers. Memorandum respecting University of King's College under letter to Lord Goderich, December 19, 1831.


13 *Colonial Advocate*, January 22, 1829.


19 *Colonial Advocate*, September 22, 1831.


21 P. A. C., Mackenzie Papers. "Observations intended to show that it is ... expedient to continue His Excellency Major General Sir John Colborne in the Government of the Province of Upper Canada." August 3, 1832.

22 *Colonial Advocate*, September 22, 1831. A Presbyterian magazine expressed similar sentiments about the Family Compact in 1839: "If they do not consider ignorance the mother of submission as well as of devotion, they seem at least, determined that we shall have no more instruction than is necessary for the support of their cause, and the providing of their adherents." *Christian Examiner and Presbyterian Review*, August 1839, p. 251.


25 For extracts from the committee report see *D. H. E.*, I, 270.
26. For the bill's provisions, see D. H. E., II, 34-6.

27. Christian Guardian, December 7, 1831. Ryerson, then twenty-eight, reveals his respect for and knowledge of United States education.


29. Debate in House of Assembly November 9, 1832 reported in Christian Guardian, November 14, 1832.


37. Quoted in St. Thomas Liberal, November 29, 1832.

38. John Willson, M.L.A. for Wentworth, reported in St. Thomas Liberal, November 29, 1832.

39. Similar sentiments were expressed by Egerton Ryerson when he defended a clause in his 1846 bill authorizing local assessment on all inhabitants according to property: "to educate 'all the brats' in every neighbourhood is the very object of this clause of the bill; & in order to do
so, it is proposed to compel selfish rich men to do what they ought to do, but what they will not do voluntarily." Ryerson to W. H. Draper, April 20, 1836, as quoted in C. B. Sissons, Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1947), II, 101.

40. Willson in St. Thomas Liberal, November 29, 1832.

41. Like Mackenzie's Colonial Advocate, the Liberal too had its presses stolen and destroyed—in this case by being thrown over a steep bank. W. C. Miller, Vignettes of Early St. Thomas, p. 372. Its masthead read "Established to advocate provincial reform—upon British Principles—and for the Diffusion of general intelligence."

42. St. Thomas Liberal, December 6, 1832.

43. The Seventh Report from the Select Committee of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada on Grievances (Toronto, 1835), p. 23.


45. This measure was first proposed in the Second Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education, Mahlon Burwell, chairman. December 13, 1832. D. H. E., II, 80.


47. Christian Guardian, January 15, 1834. It is ironic that as Superintendent of Education for the province a decade or so later Ryerson himself succeeded in making the office of superintendent responsible to the Executive rather than to the Legislature.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


52. As chairman of an Assembly Committee on Education in 1833, Burwell had urged an emulation of "the liberal provision made for Education by the most enlightened States of Europe and America." Upper Canada must not remain any longer "a solitary and deplorable exception to the general improvement." Third Report of the Committee on Education, House of Assembly, January 15, 1833. *D. H. E.*, II, 110.


54. *Journals of Legislative Council, Upper Canada*, 1837-38, February 26, 1838. Despite his support of local taxation, Burwell insisted on the need of tuition fees of some sort, except for children of indigent parents. Before the McCaul Commission on December 9, 1839, he asserted: "They [fees] are absolutely necessary, to arrest and keep enduring the attention of parents to the true interests and well working of Common Schools, and should never be dispensed with." *Journals of the Assembly, 1839-40, App. B.*, p. 375.

55. *D. H. E.*, II, 206-08.

56. *Journals of Legislative Council, Upper Canada*, 1835, April 9, 1835, p. 140.


58. The entry for Duncombe in the *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* ed. W. Stewart Wallace (Toronto, 1963) is incorrect in both birth and death dates. He was born on July 28, 1792 (not 1794) and died in Hicksville (sometimes Hixville), California on October 1, 1867 (not 1875). So far as is known, the only Duncombe Papers in public hands are deposited at the Public Archives in Ottawa. Totalling sixty-three pages and consisting chiefly of correspondence and related documents, these papers were donated by Duncombe's great-great-granddaughter, Mrs. Marjorie Killen of South Pasadena, California.
59 For advertisement announcing opening, see Colonial Advocate, August 19, 1826.


61 P. A. C., Charles Duncombe Family, 1835-1946. n.d. [1834, by internal evidence].


65 Duncombe, Report, pp. 23, 25, 38, 42, 54, 55. For Duncombe's advanced views on inductive learning, see Appendix B.

66 Ibid., p. 11. Like most humanitarian reformers of the time he also favoured temperance. He attributed increasing prosperity in the United States to the diffusion of education and the suppression of spirits. Ibid., p. 59.

67 Ibid., pp. 20-1.

68 Ibid., pp. 11, 63, 70.

69 Ibid., p. 71

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., pp. 38, 42, 55.


73 For a draft bill giving municipalities the right to pass by-laws penalizing parents whose school-age children were neither at work nor some form of schooling, see J. G.
Hodgins, *Historical and Other Papers*, II, 29. Likewise school trustees in the city of Toronto in 1847 saw the advantages of universal schooling in solving the problem of vagrant children in that it would serve to withdraw "from idleness and dissipation a large number of children who now loiter about the streets or frequent the haunts of vice, creating the most painful emotions in every well regulated mind." Quoted in C. E. Phillips, *The Development of Education in Canada* (Toronto: W. J. Gage, 1957), p. 284.


75 Ibid.

76 An eloquent appeal for female education, typical of the new regard for women, appeared in the *Christian Guardian* a few years later. "And shall women be uneducated? No! Every heart that is worth calling by that name, proclaims with emphasis, No! Let the treasures of science be unlocked and poured at her feet. Let her be educated to be the friend and companion of man! Let her be educated for usefulness. Let her be prized, not for the flowers, or drapery, or jewels which decorate her person, but for the riches that adorn her mind. LET HER BE EDUCATED!" *Christian Guardian*, December 8, 1841.

77 "Schools will be like their teachers. Hence the necessity of having the teachers well prepared for their arduous responsible office." Duncombe, *Report*, p. 71.

78 While acknowledging the necessity to have religious instruction in the schools, Duncombe foresaw a potential area of controversy that might yet emerge, namely, whether religious instruction "shall be by the united or by the separate action of religious sects." Ibid., pp. 50-1. The separate school question was to become one of Ryerson's crosses.


80 Ibid., p. 48; P. A. C., Duncombe Papers, Duncombe to John Tufford, June 13, 1842; Duncombe to Eliza Jane Tufford, January 29, 1846.

81 Duncombe was a thirty-second degree Mason.


84 Norfolk Reformer, n.d. P. A. C., Duncombe Papers. Mrs. K. M. Wilkinson of Shorewood, Wisconsin, Elijah Duncombe's great grand-daughter, wrote the author June 8, 1968 to the effect that Duncombe's election was challenged on the grounds he was recorded as a citizen of Canada. He thus was obliged to become an American citizen even though he had been born in Connecticut.
CHAPTER VIII

REBELLION TO UNION, 1837-1841

Rebellion's Aftermath

The Rebellion of 1837 and the unsettled atmosphere that preceded and followed it interrupted efforts for educational reform. The aftermath of the rebellion was marked by a strong reaction against all things American, a mood reinforced by the activity of the Hunters' Lodges which triggered in 1838 a series of American Patriot invasions into Upper and Lower Canada. Bitter anti-Americanism was reflected in all aspects of Canadian life, including education. Post-mortems were avidly conducted on the rebellion and numerous diagnoses suggested. For example, Robert Baldwin Sullivan, the president of the Executive Council, concluded that the main cause of discontent was the proximity of the United States and the extent of the spread northward of the American ideas of democracy and republicanism.\(^1\) American teachers and textbooks were held up as one of the prime forces in the spread of American ideas in Upper Canada. In a report to
Lieutenant-Governor Arthur, Upper Canada's last Lieutenant-Governor and successor to Sir Francis Bond Head, Sullivan laid the blame for disaffection on the deleterious influence of American school-books.

The books they [American teachers] use are all American, filled with inflated accounts of American independence and the glorious wars with England. The exploits of General Jackson and the heroes of '76 fill the youthful mind to the exclusion of everything glorious or interesting in English History . . . . The boy gains a smattering of geography out of an American compilation . . . in which England appears as a pitiful little island filled with tyrannical landlords and very fat clergymen, and a great number of squalid tenants and labourers . . . . It is impossible that the young man so educated can become a good subject of the Crown of Great Britain [;] he cannot be brought to think the colonial connection with England either an honour or advantage.²

Ryerson even went so far as to state in an 1847 report to the Assembly his belief an inquiry would disclose that "in precisely those parts of Upper Canada where the United States school books had been used most extensively, there the spirit of the insurrection in 1837 and 1838 was most prevalent."³ For Lieutenant-Governor Arthur the main deficiency was the absence of strict surveillance and direction over education resulting from a lack of centralization.⁴ It was probably this situation which contributed to the "madness of allowing Americans to be the instructors of the Youth of the Country."⁵ Thomas Dalton, editor of the Tory Toronto Patriot, urged local school trustees to strive "towards cleansing the fountains of Canadian Education from Yankee discolorment and defilement."⁶
In his famous Report, Lord Durham underlined the need for educational reform in the Canadas. In Upper Canada he spoke of the lack of schools "even in the most thickly peopled districts," and of how those were "of a very inferior character." Children were allowed to grow up "ignorant and boorish." The more remote settlements, he added, were "almost entirely without any [schools]."  

The McCaul Committee, headed by the future second president of the University of Toronto and appointed in 1839 by Lieutenant-Governor Arthur to investigate the state of education in the province, concurred with Durham's findings. Out of a population of 450,000 in 1839 the report found 800 common schools with close to 24,000 pupils. It was estimated that only 55 to 60 per cent of school-aged children attended school. In the thirteen District grammar schools there were only about 300 students, a figure roughly comparable to that reported in 1826. Durham predicted that educational progress would derive from two sources: emulation of American advances in education and "the establishment of a strong popular government [which] would very soon lead to the introduction of a liberal and general system of education."  

