

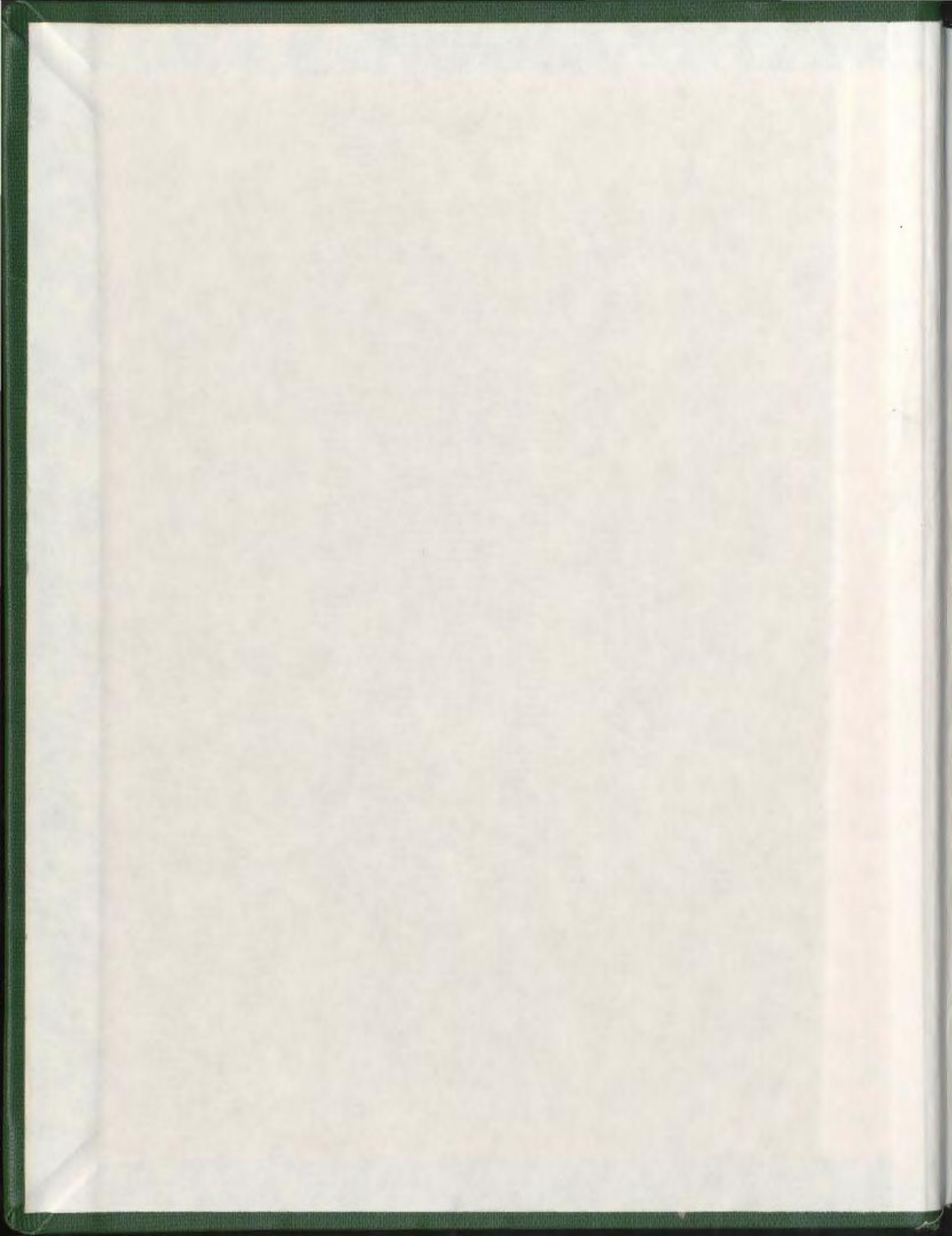
THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN NEWFOUNDLAND-
THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO BUSINESS EDUCATION

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN NEWFOUNDLAND
THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO BUSINESS EDUCATION

by



Augusta Bonita Ford, B.Voc.Ed

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education.

Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
August 1981

St. John's

Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to trace the work of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland in the field of business education. The Sisters began their work in the late 1800's, when they first introduced business education courses into the curriculum of their convent schools. Their work continued until the mid-1900's, when they began phasing out the formal business education programs which they had developed over the years in their schools. Their activities in this area constitute an important and lasting contribution to the field of business education. There has been no previous in-depth scholarly investigation into this aspect of the Sisters' work. Therefore, a study of the Sisters' contribution to this field is long overdue.

The first part of this study provides historical background of the Sisters of Mercy, the establishment of the early convent schools in Newfoundland, and the introduction of business education subjects into the curriculum of these schools.

The second part of the study deals with the opening of Commercial Departments at several of the

Sisters' schools and colleges around the Island, the development of comprehensive business education programs in these departments, and the introduction and development of business education programs at convent schools where Commercial Departments were not established.

The Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland started their business training at a time when business education was in its infancy and when the field of business was just becoming an acceptable field of employment for women. The foresight, energy, and determination of the early Sisters won the respect of educators and business people across Newfoundland. And, the outstanding achievements of so many of their students won for the institutions they represented a recognized place not only in the educational and business circles of the Island but also in international business education competitions.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, many schools and colleges in Newfoundland began closing down their Commercial Departments or phasing out their business education classes. The convent schools and colleges operated by the Sisters of Mercy were among this group. New educational institutions such as Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School for girls and The College of Trades and Technology in St. John's, along with the District Vocational Schools across the Island, now took up the task of preparing the youth of Newfoundland for the world of business.

By the time the Sisters were ready to concede the responsibility for business training to the new institutions, they had already helped to raise business education from a small cluster of basic skills courses to a highly sophisticated field of learning for young men and women. In addition, the Sisters had trained for the business communities of the Island thousands of qualified typists, stenographers, and bookkeepers. In so doing, they had given well over half a century of dedicated service to the field of business education in Newfoundland.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses her appreciation to the many people who provided information during the preparation of this work.

Special appreciation is extended to the many Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland who willingly gave their time for interviews and who provided very valuable information.

A very special debt is owed to Sister Mary Liguori Wade whose kindly help and interest lent much encouragement during the long period of research.

The writer would also like to express thanks to Dr. Gerard Murphy who directed this thesis, and to Dr. Frank Cramm and Sister Mary Teresina Bruce for their assistance on the thesis committee.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the educational and employment opportunities for young men and women in Newfoundland were limited. Apart from the professions of nursing and teaching, there were practically no other fields where women could find employment except as domestics or sales girls, both unacceptable types of work for women of the middle and upper classes. The men of the time fared a little better in the professions, but they were still restricted to a large degree by family finances and lack of local professional training centres.

The introduction of the typewriter for business purposes in the latter half of the century and its combined use with the popular "art" of shorthand, changed both the educational and employment picture for men and women in Newfoundland. A special type of professional training was soon developed in schools and colleges, and a whole new breed of businessmen and businesswomen known as typewriters or typists, stenographers, and secretaries appeared in business offices across Great Britain, the United States, and Canada.

It was not long before Newfoundland, then a colony of Great Britain, was also involved in this new wave of commercial training. Taking part in this new venture were a group of Sisters of the Order of Mercy, who had already established a reputation in the Colony for being competent and dedicated teachers.

The contribution to business education in Newfoundland made by the Sisters of Mercy covers a period of over half a century. Evidence of their fine work could be found from St. John's on the East Coast to St. George's on the West Coast and in the communities of Conception Bay, the Southern Shore, and the Burin Peninsula.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to document the work of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland in the field of business education.

II. Review of Related Literature

A review of the literature revealed two research studies pertaining to the Sisters of Mercy in two specific states of the United States: Crogan (1942) studied the Sisters of Mercy of Nebraska, and O'Toole (1964) conducted a study of the Sisters of Mercy of Maine.

Two studies examined the involvement of the Sisters of Mercy in the field of nursing: Gilgannon (1962)

conducted a study of the Sisters of Mercy as Crimean War nurses, and Wiley (1967) studied the administrative organization of baccalaureate nursing education for Sisters in the Institute of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of the Union in the United States.

Several studies looked at the work of the Sisters of Mercy in the field of education in North America: McCormack (1955) studied the educational work of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland from 1842 to 1955 but made only brief references to their work in the field of business education, Bouey (1963) conducted a study of the strengths and weaknesses in existing institutions and programs of higher learning conducted by the Sisters of Mercy in the United States, and Fagan (1972) studied the educational work of one of the colleges operated by the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland-- St. Bride's College, Littledale, from 1884 to 1964, but made only brief reference to the work of the Commercial Department of the College.

The review failed to reveal a single study which gives a comprehensive view of the work of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland in the field of business education.

III. Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the work of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland in the field of business education.

IV. Procedure

This study attempted to trace the events leading to the foundation of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland and their efforts to provide business education training for the young women and men in various parts of the Island.

The descriptive method of research was used, with the writer conducting documentary research and employing the interview technique. The facts from the research gave an account of the general events which led to the decision by Bishop Michael Fleming of St. John's to introduce a community of the Sisters of Mercy to Newfoundland, the establishment of their first schools, the introduction of business education subjects into the curriculum of the Sisters' schools, the influence on the convent schools of the mounting interest in commercial education in Newfoundland in the late 1800's and early 1900's, the opening of the first commercial schools in St. John's, the opening of the commercial schools outside St. John's, and the commercial programs of other convent schools.

V. Sources of Data

The sources of information were mainly from primary sources, such as publications of the Sisters of Mercy; publications of the Catholic Church; the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. John's; the Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy, St. John's; the Archives of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; school records; publications of the schools operated by the Sisters of Mercy; individuals (Sisters of Mercy, former business education students of the convent schools, and others involved with the work of the Sisters of Mercy); the Annual Reports of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland; and the Calendars of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland.

Secondary sources included histories and other books of Newfoundland; newspapers; related theses; British, American, and Canadian histories of business education subjects; biographies; and other books related to the Sisters of Mercy.

VI. Significance of the Study

The contribution of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland to business education warrants such a study since the Sisters played a very important role in the development of comprehensive business education programs in Newfoundland. This study represents

the first major attempt to trace the efforts of the Sisters of Mercy to develop business education programs in their schools and colleges throughout Newfoundland from the late 1800's to the early 1960's, when the new District Vocational Schools took over the major responsibility for training students in business education.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN NEWFOUNDLAND

This chapter will provide background information related to the religious congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and the events which led to the first foundation of that Order in Newfoundland. The first part of this chapter looks at the foundation of this Order in Ireland in the early part of the nineteenth century and the efforts of the Bishop of St. John's to introduce the Sisters to Newfoundland. The second part of the chapter looks at the establishment of the first convent of the Sisters of Mercy in St. John's.

I. Historical Background of the Sisters of Mercy.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy was founded in Dublin, Ireland, on September 24, 1827. The foundress of the Order was an Irish woman by the name of Catherine Elizabeth McAuley, born at Stormanstown House, County Dublin.

The early life of Catherine McAuley was to fit her well for the role which she was later to assume.

Growing up in Ireland at a time when schools were available only for the very wealthy, Catherine saw her father regularly bring together the poor of the area in order to instruct them in the truths of the Catholic faith. After the death of her parents, she went to live with family friends and was later adopted by a wealthy couple. However, despite the comforts of her new home, Catherine was not indifferent to the poor and distressed which she saw around her in Dublin. The memory of her father's love for the poor was no doubt very much alive in Catherine's mind for she was soon to emulate his example. From her comfortable home she went out into the streets of Dublin to help these unfortunate people. Her experiences with the poor soon led her to consider devoting her life to charitable work. (Carroll, 1866, pp. 95; 7; 18; 56-57)

From her work with the poor girls of the area, Catherine quickly discovered two truths which were to underlie the remainder of her life's work:

First that the giving of alms, food and clothing was not of any permanent value; that these girls would need to be equipped with skills which would enable them to earn their own living, and thus give them a measure of self-respect. Second, that the greatest handicap under which they laboured was ignorance, and that to bring about any permanent amelioration of their condition they must get elementary secular

instruction, systematic religious instruction, and be trained to put the teachings of the faith into practice in their daily lives. (Ward, 1956, p. 7)

On the death of her adoptive parents, Catherine became the heiress to their large fortune. With the money she purchased a piece of property and arranged for the erection of a building. When the building was completed, Catherine's companions, women who had joined her in her work, moved in. On September 24, 1827, the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, they opened their school. A year later, with the approval of the Archbishop, they named the building the House of Mercy (Ward, pp. 7-9). The little group of women became known as Sisters of Mercy. (Carroll, 1866, p. 114)

Sometime later Catherine decided to prepare for a religious life. While several of the women continued to operate the House of Mercy, Catherine and two companions entered the George's Hill Presentation Convent in Dublin to begin their novitiate. They were professed on December 12, 1831, the date which marks the foundation of the Order, even though the House of Mercy had remained in continuous operation from its opening date in 1827. The newly professed Sisters returned immediately to the House of Mercy to resume their work. The next day, with the approval of the Archbishop,

Sister M. Catherine was appointed Mother Superior of the House of Mercy and from that day was to become known as Mother McAuley. (Carroll, 1866, pp. 123-124; 138-139).

The ignorance of Ireland's poor was well known to Mother McAuley, and she realized that the only way she could help these people would be through Catholic education. Specialized training or leadership qualities, she believed, could only be developed once the people were sufficiently educated to be able to make use of these qualities (Lennon, 1954, p. 12). Thus education became the most important work of the newly formed Order, and Mother McAuley felt that her teachers should be well prepared for the task which they were to undertake:

Teaching she regarded as the chief function of the Order, and teaching requires continual preparation. . . . to teach well, kindness and prudence, though indispensable, will not suffice without the solid foundation of a good education; and a judicious method of imparting knowledge. (Carroll, 1866, p. 174)

Mother McAuley desired that children should not only receive a sound education from teachers who were qualified to instruct them but should also "receive a thoroughly Christian education—an education of which religion is not a mere ornament, but the basis; the sustenance, the essence, the inseparable accompaniment" (Carroll, 1866, pp. 178-179).

Mother McAuley could not find models on which to base her Catholic educational system, nor were there examples to encourage or enlighten her. Therefore, in order to accomplish her mission

she visited the best educational institutions in the city (Dublin) and from their programs she adapted the best methods of teaching secular subjects, and permeated these with the precious gift of religion. (Lennon, pp. 12-13)

The framework which Mother McAuley used to set up her educational system included the following:

1. Purpose--All for the honor and glory of God
2. Scholarship--Each Sister must have a thorough English education and in addition, specialization.
3. Progressiveness--Study to become acquainted with every improvement in the manner and method of imparting instruction.
4. Preparation--The Sisters shall prepare daily the lessons they are to present to the pupils.
5. Discipline--Obviate punishment by giving the children plenty of occupation.
6. Staff--A Sister directress shall be appointed to each school. Her duty is to supervise personally. She is responsible for keeping records for inspection. (Familiar Instructions of Mother Catherine McAuley, 1927, chap. 2)

The educational ideals of Mother McAuley formed the basis on which all the future congregations of the Mercy Order were to build their educational institutions.

II. The Efforts of Bishop Fleming to Establish the Order of Mercy in Newfoundland

A little over a decade after the founding of the Order of Mercy, Bishop Michael Fleming of St. John's, who had previously brought the Presentation Sisters to the Island to teach the daughters of the poor, now became concerned about another segment of his people--the daughters of the more comfortable and wealthy classes. The Bishop felt that the best way to do this would be to "introduce a community of nuns of the Order of Mercy, whose rule would permit them to keep a pension school" (Fleming, 1979, p. 370).

In order to do this, Bishop Fleming sent to Dublin a young lady who had spent some years in Newfoundland and who was well aware of the conditions in the country as well as of his particular plans. This young lady was to pass her novitiate with the Sisters of Mercy and after her profession, return to Newfoundland along with any other ladies who might wish to join her,

in order to found a Convent of Mercy at St. John's and open a school,--a day-school for such as could pay for their

education,--a school where children may be taught the elegant and fashionable accomplishments of the day, and at the same time may have their young minds properly imbued with the principles of religion. (Fleming, 1979, p. 370).

The Bishop later went to Ireland to procure materials for his cathedral which was being built in St. John's and, at the same time, to finalize negotiations with the Sisters of Mercy. The May 18, 1842, issue of The Newfoundland Patriot carried an article from the True Tablet which read as follows:

The truly zealous and beloved Bishop of the Vicariate of Newfoundland, sailed from Liverpool on the 4th inst. . . . His object in visiting Ireland was to procure materials for his splendid Cathedral now being erected in St. John's, Newfoundland. . . . In addition to having thus laid the foundation of a magnificent . . . temple, his lordship, on this occasion, has laid another foundation for the sustainment and promotion of religion, by inducing many who aspire to be temples of the Holy Ghost, to leave their country, their parents, and their friends, to plant the standard of the cross in a foreign country, and to pour into the ears of lisping babes in the distant wilds of North America the salutary lessons of virtue and religion. . . . These nuns are to found a Convent, or House of Mercy, in Newfoundland. . . . these ladies of the Order of Mercy will not only attend to the administrations of charity, but will also open an establishment for the education of the wealthier classes. (p. 3)

On June 10, 1842, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the young lady whom Bishop Fleming had sent to Ireland, now Sister Mary Francis Creedon, along with two

companions, arrived in St. John's (Howley, 1979, p. 371). The enthusiasm with which they were received by the citizens of St. John's is evident in the following remarks by Bishop Fleming, who had gone out to sea by pilot boat to meet their ship, the Sir Walter Scott:

On approaching the wharf . . . we found it and those adjoining thronged with multitudes who were eager to extend a welcome to those who had made so many and such great sacrifices for the promotion of the spiritual interests of the people of Newfoundland, and, as they neared the landing-place, cheers, loud and long, testified the delight of the expectant multitudes. (Fleming, 1979, pp. 371-372)

The Sisters were eventually escorted to the residence of the Bishop, where arrangements had been made for them to stay until such time as their convent was completed (Fleming, 1979, p. 371). This small group formed the first foundation of the Sisters of Mercy in North America. (Howley, 1979, p. 371)

Within a few months the Sisters were able to move into their new convent. Very shortly thereafter they were joined by a fourth lady who had already completed her novitiate in another Order (Fleming, 1979, p. 373). The convent, a wooden structure, was replaced in 1856 by a new stone building and officially opened in 1857. (Howley, 1979, p. 374). In the succeeding years this convent was to play a very significant part in the history of business education in Newfoundland, as will be seen in Chapter V.

CHAPTER III.

THE OEPNING OF THE FIRST SCHOOLS OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN NEWFOUNDLAND

The first schools of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland were established at St. John's, but it was not long before the Sisters moved outside St. John's to take on the task of instructing the children of the many little communities scattered around the Island. The arrival of the Sisters at these communities was greeted with enthusiasm by Catholic and Protestant, English and French alike.

These early schools, while providing instruction for those who could afford to pay for their education, also provided instruction for those who were of lesser circumstances. The Sisters' work was not easy, and the facilities and equipment with which they had to work were in many cases very poor. However, the record of their accomplishments is one of which they may be proud.

The first part of this chapter looks at the opening of the Sisters' first school at the Convent of Mercy, St. John's; St. Michael's Convent School at Belvedere

Orphanage; the first boarding school operated at the Convent of Mercy, St. John's; and the convent schools at Brigus, Burin, Conception Harbour, and St. Lawrence.

The second part of the chapter looks at St. Peter's School in St. John's; the second boarding school at St. Bride's Academy, Litledale; the first convent school founded by Sisters of Mercy from the United States at Sandy Point and its later relocation to St. George's; and the other early primary and elementary schools operated by the Sisters of Mercy in St. John's.

I. The Opening of the First School at the Convent of Mercy, St. John's

The Sisters of Mercy were not long in St. John's before they had won the respect of the citizens. On April 26, 1843, less than a year after their arrival in St. John's, the following editor's note appeared in The Patriot and Terra-Nova Herald:

We are gratified in being enabled to call attention to a Card in this day's paper, announcing the opening of an establishment for the education of young Ladies, in all the useful studies and necessary accomplishments. This establishment is to be conducted by the amiable Sisters of Mercy - whose many virtues and whose hal-
lowed life will, we would fain hope, obtain for them an overflowing Seminary. (p. 3)

The card alluded to above was to announce the opening of the Sisters' first school in Newfoundland. It read as follows:

FEMALE EDUCATION

A school for the Education of Young Ladies under the direction of the SISTERS OF MERCY will be opened at the CONVENT OF MERCY, Cathedral Place, ON MONDAY, the 1st May, 1843.

The general School course will comprise READING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC, ENGLISH GRAMMAR, GEOGRAPHY, Use of the GLOBES; HISTORY, & c., NEEDLE WORKS, (plain and ornamental,) & c., Terms--Five Pounds per annum.

Extra Charges:--

The FRENCH or ITALIAN Language--Two Pounds per annum.

MUSIC--Eight Pounds per annum

The above terms to be paid Quarterly in advance. (p. 3)

On May 1, 1843, the new school referred to in the newspaper card was opened, and "in a very brief space of time they had a considerable number of pupils" (Fleming, p. 373). This first school provided both academic and practical instruction which was to become the pattern of curriculum for the schools which were to follow.

With the opening of the school at the Convent of Mercy, St. John's, the Sisters' educational work had begun. In the years that followed they were to open

many convents and schools, not only in St. John's but also in the many little communities across the Island.

II. St. Michael's Convent School, Belvedere

On July 14, 1850, Bishop Michael Fleming, the man who had introduced the Sisters of Mercy to Newfoundland, passed away in the monastery which he had built at Belvedere, just outside St. John's (Howley, 1895, p. 29). In his will the Bishop had bequeathed to the Sisters all his property, to be used for the maintenance of an orphanage. On December 8, 1854, an orphanage was opened at the Convent of Mercy. (Flynn, 1937, p. 405)

In 1859 the Sisters moved the orphans to the old monastery of Belvedere (Howley, 1979, p. 376). They named their new convent St. Michael's, in honour of Bishop Fleming. On September 29, 1885, a new stone and brick building, built to replace the old wooden structure, was officially opened. In time a school was attached to the new orphanage at Belvedere (Flynn, pp. 405-406). In his Annual Report for 1892, the Superintendent of Roman Catholic Schools stated that there were six teachers at the school, the pupils did well in the examination, and "the discipline of the school was excellent" (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1892, p. 111).

III. St. Clare's Boarding School at
the Convent of Mercy, St. John's

With the old orphanage building at the Convent of Mercy now vacated, the Sisters decided to use it as a boarding school, to be operated in conjunction with the day school. They renamed the building St. Clare's Boarding School (McCormack, 1955, p. 27). In the intervening years since 1843, when the Sisters had first opened the day school at the Convent of Mercy, the curriculum had expanded considerably. A card in the June 13, 1861, issue of The Newfoundlander, listed the following subjects which were to be taught at the new St. Clare's Boarding School:

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, the English and French LANGUAGES, WRITING, ARITHMETIC, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, the use of the GLOBES, Natural PHILOSOPHY, BOTANY, ASTRONOMY, and Plain and Ornamental NEEDLEWORK.

