

The Interaction of Scottish Educational Developments and Socio-Economic Factors on Gaelic Education in Gaelic-Speaking Areas,
With Particular Reference to the Period 1872 - 1918

by

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To my family and Fran

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Abstract:

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the interaction of Scottish educational developments and socio-economic factors on Gaelic education in Gaelic-speaking areas, with particular reference to the period 1872 - 1918. In 1872 the national education system was inaugurated but it failed to include any measures for the recognition or use of Gaelic. This failure caused Gaelic advocates to seek administrative and parliamentary provisions for Gaelic within the elementary school system. The advocacy reached a climax in 1918 when parliament stipulated the compulsory use of Gaelic in those schools where the majority of the children were Gaelic speakers.

The Gaelic advocacy aroused much controversy throughout Scotland because people questioned - firstly, the relevance of Gaelic to the operation of an efficient educational system; and secondly, the relevance of the language within a society which was increasingly demanding proficiency in English. Both questions arose because of the contrasting levels of social and economic development which existed between the Highlands and the Lowlands. Highlanders faced with broken but continual periods of economic depression were forced to migrate to places of employment in the more prosperous south (and Empire). Migration required English and the school was considered the most natural and effective method of teaching English. All participants in the language debate agreed upon the necessity for English but arguments arose as to whether English could best be acquired by Gaelic's inclusion within the curriculum or through its exclusion. Almost everyone concerned with Highland education divided over the degree of Gaelic necessary to ensure proficiency in English.

The thesis considers the impact of nationalism upon the Gaelic advocacy. The advocacy was an integral feature (although an outgrowth) of a Gaelic revival which commenced in Scotland during the 1870's. Some revivalists were active Scottish nationalists. Both the Gaelic revival and the Scottish nationalism were inspired and influenced by the nationalist aspirations of the Welsh and Irish.

The thesis notes that many of the difficulties which impeded the advance of education in Gaeldom also did so in those Lowland districts which had economic and geographic conditions similar to the Highlands.

Undoubtedly there are some who will disagree with my approach and with my conclusions: I can only argue that both are the results of what the sources revealed.

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| C.D.B. | Congested Districts Board |
| C. of S. | Church of Scotland |
| E.I.S. | Educational Institute of Scotland |
| F.C. | Free Church |
| H.M.I. | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| N.S.A. | New Statistical Account |
| P.C. | Privy Council |
| P.P. | Parliamentary Papers |
| S.B. | School Board |
| S.E.D. | Scotch Education Department |
| S.H.R. | <u>Scottish Historical Review</u> |
| S.R.O. | Scottish Record Office |

Transactions Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness

U.F.C. United Free Church

Argyll Commission - Report of the Royal Commission on Education,
P.P. 1865 Vol. XVII; 1867 Vol. XXV

Napier Commission - Report of the Royal Commission on the Condition
of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands, P.P. 1884,
Vol. XXXII

Walpole Commission - Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire
into Certain Matters Affecting the Interests of the Population of
the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, P.P. 1890 Vol. XXVII

Chapter I: Introduction: The Problem Before 1872

The movement for educational reform

The geographic distribution of Gaelic
before 1872 and its decline in use

The role of Gaelic in the pre-1872 school
system

The movement for educational reform

The nineteenth century movement for educational reform in Scotland had its origins in the social and economic upheavals of the Industrial and Agrarian Revolutions of the Lowlands. The economic changes were associated with a massive growth and movement of population which overwhelmed the parochial and voluntary system of education that had been established when Scotland's population was small and mainly rural. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century the consequences of the growth and movement were evident in the numerous social ills which were seen as threatening the stability of society.

The social ills were most critical and most visible in the urban centres where population rapidly concentrated. In 1801, 17% of the population lived in towns of 10,000 or more; by 1851 the figure had increased to 32%; by 1850 Glasgow alone held 10% of the nation's inhabitants.¹ Serious housing shortages existed; destitution, sanitary problems and hazards to health increased. Unsupervised children were, "encompassed by endless temptations and means of indulgence".²

The situation was viewed with alarm by many. Lord Moncrieff, the Lord Advocate, in 1854 warned of - "a flood of deep, unfathomed, pestilential waters, which unless prompt measures are taken, any upheaving of our society may cause to burst their barriers and sweep us and our boasted institutions to destruction".³ Education would ameliorate the danger by acting as a means of social control;

education would instill discipline and habits of work in the young and the teaching of the Christian tenets would create an awareness of socially unacceptable desires and pursuits.

The inability of the existing educational system to fulfil the obligations upon it was acknowledged by church and government authorities, but disputes arose as to the best way of improving the system. The government began as early as 1834 to provide some financial assistance to schools and wished for more control and direction in their operation. Although it was supported in this by secular and religious organisations, both the Established Church and the Free Church voiced opposition. The Established Church, desiring to maintain its position as the moral and spiritual guardian of the nation, opposed any measure that restricted its authority and the Free Church (particularly during the 1850's under the leadership of men such as Chandlish) determined not to allow any national system the opportunity to give an advantage to the Establishment.* By 1867 the inadequacy of the system was so great that the Argyll Commission stated that "this institution is not only inadequate in its dimensions to accomplish the objectives for which it was designated, but falls immeasurably far short of it."⁴

*J. Myers, "Scottish Teachers and Education Policy: 1832-1872, Attitudes and Influences", (University of Edinburgh 1974, Ph.D. thesis) provides a detailed analysis of the attitude of both churches to the question of educational reform: pages 248-309 deal specifically with the views of the Free Church. Further elaboration on the views of the Free Church can be obtained from D. Withrington, "The Free Church Educational Scheme, 1843-1850", Records of the Scottish Church History Society, XV, part II (1964), 103 - 115

The Commission reported that there were 92,000 children of school age not on the school roll and one-fifth of the 418,367 registered on the roll did not attend school. The quality of teaching, the state of buildings and the "appliance" of the schools were, in most instances, defective.

The Highland parishes, the cities and the large towns had the greatest lack of facilities. In the Highlands the parochial system's efforts were restricted and counteracted by the nature of the country and the vast size of the parishes. In the cities and the large towns the system did not operate at all. Within the Lowlands where the system was in full operation it was "inadequate in extent to overtake the work for which it was intended" and needed to be supplemented. Even within the supplementary school system the efficiency was unequal and amongst all the schools the progress of the children varied with and depended upon the class of the parents. It was noted that

"education is lowest among the fishing, mining, crofter and some portions of the agricultural populations, and highest among the better class of agricultural labourers, among the shepherds and the small village tradesmen; that the demand for education of their children corresponds to the state of education of the parents; and that there is a demand only for the elementary branches among the majority of these classes, and for the higher branches among the tradesmen alone."

There was no legislative provision for education within the towns (excepting the smaller burghs which formed parts of parishes, partly landward and partly burghal). Therefore cities and burghs were dependent upon non-parochial schools, but these schools were

"utterly inadequate to effect the education of the masses ..."

The Private Adventure Schools, established by individuals for their own profit, were defective and of little benefit to their 'clients', the lower classes. The Sessional Schools of the Established and Free Churches which catered to the children of the better classes were excellent but the high fees excluded those who stood in most need of instruction - the poor. The Mission Schools (all schools connected with the churches other than the Church of Scotland and dependent upon the schoolpence and voluntary subscription) were inefficient - "if the lower classes are to be educated, it must be done by other and more efficient machinery".

The Parliamentary and Side Schools contributed little to educational development. Side schools had been established in 1803 in those parishes where, because of geographic conditions, one parish school was not sufficient: the heritors were empowered to provide a salary of 600 merks for two teaching posts and were then exempt from providing a house and garden for the teachers. In 1867 there were 189 Side schools with an enrollment of 10,073; while in the Lowlands only 65% of the buildings were adequate, in the Highlands the figure was not much more than 50%. An Act of Parliament in 1838 provided for the establishment of schools in quoad sacra parishes. If local effort provided and maintained the schools the Treasury paid the masters' salaries; and if the poor children were taught free the masters were

entitled to keep the fees. In 1867 there were twenty-seven Parliamentary schools with an enrollment of 1617; 22 of the schools and 1,344 of the children were in the Highlands. Both types of schools lacked interested and active management, and contributed little to educational advancement.

The Commission warned that an adequate supply of buildings and teachers would not alone guarantee an increase in the attendance of lower class children in school. Due to the great demand for children's labour for family support and parental indifference to the value of education, parents would have to be cajoled into sending their children to school.

In the Highlands, the provision of educational facilities was complicated by geographic conditions. Mountainous parishes up to forty miles in length and intersected by endless arms of the sea, might require "a dozen or a dozen and a half schools". An additional 200 schools were needed but the provision of such a number was far beyond the financial generosity of the heritors who would have to provide them.

The Commission also stated that Highland facilities were in a worse condition and the teachers less efficient than elsewhere in Scotland. The difficulty of procuring "energetic men of good attainments" was attributed to the lack of adequate retirement pensions, the smallness of salary, the non-payment of school fees, the inferior accommodation, and the preference that teachers understand Gaelic. The poverty of the Gaeltheachd accounted for

the inadequacy of the facilities - an area so poor could not afford to contribute enough to obtain the teachers and the facilities required.

The findings of the Argyll Commission were supported by the Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture - published in 1870.⁵

The Report clearly established that non-attendance and partial attendance in school was no less a problem in rural than in urban Scotland. Even in the North-East, where most schooling was believed to be good, evidence was given that two-fifths of the children of agricultural labourers were uneducated:

here the problem was not the lack of schools but the feeing system which led the fathers to change farms every six months:⁶ such a lifestyle allowed children to receive only very short and broken periods of schooling.

Despite the conclusions of these two reports, educational reform was delayed - primarily because of the greater importance which parliamentarians attached to English measures of legislation.⁷

Changes in Scottish education had been repeatedly blocked by English dissenting M.P.'s for English reasons. Among other things, English M.P.'s did not want a Scottish education measure to set an example for the contents of an English one - finally achieved in 1870. Political difficulties between the Lords and the Commons, the Conservatives and the Liberals, and the vested interests which both parties and Houses represented, also caused

delay. Entwined with these political difficulties were the arguments which arose over a host of fundamental, philosophical and practical questions - whose responsibility was the upbringing of the child, the family's, the church's, the state's? What was the proper relationship between church and state, between individual conscience and secular authority? Where should the power of the purse lie - with "the insatiable central government, the corrupt, impotent municipal corporations, or the Conservative, parsimonious landlords"?⁸ Arguments also arose over how the system could be reformed along lines that would preserve the basic principles of the national educational tradition, while, at the same time, adapting to contemporary needs.

The geographic distribution of Gaelic before 1872 and its decline in use

Since the purpose of this thesis is to examine the interaction of Scottish educational developments and socio-economic factors in Gaelic-speaking areas, with particular reference to the period 1872 - 1918, the question must be asked - what area of the Highlands was Gaelic-speaking by 1872, and how had previous attempts at educational reform in the region affected the language?

Which were the Gaelic-speaking regions? The answer is not easy. Gaelic speakers were not enumerated until the census of 1881 and no distinction was then made between monoglot Gaelic speakers and bilingual Gaels (see chapter III). There is however, much evidence which suggests that since the eighteenth century Gaelic was in a state of gradual decline; that by the

middle of the nineteenth century the decline was most evident in the communities easily accessible to the Lowlands; that even some remote areas of the north-west, such as Skye, had experienced and were experiencing it. The parish reports of the N.S.A. clearly indicate the extent of this development and deserve discussion in detail.

The ministers attributed the erosion of Gaelic to the changed socio-economic order which had been imposed upon Highland society as a consequence of the failed rebellion of 1745 and the introduction of agrarian reforms. The breakup of the clan system which followed in the wake of the '45 destroyed the old traditional social/military order that had preserved and developed the Gaelic language and culture. The chiefs who had once stood as the patrons and guardians of the Gaelic civilisation were replaced by wealthy English speakers who imposed not just an alien system of landlordism but also an alien culture - the southern culture - upon society. The process was extended when native landlords 'took up' the southern ways, and when English-speaking managers, farmers and shepherds accompanied the new landlords and the land reforms.

Within this new landed society Gaelic was associated with inferiority, a lack of respectability, and economic deprivation. Unfortunately for Gaelic, this attitude filtered through to those who aspired to a position within society and Gaelic increasingly became regarded as the language of the lower classes. But, even

members of the lower orders were not immune to the importance of English. Soldiers, sailors and cattle drovers had, for decades, been exposed to the professional and financial benefits which accrued to those who possessed a knowledge of English. The seasonal migration of Gaels to the south in search of work had convinced many of the necessity of possessing English if they were to advance economically and socially.

The importation of Lowland influences was accelerated by the construction of transportation facilities which reduced the isolation that had permitted some sections of Gaeldom to survive independently and intact for centuries - a freer interchange of people between the Lowlands and the Highlands could now occur than had ever occurred before. With the greater interchange of people came an enhanced exposure to English and with it a recognition of the disadvantages attached to monoglot Gaelic.

All the above factors instilled in Gaels, particularly in the ambitious, the adventurous and the young, a desire to acquire English. The desire of the young to attain literacy and fluency in English was of crucial importance to the future of the Gaelic language for if a language does not have the support of the rising generation or if it is not passed on to the young, then the language cannot help but wither away.

One further factor is indicated in the reports of the ministers - no section of Gaeldom, regardless of how remote or isolated,

seems to have been immune to the penetration of English, although naturally, those Gaelic-speaking communities in close proximity to the Lowlands were more susceptible to the process.

All these developments are clearly reflected in the comments of individual ministers. The influence of Lowland families and their servants who settled in Gaelic communities was evident in Ardersier, a coastal parish in north-east Inverness-shire; while English was the predominant language in the village, Gaelic prevailed in the interior, where "but from recent changes in the lessees of farms, and from the new occupants possessing little of the Celtic character, it may be fairly stated, that the Gaelic had lost, and is losing ground".⁹ In the pastoral and fishing parish of Kilchoman in Argyll Gaelic was the language universally spoken by the natives, but English was generally understood because of the "number of families and individuals from the Low Country settled in the parish".¹⁰ In the mainly agricultural parish of Killearnan in south-east Ross-shire Gaelic was on the decline - "in consequence of the new system of farming introduced, converting large tracts of land into one farm, strangers have come amongst us, who do not understand Gaelic, and must therefore bring along with them from other parts servants who can understand them".¹¹

Reports from many communities indicated the effect which temporary migration, eased by the extension of communication facilities, had upon the use of English - several Hebridean parishes

referred to this development. In the crofting and fishing parish of Portree in Skye, the people had acquired "a taste for English" and were "desirous to learn it" because of "the facility of intercourse with the Low Country, by means of steam navigation and parliamentary roads".¹² In another parish of Skye, Strath, Gaelic had "of late, in consequence of the constant intercourse held by the natives with the Low Country" become much corrupted with a mixture of English words and phrases.¹³ In North Uist one fifth of the whole population above the age of twelve understood and spoke English - largely a consequence of those returning from the south "interlarding some English or Scotch phrases with their own beautiful and expressive language".¹⁴

Almost every minister remarked on the preference of the young for English. In the coastal parish of Assynt in south-west Sutherland, English was making sure but slow progress as "the youth of the parish are ambitious of acquiring it, being sensible that the want of it proves a great bar to their advancement in life".¹⁵ In the poverty stricken parish of Glenshiel in mainland Ross-shire there was "scarcely an individual of the rising generation" that did not understand and speak a little English, "the advantage of which is daily experienced".¹⁶

Parents wanted their children to acquire English. In Kilmorack, a sheep rearing community in insular Ross-shire, there was among all classes an "earnest desire" that their children acquire English;¹⁷ and in mainland Locharron parents were "particularly

anxious" that their children learn English because their temporal interests would be "more certainly promoted".¹⁸

The gradual restriction of Gaelic to the lower classes was a factor continually noted by the ministers. In the insular parish of Tiree and Coll in Argyllshire Gaelic was the language "almost universally used among the lower orders";¹⁹ in the sheep farming parish of Kingussie, Inverness-shire, English was preferred "among the better classes";²⁰ and in the agricultural and pastoral community of Kiltearn in Ross-shire where English was the language universally spoken by the higher classes, the mass of the people attached a "notion of superior refinement to the possession of it" and made every effort to acquire it.²¹

In parishes which encompassed a town, almost invariably the majority of the townsfolk spoke English while the people within the country districts spoke Gaelic; those within the town who spoke Gaelic, the minority, belonged to the lower classes. In Inverness, Gaelic was exclusively spoken in the remoter parts of the parish, and by some of the poorer classes in the town.²² In Stornoway, the principal inhabitants preferred English.²³ In Dingwall, Gaelic was still the language of the lower orders but its use was sensibly declining and promised "at no very distant period" to be completely supplanted by English which was understood by all and tolerably well spoken by most.²⁴

So great was the exposure to English influences both at home and abroad that twenty years after the publication of the N.S.A., the

Argyll Commission estimated that at least one-half of the 300,000 Gaelic speakers had some knowledge of English. It was also noted that the geographic habitations of the Gaelic speakers had considerably receded - the language and the people which had once occupied every corrie and glen beyond the Grampians was now chiefly confined to the twenty-five parishes of the Hebrides which were wholly insular and the mainland parishes on the west coast of Sutherland, Inverness, Ross and Argyll.²⁵ But as noted earlier, even these citadels of Gaelic were subject to the penetration of English.

Of all the factors which contributed to the spread of English, it appears that education was one of the greatest. Almost every source remarks on the contribution which schooling made to the progress of English. It is this development which is next examined.

The role of Gaelic in the pre-1872 school systems

Although schooling had existed in the Highlands in pre-Reformation times, it was not until after the Reformation that some serious attempt was paid to the condition of education within the region - and this was primarily for political and religious reasons.

After the Reformation the establishment of the English language through the medium of the school was perceived as a way of civilising the Gaels. In the process, not only would English replace Gaelic but Calvinism would supplant Catholicism and civility would overcome barbarity. Resistance to the central

authority would end and the peace and stability of the Kingdom be ensured.

Since Gaelic epitomised Highland culture and, in the eyes of many, Highland recalcitrance, efforts were made to encourage the use of English. The Statutes of Iona decreed that the sons of Highland chiefs attend schools in the Lowlands so that they would become proficient in English. In 1646 and 1696 resolutions and acts were passed by the General Assembly and Parliament decreeing the erection of schools in the Highlands to instruct ordinary Gaels in English and in Presbyterian principles. The Assembly's 1705 "Act for Instructing Youth in the Principles of Religion" urged ministers to see that schools were erected in their parishes to ensure that the young learned to read English.

The measures had little effect because of financial problems and the difficulty of obtaining teachers and ministers. To assist the church in its task the S.S.P.C.K. was founded and in 1709 it received its letters of incorporation from the Crown. The society operated under the guidance of the Assembly and depended upon the church and voluntary contributions to support the system of schools which it developed. For more than a century the S.S.P.C.K. was the main agency for the establishment of schools in the Highlands.

Unlike the English society whose efforts were, in the main, directed towards the establishment of social discipline by means of religious instruction, the Scottish society was concerned

chiefly with the desire to convey the blessings of southern civilisation to the Gaels. The extirpation of Gaelic was the first step to reform and, to this end, its schools taught English reading, writing and the elements of Christian knowledge. Schoolmasters were forbidden to teach the children to read or speak Gaelic "except when turning it into English" and were instructed to appoint censors from among the older pupils whose duty it was to "delate transgressors" of the rule.²⁶ It was not until 1766 that this anti-Gaelic policy was changed and Gaelic was permitted in the classroom as a means of instruction. The change of policy was not due to a change of attitude towards the superior qualities of the English language as the instrument of religion and civilisation but was belated recognition of the fact that children who were taught to read aloud the scriptures in English did not understand what they read.

Some historians, notably M.G. Jones, have pointed out that even if there had been a willingness to teach and use Gaelic, it would have been very difficult to do so because of the lack of printed Gaelic literature. Neither the Bible, the catechism nor devotional literature, with the exception of the psalms, were available in Gaelic. Copies of Bishop Bedell's Bible were scarce and the Irish dialect so different from the Scots Gaelic that Highlanders could not fully understand it. It was not until 1739 that the first attempt was made to help the schools by publication of a Gaelic and English vocabulary and it was not until 1758 that the "Mothers' Catechism" was prepared in Gaelic by one of the

S.S.P.C.K.'s schoolmasters. A Gaelic translation of the New Testament did not appear until 1767 and a complete edition of the Gaelic Bible was not published until 1801.

V. Durkacz believes that the failure to provide a Gaelic Bible at the time of the settlement of parochial and Charity schools in Gaeldom (1688 - 1709) indicated that the church was not prepared to countenance any popular edition of scripture, Gaelic or Irish, for its Highland congregations; that the General Assembly and the S.S.P.C.K. had never assumed that the scriptures would be taught in anything but English and consequently made no effort to publish Gaelic literary works; that the use of English was a reflection of the widespread belief in the Lowlands that the Highlands could only be subdued through English.²⁷ In support of his statements Durkacz refers to the unsuccessful attempts of J. Kirkwood to persuade the church and the founders of the S.S.P.C.K. to teach Christianity through Gaelic. He also notes that the records of the committee appointed by the General Assembly to establish a society for the propagation of Christian knowledge contained no reference to the formation of a language policy.