At the same time the McCaul Committee was quick to warn against the evils of permitting American textbooks to be used in the schools:

Great care should be taken in the selection of textbooks. Your committee regrets to find that editions published in the United States are much
used throughout the Province, tinctured, as they are with principles which, however fit for dissemination under the form of Government which exists there, cannot be inculcated here without evil results. They, therefore, recommend that some means be taken whereby the school here may be provided with textbooks at a cheap rate from Great Britain, or that a series of compilations or republications should be prepared and printed here, as the school books appointed to be used in all schools throughout the Province.10

Significantly this was precisely the course of action followed by Egerton Ryerson within another decade.

Similarly there was distress over the practice of sending students to the United States to complete their studies. "Whatever their previous opinions may have been," one commentator concluded, "their minds are exposed to serious injury" when they go there. "Very few return without some taints of democracy."11 A particularly crucial area of concern was the training of Canadian medical students in the United States. In 1826 John Strachan had noted with alarm that more than three-quarters of the doctors in Upper Canada had been trained in the United States.12 The McCaul Commission concurred with "the baneful effect of a want of schools of medicine" and agreed on the need for such a school.13 A few years later Dr. John Rolph opened the Toronto School of Medicine which in 1854 became the medical school of Victoria College, Toronto.

The weakest link of the common school system, however, according to the McCaul Report was the teacher, whether or not American. The Commission complained that
many teachers were largely "unfit" for their "responsible station" because of their "want either of literacy or moral qualification."14 The cause of the "unfitness" was held to be the "inadequate remuneration." "In this country," the Report continued, "the wages of the working classes are so high that few undertake the office of schoolmaster except those who are unable to do anything else."15

Private individuals made similar observations about the state of education in the province. A contemporary "Memorandum on Common Schools" also emphasized the inferior status of teaching and its low remuneration.

The teachers . . . are generally speaking either uneducated lads or persons physically or morally disqualified for any occupation. Of the few respectable persons here and there to be found, the greater part are men whom a delicate constitution or some bodily injury has unfitted for the more profitable employment of their time in manual labour. The majority are persons as unfit as can be conceived. A school indeed seems to be the last refuge of the idle and worthless.16

No improvement could be expected, the memorialist argued, until qualified schoolmasters were hired. For this to happen the salary of a teacher must at least match that of an artisan, namely £75 currency per annum,17 or approximately double the current salaries for common school teachers. Even at that, a common dodge used by school boards to save money on salaries was the practice of "boarding round," hardly a practice likely to prove attractive to a refined and cultured man.18
About a year earlier the prominent Perth Presbyterian minister, the Reverend William Bell, wrote a lengthy article on education in the *Christian Examiner and Presbyterian Review* in which he touched on some of these same points. He contrasted the progress made in Europe and the United States with his contention that "scarcely anything has been done here, to improve the state of our common schools." He too singled out the importance of improving the calibre of teachers by paying them more money. "The first improvement necessary," he stated, "is a moral liberal support" for teachers, because at the moment only "the lame and the lazy" are attracted. Bell then went on to make special commendation of David Stow's Training System.

Stow, a Glasgow merchant, became concerned about providing some sort of education for his city's poor children. His experience convinced him of the importance of trained teachers, but he did not share the popular enthusiasm for the Bell and Lancasterian monitory methods. His efforts to devise a new system of teacher training resulted in the founding by the Glasgow Educational Society of the Glasgow Normal School in 1827 and culminated in the publication of a book, *The Training System*, setting forth his approach. The essence of his "method" may be summarized as: "the sympathy of numbers"--the learning stimulus that students might gain from one another--and "activity
centred teaching," as opposed to the rote learning common in that day. One feature of Stow's method which endeared his system to Upper Canadians was his insistence on interweaving moral or religious training with instruction on secular subjects. William Bell, for example, made special note of Stow's scripture precept: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Both Bell and Campbell in their high praise of Stow's system and the Glasgow Normal School make clear that his fame had reached the ears of some Upper Canadians. However, too few Canadians knew Stow to suit Bell who lamented the fact that Upper Canada "knows less about the Training System than New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land." To improve common school education in the colony Bell advised sending to Scotland for trained teachers from the Glasgow Normal School. Secondly, young men should be sent to Glasgow at public expense to learn the Training System. Thirdly, efforts should be made to disseminate the principles of the system by purchasing for distribution at public expense copies of Stow's Training System.

Bell's final recommendation also deserves note. He proposed a "circulating school," "upon the plan of the Gaelic schools in Scotland." The scheme sounds similar to the "moving school" found in colonial New England, although his school was intended for working
adults especially teachers and not children as in New England. According to Bell's scheme the "circulating" teacher would stay in one location for a month at a time. He would teach subjects not taught in the common schools, such as grammar, composition, geography, natural history, astronomy and natural philosophy. In modern parlance such a scheme would be termed a combination of adult education and teacher up-grading.

For its part the McCaul Commission had several proposals for improving the calibre of common school teachers: an average salary of £50 per annum, the establishment of a normal school at Toronto, and ultimately four throughout the province, and a model school for each township. In support of these recommendations, the normal schools of New York State and Prussia were cited: the former with its eight schools and 374 students; Prussia with its fifty-two schools and 2,000 students hoping to be teachers. A check should be placed on the calibre of teaching through systematic inspection of all schools under the direction of an Inspector General and a provincial Board of Commissioners.

P. C. Campbell in his memorandum to Arthur, mentioned earlier, also called for a more effective supervision of common schools. Each District was to have an appointed inspector who would visit each school once a year and receive annual reports from the teachers. He was to be an agent of both the Central and the District
Board of Education. In the next decade Ryerson wanted his inspectors to be under direct government control rather than district and township boards, but this goal was not attained in the Act of 1846 since the superintendents held office at the pleasure of the District Councils.

How to finance an improved system of common school education? Campbell was unhesitating in his response: the people must pay for it. But he had no illusions about the people's slight appreciation of education. He accepted that those people who needed education most did not appreciate its value and were unwilling to do anything about it. The principles of laissez-faire, as Adam Smith had made plain half a century earlier, did not apply to education. As Campbell put it:

The more hungry a man is, the more willing he will be to take measures for procuring food, but the more wicked and ignorant he is, just the less willing he will be to provide for himself religious or any other instruction. His desire for these, unlike his other desires, increases and diminishes in an inverse ratio to his need.

Campbell therefore, like Smith, accepted the need for government intervention to ensure popular education. This intervention would take the form of government financial support for schools, but also compulsory assessment. As Campbell bluntly phrased it: "I would take from the people all that can be got."
Campbell did not, however, advocate the abolition of fees, except in the case of poor children. Neither did the McCaul Commission which while recognizing the principle of local taxation to support schools stated, "Experience proves the advantages of having some charge, however small, for the education even of the humblest classes of society." 31 The free school movement did not take form in Upper Canada until almost a decade later during Ryerson's superintendency. The term "free school" came to mean schools supported by the payment of taxes based on compulsory assessment on property owned by each citizen in a community regardless of whether he had children attending school or not. A clause authorizing local property assessment was included in the original draft of Ryerson's 1846 school bill, but was withdrawn from the final piece of legislation. Provincial legislation in 1850 made it optional for school boards to levy taxes on the basis of property assessment. Compulsory legislation was withheld till 1871, by which time most of the common schools of the province (4,244 out of 4,400 school sections) had adopted local assessment voluntarily.

The criticisms put forth in Durham's Report and the substantial recommendations of the McCaul Committee might have been expected to lead directly to improvements in Upper Canada's educational system. However, in the aftermath of the rebellion and the troubles which
followed, jails, court houses, and roads received primary consideration when it came to appropriating public funds. Then, too, the Act of Union in 1840, following hard on the heels of the Committee's report played a part in postponing implementation of its recommendations. But Durham's prediction proved indeed an accurate one. Shortly after the creation of a united Canada in 1841, the Common School Act of that year ushered in a series of measures culminating in the Act of 1871 which firmly established the "liberal and general system of education" of which Durham had spoken.

**The Act of Union**

Education was one matter requiring the urgent attention of the first parliament of a reunited Canada when it met in Kingston in June, 1841. Serious recommendations for improvement of the common school system had been made in the Duncombe Report in 1836 and just prior to Union in the McCaul Commission Report. But nothing had really come from either of these reports. Public laments on the sad state of popular education persisted. The *Presbyterian Review*, for example, editorialized: "the melancholy fact . . . is that a generation has grown up lamentably deficient as a whole, of the elementary principles of knowledge and science." The blame, the editorial continued, lay mainly with the "legislator
and his neglecting to give efficiency to the abilities
and educational capacities that were in the country."\textsuperscript{32}
A similar complaint was lodged in the same magazine by
the Reverend William Bell.

Every candidate for Legislative honors promises
freely, upon the hustings, if he be elected, to
support education and the improvement of the roads.
But how are these promises kept? No sooner do they
reach the capital than other—and to them far more
interesting subjects—engage their attention.\textsuperscript{33}

But in 1841 with a new province and a new Parliament
perhaps more could be expected of the legislators.