The MODERN LANGUAGES, MUSIC, Vocal and Instrumental, & c., & c., & c. form extra charges. (p. 4)

In addition to the above, the greatest attention was also to be given to "the children's character, their health, diet, necessary relaxation, and general comfort" (p. 4).

The Sisters at the Convent of Mercy operated this boarding school for approximately twenty years. It was finally closed in 1881, but the day school continued to

operate (McCormack, p. 29) and played a leading role in the development of business education in Newfoundland, as will be seen in Chapter V.

IV. St. Joseph's Convent School, Brigus

With two schools operating in St. John's, the Sisters decided to expand their educational work to other parts of the Island. Shortly after the opening of St. Clare's Boarding School, the Sisters established their first outpost convent at Brigus. They named it St. Joseph's Convent (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy). On September 11, 1861, four Sisters accompanied by their Superioress went to Brigus on board the steamer Ellen Gisborne. Their arrival at Brigus was welcomed not only by Catholics but by many Protestants as well. The September 23, 1861, issue of The Newfoundlander carried a detailed account of their arrival, which reads in part as follows:

As soon as the Ellen Gisborne steamer was seen to approach the harbor, up went the green flag on the well known Tara Hill, and the Convent itself all the Catholics and very many Protestant houses showed flags and colours of various devices. . . . The Convent bell sounded its welcome, and the population moved en masse to the wharf to demonstrate their reverence, as well as their grateful feelings for the blessing conferred upon them. Upon the landing of the clergy and nuns, a large cannon with a great number of sealing pieces, shot

forth The Convent . . . is really a handsome and exceedingly well built edifice. . . . In connection with the Convent there is a large school house in course of erection. (p. 2)

The Sisters took up their teaching duties almost immediately. The opening of the convent school was a great blessing to the Catholic girls of Brigus, who, prior to the opening of the convent school, were required to walk to the Catholic school which was located at a very inconvenient site in the community. In fact, the inconvenient location of the school prevented many of the younger children from attending. Forty students enrolled at the convent school that first year, and the course of study included reading; writing; cyphering; grammar; geography; and history, sacred and profane. (Report upon the Inspection of Catholic Schools in Newfoundland for the year 1861, pp. 247; 269)

By 1869 another subject had been added to the course of study at the Brigus convent school. This new subject was needle work. However, the enrollment at the school was only 45, a very small increase over the years since 1861. Even with the small number of students enrolled, the average daily attendance was only 35 (Report upon the Inspection of Roman Catholic Schools for the year 1869, pp. 180-181).

Yet, in view of the problems with attendance faced by all schools in Newfoundland at that time, this small number is not surprising:

The early age at which children in this country can, by their labor, contribute to the support of the family, tends to the too early withdrawal of the children from school; and of course with limited acquirements. But even the too early withdrawing of the children is not so injurious as their irregular attendance during the years they are presumed to be pupils of the schools Until some change for the better is effected in that particular no progress can be expected to take place in the schools. (Report upon the Inspection of Roman Catholic Schools for the year 1869, p. 151.)

The Sisters were to have to contend with this problem for many years. In a report of his visit to the school in 1880, the inspector noted that the progress of the students was being impeded by their poor attendance. Only 34 pupils were present for the inspector's visit, and they did not fare very well in the examination which he gave:

Geography was fair, and grammar not so good. Those learning advanced rules in arithmetic had not been attending regularly, and their answering in that and mental exercises showed a want of quickness that regular attendance would have attained. (Report on the Public Schools of Newfoundland, under Roman Catholic Boards, for year ended December 31st, 1880, p. 191)

The limited number of students they were able to serve in their first outpost convent school did not discourage the Sisters. They continued their work; and, in

the years to follow, they were to open convents in other outports around the Island.

V. St. Ann's Convent School, Burin.

A little more than two years after the Sisters had opened their convent at Brigus, they were ready to open a second outport convent at Burin. They named it St. Ann's (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy). On July 12, 1863, the Bishop of St. John's, accompanied by the Reverend Mother of the Order of Mercy and four Sisters, arrived in Burin on board the steamer Ariel to establish a convent and school. Their arrival was greeted with the same kind of warmth and enthusiasm as that shown to the previous group of Sisters who had gone to Brigus. The July 20, 1863, issue of The Newfoundlander carried the following account of their arrival:

At about six o'clock, p.m., our population were warned by the announcement that the steamer Ariel had appeared in the offing, and within a quarter of an hour the government wharf, on which had been erected a tasteful Triumphal Arch, and Mount Saint Patrick, where cannon had been planted in anticipation of this long-desired occasion, were thronged with a rejoicing people, each one eager to express his heartfelt gratification at this auspicious event.

On the debarcation of his Lordship and the nuns, salvos of artillery rent the air, accompanied by loud shouts of joyful welcome from the assembled multitude, and bonfires illuminated the surrounding hills. (p. 3)

By 1865 the Sisters had 50 pupils enrolled in their school; and the course of study included reading, writing on slates and paper, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. (Report upon the Inspection of Catholic Schools for the year 1865, pp. 840-841)

In keeping with the principles of their foundress, the Sisters of Mercy at Burin adjusted their curriculum over the years to meet the needs of the pupils and also of their families. Where the need arose, the girls were given practical instruction to help them find employment. During his annual visit to Burin in 1882, the school inspector noted that "along with the usual plain and fancy needle-work, the more grown girls were taught knitting and spinning" (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland, under Roman Catholic Boards, for the year ending December 31st, 1882, p. 216).

The inspector made the following comments about the value of such practical instruction:

This practical instruction, given girls in Convent Schools, tends to provide to some extent employment for the female members of families. The aim and object of Education should be a preparation for the duties to be discharged by the individual in after life. Closely allied to this principle, in connection with the great bulk of the people, are the following social problems: The means by which the necessities of life may be more easily procured; the expenses of living lessened; and suitable employment provided at

certain seasons of the year. When girls are taught how to prepare woollen (sic) articles of clothing for domestic use, it will naturally follow that the father and sons become more desirous of providing the necessary material. In this way some encouragement, however small, would be given to the extension of agriculture, especially as regards the rearing of sheep. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland, under Roman Catholic Boards, for the year ending December 31st, 1882, pp. 216-217)

This early determination on the part of the Sisters at Burin to help their pupils find employment did not change. In the succeeding years they were to continually provide the type of instruction they felt their pupils required. Within less than twenty years this was to include business subjects, as will be seen in Chapter IV.

VI. Immaculate Conception Convent School Conception Harbour

On May 24, 1869, the Sisters of Mercy opened their second convent in Conception Bay, at Conception Harbour. They named their convent Immaculate Conception (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy). By autumn they were ready to begin their educational work.

The course of study offered at the convent school at Conception Harbour was similar to that of the other outport convents and included reading, writing, cyphering, grammar, geography, and needle work. In that first year 144 pupils enrolled in the school. However, the

average daily attendance was only 80. Thus from the very beginning the Sisters were to have to face the problem of poor attendance, as did the Sisters at Brigus. (Report upon the Inspection of Roman Catholic Schools for the year 1869, pp. 180-181)

At the time of the inspector's visit in the early part of November 1880, there were only 23 students present. In the report of his visit to Conception Harbour, he made the following comments about the poor attendance:

Most of the girls who were employed at home during the Fall, or taken to Labrador by their parents in the summer, had not returned to school. This was the cause of the attendance being so much less than at other seasons of the year. (Report on the Public Schools of Newfoundland, under Roman Catholic Boards, for year ended December 31st, 1880, p. 191)

The Sisters at Conception Harbour, like the Sisters at Brigus, were not discouraged by the poor attendance at their schools. They continued to expand the curriculum of their schools and by the 1890's were ready to face the new Commercial Age which was about to dawn, as will be seen in Chapter IV.

VII. Sacred Heart Convent and St. Ann's School, St. Lawrence

On September 21, 1871, the Sisters established their second convent on the Burin Peninsula at the village of

St. Lawrence. They named their convent, which for the first five years was housed in the presbytery, Sacred Heart. For their first school, the Sisters used a fish shed. (McCormack, pp. 64-65)

Despite the lack of adequate facilities during the first years at St. Lawrence, the Sisters were able to provide instruction for the Catholic girls of the community. By the following year, 1872, they had also taken responsibility for the boys, who were temporarily without a male teacher. The inspector made the following comments about the school:

I found a large number of females attending the school conducted by the Nuns, and of course receiving from those ladies the successful tuition and careful training which characterizes the teaching in these Conventual Schools. (Report upon the Inspection of Roman Catholic Schools, for the year 1872, p. 333)

The Sisters named their school St. Ann's. They continued their work; and on November 13, 1876, their new convent was formally opened. (McCormack, p. 64)

As will be seen in Chapter IV, in just a few years the convent school at St. Lawrence was to join the other convent schools in Newfoundland in providing instruction for pupils in business subjects.

VIII. St. Peter's School
Queen Street, St. John's

In 1881 four Sisters from the Convent of Mercy in St. John's opened a school in an old church building on Queen Street. They named their school St. Peter's. In this school the Sisters taught both boys and girls. The boys remained at the school for their elementary education and then moved to one of the other schools in the city operated by the Christian Brothers. The girls continued at St. Peter's. (McCormack, p. 50)

By 1892 there were 206 pupils enrolled at St. Peter's School, 93 girls and 113 boys. Two Sisters were in charge of the girls' department and two of the boys' department. The inspector gave the following account of the poor conditions under which these Sisters had to teach:

In both school-rooms there was a good deal of noise and confusion, which, however, are unavoidable under present conditions. The two apartments are separated by a partition only a few feet high, which has very little effect in preventing the noise in the one room from interfering with the other. And where, as in this case, two teachers have to work in one room and move large numbers of children about, the difficulty of avoiding disorder and excessive noise is very much enhanced. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended 31st December, 1892, p. 110)

Despite the problems encountered in this school, the Sisters continued their work. As will be seen in the next

chapter, St. Peter's was to be among the early schools offering business subjects as part of the school curriculum.

IX. St. Bride's Academy, Littledale

On November 13, 1883, the Sisters purchased the estate of Judge Philip Francis Little at Waterford Valley near St. John's, for the purpose of establishing a boarding school for young girls from all across Newfoundland. The woman who negotiated this purchase was Reverend Mother Bernard Clune, the Superioress of the Mother House, Convent of Mercy, St. John's.

Mother Bernard was a woman of foresight who believed that the best way to serve the young women of the Island would be by the establishment of a boarding school where they would receive an appropriate education. With this in mind, she had, for some time previously, assembled around her a group of young Sisters whom she trained for the difficult work of teaching. Having done this, she sought and obtained permission from her religious superiors to open a boarding school. So with the purchase of the Little property her dream was fulfilled.

The Sisters moved into the Little residence, a small wooden building consisting of two floors. A classroom was constructed at the east side of the building and a

dormitory and lavatory on the west side. The property was named St. Bride's Academy, Littledale, and formally opened on August 20, 1884. The first Superior to be appointed was Mother M. Xaverius Dowsley.

By the end of the first year the total number of boarding pupils registered at St. Bride's Academy, Littledale, was 13 (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1919, p. 5). The subjects offered in that first year covered "all branches comprised in a first-class English education - French, Music, Drawing and Painting, Domestic Economy, Plain and Ornamental Needlework" (The Newfoundlander, August 1, 1884, p. 3). In addition, for a small fee, extra classes were available as follows:

- Piano lessons from master
- Piano lessons from mistress
- Organette
- Vocal Music by Master
- Vocal Music in class
- Drawing in Pencil and Crayon
- Painting in Oils, on Glass, Satin, Velvet and Gelatine
- Dancing
- (The Newfoundlander, August 1, 1884, p. 3)

St. Bride's Academy, Littledale, was not long in attracting the young ladies of the Island to its classrooms. Carroll (1889) makes the following comments about this new boarding school:

A boarding-school has been opened at Littledale, conducted by a fine staff

of vigorous, zealous religious. Heretofore it was considered rather a slur on the island that young girls had to go elsewhere in search of boarding-schools. But now St. Bride's College, Littledale, is spacious enough for all the islanders who prefer boarding to day schools, and many have been already attracted by the superior instruction given within its walls. (Vol. III, p. 29)

Howley (1979), in commenting on the new academy, says:

a new young ladies' academy, opened at the beautiful grounds of St. Bride's, Waterford Bridge . . . only in its infancy, has given already great promise of future success (p. 377)

This comment made only four years after the opening of the school was certainly an accurate prediction of what was to happen in the years that followed. St. Bride's Academy, later renamed St. Bride's College, was to play a very prominent role in the field of business education in Newfoundland, as will be seen in Chapter VI.

X. St. Michael's Convent St. George's

(In 1893 the first convent of the Sisters of Mercy on the West Coast of Newfoundland was opened at Sandy Point in the Diocese of St. George's:

This convent, St. Michael's, has the distinction of being the first convent in the diocese as well as being the only convent of mercy in Newfoundland to be founded from the United States. (The Diocesan Review, August 1973, p. 7)

The foundation for this new convent was provided by a wealthy lady from the United States, Mrs. Henrietta M. K. Brownell, a convert to the Catholic religion. In appreciation for what she felt was a great gift, Mrs. Brownell approached a community of the Sisters of Mercy in Providence, Rhode Island, and offered to provide financial assistance for the founding of a convent in an overseas mission. One of the first Sisters to volunteer for this mission was Mother M. Antonia Egan. She was soon joined by other Sisters at Providence, one of whom was Irish-born Sister M. Corsini Dempsey, who had grown up in St. John's, Newfoundland, and was aware of the poverty existing in what was at that time the vicariate of St. George's, under Bishop Michael Francis Howley. Sister Corsini offered, and was granted permission, to write Bishop Howley regarding Mrs. Brownell's wishes.

Bishop Howley responded immediately. After having the necessary alterations made to his home to make it suitable as a convent and securing a house for a presbytery, he went to Providence to discuss plans with Mrs. Brownell. Once the plans were finalized, he selected four Sisters and accompanied them to Sandy Point. The small group were made up of Mother M. Antonia Egan,

Superior; Sister M. Corsini Dempsey; Sister M. Sylvester Cavers; and Sister M. Veronica Payne. They were accompanied to Sandy Point by their benefactress, Mrs. Brownell. (The Diocesan Review, August 1973, p. 7)

The August 12, 1893, issue of The Evening Telegram gives an account of the interest and enthusiasm shown by the people of Sandy Point in the arrival of this small group of Sisters from the United States:

The beautiful and picturesque settlement of Sandy Point was all en fete on Friday, July 28th, in preparation for the reception of the Right Rev. Bishop Howley with the first instalment of the Sisters of Mercy who have come from Providence, R.I., U.S.A., for the foundation of a Convent of that noble order on this shore. . . . The smoke of the steamer was visible far out in the Bay, and soon every flag-staff, store and ship's mast was gay with bright-hued bunting. . . . As the steamer neared the wharf a great crowd gathered, and salvoes of guns were heard on every side. The line of procession from the wharf to the Bishop's residence . . . was spanned by several arches of evergreens of tasty design and decorated with wreaths, mottoes and flags, among which the tri-colour of France was particularly conspicuous. . . . The good people displayed the most unbounded enthusiasm and interest in the arrival of the nuns, and flocked around them to welcome them in their own simple ways as the harbingers of great future blessings to this place. (p. 4)

The tri-colour of France, which formed part of the decorations, represented the background of many of the people of the Sandy Point area at that time. Rowe (1980) writes, "Bay St. George was settled during the nineteenth

century; the inhabitants came to Newfoundland chiefly from the Magdelin Islands and from the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence" (p. 124)

The eagerness of this little group to start their work is evidenced in the following comments made in the press:

The nuns will take charge of the public school immediately after vacation, and will very soon open a branch for higher education. The site for the new Convent, to be named Mount Amastris, is on the South side of the harbor in a most beautiful locality, and preparations for the building will be commenced during the coming winter, so that by the time the railway shall have been finished, it is hoped the new building will be fully completed. (Evening Telegram, August 12, 1893, p. 4)

Mrs. Brownell was to return to Sandy Point again and again over the years, spending long periods of time each year at the convent she had founded:

To this foundation Mrs. Brownell was most generous. From the arrival of the sisters until her death in 1897 she spent about six months of each year at the Convent she had founded, holding Saturday and evening classes, visiting and providing for the sick and dying poor, making clothes for poor children, giving piano and violin lessons, training the choir, even at times assisting the sisters in the work of the schools. (The Monitor, February 22, 1939, p. 12)

The sudden death of Mrs. Brownell occurred while she was in the process of getting ready to return to Newfoundland

to spend the winter. Not long after the death of Mrs. Brownell, the Sandy Point foundation was to lose another of its members. This time it was Sister M. Sylvester Cavers, who no longer able to endure the long Northern winters, returned home to Rhode Island.

Despite the loss of two of the founding members of the Sandy Point Convent, other women came to offer their services. Miss Brigid Sears of Ireland and Miss Jane de Bourke of D'Escousse, Nova Scotia, entered the convent at Sandy Point and received the habits as Sisters M. Cecilia and Sister Terese Joseph respectively. (The Diocesan Review, August 1973, p. 7)

In 1898 the School District of Sandy Point was plagued with problems, and the Sisters' work was seen as being a significant move to improve the situation:

Owing to a variety of causes, education in this section of the coast has progressed so far very slowly. . . . The population--only 1034 by last Census--is scattered along a coastline of about eighty miles; roads have been very inferior and communication, slow and difficult; the people themselves, new settlers in great part, have been oppressed by poverty. . . . These and other difficulties have combined for many years to hamper the School Board in undertaking needed improvements. . . . The establishment of the Convent at Sandy Point, by His Lordship, Bishop Howley, in 1893, was an important advance. Up to the present, the nuns have been teaching on the North Side of the harbor, where. . . they continue to do excellent work. Several of their pupils have been successfully prepared for the Junior Grade examinations of the Council of Higher Education.

In the near future, the nuns will remove to the South Side of the harbor, where His Lordship is erecting a Convent and School-house for them. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended 31st December, 1898, pp. 76-77)

With the railway having been completed to St. George's in 1897, the new Bishop of the diocese, Bishop Neil McNeil, decided that the Church could serve a more useful purpose if it were situated at St. George's. Consequently, in approximately two years a new church and presbytery were built at that community. In 1899 the Sisters opened their new convent school at St. George's. (The Diocesan Review, June 1974, p. 6)

In October 1899 the school inspector made his first official visit to the new school. At that time the pupils did very poorly in the examination he gave them, as can be seen in the following comments contained in his report:

In October '99, time of my first official examination, after the convent's removal from Sandy Point, the highest class in arithmetic did not have a thoro grasp of the compound rules, and the classes in spelling, grammar, and geography, etc., were not advanced beyond that in arithmetic. Besides this, the language of the school was English, a tongue foreign to the majority of the pupils. . . . the junior room was attended by pupils of rather advanced age, but educationally in an unadvanced stage. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1901, pp. 70-71)

Despite these problems the inspector stated, "Yet I felt confident, from observing the admirable way in which affairs were being conducted, that good results would come" (p. 71)

The inspector was not mistaken. In 1900 the Sisters opened a boarding school, St. Michael's Academy, named in honour of the late Bishop Howley (The Diocesan Review, June 1974, p. 6). When the inspector returned, he noted that there were 62 pupils enrolled, two of whom were boarders. He was able to report the following:

The progress made during the year is very marked. . . . The French element being so large the Sisters have much uphill work, as English is the language taught in the school. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the year ended 31st December, 1900, p. 65)

The Sisters, undaunted by the language difficulties, poverty, and isolation which they faced, continued their fine educational work. In just one year the inspector was able to make the following report:

This institution entered a few of its more advanced pupils for the C.H.E. examinations last June. Two were successful, one in the preliminary grade and one in the primary. This is a highly creditable showing--considering the many disadvantages that had to be overcome--and an illustration of the rapid strides forward this school is making under its present capable and zealous teachers. . . . That such an advance could be made there in the short space of two years . . . is indeed a matter which may

warrant one in predicting brilliant results from this institution at a not far distant date. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1901, pp. 70-71)

Mother Antonia, the Superior, was familiar with the operation of boarding schools and worked very hard to make St. Michael's a success:

Mother Antonia, who had had experience in such institutions, worked hard and successfully in its interests. Yearly, pupils from St. George's and other sections of the West and South Coast came as boarders to St. Michael's Academy, and thus the influence of this little community gradually spread. (The Monitor, February 22, 1939, p. 12)

With time St. Michael's was to figure prominently in the development of business education on the West Coast of Newfoundland. An account of the work of St. Michael's College will be given in Chapter VII.

XI. Other Early Schools Operated by The Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland

In addition to the schools already mentioned in this chapter, there were other schools operated by the Sisters of Mercy in St. John's, Newfoundland. These schools were St. Bridget's School, later replaced by St. Joseph's School, and the Angels Guardian School.

St. Bridget's School was opened in a section of the East End of St. John's known for a time as Maggoty Cove and later called Hoylestown. This school was

conducted by two Sisters from the Convent of Mercy. In the first year of operation, 1863, there were 187 pupils enrolled at the school, learning reading, writing, and arithmetic. Following his visit to St. Bridget's that year, the school inspector made the following comments:

The School-house is a very superior one, and the School-room, which is large and lofty and capable of accommodating a very large number of children, is provided with the necessary amount of School furniture. . . . The establishment of this School is calculated to confer the greatest benefit that could possibly be bestowed on the female Catholic children of this populous locality, as it brings within their reach all the advantages of Conventual education and training. (Report upon the Inspection of Catholic Schools in Newfoundland for the year 1863, p. 240)

St. Bridget's appeared to have attracted a large number of students and also to have had frequent adjustments to its curriculum. In 1865 the number of pupils enrolled jumped to 338, and geography and grammar were added to the three basic subjects on the original curriculum (Report upon the Inspection of Catholic Schools for the year 1865, pp. 840-841). Four years later, in 1869, the enrollment was 250, and two more subjects were added to the curriculum, this time cyphering and needle work. (Report upon the Inspection of Roman Catholic Schools for the year 1869, pp. 180-181)

St. Bridget's School disappears from the Roman Catholic School Reports after 1881. It was succeeded a few years later by St. Joseph's School, Hoylestown, which opened in 1884. The curriculum of this school consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland, under Roman Catholic Boards, for the year ended 31st December, 1884, pp. 288-289). St. Joseph's was conducted by two Sisters from the Convent of Mercy (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1892, pp. 110-111). This school was not to survive very long. On July 8, 1892, "a portion of Hoylestown, including the Convent School" (Prowse, 1895, p. 526) was destroyed in one of the worst fires in the history of St. John's.