The S.S.P.C.K. and the Assembly and/or the church, as a body, might have failed or been unwilling to produce a Gaelic Bible before 1801, but this does not mean that all clerics were either indifferent or hostile to the publication of a Gaelic Bible or to the language itself - nor does it mean that Gaels were denied

the scriptures in their own language before the publication of the New Testament in 1767. D. Meek in his article "The Battle for the Gaelic Bible", the Harvester, August 1969, pp. 226-228, notes that ministers had by then (1767) "evolved a method of extempore translation of the appropriate passage, basing their translation either on the Irish version of the scriptures, which in Scottish dress came to be known as Kirk's Bible, or on the English Authorised Version". The method was effective and produced a generation who were "mighty in scriptures". When the New Testament appeared some ministers hesitated to use it, preferring instead the tradition of extempore translation - because the Gaelic of the translation was so different from the Gaelic of the people. Two reasons accounted for this. Firstly, Gaelic has several dialects, and because the translators were Perthshire and Argyllshire men the new translation had a pronounced mainland flavour, where dialect was allowed to come through. The extempore method enabled the ministers to translate Kirk's Bible or the English Authorised Version into the dialect of their own congregations thus making 'the message' more intelligible to the people. Secondly, the translators used a form of Gaelic which differed from the ordinary, spoken Gaelic of the day - it was a sort of classical Gaelic evolved from Irish Gaelic and the rhythms and cadences of the English Authorised Version. Furthermore, the translators wrote in an elevated prose style to reflect the sacred nature of the contents. In sum, the Gaelic Bible developed a language which was, to a large extent, artificial and beyond the

immediate comprehension of the ordinary Gaels. It was some time before the Gaelic Bible became accepted by the people for whom it was intended.

The O.S.A. also reveals that the Highland ministry was not totally opposed to Gaelic. B. Lenman, in his introduction to Vol. XII of the O.S.A., states that "there was certainly no prejudice against Gaelic on the part of the ministers".²⁸ Two excerpts from ministers' reports show this. A. Stewart of Moulin wrote that the publication of the Gaelic version of the scriptures would have a powerful effect, in arresting and preserving pure the Gaelic language, which had been for many ages yielding gradually, to the encroachments of the English. He continued -

"It was once thought an object worthy of political attention to use means for eradicating this language from the Highlands of Scotland. It is to be presumed, that the legislature now entertains different views, for experience has by this time sufficiently evinced, that industry and good order are not incompatible with the use of the Gaelic, and of tartan philabegs."

James Robertson, the minister of Callander, wrote that those who understood Gaelic knew its energy and its power, the ease with which it was compounded, the boldness of its figures, its majesty in addressing the Deity, and its tenderness in expressing the finest feelings of the human heart.

Ministers were active in producing Gaelic literature. Patrick Graham, minister of Aberfoyle, "was long a member of the General Assembly's committee for revising scriptures in Gaelic"; he was

a key figure in "that complex process whereby the Gaelic heritage in terms of both culture and Highland scenery became incorporated, admittedly in simplified and distorted form, in the self-consciousness of the modern Scottish nation". Patrick Stuart of Killin, translated the New Testament into Gaelic and began a translation of the Old Testament into the same language which was to be completed by his son John, minister of Luss.

When the attitudes of individual ministers, such as those above, are considered, the church's delay in producing and publishing a Gaelic Bible before 1801 is indeed perplexing. The mystery is further heightened when the role which individual clergymen performed in the history of Gaelic publication and writing is acknowledged - a role which began long before the inception of the S.S.P.C.K. with its anti-Gaelic policy. This role is traced in D.J. MacLeod's article "Gaelic Prose" Transactions Vol. XLIX (1974 - 1976) pp 198 - 231. MacLeod notes that John Carswell's translation of the Book of Common Prayer (1567) was the first book printed in Gaelic; that it was written in early modern Irish with a "few lapses into Scottish usage" and differed markedly from the vernacular of the time. The publication of the Gaelic Shorter Catechism in 1659 is regarded as the beginning of prose writing in Modern Scottish Gaelic. Contrary to Carswell's translation the language of the Shorter Catechism was much closer to the vernacular of the people. Six of the seven new titles which appeared in Gaelic between 1567 and 1745 were religious works.

The middle years of the eighteenth century mark the real "take-off" in Gaelic publications. The first secular publication in Gaelic, Leabhar a Theagasc Ainminnin appeared in 1741 and in 1751 the first literary work, Ais-Eiridh na Sean-Chanoin Albannaich. The Rev. A. Macfarlane's translation of Baxter's The Call to the Converted in 1750 was the first in a long line of Gaelic translations of English puritan "Classics". Macfarlane's translation was the first serious attempt to develop a High Style in Gaelic, based on the vernacular "but strongly influenced by the potentous rhetoric of the original". The translation also represents the the first successful attempt at adapting the old traditional orthography to the sounds of Scottish Gaelic. Other publications followed. In 1767 Donald Buchanan's hymns and the New Testament appeared; in 1768 Duncan MacIntyre's poems were printed. During the 1780's an average of two Gaelic titles a year were published but in the 1790's the figure fell to one and a half; these works included collections of poems and hymns, proverbs, grammars, and translations of religious works.

Despite Macfarlane's efforts, stability with regard to both orthography and style, awaited until the publication of the Gaelic translation of the Bible in 1801. MacLeod states that the translators, four ministers, developed a "variety of written Gaelic which was to be the dominant influence on Gaelic prose writers during the nineteenth century and forms the core of the only widely accepted differentiated register in Gaelic to the present day". Apart from the stimulus granted to Gaelic publishing

through the standardising of orthography and style the Gaelic Bible also led to the establishment of the Gaelic schools, supported by church and individual societies. These schools produced a marked, although limited, improvement in Gaelic literacy and created a demand for more Gaelic publications. The output of Gaelic books rose from an average of one and a half per year at the end of the eighteenth century to an average of five at the end of the next. The 1840's, the era of the Disruption, saw the average rise temporarily to seven. A comparison between the first and fifth decades of the nineteenth century shows the rise more clearly. In the first decade there were twelve publications of which four were religious works; in the 1840's there were seventy publications of which forty were religious. The Bible (Old and New Testament) was undoubtedly the most popular publication. Between 1801 and 1842 there were nine reprints of it; there were also eight reprints of the New Testament (1840 - 1846) and four of the Old Testament (1801-1823)*

In view of the clerical involvement in Gaelic publishing and writings it is not sufficient alone to state that the church or the Assembly and the S.S.P.C.K. were unwilling to produce a Gaelic Bible because of the presumption that presbyterian principles and theology could be transmitted via the English Bible. A distinction must be drawn between the church in the Highlands and the church in Scotland. Almost all Highland ministers

*See D. MacLean, *Typographia Scoto-Gadelica* (Edinburgh 1915)

were well educated Gaelic speakers, apparently enthusiastic about their native tongue. But, the Highland ministry made up only a proportion of the church's ministry. In both the Assembly and the church as a whole, Gaelic speakers were fewer in number than English speakers. The founders of the S.S.P.C.K. and its directors were English speakers; the society operated from the south and directed its efforts into Gaeldom. It is unlikely that these southerners could have had any understanding of the difficulties involved in Gaels learning and reading the Bible in a foreign language - English; and, perhaps more importantly, it is unlikely that they had any appreciation of the differences between Irish Gaelic (as represented in **Bedell's** Irish Bible) and the Scots Gaelic vernacular - a vernacular, as yet, without a written language. To the English speakers, Irish and Scots Gaelic were probably seen as the same language. It is not inconceivable that the Highland ministry wished for a Scots Gaelic Bible but its wish was not strong enough to overcome the prejudices of the southerners regarding the superiority of English, and/or their ignorance of the very real differences between the printed Irish Gaelic and the Scots Gaelic vernacular. The point is that it is unfair to tarnish all within the Assembly, the church and the S.S.P.C.K. with the brush of being anti-Gaelic and unwilling to bring forth a Gaelic Bible; the Highland ministry's involvement in an anti-Gaelic policy has yet to be proved.

In regards to the publication of the Gaelic Bible in 1801 one

more observation can be made. It took thirty-four years (1767-1801) to complete the Gaelic Bible - why? The answer rests with the immense amount of work involved. Those responsible for the production of the Irish and Welsh Bibles were not creating or devising a written language or dialect, but those who produced the Scots Gaelic Bible were. Irish and Welsh had an orthography and a style; Scots Gaelic did not. So immense was the task that the S.S.P.C.K. had difficulty finding translators and then problems in getting them to pursue the work. J. Stuart had to be practically incarcerated by the society to get the final volume completed.²⁹

The use of Gaelic in the parochial and S.S.P.C.K. schools has been noted but what role did Gaelic perform in the schools established in Gaeldom as a result of the uprisings of 1715 and 1745? Shortly after the rebellion of 1715 Puritan reformers and government authorities had determined that an enlargement of the educational system was the only way to eradicate those characteristics (sloth and idleness) of Gaels which caused them to rebel. Henceforth the strictly academic system which taught reading, writing and arithmetic, was to be supplemented with a system of practical education which would give instruction in agriculture and industry. After the '45 the S.S.P.C.K. claimed that the failure of the revolt showed that the schools had played their part in its collapse since the common people had not risen to the extent that they had in 1715. The Society claimed that the prime movers of the '45 had come from those corners least affected by

schooling - a factor which showed clearly the need for more schools.

The Crown apparently concurred with the Society. Acting through the Commission for Managing the Forfeited Estates, it erected (on the annexed estates) "Publick" schools and established a system of practical education with a view to developing agriculture and trades so the region could one day make a significant contribution to the British economy. Apart from teaching husbandry and manufacturing trades the schools also taught the reading and writing of English.

The schools on the forfeited estates were popular amongst the aspiring Gaels who wished their children to have an education. The Commission's General Inspector of Schools wrote of Crieff in 1767 - "the village is daily increasing from the number of families settling there for the education of their children".³⁰ When, in 1748, the forfeited estates were returned to their former owners or heirs, the S.S.P.C.K. assumed control over the schools.

What effect did these schools, both practical and academic, have upon the Gaelic language and the Highland economy? F.G. Thompson has written that although the schools provided new opportunities for Gaels to raise their standards of living, enhanced the status of industry, and improved the general economic welfare of the region, they had a negative effect upon the Celtic culture because practically all the instruction was in English. Of the spinning schools he commented -

"the final long term effect of the instruction of the English language into predominantly Gaelic-speaking areas could be taken as the thin edge of the wedge which perhaps succeeded in some areas where the purely educational aims of the S.S.P.C.K. had failed to make progress in one particular direction: to turn Gaelic speakers against their language by publicising it as a language of peasants".³¹

Most historians have concluded that the academic schools also instilled in Gaels a desire for English. M.G. Jones states that when the Gaelic version of the Pentateuch appeared it was "read with avidity by the people, exciting in them a thirst for knowledge and a desire to learn the English language which they never before discovered".³² So great was the desire for English that, in 1801, when a complete edition of the Gaelic Bible appeared, Gaels showed a pronounced distaste for it - an occurrence which caused the now, not quite so anti-Gaelic S.S.P.C.K. to lament that a general prejudice existed against the use of Gaelic as a school language*. Parents, conscious of the advantage of knowing English, were determined that if their children attended school, they would be taught English chiefly.

Despite the efforts of the S.S.P.C.K. and the parochial authorities there were not enough schools to meet the needs of the population and the times. While the number of schools had increased, so too had the population (thanks to the potato and inoculation) and there remained numerous parishes, especially in the remotest areas (where the population was most rapidly expanding) without

*Perhaps the difference between the Gaelic of the Bible and the Gaelic 'of the people' contributed to this.

sufficient schools. To provide the additional educational facilities a number of private agencies were organised. But the growth in population was not, in itself, the chief cause for the new educational effort; the primary cause was the need for migration, a migration necessitated by the inability of the region's economy to support its people - even under, and some would argue because of, the reformed agrarian conditions of the period.

The failure of the economy to sustain its populace was evidenced in the periodic bouts of famine which visited the Highlands and forced thousands of Gaels to flee the region in search of food and employment. Sensational as this famine migration was, it was not, however, the sole type of migration in either the later half of the eighteenth century or the first forty years of the nineteenth. Within this period migration was aided and/or instigated by the socio-economic conditions imprinted on Gaeldom as a result of the '45 and the agrarian reforms. The substitution of an economic for a military organisation of society rendered large populations - once a necessity to chiefs in the art of war - now a hindrance and a burden to reforming agrarian landlords. Small holdings which had once sustained and encouraged population growth were either thrown into larger units and brought under improved agricultural methods or were converted into sheep pastures. Under both systems, but particularly under the sheep farms, population was a surplus and expendable commodity. Families which did not leave under their own volition were evicted.

Still other Gaels left because the breakdown and gradual disappearance of the old organisation of society had deprived them of their customary social relations without providing any form of social compensation.

Since Gaeldom lacked industry, Gaels either went abroad or into the industrial and manufacturing centres of the south. For the migrants life would be easier in their new surroundings if they had a knowledge of the English tongue, an ability to read and a grounding in Lowland values.³³ The school could provide all three but the shortage of schools made the task difficult; because of this shortage organisations were founded to supplement existing facilities. Thus, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, urban Gaels, well accustomed to southern lifestyles and with sufficient financial means to promote charitable efforts, established four societies to facilitate education in the Gaeltheachd.

The four societies - the Edinburgh Society for the support of Gaelic schools (1811), the Glasgow Society for the support of Gaelic schools (1812), the Inverness Society for the support of Gaelic schools (1818), and Comunn Nam Bam, the Free Church Ladies Highland Association (1843) - all used Gaelic as the means of communication and instruction, believing that literacy could only be taught through the medium of the home language. The schools were ambulatory, enabling a larger proportion of the population to receive a rudimentary education than would

otherwise have been possible. All ages were taught in shifts - weekdays, Sundays and evenings. The number of people taught to read and write by these schools is unknown, but the Edinburgh Society claimed that by 1861 it had taught 100,000 to read and had distributed 200,000 Gaelic Bibles.³⁴

Although there were the above similarities among the four societies, there were also differences, particularly in regard to curriculum content. The Edinburgh society taught Gaelic reading exclusively because it believed that, "the exclusion of Gaelic from schools had frustrated the ends of education without materially extending the knowledge of English as the medium of intercourse".³⁵ The Glasgow society did not believe in the exclusive teaching of Gaelic - English reading, writing and arithmetic were included in its curriculum. The Inverness society also gave instruction in reading and arithmetic; Aberdeen and Dumfries later established auxiliaries in aid of it. The Free Church Ladies Association Schools were dedicated to the purpose of "assisting promising young men in prosecuting their studies for the ministry".³⁶ Funds were raised by the ladies in the form of subscriptions and legacies.

Thus, by the close of the first half of the nineteenth century, there existed a conglomeration of schools all designed to teach Gaels literacy - in some cases, as in the parish schools, through the exclusion of or the most minimal use of Gaelic; in other cases, as in the Gaelic society schools, through the use of Gaelic

as a medium of communication and instruction.

How successful were these schools in teaching English literacy? The answer is difficult to determine but an attempt was made to do so by the Inverness Society for Educating the Poor in the Highlands (1822)³⁷. The society reported that a survey conducted in 171 parishes (89 responded) in Inverness, Ross, Nairn, Cromarty, Shetland, Orkney and Sutherland, revealed one-half of the population above eight years as unable to read: the highest percentage of illiteracy was in the Gaelic area. In the Hebrides and the other parts of Inverness and Ross, 70 in 100 could not read; in the Highlands of Moray, Cromarty and Sutherland and the inland parts of Caithness, 40 in 100 were unable to read; (in Orkney and Shetland 11 in 100 could not read). One third of the Gaelic families or 8,036 out of 27,133 had no members able to read, while less than 4% of the English-speaking families or 297 out of 9,496 had no members able to read.

The society attributed the high degree of Gaels' illiteracy to the inability of the 495 parochial, agency and private schools to meet the needs of the region. It apparently did not consider the fact that Gaels were learning a foreign language, and that non-academic factors might have limited the opportunities of Gaels to learn to read. The society assumed that all Gaels who had acquired literacy had done so through some system of formal education: it assumed that those who were illiterate were so because of the unavailability of a structured educational

programme. Such assumptions ignored the other means by which literacy could be acquired. The writings of E.G. West are particularly good in amplifying these 'other ways'.³⁸ West makes the point that in nineteenth century England and Lowland Scotland a large proportion of the working class achieved literacy through non-academic methods and that literacy was not always attained in what are considered the school going years - often literacy was achieved in adulthood; often it was self-taught. The availability of printed literature (newspapers, pamphlets, etc) provided individuals with the desire to learn to read and with the means to teach themselves to read. The existence of Sunday Schools, the libraries, philosophic societies, the Mechanics Institute and other workingmens' clubs, wherein men gathered to read and discuss matters of common interest, also increased literacy.

Since schools were not the sole means of attaining literacy in the south, why then should they be considered so in Gaeldom? They should not be but there were circumstances in the Highlands which prevented the attainment of literacy through non-academic means. Firstly, the Highlands did not have the numerous and varied societies which the south had. Secondly, because the Gaeltheachd did not have an active and expanding press the region was almost starved of journals, pamphlets and newspapers (see chapter IV). The printed literature which did circulate in the area was mostly of a religious nature, and some would say of an inferior quality. Although every student of Highland history acknowledges that most Gaels learned to read by studying the Bible -

in the school or in the home (self-taught) - too few mention that one of the reasons for this was the lack of other reading material. The failure to produce Gaelic printed literature contributed directly to the Gaelic Bible being the medium of literacy in the Highlands.

If one accepts West's theories as valid then it can be argued that the unavailability of non-academic resources and the scarcity of reading materials necessitated the construction of a large number of schools in the Highlands.

The 1830's witnessed new developments in the sphere of Scottish education. During this decade the government responded positively but cautiously to the demands that it intervene in the educational field. From 1834 onwards government grants were available - but, they made little impact upon Highland and Lowland education because most school authorities were unwilling to accept the conditions placed upon them if they accepted the grants. What were the grants and the restrictions? Initially the grants were restricted to the erection of new schools and could be claimed only by "reputable educational agencies" but in 1846 the scope of the grants was widened to enable authorities to build and maintain houses, to purchase equipment, furniture and teaching aids; teachers' salaries became state aided and grants were given towards the upkeep of training colleges.³⁹

To ensure that the money was wisely spent a system of state inspection was established; inspectors were to report on the form of buildings, disposition of desks, books, discipline, methods of instruction, attainment of monitors, standards of moral training, etc; grants were subsequently distributed according to the performance of the entire school or class.

A new system of teaching apprenticeship, the pupil-teaching system, was also introduced. Within the system managers could employ teaching trainees who were financed by the government provided they passed examinations conducted by the inspectors; after their apprenticeship the trainees could then win by public examination a scholarship to one of the normal colleges; if, at the end of their training, they attained a Certificate of Merit, they became certificated teachers and were entitled to augmentation of their salaries (from £15 to £30) by the government. But this grant depended upon three provisions; that the managers provided a house rent free; that the inspector, each year, declared the school to be efficient; and that the managers paid a salary of at least twice the amount of the augmentation grant. This last criteria deemed that no certificated teacher in a state aided school could receive less than £45 a year while the average teaching salary was around £70 with a further sum included for instructing apprentices.⁴⁰

The pupil-teacher system gave a degree of financial security to the normal colleges because the colleges had received grants only

for building and were thus dependant upon fees for much of their survival; often this forced the authorities to take in students ill-qualified and ill-suited for the profession; the pupil-teacher system ensured a regular influx of semi-trained teachers, financially aided by the government - provided that they passed inspection at the end of their course.

Although the grants to the teaching system eased the financial problems of the training colleges, improved the quality of teaching and the organisation of the schools, it had considerable defects and one in particular - no aid was given to those communities where the populace could not afford to subscribe the minimum of £30 a year to obtain the augmentation grant for certificated teachers. Thus, the grants were of more benefit to the better off districts in Scotland, the districts which perhaps needed less assistance than the economically deprived ones. This statement was in many ways applicable to the pupil-teacher system itself. Although designed to assist students who could not afford to enter the teaching profession via the university, the grants were not sufficient to cover all the expenses of studying in a normal college; hence, many of the poorer pupil-teachers could not afford to complete the programme and attain certification. Language compounded the difficulties confronting pupil-teachers in the Highlands. It was not unusual for Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers to encounter troubles in sitting the stiff examinations (they were in English) for entrance into the normal colleges, and many

trainees, after they had secured entrance, had difficulties in passing the examinations along the way to certification.

Before 1860 the administration of grants had been conducted entirely by Minute but in 1860 the Minutes were reduced into the form of a code. This code, with a few exceptions, regulated the action of the government towards Scotland (so far as payments were concerned) until the appearance of the Code of 1873. What of the fate of Gaelic within the grant structure and what demands were made for its teaching in the years leading up to 1873?