Governor Sydenham was determined to act immedi-
ately in this area not only to alleviate the defects
of the common school system but also to devise a uni-
fied school jurisdiction for both provinces. In
response to Sydenham's request, Solicitor-General
Charles Day introduced a bill "to make further pro-
vision for the establishment and maintenance of common
schools throughout the Province," that is in both
Canada East (formerly Lower Canada) and Canada West
(formerly Upper Canada). The act, which was an
important part of a larger scheme to create a cultural
union of the new province according to Lord Durham's
recommendation, was rendered unworkable by the fact
that each section of the union had evolved over several
decades quite distinct educational structures which
were felt to serve the needs of their respective
populations. Nevertheless a genuine effort was made to
arrive at provisions in the act which would allow its acceptance in both sections. The crucial clause in this regard was section XI which made the famous provision of "separate schools" without once mentioning the term. It provided that "any number of inhabitants of a different faith from the majority in [either] township or parish might choose their own trustees," and "might establish and maintain one or more schools" under the same conditions as other common schools.34

"Separate Schools" Clause

The conditions surrounding the inclusion of the separate school clause are worthy of note. Contemporary accounts indicate that the clause was added in the committee stage.35 That the committee consisted of seven more members from Canada East than from Canada West has often been alluded to as the reason for the inclusion of the clause in question. However, of the fourteen members from Canada East, only four were French Canadians and the most forthright appeals for separate schools came not from Roman Catholics but from Protestants. Of the forty-two petitions sent to the committee, thirty-nine requested the use of the Bible as a textbook in the schools.36 The bulk of these came from Church of England and Presbyterian clergymen disturbed by the absence of any mention of religious
education in the common schools. The predominant view among Protestant petitioners was perhaps best expressed by the Hon. William Morris, a spokesman for the Church of Scotland, when he warned that "if the use by Protestants of the Holy Scriptures in their schools is so objectionable to our fellow subjects of that other faith, the children of both religious persuasions must be educated apart."  

John Strachan, fresh from numerous setbacks over King's College, plunged into a determined campaign to ensure the creation of a system of separate publicly supported Church of England schools. A Church of England petition in 1841 requested of the Legislature "that the Education of the Children of their own Church may be entrusted to their own Pastors; and that an annual grant from the assessments may be awarded for their instruction."  

For Strachan there was no alternative but to fight the practice of "imitating the irreligious scheme of our [American] neighbours," and he remained true to his commitment until his death twenty-five years later.

An interesting comment on the Act of 1841 and Church of England reaction to it was provided by one Captain Elmes Steele of Purbrook in a letter to the Provincial Secretary. Steele, who hoped the bill would allow "that each denomination of Christians may educate their children according to the principle of their own faith," found the bill popular.
except as you might anticipate with the clergy of the Church of England, who assume the privilege of controlling [sic] and directing education without reflecting on the utter impossibility of bringing so many who differ from them to acquiesce. A spirit of toleration can alone give them that salutary influence they desire.\textsuperscript{41}

But Strachan and his friends did not give up without a fight. In 1842 George Hendry, the Chairman of the East Oxford School Commissioners, wrote the Education Office, Canada West, complaining that there were two Church of England separate schools operating in the Brock District. He was concerned lest the District Clerk would not inform the office that these schools were actually under "the surveillance of the Rector of Woodstock." These schools were not legally established under section XI of the school act since, as Hendry had previously been advised, "only Roman Catholics or Jews could have sectarian schools."\textsuperscript{42} As late as 1857 Strachan wrote Ryerson demanding that legislative grants be made to the Church of England "as well as to the Roman Catholics, and other religious bodies."\textsuperscript{43}

Roman Catholic claims to separate schools in Canada West were soon registered. Roman Catholic schools had been functioning in the province for many years. The first such school, using French as the language of instruction, had been opened at Fort Frontenac in 1676 and in 1786 abbe Dufaux had opened in his parish of Sandwich a school staffed by two female teachers sent
from Quebec by Bishop Hubert. The first English Catholic school was established in 1804 at St. Raphael's in Glengarry County in an area settled by Roman Catholic Highland Scots. The prime force behind the movement for English Catholic education was Father Alexander Macdonell who became Bishop of Regiopolis (Kingston) in 1826 and a legislative councillor five years later. Because of his sympathy for the conservative and anti-American views of the Family Compact, Macdonell managed to gain public financial support for his educational ventures and a free hand, just as the other denominations had in an era characterized by many private schools supported by voluntary subscriptions and fees.

From the time of his arrival in Upper Canada Macdonell tried his best to supply the Scottish Catholics with clergymen and schoolmasters. His efforts to foster Catholic schools coincided with his concern that the Scottish Highlanders should be educated in their own tongue, for they understood "neither french [sic] nor English." The War of 1812 frustrated his efforts to collect enough money to build a college in Glengarry County, but with the war's conclusion Macdonell felt inclined to set out for Governor Prevost's consideration the advantages of such an institution. The college would instill loyalty to Britain and guard students "against the contagion of democracy & irreligion, so rapidly diffusing through every part of the
Province by the necessary intercourse of the lower order of our people with the emigrants & adventurers from the United States." 45 Such a college would require three or four professors. Macdonell requested land and money, but nothing came of it.

During the 1820's several Catholic schools were opened in the western end of the province at Sandwich. None of them proved very successful as Father Marchand so advised the Bishop of Quebec in 1823.

Several schools are being established, mostly co-educational. I have some for girls only but I fear there will not be enough pupils to support them. 46 Five years later one sister and three postulants from the Grey Nuns of Montreal went to Sandwich to open a girls' school. 47 The first year fifty girls enrolled, but the project collapsed within the year after the sister's death. By the end of the decade Macdonell could point to only one respectable Catholic school in the province, the one at St. Raphael's. 48 This situation led Macdonell, now Bishop of Regiopolis, to criticize the parish at Sandwich for its woeful and shameful neglect of education. 49 The result was that Catholics were "kept in the background and neglected," and "made hewers of wood and the drawers of water to those who came into the country adventurers and beggars." 50
To what extent the scarcity of Catholic schools to this point was the result of government opposition forms a subject for lively debate. In a letter to William Morris of Perth in 1827, Macdonell blamed "Dr. Strachan and Justice Powell who in fact administered the government of the Province" and "though themselves bound in honour and in conscience, as sound constitutional politicians, to check the growth of popery by all the means which Providence had then placed in their power and they shrewdly discovered that this might be done as effectively by starving to death as by burning to death." They accordingly, Macdonell alleged, blocked the payment of Catholic teachers. Whether or not they were responsible as Macdonell asserted, it is a fact that although the Imperial Parliament had set aside the sum of £300 per annum for Roman Catholic schoolmasters between 1821 and 1826 this grant was never drawn on.  

By 1827 government policy towards assisting Roman Catholic education had changed. Hillier, Maitland's secretary, advised Macdonell that:

As the Roman Catholic children have the same means of availing themselves of the education provided by the Province with those of any other denomination, and as there is no interference with the principles of their religion at the Public Schools, His Lordship does not deem it necessary to authorize any special provision for schoolmasters of the Roman Catholic Religion. It is significant, however, that Hillier added there would be no objection if Macdonell wished to apply
one-quarter of the present appropriation for priests (£750) to the support of schoolmasters.\textsuperscript{54} So the money was there if Macdonell chose to or was able to use it to pay for teachers. That he did not is made clear by Macdonell himself in a scathing commentary to Bishop MacEachern of Prince Edward Island wherein he spoke of "the lukewarm selfish and semi-barbarious [sic] Catholics of Canada."\textsuperscript{55}

The arrival of Sir John Colborne in Upper Canada seems to have marked a new day for Roman Catholics in the province. "Colborne . . . has been most favourable to us and to our cause," commented Bishop Macdonell. He presented a piece of land in York for a schoolhouse and seminary, and declared himself a patron and initial subscriber for the institution.\textsuperscript{56} Attempting to put the changed attitude into a context, Macdonell cited "the spirit of liberality" which was "making such rapid progress in the colonies that they seem determined to do away with a predominant church and put the different denominations of religions on an equal footing which is all that we could reasonably desire . . . . And Sir John Colborne seems most disposed to fall in with the general wish of the people."\textsuperscript{57}

During the next couple of years, a number of new Catholic schoolhouses were built—in York, Amherstburg, and in Glengarry County at St. Raphael's, St. Andrews and Alexandria.\textsuperscript{58} Significantly the building of these
schools coincided with a large increase in the number of Irish immigrants to British North America. Further Macdonell expressed hopes to build schoolhouses at Guelph, York, Penetanguishene, Peterborough, Kingston, Perth, Bytown, Prescott, and Sandwich.

Other Provisions of the Act

Other features of the 1841 act, while perhaps less controversial, also merit attention. One was the delegation of basic decision-making powers to elected township commissioners. This provision not only marked an acceptance of the American elective principle, but also a victory for the advocates of the sort of system proposed by William Buell Jr. a decade before with its emphasis on local control as in New York State. A centralized provincial system such as Mahlon Burwell had advocated in the 1830's was not accepted until five years later. A major defect of the act was its dependence upon an efficiently functioning municipal system. Although Governor Sydenham saw to it that a system of municipal government was established, the people had not yet learned the lesson of local self-government. Nor had they grasped the idea that they would have to pay for education; unwillingness to accept this need called into question for another decade or two the extent of popular commitment to
education, an essential ingredient of an adequate common school system.

Another provision of the Act of 1841 was the appointment of a chief superintendent of education for the entire province with assistants in Canada East and Canada West. Robert Jameson, the vice-chancellor of Upper Canada from 1837 to 1854, was appointed to the senior post which lasted until it was abolished by the Act of 1843. The Reverend Robert Murray, a Presbyterian minister from Oakville, became assistant superintendent for Canada West until relieved of his post in 1844 and replaced by Egerton Ryerson, who was elevated to superintendent two years later. Prior to 1846 in Upper Canada education formed a part of the Provincial Secretary's Department.

Although the School Act of 1841 created in effect the "separate schools" of Canada West and the "disssen-tient schools" of Canada East, it rather curiously made no mention of religious education. This omission simply underlines the interrelationship between religion and education, for as W. L. Morton has said, "religion—not wealth, and not politics—was the chief concern, the main ideal occupation of [Victorian] Canadians."62 Assistant Superintendent Murray (like his successor a clergyman), however, set the tone in 1842 at least as far as Protestants were concerned:
As morality and religion are the foundation and stability of all good governments and as these are taught in their purity in the word of God, a portion of the scriptures should be read in the Schools—at least one Chapter a day.63

In answer to a specific question concerning the use of the New Testament as a schoolbook, Murray replied he could see no objection to its use "in every Protestant School."64 His correspondent disagreed. The New Testament, he argued, constituted "the means of teaching the youth to take the sacred Name in a vain manner and also to swear and to dislike it on account of being made to labour in it when learning to read."65 But for Murray, as for his successor Egerton Ryerson, the schools were to be used for the dissemination of Christian principles.