On September 18, 1881, the Sisters opened the Angels Guardian School at the Convent of Mercy in the building previously occupied by St. Clare's Boarding School (McCormack, p. 29). Howley (1979) gives the following account of the opening of the Angels Guardian School:

At the Mother House, the school of the Guardian Angels, (sic) for infant boys and girls, has been opened, to be conducted on the kindergarten system.
(p. 377)

The boys remained with the Sisters up to about grade four or five and then transferred to one of the schools operated by the Christian Brothers. The girls transferred into the regular school system at the Convent of Mercy. -(McCormack, p. 30)

In addition to the two schools above, the Sisters also opened a convent at Petit (Petty) Harbour, outside St. John's, in 1866, where they "had the courage to reside for four years, teaching the children, instructing adults, and visiting the sick" (Carroll, 1889, pp. 28-29). This convent remained open only three years. "As no resident priest could be procured and the Sisters were deprived of almost every spiritual consolation, they were recalled to the motherhouse, 1869" (Carroll, 1889, p. 29).

These schools have been mentioned merely to show the scope of the Sisters' work in Newfoundland. No further mention will be made of them in this study since the work of these schools was of a very elementary nature and in no way related to the development of business education in Newfoundland.

The willingness of the Sisters of Mercy to face the hardships of pioneer work in the small, isolated communities of Newfoundland helped to ease the lot

of many young women. Perhaps the fact that they were a body of religious may have had some bearing on the progress they were able to make under such difficult conditions:

Besides the moral and intellectual training and religious instruction given to all pupils attending Convent schools, they offer special attraction to grown girls, who can attend school only at certain seasons. Persons bordering on adult age naturally feel an unwillingness to assume the position of scholars in public schools conducted by lay Teachers, and to mix in the usual way with those much younger than themselves. When advice and instruction are received from religious, the effect is more beneficial, and the disinclination to school association is lessened. The amount of good done in this way by Convent schools is of abiding advantage to the individual and the community. (Report on the Public Schools of Newfoundland, under Roman Catholic Boards, for year ended December 31st, 1880, pp. 191-192)

Whatever the reason for their success, there is no doubt that by the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland had built for themselves a very fine reputation as Catholic educators. In a very few years many of their schools were to become the training centres for the business world.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTRODUCTION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION SUBJECTS INTO THE CURRICULUM OF THE CONVENT SCHOOLS

The Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland were always women of foresight and courage. It is not surprising then that in the latter part of the nineteenth century they would begin to foresee the value of training young girls for work in the business world.

The introduction of business education subjects into the curriculum of the convent schools occurred on a gradual basis, over a period of years, until eventually a comprehensive business program was developed at many of the schools. The first part of this chapter will look at the introduction of the first business education subject, bookkeeping, and the creation of the Council of Higher Education, which brought about changes in the curriculum of all Newfoundland schools.

The latter part of the chapter will deal with the introduction of shorthand and typewriting and the influence on the curriculum of the mounting interest in commercial education in Newfoundland in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

I. The Introduction of Bookkeeping

The first business education subject which the Sisters introduced into the curriculum of their schools was the old art of recordkeeping, or bookkeeping, as it is more formally known.

While bookkeeping is thought to have been in existence for many thousands of years, it was the Italians who developed the more sophisticated system used in Europe in the eighteenth century. And, it was not until after 1850 that the modern topics of double entry bookkeeping, income finding, asset valuation, and financial statements appeared in bookkeeping textbooks. (Chatfield, 1974, pp. 5; 33; 58)

This subject appeared in the curriculum of the convent schools in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1880 there were three students enrolled in bookkeeping at St. Ann's School, St. Lawrence (Report on the Public Schools of Newfoundland, under Roman Catholic Boards, for year ended December 31st, 1880, pp. 244-245). In 1892 there was one student doing bookkeeping at St. Joseph's Convent School, Brigus, and 12 students at the Immaculate Conception Convent School in Conception Harbour. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1892, pp. 66-67)

Before many years had passed, bookkeeping had become a permanent part of the curriculum of convent schools. While

the enrollments fluctuated from year to year, this business education subject was to remain part of the curriculum for many years to come.

II. The Influence on the Curriculum of the Creation of the Council of Higher Education

The Council of Higher Education was incorporated by Act of Legislature in 1893 (Syllabus and Regulations, Historical Note, 1921). The powers and duties of the Council were outlined as follows:

1. To promote sound learning, and to advance the interests of higher education by holding examinations, and by awarding diplomas, prizes, and scholarships to successful candidates.
2. To prescribe the subjects, manner, time and place of examinations, and to make such regulations as may be necessary for the holding of such examinations, awarding diplomas, prizes and scholarships. (Barnes, 1917, p. 147)

The Council's examination papers were prepared in London, England, by the College of Preceptors, and forwarded to the Council in St. John's for distribution to the local examination centres. Committees were set up at the local centres, and supervisors were hired to ensure that papers were honestly written. The candidates' papers were enclosed in special envelopes for each grade, sealed in the presence of committee members, and mailed to the Registrar of the Council in St. John's. These sealed

envelopes were then repackaged and shipped to the Council's office in London, England. (Barnes, p. 147)

In the beginning the Council conducted two grades of examination, Junior and Senior, which later were to be changed to Preliminary and Intermediate. In 1896 the Associate Grade was added (Syllabus and Regulations, Historical Note, 1921). It was primarily within the first two grades that business education subjects were offered.

The following range of subjects, with slight variations for each grade, was available for students doing Junior, Senior, and Associate Examinations: English, arithmetic, geography and history, algebra, geometry, mathematics, mensuration, mensuration and land surveying, mechanics, navigation, trigonometry, chemistry, magnetism and electricity, physics, Greek, German, French, Latin, book-keeping, free-hand drawing, geometrical drawing, domestic economy, scripture history, shorthand, music, and school management.

(Calendar of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1898-99, p. 48)

The Council in its early years appears to have generated considerable interest in education. Barnes (1917) felt that the Council "gave an impetus to the cause of education, promoted a healthy rivalry among teachers and pupils, and created greater uniformity in work and text-books" (p. 148).

The Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for 1900 also includes the following comments concerning the Council:

The Council of Higher Education, since its inception, has created not a little educational enthusiasm throughout the country, and has certainly been the means of elevating the educational tone. There are three grades for diplomas--the Preliminary, Intermediate and Associate. . . . These examinations are so graded, and the choice of subjects so wide, that they may be suited to any class of pupils in our schools. . . . the field is so widely distributed in the choice of subjects that, even in the Associate Grade, one may win a diploma by entering solely for what are popularly called commercial subjects, viz., English, mathematics, and shorthand. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the year ended 31st December, 1900, p. XII)

The Sisters of Mercy, along with other educators, began the task of preparing their students for the Council of Higher Education Examinations, which were soon to become known as the C.H.E. Exams. In 1896 and 1897 one of the students of the Sisters of Mercy at St. Peter's School, St. John's, who wrote the Council of Higher Education Junior Grade Examinations and successfully passed all subjects, was Miss Mary Caul of Caul's Lane, St. John's.

This young lady

passed the Junior Grade Exam., held in June 1896. Satisfying the Examiners in English, Geography & Literature, Arithmetic & Algebra, Geometry, and Book-keeping, Writing, And Gaining Honors in (2nd class) English, Arithmetic & Algebra, and Geometry. (Council of Higher Education Certificate, dated October 1, 1896)

Miss Caul also

passed the Junior Grade Exam., held in May 1897, satisfying the Examiners in Geography and History, and Book-keeping, English, Literature, Arithmetic, Algebra, Writing, French, And Gaining Honors in 1st class French, 2nd class - English Grammar and Literature, and Arithmetic and Algebra. (Council of Higher Education Certificate, dated October 1, 1897)

By 1900 the pupils at another of the Sisters' schools, St. Bride's Academy, Littledale, had established a very fine record in the Council of Higher Education Examinations:

This is the sixth year Littledale has entered candidates, and up to date it has had no failure, a record, as far as I can learn, unbeaten by any other educational establishment in the colony. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the year ended 31st December, 1900, p. XI)

Also, on the West Coast of Newfoundland, St. Michael's Academy, St. George's, prepared students for the C.H.E. Examinations. The Roman Catholic School Report for 1904 contains the following comments:

In the last examination of the C.H.E., two Intermediates, and six Preliminaries passed. In the Intermediate, honors were obtained in book-keeping and art, together with first place in the former, Miss MacDonald having secured max. marks in that subject. In the Preliminary grade, honors were awarded in hygiene and penmanship. This is a proud record for the short time the school has been in being (sic). (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland, for year ended December 31st, 1904, p. 66)

The Council of Higher Education had given the pupils of convent schools a wide range of subjects from which to choose and a goal towards which to strive.

III. The Introduction of Shorthand

By 1897 another business subject had found its way into the curriculum of the convent schools. This new subject was Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, named after its two inventors, John Matthew Sloan of Scotland and Abbé Duployé of France.

This shorthand system was first published by Abbé Duployé, curé of Montigny-en-Arrouaise, France, in 1862. Later John Matthew Sloan, who had been travelling in France and Italy, after completing his schooling in Belgium, became acquainted with the new shorthand system of Abbé Duployé. While Duployé's system had already been adapted to English, Sloan requested and was granted permission by Abbé Duployé to make his own adaptation. This was completed in 1881, and the first edition is said to have been published at Dublin in 1882.

Sloan later moved to London, England, where he continued to teach and promote his shorthand system. Later he became ill and moved to Ramsgate and, despite his health, continued his work.

Sloan-Duployan Shorthand is a geometric, joined-vowel system, with strokes and vowels thickened to add "r." This new system of shorthand owed much of its early success to Sloan, who provided a textbook

which clearly outlined the basic principles of the system. Writing exercises were given in such a manner that pupils could learn without the help of a teacher. (Butler, 1951, pp. 130-132)

By the year 1887 shorthand had gained considerable attention. In September of that year the first International Shorthand Congress was held in London, England. Delegates to the Congress came from all over the world. They had an opportunity to hear papers on all aspects of shorthand and shorthand writing as well as on a recently-developed skill, typewriting. While the majority of shorthand writers of that day were male, it is interesting to note that one of the papers presented at the Congress was given by a lady who spoke on "Shorthand for Women" (Butler, p. 140).

With time a Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society was formed in England to promote interest and enthusiasm in the study of shorthand and to encourage students to develop accuracy and speed. The Society offered many incentives to students as can be seen from the following description of the Society:

Students and writers of Sloan-Duployan in all parts of the world may join this Society and share in its benefits. . . . Its sphere is worldwide. The student . . . may compete for the various medals offered and benefit in the improvement of his, or her,

writing by the stimulating effect of competition. He may enter into communication with fellow Sloan-Duployanites . . . and be constantly in touch with the headquarters of the system.

The chief attraction of membership is the number of gold and silver medals awarded semi-annually, the number being regulated according to the number of competitors. . . . Reports and a Shorthand Supplement are sent to all Associates and Members regularly.

The Society is composed of:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Associates (A.S.D.S.) . . . | Those studying Sloan-Duployan. |
| Members (M.S.D.S.) . . . | Proficient writers of the system who possess the Reporting Style Diploma of Accuracy. |
| Fellows (F.S.D.S.) | The Fellowship Committee entertain applications for Fellowship from Members of not less than seven years' standing. The letters F.S.D.S. are the hall mark of efficiency in Sloan-Duployan and the highest honour that can be bestowed upon exponents of the system. (Sloan, 1951, p. 136) |

By 1890 shorthand had become recognized as a useful office skill. At that time about 38,000 people in England were studying shorthand (Zelter, 1980, p. 21). Here in Newfoundland, at the Convent of Mercy School, a young Sister from Fermanagh, Ireland, Sister Mary Joseph Fox, was

quick to introduce shorthand to her students. The system she chose was Sloan-Duployan. In fact, she was to be well remembered by many in St. John's for her work in the field of shorthand, as evidenced by the following press tribute paid to her memory:

It is sad to have to record the death of another great Sloan-Duployan pioneer. Sister Mary Joseph Fox, principal of the Commercial Department of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, passed away on Monday, 1st September, 1930, after a brief illness. . . . Fervent in the cause of education, she was ever ready to adopt the best methods, and was one of the first to interest herself in Sloan-Duployan. Her association with the system covered a period of over forty years, and during that period her pupils numbered thousands and found their way to business positions in all parts of the world. Ever since the inception of the Sloan-Duploan (sic) Competitions, the trainees of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, St. John's, have figured prominently in the award lists, as well as taking the highest places in the Council for Higher Education and other examinations. (Inter Nos, June 1931, p. 59)

Shorthand soon became a highly competitive subject in convent schools. In addition to the shorthand examinations given by the Sloan-Duployan Society of England, the Council of Higher Education administered its own examinations in this subject. The Council also awarded prizes in Junior and Senior Grade to the student or students winning the highest places in shorthand in

Newfoundland. In 1897, just four years after the Council was formed, these prizes went to two students of St. Bride's Academy, Littledale. First prize in Junior Grade shorthand went to Miss Mary McGire (McGirr), and first prize in Senior Grade went to Miss Hannah Nugent (Calendar of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1898-99, pp. 20; 22). Over the years students of convent schools continued to win top places and prizes in the Council of Higher Education Examinations and in the examinations of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society, as will be seen in the chapters which follow.

Shorthand, like bookkeeping, became a regular part of the curriculum of convent schools. Because of the competitive nature of this subject, it soon attracted attention from many sides. Announcements of shorthand competitions and their results were frequently announced by the press, and both schools and businesses showed an active interest in these competitions.

IV. The Introduction of Typewriting

Shortly after the introduction of shorthand into the curriculum of the convent schools, a new subject known as typewriting appeared. This new subject was

to eventually bring about the introduction of formal business education training programs in the convent schools.

Typewriting came about as a result of the invention of a new writing machine known as the typewriter. The first commercially produced typewriter was developed in the United States by Christopher Latham Sholes and Carlos Glidden, with the financial backing of James Densmore. By 1873 their machine was ready for commercial use. On March 1, 1873, a contract was signed with Remington for one thousand machines. Manufacture began in September, and in early 1874 the first shipments were made.

It was some time before this new machine attracted much attention but when it did, it brought to the field of commerce a whole new career for women. Up until that time women could find employment only as factory workers, sales girls, or domestics, unless they were fortunate enough to have the necessary educational background to pursue a career in teaching or nursing. Perhaps one of the first organizations to start training girls to operate the typewriter was the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States. In 1881 they set up a training class for eight girls, and only five years later female operators could be found in many offices throughout the United States. (Beeching, 1974, pp. 28-29; 32; 34-35)

Less than two decades after the first group of typewriting students were trained in the United States, Sister Mary Joseph Fox of the Convent of Mercy School, who had previously introduced Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, now decided to teach typewriting. In 1898 she purchased a Remington typewriter and began her first typewriting class, consisting of both men and women. (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy)

In 1902 the Sisters at Immaculate Conception Convent School, Conception Harbour, ordered a typewriter and began teaching typewriting. Their first class was made up of six girls, who, at the time of the school inspector's visit, "had already made some progress" (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1902, p. 39)

As time went on typewriting was adopted by other convent schools, and by teaching students how to combine it with shorthand, the Sisters were able to provide valuable business training for many young people across the Island.

V. The Influence on the Curriculum of the Mounting Interest in Commercial Education in Newfoundland in the Late 1800's and the Early 1900's

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, interest in commercial (business) education in Newfoundland began to

mount. Several events which occurred during that time brought about improvements in communications and transportation on the Island.

In 1866 the first successful Trans-Atlantic cable was landed at Heart's Content, making it possible to transmit telegrams across the Atlantic for the first time. In 1878 the cables were fitted with a duplex which permitted the transmitting and receiving of messages at the same time on the same cable. (Prowse, pp. 642; 645). In 1885 the first telephone system to be operated on the Island was introduced to St. John's by the Anglo-American Telegraph Company. And, by 1900 the new railway line from St. John's to Port-aux-Basques was in operation. (Rowe, 1980, pp. 307; 333)

With Newfoundland now in daily contact with Europe, a railway line between St. John's and Port-aux-Basques, and a telephone system available for businesses in St. John's, the long period of isolation in Newfoundland was over. The beginning of the twentieth century held promise for young Newfoundlanders.

In 1900, Newfoundlanders had high hopes and a conviction that, at long last, the Colony was started on the road to development, prosperity and social and economic growth that had been denied to her in the past. (Rowe, 1980, p. 341)

With a promising start, Newfoundlanders moved into the new century with ease. "The years after 1901 were, for

the most part, placid, and Newfoundland's economy improved substantially" (Rowe, 1980, pp. 333-334)

Educators in Newfoundland were becoming aware of the need to prepare their students for the new age of commerce. Their concern for a well-rounded education which would fit their students for business is evidenced in the following statement made by the Principal of St. Bonaventure's College in the annual report of the College for 1900:

In recent years there has been a general awakening in the matter of commercial education. European countries behold with wonder if, not with despair the commercial supremacy of Germany. The cause of the supremacy is not far to seek. "It seems certain," says a distinguished English educationist, "that our trade is being taken from us in many quarters, and this is happening because our rivals are better equipped for the work to be done--in a word, they are better educated than we are." Therefore in the age of keen commercial competition the business man requires every available aid to hold his own against his rivals, and nothing can so surely make for success in any walk of life as a well-trained intellect. Being convinced of this, we have always persuaded our pupils to follow a good general course before taking up purely commercial subjects. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the year ended 31st December, 1900, p. IX)

The Superintendent of Roman Catholic Schools, in presenting the Principal's report in the annual report for the school year, had the following comments to make:

It is to our teachers and future teachers we have to look for the country's educational

advancement, and thus indirectly to its commercial welfare as well. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the year ended 31st December, 1900, p. VIII)

The Principal of another school in St. John's, Mr. P. G. Butler of the Springdale Commercial School, in an article written in The St. John's Daily Star, pointed out the advantages of commercial training:

Wage reports show that the average yearly earnings of uneducated people are \$450, of Elementary, \$600, of Commercial \$1000, also lawyers average \$800, doctors, \$1200, business men, \$2000. . . . Commercial training then pays best. Every three years, on an average, Book-keepers and Stenographers are promoted, owing to marriage often in case of ladies, and to increase in the volume of business that has doubled in twelve years in Newfoundland, and more than that in the case of Banks. . . . Now that the war is over leading business men are predicting the greatest period of business prosperity that the country has ever seen. Trained business efficiency will be at a premium, as it is now, and always has been. There is a constant demand for beginners. . . . Who is the leader today? The business man. Lawyers, mechanics, laborers are all subject to his orders, working out his problems, under his direction, and largely for his gain. He is the master leader; and the gateway to this great realm of business success is through a business education. (September 6, 1919, p. 8)

While educators tried to emphasize the importance of business training, other people also expressed interest in the role of women in the business world. Advertisements appeared in the local press concerning the new business

woman. One such advertisement appeared in the September 22, 1917, issue of The Daily News:

Today, more than ever before, is woman's opportunity. Many new occupations are now opened to her, which, before the war, she was deemed unfit to fill. And truth to tell she has risen to the opportunity, and now shares many business responsibilities in former times confined to men. But, as women are subject to more frequent fluctuations of health than men, many will be handicapped early, if they regard their health requirements too lightly. (p. 2)

By the end of the nineteenth century business education had become an important part of the educational system of convent schools. Newfoundland had broken out of her isolation, and her new communications and transportation systems put her in a better position than ever to carry on business relations with the rest of the world. The Sisters of Mercy eagerly took up the challenge of training young men and women for the many new positions that would be available in the business world.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN NEWFOUNDLAND OPERATED AT THE SCHOOL OF OUR BLESSED LADY OF MERCY

The Sisters at Mercy Convent were among the first educators in Newfoundland to develop a formal approach to business education. The humble attempt of Sister Mary Joseph Fox at the Convent of Mercy School, St. John's, marked the beginnings of the first Commercial Department to be set up by the Sisters in Newfoundland.

The first part of this chapter will review the work of the Commercial Department under Sister Mary Joseph Fox from 1898, when she first began her work, until her death in 1930. The second part of the chapter will look at the work done by the Commercial Department from the death of Sister Mary Joseph Fox up to the late fifties when the Commercial Department was finally closed.

Before discussing the work of the Commercial Department, it is important to clarify some of the terms which will be used in this chapter and throughout the remainder of the study.

In the early days in Newfoundland, classrooms were frequently referred to as "schools" of an institution.

Consequently, the terms "Commercial Department" and "Commercial School" as used in this study are synonymous and refer to the classroom(s) of a school where commercial subjects were taught, rather than to a separate building or institution. Also, it is important to point out that the Convent of Mercy School, which was named the School of Our Blessed Lady of Mercy, became popularly known over the years as "Mercy Convent." While the school was later raised to the status of an Academy and eventually a College, it never lost its popular title "Mercy Convent." This latter title will be used frequently throughout the study in reference to this school.

I. The Work of the Commercial Department Under
Sister Mary Joseph Fox, 1898-1930.

In 1898, with a single Remington typewriter and five students, Sister Mary Joseph Fox of the Convent of Mercy School, Military Road, St. John's, had established the beginnings of the first Commercial Department or School to be set up by the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland.

(McCormack, p. 35)

Sister Mary Joseph, as she was known, had been educated at the well-known Convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Sligo, Ireland, and had come out to Newfoundland in October, 1881, at the age of 27 (The Daily News, September 4, 1930, p. 3).

Her first attempt at commercial training turned out to be very rewarding. The five students who made up her 1898 class went on to very successful careers:

Of these first five, two were men who became identified with the life of St. John's, one as a prominent business man, the other as a member of the Municipal Council for a period of fifty-four years. One of the girls subsequently moved to Philadelphia where she became a lawyer. (McCormack, p. 35)

As mentioned in Chapter IV, Sister Joseph taught her students the Sloan-Duployan System of shorthand. Examination papers were written at Mercy Convent and sent to the Sloan-Duployan Headquarters in England to be corrected. Mr. J. M. Sloan, the man who devised the Sloan-Duployan System, personally signed each diploma certifying the student's competency in writing shorthand.