In 1848 provisions were made for Gaelic within the grant structure: a £5 bonus was given to every qualified Gaelic teacher who would teach in the language. J.P. Kay-Shuttleworth, Secretary to the Committee of Education commented:

"The Committee is satisfied that to instruct the children of the Gaelic population with lesson books written in the English language by means of teachers not familiar with the written and colloquial idiom of the Gaelic language, as well as the English, must fail to give the scholars of the Highland schools a grammatical knowledge of the Gaelic as well as any useful acquaintance with the English language".⁴¹

Despite such words of encouragement and despite the 'Gaelic' intentions of the Gaelic societies, there is ample evidence which suggests that in the first seventy years of the nineteenth century the demand for Gaelic teaching was not great and its use in the schools was limited. Reports in the N.S.A. indicate this. The reports reveal that, in general, the presence of Gaelic schools failed to create a desire for further studies in Gaelic;

rather they instilled a desire for the acquisition of English. Reports from Assynt (a coastal parish in south-west Sutherland where Gaelic was still considered the universal language) and Torosay (a Gaelic-speaking parish in insular Argyll) indicate the desire for English created by the Gaelic schools.

Assynt - "It is probable that the Gaelic School Society will probably prove the means, at a remote period, of the expulsion of Gaelic from the Highlands. The teachers employed by that useful Society to whom we owe so much, taught the young to read the Scriptures in their native tongue. This implanted a desire to acquire knowledge on other subjects which induced them to have recourse to the English language as the medium of communication".⁴²

Torosay - "At school children are taught to read in both languages. Though the teaching of them thus to read Gaelic would seem to tend to its permanency, the contrary effect in all probability, will ensue. By being able to compare both versions of the Scriptures, they daily add to their vocabulary of English words, so that Gaelic in this manner, forms to them a key for the acquisition of the English".⁴³

Sheriff A. Nicolson (of the Argyll Commission), a Gaelic scholar, concurred with the concept that the only way to educate Gaels, to teach them English, was through the use of Gaelic; he believed that the attempt to teach English without Gaelic was one of the great causes of the ignorance of English which existed in parts of Gaeldom; he scorned those teachers who failed to use Gaelic because they considered it a mark of rusticity and thought it better that the child be addressed in words which he did not understand "rather than derogate from the dignity of the business by using the vulgar tongue".⁴⁴

Nicolson's investigation revealed the high rate of illiteracy

which continued to exist in the region, especially in the Northern Isles. In Lewis, the number literate was so small, "as to indicate that all the educational power put forth, up to a comparatively recent period, has with the exception of the agency of the Gaelic Schools, been of very trifling effect and most specially and painfully so in respect to the female sex". In South Uist, Nicolson was "not prepared for such a demonstration as they furnish of a state of ignorance so far as reading is concerned, surpassing even that of the most illiterate district of Lewis". Out of 560 people examined, 73 could read Gaelic and English and 13 could read Gaelic only.

As a result of Nicolson's report and of his strong reference to the need for instruction in Gaelic, the Argyll Commission noted that teachers in Gaelic-speaking districts should have a knowledge of Gaelic:

"It may not be essential that a teacher should be able to give instruction in Gaelic, when he is appointed to the charge of a school in which a majority of the children can understand and speak English; but it seems obvious that, in districts where Gaelic alone is understood the teacher should be able to communicate with his pupils in a language and meaning of which they can comprehend."

The Commission argued that it was a mistake to overlook the difficulties of the scholar who was sent to learn what was to him a foreign language without having first acquired the art of reading his own. In its only reference to dialect difficulties the Commission stated:

"In districts where English is the vernacular, it is difficult enough for the teacher to make the children of illiterate parents apprehend the meaning of the language of books, so different is it from the dialect which they speak; how much more difficult must the task be when the thing to be taught is not merely a different dialect but a foreign language."

The ability of Gaels to understand English was essential if they were to seek employment beyond the Highlands. The Commission stated that-

"... the people must be taught to appreciate the benefits which may be obtained by leaving their Island homes and must be furnished with the means of employing their energies in the country to which they transfer themselves. Effects such as these can only be produced by education. The minds of these Islanders must be enlarged - the desire for improving their condition must be stimulated, and the knowledge of the English language, whereby alone that desire can be practically gratified, must become general".

The equation of education = English = migration was to be even more strenuously emphasised in the later decades of the nineteenth century when the Highland economy failed to respond to governmental efforts to revive it. These developments are examined in chapter III; Chapter II examines the education system established by the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872. The system was designed to meet the needs of the entire country but few allowances were made for regional variations and difficulties: the failure to provide for both impeded the implementation of the Act and slowed the progress of education in the remote and rural areas of the nation.

Chapter II: The Education (Scotland) Act, 1872

Principles of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872

Problems implementing the Act

The fate of the traditional Gaelic schools

Principles of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872

The old, parochial system of education was completely reorganised by the Scottish Education Act of 1872. The control of education passed from the churches to the state; school boards and rate-payers assumed the educational responsibilities of heritors* and ministers; all existing parish and burgh schools and the majority of voluntary schools were transferred to the boards.

Education was placed under the authority of a co-ordinating central authority - the Scotch Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, which, along with its civil service executive was known as the S.E.D. This body was practically the same as that which exercised control in England; both bodies had the same president, vice-president and permanent secretary, and both had their headquarters in London - a fact which led the Duke of Richmond to state that the department was merely a room in Whitehall with the word Scotland printed on the door.¹

In 1885 the S.E.D. became an independent Committee of Council and the chief political office, that of vice-president, devolved upon the newly created Secretary for Scotland who was given a separate permanent secretary. In law, decisions of policy were left to the Committee of Council and later to the Secretary for Scotland, while the S.E.D. was to carry out the decisions; but

*The Act was the first piece of legislation (national) which did not allow landholders/heritors any special rights, status or privileges.

because of the pressure upon politicians many of the changes in Scottish education originated with the department - thus increasing the importance of the permanent secretaries.²

The duties of the S.E.D. were to distribute the annual parliamentary grants, to form a code for future grants and to issue certificates of competency to teachers. The department also had extensive powers with regard to the constitution and alteration of school districts, the fixing of the number of each school board, the regulation of board elections and the power to appoint members to boards where no candidates volunteered.

The Act also established a temporary Board of Education in Edinburgh to assist in organising school boards and districts, to advise on school building and accommodation - but it did not have any financial control over long term educational policy; financial control rested with the S.E.D. The Board was responsible to the S.E.D. and when it ceased to function in 1878 its duties were assumed by the department.

Although the Board was neither intended nor designed to bring a Scottish perspective to the new education system (this was demonstrated by the appointment to the Board of five men who were "typical of the Anglo-Scottish tradition"³) or for that matter, to reflect values and aspirations traditional in Scottish education, the Board in several areas succeeded in doing both - particularly in regards to secondary education. Secondary

education had not been well developed in Scotland. There was the "much vaunted connection between the parish school and the university, but it owed as much to the rudimentary level of first year university teaching as to the achievements of the village dominie". The Act of 1872 had made few provisions for secondary schooling and the Board was determined to ensure that provisions for such schooling were extended. The Board did not foresee secondary education becoming available to all but rather envisaged the middle class and the exceptionally gifted poor as being the chief beneficiaries of the system - and to ensure that this occurred the Board advocated the redistribution of funds from endowed hospitals (i.e., free boarding schools designed for children of the poor) to secondary schools of high academic attainment. Thus, funds originally designed to provide schooling for the poor were redirected to schools designed initially to educate the middle classes. Within the new secondary system most pupils (and they were likely to be middle class) would have to pay a fee but the gifted poor children could attend through the aid of bursaries. The new system would meet two traditional aims of Scottish education - firstly, there would be no class distinction (technically) in connection with secondary education since middle and lower class children would be taught together; secondly, both classes of children would receive an equally high standard of education.

Although there was wide support for this new system of endowed

schools there was also a general concern over the future of secondary education within rural districts - endowed schools were usually established in towns. Some Scots doubted whether the parish or country school masters could ever effectively teach the "higher branches" of education; others suggested that they could do so only at the expense of the majority of children who were learning the basics; still others argued that if the teaching of the "higher branches" was discouraged country children would be effectively barred from attaining a university education - such an occurrence would be contrary to and would be a betrayal of the Scottish tradition that all pupils, including the "lad of pairts", were entitled (intelligence permitting) to a place at university. The Board, by its support for the teaching of specific subjects, sided with those who desired to preserve this characteristic feature of the old parochial tradition.

The Board was also anxious to amend some difficulties which afflicted particular regions of Scotland: for instance it encouraged the government and the department to assist those remote and isolated boards in the Highlands and in the Shetlands which encountered financial difficulties through their inability to raise sufficient funds from the school rate (because of the low rateable value of property) and because of the revenue lost through low attendance and the non-payment of school fees (see pages 60-81).

School boards, the local means of running state assisted education, were established in every burgh and parish in the country, although

small or thinly populated parishes could be joined to adjacent ones by the Board of Education. All the Royal and Parliamentary burghs had a district of their own and to those were added eight other populous townships such as Alloa: burghs with a population under 3,000 could be absorbed by parishes.

Along with assuming control over burgh and parish schools, including parliamentary and side schools, boards could accept the transfer of any denominational or subscription school; they could lease or buy private schools, establish infant schools for children under seven, and evening classes for children over thirteen; the boards could also borrow money for capital expenditure.

The school boards, containing from five to fifteen members, were elected triennially by the ratepayers of each parish or burgh. Except for individuals employed by the board, any person of lawful age and without any legal incapacity could be a candidate, if nominated by selectors at least fourteen days before the election. The elections were conducted by the heritors and ministers of the parish, and by the town councils of the burghs. Initially there were 984 boards.

Every voter was entitled to the number of votes equal to the number of members to be elected and could give all votes to one candidate or could distribute them amongst the candidates - this was the cumulative voting system. Its purpose was to give

minority groups a good chance of winning representation on boards, a result which could be achieved through good organisation and a skilful distribution of their multiple votes between candidates.

What type of individuals were elected to the boards? Generally they were from the middle class and they were both clergymen and laymen: amongst laymen it was the upper rather than the lower middle class which predominated. There were some shopkeepers and men with small businesses but they were outnumbered by doctors, solicitors, bankers, landowners and manufacturers. Of manual workers there were, on the early boards, scarcely a trace. The clergy were the best represented - in 1873, approximately one-quarter of all board seats were occupied by clerics. This high representation was due to a "residual feeling that they ought to be interested in education", the strength of sectarian feeling, and the nature of the electoral system. The electoral system, through its system of cumulative voting, allowed for religious denominations, including religious minorities, to be well represented. For instance, while in Glasgow, in 1873, Roman Catholics came second, third and fourth a militant Orangeman topped the poll; and in the same year the Protestant city of Dundee saw a Roman Catholic top the poll.

The cumulative voting system allowed not only for the fair representation of all religions on the boards but it also enabled many board elections to become an arena for a trial of strength

between the contending ecclesiastical parties; in such communities sectarian strife could only increase. In 1879, a meeting was held in the Free Gaelic Church, Glasgow, to protest against the election of Roman Catholic priests to the Glasgow school board - not only were Roman Catholics declared disqualified from having anything to do with the education of a Protestant country, but they had no right to sit on the board while Catholic children attended their own schools.⁴

Where sectarian feeling had an undue influence in the proceedings of the boards, much time was taken up with unprofitable discussions as to the kind and amount of religious instruction in the schools, with the effect of postponing more pressing matters (see Chapter VII). Teachers were caught up in sectarian disputes and feelings - at times they were hired and forced to resign because of their religious affiliation or their hesitancy in responding to the demands of a particular cleric. This was one reason why the E.I.S. strongly denounced the cumulative voting system and urged a reform of the school board system.⁵

There was much sectarian strife in Gaeldom wherein the Free and Established churches were locked in an intense and often bitter rivalry; the contests for board seats served only to increase this rivalry. In virtually every parish in the Highlands where the two churches had ministers, clerics of both denominations sat on the school board. The Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopalian Church were not immune to sectarianism in the

Gaeltheachd. A good example of Episcopalian involvement is found in the parish of Clyne during the years 1873 - 1897. Great religious bitterness permeated the board elections because, while the bulk of the people were Free Church, the local land-owners were Church of Scotland and the Duke of Sutherland was Episcopalian.⁶

While religious representation was a factor common to all districts within Scotland, rural school boards - for example, those within the Highlands and those within the eastern and middle borders - were often dominated by factors. Lewis provided a classic example - in 1873 all four of the island's boards were chaired by the factor.

M. Monies in her Edinburgh University Ph.D. thesis "The Impact of the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act on Working Class Education up to 1899" presented some interesting statistics on the occupation of board members in twenty-five school districts* (comprising 155 seats; 153 before 1879) during the elections of 1873, 1885 and 1897. In the following table Monies reveals the number of seats won by six groups of individuals in the three elections.

*The districts were in the counties of Roxburgh, Inverness, Glasgow, Argyll and Sutherland; there were six Highland school districts - Creich, Clyne, Loth, Daviot and Dunlichity, Kiltarlity and Kirkhill.

| | 1873 | 1885 | 1897 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Group I clergy | 45 | 31 | 38 |
| Group II professional and commercial | 27 | 30 | 29 |
| Group III upper middle class (landowners and capitalists) | 32 | 29 | 21 |
| Group IV lower middle class (artisans and farmers*) | 37 | 50 | 47 |
| Group V working class | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| Group VI women | 0 | 3 | 3 |

The table shows clearly that the middle class and their allies remained firmly in control throughout the period. The clergy and the professional classes, Groups I and II, held 72, 61 and 67 seats (out of 141, 145 and 147 respectively) in the three elections. With the addition of what might be called the land-owning and capitalist group, Group III, over one-half of all the seats were held by those who could be called the better off in society. From the table it is also apparent that there was a tendency towards greater representation for Group IV - the lower middle and artisan class, and Group V - the working class. Monies believes that this might well have been expected since more and more families paid higher rents and automatically became enfranchised; apathy, the lack of organisation for the labour vote, etc., minimised their representation.

* Farmers worked their own land, possibly with some hired help; they were distinct from both crofters and landowners.

Note should be taken of the category farmer. In each election they comprised over one-half of group IV, the figures being 22 out of 37, 33 out of 50 and 27 out of 47. The following table shows their distribution in each county; in the Highlands their number doubled from 5 in 1873 to 10 in 1897

| Year | Total number elected | Number in Inverness | Number in Sutherland | Number in Ayr | Number in Roxburgh |
|------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1873 | 22 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 9 |
| 1885 | 33 | 6 | 2 | 15 | 10 |
| 1897 | 27 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 7 |

Monies suggests two reasons for the increase in farmer representation; firstly, farmers might have felt more able to make their voices heard once the power of the landlords had been challenged; secondly, it is possible that the farmers felt the necessity to exert their interests in the face of possible crofter challenges - the takeover of farm pastures was not an unknown occurrence. Although the six Highland districts under consideration (Creich, Clyne, Loth, Daviot and Dunlichity, Kiltarlity, and Kirkhill) were not the areas most affected by crofter unrest the influence of the Land League meetings and the crofter protests could not have been nil; even in Kirkhill there were occasional Land League meetings.

What of crofters on the school boards? There is little evidence to suggest that crofters were widely represented on the boards. Monies discovered that only two crofters were elected to the

boards in 1873, 1885 and 1897. The records of school boards that I examined made few references to crofters being elected; there were at least two crofters on Lewis school boards in the late 1880's. The representation of crofters on the boards is not a matter discussed in much detail in S.E.D. memoranda. This is not to deny that considerable numbers of crofters may have sat on the boards - the minutes of the boards are very incomplete and those that are complete do not always acknowledge the occupation of the members.

Two reasons might account for the apparently small numbers of crofters on the boards. Firstly, in areas like Lewis and the Uists few crofters were occupiers of property valued at £4 or more and thus eligible to vote in the elections. Secondly, there was no tradition of crofter participation in the educational process - before 1872 local education was the concern (or preserve) of the heritors and the clergy.

School boards had three sources of revenue - the school rate, school fees and the parliamentary grant. The school rate was levied one-half upon owners and one-half upon occupiers of property valued at £4 or more. There was no fixed limit to the amount of the school rate which was levied and collected with the poor rate by the parochial boards.* School fees were also

*The school rate is discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter.

determined by individual boards. Although it was general practice for a board to charge one common fee to all the schools under its jurisdiction Glasgow was an exception. The Glasgow Board operated on the principle that within every district of the city, schools should be available at fees which were adjusted to suit the different incomes of parents. The Scotsman stated that the higher fees were "to make the school more select for the sake of shop-keepers and well-to-do artisans who do not like their children to mix with the very poor".⁷ In 1889 fees were abolished in all compulsory standards of the code: the fixing of such fees as might still be charged were subject to the provision of the S.E.D. Fees were maintained for certain subjects taught in the higher branches of elementary education. In 1894 all fees were completely abolished.

Parliamentary grants were distributed according to the efficiency of the schools. The efficiency was determined during the annual inspection of schools, conducted by H.M.I's. The amount of grant depended upon average attendance and the results of individual examination of pupils over the age of seven (i.e. payments by results) with reductions for inadequate staffing, unsuitable premises or faults of instruction, discipline or registration. Pupil-teachers also had to be examined and the certificate of teachers endorsed.

A grant of 4s per scholar was awarded according to the average number in attendance throughout the year, plus an additional 1s



if music was taught, and 1s 6d if discipline and organisation were excellent (1s if both were good). For each infant between four and seven who made 250 attendances there was a grant of 8s and 10s if taught as one class by a certificated teacher.

The payment by result system awarded a grant of 3s for each of three subjects passed by each scholar over the age of seven; a further 2s per head according to average attendance (250 attendances were required) in standards II and III was granted if the scholars showed an intelligent and grammatical knowledge of the passages which they had been called upon to read. An extra grant of 2s could be earned in standards IV to VI if the classes from which the children came passed in history and geography. Each child in standards IV to VI could also be presented in one or two specific subjects (Latin, French, etc.) and earn a grant of 4s. The payment by result system put tremendous pressure upon pupils, teachers and inspectors. The inspectors, the agents of central direction, influenced what was done in the schools, for what they tested would be taught, and it would be taught in the way most likely to produce the results that their test demanded. This method restricted the range of instruction and was one of the reasons for its abolition in the lower standards in 1886 and in all standards in 1890. Even within the method of general inspection (which replaced individual inspection) there was a network of special rewards and punishments. Evidence of "exceptionally meritorious work" might attract an increase of 6d per pupil, but the opposite could result in a loss of 6d to 1s a head;

"observable neglect to teach manners, etc" might also cost a 1s loss in revenue.⁸

The Act of 1872 had stated the necessity of there being a certificated head teacher in each school for it to receive an annual grant. The Act also required that from 1872 onwards all teachers had to be certificated; practising teachers were able to qualify without examination but the training colleges offered the best prospects for new entrants to the profession. Unfortunately the Act made no provision for the training of teachers and the colleges remained outside the Act (until 1908). The colleges could not cope with the demands placed upon them and a shortage in the supply of certificated teachers existed into the twentieth century. In 1904, 14% of all teachers in Scotland were uncertificated, their number varying with the area and its attractiveness - "from 11% of the school staff in Edinburgh to 24% in Linlithgow, and even more in Berwickshire and the Highlands".⁹

In the competition to attract qualified teachers, the lack of a national salary scale allowed boards to offer teachers what they could afford. Salaries rose rapidly; by 1877 newly qualified men averaged £84 a year and women £65. There were so many headships available for men between 1870 and 1882 that their average salary rose from £102 to £137; but because boards had an aversion to appointing women to headships even of small schools the average female salary was just about one-half that of the men.¹⁰

To attract qualified teachers more than a good salary was offered; social and environmental amenities were also inducements. The larger, urban and richer boards could offer a greater supply of all three; inspectors in the rural districts pointed out the "superior attractions, financial or otherwise of the large towns as constantly drawing teachers from the country to the town".¹¹

But not all teachers were treated well by their boards; in times of economic depression teachers' salaries were usually the first expenditure cut in an economy drive. The payment by result system also operated against the teacher because boards in making their salary bargains with the teachers frequently gave them a minimum salary plus a proportion of the grant earned so that the teachers would have an interest in securing a high grant - a low grant meant a low salary; but more than a low salary could be involved because a low grant usually meant an extra charge upon the school rate and few boards were willing to employ unprofitable servants - teachers employed by such parsimonious boards had little sense of security.

To overcome the deficiency in the supply of qualified teachers pupil-teachers (see chapter I) were relied upon, especially in the infant classes. In some schools, particularly those in small, rural areas, pupil-teachers were abused. Parsimonious boards, eager to pay the lowest salaries, employed pupil-teachers rather than qualified or assistant teachers; often too, the boards

insisted that the pupil-teacher fulfil the responsibilities of certificated teachers. The Educational News complained that the pupil-teachers were treated as cheap, half-fledged journeymen and not as apprentices.¹²

In 1889 the S.E.D. reduced the size of a school which a qualified teacher, aided by one or two pupil-teachers could conduct (from 100 students to 90 - one pupil-teacher; from 140 students to 120 - two pupil-teachers), while successive codes progressively raised the standards demanded for pupil-teachers in existing subjects and also extended the range of their subjects. In response, larger boards such as Govan, set up central classes of study and instruction for their pupil-teachers; because country districts could not organise such classes, the rural pupil-teachers were at a disadvantage in the competitive examination for the training colleges.