A popular farmers' magazine of the day, The British American Cultivator, concurred. "No judicious system [of education] can be adopted," one editorial argued, "unless based upon religious instruction." Otherwise it "is not likely to increase the virtue and happiness of a people." The evidence for the statement was legion. The French Revolution, for example, was not caused by "the millions of ignorant, laborious men who toiled in humble life, not one in fifty of whom could read." The corruptions instead derived from "the thousands of the privileged classes, who were all highly educated, refined and cultivated," but whose education was not based upon religion; "they were,
probably, the most infidel generation that ever existed upon the face of the earth, and we have seen to what their intellectual cultivation led." Or one might take the example of Pompeii where of the books that were found, 9,900 "relate exclusively to subjects of gastronomy and obscenity." Closer to home, Scotland provided a sad example. Once a "virtuous country . . . high in the scale of European morality . . . when the school-house stood beside the church, and both trained up the same population, who afterwards were to repose in the neighbouring churchyard," Scotland had fallen on rough, crime-filled days, "since manufactures have overspread its great towns." The population was indeed educated, "but without the means of religious instruction and almost totally destitute of religious principle." Consequently, the character of the nation had entirely changed and "the progress of crime has been more rapid in that part of the British dominions, during the last thirty years, than in any other state in Europe."66

Thus it was generally held at the time that to be useful, education must be based on religious instruction.

By the same token the Methodist organ, the Christian Guardian, underscored the necessity to ensure that teachers held correct views on religious topics. "The professed atheist, deist, or infidel, has sometimes been appointed to instruct a Protestant school," the Guardian observed. This practice must be stopped. The
answer lay in establishing normal schools for teachers "where attention shall be given to their intellectual and moral character, and they otherwise be trained."\textsuperscript{67}

By the 1840's some of the Reformers' unfulfilled dreams of the 1830's were being realized. With increased state support there was a large increase in the number of schools. Secular control of public education appeared to be firmly established despite the provisions of section XI of the 1841 Act. Church of England and executive government control of education had been routed. Local control had been reasserted with elective representatives. Yet all this had occurred under a Conservative ministry. What educational legislation might one expect under the first Baldwin-LaFontaine ministry which took office in 1843?
NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII


2Ibid., I, 152-3.

3Canada, Journal of the Assembly. V, App. B.B.

4Same opinion found in Western Canada Herald and Farmer's Magazine, November 6, 1838.


6Quoted in Western Canada Herald and Farmer's Magazine, November 6, 1838.


10D. H. E., III, 250.

11P. A. C., Educational Papers. R. C. Horne to Hon. John Macaulay, Inspector General, April 6, 1839. See also William Morris to Hopkirk, Secretary of McCaul Commission, December 11, 1839.

12P. A. C., U. C. S., Strachan to Maitland (on the subject of a university for Upper Canada), March 10, 1826.

In a memorandum to Lieutenant-Governor Sir George Arthur, a member of the Board of Education for the Johnstown District painted a vivid picture of the lack of moral qualifications of many teachers of his District. "Drunkenness with all its train of vices, is constantly prevalent and I am certain that notwithstanding the exertions and examples made by us during the last two years, no small proportion of the Government allowance is spent on liquor in the town, on the day of distribution. We have now two Schoolmasters in jail on charges of forgery." P. A. C., Educational Papers. P. C. Campbell to Arthur, September 4, 1839. Edited and annotated version of same memorandum (J. Donald Wilson, ed.) published in Journal of Education (U. B. C.) no. 15 (April, 1969), pp. 63-73.


The McCaul Report recommended the average salary for a common school teacher be fixed at £50 per annum.


Canadian Christian Examiner and Presbyterian Review, March 24, 1838. Original copies lodged at United Church Archives, Victoria University, Toronto.

David Stow, The Training System (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1845).


Presbyterian Review, March 24, 1838.

Ibid.

26 The "moving school" operated for a few months in one part of a township and then moved on to another part. See Robert Middlekauff, Ancients and Axioms: Secondary Education in Eighteenth Century New England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 31-40.

27 In the next decade provision was made for a normal school in the School Act of 1846. The first Normal School was opened in Toronto on November 1, 1847 in temporary quarters. Steps were taken to erect permanent quarters in 1849. The cornerstone for the new building designed by Frederic Cumberland, the architect of St. James Cathedral, the 1850's remodeling of Osgoode Hall, and University College, Toronto, was laid by Lord Elgin on July 2, 1851.


30 Ibid., p. 67.


32 Presbyterian Review, February, 1839.

33 Ibid., March 24, 1838.

34 Canada, Statutes, 4 and 5 Vict., c. 18, sec. xi.


37 Quoted in Ibid., p. 19.


41 D. H. E., IV, 16.

42 P. A. C., P. S. O., Elmes Steele to S. B. Harrison, October 8, 1841.

43 P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. Hendry to Murray, September 15, 1842. Over many obstacles Strachan did manage to get some Anglican schools built in Toronto. In 1847 he had a new wing built on the back of Holy Trinity Church in Trinity Square to house a school. The next year a schoolhouse was built behind "Little Trinity" on King Street East. Neither of these schools received public funds.

44 P. A. O., Education Department Records, Incoming General Correspondence. Strachan to Ryerson, June 23, 1857.


46 P. A. C., U. C. S., Macdonell to Prevost, December, 1814.


48 Ibid., p. 33.

49 A Protestant's explanation of the Sandwich school problems was also very blunt. "The Canadians who compose the great majority of the population of Sandwich, are extremely ignorant and have no ambition for educating their children; with the exception of four or five, there is not one among them who can either read or write." Thomas Rolph, Statistical Account of Upper Canada (1836) in D. H. E., IV, 346.

51. P. A. O., Macdonell Papers. Macdonell to Morris, April 21, 1827. Despite these allegations against Strachan, less than a decade later Macdonell recommended his appointment as "First Protestant Bishop of the Canadas." He praised Strachan for the "good feeling which happily subsists between the two persuasions." "I have always lived on the most intimate and friendly terms" with him. P. A. O., Strachan Papers. Macdonell to "My Lord" (Bishop of Quebec?), October 27, 1835.

52. P. A. O., Macdonell Papers, Colborne to Macdonell, March 14, 1829. Maitland was responsible for procuring this grant. P. A. C., U. C. S., Macdonell to Maitland, January 25, 1822.


54. Ibid. Also P. A. C., U. C. S., Macdonell to Hillier, January 9, 1827.

55. P. A. O., Macdonell Papers. Macdonell to Bishop McEachran [sic], April 3, 1829.

56. P. A. O., Macdonell Papers. Macdonell to Weld, March 29, 1829. Mention of Colborne's favour towards Roman Catholics is repeated in Macdonell to Rt. Rev. John Dubois, Bishop of New York, April 20, 1829; in W. J. O'Grady to Macdonell, September 28, 1829; and in Macdonell to Goderich, March 23, 1833. In last one Macdonell asserts that thanks to Colborne, Upper Canadian Roman Catholics are a "thriving and happy people."

57. Ibid., Macdonell to Weld, March 29, 1829.


59. The figures for 1829, 1830, 1831 and 1832 are 9,614; 18,300; 34,133; and 28,204 respectively. William F. Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 421.
60 P. A. O., Macdonell Papers. Memorandum, August 25, 1832.

61 Legislative Councillor, P. B. De Blacquiére claimed the bill was "nearly a transcript of the plan of education in the State of New York." Christian Guardian, September 15, 1841.


64 P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook A. Murray to John Treffry of Otterville, July 13, 1842. Also Murray to W. Boultbee of Ancaster, March 22, 1843.

65 P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. Treffry to Murray, July 4, 1842.


67 Christian Guardian, November 24, 1841.
CHAPTER IX

PRELUDE TO THE RYERSON ERA, 1841-1844

Dissatisfaction with 1841 Act

The failure of the School Act of 1841 led to its being replaced by the Common School Act of 1843, sometimes known as the Hincks' Act after its sponsor Sir Francis Hincks, receiver-general in the first Baldwin-LaFontaine ministry. This was the first school bill sponsored by Reformers to become law in the history of Upper Canada, although the resignation of the Baldwin-LaFontaine ministry shortly afterwards left the administration of the act in Conservative hands. This act marked, as one study has noted, "the zenith of liberal, American . . . influence on Upper Canadian legislation" affecting education.¹

What was the source of the dissatisfaction with the 1841 Act? Assistant Superintendent Murray himself left no doubt about its unacceptability. "It is acknowledged on all hands that the present school bill does not work well."² The District Clerk in Port Hope reported to Murray in 1842 that the school
commissioners were "dissatisfied with the School Bill."³

The teachers and school commissioners of Cavan, southwest of Peterborough, called it "complex, mystical, overbearing, tyrannical and unprecedented in Legislation."⁴ Moreover, the bill did not succeed in improving school attendance, according to a Markham teacher:

... out of upward of 80 between the ages of 5 and 16, which are in the school District, not more than 24 attended during the last quarter.⁵

One of the biggest problems with the 1841 Act concerned the payment of teachers. There seemed to be a lack of clarity as to who was responsible for their payment. One teacher complained, "the Commissioners . . . tell us that they are not in any way responsible for our salaries; nor can the[y] tell us who is, more than they refer us to the government."⁶ In the eighteen months of the act's existence a remarkable number of letters were sent to Murray; those from trustees complained about the lack of money to pay teachers;⁷ those from teachers at not being paid.⁸ More specifically teachers complained not only about a lack of sufficient remuneration on which to live, but also that their income was spotty because of their dependence on student fees to supplement the government grant and local property tax. This state of affairs was made even worse by irregular attendance on the
part of the students. In Toronto Township teachers were even forced to collect fees from parents by themselves, since no money was forthcoming from School Commissioners.9