Mr. Sloan was very concerned about accuracy in shorthand writing and always entertained private communication from students regarding the competency of teachers. On one occasion when he obtained evidence concerning a teacher in England, who had somehow obtained the certificate of proficiency without being able to write shorthand accurately, he located the gentleman and requested that he return his certificate (Butler, pp. 131-132). Consequently, much time and effort had to be put into the practice of writing

accurate shorthand outlines. It seems, however, that the long hours of practice were no deterrent to the students of Mercy Convent. Just two years after the Commercial Department was opened, the local press carried the following account of the pupils' success in the examinations of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society:

The following pupils of the Mercy Convent, Military Road, received shorthand diplomas from J. M. Sloan by last mail: Misses M. Gamberg, A. Fitzgerald, M. O'Reilly and K. Keating. (The Daily News, June 7, 1900, p. 4)

In addition to granting certificates of competency, the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society also awarded a certain number of gold and silver medals to top competitors in their examinations, as discussed in Chapter IV. The gold centre medal was the highest award offered by the Society. In 1907 this award went to one of Sister Mary Joseph's students, Miss Isabel (Belle) Kelly, for writing 150 words a minute in shorthand (Interview with Dr. J. M. Darcy, July 22, 1981). In 1909 Miss Kelly went to work at the Bank of Montreal, St. John's, and became the first woman employee of that bank in Newfoundland (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy). Miss Kelly remained with the Bank until her marriage in 1917. During her service with the Bank, Miss Kelly performed her duties in a manner which brought credit to her teacher and her

school, as can be seen from the following article published in the press at the time of her resignation:

A pleasing presentation took place at the Bank of Montreal a few days since, when Miss Belle Kelly, a popular and highly esteemed official of the Bank, was presented with a purse of gold by the Asst. Manager, Mr. H. D. Carter, on behalf of the Bank employees. Miss Kelly resigned her position last week, and will be married on the 15th inst. to Mr. J. M. Darcy of the Imperial Tobacco Co. In making the presentation Mr. Carter paid a graceful and well-merited tribute to the worth and ability of the fair recipient, and tendered the sincere good wishes of the Manager and Staff for her future happiness and prosperity. (The Daily News, August 9, 1917, p. 4)

The year 1909 not only saw a Mercy Convent gold medal winner become the first female employee of the Bank of Montreal in Newfoundland, but it also saw other Mercy Convent students winning top places among shorthand writers from many parts of the world in international competition. The July 27, 1909, issue of The Daily News carried the following article:

That well-known educational institution, the Convent of Mercy, Military Road, St. John's, famed for the excellence of the commercial training which it affords its numerous pupils, has again been successful in the semi-annual International Short hand Competitions of the Sloan-Duployan Society, Ramsgate, England. The total number of medals granted in the June, 1909, contest was five, and two of these are awarded to pupils of the Convent of Mercy. Miss Mildred Thomas gained one of the silver medals in Class II. (accuracy, reporting style), and Miss Floss Parsons won the only gold and silver medal

offered in Class III. (best note and transcript at 100 words per minute). All the papers submitted by the school, both in the accuracy and speed sections, were of a high order of merit, and great care had to be exercised by the Examining Committee in their adjudication.

The remaining three awards were distributed as follows: Class I. (accuracy, learners' style); silver medal to Mr. Lionel Dottin, Cold Storage Office, Cristobal, Canal Zone, Panama. Class II. (accuracy, reporting style); silver medal to Mr. W. C. Parkinson, Observatory, Eskdalemuir, Langholm, Scotland, and Mr. R. Jeavons, 23 Hall Street, Old Hill, Staffs, England. (p. 5)

Also in 1909, in addition to winning Sloan-Duployan medals, seven students passed the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand speed examinations, with speeds from 112 to 115 words a minute; six students passed the examinations for shorthand accuracy; and 14 students received Certificates of Membership in the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. Among the students who passed the shorthand speed examinations was Miss Clo Bonia (Sister Mary Agatha), who in less than another decade, would open her own Commercial Department and during her lifetime become one of the best known business educators in Newfoundland. Sister Mary Agatha's work will be discussed in detail in Chapter VI. (The Daily News, July 17, 1909, p. 5)

The following year a Mercy Convent student again won the highest award in shorthand in the International

competitions of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society.

The local press carried the following account:

The International Competitions which are held twice yearly in connection with the Sloan-Duployan Society, Ramsgate, England, gain in popularity with each succeeding contest. In the latest competitions, particulars of which are just to hand, in addition to the British Isles the following countries were represented:-- France, United States, Canada, Newfoundland, Natal, Transvaal, Gold Coast, India, Burma, Cape Colony, Mauritius, Ceylon, British Guiana and Northern Nigeria.

The highest award of all, the Gold Meday (sic) in Class IV. for the best note and transcript written at 150 words per minute, was gained by Miss Maggie Coady, a pupil of the Convent of Mercy, Military Road, St. John's, N.F., an institution famed for the successes achieved by its pupils in all commercial branches. In a previous competition Miss Coady gained a silver and gold medal in Class III.

Miss Florence Hampton, a pupil of the same school, gained one of the three silver medals offered in Class II. for the best specimen (accuracy and neatness) whitten (sic) in the reporting style. Newfoundland thus claims two out of the total of six medals granted, the four remaining awards going respectively to Mr. W. R. Grindley, Carlisle, England; Mr. J. M. Bonnet, Mauritius; Mr. Michael Byrne, Kilmacthomas, Ireland; and Mr. W. E. Darroch, Portsmouth, England. (The Evening Telegram, July 14, 1910, p. 7)

In addition to winning top places in the International Shorthand Competitions of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society, the commercial students at Mercy Convent also did

exceptionally well in the examinations of the Council of Higher Education. In 1910 Miss Lizzie Clarke of the Commercial Department was one of three girls in Newfoundland to win first prize in Intermediate Grade shorthand, while Misses Alicia M. J. Fitzpatrick and Florence Dawson also received special distinction. In the Preliminary Grade Examinations, nine students received special distinction in shorthand with one of the nine also receiving special distinction in book-keeping. (Calendar of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1910, pp. 31; 73-74; 83-84; 80)

In 1915 the School of Our Blessed Lady of Mercy (Mercy Convent) became the Academy of Our Blessed Lady of Mercy (McCormack, p. 32). And, by the following year, the small Commercial Department of 1898, with only five students, had grown to 95, and employment opportunities for graduates were readily available in the business firms and government offices of St. John's (Report of The Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards For The Year Ended 31st December, 1916, p. XXIII). Of the large class, two students won honors in the Council of Higher Education Intermediate Grade Shorthand Examinations while four others were also successful. One of the four, Miss Mary Cullen,

was the only person in Newfoundland to win prizes in both typewriting and office routine. (Report of the Examinations Conducted by the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1916, pp. 54-57; 48)

In 1917 the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent received words of praise in a public statement made by a gentleman referred to by the Superintendent, Roman Catholic Schools, as "a visiting educationist of considerable experience, from the United States" (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1917, p. 43). In speaking of the Commercial School, this gentleman, whose name has not been recorded, made the following comments:

It is gratifying to all the people of St. John's that there is a school of this kind in their midst, and I have heard it, on the testimony of many important business men and others in town, that the graduates of the Convent of Mercy Commercial School are in great demand, in fact, the supply is short--a fitting tribute to their superiority, to their unexcelled efficiency, and to their worth, commercially and womanly, in the upbuilding of the business and the life of this great capital city of the Old Colony. (p. 43)

During that year Miss Grace Fleming of Mercy Convent won a silver medal in Class II for the best specimen in reporting style in the Semi-Annual International Shorthand

Competition of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society.

Another student, Miss Ella Steele, who had previously won a silver medal in Class II competition, this time won a gold centre medal in Class III competition for the best paper at 100 words a minute (The Daily News, August 13, 1917, p. 5). In addition to the medals awarded, a considerable number of students received honourable mention, speed and accuracy diplomas, and Certificates of Membership in the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. (The Daily News, September 7, 1917, p. 5)

In December of the same year, another Mercy Convent student brought further credit to the Commercial Department:

The Gold Medal awarded for speed and accuracy in stenography by the Sloan-Duployan Society in December was also won by a graduate--Miss Lillian Sullivan, who entered into the world-wide competition among commercial students for this much-coveted prize, thus keeping up the record of the Commercial Department of the Institution. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards, for the Year ended 31st December, 1918, p. 44)

In 1918 the number of students registered in the Commercial Department had climbed to 147! Despite the large numbers, the Department was still able to maintain its fine record:

In the International competitions this department took first place, winning three gold medals and three silver medals, besides special mention given to six pupils whose

"papers were excellent," but could not be awarded medals owing to the limited number offered. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards, for the Year ended 31st December, 1918, p. 44)

It should be noted here that the number of gold and silver medals awarded by the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society were regulated in proportion to the number of competitors in each competition. (Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Business Letters, 1959, p. viii)

Honours continued to be heaped on Mercy Convent by the hard-working commercial students, and in 1919 they won for the Academy the Lord Foley Shorthand Challenge Shield. (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy)

In 1920 the number of students in the Commercial Department at Mercy Convent had increased to such an extent that a second teacher had become a necessity. The rapidly expanding department was by now an important source of qualified stenographers and secretaries for the business firms of St. John's. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended June 30th, 1920, pp. 41-42)

Over the years the old Mercy Convent building, which had been erected in 1856 with accommodation for approximately 100 pupils, was becoming rapidly

overcrowded and by 1920 was barely able to accommodate the approximately 400 pupils then enrolled. As a result, the conventual part of the building, which had originally been intended for the use of the Sisters, had to be taken over for classrooms. However, in 1920 the situation began to change. In mid-October of that year, Archbishop Roche laid the cornerstone for a new school, which was to be erected by the Knights of Columbus, St. John's (The St. John's Daily Star, October 18, 1920, p. 2). The school, which was the gift of Terra Nova Council, No. 1452, was to be built "as a Memorial to the noble, gallant and devoted brothers of the Council who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War" (The Newfoundland Quarterly, December 1921, p. 7).

On October 12, 1921, His Grace the Archbishop celebrated Mass in the Auditorium of the new school, and "at 8 p.m. of the same day, the Memorial Schools were formally opened" (Inter Nos, May 1941, p. 22). The new school was named the "K. of C. Memorial School" and contained, in addition to other facilities, 12 classrooms with accommodation for 480 pupils. (The Newfoundland Quarterly, December 1921, pp. 7-8)

With the completion of the new K. of C. Memorial School, the Commercial Department was relocated from

the small, dark room, which it had previously occupied to "a spacious, airy and well-lighted school on the ground floor of the convent facing Military Road" (Inter Nos, May 1941, p. 23).

In addition to their class work, the students of Mercy Convent took time out to engage in dramatics, and in 1921-22 gave several fine performances in the auditorium of their new school. Along with dramatics, increasing numbers of students each year studied music. The piano, violin, cello, and mandolin became very popular. An orchestra was formed, the members of which soon mastered many difficult and classical pieces and were able to perform them with ease and confidence. Physical Culture, under the direction of Captain O'Grady, was given considerable attention. Hockey and basketball matches were played between Mercy Convent girls and girls of other city schools. Also, in 1921-22 the students of the Academy issued the first copy of their magazine, Inter Nos. Their aim was to provide information about their work and talents in the hope that the magazine might arouse the attention of people who may have been indifferent to the idea of further education for girls.

The Commercial Department, now working out of its new facilities, continued to produce competent typists

and stenographers. Visitors from foreign countries noted that the training provided by the Department could rival that of any similar training centre in Canada or the United States. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1922, pp. 124-125)

In addition to helping her students attain the necessary skills to become competent typists and stenographers, Sister Mary Joseph also taught them how to dress appropriately and conduct themselves properly in the business world. One of her students of the early twenties recalls that Sister Mary Joseph maintained strict discipline. She expected the girls to dress properly and to wear appropriate hair styles. She regularly observed their appearance, and if there was anything which she felt was improper, she was quick to point it out to the girl(s). (Interview with Mrs. Nina (Taylor) Young, July 18, 1981)

On May 12, 1922, one of Sister Mary Joseph's students, Miss Helen Channing, became the first typist in Newfoundland to be awarded the degree of O.A.T. (Order of Accurate Typists), New York, and the Canadian Bronze Medal for Typewriting. Miss Channing also won the gold centre medal for best transcript of shorthand.

notes at 100 words per minute. The awards were made through the Credential Department of the Underwood Typewriting Company. (Inter Nos, June 1923, p. 65)

The following school year, 1922-23, again saw Mercy Convent students win their share of medals. In addition, students found time to devote to dramatics:

The singular and unvarying success of the work in the commercial Department is without parallel.

In the Sloan-Duployan competitive Exams. this year, two students Misses Walsh and Davis won gold medals for speed in Shorthand. Misses Faulkner, Molloy and Leonard carried the silver medals for accuracy. The bronze medal for Typewriting speed was awarded to Miss Wilcox. . . . Dramatic Art, as a subject, is considered worthy of time and attention. The operetta-- "THE JAPANESE GIRL" was successfully played by the pupils at the closing exercises. A couple of evenings every week the pupils practise for the great drama "PILATE'S DAUGHTER" which they played for the public last year and which will be reproduced. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1923, pp. 87-88)

Education at Mercy Convent was made interesting and pleasant, and between student and teacher there was a good working relationship:

In all the class-rooms there is a very good tone and the studies of the pupils are made interesting and pleasant. A happy and friendly relationship exists between the teachers and the taught; one can see that the children are at their ease, and they

work having the comfortable feeling that they will be carefully and sympathetically helped over their difficulties. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1924, p. 90)

In June 1925 the school magazine for Mercy Convent,

Inter Nos, proudly carried the following article:

Our Commercial Department has already made itself so well and and (sic) so universally known by its wonderful success in the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand examinations, and by the splendid success of its graduates in the business world, that it needs no introduction from us. However, we should like to mention some of its latest successes.

In the exams of 1924, the commercial classes obtained their usual good results adding fresh honours to the already long list of which the department can boast.

The following young ladies received Silver Medals for Accuracy: Miss Gertrude Leamy, Miss Josephine Keiley, Miss Hilda White and Miss Julia B. Hopkins. Miss Margaret Hannaford received a gold-centre medal for success in the speed test. (p. 71)

The Roman Catholic School Report for that same year, in addition to mentioning the curriculum of the school, also commented on the ease with which the graduates moved into the business world:

The commercial rooms still continue to take their rightful place as perhaps the finest of their kind in the country. The young ladies trained for commercial life in these rooms are thoroughly grounded in the life of commerce, stenography, office routine, commercial law, etc. They find it

comparatively easy when they go out into commercial life to become quickly at home in their chosen work. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year Ended June 30th, 1925, p. 96)

Again in 1926 a large number of commercial students obtained diplomas for accuracy and speed from the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. Also, "Misses Barbara Abbott and Margaret Corbett were awarded Silver Medals and Miss Maud L. Sullivan won the Gold Centre Medal for speed" (Inter Nos, June 1926, p. 72).

While Mercy Convent continued to develop a reputation for its fine work in the area of shorthand, other areas of business education were also given attention. By 1926 the business education program of the Academy had expanded considerably, as can be seen by the following comments appearing in the Roman Catholic School Report:

The Commercial School has still maintained its high standard of efficiency and the gold and silver medals won by the young ladies of this department as well as the many certificates for speed and accuracy in Shorthand show that the Sisters have the willing co-operation of the class. But while the study of this all-important subject has been given special attention the other branches of Business Routine, such as Book-Keeping, Insurance, Law, Shipping and Filing have each an adequate amount of time devoted to it. The useful art of typewriting which has practically supplanted the hand in the business world forms an important part of the training here given as the

several certificates for proficiency testify. During the year many lucrative and responsible positions were obtained for the young ladies by the principal and encomiums bestowed upon their work is sufficient proof of the solidity of the training which they have received in this Department. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1926, p. 90)

The school magazine, Inter Nos, published annually helped to stimulate literary activity, as each class was required to submit its quota of material to be published. The students' work revealed a familiarity with the great English writers and a careful choice of phrasing (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1926, p. 90). There was also an element of fun evident in the students' work. The following poem submitted to Inter Nos by one of the commercial students shows both the talent and the cheerful outlook of the girls of the Commercial Department:

THE COMMERCIAL CLASSES

There have been nymphs of olden time,
Our thoughts may love to follow,
Who wander'd through the leafy ways,
Or slept in woodland hollow.

But Oh! the nymphs of modern days
Attend commercial classes,
And strive their utmost to succeed,
And thus receive their passes.

Into the business world they go,
to type commercial letters:
A most important work, you know,
For they are business getters.

And some may keep a set of books,
And balance ledgers yearly,
Which proves to men the sweet young things
Can sometimes think quite clearly.

Commercial life some girls decry,
Think Art and Music nicer,
But Business rules the world to-day
Ain't that a great enticer?

Oh! they're the envy of the school--
The smart commercial classes,
For business heads give extra charm
To all those dear young lasses.
(Inter Nos, June 1926, p. 40)

In July 1927 the Commercial Department gained five of the fifteen medals awarded in the Semi-Annual International Shorthand Competitions of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. Silver medals were awarded to two students, and gold centre medals to three students. In December of the same year the results of the International Shorthand Competition surpassed that of all previous classes, with the students winning six of the fourteen medals awarded by the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. This was the largest number of medals ever awarded to one school. Five were silver medals for accuracy in reporting style, and one was a gold centre medal for the best paper at 100 words a minute. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1927, p. 88)

The good Sisters of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy did more than merely instruct the commercial students in various commercial subjects, as can be seen from the following comments contained in the Roman Catholic School Report for 1928:

Although every attention is given to the training of the intellect, the teachers take the greatest care to combine with intellectual development the cultivation of those moral and religious qualities, without which any system of education is incomplete. Therefore the pupils, while using fame as an incentive to earnest work, are continually reminded that there is a higher motive in labour, and a nobler recompense for their work, than the applause that passes with its utterance. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year ended June 30th, 1928, p. 77)

In 1929 a total of ten medals were awarded to the commercial students by the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society-- six gold medals and four silver medals. The school magazine, Inter Nos, in the following article indicated the unfledging success of the Commercial Department:

There are few school departments that have not, now and then, a year which does not compare favourably with other years.

But . . . our Commercial Department . . . is not to be numbered with those whose success is fluctuating; for never once has it lost the leading place. (June 1930, p. 18)

The year 1930 was a significant one not only for the Sisters of Mercy but for all Catholic educators around the

world. In that year they had as their guide an encyclical on education which was to become one of the most outstanding documents of the Catholic Church. On the eve of 1930 His Holiness Pope Pius XI issued to the world his famous encyclical "Christian Education of Youth," Divini Illius Magistri (Seven Great Encyclicals, 1963), setting forth the Church's position on education:

The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism. (p. 64)

The Holy Father defined the following limits within which Catholic educators may work: "Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social" (p. 65). He also explained the kind of person which the Catholic educator should try to mould:

the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character. (p. 65)

While the encyclical outlined the philosophy, scope, and aim of Christian education which may have previously been hazy for some Catholic educators, it merely confirmed for the Sisters of Mercy what they had already believed and practiced. In fact, the words of the encyclical were

echoed in the following statement about the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, which was contained in the Roman Catholic School Report for that year:

The social and intellectual training which the pupils of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy receive is second to none in the Island, but their religious training is shown to be of paramount importance. Those in charge fully realize that any system of education which aims at intellectual development without influencing the soul and heart, is inadequate and incomplete. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1930, p. 78)

In the Commercial Department the year 1930 was also an important one. The results of the Sloan-Duployan International Shorthand Examinations that year showed that students of the Commercial Department won a total of nine medals--three gold centre medals and six silver medals. This was a significant number of medals to be carried in one year by one class. The school magazine echoed the pride of the entire academy by noting "This record speaks for itself--bolstering would be out of place here" (Inter Nos, June 1931, pp. 35-36):

Before the opening of school the following September, Sister Mary Joseph, the competent and dedicated Sister who had held such a respected place in the educational and business circles of St. John's, had passed away. Sister Mary Joseph died on September 1, 1930, after a

brief illness. The high regard in which she was held by the citizens of St. John's is apparent in the extracts of obituaries and editorials written in the local press. The September 2, 1930, issue of The Daily News carried an obituary which read, in part, as follows:

At the Convent of Mercy, Military Road, the unexpected death of Sr. Mary Joseph Fox took place, yesterday at noon The deceased was a well-known figure in the educational life of St. John's for well nigh fifty years. In the commercial class room of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy she was best known and this institution as well as the business departments of the city will miss Sr. Mary Joseph from her important post in the commercial school. (p. 3)

On September 4 the same newspaper carried an editorial about Sister Mary Joseph which contained the following comments:

THE COUNTRY'S SYMPATHY

The passing of Sister Mary Joseph Fox removes an educationist of more than usual note from our midst, one to whom the commercial life of the city owes a great deal, for three generations of stenographers and secretaries and female accountants have passed through her capable hands. She may be said to have initiated modern stenography in this city and was the first to adopt the typewriter here and train pupils in its use. Those who have had the pleasure of being shown through her classrooms must have been struck with the meticulous care she lavished on the production of efficient stenographers and accountants. Her list of successful pupils who have graduated into prominent places

in the business life, not only of Newfoundland but abroad as well, must be very large and her influence has been very great.

Although the worthy Sisters do good by stealth and never court publicity, we feel that we echo the gratitude of very many women of Newfoundland in emphasizing her work as a teacher. (The Daily News, September 4, 1930, p. 4)

Sister Mary Joseph became known to the business community of St. John's not only through her work as an educator but also through another feature of her work--her special artistic ability in etching, engrossing, and illuminating of addresses presented to prominent public figures and visiting dignitaries. At that time many public functions were held in St. John's for prominent visitors, and on these occasions an illuminated address was an important feature of the programme. Many of the addresses presented were the work of Sister Mary Joseph, and "in this respect she made an impression upon the official life of St. John's, and entered within the sanctum of commerce and industry" (Inter Nos, June 1931, p. 58)

Sister Mary Joseph had been held in such high regard by the local businessmen that some of them to whom she had sent secretaries, or helped in some other way, occasionally donated money to the Commercial Department. Also, one of the businessmen presented Sister Mary Joseph with a five-hundred dollar chiming clock. Another presented her with

a large statue of Our Blessed Lady (McCormack, p. 36). So it was not surprising that her former students would also wish to remember her in a tangible way. Several years after her death, they presented to the Convent chapel a beautiful stained glass window picturing St. Joseph, "to show their reverence and appreciation of their deceased teacher" (Inter Nos, June 1935, p. 17)

The death of Sister Mary Joseph came at a time when commercial training was becoming very much in vogue in St. John's. An editorial in The Daily News shortly after her death shows just how much had been accomplished in the field of commercial training over the years:

It is interesting to note, concurrent with the opening of colleges, the growth of the idea of commercial courses. This week there will be a larger opportunity for acquiring a commercial education than was ever offered in the city before, and if competition pitch a high keynote in other things it probably indicates a higher and more intensive commercial course will result.