The department's restriction of the number of placements at the training colleges to 860 (after the expansion of the 1870's) caused a greater competition for the fewer places.¹³ Apprentices who failed to gain places (ex-pupil-teachers) continued to form a pool of cheap labour for those remote school areas who could not afford trained teachers.

In 1906 the S.E.D. announced the phasing out of the pupil-teacher system and its replacement by the Junior Student system and the Senior Studentship.¹⁴ Only those Junior Students

(aged fifteen to eighteen) who had passed the Intermediate Examination were admitted to the programme, wherein they would receive a secondary education based on an approved curriculum with systematic training in the art of teaching primary school subjects. While training they received maintenance allowances provided by the county and burgh secondary school committees. When they passed their course they received the Junior Student Certificate which gave automatic entrance to a training centre* or college. As secondary school pupils they could also take the Higher Leaving Certificate in subjects contained within their curricula.

There were three categories of Senior Students. Chapter III students included ordinary graduates who took a one year course and former Junior Students or those who, in addition to having the Leaving Certificate, had six months practical experience in schools. They took either a two year course at the training centre or a three year concurrent course at the centre and neighbouring university and qualified for a General Certificate, which allowed them to teach primary school. Chapter V students were graduates with honours qualifications in a teaching subject who took a one year course of professional training in order to become "teachers of higher subjects" in intermediate and secondary schools. Chapter VI students held diplomas from a

*In 1904 Provincial Committees had been established in the four university cities to develop teacher training centres and courses of study.

Central Institution in subjects such as domestic economy and physical training. Students took a one year course to qualify as "teachers of special subjects".

As in the past, teachers were to serve a two year probationary period before receiving their parchments: all studentships had to give surety for their bursaries and were required to teach for two years.

The 1906 regulations made training essential and allowed for a period of adjustment. After 1915 the external examination leading to the teacher's certificate was to lapse and thereafter uncertified teachers were no longer to be recognised as members of the school staff. Meanwhile career prospects in secondary education had attracted graduates into the profession - in 1915 the proportion of graduates entering teacher training was a sixth of the total.

The Scottish Education Act of 1872 had made attendance at school compulsory for all children between the ages of five and thirteen, but exemption was permitted to those children who could prove to inspectors the ability to read, write and do elementary arithmetic. School boards were required to appoint school attendance officers whose duty it was to see that no child failed to attend school without reasonable excuse. Parents who did not send their children to school could be fined 5d a day plus expenses of the same amount, or they could be sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment - every three months. Anyone who

employed a child under thirteen was held in loco parentis, subject, if the child could not read or write, to the same penalties as the parent.

Because there was part-time employment of children outside school hours, the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878, regulated the casual employment of children. Children under ten were not allowed to sell anything in the streets and children under fourteen were not allowed to be casually employed after seven in the evening in winter and after nine in the summer. Another provision allowed exemption from school during six weeks of the year - to enable country children to help with herding, harvesting, etc.

The Elementary Education (Scotland) Act, 1876, had attempted to aid attendance in thinly populated areas of the country. In cases where the population, within two miles by road, was less than 300, a special grant was awarded if no other public or state aided school was available for that population - the grant was £10 if the population exceeded 200 and £15 if less than 200.

In the remote glens and islands, where the population was not sufficient to justify the erection of a school and where the route was too long or difficult to attend school, children had to be instructed by itinerant teachers. For these teachers the government gave a special grant, provided three conditions

were fulfilled - the number of scholars was less than twenty, the nearest state aided school was not less than four miles or separated by the sea, the children received instruction from an approved teacher for at least sixty days a year and were annually inspected. The board then received a double grant for the scholars and if the number of scholars reached fifteen, an additional grant of £10 was awarded.

There was, as noted earlier, little mention of secondary schooling in the Act of 1872. The Act constituted burgh schools which taught Latin, Greek, Mathematics and the higher branches of knowledge, into higher class public schools. Although these schools were managed by the school boards, their monies came not from the school rate but from endowments, fees and the town council. A series of steps by the government permitted the gradual development of the secondary school system.¹⁵ The Act of 1878 extended the right of boards to maintain and repair buildings from government grants. The Educational Endowments Act of 1882 made inspection compulsory in higher class schools - previously boards were responsible for examination. In 1892 a grant of £60,000 (it became an annual grant) was made available for the extension of education through the Education and Local Taxation (Scotland) Act: a departmental minute simultaneously established thirty-five secondary education committees to distribute the parliamentary grant. The Leaving Certificate introduced in 1888, and at first restricted to higher class

schools, was extended in 1892, to pupils in all schools which had efficient higher departments but were not classified as higher class schools. The code of 1889 provided for the establishment of Intermediate or Higher Grade schools to give education of a higher grade than elementary to the clever pupils from poor families; the schools offered a three year course with a scientific or commercial emphasis. In 1902 the Intermediate Certificate was established; it was a three year course (with subjects in Mathematics, English, languages, and science) intended to distinguish between elementary and secondary schooling; it came to be regarded as the half-way stage to the Leaving Certificate. The Act of 1908 defined the term secondary; essentially it referred to those schools which provided full five year post elementary courses.

Problems Implementing the Act

The Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 did not make an immediate impact on all school districts of the country, particularly in Gaeldom. The Napier Commission stated that "the benefits of the Act did not for several years come into operation in the Highlands and Islands".¹⁶ In Lewis schools did not open until 1878 because of quarrels among school board members, a shortage of school accommodation and materials to build the schools, a lack of qualified and/or experienced teachers, and little parental enthusiasm for the new educational system.¹⁷

In some areas of Gaeldom the compulsory attendance clause was

almost inoperable. In 1884 Bracadale (Skye), secured an average attendance of 48 out of 154 children of school age, Kilmuir (Argyll), 70 out of 262 and Harris 457 out of 1,035.¹⁸ Several reasons (similar to those in the rest of Scotland) accounted for the low attendance - poverty, the great extent of areas over which small populations were scattered, truancy, technical difficulties in procuring convictions for absenteeism, the expense of legal proceedings and parental poverty.

The Napier Commission alleged that Highland parents had a defective appreciation of the importance of punctuality and imagined that the amount of education which they thought adequate could be acquired in a much shorter time than was really necessary. H. Craik* believed that parents kept their children at home to save trouble, to avoid paying the school fees, and to retain "the boys' help at home".¹⁹

Poverty also contributed to non-attendance. H.M.I.'s Ross and Robertson reported that parents in Lewis were so wretchedly poor, some so burdened with young families, that several boards were forced to conclude that if all the children of school age in one family attended school regularly, one should be allowed to remain at home to help out: in this way, "the attendance of some of the children was secured with some degree of regularity".²⁰

Weather and geography aided non-attendance: the weather was often rude and boisterous and the schools were frequently not

*Senior Examiner in the S.E.D., and in 1885, its Secretary.

connected by roads with the secondary townships. The school board of Harris, in 1891, reported - "the want of roads is a serious disadvantage to many school districts under this board and helps to keep attendance down".²¹

The technical difficulties involved in prosecution and the expense of the legal proceedings caused boards not to prosecute for non-attendance.²² There were five statutes which had to be consulted to conduct a prosecution and magistrates were hesitant to convict unless the circumstances were clearly within the letter of the law - it was difficult to distinguish between "neglect to provide education" and "mere irregular attendance" and to determine what was a "reasonable excuse". The expense of prosecuting defaulting parents was often considered too high to justify prosecution. For instance, in 1881 - 1882 expenses for prosecuting throughout Scotland were five times that of the amount recovered in fines (£280 to £1,449): in the Highlands and Islands expenses were nine times as high.²³

The expense was high because of the cumbersome machinery involved in the prosecution process. Until 1883 the process was conducted by the procurator fiscal before the sheriff substitute - both resident at great distances from many parishes. Since the majority of boards could not afford the expense involved in travelling to the authorities to get the order and then bringing the defaulting parents before the authorities, boards did not bother to prosecute. In 1883, the Education (Scotland) Act,

empowered boards to bring defaulting parents before one or more justices of the peace sitting in open court, but again, in parishes of great distance, it was too expensive to bring parents to the sittings. The conditions of the compulsory officer's employment also created problems: in many cases he was not full-time and where parishes were large and population scattered, he could not give effective supervision.

Low average attendance had financial repercussions upon the school boards; "not only is the attendance grant proportionately diminished but many of the children are not qualified by attendance to be presented to the inspector and the lowering of the general efficiency caused by its irregularity leads to a lower scale of grant allowed".²⁴

Low attendance also affected the rates. Section 67 of the Act had been especially designed to assist Highland school rates through the awarding of special grants based on attendance - this section enacted that where a rate of 3d raised less than 7s 6d a child or £20 altogether, the school boards were entitled to a further sum which would make up the amount, the additional sum being irrespective of what the rate actually was, provided that it was not less than 3d. The clause also mentioned that Argyll, Ross, Inverness, Orkney and Shetland (Sutherland and Caithness were later added), were districts in which the parliamentary grant (if the school rate was not less than 3d) could be in excess of the income of the school derived from fees,

rates and subscriptions.

Further financial assistance to encourage higher attendance was contained in the Highland Minute of 1885. The Minute instituted a special graduated attendance grant based upon average attendance. With reference to Article 19 A(1) in schools of a parish (not burgh) instead of a 4s per scholar grant, a grant of 5s per head was given where the average attendance was between 65 and 70 per cent of the children on the register; 6s where the average attendance was between 70 and 75 per cent; 7s where the attendance was between 75 and 80 per cent; and 8s where beyond 80 per cent.

The above scheme was also intended to help compensate for the low payment of school fees. The failure to pay fees was general throughout Scotland but was especially pernicious in the Highlands and Islands. The Napier Commission reported that the amount of fees paid in the counties of Shetland, Sutherland, Ross-shire and Inverness - in proportion to the population - was much below the average of Scotland as a whole.

Poverty was the general reason given for the non-payment of fees. The Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 allowed that when parents could not afford to pay the fees, they could have themselves registered with the parochial board as poor and needy people: the board would pay the fees of the children as part of the poor relief. The fees of the desperate and indigent were thereby provided for but there remained a large group of parents

too proud to go on poor relief and their fees went unpaid.

Craik believed that it was not just a dislike on the part of the parents to resort to the parochial board; there was also "a general dislike on the part of the authorities to encourage them to do so, as this might lead to application for further aid from the same source".²⁵ Some school boards such as Uig, South Uist and Barra, charged no school fees; others such as Barvas, Lochs, and Stenschall, charged only 1s 8d per head while the average fee in state aided schools throughout Scotland was 12s 10d.

The 1890 parliamentary grants in relief of fees - applicable to all schools in Scotland - practically eradicated the need for fees on the elementary level: until this grant was available Highland boards had to depend upon the attendance grants of 1885.

The levying and paying of school rates in some districts of Gaeldom was also a problem. In 1877 when the average school rate for the country was just above 4½d, it ranged from 7d to 10d in the Highlands (and 1s in the Shetlands).²⁶ Of the 115 parishes in Scotland which had a school rate which exceeded 9d in 1881 - 1882, 76 were in the Highlands; in 1881 the rate exceeded 2s in 12 insular parishes in Inverness-shire, Ross-shire and Shetland; in Barvas and Uig (Lewis) the rate was 6s 8d and 4s 6d respectively.²⁷

Before discussing why the rates were so high it is first necessary

to explain how the rating system operated. The school rate was levied one-half upon owners and one-half upon occupiers of property valued at £4 or more; there was no fixed limit to the amount of the school rate; the school board determined the amount of rate needed to fulfil its commitments for the year and passed this estimate on to the parochial board which collected it with the poor rate.

Within the Highlands several problems occurred in the levying and the collecting of the school rate. The first and most crucial problem was the fact that property in the region had a low rateable value; there were few properties valued at £4 or over - for instance, as late as 1906 there were only 83 out of 3,034 crofts valued at above £4 in Lewis and in South Uist, in 1903, the average rent of 703 out of 793 holdings was £3.²⁸ The exclusion of the under £4 property owners and occupiers meant that thousands of crofters and cottars did not contribute anything to the rates: to compensate for the small number of ratepayers boards levied a higher rate than would have been necessary had property a higher rateable value.

The burden upon the small band of ratepayers was increased when (and because) the rates were calculated at a level sufficient to recoup the revenue lost through non-attendance and the non-payment of school fees. The ratepayers had also to meet part of the expense which had been incurred in the construction of school buildings - indeed a debate raged within the Highlands

and within the S.E.D. over the cost of the buildings. The Napier Commission alleged that the standards of the buildings demanded by the S.E.D. were far above the needs of the people and far beyond their ability to pay. The S.E.D. denied the accusations and argued that nearly all the expenditure approved by the department was recoverable through the building grants and loans provided by the department. No extravagant expenditure was either necessary nor approved and any which did occur was the fault of individual boards which, by the Act of 1872, had been left with wide discretionary powers. A report from three departmental men (1888) instanced the case of Lewis school boards and their costs.²⁹ The report stated that upon the passage of the 1872 Act Lewis was in a state of unusual prosperity and under the influence of this prosperity the construction of numerous schools (to provide for the scattered island population) was begun. At this time wages were high and the building programmes (to be completed within a certain period at the insistence of the department) served only to raise the wages to an even higher rate. Many materials had to be imported from the mainland and this increased their cost. In sum, the report argued that it was not the department that was responsible for the high cost of construction, but circumstances peculiar to the region and to the judgement of individual boards. The report concluded -

"... in almost every case the estate factors had the dominating influence on the boards; and it was with their consent, under the belief of permanent and progressive prosperity, that a liberal scale was adopted in regard to buildings. The general

verdict seems to be that the schools, though not as such as would be called extravagant under normal conditions or in an ordinary neighbourhood, are certainly not designed with a strict view to economy. They did not foresee the impending economic disasters of the island."

Boards now had to meet the difficulties out of the rates "which are restricted by the constantly increasing poverty of the people and the consequent diminution in the return from land" - a series of economic disasters in the early 1880's (the destruction of crops and fishing gear by a severe gale, the decline in earnings from herring fishing and cattle, the scarcity of work in the Highlands) had intensified the poverty of the people.*

The economic depression coincided with (if it did not help cause) an agitation by the crofters for land and land rights. In the early years of the 1880's crofters in Skye initiated land riots and engaged in a policy of withholding rents and rates: crofters in Lewis and Harris followed suit and withheld rents and rates. When the occupiers did not pay their rates the owners became responsible for them: landlords found this system unjust and economically disastrous, especially when they received little or no rent from the crofters. In December 1888 Lady Matheson of Lewis appealed to the Second Division of the Court of Session to have her rates reduced (by £222) to a more equitable sum on the grounds that she was receiving no rent from the subjects for which the rates were levied: although the Court agreed that her

*See Chapter III

case was a "hard one" it declared that no relief could be given.³⁰

The falling off in the payment of school rates was so great that several boards faced bankruptcy: as a consequence the boards of Lochs, Uig, Barvas and Harris asked the S.E.D. for assistance. Henry Craik acknowledged the gravity of the situation -

"The burden imposed by the Act has hitherto been paid with very great difficulty, and now, at the very time when disorder and want of means have rendered it almost impossible to collect any rates, the burden which would have to be met is increasing. If no remedy can be applied, the entire decay of the schools and a virtual suspension of the Education Act seems inevitable. Not only is the collection of rates difficult but their payment is apparently absolutely impossible, and it becomes necessary either to find some remedy, or to face this alternative."³¹

The department communicated to the four boards -

"It appears that concurrently with the increase of liabilities the sources from which these may be met have greatly diminished, and that this has been due to the fact that rents have been largely unpaid, that rates, due from tenants, are largely unpaid also, and that as regards the rates falling on owners, they have to be demanded partly in respect of property for which the owners, having no rent, are called upon to pay one-half of the rates; and partly in respect of property for which, having received no rent, they are called on to pay rates, both for themselves and for their tenants. It is evident that such a state of things must sooner or later destroy the resources of the owners, and break down the whole system upon which local and imperial taxation and administration are based."³²

To avoid a breakdown in the taxation system and the collapse of the educational system the department, through the Highland Minute of 1888, enacted an indirect system of relief based upon average attendance. To receive the assistance the boards had to

commit the management of their schools to three managers, one of whom was an inspector, especially appointed to take charge of the school districts. In any dispute between the managers and the inspector the S.E.D. was to decide the issue. Full powers under 35 and 36 Vic., c 62 and sec. 22 were delegated to the managers who were to receive the parliamentary grant. The deficit of each board was to be met from two sources. Firstly, from the Probate Duty Grant at the disposal of the Secretary for Scotland under the Probate Duties (Scotland and Ireland) Act, 1888, the sum allotted to each parish to be distributed in the same proportion as the average attendance at the school bore to the average attendance of all public schools in the parish. The sum from the Probate Duties was not forthcoming after March 31, 1890 but the necessary funds were provided by Parliament each year thereafter in the estimates for education. Secondly, by another grant not exceeding £25 in the case of any one school, or 5s per scholar in average attendance, from any fund which might be placed at the disposal of the department by the Secretary for Scotland.

Eventually thirteen boards were affected by the scheme - Stenscholl in Inverness-shire, South Uist, Barra, Bracadale, Snizort, Barvas, Lochs, Uig, Harris, Duirnish, Strath and Sleat; all had appealed to the department for assistance because of their financial difficulties. The boards began receiving assistance from the scheme in 1889: in 1890 they were also to benefit from the grants in relief of fees which, in effect, abolished the payment of

school fees. The abolition of fees removed any financial hardship which parents might have incurred through sending their children to school and ensured, for the boards, a much higher ratio of attendance; with increased attendance figures the boards received a higher sum from the attendance grant.

Four school boards - Barvas, Lochs, Uig and South Uist - have been selected to demonstrate how the Minute of 1888 and the grant in relief of fees combined with the code grant and the grant under Section 67 (see page 63) to improve the financial position of each board and thus reduce the burden upon the ratepayers. The boards of Lochs, Uig and Barvas are studied first.³³

The total amount of revenue derived from the parliamentary grants by the three boards in 1888* amounted to £2,158 (the code grant = £1,471; school fees = £16; grant under Section 67 = £671). £1,529 was raised from the school rate (the combined school rate was 12s and the combined property valuation was £4,927). The total amount of revenue raised (£3,687) was, in the words of the S.E.D. "totally inadequate to meet the educational wants of the parishes" - which included the repayments due on building debts of over £12,000. The department noted that the £1,471 received in code grants based on ^{an} average attendance of 1,829 was far below what it should have been; the combined

*The year before the Minute of 1888 took effect and two years before the grant in relief of fees came into operation.

average attendance of the three boards should have been 3,112 children. Additional grants under Section 67 (£671) would have been up to £500 higher had the boards secured an average attendance in "any reasonable degree proportionate to the accommodation provided". The payment of school fees had ceased to be a reality and their non-payment had become almost a tradition. While the boards had received only £16 in fees they should have received £470 - a sum arrived at by calculating the average fee per scholar in average attendance at 8s 6d. This fee was regarded as a fair estimate of the rate which might have been expected from these three parishes as compared with 12s 11½d, which represented at the time, the rate of fee per child all over Scotland.

The Minute of 1888 (payment commenced in 1889) and the grant in relief of fees (payment commenced in 1890) contributed £28,089 (£4,018 and £14,071 respectively) to the revenue of the boards during the years 1889 - 1900.

A rise in attendance figures went hand in hand with the sums received - attendance rose from 1,829 in 1888 to 2,528 in 1900. This rise was attributed to the increased stringency used in enforcing attendance, the abolition of school fees, the increase in population and the construction of roads and footpaths to the schools. The rise in average attendance increased the revenues received from the code grant and grants under Section 67. This revenue increased from £2,142 in 1888 to £4,452 in 1900.

What effect did this higher revenue from government grants have upon the level of school rates? The increased revenue meant that the boards did not need to derive as much money from the rates to meet their financial obligations. Boards could thus ask the parochial board to levy a lower school rate. This is evidenced in the figures for 1888 and 1900. In 1888 a combined school rate of 12s (an average of 4s per parish) raised a sum of £1,529 (approximately £500 each) at a total property valuation of £11,247 (approximately £ 3,749 each). In 1900 the combined school rate had fallen to 3s 3 d (approximately 1s 1d each) and raised a sum of £448 (approximately £149 each) at a total property valuation of £8,588 (approximately £2,862).

In 1901 the Commission on Lewis concluded that the increased revenue from the parliamentary grants had resulted in "reducing the school rates from the exorbitant amounts they had reached to moderate sums which the parties liable can fairly meet". Table A (on page 74) shows, in five yearly intervals the rise in revenues and the lowering of the school rate in the three parishes.

South Uist had been beset by the same problems as the other twelve boards - high rates levied because of the low rateable value of property, and revenue lost through non-attendance and the non-payment of school fees.³⁴ Of the twelve it was the first to be returned to local control - in 1894.