Murray was the recipient of many letters outlining teachers' destitute state. One or two bear repeating so as to enable the reader to savour the general tone of grievance. Nicholas Wilson, a Cobourg teacher, wrote almost pathetically:

I am really ashamed to walk out in the streets of Cobourg, lest I should meet one or more of these persons whom I should have paid long ago, it grieves me very much to think that it is not in my power to act, decently, and respectably, with every person.10

Another teacher in Warwick Township underlined the difficulties of transportation and communications in this pre-railway era. Murray had called a meeting for district common school teachers in Sandwich as part of his tour of the western end of the province. But for the Warwick teachers,

being men of families, it would be hard for us to leave our homes and go a distance of 150 miles [return] at this season of the year, besides we have not the means to go, never having received any recompense for our labours either from the Parents of the children under our respective charges or yet from the funds appropriated by Government.11

Murray could only conclude that many teachers "appear, from their correspondence, to be in a state little short of starvation."12 Bearing out the reality of all the trials of a common school teacher, a Port Hope teacher confessed to Murray he wanted out and sought
the latter's intervention on his behalf, because "I am so heartily tired of the Life of a Schoolteacher."^{13}

It seems that Murray was himself sincerely concerned about improving the status of teachers.^{14} In a letter to the Teachers' Society of Johnstown District, he stated:

Be assured that my greatest earthly ambition is to make Teachers respectable, efficient & independent . . . . Much of the civil & religious peace of this great country must depend on the education of the young, and therefore every effort I make to advance the status of the Teachers of youth is tending directly to advance the Standard of Education, and the best interests both civil & religious of this Province.^{15}

Certainly the 1841 Act had proven no panacea. Murray was quoted as stating that during 1842 nearly half the school districts were without teachers.^{16} Whole townships went through the year without a single school in operation.^{17} Early the next year the situation was still desparate; there were 124 vacancics reported in the Home District, eighty-two in Niagara District, forty in Brock District, forty-six in Wellington District and 129 in London District.^{18}

Improvement of teacher status was dependent upon two elements, according to Murray: a substantial increase in teachers' salaries and "increasing the protection afforded to Teachers."^{19} The "subscribers and teachers in Esquesing" echoed Murray's view by stating that most teachers sought "a competent income, and the prospect of permanency in the situation." The cases
of Scotland and Prussia were cited as models of generous support of teachers with the former providing each teacher with a house, a garden, "and an arable field, sufficient for the pasture of a cow," as well as life tenure, and Prussia providing its teachers with a pension at superannuation.\textsuperscript{20}

Even prior to his appointment as Superintendent of Schools, Murray had pointed up the precarious nature of the teacher's position and the lack of protection afforded his job. In a letter to the McCaul Commission in December, 1839, he put the case:

The power of ejecting School Masters vested in three Trustees, or Superintendents, subjects the Teachers to the whim and caprice of every child attending the school; the Teacher is thus left at the mercy of the public, who, presumably, have no conscience, and his situation is rendered more precarious and more degraded than that of a shoeblack.\textsuperscript{21}

Job tenure was too delicate a question to arouse much public interest at this point, but teachers' salaries was a problem demanding immediate attention.

One way to provide more money for qualified teachers was to curb the proliferation of schools. Murray was of the opinion that there were too many school districts and was pleased to note that municipal councils operating under the new Municipal Act were beginning to reduce the number. Such a measure resulted in larger schools with a corresponding augmentation of teachers' salaries.\textsuperscript{22} Teachers could also be put to
work on a shift basis whereby they could teach in one school in the morning and another school in the after-
noon. If he could have his way, Murray would limit a twelve-mile square township to four schools instead of from twenty to twenty-six found in a few townships. The cause of this needless proliferation of schools was simple: "Every kind parent wishes a school at his door." Murray was adamant that no government could support such a system of education; the cost of "qualified" teachers for all these schools would be prohibitive.

Moreover teachers must be relieved of bothersome, unprofessional tasks, such as arriving at school early to light fires to heat the school. Murray argued that one would not expect a clergyman to tend to the fires in his church, nor likewise the Speakers in the Legislative Council and House of Assembly. So, "Commissioners who would lay such a duty upon the Teacher in order to save the School District the paltry sum which would be required to pay for a person to attend to it, shew that they have yet to learn the value of education." A growing concern about professionalism was also evident among teachers themselves, and one, in particular, voiced serious displeasure over the intrusion of unqualified and uncertified persons into the ranks of the profession, thus "curtailing the allowance of the tried and experienced Teachers." Teachers' groups were highly critical of the commissioners'
competence to judge educational matters. One group from Brock District found it hard to understand "why teachers should be made mere passive tools in the hands of Commissioners and it be left with the latter to the exclusion of the former to frame rules for the conduct of schools." They concluded that commissioners must be assumed "to be (in general) more competent than teachers," whereas "truth constrains us to say that the reverse will (in general) be found to be the case."²⁷ The solution was obvious: teachers must have a greater share in the determination of educational policy, for "since it is to the teacher that the parents naturally look for the improvement of their children, it is only reasonable that he should have a share in the formation of those rules which he himself is to carry into execution."²⁸

Another group of teachers from Gore District made a specific demand that since teachers knew what was best for education they should compose the District Boards of Education. Other professions governed their own actions; why not teachers? The plea was carefully reasoned and revealed a highly developed concept of professionalism.

... as teachers alone can give effect to any system of education, they and they alone should regulate the course of study to be adopted, the books to be used, and the various means to be applied, in order to promote the advancement of common school training on a uniform and efficient plan. The branches of duty we have just enumerated belong legitimately to teachers, they cannot
be so well understood, or so efficiently performed, by either District Councils, or Boards of Commissioners.29

District Councils and Boards of Commissioners would, they conceded, retain all duties not relating directly to the educative process.

If teachers were to act as true professionals they would have to be prepared to police their own ranks. This necessity the Brock District teachers were quick to acknowledge. If they were granted the share of the decision-making powers they sought, teachers would naturally be "most interested in maintaining their own respectability" and would consequently have some influence in excluding "immoral and otherwise disqualified characters" from their ranks. Among "otherwise disqualified characters" the Brock teachers included aliens, especially Americans. The latter, they asserted, "are persons whose political opinions are diametrically opposed to monarchical institutions and are generally imbued with a morbid zeal for proselytizing to their own principles."30

Although they did not include female teachers in the classification of "disqualified characters," the Brock teachers opposed the hiring of women at salaries equal to male teachers. Such a practice, they were convinced, was a retrograde step destined to retard education's "progressive improvement."
There is no department of business, save that of teaching, in which females receive the same ratio of remuneration as men do, and the consequence is that schoolmasters in general, experience a mortified feeling of degradation, very injurious to the beneficial exercise of this calling.\textsuperscript{31}

There was no denying the presence of numbers of female teachers. In fact the feminization of the profession dates from this period. In 1843 more than half the children of the town of Hamilton were learning under female teachers.\textsuperscript{32} A Picton resident reported that in one township alone out of twenty-one school divisions sixteen were held by female teachers, "and I am prepared to say and prove not more than one of the sixteen is in any way qualified to teach correctly even the first principles of Education."\textsuperscript{33} Female teachers were popular with school commissioners, however, because "having no pretensions to Education," they were satisfied to accept less money than demanded by male teachers.\textsuperscript{34}

A common suggestion to improve the calibre of teachers, both male and female, was to erect normal schools or model schools throughout the province.\textsuperscript{35} Teachers properly trained at such schools would obviate the situation where "a Board composed of illiterate men (as must often occur) . . . judge the qualifications of teachers."\textsuperscript{36}

The need to erect a uniform and centralized system was widely recognized before Ryerson became superintendent. Some venturesome individuals even
proposed the introduction of compulsion in both taxation and school attendance. Murray himself was committed to a centralized system and saw the disruptive, almost chaotic results of having the power so much divided among the township commissioners. He was realistic enough to admit, however, the "deep rooted jealousy" in certain quarters "of such a power being committed to one man." 37

Murray received many letters from both teachers and school commissioners pointing out the need for and benefit deriving from a "uniform system." 38 Not so many recommended compulsion, however. Those who did, approximated the arguments which Ryerson was to advance in his 1846 Report and in his later campaign for free schools. The President of the Board of Police of Belleville while admitting that "compulsion is hardly ever found to be popular," was convinced that the voluntary system would not succeed. State interference was necessary to ensure an educated population.

The people will remain in ignorance and hence would continue as we are now, cut up by violent dissensions religiously & politically, which would in my opinion be of less occurrence, were the minds better cultivated by a liberal Education. 39

In comparison one finds Ryerson's opinion expressed in his 1846 Report on his return from Europe. "Education is a public good, ignorance is a public evil," and therefore every child rich or poor should
receive an education sufficient to overcome "the evils of want and poverty," and to "fit him to be an honest and useful member of the community." This conviction led Ryerson to assert that education should be compulsory—"if the parent or guardian cannot provide him with such an education, the State is bound to do so." 40

The Brock District teachers also favoured compulsory taxation, unpopular as such a measure might be. 41 Leaving property assessment optional to the Municipal Councils, as in the 1841 Act, was bound to be met with non-compliance, they argued. Likewise, those inhabitants who had no families to educate would "object to contribute any sum however small to build schoolhouses or pay teachers for educating other people's children." The only way to overcome this "merely selfishness" would be to make the collection of taxes obligatory on all citizens. 42 Incidentally Ryerson used the same reasoning when he prepared the original draft of his 1846 bill which included a clause authorizing local assessment on all inhabitants according to property. 43

Foreign cases were even cited to emphasize the value of compulsory education. One group of "subscribers and teachers" drew to Murray's attention that in the states of southern Germany, especially Württemberg, parents were compelled to send their children to school from the age of six to fourteen. To help
enforce this provision it was declared illegal "to employ any person, in any capacity, under twenty-one, without a formal certificate that he has attended at school the appointed number of years." The memorialists agreed such provisions might be unrealistic to expect in Canada West but urged serious consideration of legislation exacting school fees for every child between the ages of six and sixteen years whether that child should attend school or not. 44

**School Act of 1843**

In drafting the 1843 Act, Hincks paid little attention to all these suggestions favouring a centralized, uniform system of education. The result of his efforts was instead a decentralized school system on the William Buell model, something Reformers had long advocated. So Murray's efforts to involve teachers as much as possible in the drafting of new legislation came to naught. Although many teachers had expressed their opinions concerning the 1841 act, Murray asserted he had nothing to do with the new bill. 45 In fact, he admitted, "no credit is due to me in the matter, they who are interested therein owe the whole, with one or two slight exceptions, to the late administration." 46

The absence of strong central control in the new act, Murray felt, would be particularly noticeable in
the area of schoolbooks.