The city has recently paid its tribute to one who was largely, if not entirely, responsible for the inauguration of the training of young women stenographers and bookkeepers. The growth of opportunity for efficient training in commercial life has been steadily upward and must now offer ample opportunity for all who contemplate this work. The comprehensive nature of commercial life to-day calls more and more for expert training. Deliberate methods of half a century ago are rapidly being jettisoned, if not entirely thrown overboard. The young man or woman now enters commercial

life with the complete training necessary to take immediate and active part therein. Commerce should benefit therefrom, for trained workers mean more effective work. (September 10, 1930, p. 4)

Sister Mary Joseph had given over thirty years of her life to the training of young men and women for the business world. She had started her commercial training when the idea was relatively new and had lived to see it become a highly sophisticated form of preparation for business careers. She was a woman of vision, and her knowledge, skill, and ingenuity had helped to make the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent known around the world. She left behind her a long line of qualified stenographers, secretaries, and bookkeepers, who played an important part in the business life of Newfoundland.

II. The Work of the Commercial Department, 1931-1957

After the death of Sister Mary Joseph Fox, several Sisters contributed to the fine work of the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent. Among these dedicated teachers were Sister Mary Acquin Gormley, Sister Mary Cecilia Agnes Norris, and Sister Mary Francis Hickey.

The Commercial Department, under these capable women, continued to expand its work, and over the years maintained its reputation as a prominent business

training centre for the young men and women of St. John's. The successes of the students in international competitions continued to keep Mercy Convent in the world's spotlight.

In 1931 a former commercial student of Mercy Convent brought great honour to her Alma Mater:

THE COLONEL WATKINS SHORTHAND CUP.

Notable Success of a St. John's Court Reporter.

For the first time, a Newfoundland competitor has succeeded in winning the shorthand competition for the Colonel Watkins Challenge Cup. This success has been achieved in the 1931 competition by Miss Gertrude Costello, a St. John's Court reporter. In addition to holding the Cup for one year, Miss Costello has been awarded a special silver medal by the Sloan-Duployan Society, as a permanent memento of her success.

The test consisted of a seven-minute speed run, difficult matter, at 130 words a minute, under stringent conditions, in the presence of two responsible witnesses. The winning competitor's test was supervised and witnessed by the Hon. W. J. Higgins, Judge of the Supreme Court, and Mr. L. E. Emerson, Barrister at Law.

Miss Costello is a former pupil of the commercial department of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, St. John's, and this result adds one more item to the already long list of shorthand successes obtained by that progressive institution. (Inter Nos, June 1932, p. 39)

The winning of this cup was quite an achievement for this young lady, since entries in the competition came from all

over the world (The Daily News, July 24, 1931, p. 7). It was also quite an honour for the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent, which could now proudly boast of being the winner of both the Lord Foley Shorthand Challenge Shield and this most recent Shorthand Cup, along with nearly 700 medals won by individual pupils in various international shorthand competitions. (Inter Nos, June 1932, p. 39)

Also in 1931 the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland celebrated their centennial. To commemorate this event a friend of the Sisters of Mercy wrote a tribute to the outstanding work done by the group of Sisters at the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy:

Of late years the good Sisters, keenly alive to changing conditions, have developed a commercial school in which young ladies desirous of engaging in commercial pursuits, may acquaint themselves with practical knowledge of office work and commercial, banking and professional procedure . . . I find on every side of me in this city evidence of the useful part which the young girl graduates of the Academy are playing in the business life of the community. (Souvenir Centennial Celebration, 1931, p. 21)

The following year was also an important one for educators in Newfoundland. That year, for the first time, Newfoundland had its own educators setting or examining papers for pupils of all grades. This came about with the setting up of a Common Examining Board

for the Maritime Provinces of Canada and Newfoundland, which was the outcome of the Educational Conference of 1927 held at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick (Annual Report of the Bureau of Education, 1929-30, pp. XXIII; XXV). This meant that the Sisters would no longer have to forward to England the examination papers of the Council of Higher Education, or wait long periods of time for examination results in the event of transportation difficulties, which occurred especially during wartime. (Interview with Sister Mary Liguori Wade, June 29, 1981)

While the Sisters no longer forwarded to England the Council of Higher Education Examination papers, they did, however, continue to forward to England the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Examination papers. Twice each year, in June and December, the commercial students continued to present themselves for examinations which the Sisters sent to the Sloan-Duployan Headquarters in England for correction. On several occasions the examiners released to the press information concerning the fact that Newfoundland carried 50 percent or more of the medals donated semi-annually. The commercial students of Mercy Convent played a large part in placing Newfoundland in that envious position. In

fact, in 1933 six students won gold centre medals for shorthand speed, while eight students won silver medals for accuracy in shorthand. In addition, nearly 100 students received shorthand diplomas for accuracy and speed.

In December of 1934 the pupils of Mercy Convent began their Annual Retreat, one of their most treasured traditions. As on all previous occasions, a Spiritual Director was appointed to give daily lectures. At the end of the Retreat, a special mass was celebrated during which nearly 200 pupils were received into various sodalities, and over 20 were received into the Sodality of the Children of Mary. (Inter Nos, June 1934, pp. 43; 48)

Throughout the thirties increasing numbers of men presented themselves for the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Examinations and were awarded medals and diplomas along with their female counterparts. In 1936 five men were among those awarded certificates for shorthand accuracy. Two of these men, Mr. Henry Kendall and Mr. Martin O'Grady, were also awarded silver medals. (Inter Nos, June 1937, pp. 129-130)

In 1938 another young man, Mr. Frank Rogers, was among the winners of gold centre medals and diplomas for

shorthand speed, while 12 other men received diplomas for speed and accuracy. Again in 1939, 26 men were among those receiving certificates for shorthand speed and accuracy. Of this number three were also awarded silver medals. Among the recipients of diplomas for shorthand speed at 100 words a minute was a young man who was later to hold several important positions in both provincial and federal politics, first as Member of Parliament for Newfoundland, then Minister in the Federal Cabinet, and finally Leader of the Opposition Party in Newfoundland. (Inter Nos, May 1939, pp. 138-139; June 1940, pp. 161-162)

The forties brought added laurels to the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent. Both men and women continued to do well in international shorthand and book-keeping competitions. The Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Examination results for 1940 show 10 silver medals awarded for accuracy, along with a large number of diplomas, Certificates of Merit, and Membership Cards. (Inter Nos, May 1941, pp. 129-130)

The year 1941 again saw Mercy Convent students being very successful in the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Competitions. During the year three gold medals, seven silver medals, three Certificates of Merit, and a large number of diplomas for accuracy were awarded.

On February 13, 1942, the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent lost another of its capable teachers, Sister Mary Acquin Gormley. Sister Mary Acquin, born at Roscommon, Ireland, received her education from the Sisters of Mercy in that town, and came out to Newfoundland on October 24, 1891. For many years she had devoted her efforts to the training of the commercial students, and when she died, she left behind a large number of former students, who mourned her passing with regret. (Inter Nos, May 1942, p. 144)

Sister Mary Acquin, like her predecessor, Sister Mary Joseph, was a strict disciplinarian. In addition to helping her students acquire the skills needed for an office, Sister Mary Acquin also helped them develop a sense of responsibility. She carefully watched their working habits in the classroom, making certain that they corrected any faults which might interfere with their success in the business world. She also helped them develop proper habits of dress and personal hygiene. (Interview with Sister Mary Basil McCormack, August 19, 1981)

In 1944 the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy was raised to the status of a College, and from that time became known as the College of Our Lady of Mercy (McCormack, p. 26). It is important to note here

that prior to 1950, the term "college" had a special connotation in Newfoundland:

The term "college" was in the English sense rather than the North American, since no courses were offered above Grade XII. Usually, in fact, no work above Grade XI was attempted. (Rowe, 1964, p. 113)

Also, in that year, 110 students were enrolled in the Commercial Department. They did especially well in typewriting and bookkeeping. In November of that year one of the students, Miss Ann Tomlinson, won a bronze pin for artistic typewriting--a method of creating designs with the typewriter. She, along with 15 other students, also received the Certificate of Junior Membership in the Order of Artistic Typists. And, 21 students were awarded certificates for typewriting speed, ranging from 31-62 words a minute.

At this time, Business Education World magazine, a publication of the Gregg Publishing Company, New York City, regularly sponsored bookkeeping contests. The students of the Commercial Department were among the many students in North America who entered these contests. In 1944 several of the students entered the Business Education World Monthly Bookkeeping Contest, four of them obtaining Superior Certificates,

entitling them to wear the Sterling Silver Pin, O.B.E.-- Order of Business Efficiency (Inter Nos, June 1945, pp. 45-46). A Superior Certificate indicated "an outstanding paper judged on the basis of neatness, good penmanship, careful ruling, and legible, well-executed figures" (Inter Nos, June 1947, p. 70). In addition to the four Superior Certificates, five Junior and five Senior Certificates were also awarded in bookkeeping.

While the students of 1944 did exceptionally well in typewriting and bookkeeping, they also had their usual success in the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Examinations. The December examination results showed three silver medals awarded for accuracy and a large number of certificates and diplomas awarded for both speed and accuracy. (Inter Nos, June 1945, pp. 45-46)

In 1945 the commercial students appear to have had a very busy year. In shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping, they again did very well. In the December Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Examinations, the students obtained two silver medals, two Certificates of Special Merit, 25 diplomas for accuracy, and six diplomas for speed. In the typewriting examinations, 18 students were awarded certificates for speed, ranging from 30-66 words a minute. And, in bookkeeping, six

students were awarded Junior Certificates, four were awarded Junior and Senior Certificates, and 11 were awarded Superior Certificates from the Business Education World Awards Department, New York City. (Inter Nos, June 1946, pp. 87-88)

While the students did very well in their regular classroom work, they also took time out to engage in other activities. Their instructor now was Sister Mary Cecilia Agnes Norris, a Newfoundland-born Sister. During 1945 she and her students worked along with the editorial staff of the Sunbeam, a class paper, the purpose of which was to spread sunshine. The girls typed and mimeographed the various articles and put forth every effort to make the paper a success. In addition to working on the Sunbeam, the commercial students, along with other students at the College, participated in a Sale of Work. They shared in this event by serving tasty suppers which they had not only helped to prepare but for which they had also collected donations. Their efforts helped to make the event a great success. (Inter Nos, June 1945, pp. 55; 53)

Over the years Sister Mary Cecilia Agnes took time out from her duties to obtain the degree of B.Sc. from Mount Saint Vincent College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the M.A. Degree in Business Education from the Catholic

University of America, Washington, D.C., so that her students would receive the benefit of up-to-date teaching methods. (The Monitor, July-August 1970, p. 10)

In 1946 another exceptional honour was bestowed on the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent. In that year one of the students, Miss ~~Alice~~ Collier, was awarded the Honourable Mention Scholastic Achievement Certificate in Bookkeeping from the Business Education World magazine. This award was made in recognition of the "exceptionally fine solution submitted by this student in competition with approximately 6,000 students representing 39 States and several Canadian Provinces" (Inter Nos, June 1947, p. 69).

Also, during that year, a large number of other students did well in bookkeeping and were granted certificates by Business Education World magazine as follows: 17 students received Junior Certificates, nine students received Junior and Senior Certificates, and 13 students received Junior, Senior, and Superior Certificates. In addition, 26 students entered the International Bookkeeping Contest and were granted certificates, nine of which were Superior Certificates (Inter Nos, June 1947, pp. 69-70). The latter was quite an achievement in bookkeeping, since Superior

papers were, as mentioned on page 93, very high quality papers.

By the school year 1946-47, the Commercial Department of Mercy Convent had switched from Sloan-Duployan Shorthand to Gregg Shorthand. While Sloan-Duployan was a geometric system, Gregg was a cursive system. It had joined vowels, was written on one slope, and used only one thickness. The inventor, John Robert Gregg, had registered the system on April 3, 1888, and by the early 1900's, the system had become popular in the United States (Butler, pp. 133; 148; 150). However, despite the change in the system of shorthand being taught, the commercial students continued to do well in that subject, winning four gold pins, one silver pin, and a large number of certificates for shorthand speed.

In that year students also did well in typewriting and bookkeeping. In typewriting, 42 students were awarded certificates with speeds ranging from 30-50 words a minute. Of these 42 students, three were also awarded gold (Competent Typist) pins. In bookkeeping, two students, Misses Winnie White and Monica Dempsey, were awarded Special Certificates of Scholastic Achievement from the Business Education World magazine. To obtain these certificates, the girls had to compete

with 4,000 students from 38 American States and several Canadian Provinces. (Inter Nos, June 1948, pp. 93-94)

However, the Special Certificate of Scholastic Achievement was not the only honour bestowed on Miss White. That year she was also the winner of a cash prize and certificate in the Eleventh Annual International Bookkeeping Contest. In that contest, 18 of her classmates also received certificates. This fine achievement resulted in the Bookkeeping Class being awarded Honourable Mention in the Contest and a Superior Achievement Certificate being sent to the Commercial Department of the College. An article written in the June 1948 issue of Inter Nos explains the basis on which the award was granted:

Those students competed with more than 15,000 students in schools throughout the United States, Alaska, Canal Zone, Canada, Hawaii, Philippine Islands, and Puerto Rico. The award was made on the basis of the percentage of the class membership that took part, as well as on consistent excellence of the solutions submitted. The award attests, contest authorities stated, that the work of the entire class was of superior quality. (pp. 94-95)

In addition to these outstanding awards, four students received Junior Certificates in Bookkeeping, 12 received Junior and Senior Certificates, and 24 received Junior, Senior and Superior Certificates. (Inter Nos, June 1948, p. 94)

During the summer vacation of 1947, the Commercial Department was given a completely new look:

the Commercial rooms were divested of their old habiliments and remodelled and decorated along entirely new lines. With fluorescent lighting, more modern equipment and accessory appointments designed to give comfort, convenience and facility in Business Education, the new Commercial Department is the pride and joy of the teachers and students. (Inter Nos, June 1948, p. 93)

In the fifties the Commercial Department continued its fine work of training students for the business world.

During the school year 1951-52 there were 59 graduates from the Commercial Department. In 1952-53 there were 84 graduates. All of these students received from Business Education World, typewriting diplomas for speed and accuracy, shorthand diplomas, and diplomas for proficiency in bookkeeping. In addition to being successful in these three subjects, the students also passed school examinations in business English, office routine, and religion. (Principal's Report for the School Years 1951-52; 1952-53; pp. 2;3)

In 1954-55, 38 students received shorthand certificates with speeds ranging from 60-100 words a minute, 33 students received typewriting diplomas, and 21 students were awarded bookkeeping diplomas from Business Education World. In addition, fine work was also done

in business English and office practice, and provision was made "for further study in religion, and reading of a religious nature" (Principal's Report for the School Year 1954-55, p. 5)

The following year 42 students received from the Gregg Awards Department, New York City, diplomas for speed and accuracy in shorthand and proficiency in typewriting and bookkeeping. The students also studied business English, office practice, business arithmetic, and music. In addition to all this, the students were given a course in religion, in which special attention was given to problems confronting the Catholic girl in the contemporary world (Principal's Report for the School Year 1955-56, p. 3). This class of students made a fine gesture of loyalty and interest in their school by initiating two alumnae scholarships of \$25 each. These were awarded to the 1956 commercial graduates.

In addition to providing students with business skills, the Sisters tried to help them become a force for good in the business world. Daily religious instruction was provided with time allotted for discussion of important moral questions. To further enhance their knowledge of their religion, they were assigned

transcription exercises in shorthand based on the papal encyclicals, which were obtained through the Catholic Business Education Association. (Principal's Report for the School Year 1956-57, pp. 5-6)

In 1958 the Sisters of Mercy Convent closed the doors of their Commercial Department and in doing so brought to an end 60 years of fine service to the business community of St. John's. An educationist of the early years, on observing the public entertainments of Mercy Convent students, noted the self-reliance, grace, and thoroughness which distinguished these young people and commented, "They stand out a type, distinctly all their own" (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended June 30th, 1920, p. 41). That same comment best describes the many commercial students of that school who, in various international competitions, stood out well ahead of the thousands of other young men and women around the world with whom they had the opportunity to compete. Their success was, in no small measure, due to the interest, knowledge, and skill of a small number of dedicated Sisters of Mercy, who have long since gone to their eternal reward.

CHAPTER VI

THE WORK OF THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT OF ST. BRIDE'S COLLEGE, LITLEDALE

As the interest in business education increased in Newfoundland, a need developed for a second Commercial Department to be established in St. John's. St. Bride's Academy, or Littledale, as it was popularly referred to, accepted the challenge.

Before discussing the opening of the Commercial Department in 1918, it is important to look at the early work done by St. Bride's Academy in the field of business education. The first part of this chapter will review the events leading up to 1918. The second part of the chapter will look at the opening of the Commercial Department at what was now St. Bride's College, it having been raised to that status in 1917 (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1919, p. 82), and the work done by the Commercial Department up to 1957.

I. Commercial Instruction Prior to 1918

Commercial subjects such as bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting appeared on the curriculum of Littledale

from about the late 1800's. In 1897 two Littledale girls won both the Junior and Senior Grade shorthand prizes in the C.H.E. Exams, as was mentioned in Chapter IV.

In 1900 Littledale, which in 1884 had only 13 boarders, now had a total of 50 residents. More space was needed, and a new wing was in the process of being built to accommodate the increasing number of boarders. Also, Littledale was becoming renowned for its fine work. Excellent achievements in commercial subjects appeared at the top of the list of school accomplishments. The century began with excellent promise for Littledale, as can be seen in the following results of the C.H.E. Exams:

Twenty candidates entered and all again were successful. . . . Three pupils entered for the A.A., all were successful; two--Misses Nugent and Kickham--gaining places in the first division. . . . This is the highest number of girls that have yet passed this grade from a girls' school. Misses Nugent and Kickham were the only two in the Island who obtained honors in shorthand--the former also winning the prize in that subject. In the Intermediate grade, eight candidates entered--all were successful. . . . The total number of honors gained in this grade was twenty. These were obtained in the following subjects. . . . book-keeping, shorthand. . . . In the Preliminary grade several honors in. . . shorthand. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the year ended 31st December, 1900, pp. XI-XII)

In 1901 Littledale again received considerable recognition in the C.H.E. Exams. Three of the girls won the prizes offered for shorthand in Associate, Intermediate, and Preliminary Grades. Honors were also obtained in Preliminary Grade shorthand and Intermediate Grade bookkeeping. By this time the new wing was completed, and the Sisters were determined "to leave nothing undone, whereby this institution may be made to compare favorably with any of its kind in British North America" (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1901, pp. XVI-XVII).

In addition to their fine training in commercial studies, Littledale girls were given ample opportunity to develop their intellectual and aesthetic abilities. Instruction was available in subjects such as French, German, Latin, fancy needlework, painting, and drawing. In the C.H.E. Exams the girls won prizes in languages, art, and other academic subjects, along with commercial subjects. In 1902, for example, Miss Genevieve Penny won the first scholarship, and first place in Preliminary Grade, in open competition with other schools and colleges in the Colony. Miss Penny also obtained first place, and a prize in shorthand, along with prizes in

French, German, and fancy needlework. She also received honors in algebra and Latin. Miss Skinner, the only Associate candidate from Littledale, won one of the highest places in the First Division, and the prize in shorthand along with the prize in hygiene. Another Littledale girl won the prize in shorthand for Intermediate Grade. (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1902, pp. 15-16)

In 1904 Miss Genevieve Penny, the lady who had brought distinction to Littledale in 1902, again brought honor to her school. This time she was one of six girls in the entire colony to win an open scholarship in Intermediate Grade. She received a special prize in shorthand, along with prizes in German, French, and art. Unfortunately, she was disqualified from the art prize because of having won it in 1903. Miss Penny also came first in the Honors Division (Girls) Intermediate Grade and received distinction in shorthand, along with English grammar, German, French, art, and algebra. Another Littledale girl, Miss Bride Flannery, joined Miss Penny in bringing honor to Littledale in 1904. Miss Flannery passed the First Division (Girls) Intermediate Grade, receiving distinction in shorthand,

along with school management, hygiene, arithmetic, and algebra (Calendar of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1904-5, pp. 12-14; 18-19; 22-23)

Over the years Littledale girls continued to bring distinction to their school in the field of commercial studies. In 1908 Miss Laura Barnes was awarded one of the nine open scholarships granted in Newfoundland that year. Miss Barnes also won a place in the Preliminary Grade Honors Division, along with first place and prize in shorthand. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland, Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended December 31st, 1908, p. XVII)

In 1909 the enrollment at Littledale had increased to 83. With the rapidly increasing number of students, the Sisters felt the need for more space. They requested, and were granted, approval by the Archbishop to raise funds for the erection of another wing. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended 31st December, 1909, pp. XX-XXI)

In addition to the distinctions and prizes offered by the Council of Higher Education, Littledale provided its own incentives to students. Prizes and medals were awarded annually to students receiving the highest marks

in a particular subject or for special attributes, such as amiability. In 1909, among the prizes awarded, were two for bookkeeping, five for shorthand, and two for typewriting. Two silver medals were also awarded for amiability, but one girl was disqualified because she had received the medal the previous year. (The Daily News, July 1, 1909, p. 3)

On November 8, 1910, the Archbishop of St. John's, His Grace the Most Reverend M. F. Howley, turned the first sod for a new wing to be added to the Littledale buildings. The curriculum at this time consisted of bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting, along with a wide range of other subjects. Littledale was now becoming recognized for yet another aspect of its work-- character building, which was thought to be most important in the education of Christian women. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended 31st December, 1910, pp. XXI-XXII)

The new building was opened on December 8, 1912. Because of the kindness of the Archbishop and the interest which he had shown in the work of the Academy, Littledale now had a building of which it could be very proud. This new edifice contained the very finest in furniture and equipment and was able to

accommodate 90 boarders. In addition, there were now other students who came by day to do typewriting and shorthand. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Years Ended 31st December, 1912; 1914; pp. XXII; XVI)

By 1916 Littledale had a record number of students, with over 60 boarders as well as day students. A convent was under construction for the Sisters, so that the new building completed in 1912 could be made available almost exclusively for student use. In addition, a well-equipped school of household science was opened; Professor Hutton was on staff to teach vocal music and elocution; and Mrs. J. Cleary to teach physical culture and dancing; while the Sisters themselves provided instruction in instrumental music. Time and attention were given to the fine arts of drawing, painting, fancy work, and lace-making. Training was also provided in instructional methods for students who intended to pursue a teaching career (Report Of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards For The Year Ended 31st December, 1916, pp. XXI-XXII). Some of the students later became business education teachers. One such student was Miss Bride Wade of Conception Harbour, who later joined the religious life and as Sister Mary Liguori, taught business education at the convent schools of Curling and St. George's. (Records of St. Bride's College, Littledale)

Throughout the years of World War I, Littledale continued its fine work. An article carried in the December 19, 1917, issue of The Daily News contained the following comments:

May we venture to say that in these days, when patriotism is running so high, that parents and guardians could not do a more patriotic act than send their children and wards to Littledale, where they will receive a highly finished education and a culture and refinement and moral training that is not surpassed outside of Newfoundland. (p. 3)

Also in 1917, St. Bride's Academy, Littledale, was raised to the status of a college, and thereafter became known as St. Bride's College, Littledale (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1919, p. 82).