In 1881 less than one-third of the school age children were

TABLE A Revenue of School Boards in Lewis
1885, 1890, 1895, 1900

| Parish | Year | Average numbers in attendance | Code Grants | Specific Grants for general purposes and to relieve rates Sec. 67 | Min. of 1888 | Fees | Grant in relief of fees | Amount needed from school rate | School rate | Property valuation |
|--------|------|-------------------------------|-------------|--|--------------|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Barvas | 1885 | 506 | £330 | £269 | - | £44 | - | £550 | 3.11 | £2,750 |
| | 1890 | 641 | 386 | - | £592 | 10 | £196 | 118 | 1.0 | 3,360 |
| | 1895 | 867 | 964 | 298 | - | - | 519 | 60 | 0.6 | 2,400 |
| | 1900 | 964 | 1,174 | 369 | 290 | 0 | 578 | 113 | 0.9 | 2,938 |
| Lochs | 1885 | 642 | 535 | 422 | - | 101 | - | 750 | 4.4 | 3,450 |
| | 1890 | 903 | 756 | - | 860 | 32 | 263 | 103 | 0.6 | 4,120 |
| | 1895 | 746 | 883 | 23 | 500 | 2 | 437 | 80 | 0.6 | 3,200 |
| | 1900 | 821 | 1,005 | 389 | 400 | - | 490 | 185 | 1.0 | 3,700 |
| Uig | 1885 | 367 | 344 | 124 | - | 12 | - | 700 | 3.0 | 4,620 |
| | 1890 | 426 | 358 | - | 473 | 10 | 117 | 113 | 0.6 | 4,520 |
| | 1895 | 670 | 854 | 185 | - | 3 | 406 | 260 | 1.0 | 5,200 |
| | 1900 | 743 | 1,006 | 509 | 50 | - | 463 | 150 | 1.6 | 1,950 |

in average attendance (419 out of 1,379). In 1889 attendance had improved but still less than one-half were in average attendance (603 out of 1,228). The situation regarding the payment of school fees was "lamentable". In 1881 only £9 was collected in fees whereas £178 should have been collected - if the rate of 8s 6d per child had been paid. In 1889 no school fees were collected from the 603 in average attendance whereas £256 should have been collected - at the rate of 8s 6d. During this period (1881 - 1889) £22 was paid in fees by 5,029 children in average attendance when £2,150 should have been paid.

During the years 1881 - 1888, £4,023 was collected in code grants and £795 under Section 67 of the Act - a total of £4,818; £2,689 was received from the school rate. The school rate fluctuated from a low of 6d in 1885 (a property valuation of £6,880 raised £172) to a high of 16d in 1888 (a property valuation of £6,420 raised £428).

The Minute of 1888 (which the board received grants from for four years only because of improvements in its finance) and the grants in relief of fees made a considerable impact on the board's finances. During the years 1890* - 1900, £1,631 was received from the Minute of 1888 and £4,167 in grants in relief of fees. With the exception of one year (1891) attendance rose annually. The code grants and grants under Section 67 fluctuated yearly while contributing a total of £11,198 (£8,778 and £2,420 respectively) to the revenue of the board. The increased revenues eased the

*The board did not receive any money from the Minute of 1888 in 1889 as the other twelve boards had.

burden upon the ratepayers; whereas in the period 1881 - 1889 the school rate had average 11d, the rate dropped to an average of 6d in the years 1891 - 1895. After this period the rates rose dramatically; from 1896 - 1900 the rate of assessment averaged 19d per year. There is no indication as to why the rates increased so much*, but whatever the cause or causes, the increase would have been much greater without the additional revenues from the parliamentary grants. Table B, (on page 77) charts the revenues derived from the school rate and parliament during the years 1888, 1891, 1894, 1897, 1900.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the E.I.S. complained that the school rates in some of the parishes of Gaeldom were too low. In 1910 it petitioned the Secretary for Scotland to increase the school rates in the parishes of Barvas, Lochs and Uig. The boards of these parishes had come to "depend almost wholly on departmental subventions while the local school rates are kept at a figure far below the educational needs of the parishes and the average ratepayers' ability to pay rates".³⁵

* The Commission on the Uists did not indicate why the rates rose and the school board records do not exist to shed any light on the matter: no relevant information is contained in the S.E.D. files.

TABLE B Revenue of South Uist School Board
 1888, 1891, 1894, 1897, 1900

| Year | Average numbers in attendance | Code Grants | Specific Grants for general purposes and to relieve rates Sec. 67 | Min. of 1888 | Fees | Grant in relief of fees | Amount needed from school rate | School Rate | Property Valuation |
|------|-------------------------------|-------------|--|--------------|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 1888 | 603 | £554 | £156 | - | - | - | £428 | 1.4 | £6,420 |
| 1891 | 585 | 642 | 386 | £353 | 1 | £349 | 402 | 0.6 | 16,080 |
| 1894 | 641 | 777 | 184 | - | 2 | 406 | 245 | 0.10 | 5,880 |
| 1897 | 660 | 838 | 170 | - | 2 | 405 | 195 | 0.8 | 5,850 |
| 1900 | 764 | 1,040 | 515 | - | 4 | 430 | 252 | 1.4 | 3,780 |

The E.I.S. pointed out that the Local Government Board Report of 1906 had stated that occupiers (namely crofters) were not overburdened by the local rates.

"The average amount of rates (for all purposes) paid by a Barvas crofter was 5s 6d; by a Lochs crofter, 5s 1d; by a Uig crofter, 6s 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d; and by a Stornoway crofter, 2s 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. Having regard to the resources of the people these rates cannot be said to be unduly burdensome on the crofters. Many are very poor and find it a hardship to pay rates, and some are not able to pay any rates, but their cases on being represented to the rating authorities receive consideration. The average crofter, however, is quite able to pay the local rates."

The E.I.S. also noted that in Barvas, for the ten years ending May 1905, 96% of the rates were collected; 96% in Lochs; 98% in Uig; and 95% in Stornoway. With such a high percentage of collection, the school rates could be raised - the rates on occupiers for the year 1908/09 in the four parishes were: Barvas - 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d, Lochs - 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d, Uig - 1s, Stornoway - 1s, and Stornoway Burgh - 1s.; because of the Agricultural Ratings Act, not even the whole of the school rate was paid by the occupiers "... owing to the operation of the Agricultural Ratings Act and to the deduction made from the gross valuation by the parish councils, the occupier of agricultural land pays no more than three-eighths of fifty-five hundredths of the nominal school rate".

The E.I.S. maintained that the low school rate imperilled educational efficiency - the condition of school buildings with regard to cleaning materials, water supply, sanitation and disinfection was bad; staffing arrangements were inadequate;

the salaries of teachers were low and there were inequalities in payments for years and services. H.M.I. Robertson (chief inspector of the north and manager of the schools involved in the controversy) admitted that there were problems, especially in regard to staffing and salary, but questioned the feasibility of raising the school rates - "the point whether the rates could have been raised, as stated by the E.I.S., is debatable, as is the condition of the crofters' ability to pay".³⁶ (The problems raised by the E.I.S. are discussed in Chapter VI).

The Highland Minute of 1885 had attempted to aid the development of secondary education in Gaeldom. The assistance was badly needed - the Napier Commission had stated that there was no secondary school "on the west of Sutherland or of Ross, none in all the western islands, or on the whole west coast, from Cape Wrath downwards, till Campbelltown is reached".³⁷

The Highland Minute allowed pupils in a central school who passed certain subjects* in standards V and VI to receive a grant of 10s instead of 4s. The clause was attached to the end of article 21 (a) which read -

"Where, in any parish (not burgh) in one of the specified counties, there shall be maintained at one or more centres, sanctioned by the department, a school or schools in which at least one teacher shall be a graduate in arts or science of some university of the United Kingdom, and where, independently of such teacher, there shall be provided a staff which, after a deduction of thirty scholars from the average attendance, shall fulfil the requirements of article 32 (c), in such a school this grant may be raised to 10s per subject".

*The maximum number of subjects was two.

Due to the shortage of teachers who were university graduates and the inability of the authorities to pay their salaries few parishes could take advantage of the Highland Minute's provisions: the result was that in parishes such as the Uists secondary education remained either non-existent or in a languishing condition.³⁸

Where central schools were established, distance and poverty often combined to block the children's access to them: "it is almost as difficult for a boy to meet the expense of residing near a school which is twenty miles as at one forty or three hundred miles away".³⁹ In an effort to overcome the travelling and living costs of pupils away from home a massive bursary scheme was developed by the Secondary Education Committee: in the scheme students were nominated to receive a bursary on the report of school managers and teachers (private bursaries continued to exist). While the bursaries were of great assistance there were never enough to meet the demands. Each parish and each county was allocated only so many and although there were occasions when a parish lacked a qualified candidate, overall, there were more candidates than bursaries. (When a parish did not have a suitable candidate, its allotment was reallocated). The amount of the bursaries was barely sufficient to support the students and they had often to rely upon the meagre resources of their parents to tide them over: no one was allowed to receive a private bursary if in receipt of a public one.

What conclusions can be drawn regarding the financial status of Highland school boards after 1890? The additional revenues from the parliamentary grants did ease the financial difficulties of many boards, but all were not eliminated. The revenues obtained from parliament and the school rate may have been sufficient to keep the schools in operation but they did not allow for extras. The revenues were not great enough to permit the boards to attract qualified, high salaried teachers; because boards could not, they continued to rely upon uncertificated teachers - a practice also engaged in by many boards in the rural areas of the Lowlands. Yet, it would be wrong to attribute all the difficulties in obtaining qualified teachers to the inability to pay competitive salaries. Chapter VI will show how other factors (such as isolation, the lack of educational and employment opportunities for the older children of teachers, etc.) contributed to the shortage of qualified teachers in the remote and rural areas of the nation, particularly in Gaeldom.

The Fate of the Traditional Schools

The old church and society supported Gaelic schools were founded not to perpetuate the Gaelic language and the Gaelic culture but to give religious instruction to Gaels in their own language. The ability to read Gaelic was foreseen as "but a step away from the desire to learn English".⁴⁰

By the middle of the nineteenth century English was already established as part of the curriculum in many of the Gaelic

schools (see chapter I); indeed, by this period, English reading, writing and arithmetic, with Gaelic only used for Bible reading, was the general curriculum content of the schools. The emphasis on Gaelic Biblical reading provided Gaels with their principal, if not their sole, opportunity for becoming literate in their own tongue.

After 1872 the national schools, publicly financed and with a conscience clause that allowed for religious instruction, took over the role of the voluntary schools and rendered them unnecessary. Financial donors who had kept the old schools in operation sought other areas in which to dispense their charity: without resources and without purpose the schools disappeared — gradually: their demise took about two decades. The Napier Commission noted the "gradual abandonment of schools in some places where they had previously been kept up by ecclesiastical agencies or benevolent societies as a necessary supplement to the parochial system of education": it was in the "various, remote corners" where the Act of 1872 was not fully implemented that voluntary agencies continued to "supplement the deficiencies of the public educational provision".⁴¹

The absence of source material makes it difficult to trace accurately the decline and the details of the decline of the voluntary Gaelic schools, especially those belonging

to the Gaelic School Society (which incorporated the Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness societies' schools). Records of the society do not exist after 1844 and the historian has to rely upon references made to it in other sources for any indication of its activities. From the few references made to it there can be little doubt that the role of the society as an educational tool greatly diminished after 1872. The beginning of the decline can be traced to the 1840's when the society's financial resources became severely restricted because of the new and tragic outlet which charitable organisations and philanthropists found for dispensing their money - the relief of famine and destitution in Ireland and the Highlands.⁴² Records of the Ladies Highland Association, with which the society closely co-operated, reveal that the society was still operating and helping the association to operate schools in distant parts of the Outer Hebrides in the years after 1872. It was particularly active in Lewis, especially in the operation of sewing schools; no reference can be found to school endeavours beyond the year 1886.

Despite the society's diminished role as an educational tool, its executive remained active in promoting the use of Gaelic within the national system. **Three** factors accounted for this development. Firstly, the society was aware of the need and desire which the Gaelic-speaking populace had for English; **secondly**, it was convinced that Gaelic-speaking children acquired English

most efficiently and most thoroughly through the use of Gaelic as a means of translation and instruction; thirdly, the society's promotion of Gaelic coincided with the revival of Gaelic and the growth of a Gaelic nationalism which was occurring in the Highlands at this time - each were stimulated by nationalist and cultural developments in Ireland (see chapter IV).

In the later years of the 1870s the society petitioned parliament for greater concessions to the Gaelic language, and in 1876 addressed a statement to Highland school boards urging the adoption of Gaelic as part of the academic curriculum (see chapters V and VI). To assist the increased use of Gaelic the society gave grants to school boards and teachers. In 1892 the Gaelic School Society was wound up.

What of the other pre-1872 voluntary schools which used the Gaelic language? Mention has already been made of the Ladies Highland Association schools, most of which were in remote areas of the Highlands. In 1878, the year that the first board schools came into operation in Lewis, there were fourteen Association schools with one thousand in attendance; in 1879 seven of these schools were closed at the request of the school boards but at the same time another was opened at Arivruaich which had been served by the Gaelic School Society until 1877.⁴³ In all, because of the delay by boards in establishing schools, six Association

schools had been opened in the distant parts of the island (such as Uig) during the years 1872 - 1895: the schools were paid occasional visits by the inspectors of the national system but it is not known what status, if any, they possessed under the Act. Sewing schools were also maintained in Lewis and in three cases they were administered jointly with the Gaelic School Society. After 1895 the role of the Association in elementary education virtually ceased although it still played an important role in places such as Carloway, Crossboat and Bayble developing secondary education.

After the passage of the Act of 1872 the support of voluntary schools in the Highlands by the S.S.P.C.K. was deemed no longer necessary and in 1899 four-fifths of its funds (£185,330) were delivered to a body of trustees and formed into the "Trust for Education in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland"; the remaining one-fifth was left in the hands of the society for purely religious purposes.⁴⁴ The Trust's money was used to provide bursaries to students at central schools and technical institutions (£15), universities and training colleges (£20), with special regard to the claims of Gaelic-speaking candidates. Candidates had to be of the protestant faith; religious knowledge was one of the subjects of examination. Grants were made to County Education Committees to supplement the salaries of teachers of Gaelic, to help pay the cost of sending teachers to the Gaelic summer vacation courses sponsored by An Comunn, and to purchase Gaelic text books for school libraries.

As noted in the first chapter of this thesis the Gaelic schools were insufficient in number and inadequate in facilities to meet the educational wants and needs (in Gaelic and/or English) of the Gaelic-speaking people. But, limited though these schools were, they, along with the churches, were the main avenue whereby a Gael could become literate in his own language. Apart from teaching Gaels to read the Bible in their native tongue, the societies had produced and published numerous text-books and grammars in Gaelic.⁴⁵ These endeavours ended in 1871 - possibly out of the belief that the new education system would assume responsibility for such works. With the demise of these schools the question arose - were there now any means (apart from the teaching of scriptural readings by the churches) whereby literacy in Gaelic could be acquired and extended? As was noted in chapter I, little Gaelic literature was available to Gaels during this period; there was no Gaelic press; and there was not the proliferation of reading societies and clubs in the Gaeltheachd which there was in the south wherein men and women could learn to read. There were libraries (usually in the schoolhouse) in the Highlands but, as mentioned, the Gaelic literature was limited; and there is little indication of reading clubs and discussion groups having formed around the libraries.

Because there were such few means available whereby Gaels could acquire literacy in Gaelic, Celtic advocates began to urge that provisions for Gaelic be incorporated into the Education (Scotland) Act,

1872: no Gaelic measures had been included in the Act when it was passed by parliament. The Gaelic advocacy was part and parcel of a revival in all things Celtic which was beginning in Scotland at this time - a revival inspired by similar developments in Ireland and Wales (see Chapter IV.) Many of the individuals who urged the adoption of Gaelic measures into the Act were initiators of the Celtic revival; some were advocates of the nationalist feeling which was emerging within Scotland during this epoch. A few of the nationalists were involved with the effort to conserve the culture and vernacular of the Lowlands. These men believed that if the traditions, culture and speech of Scotland were not retained and strengthened, then the Scottish identity and nationality would be overwhelmed and eventually submerged by the ever advancing English language and influences.

The Education (Scotland) Act of 1872, through its failure to include provisions for the Scots tongue and Scots Gaelic, symbolised this threat to the nationhood of Scotland. Nationalists thus demanded a place for Gaelic and the Broad Scotch dialect in the educational system. But nationalism and the Celtic revival were not the only motivating factors behind the efforts to have the native tongues included within the schools of the nation. Other elements were involved, primarily the ability of the children to acquire an intelligent knowledge of English without resource to or use of their native tongues. For Gaels this was of particular importance because in the later decades

of the nineteenth century, the Highland economy failed to respond to governmental efforts to revive it. With the region in a continuous state of socio-economic depression, thousands of Gaels were forced southwards (as they had been in the past) to earn a living. In the south English was essential if prosperity was to be achieved. But how were Gaels to become proficient in English - in a school system which excluded Gaelic from the curriculum and totally immersed the Gaelic child in English, or, in a system which used Gaelic as a medium of communication and translation? While later chapters of this thesis discuss the educational questions involved, the following chapter examines the economic conditions which necessitated an outward population movement and a knowledge of the English language.

Chapter III: The Highland Economy and Population Movements

Introduction

Background to the economic situation

The farming and fishing industries

Migration and the Gaelic language

Introduction

In the last twenty years of the nineteenth century Gaeldom continued in a state of socio-economic depression and continued to house a population much larger than it could support - despite government efforts to revive the economy. The importance of this situation upon Gaels and their language cannot be overstated. Since most Gaels could not secure a living at home they were forced, as they had been in earlier decades, to take seasonal jobs in the south to supplement their meagre Highland earnings or to take up permanent residence away from the Gaeltheachd. The employment situation was so grave that one government commission stated "... in order to produce any substantial improvement in the material prosperity of the population a considerable reduction of their number is urgently required".¹ Eventually population movement became government policy: one of the functions assigned to the C.D.B. was that of "aiding the migration of crofters and cottars from congested districts to other places in Scotland and settling any migrants under favourable circumstances in the places to which they first migrate".²

Both migration and emigration had severe consequences upon the Gaelic language. Emigration meant a direct and immediate statistical loss to future generations: although it did not directly contribute to the decrease in the use of Gaelic which was occurring at home it did so indirectly - through instilling

in those Gaels who stayed home an awareness that they too or their children might one day have to settle away and if they did English would be required.

Seasonal migration assisted the advance of English in a much more drastic way than emigration, for seasonal migrants might import southern values and the English language into Gaeldom: seasonal migration also impressed upon Gaels the fact that if they were to improve their job prospects in the south competency in English was essential - without English Gaels could obtain only the most menial and labourious jobs.

The efforts to reinvigorate the economy, in themselves, undermined Gaelic society. The attempts to increase productivity and profitability in the farming and fishing industries, in conjunction with the expansion of communications, exposed Gaels to pursuits and lifestyles which were foreign to traditional and contemporary Highland society - these alien ways altered gradually, but irrevocably the society and culture which had fostered the Gaelic language.

Southern modes of thought and standards of living invaded Gaelic homes - a process assisted by the availability of an English press and literature, in contrast to the lack of printed Gaelic works (see chapter IV). The new lifestyle required its own framework and its own means of expression - both of which Gaelic seemed either unable to provide or to provide with

difficulty. While those parts of the language which were associated with the old framework of reference - the special vocabulary associated with the sea, the croft, with shelling life and customs - continued in use, Gaelic appeared unable to adapt to the new conditions imposed upon Highland society by the evolving southern economic and commercial prospects. It seemed to lack the flexibility and capacity to derive and assimilate words from the new science and technology of the period. This failure to extend the register had serious consequences in the realm of education, particularly in regard to teaching languages, mathematics and science. There were no Gaelic words for the tenses in English, nor for the tenses and cases in Latin and Greek. Teachers had either to use the English names of the tenses, etc., or to somehow circulate them in Gaelic. Much circulating was done when it came to dealing with words in science such as, gravity, gasket, electricity, sterilisation, etc. In the appendix a list of words can be found which were necessary for teaching but for which there were no Gaelic equivalents. More information on the extension of the vocabulary and register of Gaelic can be found in chapter IV.

The national system of education devised in 1872 encouraged the movement of Gaels to the Lowlands and the importation of southern lifestyles and values. The school, through its ability to impart a knowledge of the English language was perceived, as

it had been in the past, as the vehicle by which Gaels could escape from their poverty ridden lifestyles to employment and prosperity in the south and Empire. The Commission on the Uists made this point when it stated:

"Before the passing of the Education Act in 1872, education in both parishes of Uist was in a backward state, and the ordinary Uist man who ventured to the mainland was greatly handicapped on account of his imperfect knowledge of English. That is no longer so. Elementary education has made great strides within the last twenty years, and the Uist young men and women now leave their native islands equipped with such a knowledge of English as enables them not merely to make their way in the world, but sometimes to rise to positions of trust and responsibility."³

Background to the Economic Situation

The Highland population, especially that of the Western Isles, had been saved from destitution in the 1850's by the revival of the potato and the growth of the herring fishing industry, as well as by the growing ability of Gaels to find seasonal jobs in agriculture and manufactures in the south: landlords found salvation in sheep farming. Both fishing and farming were vulnerable to forces beyond control and both suffered severely from these forces in the later years of the century.