I am thoroughly convinced that unless the appointment of School Books is committed to the Superintendent, more than half his usefulness will be lost to the public.47

The danger here was that since Upper Canadians were averse to purchasing schoolbooks of any kind, "when obliged to purchase they generally choose those which cost the least without much if any regard to intrinsic value."49 Another factor which perturbed Murray was the price and appearance of schoolbooks: "they are miserably got up, & double the price at which they might be sold under a general Provincial System."49 Ryerson was able to solve the problem a few years later by arranging to republish in Canada West the "Irish National Series."

The 1843 Act was modeled upon the New York State school law. One observer remarked that it was "taken almost bodily" from the school laws of that state.50 But that fact did not disturb Francis Hincks51 or Hamilton Hunter, the Home District superintendent of common schools. Indeed the latter was proud that the new law was "almost a transcript" of the New York system "which works so satisfactorily and so beneficially." The act's success was almost assured, he believed, because of the "analogous condition of the population of the two countries."52 Ryerson, however, thought it advisable to attempt to "assimilate" the
common school systems of Canada East and West, rather than to assimilate Upper Canada to that of New York. 53

Unlike the 1841 Act, the 1843 Act did have something to say about religion in the school, and here again followed the pattern of the New York free schools. Specifically the act stated:

... no child shall be required to read or study from any Religious Book, or to join in any exercise of Devotion or Religion, which shall be objected to by his or her Parents or Guardians. 54

The principle of separate schools, accepted first in 1841, was continued. The term, "separate schools" was actually used in the provisions of the act that became the basis of all subsequent laws governing separate schools in the united province. 55 By this time opposition to the separate schools provision was concentrated among members of the Church of England. They wished to see public monies extended to their church as well as to the Roman Catholics and opposed being lumped together with "the myriad of Protestant Denominations." 56

Alternatively they preferred a return to purely voluntary support of education, strongly objecting as they did to "being compelled to contribute to Schools founded on principles of which no sincerely religious man can approve." 57 "The Church and the School-Master," Strachan argued, "must go hand in hand." 58

Strachan made a serious appeal in 1844 in favour of public support of Church of England schools.
With this argument he hoped to touch the utilitarian strain in pioneer Upper Canadians.

Good Parochial Schools are the greatest benefit, even in a temporal point of view. To teach the rising generation to read, write, and cast accounts, and their duty to God and man, is to make them good members of society and candidates for heaven. Were this effectually done, our Gaols would soon become comparatively empty; our Courts would be relieved from the greater portion of their business; and the expense of guarding against crime, and of detecting and punishing it, would be greatly diminished, and personal injury and loss prevented.\(^{59}\)

But the Government stood firm and Strachan's wishes were not met.

The end of the period in question in this study did not see a final public acceptance of the principle of universal and compulsory property assessment as the main means of school support. Sir Francis Hincks admitted the considerable opposition to the school tax, but dismissed it on grounds of selfishness or ignorance. To assist understanding, he wrote a letter to the Christian Guardian early in 1844 in which he set forth the case of a hypothetical school district.

I shall suppose that the Trustees of a School District engage a teacher at £60 a year, and that the share of the Government allowance for that District would be £10. It follows that the parents of the children would have to raise the remaining £50 if there were no tax. If, however, a tax to double the amount of the grant were raised, that District would get £20 more, and the parents would only have to raise £30 instead of £50; and this tax falls upon the whole property of the township, real and personal, residents and non-residents—those who have children and those who have none. The object of the tax is to encourage the actual settlers, particularly the poorer ones, to establish schools.\(^{60}\)
At the same time the Toronto newspaper, The Mirror praised the working of the 1843 act. The sore points of previous years were being tended to: teachers of better character and qualifications were being recruited; the superintendents were doing their job; and the trustees were functioning well. 61

In September, 1844, Robert Murray was relieved of the post of Assistant Superintendent of Education and was named Professor of Mathematics at the University of King's College. His replacement was the Reverend Egerton Ryerson, former editor of the Christian Guardian, long-time opponent of John Strachan and the Church of England, and currently principal of Victoria College, Cobourg. Ryerson was by this time a prominent figure in Canada West. In 1844 he once again hit the public spotlight in his celebrated defence of the Governor-General, Sir Charles Metcalfe. Metcalfe, Ryerson argued, had acted within his constitutional rights in refusing his Council's advice on certain appointments. Looking through different glasses, the Reformers accused Metcalfe of subverting the constitution. Ryerson's brilliant defence, his enemies argued, brought him due reward in the form of the post of Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Canada West, a post which two years later led to the full superintendency. Despite the political reasons that may have brought about his appointment Ryerson was eminently suited to assume such
an important position.

Metcalfes instructions to Ryerson underline as much as anything the continuum linking Duncombe, the McCaul Commission, Murray and Ryerson. Ryerson was to be responsible for devising such measures as may be necessary to provide suitable schoolbooks; to establish the most efficient system of instruction; to elevate the characters both of Teachers and of Schools; and to encourage every plan and effort to educate and improve the youthful mind of the Country.62

The concerns of the 1830's regarding public education were still uppermost in Metcalfes mind.

In his letter of acceptance Ryerson announced his intention to set off for a year's tour of Europe so as "to examine the educational systems of the most enlightened nations of Europe, from the primary schools up to the Universities." He insisted upon the necessity for "personal inspection in addition to the perusal of books."63 Here again we see reflected a growing interest in European as opposed to American educational systems. Ryerson's model was Prussia, not New York, as for Strachan, Burwell and Duncombe. He summarized for Metcalf the features of the Prussian system.

In Prussia School teaching is a profession, as much as Law or Medicine: School teachers are professionally educated and supported like other public servants: popular control is very much blended with that of the Crown: and the whole system is managed with great economy.64
These were the very points Ryerson was to emphasize upon his return from Europe in his famous 1846 Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada and in his subsequent Common School Act of 1846. The essence of the 1846 Act was its provision for a strong central authority to prepare regulations and curricula, to authorize suitable textbooks, and to improve the quality of teaching through certification, inspection, and the erection of a normal school. As in Prussia, local control of education was not, however, completely abolished. But the main characteristic of the system was its uniformity and centralization. It marked the province's first truly effective centralized administration. It was so successful in fact that a century later a distinguished Canadian historian, F. H. Underhill, could point to the extreme centralization of the Ontario school system of the 1950's and label Ryerson as the villain of the piece.65
NOTES TO CHAPTER IX


2 P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook A. Murray to Thomas Alexander, February 24, 1843.

3 P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence, District Clerk, Port Hope to Murray, October 5, 1842.

4 Ibid., Samuel Armour, chairman, School Commissioners, to Murray, December 17, 1843.

5 Ibid., "A. B." (Teacher), Markham to Murray, February 4, 1843.

6 Ibid.

7 For example, James Strang, Galt, chairman, Common School Commissioners, to Murray, September 14, 1842; David Thorburn, warden, District of Niagara, to Murray, December 31, 1842.

8 For example, Ibid., John Unsworth, Talbot Road W., October 15, 1842; D. R. Macleod, Vaughn Township, November 24, 1842. Johnston Neilson, Smith Falls, November 28, 1824; Nicholas Wilson, Cobourg, December 26, 1842; "A. B.," Markham, February 4, 1843 (note apparent need for anonymity); David Walker, Milton/Trafalgar, March 13, 1843; John Rogerson, Nottawasaga, April 15, 1843; Henry Livesley, Simcoe, May 27, 1843.

9 Ibid., John Tilt to Murray, April 19, 1843.

10 Ibid., Wilson to Murray, December 26, 1842.

12 P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook A. Murray to David Thorburn, MPP, September 17, 1842.


15 *Ibid.*, Murray to Edward Lane, Secretary, Teachers Society of Johnstown District, March 14, 1843.

16 P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. John Tilt, Township of Toronto, to Murray, April 19, 1843.


18 P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook A. Murray to John Giles, aspiring teacher, Ancaster, January 10, 1843.

19 *Ibid.*, Murray to Chairman and Committee of Teachers in Townships of Charlottenburgh and Lancaster, September 16, 1842. In their letter to Murray the committee had demanded an income for teachers "at least double that of a Mechanic's—without a competent salary he can command the Esteem and respect of neither Parents nor Children." Incoming General Correspondence, September 10, 1842.


24. P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook A. Murray to William Hutton, Kingston, July 14, 1842; to School Commissioners of Tarbolton, December 12, 1842. See also Murray to James Strang, Galt, September 17, 1842. P. C. Campbell in his "Memorandum on Common Schools" (1839) made the point that disagreements often took place as to the site of a proposed school. The solution normally was to erect two schools "where one would be amply sufficient." Wilson (ed.), "Memorandum on Common Schools," Journal of Education (U. B. C.), p. 66.


27. Charges of incompetency against commissioners were common enough, but one report to Murray even mentioned cases of nepotism, whereby wives, sons, daughters, and brothers of the commissioners were appointed to the best schools, "no matter how unfit or inexperienced." Ibid., Henry Livesley, Simcoe, May 27, 1843.