Within a few years St. Bride's College would become one of the most well-known names in business education in Newfoundland.

II. The Work of the Commercial Department, 1918-1957

For many years the Sisters at Littledale felt an urgent need for a commercial department but space and equipment were not available (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1919, p. 83). This problem was eliminated in 1918 when the portion of the new building erected was completed. A large dining room, a study hall, and a well-equipped commercial room were then

added to the students' already existing facilities (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards, for the Year ended 31st December, 1918, p. 42). The Sisters were now in a position to provide a more formal approach to business education. Consequently, in the autumn they opened a Department of Business Education, more frequently referred to as the "Commercial Department" or "Commercial School" (Records of St. Bride's College, Littledale).

The Sister appointed to head the new Commercial Department was a native-born novice, Miss Clotilde (Clo) Bonia, who had just begun her novitiate at St. Bride's Convent. In religious life Miss Bonia took the name of Sister Mary Agatha (Interview with Sister Mary Rita Coady, June 22, 1981). In 1909 she had been a commercial pupil of Sister Mary Joseph Fox of The School of Our Blessed Lady of Mercy. The following newspaper article gives an account of her success in the 1909 examinations of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society:

The following pupils, attending the Commercial Classes at the Convent of Mercy, Military Road, have successfully passed the Sloan-Duployan examinations for shorthand speed . . . Miss Clo Bonia - 112 words a minute. (The Daily News, July 17, 1909, p. 5)

In 1912 Miss Bonia was appointed as a Typewriter to the Honourable M. P. Cashin, Minister of Finance and

Customs for Newfoundland, and she continued in this position until 1918 (Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland, 1912; 1918; pp. 186; 197), when she resigned to enter the religious life at St. Bride's Convent, Littledale (Records of St. Bride's College, Littledale). The term "typewriter" was the early name given both to the machine and to the girl who operated it. (Beeching, p. 34)

Sister Mary Agatha's first commercial class was made up of nearly 30 students, who were given an opportunity to study not only business courses but any other courses in which they had an interest:

Here the pupils obtain a thorough business course to fit them for any position, and at the same time, they can if they so desire (as many do) take a course in Music instrumental and vocal, Drawing, Painting etc.

Added to this they enjoy all the advantages of Boarding School, and imbibe the atmosphere of culture and refinement which will fit them to take their place later in the social life of the Community. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1919, p. 83)

The commercial pupils at Littledale followed a rigorous schedule. The Sisters maintained strict discipline, and students were expected to observe all rules of the College. If a student broke a rule, she was expected to report the incident to the Sister

in charge, giving her name and the offence committed. Before dinner on Sundays a meeting of all students and teachers would be held to discuss what was or was not acceptable conduct. (Interview with Sister Mary Teresina Bruce, June 9, 1981)

The 1919 Prospectus of St. Bride's College, Littledale, clearly outlined the policies of the College:

The observance of discipline and good order being indispensable to the formation of character and the success of the pupils, the rules of the College are gently though firmly enforced. . . . They are thoroughly grounded in a knowledge of their Faith and taught to love and practice virtue. They have the great privilege of daily Mass and Communion. . . . The Course of Instruction embraces all the subjects included in a first class English education. Candidates desirous of entering for Matriculation or C.H.E. Examinations are thoroughly prepared. Pupils are successfully prepared for all grades of the Trinity College of Music Examinations. Besides a complete knowledge of the English Language, Literature and History, the course of Instruction embraces the following subjects--French, Latin, German, Vocal and Instrumental, Music, Elocution, Mathematics, Drawing, Painting, Shorthand, Typewriting, Book-keeping, Plain and Fancy Needlework, Hygiene, Physical Culture and Domestic Science. . . . Apart from the work of examinations, a due proportion of time is devoted to Music, Singing, Deportment, etc. and all that tends to refine and sweeten life. . . . The course of studies and the session for day pupils are precisely the same as for boarders. . . . Gold and Silver Medals, Gold Crosses and Chains, Gold Pieces have been presented. . . . (Gold Medal and Silver Medal for General Excellence) These together with many

beautiful literary volumes, diplomas and other prizes, foster a wholesome spirit of emulation, and prove an incentive to earnest work throughout the year. (St. Bride's College Annual--Prospectus, June, 1919)

With clearly defined rules and strict discipline enforced, the girls at Littledale had little opportunity to waste time. In addition to closely supervised class work, study periods were set aside each evening for the boarding students. These periods were also supervised by one of the Sisters. (Interview with Sister Mary Teresina Bruce, June 9, 1981)

However, despite the busy and ordered life of a convent school, the first class of commercial students at Littledale appears to have been very successful. Sister Mary Agatha, like her own teacher, Sister Mary Joseph Fox, taught her students the Sloan-Duployan System of shorthand. In the Semi-Annual Competition of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society that year, Sister Mary Agatha's pupil, Miss Zita Garnier, won a silver medal for accuracy in reporting style. (The Daily News, August 15, 1919, p. 4). Some of the commercial pupils, upon completion of their course, obtained positions in St. John's, while others found work in various parts of the country. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1920, p. 102)

In the next few years, Littledale diversified its programs and activities. In 1921-22 students of the Music Department formed a College orchestra, while others took up the study of the violin. The operetta, "The Royal Jester," was presented by the students during the winter. In addition, Captain J. O'Grady, who for some time had been teaching at The Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, was hired to teach physical culture.

In 1922-23 several prominent city speakers were invited to Littledale to give a series of lectures; Rev. J. J. Rawlins provided moving pictures which were shown in the Class Hall; a Debating Club was organized by the students; and the singing class under the direction of Miss T. Power, A.T.C.L., gave several entertainments at the College.

In 1923-24 the Sisters secured the services of Miss Mary Raymond, who had received her nursing certification at St. Vincent's Hospital, New York. It was her responsibility to take care of the health needs of the pupils at the College. In addition, the Sisters themselves provided training in manners, expression, and deportment. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the years ended June 30th, 1922; 1923; 1924; pp. 122-123; 84; 79)

In all their work the Sisters were forever mindful of their most important task as Catholic educators, that of providing sound religious training. They realized that "the child, besides being prepared to become a worthy member of the state, must, while in the school, be imbued with the idea that efficient citizenship here below must be made a preparation for eternal citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1923, p. 84)

Thus while Littledale students were given every possible opportunity to develop intellectually and physically, the efforts of the Sisters were always directed by Catholic educational philosophy and the familiar instructions of their foundress, Mother McAuley: "Let us fit our pupils for earth without unfitting them for heaven" (Familiar Instructions of Mother Catherine McAuley, 1927, chap. 2)

In 1926-27 two of Sister Mary Agatha's students, Misses Angela Kennedy and Gertrude Hardy, won the first two silver medals ever awarded in the Colony by the Remington Typewriter Company, Toronto. Other prizes and medals for shorthand and typewriting were also won by the Commercial Class that year. On February 11, 1927,

the students moved to their new commercial room, which had been enlarged and improved. It was now considered "ideal in equipment and arrangement" (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1927, pp. 62; 38; 88).

Each week the newly appointed nurse gave the girls a series of lessons in hygiene to prepare them to be of assistance both at home and at school. She also taught them basic nursing and first aid (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30, 1926, p. 88). By now the girls also had their own resident chaplain appointed by the Archbishop. This afforded them a very special opportunity to learn about their church and its various ceremonies:

Now very many of the devotions peculiar to the different seasons of the Church are carried out in the College Chapel. This is of incalculable value in the religious education of the pupils, giving them a better understanding and appreciation of the ceremonies of the Church, and preparing them for a more intelligent practice of their religion in later life.

(St. Bride's College Annual, June 1927, p. 89)

However, not all of the students' time was devoted to indoor activities. The Sisters made sure that the girls received adequate outdoor exercise. Hockey (field) and basketball teams were formed, the girls were taken

on long walks, and skating was encouraged during the winter months. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1927, p. 86)

One of the students who attended the Commercial Department from 1925 to 1927 was Miss Angela Kennedy, who later entered the Order of Mercy and took the name of Sister Mary Kevin. As a Sister of Mercy, she taught business education subjects at the convent schools in Curling, Bell Island, and Bay Bulls. Sister Mary Kevin recalls that the curriculum at Littledale consisted of typewriting, office routine, English, Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, and bookkeeping. In addition, she learned music, dancing, physical culture (drill), and singing, and was also involved with College plays.

Sister Mary Kevin also recalls that girls of all denominations attended Littledale. The Sisters' spirit of dedication and their strict training helped the girls develop strong characters and respect for their seniors. She feels that the kind of training provided at Littledale was useful in helping the girls meet the catastrophes of life.

During her first year at the College, Sister Mary Kevin was taught typewriting by the visual method-- one where students watch the movement of their fingers

over the keyboard as they learn to type. However, in 1926, her teacher, Sister Mary Agatha, introduced what is known as "touch typing," a method whereby students are taught to locate the keys by position on the keyboard and thus learn to type strictly by touch, without looking at the keyboard.

Sister Mary Kevin feels that Sister Mary Agatha did more for her students than merely teach them the basic business skills:

She instilled uprightiness, honesty, kindness, and justice. She felt a secretary should be able to meet emergencies, be composed, and maintain great secrecy relating to confidential matters. Sister Mary Agatha was a very just person. She was also very courteous and expected others to be the same. (Interview with Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, June 22, 1981)

In 1927-28 the Commercial Class of Littledale had another very successful year:

The Commercial class continues to uphold a very honourable record. The various tests in Shorthand, Typewriting and Business Routine were most successful, full marks being awarded in nearly every case. To Miss Kathleen Cashin has fallen the signal honour of winning during the past year the first gold medal ever awarded in Newfoundland by the Remington Typewriter Co. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year ended June 30th, 1928, p. 71)

Littledale students could now boast of having won both the first silver medal and the first gold medal for typewriting offered by Remington.

In 1931 Miss Margaret Wall, a commercial student, was successful in the shorthand examinations at 100 words a minute given during the Semi-Annual Competition of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. (The Daily News, July 24, 1931, p. 7)

In 1932, at the time of the inauguration of the Council of Higher Education Examinations in Commercial Courses, "the Business Department of St. Bride's College, which had been functioning successfully for many years at once took up the additional subjects required by the new syllabus" (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1940, p. 109). However, there was also the ordinary curriculum in typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping, and English. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1940, p. 109)

In 1932 the Commercial Class could boast of yet another major accomplishment in typewriting. In May of that year Miss Kay Grant of the Commercial Department won a medal for fifty words a minute on the Woodstock typewriter. It is believed that this was the first medal of its kind ever to be awarded by the Woodstock Typewriter Company in Newfoundland (The Daily News, May 7, 1932, p. 10). In addition to winning the Woodstock medal, Miss Grant was presented with a gold

medal for first place in commercial subjects at the Closing Exercises of the College. (The Daily News, June 25, 1932, p. 9)

The June 1940 issue of St. Bride's College Annual carried a review of the work of the Commercial Class during the thirties. This article contains the following comments concerning the success of the commercial students in the Council of Higher Education Examinations:

Each year since pupils wishing to enter for this course have been given every facility for preparation and have written the Examination. The results have been exceptionally good. In eight years sixty-seven per cent of those entering have passed in all subjects, and about seventy per cent secured various positions on leaving school. . . . The Commercial Class is usually fairly small, ranging in number from ten to fifteen. This permits of careful supervision of the work and is perhaps accountable for the high standard of excellence. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1940, p. 109)

In 1941 there was such an increase in the number of applications to the Commercial Department that it became necessary to enlarge the facilities of the Department:

The large numbers seeking admission to this class during the past year necessitated the opening of a new room, with additional equipment. Many of the students completing Grades XI and XII, return to Litledale for a Business and Commercial Course, realizing that with such additional training, they are fitted for remunerative positions not open to even College graduates who lack such a course. Several who take the Grade XI Examinations in

schools outside the city also come to the College for a year or more of Commercial work. Graduates of this Department are doing efficient work in practically every important business centre of Newfoundland. (St. Bride's College, Littledale, Prospectus, 1942, pp. 5-6)

During the Annual Graduation Ceremony in June 1942, the Commercial Class did exceptionally well. One student, Miss Florence Bidgood, was awarded a gold cross and chain for First Place in the Commercial Class, a silver pin for shorthand, a gold pin for typewriting, and a Shorthand Certificate for 120 words a minute. Another student, Miss Dorothy Fanning, was awarded a silver cross and chain for Second Place in the Commercial Class, a silver pin for shorthand, and a Shorthand Certificate for 100 words a minute. In addition, 13 other students received certificates, pins, and prizes for shorthand, typewriting, book-keeping, office routine, and English, as well as a gold centre medal in music. (The Monitor, June 1942, p. 2)

In 1943 plans were announced for the opening of a new building which was later named St. Augustine's Hall, in memory "of that great doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, and in memory of one of Littledale's most beloved teachers, Mother M. Augustine" (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1947, p. 17. This building was

to become the home of the Commercial Department for the duration of its existence:

To the group of buildings comprising St. Bride's College at Littledale, Waterford Bridge Road, is to be added a new school and dormitory block - to be named St. Augustine's Hall - work on the foundations of which has been in progress some weeks and is now actually completed. . . . The second floor will contain Senior and Commercial classrooms . . . all completely equipped. (The Monitor, July-August, 1943, p. 1)

On February 1, 1944, His Grace Archbishop Roche celebrated Holy Mass at St. Augustine's Hall and dedicated the building to the work of Catholic education. In his address the Archbishop pointed out that the enrollment of Littledale had grown to approximately 450 and that it was not a St. John's institution but a Newfoundland institution, with students coming from all parts of the Island, thus spreading the influence of Littledale all over Newfoundland. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1947, pp. 17; 19; 21)

At the end of the first year at St. Augustine's Hall, 27 commercial students received certificates for shorthand and typing at the Annual Graduating Exercises of the College. (The Monitor, June 1944, p. 14)

Archbishop Roche, who had undertaken the construction of St. Augustine's Hall, had also brought to Littledale one of its most beloved traditions--the

Annual Retreat for members of the Children of Mary Sodality. The following newspaper article written on the Annual Retreat of 1945 explains the nature of this important annual event:

Retreat opened on Tuesday evening December fourth. More than a hundred of the older students took part in the retreat, and for these three days their ordinary routine . . . was superseded by a special retreat time-table.

Littledale's annual retreat has become a beloved tradition among the students of that College Indeed these days of retreat are one of Littledale's most important contributions to the training of her students-- a time set aside out of the year's routine during which they may ponder upon the eternal truths, and pray for the many needs of the days ahead. In an age like ours, when there is so little time for thoughtful planning beyond the maternal interests of a work-a-day world, such retreats are very necessary for the youth of our land, who are about to enter into the struggle of adult life. (The Monitor, December 1945, p. 20)

In 1947 the commercial students formed their own club, which they called the Cabrini Secretarial Club, with membership open only to those who planned to pursue a business career. Their club was named after Saint Cabrini, "the first naturalized American citizen and the only woman on this side of the Atlantic except St. Rose of Lima to be raised to the altars" (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1947, pp. 50-51). The students

chose Saint Cabrini to be patroness of their Club because "she was a great saint; and . . . because of her outstanding ability in business administration, as shown by the success she achieved in the many hospitals, orphanages, and the like institutions that she founded in a short space of time" (Littledale Leaves, December 1951, p. 2).

The club members paid a monthly fee, and with this money they bought items, such as lights and flowers, to decorate their classroom (Littledale Leaves, December 1951, p. 2). The Club published its own magazine, The Typist, which contained informative articles and advice for aspiring secretaries. In addition, the members also contributed to the Library Week Program by writing articles and giving talks on book-related topics. Other activities of the Cabrini Club members included doing fancy needlework, making Christmas gifts for their mothers, arranging Halloween parties, and producing entertainments. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1947, p. 50)

The goals of the Cabrini Club were outlined in the following article written in the December 1951 issue of the College magazine, Littledale Leaves:

We . . . hope to become the highly-qualified secretaries that modern business demands. And so, following the

example of our holy patroness, we hope to discharge our duties in such a way that the fulfilling of them . . . will help us to become more conscientious, more holy, more noble, and more zealous in promoting the welfare of others. (p. 2)

A former commercial student of Littledale, in a letter to one of her teachers, expressed her feelings about her training and offered some words of advice to students who were planning to pursue a business career:

In my opinion, the two phases of training at Littledale which have the greatest influence on a girl's life are the spiritual and the cultural. The former makes for conscientiousness in her chosen work. The reward--an easy mind when the day is done and a sense of having done her duty. The culture and refinement acquired there promote happiness and harmony in the home, school, office, or wherever she may be.

Lastly, there are a few ideas gathered from my experience in an office which I would like to pass along to those who are contemplating business careers. The first is to try and cultivate a real interest in your work, know as much as possible about your company and how it operates. Being aware of its ultimate aims and objectives will make you want to do a little more, a little better each day. The stenographer may seem just a cog in one big wheel, but if she is capable and efficient, she will be an asset to any office. She should aim at perfection in her particular type of work. The typist would do well to examine her typed page and even if it has to be done

a second time, make sure she is proud to place her initials on the corner of it. Carelessly done work does not rate praise nor raise from the employer, so it is to her advantage to put her best into her work. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1947, pp. 99-100)

Another former commercial student had this to

say:

It must be almost a decade ago since I first walked up to stately old St. Bride's and passed along the dignified corridors that led at last to the Commercial Room. It was a small room It could accommodate no more than twelve or fourteen pupils However, during the years I have spent in the world of business, I have come to realize that the things we learnt in that small room could not have been learned better in the best equipped school in the world, for somehow our teacher had the wisdom to teach us what we really needed to know, and she enabled us to acquire those qualities which are vital to success in any sphere of life, but particularly so in the business sphere. Almost without our knowing it, she taught us tact and discretion. She contrived to give us a sense of responsibility, too, and even succeeded in making the shyest girls in the class feel self-confident. One of her methods for achieving this last mentioned was to have Oral Tests, at which the Superior of the College and some other Sisters were present. . . . It was on these occasions that we really learnt to think for ourselves and to give expression to our opinions I should also like to mention in passing the very wonderful conception our Commercial Teacher had of what constituted an ideal Stenographer. To her it was not enough that we should be excellent typists. We had also to be accurate spellers and manipulators of figures, and very efficient in the

speaking and in the writing of English, and lastly possessors of the skill to transcribe accurately our shorthand notes. . . . A reminiscence of my days at Littledale would not be complete without some reference to what might be called the cultural part of our training. Here there was always time for the finer things of life, and so we came to know and to love Music and the Drama. Knowledge of Music was not restricted to those of us who took music lessons, but classes in Music Appreciation, in singing and also in Elocution were given for the whole student body. These classes helped us form our ideas of the "Good and the Beautiful" and helped to give us that sense of poise and dignity that identifies the charming, cultured woman. (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1947, pp. 100-101)

Sister Mary Agatha, like her own teacher, Sister Mary Joseph Fox, was always ready to adopt new methods or ideas to help her students become qualified stenographers. In the late 1940's or early 1950's she saw the need to switch from Sloan-Duployan Shorthand to Gregg Shorthand. To prepare herself for the switch, Sister Mary Agatha took it upon herself to learn the Gregg system. To assist her in her private study, she called upon the services of a fellow commercial teacher at Prince of Wales College, Mr. Thomas W. Serjeant, who came regularly to Littledale to work with her. (Interview with Sister Mary Teresina Bruce, June 11, 1981)

To assist her students in the study of the postal system and its many services, Sister Mary Agatha arranged

with Mr. W. J. Veitch, a Public Relations Officer with Canada Post Office, to make regular visits to the Commercial Department to lecture to the students. (Littledale Leaves, March 1956, p. 4)

In 1951 there were twenty-eight students registered in the Commercial Class at Littledale. One student, in explaining why she and her classmates had chosen the Commercial Class, had this to say:

For various reasons, I suppose. But principally, I think, because we know that a thorough business training affords a graduate opportunity to obtain remunerative secretarial employment in congenial surroundings and with interesting, alert people.

We know, too, that a commercial graduate requires much more than shorthand and typewriting certificates. She must develop as well the desirable qualities of trustworthiness, loyalty, courtesy, initiative; she must be prepared to obey orders willingly and graciously. (Littledale Leaves, December 1951, p. 2)

Another student from the same class gives an account of the motivating devices used by Sister Mary Agatha to encourage the girls in their commercial studies:

The shorthand and typewriting certificates offered at the end of each month to successful candidates, not only provide an incentive to putting extra effort into our work, but also measure the skill we have attained.

We have already reached the first goal (sic), the winning of a shorthand certificate for membership in the Order of Gregg

Artists. We are now working for a type-writing certificates (sic), which we hope to win before the holidays.

An ex-pupil of the class has donated a beautiful silver medal for first place in shorthand examinations to be held in June. (Littledale Leaves, December 1951, p. 2)

In addition to the commercial studies, various sports continued to be considered important activities for the commercial girls. In the Fall there were outdoor sports such as basketball, softball, and volleyball; and during the winter months, in addition to skating, there were indoor sports such as badminton and ping pong. Apart from the sports activities, the girls could also be found engaging in all College activities--taking part in College plays, participating in Catholic Book Week, writing articles for the College newspaper, or forming part of the cooking classes on Saturday mornings. (Littledale Leaves, April 1952, pp. 1-4)

While the commercial students at Littledale had a variety of social activities in which they could participate, they also seemed to be very adept at discovering the lighter side of their more serious activities. This particular skill was not confined to any one Commercial Class at Littledale but seemed to be the case

with many of them. In 1940 two girls created an amusing drama entitled "The Twin Arts," in which one of them played the role of Typewriting and the other of Shorthand. They later published their creation in the College magazine for all to enjoy (St. Bride's College Annual, June 1940, p. 98). In 1953 two other girls sought humour in their studies. One wrote a Commercial Class Hit Parade, taking the top songs of the Hit Parade and tying them to amusing incidents in the Commercial Department (Littledale Leaves, February 1953, p. 3); while the other girl wrote a poem entitled "The Problems of Commercial," in which she related the struggles of beginning commercial students to learn the rudiments of business subjects (Littledale Leaves, December 1953, p. 3). And, in 1954 the Commercial Class produced a very enjoyable concert made up of singing, skits, a recitation entitled, "I'm Called a Stenographer," and a business sketch entitled "Poor Mr. Hill" (Littledale Leaves, March 1954, p. 3)

In all the College activities, both the serious and the not so serious, there was always the permeating influence of the Catholic faith. In 1953 the commercial students, along with other senior students of the College, held a symposium to discuss Pope Pius XI's encyclical,

"Christian Education of Youth." Two of the commercial students, in commenting on the symposium, made the following remarks:

This symposium concerning the Encyclical by Pope Pius XI on the Christian Education of Youth proved quite informative. . . . From these addresses we have learned the true meaning of this encyclical of Pope Pius XI. (Littledale Leaves, December, 1953, p. 4)

Throughout the fifties the numbers of commercial students fluctuated from year to year, with from 25 to 30 students each year. By 1954 Sister Mary Agatha had dropped the requirement that the girls write C.H.E. Examinations and instead had them write examinations prepared by the Gregg Company in the United States. The girls, if successful, received diplomas from that company, certifying them in shorthand and typewriting. Examinations in the other subjects were prepared locally by Sister Mary Agatha and administered and corrected at Littledale. The new curriculum consisted of religion, English, spelling and dictation, shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, and office practice. (Records of St. Bride's College, Littledale)

A commercial student of the 1954-55 class made the following comments about her Littledale training:

Littledale was a real haven--the girls felt very safe and secure and very "at home." Sister Mary Agatha was interested not only in

the girls' school work but also in them as individuals.