The expansion of the herring fishing industry in the middle decades of the nineteenth century had caused migration to all the fishing ports on the east coast of Scotland: meanwhile the home fishing at Stornoway was greatly increased because

of the influx of large and well equipped eastern boats into the Minch. The eastern boats also established bases on the eastern side of Lewis and in Barra. At their peak, the Barra and Lewis fishings employed about 1,400 boats, four-fifths of which were of east coast origin.⁴

While the eastern boats enjoyed success in the Lewis and Barra fishing stations, the part-time fishermen of the west coast fished spasmodically, "with no outstandingly sustained success" during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century.⁵ Although the western fishermen did not fare well financially, those who secured engagements as hired hands on the eastern boats earned a scale of wage unknown to their forefathers; and when, as often happened, several members of the same family were employed, the result was comfort and abundance for the remainder of the year.

While these circumstances improved the condition of the people, the potato, by degrees, threw off the blight which had threatened its existence and became, again, an important article of diet. At the same time, a fall in the price of oatmeal enabled the cultivator to devote more of the inferior grain crop to the winter feed of his cattle and thus raised the market value of the cattle.

The improved circumstances induced the people to remain at home. Squatting and subdivision, already indigenous growths, were thus stimulated in certain areas of the region, particularly

in Lewis, the most densely populated section of Gaeldom. Such growth would have been remarkable in a prosperous agricultural district, but occurring in an area where the produce of the land was insufficient to maintain its inhabitants, disaster could strike at any moment. In the 1880's a series of disasters occurred which caused a near calamitous situation to develop.

In the early years of the 1880's wool prices collapsed and caused a decline in sheep farmers' profits and landlord rentals. The harvest of 1881 was poor: in 1882 blight almost totally destroyed the potato crop while the corn and hay crops and fishing gear were severely damaged by a gale. The east coast herring was unremunerative that year and hardship was inflicted upon the people of the north-west who depended upon it for their livelihood.

A change in the method of payment for the herring catch caused another crisis to develop in the years after 1884. Curers, partly to reduce their losses occasioned by a poor season, as in 1884, abandoned the old system whereby certain boats were engaged to fish exclusively for them and men were hired for a fixed wage plus an additional payment for each cran fished; under this system it was not unusual for a fisherman to return from the east coast with £20 or £30 while a moderate wage was about £12. Under the new system the curers adopted a method of sale by daily auction of the whole

catch in which the hired hand shared one-twelfth of the proceeds. Fishermen's earnings were now subject to the fluctuating demands of the market: a catch of little value meant earnings precariously close to the subsistence level.

Although the old system was somewhat more durable in the remote ports of the west coast* than it was in the east, the new system held severe consequences for those western men who served as hired hands on the eastern boats operating in the North Sea and on the east coast itself. Within the 1886 and 1887 seasons fishermen from Lewis alone lost an estimated £80,000. The loss of income from fishing destroyed the credit system which had carried the fishermen over from one season to the next. In former years, as soon as the potatoes were consumed, the people obtained credit from the merchant, usually the curer for whom they fished; but because of the experience of 1886 and 1887, the merchant no longer gave credit.

The decline in earnings from herring fishing was accompanied by a decline in the value of the crofters' stirk - from a high of £3 to £5 in 1884 to as little as 30s in 1888. To make things worse for the crofter, there was little or no demand for hired labour in his own neighbourhood; nor was there much work for him in the Lowlands - it became harder in the years

*The old system still operated in Stornoway in 1887 and in Barra in the early 1900's.

after 1874 for casual labour to get a seasonal job in Lowland farming (which was shedding labour under the influence of falling grain prices) or in the Clyde shipyards, etc. (because of heavy unemployment at the down-turn of trade cycles).

In 1888 the Commission on the Lews concluded that the crisis was "more serious because probably inevitable, than that which occurred through the ruin of the kelp industry and the failure of the potato"; that starvation had only been averted in 1887 through the exceptional abundance of a good harvest; that in the future widespread destitution was inevitable unless either employment could be provided or the population greatly reduced through permanent migration.⁷

Reports of the Napier Commission (1884), the Crofters' Commission (1888 - 1912), the Walpole Commission (1890) and the C.D.B. (1897 - 1913) responded to the economic difficulties by recommending changes in land tenancy and agricultural practices, accompanied by numerous initiatives in rail, steamer, road, postal and telegraphic communications. Along with developing the farming and fishing industries, it was hoped that the communication facilities would increase tourism, stimulate the growth of local trade, increase the shipment of Highland produce to the south and encourage the population to move to places of employment in the south.

The following section of this chapter investigates the problems

that were inherent in the farming and fishing industries and the efforts of the government to resolve them: the efforts were neither sufficient nor realistic enough to overcome the difficulties and Gaels, with few other sources of work in Gaeldom, moved southwards in search of employment.

The farming and fishing industries

In 1884 the Napier Commission concluded that agricultural and pastoral farming in the Highlands was still backward and inefficient - drains were seldom dug, fences seldom built, rotation of crops was minimal, the soil was yearly tilled, and little attention was paid to animal husbandry.⁸ Crofters and cottars also endured "the evils attached to an unproductive soil, high elevations, a variable and boisterous climate", as well as, "several causes of indigence, discouragement and irritation" - such as small holdings, want of compensation for improvements, high rents, defective communications and tenurial arrangements.

Although the people saw the resolution of their difficulties in security of tenure and the possession of land, the Napier Commission felt that security of tenure "would in some districts simply accelerate the sub-division and exhaustion of the soil, promote the reckless increase of the people,

aggravate the indigence, squalor and lethargy which too much abound already and multiply the contingencies of destitution and famine which even now recur from time to time".

The Commission was prepared to give security of tenure to those crofters who paid a rent of £6 per year and who would accept an improving lease. It urged that financial assistance be given to the crofters to purchase their holdings and to the cottar-fishermen to purchase their dwellings: the possession of property would be a "powerful agent in forming habits of industry and self-respect and in supplying sources of rational enjoyment". For those granted security of tenure the commission recommended rent adjustments, in the hope that "such valuations, aided by the indulgence of proprietors, would have no small effect in regulating rents paid by other occupiers where these may require consideration".

The Crofters' Holdings Act (1886) included many of Napier's recommendations and some which the commission had argued against - primarily the granting of security of tenure to all crofters. Compensation for improvements, a fixed, fair rent and facilities for the enlargement of holdings were also provided for - along with a Crofters' Commission to carry out the reforms and a Land Court to settle disputes.

The Crofters' Commission did not have the power to enlarge or to create new holdings: it depended upon the co-operation of the landlords to make land available for both. The commission

could do nothing for the large, landless population among whom the craving for land was greatest - the cottars. Cottars were a burden upon both crofters and proprietors: most had no title to the land they occupied, paid no rent, erected dwellings without permission and grazed stock upon the crofters' common pasture without providing compensation.

In 1897 the C.D.B. was created by the government to aid localities whose resources were insufficient to meet the needs of the populace wherein the valuation did not exceed £1 per head; fifty-six parishes were designated as congested districts. Although the Board had the power to purchase land, to make certain improvements on the land, to create new holdings, and to erect fishermen's dwellings, its actions were limited by several factors - the restriction of its budget to £35,000 per year, the inability to take land without the landlord's consent, and the Highlanders' unwillingness to own land. The typical crofter wanted only security of tenure and a fixed, fair rent - not the disadvantages of ownership, especially the responsibility for the payment of both owner and occupier rates; neither did the crofter wish to lose the protection and privileges of the 1886 Act, particularly the right to appeal to the Commission for the settlement of grazing and other disputes.

The crofters' hesitancy to own land did not stop them from agitating for more of it; in reality, the agitation was for

land tenancy. Despite their demands and the recommendations of the Commission on the Uists that more land be made available, additional steps to provide it were not taken by the government until the passage of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Act, 1911. This Act transferred the functions of the Crofters' Commission to the Scottish Land Court* and the functions of the C.D.B. to the Board of Agriculture. Although the Board was allocated a budget of £200,000 a year and a wide range of settlement powers, including the power of compulsion to create new holdings, the complicated method devised to compensate owners slowed the process of land redistribution; wider powers and a more workable method of compensation had to await until after the war.

The possession of land neither eliminated the problems inherent in agricultural and pastoral farming nor altered the backward and unproductive approach of the crofters' to farming. The efforts of the Crofters' Commission, the C.D.B. and the Board of Agriculture to increase the efficiency of farming were minimised by the hesitancy, at times the refusal, of the crofters to adapt to new ways.

The complaints by observers of the Highlanders' failure to embark on new methods of husbandry or to take advantage of resources cover all aspects of their economy. An instance of this is in the uphill struggle waged by the C.D.B. to establish an egg and poultry industry in the region. Although the Board provided instructors, advice, pamphlets, supplied fowls and

* The Land Court was to settle disagreements over compensation

sittings and pure eggs, it took years to overcome the negative attitude of crofters to the enterprise. Highlanders considered poultry raising to be women's work and hardly worthy of consideration. They also believed that the industry could not be conducted in remote and sparsely populated districts and therefore kept few fowls with regard to profit - although surplus eggs were sold. Methods of management, feeding, collecting, grading and marketing of eggs needed improvement; van collections were used by some local grocers but on the whole the people could not be made to realise the advantage of rapid marketing. The Board advocated the establishment of agencies which would secure a systematic and rapid marketing process but co-operation in the matter was wanting. Nevertheless, the Board persisted in its efforts and in its final report could note some progress - there were dealers in various districts who saw that it paid to grade, pack, and market eggs while fresh; and in several places co-operatives were being formed for the same purpose.⁹

For further elaboration on the difficulties incurred by the agencies in modernising the Highland economy - from stock-rearing to spraying, to introducing new seeds, fencing, drainage, and new crops - see the annual reports of the Crofters' Commission and the C.D.B., especially the final reports of both.¹⁰

Since the land could not, in most cases, support the population

which lived off and on it, large numbers of people resorted to the sea to supplement their livelihood; but because the east coast fishing was far more developed and successful than that of the west, most of the west coast men worked on the eastern boats - which fished in the waters of both coasts. The east coast fishing was superior in almost every aspect. Each man from the east coast caught twice the value of fish as each man in the west; the eastern fisheries employed twice the number of men and caught four times the value of fish; even the larger part of the west coast's most successful fishing, herring, was conducted by eastern boats.¹¹

West coast fishing, particularly that on the northern portion of the Minch and the area outside the Long Island, although capable of extensive development, was hampered by several factors - the financial inability of the crofter-fishermen to purchase the large boats and the specialised gear necessitated by the stormy character of the seas; the lack of suitable harbours and boatslips; the distance of the fishing grounds from the southern markets which prevented the development of the more profitable fresh fish trade; the low price of fish in (the then) recent years coupled with high carriage charges which made fishing less remunerative than formerly; the want of postal and telegraphic communications which made it difficult to obtain accurate and speedy intelligence on the state of the markets; and the reluctance of west coast men to be full

time fishermen - they devoted the major part of their time to the croft and resorted to the sea only as a means of supplementing their incomes and daily supply of food.

Only two of the factors were ^{deemed} crucial to the development of the western industry - the want of communication facilities and the reluctance of the men to fish full time.* But, of the two the latter was the most important. Rail, post, steamer and telegraphic communications could be provided but if the men failed to engage in fishing on a permanent basis the affects of the facilities would be minimal. Part-time fishing was uneconomical; large boats and expensive gear could not be remuneratively employed on any single fishing which lasted only a brief period; in other words, the combination of crofting with fishing was "inexpedient".

The government tried to develop full time fishing through the Fishery Board's schemes (1886) to loan fishermen money to purchase equipment, but the efforts were largely unsuccessful because of the poverty of the people. Few could raise the initial sum required, and of those who could, only a tiny minority repaid the loans completely. All efforts to recover the money and to lend money ended in 1908: attempts to establish cottar-fishermen settlements in Lewis also ended in failure.

*The grounds of the east coast were not less stormy, the low price of fish affected both coasts, and the natural facilities for harbour accommodation were inferior to the west.

Although the efforts to expand the western fisheries achieved only minimal success, the men who engaged in fishing earned more money through it than they could have earned on their small land holdings. In Eriskay, annual earnings varied from £40 to nil, according to season and luck, while yearly returns averaged around £8.¹² For those men who fished for subsistence purposes, even the landing of enough fish to fill one barrel was a significant contribution to the family's comfort - such fishing would continue as long as there was any chance of this small reward.¹³

Women also earned money in the fishing industry - through the gutting and packing of fish in England and Scotland. In the 1870's and 1880's over 4,000 women from local crofts were employed in the curing stations of the Long Island alone.¹⁴ By the 1880's £30 was a possible reward for six weeks work at an eastern port, although the remuneration might fall below £10 if the catch was small.*¹⁵

To what can we attribute the failure of ^{the} Highland economy to develop, modernise and expand? To begin with, all the failures cannot be blamed solely on the hesitancy of Gaels to adopt new methods and programmes. Some of the failure may be explained by the inapplicability of certain types of government aid to the special problems of the area - as demonstrated in the

*Women were paid a small sum upon engagement and a small sum for each barrel completed.

attempts to improve communications.¹⁶ Although well intentioned, too few allowances were made for the poverty of the people in the sparsely populated and isolated districts - the provision still existed that postal and telegraphic communication, piers and harbours were of local benefit and should therefore be locally supported. This requirement placed the remote communities with small populations and few financial resources at a considerable disadvantage. Government subsidies, when granted, were never large enough to compensate for the lack of money: almost invariably the community was required to pay a percentage of construction, installation or operating costs. Even when established the facilities were expected to show a profit or break even - such demands were unrealistic in many communities. The failure of the government to adapt its financial provisions to Highland conditions ensured that the maximum development of facilities would not occur. Although the government can be criticised for its stand, it is only fair to note that the institution of such financial schemes constituted a radical departure from past ways of operating - wherein no aid at all was offered. It was probably not until the passage of the Highlands and Islands (Medical Services) Bill, 1912, that the claim could be made that the government took into full consideration all the difficulties and peculiarities which existed in the region.

One further factor which complicated and often delayed

government assistance was the number of agencies involved in the process - the Crofters' Commission, the C.D.B., the Fishery Board, and later, the Department of Agriculture. Often their responsibilities overlapped with no clear distinction between each: co-operation among the agencies did not always exist and programmes delayed as a consequence.

The failure to revive the economy caused thousands of Gaels to continue to need to seek temporary or permanent employment in the south where a knowledge of English was at the very least desirable, if not essential. The transportation and communication facilities that had been established or extended by government funding facilitated the outward movement of population and by doing so assisted in the depopulation of Gaeldom and the anglicising of the Gaelic race. But the population movement was not a 'one way' occurrence. The expansion of communications brought an influx of English speakers into the Gaeltheachd - those supervising and constructing the network's facilities, and those who came north for sporting and other tourist pursuits. Thus, through its conveyance of English speakers into the Highlands the communication system directly expedited the importation of the English language into Gaelic-speaking communities. As a result of this influx Gaels who remained at home were now as exposed and susceptible to the language and to its benefits as those who travelled outwards in search of work.

In summary, it can be argued that both migration and immigration provided the Gael with the motivation to learn English and directly contributed to the decline in the use of Gaelic within Gaeldom.

Migration and the Gaelic Language

Migration and famine had existed in earlier periods of Highland history but both appear to have been particularly marked during the years 1846 - 1851. The extensive cultivation of and dependence upon the potato had permitted an acceleration in the growth rate of the population: its near total collapse in 1846 forced a massive population movement outward. The movement was encouraged and aided by financial assistance from the Highland Emigration Society, landlords and government - through the Emigration Act of 1851. At times force was used to remove the people.

Enforced movement was not a phenomenon new or peculiar to the period. T.C. Smout and I. Levitt state that "the landowners of Skye and the Outer Hebrides were trying by force or persuasion to get rid of a crofting tenantry for whom, since the collapse of the kelp industry, they could find no economic function".¹⁷ The onslaught of the famine in 1846 simply accelerated the use of coercion.

What were the consequences of this outward movement upon population growth? Until recently little work has been done upon this subject but in 1977 M. Flinn and his colleagues of the

Economic History Department at Edinburgh University produced an extensive study of Scottish population growth and movement. It is from this work - Scottish Population History, (Cambridge 1977), henceforth cited as Flinn - that most of the material contained in this section of the thesis is taken.¹⁸ Flinn makes it clear that before the 1840's growth, if slow, had persisted; but by 1841 the Highland counties had reached their maximum population - as demonstrated in the following table:

| Year | Population of Highland counties | % of total population of Scotlan |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1801 | 245,175 | 15.2 |
| 1811 | 260,727 | 14.4 |
| 1821 | 293,676 | 14.0 |
| 1831 | 310,259 | 13.1 |
| 1851 | 314,377 | 12.0 |
| 1851 | 310,906 | 10.8 |
| 1861 | 291,595 | 9.5 |
| 1871 | 285,459 | 8.5 |
| 1881 | 286,496 | 7.7 |
| 1891 | 282,430 | 7.0 |
| 1901 | 280,423 | 6.3 |
| 1911 | 272,903 | 5.8 |
| 1921 * | 281,648 | 5.8 |

The growth before 1841 was uneven. While the parish of Lochs (Lewis) doubled its population between 1801 and 1841 and Tongue and Eddrachillis (Sutherland) increased theirs by 51% and 57% respectively between 1801 and 1831, other parishes such as Farr (Sutherland) and Laggan (Inverness) had reached their maximum-ever populations in 1801. The decline in populations was greater than the increase - "out of 128 parishes in the Highland counties, the population of 53 had already begun to decline by 1831, even

*Because the table is a decennial one, the year 1918 - the time span of this thesis, has been exceeded.

though the population of the whole region continued to grow until 1841".

After 1841, in spite of some unevenness in local trends, decline was persistent. The western islands, the stronghold of the Gaelic language, were the hardest hit - 66% of their parishes experienced actual reductions. Between 1841 and 1851 the population of North Uist declined by 11.5%, South Uist by 15.8%, Benbecula by 18.9%, Barra by 20.7% and Coll by 23.1%; the island of Viua Mor (Lewis) was entirely evacuated.

Because these changes occurred in a period when, without emigration, the natural increase of the population might well have been around 10% it is probable that during the 1840's some of the western islands lost between one-quarter and one-third of their inhabitants. A significant exception to this trend was the island of Lewis whose population rose between 1841 and 1851 and continued to rise during the second half of the century (see page 119).

The passage of the Emigration Act of 1851 caused an explosion of emigration to occur, and (consequently) a further decline in the rate of population growth. In both islands and western mainland the rate of decline of population was faster between 1851 and 1861 than it had been between 1841 and 1851. Over the whole twenty year period (1841 - 1861) the total population of the Hebrides declined by 12.5% and that of the western mainland by 8.3%. Even these figures do not reveal the true extent

of depopulation. If the natural increase in population that would have occurred without emigration were taken into consideration, the total population outflow from the western Highlands and Islands since 1841 would be in the range of 30% or 60,000 people.

Within the affected regions distribution did not remain constant, and the maintenance of numbers, or even actual growth, in some parishes involved higher than average rates of decline than in others. Stornoway continued to take in population during the 1850's - as did other parishes in Lewis (see page 119). A few western mainland parishes such as Gairloch and Lochbroom in Ross, and Eddrachillis and Tongue in Sutherland, actually increased their population between 1851 and 1861. But many parishes of both western mainland and islands experienced their sharpest decline after 1851 - the population of the Small Isles fell by 38%, Colonsay 29%, Glenelg (Inverness) 25% and North Knapdale 20%.

What accounted for such variations? The answer does not lie in any one factor but rather in several. Population growth had been encouraged by the manufacture of kelp, a labour-intensive industry: landlords, to ensure the required labour force, countenanced early marriages and a high birth rate through permitting the sub-division of land. The potato and vaccination had ensured that the growth would be maintained. But with the collapse of kelping and no other labour-intensive industry

available whereby the population could be remuneratively employed, the population became redundant and expendable, especially when landlords decided to convert their properties into sheep farms and, later, deer forests. Further economic hardships were inflicted upon the Highlanders in and around the years 1836 - 1846 when the herring fishings were unproductive, the price of cattle was low, the grain and hay harvests were destroyed by poor weather and the potato crops had fallen victim to poor weather and disease. Although these events had occurred throughout the Highlands generally, and the Western Islands in particular, the pattern of their occurrence was uneven - hence the variations in population growth.

For instance kelping, although on the decline since the 1820's, continued to be carried on at various levels in different parishes - depending upon the willingness of the landlord to have it pursued as a by now minor industry. Thus, in Lochs, with a population of 3,067 in 1831, about 100 tons were manufactured annually in the early 1830's, while in Duirnish with a population of 4,765 in 1831 and bordering on 5,000 in 1841, about 80 tons were manufactured annually in the early 1840's.¹⁹ Kelping was only continued in Duirnish because one of the local proprietors accepted it as payment for rent.