28. Ibid., Teachers of the District of Brock to Murray, June 17, 1843.

29. Ibid., School teachers and commissioners of Gore District to Murray, April 1, 1843. Italics added.
Ibid., Teachers of the Brock District to Murray, June 17, 1843. The warden of Victoria District, however, opposed the idea of excluding alien (American) teachers on the grounds that "some of our best teachers [are] females from the States." Ibid., William Hutton to Murray, July 2, 1842.

Ibid., Teachers of the Brock District to Murray, June 17, 1843. For other letters to Murray expressing concern over the hiring of female teachers, see Rev. William Reid, Grafton, June 15, 1843; President, Police Board, Belleville, June 26, 1843; Clerk of Police, Cobourg, July 31, 1843; Henry Livesley, Simcoe, May 27, 1843.

Ibid., George S. Tiffany to Murray, February 20, 1843.

Ibid., Ahira Blake to Murray, October 16, 1843.

Ibid., Robert Roy Mackie, Richmond, Bayham, to Murray, November 1, 1842. Also James Strang, Galt, Chairman, Common School Commissioners, September 14, 1842.

For example, Ibid., Strang, September 14, 1842; school teachers and commissioners, Gore, April 1, 1843; Samuel Armour, chairman, Cavan teachers, December 17, 1843; teachers of Brock district, June 17, 1843.

Ibid., John Burns, Esquesing, to Murray, January 19, 1843. Same charge of illiteracy made in Henry Livesley to Murray, May 27, 1843; Johnston Neilson to Murray, August 16, 1843.

P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook A. Murray to Thornton, Hamilton, March 27, 1843.

P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. Teachers, Sidney Township, June 26, 1842; John Treffrey, chairman, school board, Norwich Township, July 4, 1842; Thomas Alexander, teacher, Cobourg, July 29, 1842; Richard Fowler Butt, Clerk of Wellington District, February 25, 1843; A. Mitchell, teacher, Bothwell, July 7, 1843; John McKay, Township Clerk, Thorah, February 10, 1844.

Ibid., F. M. McAnnany to Murray, December 2, 1842.

41. See P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. "A. B." (Teacher), Markham, to Murray, February 4, 1843.

42. Ibid., Teachers of Brock District to Murray, June 17, 1843. Also "... let nothing of a pecuniary nature as to education of children be left voluntary." Johnston Neilson, teacher, Smith's Falls, August 3, 1842.

43. Draft bill of 1846, D. H. E., VI, 76. At the time Ryerson described this clause as "the poor man's clause, & at the very foundation of a system of public education." The main objection to the clause, he predicted, would come from the rich and quoted a Methodist magistrate as saying he did not wish "to be compelled to educate all the brats in the neighbourhood." Ryerson's reply was to emphasize that "to educate 'all the brats' in every neighbourhood is the very object of this clause of the bill; & in order to do so, it is proposed to compel selfish rich men to do what they ought to do, but what they will not do voluntarily." Ryerson to W. H. Draper, April 20, 1846, as quoted in C. B. Sissons, Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1947), II, 101. "In every good government and in every good system," Ryerson urged, "the interests of the whole society are obligatory upon each member of it." Draft bill of 1846, D. H. E., VI, 76.

44. P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. Subscribers and Teachers of Esquesing to Murray, September 3, 1842.

45. P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook A. Murray to W. Howard, November 2, 1843.

46. Ibid., Murray to Dr. Craigie, Ancaster, December 3, 1843. Murray was referring to the Baldwin-LaFontaine ministry.

47. Ibid., Murray to P. Thornton, Hamilton, March 27, 1843. See also Murray to S. B. Harrison, September 13, 1842.
48 Ibid., Murray to James Black, Cavan, December 7, 1842.

49 Ibid., Murray to W. Boultbee, Ancaster, March 22, 1843.


52 Canada, Journals of Assembly, 1846, II, App. P.


54 Canada, Statutes, 7 Vic. ch. 29, sec. 54.

55 Ibid., sec. 55.


57 Petition of the Members of the United Church of England and Ireland in the City and Vicinity of Toronto. Christian Guardian, December 25, 1844.


59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., February 28, 1844.

62 P. A. O., Education Office, Incoming General Correspondence. P. Daly, Provincial Secretary, to Ryerson (announcing appointment), September 28, 1844.

63 P. A. O., Education Office, Letterbook B. Ryerson to Daly, October 2, 1844.

64 Ibid.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

There is probably no better place than a schoolroom to judge of the character of a people, or to find an explanation of their national peculiarities. Whatever faults or weaknesses may be entailed upon them, will show themselves there without the hypocrisy of an advanced age, and whatever future they may possess is reflected without admixture of vice and corruption. In so humble a place as a schoolroom may be read the commentaries on the past, and the history of the future development of a nation.¹

The foregoing statement made in 1837 by Francis J. Grund, the German-born American author, points up the importance that formal education has played in the Western world in the past century and a half. To truly understand a nation or a people, one must ultimately turn to the system of education, formal or otherwise, that that people erects in order to enculturate its youth. Today monolithic systems of public education dominate the stage. In the past informal or indirect education was also accorded its place in enculturating the young. This study, then, has been concerned with examining both the formal and the informal aspects of education in Upper Canada with particular emphasis upon assessing the relative parts played by foreign and local
influences in determining the nature and direction of early education in the province.

Because of the central position which formal systems were to assume later in the province's history, it is reasonable that the bulk of our attention has been focussed on the first faltering steps of an embryonic "public system." One of the points we have tried to establish in this regard was the presence in various quarters, well before Ryerson's assumption of the mantle of office in 1844, of attitudes predisposed to, and a general climate of opinion favorable to, the adoption of educational measures for which he in the past has been given exclusive credit. Ryerson was thus less an innovator than generally believed today. Following up the work of Professor J. D. Purdy, already cited, we have further pointed to the immense contribution of John Strachan as an early educational pioneer. We have highlighted the efforts of several men concerned about educational reform in the 1830's—men such as the Tory Mahlon Burwell and the Reformer Charles Duncombe who are normally seen by historians in purely political roles; or the "notorious rebel" James Lesslie and the "hare-brained" crusader Thaddeus Osgood; or utopian thinkers like William Lyon Mackenzie. These men and others too laid the groundwork for the structure which Egerton Ryerson was to erect a decade or so later.
At the same time, while looking at these formative years in Upper Canada's growth, we have tried to lay to rest certain popular myths. For instance, in the main the promoters of educational reform were not radicals, as is sometimes thought. Rather they were moderates, or even what we might call social conservatives. None of them called for fundamental societal change; rather they functioned in the mainstream of colonial development. Consequently it is possible to speak of political opponents such as Mahlon Burwell and Charles Duncombe in the same breath when it comes to educational reform; to understand why both Tory and Reformer supported (and opposed) the establishment of mechanics' institutes in the province; to come to appreciate the common concern about Indian education shown by Egerton Ryerson, Thaddeus Osgood and Lieutenant-Governor Colborne. Fire-breathing radicals, like William Lyon Mackenzie, may have provided interesting utopian models, but uniformly they failed to effect legislative changes or to bring about substantive alterations in public opinion.

The climate of opinion, however, was not solely effected by individual educational promoters. As we have tried to establish in the two preceding chapters, several groups of people had a part to play. By the end of the period teachers were beginning to develop a corporate sense, to take the first steps down the rocky road to teacher professionalism. Phrased in modern
terms, they became status-hungry. Their opinions on questions like remuneration, female teachers, tenure, and teacher-trustee relations, reveal a more highly developed sense of "professionalism" than is usually conceded for the time. They also expressed conflicting opinions on such controversial topics as compulsory property assessment and free education, innovations which historians have given Ryerson credit for making into lively political issues. Groups of solid citizens from what we would call the middle class joined humanitarian associations, such as the Midland District School Society and the Sunday School Unions, through an ever-growing concern for the orphaned or the children of the poor. The appearance of this impulse marked an important shift from the private, parochial concerns of the early settlers to a stage where some inhabitants at least became acutely aware of other people's children. Thus from the private schools of Stuart and Cockrell we see emerging much broader province-wide schemes such as the Sunday Schools and Maitland's "National Schools." Both of these institutions derived from a distinctly Protestant context which was to reach its zenith in Ryerson's non-sectarian, but Protestant, provincial system of common schools.

The last point raises the matter of the tension existing between evangelical religion and secular culture in the first half of the nineteenth century.
As we have tried to show, this tension was most acute in the field of education by virtue of the desire to enculturate youth in the proper way. Learning must serve piety. Schooling and religion therefore went hand in hand. This view was common to Catholics, Churchmen, and evangelical Protestants. Consequently Strachan, Maitland, Ryerson and others sought not to separate church and state, as did their American counterparts, but rather to use the schools as a means of disseminating Christian principles. As W. L. Morton has stated, "Church and state could not really be separated because religion dominated the state."\(^2\) The fact that the President of the General Board of Education and the first and second Superintendents of Schools for the province were all clergymen bears witness to this point.

Fundamentally, therefore, the American model for public education would not work in Upper Canada. The American common school, as has been shown by Timothy Smith, David Tyack and others,\(^3\) did not in fact operate free of the Protestant context, but significantly Upper Canadians thought it did. Their perception of reality, as so often happens, was faulty. Consequently when a man like Mackenzie called for emulation of the American model of society and education, he immediately encountered firm opposition. Under no circumstances could the perceived separation of church and state, not
to mention the republican institutions of the United States, be found acceptable in Upper Canada. Basically the new country rejected new ways and relied instead on a continuation, a reproduction in the New World of the tried-and-true methods of the Old. Indeed, to quote again W. L. Morton, the task at hand "was not to be original but to prove the old possible in the new, to re-affirm accepted modes in new conditions."\(^4\) The new conditions often made the task difficult, but equipped as they were with "mental furniture" from the Old World supplemented by conservative governmental pressure, the inhabitants struggled to re-create the known.\(^5\) One thing was certain: most inhabitants had no desire to "opt in" to the American Utopia.