The girls were taught to respect themselves, to hold high ideals, and to have the courage of their convictions. There was a finesse about the Littledale girls that other institutions did not seem to be able to produce. (Interview with Mrs. Bridget (McDonald) Walsh, June 23, 1981)

In the Fall of 1958 the Commercial Department of Littledale was finally closed. While a group of students had registered for the 1958-59 school year, they were not to remain at Littledale. Instead, Sister Mary Agatha, who had by now given forty years of service to the Littledale Commercial Department, transferred with her students to the Commercial Department of the new Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School on Bonaventure Avenue in St. John's. There, she, along with Sisters from Meroy Convent and the Presentation Order, was to take up teaching duties. This marked the end of Littledale's involvement in business education.

Sister Mary Agatha spent only a few years at Holy Heart, as the school came to be known, when ill health took her from her duties. She passed away in 1963, leaving behind a long trail of young businesswomen, who had found their way into offices all over the Island.

Littledale was a girls' school, and it prided itself in turning out poised and graceful young ladies,

who were as much at home in the office as in the kitchen, or on the stage as on the sports field. Typing and shorthand, for example, went hand in hand with music and dancing, with cooking and needlework, with religion and sports. The girls were taught courtesy, tact, discretion, and self-reliance. They were shown the importance of being honest, of caring, and of being responsible in their personal and business relationships. These lessons did not come only from their daily lectures or their religious and moral training, but also from the example shown by the dedicated Christian women under whom they had been fortunate enough to receive their education.

Thus the Commercial Department of Littledale, under the guiding hand of Sister Mary Agatha Bonia, had given to the business community of Newfoundland many hundreds of young stenographers who had received the benefit of a truly well-rounded education.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORK OF THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, ST. GEORGE'S

The small group of American Sisters who had established a congregation on the West Coast of Newfoundland became involved in business training, in a limited way, shortly after their arrival at Sandy Point. In a few years they opened St. Michael's Academy at St. George's, which was later raised to the status of a college (The Diocesan Review, June 1974, p. 6). The Sisters' work in business education continued to expand until they eventually found it necessary to open a Commercial Department.

The first part of this chapter will look at the business training provided at St. Michael's prior to the opening of the Commercial Department. The second part of the chapter will review the work done by the Commercial Department.

I. Business Training Prior to the Opening of the Commercial Department

The Sisters of Mercy of the St. George's Diocese began instruction in business education as early as 1898 at their convent school at Sandy Point. In that year two students were enrolled in bookkeeping. By 1900 the Sisters had already moved across the harbour to St. George's, and in that

year the number of students studying bookkeeping increased to seven. By the school year 1903-04 the number had climbed to 20. (Reports of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the years ended 31st December, 1898; 1900; 1904; pp. 52-53; 38-39; 42-43)

In the 1904 Intermediate Grade Examinations of the Council of Higher Education, one of the students of St. Michael's, Miss Agnes McDonald, obtained distinction and a special prize in bookkeeping. Again, in the 1910 Preliminary Grade Examinations of the Council of Higher Education, a student of St. Michael's, Miss Mary Roche, was awarded distinction in bookkeeping (Calendars of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1904-05; 1910; pp. 13; 21; 81). The numbers of students continued to increase, and by 1911 there were 35 enrolled in bookkeeping. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended December 31st, 1911, pp. 50-51)

In addition to bookkeeping, shorthand was also taught at St. Michael's. In 1912 two students received honors in the Intermediate Grade Shorthand Examinations of the Council of Higher Education. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended 31st December, 1912, p. 80)

St. Michael's continued to attract increasing numbers of students, and, as a result, it eventually became necessary to enlarge the school facilities. In 1911-12 there were 131 students enrolled, and by now the Intermediate Department of the Academy had gained recognition in the Island. The Roman Catholic School Report for that year contained the following comments: "There is not a neater or better equipped school room outside of the colleges than the Intermediate room of this school" (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended 31st December, 1912, p. 80)

The following year, the work on the convent building was completed thus providing St. Michael's Academy with "one of the best school properties in the country, outside of the City of St. John's" (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended 31st December, 1913, p. XXXIII). Also by now the Academy was beginning to be recognized as having a considerable influence on the West Coast of Newfoundland:

Since the establishment of this school there has been a steady upward tendency in educational conditions in the locality, and it has done not a little towards helping to promote that educational activity which is noticeable along the whole West Coast. The tone of the

school is an excellent one, its influence over its pupils is of the right kind, and many of these who have gone forth from its walls to teach, have brought that same good influence with them, and thus its usefulness extends far outside of the town of St. George's itself. . . (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended 31st December, 1914, p. XLII)

St. Michael's Academy received very fine comments not only from educational officials but also from the local press. The April 21, 1920, issue of The Western Star carried the following article:

It must be a source of legitimate pride to every man and woman of the West Coast to know that we have such an institution as St. Michael's Academy in our midst.

Its remarkable success in various departments of education gives good reason for hoping, that granted the support of the community at large, it will play no small part in our new era of development. That it merits the support of those who intend providing for their girls a solid education, appears from the success that continues to attend the efforts of the efficient staff, each member of which is fully qualified. . . . The fathers and mothers of the West Coast should consult the prospectus of St. Michael's before sending their girls far afield in search of what can be got so near home. (p. 2)

The Sisters continued to provide training in commercial subjects, and, like the Sisters at Mercy Convent and Littledale, they not only prepared their students for the C.H.E. Exams, but they also prepared them for international competitions. It did not take long for the

students at St. Michael's to be able to take their places of honor in these competitions along with their counterparts in other parts of the world. The following article appearing in the October 2, 1920 issue of The St. John's Daily Star gives an account of the girls' performance in the shorthand competitions of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society:

Miss Melissa Butt recently secured the award of a silver medal from the Sloan Duployan Shorthand Society for accuracy, while diplomas were obtained by Misses Kelly, Collins, Hartigan, Flossie Butt, Davis, Pine and Coady. (p. 8)

In the Fall of 1921 the Academy again underwent improvements and repairs. His Lordship, Right Reverend Bishop Renouf, who had approved of these alterations, hoped to increase the scope of the Academy's work. Already students from various parts of Newfoundland were attending the institution, and it was the Bishop's hope that many more students would attend:

St. Michael's Academy is an important institution for the people of the West Coast as it supplies a school for the young ladies of St. George's Diocese where piety, culture and learning are combined. Many of its pupils are now taking leading positions amongst the women of this country Although the Academy is not very old in years, its name is well known beyond the bounds of St. George's, and students have been attracted there from many of the Southern and Northern Outports as well as from St. John's. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1922, p. 129)

The students at St. Michael's, like their counterparts at Mercy Convent and Littledale, often engaged in group activities with a view to raising funds for their school. For example, in 1921 they staged an operetta in order to raise funds to purchase equipment for a library. The curriculum also allowed for many activities outside the required course work. Musical instruction was provided, with many students obtaining diplomas from Trinity College of Music, London, England. A talented artist taught painting in oils and water colours. The illuminating of manuscripts became a perfected art. And, plain and fancy needlework, singing, and dancing were also taught. (The Western Star, June 8, 1921, p. 2; April 1, 1925, p. 3)

In addition to the above activities, the Sisters at St. Michael's also gave special attention to "the forming and developing of character . . . to fit their pupils to take their places in broader spheres than those of the classroom" (The Western Star, September 24, 1924, p. 3). In this noble work they were, of course, following in the footsteps of their foundress, Mother McAuley, who believed that in order to help young women it was necessary to "build up their character on the basis of Catholic truth" (Ward, 1956, p. 7).

In the years from 1923 to 1925 there was considerable development on the West Coast of Newfoundland. The new town of Corner Brook had brought about an increase in the population, and St. Michael's Academy also saw an increase in both its boarders and day pupils. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the years ended June 30th, 1924, 1925; pp. 81; 94)

The need for a Commercial Department wherein young women could receive a full commercial program to enable them to compete for jobs on the rapidly growing West Coast was evident. The Sisters responded to this need by establishing a Commercial Department at the Academy so that both boarders and day pupils could avail of the opportunity to train for the business world.

In the meantime, bookkeeping, which now became part of the commercial curriculum, also remained on the regular College curriculum, and male as well as female pupils studied this subject. Here it is important to note that while St. Michael's had originally been built, as were the other convent schools, for the training of young women, boys also attended.

In 1931 one Grade VIII student and seven Grade X students were awarded distinctions in bookkeeping in the

C.H.E. Exams. One of the Grade X students also received distinctions in both shorthand and typewriting--subjects which also were available on the regular curriculum. In the same year another student, Miss Martha Lewis, was awarded a prize for the highest marks in bookkeeping in the C.H.E. Exams. (The Western Star, September 16, 1931; December 23, 1931; pp. 1; 12)

The new Commercial Department was to increase the scope of commercial training, and in a very short time become an important centre for that type of training on the West Coast of Newfoundland.

ii. The Work of the Commercial Department

In 1925 the young ladies of St. George's Diocese were able to avail of a complete commercial course at St. Michael's Academy. The new commercial curriculum consisted of shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, office routine, English, and mathematics. As with Littledale, this course was available to both boarders and day pupils who had completed Grade XI (Interview with Sister Mary Liguori Wade, July 10, 1981). The local press noted that St. Michael's Academy was now offering a "first class commercial course" (The Western Star, September 16, 1925, p. 3)

As the population of the West Coast continued to increase, St. Michael's Academy also noted an increase in its numbers. During the school year 1928-29 the school inspector noted that

at St. Michael's Academy, St. George's, a larger number of boarding students attended than for some years past, while the number of day pupils had also increased. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30, 1929, pp. 57-58)

In 1930 the students of St. Michael's Academy, or St. Michael's College, as it is now known, made a fine showing in the shorthand competitions of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. Six girls received diplomas for speed, having attained 100 words per minute; and four girls received diplomas for accuracy in reporting style. (The Western Star, September 24, 1930, p. 6)

Each year seemed to bring further increases in the numbers of students seeking admission to St. Michael's College, and its fine work was being recognized by education officials:

This institution performs an important role in the educational life of the West Coast. Within its atmosphere of refinement, and under the watchful care of the Sisters of Mercy many young ladies are thoroughly prepared for their work in the growing communities of that portion of our country. Last year saw St. Michael's filled to capacity, and several applicants were awaiting admission. . . . The Commercial Class was

well attended; its graduates are giving every satisfaction and are reflecting great credit on their Alma Mater. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1930, p. 76).

By 1931 the world depression had begun to hit the Island and 1933 saw Newfoundland's economy "flattened" (Rowe, 1980, pp. 399-400). This had its effect on St. Michael's College. The Western Star of December 19, 1934, noted that "owing to the depression the attendance at the college was not as large as formerly" (p. 3). However, the small number of commercial students who did attend performed well. Five received shorthand diplomas for 100 words a minute from the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society and four of these students also received diplomas for advanced typewriting. In 1935 the Commercial Class had another successful year with seven students obtaining typewriting diplomas and shorthand speed diplomas from the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. (The Western Star, December 19, 1934; September 11, 1935; pp. 3; 1).

From 1935 to 1946 the Commercial Class of St. Michael's averaged about nine to ten students per year, and instruction was given in the afternoon only. The curriculum at this time consisted of typewriting, Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, bookkeeping, and office routine. During this period

the Commercial Department was under the guiding hand of Sister Mary Fidalis Parsons (Interview with Sister Mary Basil McCormack, August 19, 1981). Of the 1946 class five young ladies successfully completed the Council of Higher Education Examinations for Grade XI Commercial. (The Western Star, August 30, 1946, p. 3)

The Commercial Department of St. Michael's College continued its work until the opening of the Vocational Schools, erected on the West Coast in the sixties, lured away many of the prospective commercial students. In 1968 St. Michael's College was closed (The Diocesan Review, June 1974, p. 6), and with it another important centre of business training passed into history.

CHAPTER VIII

COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF OTHER CONVENT SCHOOLS

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Sisters of Mercy set up Commercial Departments at some of their other schools. Each of these schools and convents were operated autonomously, and only in an emergency would a Sister be transferred from one convent to another (McCormack, p. 97). The existence of these small autonomous communities made it difficult to provide adequate training for novices (The Monitor, October 6, 1934, p. 6). However, before long an event was to occur which would change the existing situation and allow the Sisters to expand their educational work in the country.

On July 16, 1915, the Sisters of Mercy, together with the Presentation Sisters, another religious order which had been established in Newfoundland, forwarded a joint petition to Pope Benedict XV, through the Apostolic Delegate, Most Reverend P. F. Stagn, praying for the amalgamation of the convents of each Order. The petition was sanctioned and approved by Archbishop E. P. Roche of St. John's, Bishop J. March of Harbour Grace, and Bishop M. F. Power of St. George's.

On August 4, 1916, a communication was received from the Holy Father acceding to the petition. As a result, a Generalate was formed for each of the two Orders in the country. Reverend M. Bridget O'Connor was chosen as the first Mother General of the Order in Newfoundland. A Novitiate House was then set up at St. Bride's College, Littledale, serving as a training centre for prospective teachers. This new Novitiate House proved to be an incentive to study and thus provided a supply of trained teachers who were available to staff new or existing convents. (Inter Nos, May 1941, pp. 21-22; June 1945, p. 92).

Now that a supply of trained teachers were available, the Sisters were in a position to open other convents and schools. The first part of this chapter will look at the establishment of the convents and schools at Curling and Bay Bulls and the opening of Commercial Departments at these schools. The second part of the chapter will look at the opening of the convent and school at The Mines, Bell Island, and the subsequent opening of a Commercial Department at the school.

I. Convent of St. Mary's-on-the-Humber and Holy Cross School, Curling

In August 1917 the newly-appointed Mother General of the Mercy Order, Mother M. Bridget, went to Bay of Islands

to look over the site of a new convent which was about to be erected for the Sisters of Mercy at Curling. The local press carried the following account of her arrival:

Rev. Mother Bridget arrived here on Saturday to examine into the site of the new convent about to be erected. One of the greatest problems in this country has been the education of the children. His Lordship Bishop Power and Very Rev. Dean O'Rourke have given much thoughtful consideration to the education of the Catholic youth of this place, with the result that it is about to be entrusted to a community of Sisters, and preparations are in progress for the erection of a convent. The building to be erected, we understand, will be most modern both in design and equipment. (The Daily News, August 24, 1917, p. 4).

On September 24 the Sisters arrived by rail at Curling and received an enthusiastic welcome:

The Sisters on arrival were met at the Railway by the Bishop, the Clergy, and a great throng of people. They were escorted as in a Triumphant March from the Station first to the Church to visit the Blessed Sacrament, and then to their humble little Convent, St. Mary's-on-the-Humber. Here the Bishop officially welcomed them to the Diocese and then installed them in their new home, amid the acclamations of the people who crowded the grounds. (The Monitor, October 1942, p. 14)

The next day the Sisters started teaching in St. Patrick's Hall (McCormack, p. 102). Among the first subjects taught was shorthand. In the first year seven students were enrolled in this course (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended 31st December, 1918, pp. 24-25). In 1919 one of the

students at the convent school, Miss Olive Petley, won a silver medal for accuracy in reporting style in the shorthand competitions of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. (The Daily News, August 15, 1919, p. 4)

In 1925 a new school was erected and given the name of Holy Cross (McCormack, p. 102). A Commercial Department was opened at this school, offering courses in Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, English, office routine, and arithmetic. The students were day-pupils and their numbers varied from year to year. They were both male and female, Catholic and non-Catholic. In order to be admitted to the Commercial Department, these students had to have completed Grade XI. (Interview with Sister Mary Liguori Wade, July 10, 1981)

The opening of the new school occurred at a time when Bay of Islands was experiencing considerable development, as can be seen from the following press article:

The greatest thing in the history of Bay of Islands up to the year 1922 had been the coming of the railway. In 1923 however a still greater uplift was in store for it, that was the establishing of the Paper Mills at Corner Brook. In July 1925 the first roll of newsprint paper was made by the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company Limited. Since that day many millions of dollars have been paid out in wages here, and the indications are this will be our good fortune for many years to come. (The Western Star, March 26, 1941, p. 9)

In 1930 one student from Holy Cross obtained a shorthand speed diploma for 100 words a minute and another student received a diploma for accuracy from the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. In 1934 a Certificate of Merit was awarded to a Holy Cross student in the shorthand competition of the same Society. (The Western Star, September 10, 1930; August 15, 1934; pp. 2; 1)

The Commercial Class continued their fine work, and in 1937 they had a very successful year. Two students received diplomas for Intermediate bookkeeping and accuracy in shorthand (reporting style), one of them also receiving a diploma for advanced typewriting, from the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. Also, in the same year Miss Margaret Gillam of Holy Cross won a silver medal in the December shorthand competition of the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society, while another student, Miss Dorothy Davis, received special mention and was awarded a Certificate of Merit. (The Western Star, September 1, 1937; February 23, 1938; pp. 2; 1)

The fine work of the Commercial Department continued on into the forties. One of the teachers in the Commercial Department during the thirties and forties was Sister Mary Liguori Wade. In addition to the

regular course work of the Department, Sister Mary Liguori's students also worked at other projects. They helped with the preparation of the monthly school publication put out by the high school students, sharing in both the design of the publication and in the actual typing work. They did most of the typing of correspondence for the Sisters and priests. And, they also engaged in a project known as "artistic typewriting" or "art-typing." This involved creating designs on the typewriter with the use of coloured ribbons. Using this technique, the students were able to design Christmas cards, book covers, and frames for graduation class results, to mention only a few. (Interview with Sister Mary Liguori Wade, July 10, 1981)

In 1943 one of Sister Mary Liguori's students, Miss Delia Lewis, received a series of honors. She was awarded a medal and certificate for artistic typewriting in an Art-typing Contest sponsored by an organization in Baltimore, Maryland. She received the school prize for general commercial subjects during the Annual Distribution of Prizes. And, she was awarded a diploma for advanced typewriting, a diploma for intermediate bookkeeping, and a shorthand diploma for 100 words a minute from the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. Miss Lewis'

classmates also did exceptionally well, with one student obtaining a diploma in intermediate bookkeeping, five receiving diplomas in advanced typewriting, four obtaining shorthand diplomas for 100 words a minute, and one obtaining a shorthand diploma for 120 words a minute from the Sloan-Duployan Shorthand Society. (The Western Star, November 27, 1943, p. 7)

In addition to the classroom work, the students could also study music or participate in dramatics. Each Distribution Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Christmas, the students of Holy Cross staged a concert to which Sisters, priests, parents, and other friends of the school were invited (Interview with Sister Mary Liguori Wade, July 10, 1981). The following article from the local press gives an account of the Distribution Day program of 1943:

The 1943 classes of Holy Cross School . . . received their diplomas and prizes from His Excellency the Bishop of St. George's on Thursday evening November 18. The programme which marked this annual ceremony of the school was both impressive and entertaining, and was held in St. Patrick's Hall.

Present with His Excellency the Bishop of the Diocese were Rev. Fr. St. Croix, P.P., and Rev. Frs. Drake and Bromley. With the other guests, parents and friends of the school, the hall was filled to capacity. . . . Tribute must be paid to the feature of the evening, the dramatic presentation of "Queen By The Grace of God." It was so well interpreted by the many, talented pupils of the school that

it will be long remembered by those present as a happy blend of knowledge, gaiety and charm, sincerity and humour. (The Western Star, November 27, 1943, p. 7)

Distribution Day also gave the students an opportunity to show the rest of the school what had been done by each individual department. In 1946 the commercial students presented a fine record of their department. Prizes were awarded to one student for advanced typewriting, eight for intermediate typewriting, six for advanced commercial correspondence, five for 100 words a minute in shorthand, two for 80 words a minute in shorthand, and one for shorthand accuracy. (The Western Star, December 13, 1946, p. 4)

The Sisters at Holy Cross continued to provide business training for the young men and women of the West Coast until the fifties when they closed their Commercial Department.

II. Sacred Heart Convent and St. Patrick's School, Bay Bulls.

In 1921 the parish priest of Bay Bulls, Rev. P. J. O'Brien, invited the Sisters of Mercy to Bay Bulls to take up residence in the new convent which he and his parishioners had erected (Inter Nos, May 1941, p. 22). Free labour was provided by the Catholic men of Bay Bulls for the construction of the Convent building (Interview with Mr. Cyril Maloney, July 27, 1981). On September 24,

the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, the Sisters arrived at Bay Bulls to take up residence (Inter Nos, May 1941, p./22) at the convent which they named Sacred Heart. (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy)

Just two days after their arrival in Bay Bulls, the four Sisters who made up the foundation opened their school, which they named St. Patrick's. In the first year 180 pupils enrolled (McCormack, pp. 103-104). Business subjects were part of the curriculum of St. Patrick's School from its earliest days. In addition, Sister Mary Paul Ryall, one of the founding Sisters, provided commercial training for students who wished to pursue a business career.

Commercial training was offered for a small additional fee of 25 cents per quarter. Sister Mary Paul taught the students Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, and there was one typewriter available on which she taught them how to type. As the students completed their assignments for the month, they placed them in what was known as a "budget," which Sister Mary Paul kept in a special place in the classroom. (Interview with Mrs. Eliza M. (Glynn) Maloney, July 27, 1981)

In addition to their commercial training, the early students at St. Patrick's were able to attend drawing and

needlework classes on Saturday afternoons. Also, the parish priest, Rev. P. J. O'Brien, purchased a set of the Books of Knowledge for the school, and on Saturday afternoons the students could sit and read these books. Every Saturday there was a different book to discuss. On Sundays there were meetings of the Children of Mary Sodality. The students were given blue ribbons and medals and a blue shoulder cloak to wear on Feast Days and special occasions.