The cessation of kelping depended upon the speed with which landlords introduced sheep farming and ended sub-division of land: this varied from landlord to landlord and parish to parish.

When evictions accompanied the introduction of sheep farming, populations were often transplanted to neighbouring parishes, thus causing a population growth in the adopted parish and a decline in the growth of the native parish. This happened in several parishes of Sutherland as a result of the Sutherland evictions. In Lewis small tenants were removed in the 1830's and 1850's to make way for sheep farming and afforestation respectively: dispossessed tenants either emigrated or moved to adjacent parishes, particularly Stornoway, the industrial hub of the Hebrides, in the hope of finding work.

Evictions and emigration rose as a result of famines and both contributed considerably to the variations which occurred in population growth. Emigration, particularly enforced emigration during famine years was, on occasion, just an excuse for landlords wishing to get rid of an unwanted peasantry; on other occasions it was the result of the heavy financial burden imposed upon the landlords by the provision of famine relief. Landlords such as Lord MacDonald, proprietor of North Uist and half of Skye, through financial incentives and coercion, ensured that 3,250 people emigrated from these two estates during the years 1839 - 1842. He used the same methods again during and after the famine years 1846 - 1851.

There was no particular pattern to the evictions or to the emigration. Smout and Levitt note that even in Skye and the Outer Hebrides where an estimated 7½% of the population emigrated

in the years 1839 - 1842, and where the biggest incentive to emigrate existed of anywhere in the country, the extent of movement varied enormously from parish to parish. Within the presbytery of Skye the 1843 returns refer to 500 emigrating from Portree, about 500 from Kilmuir in 1841 and a "considerable number" from Snizort, but from other parishes the numbers were much less - from Duirnish "a few, three years ago", from Sleat "four families", and from the Small Isles, one family.²⁰

The propensity to emigrate or migrate did not depend solely upon the actions of the landlords and the availability of financial assistance. Emigration was also determined by the ability of the people to attain subsistence through means other than kelp and the potato, such as through fishing and seasonal employment in the south. For instance, while the herring fishing had failed in Barvas, Lochs and Uig (Lewis) over a thirty year period, the communities were able to find some salvation in cod and ling fishing - whereas in other communities such as Portree in Skye, there was no recourse to any other fishing when the herring fishing failed.

The onslaught of the potato famine in 1846, which Flinn has described as constituting "the climacteric of the social history of the Hebrides and Western Highlands in modern times", unleashed further and more massive outward population movements³⁴. Because the evictions, emigration and migrations occurred without any specific pattern developing, all contributed to variations in

the growth rate of individual parishes. The famine years were followed by yet more years of economic depression and population decline - a decline attributed to a population exodus and a lowering of the birth rate (see page 125).

Now let us look at how these demographic changes affected several Gaelic-speaking parishes - North Uist, Kilmuir, the Small Isles and the presbytery of Lewis; and since this thesis is concerned with the interaction of the educational process and socio-economic conditions it is appropriate to examine the state of education in each parish during this period (roughly 1830 - 1870). Much of the information regarding these subjects is taken from the N.S.A. and the Argyll Commission.²¹

North Uist: The population of North Uist declined from 4,971 in 1821 to 3,959 in 1861. Part of this decline was due to an outward population movement occasioned by the near collapse of the kelp industry and unsuccessful fishings. What consequences did this uprooting of the people have upon the Gaelic language? In 1837 only five people in the parish were ignorant of Gaelic while only about 20% of the population understood and spoke English. Accepting Smout's estimate that the parish lost 950 people or 21% of its population in 1841 through emigration, and accepting the statement that the population was almost entirely Gaelic-speaking this would mean that the parish lost literally 21% of its Gaelic speakers in this one period of emigration alone.²²

What of education in the parish? There were, in 1837, eleven

schools, including five Gaelic society schools; an additional six schools were required; and the people were "anxious to confer the blessings of instruction on their children". By the time of the Argyll Commission the number of schools had increased to fifteen but the Gaelic schools had decreased to four. Although there were 1,042 children of school age in the parish there was accommodation for only 811 but then only 703 were on the school roll and 614 in actual attendance.* The buildings were in many cases bad - the parish school was in a "ruinous state"; and the teaching staff was, on the whole, inefficient; of the fifteen teachers, seven were trained at normal school but only one was certificated; none of the schools were under government inspection. 94 children or 13.1% of the school population took Gaelic as a subject (the highest percentage 83.8%, took Reading) but it is not specified whether Gaelic was taught in any of the schools besides the Gaelic schools.

Kilmuir: Outmigration, caused by the cessation of kelping and the irregular appearance of herring in small quantities, contributed to a decline in the population of the parish between 1837 and 1861 - from 4,011 to 2,872. Almost one half of the decline (500) was due to the 'assisted' emigration of 1840. Since only the young, particularly those who went south annually in search of work, had any understanding of English this depopulation meant a considerable numerical loss to the Gaelic

*These figures refer to the number on the roll and in actual attendance when the school was visited by Sheriff Nicolson or his deputy, of the Argyll Commission.

language in the parish.

In 1837 there were three schools in the parish - one parochial, one S.S.P.C.K., and one Gaelic society school. In the parochial school, "reading English and Gaelic, English in all departments, arithmetic, mathematics, geography, navigation, Latin and Greek" were taught while the S.S.P.C.K. school taught the "common branches of education" and the Gaelic school taught Gaelic only. Attendance in the parish school averaged 70 in summer and 130 in winter, but the children attended irregularly because of the inability of the parents to purchase clothes and books, and because of the requirement that the children work at home while their fathers and older brothers were away in the south.

The reporter to the N.S.A. acknowledged that the children were generally instructed in English before Gaelic for three reasons. Firstly, the imitative powers of the children, with respect to sounds and articulation, were more acute in early life; were the Gaelic taught first, it would be almost impossible to adapt the tone of voice afterwards to English pronunciation. Secondly, although the English language would take a longer period than Gaelic to acquire properly, when it was acquired the children could then master Gaelic without any difficulty.* Thirdly, those who could not master the English naturally were believed

*The reporter does not indicate whether he meant speaking or reading English.

to be more reluctant to leave the country in quest of employment: it was necessary for these "slower" learners to be exposed to English as soon as possible and for as long as possible.

By 1861 Kilmuir had five schools - one parochial, one parliamentary and three "others". Unfortunately, there is no information on the teaching of Gaelic in the schools.

One of the remotest Gaelic-speaking parishes, the Small Isles, lost two-thirds of its population during the years 1821 - 1861. Within this period the population dropped from 1,620 to 567, largely a consequence of emigration - in 1826 nearly the entire population of Rum emigrated to North America (about 400) and in 1828 a similar emigration occurred in Muck. Further emigration occurred in the 1840's. Agriculture, with the rearing of black cattle and sheep, were the prevailing occupations of the islanders: potatoes were the sole crop and upon them the people depended primarily for their subsistence.

In 1836 there were only two schools in the Isles - a Gaelic school in Muck and an ill-taught parochial school in Eigg. The parochial school master was not noted for "diligence in the discharge of his duties": he seldom had more than thirty pupils and often none attended as parents withheld them knowing that "they make no progress in their education under him". Nearly two-thirds of the population were unable to read or write.

By 1861 the only school in the Small Isles was the parochial

school, now efficiently taught. Of the 137 children of school age in the parish only 42 were on the roll. Illiteracy was still widespread - of the 213 people above the age of 16, 100 were unable to read and 143 unable to write. The school was inaccessible to the population of Muck, Rum (a sheep farmer, a few shepherds and their families) and the 127 people of Canna: a school was "absolutely wanted" in Canna.

The presbytery of Lewis, which incorporated the parishes of Lochs, Uig, Barvas and Stornoway, provides an interesting contrast to North Uist, Kilmuir and the Small Isles. While the population of these three parishes decreased over the years 1831 - 1861, the population of the presbytery of Lewis increased from 14,541 in 1841 to 21,056 in 1861, despite economic setbacks and emigration. In the 1830's the island suffered from the decline in the kelp industry, crop failures (including the diseased potato) and the failure of the herring fishings - during these years the herring was usually scarce but even when it was plentiful the people lacked the proper equipment to catch it. Subsistence was maintained by cod and ling fishing, small farming, and relief obtained from away. Small tenants were removed from some parts of the island to make way for sheep, and later, deer forests: the miseries of the people were increased when the potato famine of 1846 struck several areas of the island with severity.

Because of the poverty of surrounding townships, Stornoway's population increased* - many who could not afford to emigrate

*In 1831 the population of the parish was 5,491; in 1861 it was 8,668

to foreign lands simply moved there in the hope of finding work. Since Stornoway was the chief port of the Hebrides English was spoken there more frequently than in other parts of the region: Gaelic though, was still the language of the working classes, and most of the populace born in town spoke Gaelic. But the language was a "good deal corrupted" by the people introducing English words into Gaelic sentences. Provisions for both languages were made in the thirteen schools (including two Gaelic schools) of the town. The number who attended the schools is unknown but there were 586 children between the ages of six and fifteen who could not read and there were 1,265 persons above fifteen who could not read. In 1867 there were nineteen schools with 1,270 children on the roll but little else is known about the schooling.

Barvas in 1831 had a population of 3,011 - with Gaelic the only language since time immemorial; by 1861 the population had risen to 4,609. The reporter to the N.S.A. believed that the population growth had not declined because the people had no desire for emigration - and this he also believed was one of the reasons (the other being poverty) why the people did not support the schools in the parish - parents feared that once their children had been educated they would go abroad. The minister continued - "In a country almost devoid of the slightest prospect of advancement, it certainly is, and might naturally be expected to be, the tendency engendered in an educated and cultivated mind, to go abroad where some field might be found

for exertion".

In 1836 there were two Gaelic society schools and a parochial school in the parish: while Gaelic was the only subject taught in the Gaelic schools, Latin, Greek, arithmetic and English reading were taught in the parochial school. In 1861 there were eight schools in the parish - one parochial, one parliamentary and six others, with an enrollment of 386 but only 87 in attendance: once again there is no indication of the extent to which Gaelic was taught or used in the schools.

The population of Lochs had risen from 3,067 in 1831 to 3,568 in 1861 - despite a propensity to emigrate caused by a drop in cattle prices, the failure of the herring fishings, and encouragement from friends in N.S. With, in 1833, not one road in the entire parish, it was impossible for all the children to attend the parish school - which because of unsuitable accommodation had been vacant until that year. Four Gaelic schools supplemented the work of the parish school. Only twelve people in the parish could write (in which language it is not stipulated) but half the people between the ages of twelve and twenty-four (the number between these ages is unknown) could read Gaelic - the language generally spoken in the parish: a few males could speak broken English. There is no reference to the number who could read English. By 1861 the number of schools had increased to 10 with an enrollment of 601 and an average attendance of 352.

The minister of Uig reported in 1833 that the population of the

parish continued to rise because of early marriages and an unwillingness to migrate. Although the parish had for thirty years suffered from the failure of the herring fishing many could still rely on cod and ling fishing, while kelping provided a meagre wage. Little is known about the educational system in the parish except that there was one parochial school and four Gaelic schools. Two more "English schools" were soon to be opened. The "ordinary branches" of education were taught in the "English schools". Gaelic was the universal language of the populace and was spoken as purely as it had been forty years ago. In 1861 Uig had six schools with an enrollment of 276 and an average attendance of 201.

In total, in the 1830's, there were 26 schools (11 of which were Gaelic society schools) serving a population of over 14,000 in the presbytery of Lewis. In the 1860's there were 47 schools (42 non-parochial: the number of Gaelic schools is unknown) serving a population of around 21,000. Of the 2,697 on the school roll at the time of the Argyll Commission, 1,270 were enrolled in the 19 schools of Stornoway and the remaining 1,427 were enrolled in the 28 schools of Lochs, Uig, Barvas and Carloway. (Carloway was not included in the presbytery reports of the 1830's and the 1840's). Of the 2,697 on the school roll of all 47 schools, only 1,606 were in actual attendance.

The majority of teachers within the 47 schools were uncertificated; indeed, only five were certificated and three of these taught in

Stornoway. The curriculum contained a variety of subjects - reading, writing, English grammar, English history, geography, Euclid, drawing, Gaelic, modern languages, etc. While 84.5% or 2,281 of the pupils were taught reading, 78.6% or 2,121 were taught religious instruction, 38.8% or 1,047 were taught writing and 18.5% or 499 were taught English grammar; Gaelic was taught to 22.9% or 619 of the pupils.

Four conclusions can be drawn from this brief examination of the seven parishes. Firstly, the parishes all suffered terrible economic depressions and the population, as a result, was forced either to live at the subsistence level or to depart. Secondly, since those that did leave were Gaelic speakers (perhaps bilingual) there was a direct statistical and proportional decrease in the number of Gaelic speakers in each parish although not necessarily a decline in the population growth of the parish. Thirdly, although an educational system 'of sorts' existed there can be but little doubt that large sections of the population went without receiving any education whatsoever. Fourthly, and finally, it is almost impossible to establish any direct correlation between the incidence of schools, either Gaelic or English, and the incidence of population decline and/or emigration in each parish. But, from the preponderance of English teaching within the curriculum it can be assumed, fairly safely, that any who did emigrate after having attended school did have some understanding of the English language. And we have seen how several ministers related directly the predilection to emigrate with education.

The following pages of this chapter concentrate on the contribution which emigration made to declining population levels in the Highlands during the second half of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries (once again Flinn is the source from which most of the information is taken). The relationship between population decline and the decline in the number of Gaelic speakers during these years is also examined.

The easing of pressure through emigration reduced the severe dependence on the potato which had built up as a result of the pressure during the first half-century before the famine. Throughout the remaining fifty years the Highlands continued to experience the most acute social and economic problems which caused Highlanders to continue to migrate and caused the population intermittently, yet further, to decline.

The net out-migration from the Highland counties is revealed in the table below.²³

Net out-migration (including emigration), 1861-1920*

| <u>Period</u> | <u>Total of outmigrants</u> | <u>% of population</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1861-1870 | -31,272 | -10.7 |
| 1871-1880 | -21,728 | - 7.6 |
| 1881-1890 | -27,430 | - 9.6 |
| 1891-1900 | -18,982 | - 6.7 |
| 1901-1910 | -18,875 | - 6.7 |
| 1911-1920 | - 4,550 | - 1.7 |

* Because Flinn's table does not state specific figures for 1918 (the time span of this thesis ends in 1918) the years closest to this date, 1911-1920, have been included.

Though much of the explanation for the stagnation or actual decline of the population of the peripheral regions after the middle of the nineteenth century obviously lies in the social and economic developments leading to out-migration, the natural increase rates also contributed to the situation. All regions in Scotland experienced declining rates of natural increase after 1871, but in most of them the decline was slight before 1911. In the Highland counties, however, the decline was marked from 1861 onwards. On page 354 in the appendix there is a table from Flinn which compares the rates of natural and actual increase of the Highland counties with Scotland (1861 - 1921). The rate of natural increase was affected negatively by out-migration and the poverty of the region. Out-migration led to a lower percentage of marriageable males in the region and the socio-economic conditions caused those who remained at home to marry later in life. Later marriage delayed birth and contributed to a smaller number of births. For tables comparing the male and female age marriage rates, later marriage rates, and birth rates of the Highland counties with Scotland, see page 355 in the appendix.

Migration was such a common occurrence throughout Gaelic Scotland that it was almost considered a fact of life to be taken for granted. The Commission on the Uists mentioned how the old men in Gaelic-speaking communities spoke of Oban as the Charing Cross of the west and referred to Glasgow as if it were only a suburb of the popular summer resort. According to the Commission almost every able bodied person who could be spared from home went to

the mainland to obtain better remuneration from his or her labour. In many districts, it often happened that the thrifty, industrious man who obtained suitable employment in the south was more prosperous than the man who depended upon the cultivation of his poor croft at home.

While away from home the men worked on the railway as navvies, surfacemen, porters, etc; others worked as day labourers wherever work could be found - some engaged as lumpers or wharf labourers at ports. A man who worked steadily in such regular employment during summer and autumn could save an average of 10s a week. There were also countless numbers of men who went south during harvest time - especially and usually the cottars and squatters who had little to do at home because they had no land of their own: local harvest work had also declined as farming became mostly non-cereal.

In the winter men who did not fish, usually left for the Clyde where they were employed in the shipyards or the gasworks - a favourite occupation because, unlike ordinary outdoor work, there was no broken time.

Service in the armed forces was a traditional occupation of Gaels and part-time service was a useful source of money. In Lewis and the Uists where the Militia was the most popular branch of the service, annual earnings in 1903/04 ranged from £3 10s to £7, depending upon rank and length of service.²⁴

Women also contributed to the Highland economy through work at

and away from home. Although thousands continued to work as gutters, packers, and farm servants, in communities such as the Uists, the numbers engaged in these occupations dropped because of the church's disapproval; such employment, the church believed, "affected the chastity of many".²⁵ Some girls went into domestic service. Although service had its disadvantages, the work was much easier than gutting and packing and there were no seasonal fluctuations in the supply and demand for their service in the south. If women wished to stay at home or close to home there were opportunities to work as servants in the Highlands - opportunities which increased with the growth of sporting estates, the expansion of the tourist trade and the greater number of incomers who made their home in the region. These conditions, along with food, clothing and lodging made up for the lower wage received in comparison with the fishing trade. It is also probable that a number of women chose not to enter into that industry because of the fluctuations in the wage; at least with a servant's wage one could be sure of a set sum, plus the 'perks' mentioned.

Women also engaged in the home industries, particularly the weaving of tweed which grew to moderate proportions as a luxury trade in Harris and Lewis in the later years of the nineteenth century. In Harris the weaving was done almost entirely by women while in Lewis it was done mostly by men. In 1912/13 the C.D.B., which assisted the industry since 1897, cautiously estimated that tweed brought into Lewis and Harris about £30,000 and £20,000 a year respectively - these earnings "usefully" supplemented and

supported the system of small-holding cultivation.²⁶

Apart from their ability to knit, sew, spin and weave, their ability to make cheese, butter and other foods, women contributed in other ways to the economic functioning of the croft - particularly in the areas of Norse settlement where the men preferred to 'work the sea' rather than the land; accordingly, much of the agricultural work in connection with the croft devolved upon the women. Celts, on the other hand, preferred the land to the sea and relieved the women "from the rougher kinds of land work".²⁷

In Lewis a crofter woman carried the seaware or other materials for manure in a creel on her back and, at times, tilled the land. In the summer women went with the children and the cattle to the sheilings and tended to the needs of all. In autumn she weeded, reaped and carried the corn and hay to the barn: the end of autumn and the beginning of winter was an especially busy time for her because, along with the regular household chores of cooking, baking, etc., she carded and spun the annual web of cloth for the seasonal blankets and plaidings.

With such a lifestyle awaiting them, fewer women, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, chose to remain on the croft and preferred instead to try their hands at occupations away from the croft and the Highlands - into situations and communities where English was the language used as the medium of communication and advancement. Whereas in previous decades it

was the men alone who were exposed to the needs and advantages of English, now, both sexes were cognizant of what they and their children could achieve through a knowledge of English - a higher standard of living and an easier mode of existence.

The motives for migration were not always economic. Many men and women left out of a sense of adventure, inspired by stories of returning sailors and soldiers who had served around the world; others received encouragement from relatives living abroad who wrote home telling of opportunities and land available; still others found the religious atmosphere too confining and oppressive - a result of the narrower, stricter, and more rigid presbyterianism that had been implanted in many communities by the religious revivals of earlier decades.

Because seasonal migrants brought some of their earnings back with them and permanent migrants sent remittances home, the purchasing capacity of the home-bound population was increased and their standards of living improved, particularly their eating habits and housing conditions. The Crofters' Commission of 1912 stated that migrants "are the source from which the money now invested in stone and lime comes".²⁸

But the improvements were neither universal nor as extensive as desired and there remained communities where "no meal is found, the surplus sheep and cattle are sold for urgent cash, every egg is bartered for shop commodities and the fuel supply is insufficient, especially in winter".²⁹ Such conditions served only to

drive more Gaels out of the Highlands and into the cities and countryside of the south and the world.

Temporary or seasonal migration, more than any other factor, contributed to the decline in the use of Gaelic within the Gaeltheachd. Migrant Gaels needed English, not Gaelic. With little or no English, migrant Gaels were unable to communicate with their fellow workers, their managers, shopkeepers, etc., or at best, they communicated with difficulty - at times they were forced to rely upon a bilingual Gael to translate; one Gael said of this need - "it is a hardship to have your tongue in another man's cheek".³⁰ Equally important was the difficulty experienced in securing promotions at work. Although seasonal work almost ruled out promotions, there were many opportunities for advancement in the fishing fleet, the steamships, the merchant navy and the armed forces, if fluent and literate in English. Stories abound in Gaeldom of men unable to secure promotion in the forces because of their lack of facility in English. F.G. Rae, teacher and author of A Schoolteacher in South Uist, (1964), told of how essential it was for sailors to be proficient in English in order that they might pass their navigation examination; if they did not pass it they remained unpromoted even though their seamanship might have been and usually was of the highest calibre.