Nevertheless this did not mean the British model was to be accepted in toto. The failure of the National Schools suggests a resistance to English influence resulting in part from factors derived from local conditions. Of course popular resistance to the aims and tactics of Strachan and Maitland in this connection must also be taken into account. By the same token, American practices, such as methods of school finance, were sometimes held up for emulation by Tory and Reformer alike. The net result was an amalgam of British and American ideas based upon a clear refusal to accept a radical system, regardless of its source. The case of John Strachan is perhaps typical in this
respect. As J. L. H. Henderson has pointed out, Strachan fought for a mixture of his own including "the English establishment as interpreted by a Scot, . . . British legislative and administrative procedures (when they were being changed at home), . . . Scottish education, and in the end, . . . American-style church government for his denomination."^6 John Robson, the British Columbia newspaper editor and later provincial premier, caught the flavour of the Upper Canadian school system when he wrote it was "composed of a happy blending of Scottish, Irish [largely as a result of Ryerson], and American School Systems, combining the excellencies of each and adopting them to the peculiar circumstances of her people."^7

Ultimately by 1844 the question of who was to control education in the province had pretty well been answered in favour of the state. Private schools were not feasible for the entire population. Church control of public education seemed unlikely by this time, although church influence was clearly to remain a significant factor for some time to come. Support for a strengthened state hand in education had derived from constituted authority, such as Governor Sydenham and Superintendent Murray; from government investigatory commissions, such as the McCaul Commission; from private individuals, like Bell and Campbell; and from both teachers and trustees. It was into this climate of
opinion that Ryerson stepped in 1844.

The new direction that education was taking has been classified by the English historian William Boyd into four categories: social comprehensiveness, total commitment to education, linking of education with technological and social change, and heavy reliance upon action by the state. Clearly the state of education in Canada West could not remain unaffected by urban development, the early stages of industrialization, and improvements in transportation and communications associated with the railway era. In the forties and fifties the growth of industries and urban centres, especially Toronto, changed the way of life for many settlers. As they became less and less self-sufficient, there grew up the need for specialized urban services, including schools of a sophisticated nature. Thus the education of children became not only more widespread as the need for education became more widely recognized, but also more formalized and institutionalized. Trained and certified teachers, state-run schools, compulsory property assessment, and compulsory school attendance became common features of the educational landscape. Ryerson's role in the evolution of these institutions lies outside the purview of this study. What is certain, however, is that the state of public opinion had already been conditioned in the direction of acceptance of these institutions before Ryerson assumed
office. The claim, therefore, that Ryerson was "Founder of the School System of Ontario," as appears on his statue in front of the Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in downtown Toronto, requires careful qualification.
NOTES TO CHAPTER X

1 Used as frontispiece to Ruth Miller Elson, Guardians of Tradition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1964).


4 The Shield of Achilles, p. 328.


7 British Columbian, July 18, 1861. Robson knew whereof he spoke. Born in Upper Canada and educated at the Perth grammar school, he was thirty-five years old before he emigrated to British Columbia.

APPENDIX A


There is scarcely anything of so much importance to a community as a suitable SPELLING BOOK; it exerts an influence peculiarly its own, whether in regard to first impressions, or the formation of character and conduct. The sentiments acquired at school are generally retained through life.

During a residence of nearly twenty years in Canada, the compiler of the following pages often had occasion to notice the great diversity of elementary books in use, and how exceedingly inappropriate many of them were to the object for which they were professedly designed. At the present time this diversity is not diminished; and it cannot be denied, that, in different sections of the country, those of the United States origin are the most numerous. While spelling books from England are to us necessarily defective, not being suited to our scenery and other localities, those of a foreign origin are liable to more serious objections.
It is very generally acknowledged, that our system of popular instruction is exceedingly inefficient; but were it otherwise, the evil alluded to is one of great magnitude, and is, in itself, sufficient to excite regret in the mind of every individual possessed of any degree of true patriotism.

Since no person more competent to the task has stepped forward to apply a remedy, it has been the object of the compiler to do so in the succeeding pages. In pursuit of this object—in addition to lessons written expressly—he has availed himself of every assistance within his reach. Nor has he forgotten that Education, unconnected with Religion, is vain, if not injurious; he has, therefore, been particularly careful to introduce each reading lesson as will subserve the interests of religion and morality, by directing the young mind to the great Author of all existence, and to consider itself destined to be an heir of immortality.

NIAGARA, 11th July, 1840.
APPENDIX B

Duncombe on a Proper System of Education (Conveyed in letter to son-in-law, John Tufford, Rochester, June 13, 1842).

"The inductive system is no doubt the true system of education. Don't restrain them [your sons] by fear. Fear is a degrading passion. If they do wrong reason with them, show them their errors."

"Let them see everything. Let them observe the trees of the forest, and the flowers and grass of the field, all contain instructions. Let them ask as many questions as they will. If their questions puzzle you a little to answer, refer them to their dictionaries or some other authority."

"Books with pictures are best for children--I would learn these things--these words--and how to spell them at their leisure--I would not restrain them from making a noise. Let them play and hallow as loud and as much as they will."

"Let them commit to memory as much as they can. The memory may be made as good as you desire it. Only see all you can see and begin the improvement of the
memory by asking them over and over to describe what they have seen, next what they have heard, what you have told them of the different kinds of timber—cattle—hogs—horses—sheep—fowls [sic]—birds—fishes—Everything they see they should describe. Help them constantly, every day, and they will soon be able to tell a long story—'It is all done by talk.'

Source: P. A. C., Duncombe Papers
### APPENDIX C

**COMMON SCHOOL TEXTS IN USE IN UPPER CANADA**

<table>
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<th>TEXT (by imprint date)</th>
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<td>1784 Dilworth, Thomas.</td>
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<td>The Schoolmaster's Assistant New York: Hugh Gaines, 1784.</td>
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<td>1791 Melrose, A. A Concise System of Arithmetic. Edinburgh, 1791.</td>
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<td>Willets, Jacob</td>
<td>The Scholar's Arithmetic; designed for the Use of Schools in the United States</td>
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ARITHMETICS (cont'd)

1842 Gouinlock, G. and J.  
_A Complete System of Practical Arithmetic; for the Use of Schools in British North America._ Hamilton: J. Ruthven, 1842.

1862 Greenleaf, Benjamin.  
_A Mental Arithmetic, upon the Inductive Plan._ Boston: Davies, 1862.

Other Canadian Imprints


1849 Walkingame, Francis. _The Tutor's Assistant: being a Compendium of Arithmetic, adapted to the Use of Schools in Canada._ Second Canadian from the 76th London ed. Picton: J. McDonald, 1849.

GRAMMARS

1821 Murray, Lindley.  
_English Grammar._ Dublin: John Cumming, 1821

1825 Murray, Lindley.  
_English Grammar, adapted to the different classes of learners._ Cooperstown, N. Y.: H. and E. Phinney, 1825.


**Other Canadian Imprints**


**READERS**


1798 Enfield, William. *The Speaker: or, Miscellaneous Pieces, selected from the Best English Writers.* Hudson, N.Y.: Ashbel Stoddard, 1798.
READERS (cont'd)


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1836 Chambers, William and Robert (eds.). *Chambers' Educational Course*. Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers, 1836

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Canadian Imprints


1832 Murray, Lindley. *Introduction to the English Reader*. Hallowell: Joseph Wilson, 1832.


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London: Mentorian Press, 1818. | Middlesex County | 1845 |
| 1843 Goldsmith, Oliver.  
*Abridgement of the History of England.*  
| | | 1838 |
| **LATINS** | | |
| 1808 The Eton Latin Grammar.  
4th ed.  
London: For Eton College, 1808. | Ottawa | 1838 |
| 1823 Ruddiman, Thomas and John Hunter.  
The Ruddiments of the Latin Tongue.  
3rd ed.  
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1823. | London | 1834 |
<p>| <strong>BIBLE</strong> | | |
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| County of York | 1829 |
| Gore (Bible &amp; N.T.) | 1831 |
| London (N.T.) | 1832 |
| London (N.T.) | 1835 |
| District of Newcastle | 1823 |
| Raleigh Twp. (N.T.) | 1842 |
| Lochiel Div. #1 | 1842 |
| Matilda School #1 | 1842 |
| Murray School Div. (N.T.) | 1842 |
| Murray School Div. (Bible) | 1843 |
| Johnstown (Bible, Testament) | 1838 |</p>
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NOTE:

The above list was compiled, wherever possible, from direct consultation of the textbook concerned. Texts were found in the Library of the University of Western Ontario, the Baldwin Room of the Toronto Central Library, the Ontario Archives, and Special Collections of the University of British Columbia Library. In cases where a copy of a text could not be located, recourse was had to the excellent bibliography of early American textbooks in Ruth Miller Elson, Guardians of Tradition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), and for a few British titles, to the British Museum, General Catalogue of Printed Books (London, 1966). Every effort was made to locate the earliest known imprint date of each text and to ascertain whether or not a foreign text had a subsequent Canadian imprint. The source for the schools where the above texts were used, and when, was in large part the Educational Papers in the P. A. C.
## APPENDIX D

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<tr>
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<td>1,169</td>
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<td>1/2 yr ending</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 yr beginning</td>
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<td>Dec 1 to 1828</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>674</td>
</tr>
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<td>Dec 26, 1822</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>nearly 800</td>
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<td>1827</td>
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<td>800</td>
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<td>(increase of 100</td>
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<td>Feb 1, 1817</td>
<td>9 plus several others failing to report</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<td>1828</td>
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<td>597</td>
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<td>Dec 31, 1830</td>
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<td>?</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td><strong>OTTAWA</strong></td>
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<td>596</td>
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<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>574</td>
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</table>

Source: P. A. C., Educational Papers
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R. G. 5, B 11, Miscellaneous Records Relating to
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B. SECONDARY SOURCES

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