Reverend Mother Mary Winnifred Greene, the Superior of St. Patrick's Convent, taught the students music and arranged operettas for the school. She invited a St. John's poet and artist, Mr. Danny Carroll, to come up to Bay Bulls to paint the background scenery for the operettas at St. Patrick's. Mother Mary Winnifred's sister and Sister Mary Paul's sister would both come from St. John's to Bay Bulls to teach the students dancing for these performances. All of these volunteers would travel to and from Bay Bulls by train. At least once a year, the Mother General of the Mercy Order in St. John's would also pay a visit to St. Patrick's School.

Throughout the entire range of activities at St. Patrick's School, religion played a very important part. Morning and afternoon classes began with prayers.

and at noon the church and school bells would ring to announce the time for the saying of the Angelus. Classes in religious instruction were also held as part of the regular school program. (Interview with Mrs. Eliza M. (Glynn) Maloney, July 27, 1981)

St. Patrick's School continued to provide commercial training for the young men and women of Bay Bulls. A former commercial student, who studied there during the thirties and forties, made the following comments about the training she received:

Bookkeeping and shorthand were taught in Grades VIII and IX and we learned to balance a complete set of ledgers. We also did some typing in Grade VIII and following completion of Grade XI took a typing course and office routine at the convent room for a small sum. . . . there was great emphasis placed on good spelling and writing. . . . Religion was a very important subject. Daily religious instruction was given from 1200 to 1230 following the Angelus. The day also began and ended with prayer and the priest visited the classroom daily.

Dramatics and debates were a part of our agenda also. There were concerts Christmas, Easter, and St. Patrick's Day. . . . The concerts usually consisted of a three act play with recitations, dances, drills, etc., between acts. . . . The education I received at the convent school in Bay Bulls has stood me in good stead. I feel I am adequately equipped for the average job. . . . I am forever grateful to those dedicated educators who strived to educate and prepare me for a successful future. (Interview with Mrs. Mary (Glynn) Mercer, July 31, 1981)

In 1951-52 Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, a former student of Sister Mary Agatha of Littledale, taught Grade XI

Commercial at St. Patrick's School. At that time there were about eight students, both male and female, doing the commercial program. This was one of the last classes to be conducted by the Sisters at St. Patrick's. Shortly thereafter they discontinued their commercial program. (Interview with Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, June 22, 1981)

III. The Immaculate Conception Convent and The Academy of the Immaculate Conception, Bell Island

Bell Island was the first community outside St. John's to have a second convent and school operated by the Sisters of Mercy (Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy). They had gone to Bell Island in 1917 to open St. Edward's School at The Front, which will be discussed in Chapter IX, and had taken over the school at The Mines on September 24, 1920 (McCormack, p. 106).

For many years the Sisters travelled daily to The Mines School from their convent at The Front. However, in 1926 that was about to change. In that year the Knights of Columbus formed a Ladies Auxiliary for the purpose of raising funds for the building of a convent at The Mines. On October 18 of the same year the first sod for the new convent was turned. Construction began in November, and just one year later, in November 1927,

the Sisters moved into their new convent (Bown, undated, pp. 17; 21), which they named Immaculate Conception.

(Archives of the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy)

Just ten years after they had opened their new school, the Sisters established a Commercial Department in a basement room which had been used by the Knights of Columbus for meetings and thus had come to be known as the Knights of Columbus Room. Grade XI Commercial was taught, and the subjects included Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, commerce, and business English. (Interview with Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, June 22, 1981)

In 1944 a new storey was added to the school providing space for commercial rooms (McCormack, p. 107). Two large rooms, one for typing and one for a teaching classroom was now available. (Interview with Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, June 22, 1981). The following year "the school was raised to the status of an academy, to be known thereafter as the Academy of the Immaculate Conception" (McCormack, p. 107).

One of the teachers in the Commercial Department of Immaculate Conception during its early days was Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, who was on Bell Island throughout the forties. In the last few years of her work on the Island,

Sister Mary Kevin switched from Sloan-Duployan Shorthand to Gregg Shorthand, which she had learned on her own. Her students did well and found it very easy to obtain employment with most of them going to work at the United States Air Force Bases at Pepperrell, Argonia, Stephenville, and Goose Bay (Interview with Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, June 22, 1981). In fact, while the students had taken Grade XI Commercial Examinations from 1940 to 1950, these examinations were discontinued after 1950 because the majority of the commercial students had been obtaining offers of employment before the end of the school term. (McCormack, p. 107)

In the mid-fifties Sister Irene Kennedy took over the Commercial Department and remained there for a period of four years. At that time the Commercial Class consisted of about 15 students, both male and female. The subjects taught included Sloan-Duployan Shorthand, typewriting, spelling, English, and bookkeeping. Sister Irene provided classroom instruction in the mornings. The afternoons were devoted wholly to practice sessions in typewriting. (Interview with Sister Irene Kennedy, August 21, 1981).

By the sixties the Sisters were able to close their Commercial Department. The new Vocational School at Bell Island had taken over the responsibility for training the young men and women for business careers.

CHAPTER IX

BUSINESS EDUCATION SUBJECTS TAUGHT AT CONVENT SCHOOLS NOT HAVING COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENTS

While the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland operated several Commercial Departments, they also taught business education subjects as part of the regular curriculum in many of their other convent schools. Sometimes, as the need arose, they would establish commercial classes.

The first part of this chapter will review the work done in business education at St. Michael's Convent School, Belvedere; St. Joseph's Convent School, Brigus; St. Ann's School, Burin; and Immaculate Conception Convent School, Conception Harbour. The second part of the chapter will look at the business training given at St. Ann's School, St. Lawrence; St. Edward's Convent School, Bell Island; and St. Joseph's Convent School, Hoylestown, St. John's.

I. St. Michael's Convent School, Belvedere

Belvedere, which opened in 1859, provided a home for orphan girls. However, the Sisters, like their foundress Mother McAuley, realized that merely feeding and clothing these orphan girls was not enough, they would have to provide them with the means to earn a livelihood. The

Sisters' intention to do exactly that was evident from the following comment contained in the Roman Catholic School Report for 1902: "This institution is an orphanage, and the object being to train girls to earn their own livelihood" (Report of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the Year Ended December 31st, 1902, p. 43).

With this aim in mind, the Sisters of St. Michael's School, Belvedere, offered several types of vocational training, among which was business training. In 1911 they taught bookkeeping to 16 of the girls, and just seven years later, in 1918, they taught shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping to a class of eight girls. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Years ended 31st December, 1911; 1918; pp. 50-51; 46-47)

Throughout the twenties girls at Belvedere continued to study commercial subjects. In 1920 a class of eight girls studied shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping. While interest in bookkeeping dropped in the late twenties, girls continued to study typewriting and shorthand. In 1929 the school inspector commented, "the seniors are given . . . Typewriting and Shorthand. It is no exaggeration to state that girls leave Belvedere as well

trained as from the best boarding schools" (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the Years ended June 30th, 1920; 1929; pp. 44; 77)

The Sisters at Belvedere continued to provide a practical education for the girls under their care, and in 1930 the Roman Catholic School Report contained the following comment:

No visitor to Belvedere Orphanage can fail to be impressed with the wonderful work of this institution. . . . Not only do these orphan children find a bountiful home and receive a useful education, but their subsequent welfare is carefully provided for. Those who display aptitude in various ways are encouraged and trained along these lines. There are classes in . . . stenography. It can be truly said that the girls of Belvedere are prepared for life's work equally as well as those of any institution in the country. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1930, p. 83)

In 1947-48 students of St. Michael's School, Belvedere, wrote the Grade XI Commercial Examinations. In 1949 and the years that followed, Belvedere girls went to the College of Our Lady of Mercy to do business courses. (McCormack, p. 118)

Thus the orphan girls at Belvedere received the same opportunity for business training as girls at any other convent school in Newfoundland. While their

classes were small, nothing was spared in providing them the very best business training possible. And, they had the added advantage of a more intimate relationship with their teachers. On one visit the school inspector commented that "In Belvedere one does not have to visit school to see the cordial relations--the intimate and almost parental relations--that exist between the teacher and the 'taught'" (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland Under Roman Catholic Boards for the year ended June 30th, 1923, p. 90). What the students at Belvedere may have lacked in elaborate school facilities, they more than made up for in the friendly, personalized attention which they received from their devoted teachers.

II. St. Joseph's Convent School, Brigus

The Sisters at St. Joseph's Convent School, Brigus, began training in business subjects as early as 1892 when one student enrolled in their bookkeeping course. In 1900 four enrolled for that course, and the following year showed a registration of six. This subject continued to be taught, and in 1908 two of the students wrote the Intermediate Grade Examinations of the Council

of Higher Education and were awarded honors. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the years ended 31st December, 1892; 1900; 1901; 1908; pp. 66-67; 26-27; 16-17; vi)

From 1910 to 1920 the Sisters set up a Commercial Course which they taught on Saturdays for students from communities around Brigus, who could only come there once a week. Approximately 15 students would attend these Saturday classes. (McCormack, p. 55)

In 1914 two students from St. Joseph's Convent School were awarded distinction in shorthand in the Primary Grade Examinations of the Council of Higher Education (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year Ended 31st December, 1914, p. XIX). Again, in 1916 students from St. Joseph's Convent School did very well in the Council of Higher Education Examinations. In the Preliminary Grade, Misses Margaret M. Murray and Winnifred G. Bartlett both were awarded distinction in shorthand, with Miss Murray also being one of three students in Newfoundland to win the subject prize in shorthand. In the Intermediate Grade, distinction in shorthand was also awarded Miss Margaret M. Connolly. (Report of the Examinations Conducted by the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1916, pp. 49; 64; 65; 55)

By 1930 the Sisters at St. Joseph's Convent School had discontinued their commercial training (Interview with Sister Mary Rita Coady, July 28, 1981). Such had been the extent of commercial training provided by the Sisters at Brigus. If a sufficient number of students requested business training, the Sisters did everything possible to accommodate them. However, at no time was there ever a full-time business education program provided at this school.

III. St. Ann's School, Burin

At St. Ann's School, Burin, business training was part of the curriculum as early as 1900, when a group of eight students enrolled in bookkeeping. The number of students in this course remained approximately the same for the next two years, but by 1904 the number had increased to 12. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the years ended 31st December, 1900; 1901; 1902; 1904; pp. 38-39; 38-39; 34-35; 42-43)

By 1904 the Sisters at St. Ann's School were also teaching shorthand. And, in both shorthand and bookkeeping the students did very well in the Council of Higher Education Examinations. In that year two of the students, Misses Lizzie Walsh and Clare White, were

awarded distinction in Preliminary Grade shorthand. In 1910 Misses Susie Avery and Emily Bungay were awarded distinction in Preliminary Grade bookkeeping. (Calendars of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1904-05; 1910; pp. 30-31; 80)

These subjects continued to be taught, and in 1916 four students were awarded distinction in shorthand in the Intermediate Grade Examinations (Report of the Examinations Conducted by the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1916, pp. 55; 57). In addition to bookkeeping and shorthand, instruction in typewriting was also provided in the early 1900's. (Interview with Sister Mary Rita Coady, July 28, 1981)

Thus a limited amount of commercial training was available at St. Ann's School for a number of years. In 1939 the school was finally closed, and the small group of Sisters left Burin. (McCormack, p. 60)

IV. Immaculate Conception Convent School Conception Harbour

The Sisters of the Immaculate Conception Convent School had engaged in business training, as noted on page 44, as early as 1892, when instruction in bookkeeping was included as part of the regular school

curriculum. By 1901 the enrollment in bookkeeping had increased to 16. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the years ended 31st December, 1892; 1901; pp. 66-67; 16-17)

In 1904 there were 11 students studying bookkeeping, and the school inspector noted that they were doing very satisfactory work. In addition to bookkeeping, the Sisters now provided instruction in typewriting. By 1908 shorthand was also being taught. In the Council of Higher Education Examinations that year, two students were awarded distinction in bookkeeping and three in shorthand in the Preliminary Grade Examinations. The following year students in both Preliminary and Intermediate Grades received distinction in shorthand. (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the years ended December 31st, 1904; 1908; 1909; pp. 20-21; IV; IV). Again in 1910 four students received distinction in shorthand in the Preliminary Grade Examinations. One of these students, Miss Nellie St. John, was among four people in Newfoundland to win a prize in shorthand. (Calendar of the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1910, 83-84; 33)

The students continued to do well in the Council of Higher Education Examinations. In 1911 they were awarded

distinction in shorthand, and in 1914 in bookkeeping (Reports of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Years Ended December 31st, 1911; 1914; pp. III; XVIII). Again in 1916 one of the students, Miss Lillian Flynn, won distinction in bookkeeping and shorthand in the Preliminary Grade Examinations. (Report of the Examinations Conducted by the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1916, p. 67)

While business education courses were taught by the Sisters over the years, no formal commercial program was ever instituted at this school.

V. St. Ann's School, St. Lawrence

St. Ann's School, St. Lawrence, as noted on page 44, was one of the earliest convent schools to start instruction in bookkeeping. Over the years shorthand and typewriting were also included. In 1916 four students from St. Ann's School received distinction in shorthand in Preliminary Grade Examinations of the Council of Higher Education. (Report of the Examinations Conducted by the Council of Higher Education, Newfoundland, 1916, pp. 64; 69; 71)

In the years from 1916 up to the early twenties, bookkeeping, shorthand, typewriting, and office routine were being taught at St. Ann's School. Classes were

small since the Sisters had only two typewriters available at that time. These classes continued and the numbers remained small. By the mid-fifties business training was discontinued. (Interview with Sister Mary Basil McCormack, August 19, 1981)

While the business training provided by the Sisters at St. Lawrence was of a very limited nature, it nevertheless helped to serve the business needs of the Burin Peninsula.

VI. St. Edward's Convent School, Bell Island

The first convent and school to be opened by the Sisters of Mercy after the formation of the Generalate (discussed on page 145) was at Bell Island. In 1915 Archbishop Roche had made a promise to the people of the Bell Island parish that he would have a convent and school erected there, to be conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. In fulfillment of his promise, the Archbishop blessed the cornerstone of the new convent on May 12, 1917. (The Daily News, May 16, 1917, p. 4)

On September 18 of that year, four Sisters of Mercy went to Bell Island for the purpose of conducting a school. Since their new school was not completed, they set up their first classes in the old presbytery. On September 24, the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, the new

school was formally opened by Archbishop Roche and given the name of St. Edward's. During that year over 100 pupils registered at the school.

At this time the convent was still under construction, and the Sisters were living in temporary quarters. However, on October 13 the convent was ready, and Archbishop Roche returned to Bell Island for the formal opening. Just one year later he was able to inform the Bell Island parishioners that "as a result of the work of the Sisters, school attendance had shown a marked increase and their efforts were reflected in better results in both the academic and music examinations" (Bown, undated, p. 53).

The Sisters at St. Edward's began teaching business subjects as part of the regular curriculum from their earliest days. In 1918 seven students were enrolled in book-keeping and twenty students in shorthand. (Report of the Public Schools of Newfoundland under Roman Catholic Boards for the Year ended 31st December, 1918, pp. 24-25)

In 1928 the old St. Edward's School was replaced by a new six-room school, and commercial instruction was offered to pupils who wished to find business positions on the Island (McCormack, pp. 99-100). Four years later, in 1932, commercial instruction was given only on a private basis at the convent, with one typewriter available for

the Sisters' use (Interview with Sister Mary Liguori Wade, July 29, 1981). By 1937 even this limited amount of commercial instruction was discontinued. (Interview with Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, June 22, 1981)

While the Sisters at St. Edward's discontinued their commercial training, the students of Bell Island could still avail of the commercial instruction provided at the Commercial Department established at the Academy of the Immaculate Conception. The work done by this Department was discussed in Chapter VIII.

VII. St. Joseph's Convent School, Hoylestown, St. John's

St. Joseph's Convent School, Hoylestown, which replaced the old St. Bridget's School in that area, opened in 1884, and was destroyed by fire just eight years later, as mentioned in Chapter III. Classes for students at Hoylestown were later held in another building and taught by secular teachers. However, the facilities were inadequate, and by 1902 the students were again moved to a rented room in another building. This new location soon proved to be little better than the previous one, with the room being poorly furnished and poorly ventilated. (Reports of the Roman Catholic Schools of Newfoundland for the years ended December 31st, 1900; 1902; 1905; pp. 49; 43; 68)

In 1907 two Sisters from Mercy Convent again took over the operation of the school at Hoylestown. The following year the school was enlarged. However, conditions continued to be very poor, with two Sisters and two secular teachers trying to teach without partitioned classrooms. In 1918 a new school was built at Hoylestown with accommodation for 200 students; and in 1922 a convent was established so that the Sisters could live in the area. (McCormack, p. 105)

Commercial instruction at St. Joseph's Convent School was provided only on a private basis. For example, in 1928 Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy provided business training to one student in out-of-school hours. This student later became a secretary at one of the Sisters' convents in St. John's (Interview with Sister Mary Kevin Kennedy, June 22, 1981). Also, in 1931 Sister Mary Fidelis Parsons taught typewriting, shorthand and office routine to a couple of private students. (Interview with Sister Mary Basil McCormack, August 19, 1981)

At no time did the Sisters of St. Joseph's feel it necessary to provide full-time instruction in business education at this school, since they were already operating large Commercial Departments at two other of their City schools, Mercy Convent and Littledale.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Summary

The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Newfoundland in 1842, at the invitation of Bishop Michael Fleming of St. John's. At the time of their arrival, educational opportunities for young girls of wealthier Catholic families were completely nonexistent in the Island. In less than a year after their arrival, the Sisters opened their first school. Word of their fine work quickly spread around the country, and before long they had established convents and schools in many parts of Newfoundland. In 1893 their numbers were reinforced by a group of Sisters from the United States, who set up a foundation on the West Coast of the Island. Wherever the Sisters of Mercy went, they were greeted warmly and enthusiastically by both Catholic and non-Catholic, English and French.

Before many years had passed, girls of all classes were included in their schools, and, following in the footsteps of their foundress, they set about to establish programs of learning which would enable these young

women to earn a living. In setting up their programs, the Sisters looked not only at the needs of the students, but also at the needs of their families and the communities where they would be spending most of their lives. Thus the Sisters felt it necessary to design programs of both an academic and a vocational nature. While living very cloistered lives, the Sisters were nevertheless very much aware of social and economic influences in Newfoundland and were always willing to adjust their curriculum to meet changing needs.

Almost from the earliest days business education was part of the curriculum of the Sisters' schools. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, interest in commercial training began to develop in Newfoundland. The Sisters at Mercy Convent in St. John's, realizing the possibilities for young people in the field of business, purchased a typewriter and began the task of business training. By now their services had been expanded to include the training of men as well as women, non-Catholic as well as Catholic.

Spearheading this new venture in business education was an Irish-born woman, Sister Mary Joseph Fox. Her first small commercial classes laid the groundwork for the large Commercial Department which was eventually to

be developed at Mercy Convent. The fine work done by this remarkable woman soon earned the respect and support of the business community of St. John's, and the outstanding achievements of her students won for Mercy Convent an excellent reputation in international competitions.

Just twenty years after Sister Mary Joseph Fox began her first commercial class at Mercy Convent, one of her former pupils, Sister Mary Agatha Bonia, was chosen to head up the new Commercial Department recently established at St. Bride's Academy, Littledale. This was followed by the establishment of Commercial Departments at St. Michael's College, St. George's; Holy Cross School, Curling; St. Patrick's School, Bay Bulls; and the Academy of the Immaculate Conception, Bell Island.

At the time of Sister Mary Joseph Fox's death in 1930, business education had become a highly respected field of learning for young men and women in Newfoundland. Hundreds of her students were filling positions of responsibility in offices not only in Newfoundland but in many other parts of North America. The press carried glowing tributes to the fine work done by this great business education teacher. Approximately five years

after her death, her former students donated a stained glass window to the chapel of Mercy Convent in memory of their beloved teacher.

Over the years, in addition to the establishment of Commercial Departments at several schools, small business education classes and private tutoring were also made available to students at other Convent schools around the Island. Mercy Convent, which had been the home of the first formal business education classes, was also to set the stage for the type of business training which other Convent schools were later to follow.

The Sisters at Mercy Convent did not relegate business education to the backrooms of the school, instead they made it a very important part of their school program. In addition to learning business subjects, the students also learned to develop self-confidence, to dress appropriately for the business world, to speak correctly, and to conduct themselves properly in business and social situations. They were also taught the importance of honesty, courtesy, reliability, tact, and respect for others.

Commercial students joined with students of other classes in recreational, cultural, and intellectual

pursuits. They participated in sports activities, studied music, engaged in dancing and dramatics, and shared in the publication of the school magazine. Perhaps most importantly of all they learned to appreciate their Catholic faith. Retreats were held, Feast Days were celebrated, and masses were conducted. Not only did these young people receive the benefits of religious and moral training so important to the development of the individual, but they also had the added benefit of the guiding example of the dedicated Christian women who were their teachers.

The commercial students at Littledale, St. Michael's, and other convent schools received the same opportunities to avail of the Sisters' expertise in music, dramatics, sports, and other activities. The work of these religious extended well beyond the classroom day and the school week, and their influence found its way into homes and offices across the country.

While the Sisters were guided in their work by Catholic educational philosophy and objectives, their service to the youth of Newfoundland knew no religious bounds. Both Catholic and non-Catholic students worked side by side, receiving the same care and attention from the dedicated Sisters.

In 1958 Mercy Convent and Littledale closed the doors of their Commercial Departments. They were followed shortly thereafter by other convent schools. The new Regional High School for girls at St. John's and the Vocational Schools across the Island were able to provide larger and more modern facilities for business education. At the present time, only a few Sisters of Mercy are engaged in business training in Newfoundland, and they now teach at the Regional High School for girls in St. John's along with Sisters from the Presentation Order and other secular teachers.

II. Conclusions

The Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland were among the pioneers in business education in the Island. They started their training at a time when business education was in its infancy and when the field of business was just becoming an acceptable field of employment for women.

The foresight of the Sisters in seeing the possibilities for young people in the business communities of Newfoundland led them to set up formal training programs and eventually several Commercial Departments. Before long they were training hundreds of young men and women for business positions in

Newfoundland. Their efforts helped to win for business education a respected place in the school curriculum.

The Sisters took their work seriously. They provided not only job entry skills but a well-rounded education, which fitted their students not only for the business world but for life in general. Up to the time they began phasing out their business programs around the Island in the late fifties and early sixties, they had already given to Newfoundland over sixty years of fine work in the field of business education.

III. Recommendations

In the process of carrying out this study, the writer has learned of the varied educational work of the Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland. Their contributions to other fields of learning have yet to be recorded. As a result the following recommendations are offered:

1. That the Sisters work in the field of Music Education in Newfoundland be researched.
2. That the Sisters work in the field of Nursing Education in Newfoundland be researched.

3. That the Sisters work in the field of Primary Education in Newfoundland be researched.
4. That the Sisters work in the field of Elementary Education in Newfoundland be researched.
5. That the Sisters work in the field of Religious Education in Newfoundland be researched.

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