People in domestic service faced similar problems. Domestic servants found their jobs much easier when they were able to

communicate directly with their immediate superior or the head of the household. Facility in English gave the Gaelic servant a better chance of a higher position in a household or an establishment - especially when young children were under their care. English was needed to wait on customers in a hotel. English was necessary for entry to the ministry because the university training was conducted in English and the universities were all situated in English-speaking areas.

The value of English was further impressed upon Gaels by the government's efforts to revive the economy. In those areas of Gaeldom where communication facilities had been extended, Gaels were exposed to a whole new set of vocations (electrical, mechanical, engineering, banking, etc.) to which they could aspire - if they had English. The facilities also created local jobs which required English - telephone and telegraph operators need English to transmit messages to and from the south; the same requirement was necessary for anyone who had financial or commercial dealings with the south - merchants, shopkeepers, postal officers, etc.

Census returns indicate the progress which English made, particularly in the decrease of those people who spoke Gaelic only and the consequent increase of those who spoke Gaelic and English. As noted in chapter I, the first census which enumerated the Gaelic-speaking people was that of 1881, but no distinction was made between those who spoke Gaelic only and those who spoke

Gaelic and English. The column in the census returns was headed "persons speaking Gaelic" and the figures were understood to have included all persons who habitually spoke Gaelic as their colloquial language. In 1891 a distinction was drawn between those who spoke Gaelic only and those who spoke Gaelic and English. The census of 1901 introduced the question of age - particulars were to be given of persons "being three years of age or upwards". Previously infant children of Gaelic-speaking parents were entered in the returns as if they spoke Gaelic: the result of the new age clause was that children who were below three were not entered as speaking Gaelic. Before looking at the statistics for the whole of Scotland, the figures for North and South Uist and Lewis are presented to give an indication of the effect which the phrasing of the questions had on individual community returns.³¹

Census figures applicable to North and South Uist and Lewis

| | <u>South Uist</u> | <u>North Uist</u> | <u>The Uists</u> | <u>Lewis</u> |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Year - 1881</u> | | | | |
| Total population | 6,078 | 4,264 | 10,342 | 25,587 |
| Persons speaking Gaelic | 5,842 | 4,134 | 9,976 | 23,747 |
| Persons who did not habitually speak Gaelic | 236 | 130 | 366 | 1,840 |
| <u>Year - 1891</u> | | | | |
| Total population | 5,821 | 4,187 | 10,008 | 27,590 |
| Persons speaking Gaelic only | 3,430 | 2,348 | 5,778 | 14,015 |
| Persons speaking Gaelic and English | 2,102 | 1,579 | 3,681 | 11,254 |
| Persons presumably unacquainted with Gaelic | 289 | 260 | 549 | 2,321 |
| <u>Year - 1901</u> | | | | |
| Total population | 5,516 | 3,891 | 9,407 | 28,949 |
| Persons speaking Gaelic only | 2,500 | 1,619 | 4,119 | 9,929 |
| Persons speaking Gaelic and English | 2,573 | 1,975 | 4,548 | 15,989 |
| Persons presumably unacquainted with Gaelic | 443 | 297 | 740 | 3,031 |

Both the Commission on the Uists and the Commission on Lewis maintained that the number of persons unacquainted with Gaelic was misleading. Of the 1901 figures for the Uists, the Uist Commission noted that there were 566 children under three years of age and that practically all of them, whenever the age of three was reached, could be taken as swelling the list of those who were bilingual; on this basis, the following result could be calculated -

| | |
|--|-------|
| Total population in 1901 | 9,407 |
| Persons speaking only, per census | 4,119 |
| Persons speaking Gaelic and English, per census | 4,548 |
| Children under three years of age, per census | 566 |
| Persons, including children under three, speaking Gaelic and English | 5,114 |
| Total of population acquainted with Gaelic (4,119 + 5,114) | 9,233 |
| Number unacquainted with Gaelic | 174 |

This number of 174 the Commission believed to be far more realistic than the number which the census gave - 740

In regard to the Lewis figures of 3,031 people presumably unacquainted with Gaelic in 1901, the Commission on Lewis wrote that since approximately $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the population (i.e., 2,171 people) was under three years of age, this percentage was not included as speaking Gaelic. 860 (rather than 3,031) should have been classed as non-Gaelic speakers.

Excluding the Burgh of Stornoway, where much of the population was unacquainted with Gaelic, there were 23,069 people in the country districts who spoke Gaelic only, or Gaelic and English. On the basis of 7½% there were 1,730 persons under three years of age, classed as English, but nearly all of whom would be bilingual; this number left only 333 persons in all the country districts unacquainted with Gaelic.

What do the official census returns for the whole of Scotland indicate? Quite simply, they reveal a steady decline in the number of Gaelic speakers in the nation throughout the period 1891 - 1921 (since the census is a decennial one, the year 1921 has been included to cover the population changes that occurred from 1911 to 1918 - 1918 being the final year of the time span of this thesis; the 1881 census figures are not included because of the difference in terminology of questions that occurred from 1891 onwards). In 1891, 210,677 out of 4,025,647 Scots spoke Gaelic - or 5.2% of the population of the nation; in 1921, 148,950 or 3.1% of the total population spoke Gaelic. Tables A, B, and C indicate the decline in numbers of Gaelic speakers from 1891 - 1921; Table A presents the population of Scotland, Table B presents the number of Gaelic and English speakers and Table C presents the percentage of the total population which the Gaelic speakers composed. The tables are taken from the Census 1971 (Scotland) Gaelic Report, 1975; for the sake of historical continuity the table includes those persons aged 0 - 2.

Table A - Population of Scotland 1891 - 1921

| <u>County</u> | <u>1891</u> | <u>1901</u> | <u>1911</u> | <u>1921</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ross/Crom | 77,810 | 76,450 | 77,364 | 70,818 |
| Inverness | 89,317 | 90,104 | 87,272 | 82,455 |
| Sutherland | 21,896 | 21,440 | 20,179 | 17,802 |
| Argyll | 75,003 | 73,642 | 70,902 | 76,862 |
| Nairn | 10,019 | 9,291 | 9,319 | 8,790 |
| Bute | 18,404 | 18,787 | 18,186 | 33,711 |
| Perth | 126,184 | 123,283 | 124,342 | 125,503 |
| Glasgow city | - | - | - | - |
| Rest of Scotland | 3,607,014 | 4,059,106 | 4,353,340 | 4,466,556 |
| Total | 4,025,647 | 4,472,103 | 4,760,904 | 4,882,497 |

Table B - Number of Gaelic and English speakers throughout Scotland

| <u>County</u> | <u>1891</u> | <u>1901</u> | <u>1911</u> | <u>1921</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ross/Crom | 37,437 | 39,292 | 37,816 | 35,621 |
| Inverness | 44,084 | 43,281 | 41,110 | 35,449 |
| Sutherland | 14,786 | 14,083 | 11,651 | 8,789 |
| Argyll | 36,720 | 34,428 | 30,340 | 24,624 |
| Nairn | 2,487 | 1,325 | 929 | 537 |
| Bute | 3,482 | 2,764 | 2,079 | 1,453 |
| Perth | 13,846 | 11,446 | 8,997 | 6,255 |
| Glasgow city | - | - | - | - |
| Rest of Scotland | 57,835 | 56,081 | 51,076 | 36,213 |
| Total | 210,677 | 202,700 | 183,998 | 148,950 |

Table C - Percentage of the population speaking Gaelic and English

| <u>County</u> | <u>1891</u> | <u>1901</u> | <u>1911</u> | <u>1921</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ross/Crom | 48.1 | 51.4 | 48.9 | 50.3 |
| Inverness | 49.4 | 48.0 | 47.1 | 43.0 |
| Sutherland | 67.5 | 65.7 | 57.7 | 49.4 |
| Argyll | 49.0 | 46.8 | 42.8 | 32.0 |
| Nairn | 24.8 | 14.3 | 10.0 | 6.1 |
| Bute | 18.9 | 14.7 | 11.4 | 4.3 |
| Perth | 11.0 | 9.3 | 7.2 | 5.0 |
| Glasgow city | - | - | - | - |
| Rest of Scotland | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 0.8 |
| Total | 5.2 | 4.5 | 3.9 | 3.1 |

What conclusion or conclusions can be drawn from this chapter? Basically there is only one, but it is of major importance. The later years of the nineteenth century witnessed the steady advancement of the English language into Gaeldom because of extensive population movements made necessary by the depressed socio-economic condition of the region. English and the southern values associated with it challenged the vitality of the Gaelic language and the Gaelic culture.

Yet further pressures were exerted upon Gaelic by the scheme of education established in 1872. The system was primarily concerned with the teaching of English: no provisions were included for the teaching of Gaelic or the various Scottish dialects. This omission did not go unchallenged. Individuals concerned with the declining state of Gaelic and its culture

engaged in a campaign to secure concessions for the language: the campaign commenced in 1873 and did not end until 1918. The following chapters of this thesis trace the stages and the progress of the advocacy.

The failure to include measures for the Scottish tongue aroused occasional demands for the use of it within the schools. At times the advocacy for the Scottish dialects and the Gaelic language coincided and forces were joined; such occasions are noted in the thesis.

Chapter IV: The Language Issue: Questions and Divisions

The Gaelic revival and its involvement with
Scottish and Irish nationalism

The debate surrounding the relevance and the
use of Gaelic in the schools

The attitude of the Presbyterian churches

The Gaelic revival and its involvement with Irish and Scottish nationalism

The reorientation which occurred within Highland society as a result of the economic upheavals of the second half of the nineteenth century challenged the vitality of the Gaelic language and its culture. This challenge caused individuals, in the last thirty years of the century, to form associations and to institute publications with the express purpose of preserving and developing both the language and its culture. Henceforth this advocacy will be referred to as either the Gaelic language movement or the Gaelic/Celtic revival - in Highland writings the two terms are synonymous and interchangeable.

The revival was extended to include a concern over the fate of all things Celtic and Highland - Celtic architecture, placenames and clan genealogies, the continued use of traditional tartans in Highland regiments, the disappearance of the traditional Highland shoe, the proper wearing of the kilt, etc.

The Gaelic revival did not exist in isolation of other contemporary events. Some Gaelic revivalists were involved with the Highland land agitation of the 1880's and with the Scottish Home Rule movement of the same period. Before discussing these involvements it is necessary first to look briefly at events in Ireland during the closing years of the nineteenth century - for the Gaelic revival, Highland land agitation and Scottish nationalism were each influenced by similar developments in Ireland.

Land agitation was rife in Ireland in the 1870's - a reaction to the economic injustices which were inflicted upon the Irish peasantry by a system of alien and absentee landlordism. At the same time Celtic organisations developed which stressed the racial and cultural differences between Ireland and England - inherent in this development was a revival of the Irish language and culture.

In the early years of the century the Celtic organisations were essentially learned and cultured, appealing to intellectuals and scholars and not to the masses as future societies would do. The members of these early societies shrank from political expression but found an outlet for their patriotism through literary works. The Gaelic Society of 1806, the Ibero-Celtic Society of 1821, the Celtic Society, the Irish Archeological Society, the Ossianic Society - studied the language, produced texts, prose, poetry, edited and translated. Although little was done to see that Gaelic survived as a spoken language, its survival in the printed form was ensured.

In the last thirty years of the century other Gaelic associations emerged which were more intent upon appealing to the masses and more determined in their efforts to preserve the language as a spoken form. In 1876 the Society for the Preservation of the Irish language was founded to publish books and lessons in Irish and Irish texts: it also published the bilingual weekly journal, the Gaelic Journal. The foundation of the Gaelic Athletic

Association in 1882 and the Gaelic League in 1893 increased immensely the popularity of the language and culture among Irishmen. The Gaelic Athletic Association was dedicated to the revival of Celtic sports and to the erection of clubs which encouraged the playing of such sports. By the turn of the decade hundreds of clubs and associations with thousands of members were actively engaged in promoting distinctive Celtic pastimes and activities.

The foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893 really brought the language into the political arena and into the forefront of nationalist politics. One of the founders, Douglas Hyde, argued that Ireland was losing the essentials of nationhood even while she was gaining more political freedoms. The only way to regain her nationhood was through a revival of the Celtic culture, particularly the language.¹

The League's membership was drawn from all walks of life and political persuasion. In ten years it had 500 branches, had published Irish primers and grammars, folklore and texts, original Irish poetry and a weekly Irish newspaper. The language led inevitably to other things - to a revival in Irish dancing, music, customs, traditions, placenames, territorial divisions and history. The League and its endeavours emphasised the separateness of Ireland from England: it aroused national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory.

Other Celtic and nationalist associations followed in the footsteps

of the Gaelic League but none were so influential as A. Griffith's Cumann Na N Gaedheal (1900) which was dedicated to the study and teaching of Irish history, literature, music and art. Neither the Celtic societies nor their leaders neglected the use of Irish within the educational system: they worked diligently to ensure that provisions for its use were included within the curricula of schools and universities.²

While the above societies were doing their utmost to preserve the Irish language and culture and to instil in the populace strong nationalist feelings, overt political organisations were forming with the intention of securing a change in Ireland's political status. The denial to the people of many basic human rights and the perception that Union had been imposed and maintained through bribery and jobbery heightened the demands for reform. Movements such as the Young Irelanders and the Fenians demanded Repeal and changes in land tenure. The failure of the government to respond positively caused a deepening of the discontent. In the 1870's the Home Rule League became a force to be reckoned with politically. The League did not ask for a complete break with England, nor did it seek to sever all relations with the crown; but, it did wish that Ireland be granted the right to govern her own internal affairs. The League strove to gain its goals by parliamentary means and supported candidates for the Commons who adhered to its principles.

Individuals and associations with vested interests in the status

quo (particularly the established church and the landed aristocracy) considered the League's proposals a threat to their own position and the position of England in the world. Gladstone's attempts to solve the Irish problems in detail failed: disestablishment and a degree of land reform were insufficient and too late to quell the voices of discontent. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule had given some hope that the situation might have been resolved but his inability to procure it ensured the emergence of more militant and nationalist organisations. The formation of Sinn Fein in 1908 marked the ending of Home Rule as an acceptable political concept in Ireland.

The improvement in communications and the increase in press publications ensured that developments in Ireland would not go unnoticed in Scotland. Scottish nationalism, dormant throughout much of the century, awoke to demand that if Home Rule was deemed to be appropriate for Ireland then Scotland was no less worthy of a similar measure. When Gladstone acknowledged the right of Scotland to a degree of Home Rule, membership in the Home Rule Association grew and the Scottish Liberal Association embraced the cause - although the official hierarchy of the party had little enthusiasm for it. Why, at this particular moment in time, did the Irish example and Home Rule catch on within certain sections of society?

Much of the answer lay in the "bonding together" of England and Scotland which had occurred as a consequence of the need to

introduce common regulations and legislation pertaining to those aspects of life affected by the "modern economy" which had emerged in post-industrialised Britain.³ From the 1830's onwards technological, industrial and commercial developments necessitated a steady imposition of regulations concerning almost every aspect of society - regulations governing factories, the employment of children, travel, crime, health, education, etc. In most cases a common parliament in Westminster devised identical or similar measures of control applicable to both Scotland and England. The effect of these measures was to ensure that the great bulk of Scottish institutions became "partly or wholly, assimilated to a common post-industrialised type with the English...."⁴

Protests arose over this assimilation and over the other aspects of Scottish society (such as the manner of dress and eating habits) which were becoming less Scottish and more British. It was also alleged that the British laws and British ways were not only eroding the identity of Scotland but were leading to a decrease in the degree of control that Scots had felt they possessed (until this period) over their own affairs. It was further alleged that a parliament meeting in London and dominated by Englishmen could not legislate efficiently for a country they were ignorant of and removed from. It was in reaction to these developments that the Home Rule movement took root.

In order to reassert the national identity and to prove to all (Scotsmen and Englishmen) that Scotland was capable of governing

herself, Home Rulers pointed out that the country had a history, a culture, and a political tradition different from that of England; that she had a system of laws, her own Church (the Presbyterian), her own system of local government and a distinctive educational system. Some Home Rulers, looking for more emotive and more personal differences between the two nations, concentrated on the non-institutional features of Scottish society, particularly those pertaining to language and race. The Broad Scotch dialect (both spoken and written), traditional Lowland verse, music, etc., were held up as valuable symbols of the Scottish identity which needed preserving. But an even more dramatic symbol of the differences between England and Scotland was found to be contained within the Celtic elements of Scottish society: for some nationalists the existence of the Celtic race, language, traditions and customs epitomised more clearly than any other feature of Scottish society the difference between the two countries. Yet, the Celtic aspect of the nationalism of this period was not a new phenomenon. The writings of Sir Walter Scott and the appearance of the Royal Court in Highland dress had helped to create in the public mind a concept of Scotland that was Highland. The symbols of the Highlands - the kilt, bagpipe, whisky, the concept of the clan - became the symbols of Scotland. What was new in the Celtic element of nationalism in the 1880's was the vigorous espousal of its existence as distinctive features of the Scottish nationality. The following pages concentrate on the revival of "all things Celtic" and their relationship with the nationalism of the period.

If one event can be selected to signify the beginning of the Gaelic revival in Scotland it is the founding of the Gaelic Society of Inverness (1871), "the most important institutional manifestation of the Gaelic revival".⁵ The society had as its motivation "a burning love for the Highland way of life, its language, music and traditions"⁶ The society supported Gaelic literary publications, established a Gaelic library and hoped to encourage the use of Gaelic in schools. From the society's inaugural meeting in 1871, when 35 persons attended, its membership (drawn mostly from the middle class) increased to 390 in 1876 and continued thereafter to grow.

In 1891 a group of Gaels from Oban founded another Celtic organisation which was of major importance to the Gaelic revival, An Comunn Gaidhealach. An Comunn had four objectives - to promote the cultivation of the Gaelic language, literature, music, art and industries; to encourage the teaching of Gaelic; to propagate a knowledge of Gaelic history and culture, especially in school; to hold an annual gathering at which competitions would take place and prizes be awarded.⁷

An Comunn contained many members of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. Both societies encouraged Gaels to participate in the effort to secure measures for Gaelic in the educational system by voting in school board and parliamentary elections for candidates who supported Gaelic concessions, by the circulation and signing of petitions and by holding protest meetings in Gaeldom. Of the

two bodies, An Comunn was the more aggressive in its demands and more directly involved with the people because it sent representatives about the country to stir Gaels into an awareness of the declining position of Gaelic and of what steps they could take to stem the tide. The Inverness society developed along different lines - it became a forum for venting ideas, inviting men of all shades of opinion to address it. In this way it hoped to influence those in positions of authority to change their attitude towards Gaelic.

During the 1860's and 1870's there was a tremendous upsurge of Gaelic sentiment among emigre Gaels in the cities of the south. The decades saw the formation of numerous Highland-Celtic associations designed specifically to create a communal feeling and spirit among the emigrés. Some societies were open to any Gael regardless of the district from which he came in Gaeldom; others were organised to enable the emigrés of a particular Highland district to meet socially but also with the object of dispensing charity to impoverished fellow countrymen. The success of the Inverness Gaelic society encouraged Gaels in other towns such as Glasgow and Dundee to follow its example; and in the 1890's branches of An Comunn appeared throughout Scotland. The majority of these societies promoted the use of Gaelic in the school, urged the establishment of a Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh University, supported the crofters in their agitation for land, and in their elaborate system of ceillidhs and concerts, presented a forum to the emigre

Gaelic poets of the period. In the ceillidh circle of the Lowland cities, poets as diverse as John MacFadyen, Mary MacPherson and Neill MacLeod, were assured that their works would be received by a ready made and appreciative audience.

Highlanders were not the only ones who argued that the language and Highland-Celtic culture needed to be studied, preserved and developed: Lowlanders also made significant contributions to the cause. One such man was W.F. Skene (lawyer, Historiographer Royal for Scotland, LL.D. - Edinburgh, D.D.L. - Oxford). His numerous articles and volumes of history constituted the first serious scholarly approach to the study of Celtic history and society in Scotland - in effect, he made Highland history and its study respectable. Skene did this by demonstrating to the world, particularly to monoglot English speakers, that Celtic society had a history which was composed of more things and events than clan warfares and rebellions against constituted, centralised authorities. He showed that the Celtic people had a language rich in both written (albeit ancient) literature and oral tradition - and that it was a language much older than English. He revealed that Gaeldom had a church, a system of laws, land tenure and a social hierarchy distinct from that of the Lowlands and England. He also traced the change and decay inflicted upon each of these institutions by southern influences. Skene's writings demonstrated that the Celtic people had a history at least as rich as the non-Celtic peoples of Scotland; that no serious study of Scottish history could occur without an appreciation and understanding of

Highland history; that Highland-Celtic culture was an integral part of the Scottish identity.

John Blackie, professor of Greek at Edinburgh University was another Lowlander who did much to popularise Highland-Celtic culture. Blackie, together with Sheriff Nicolson of the Argyll Commission, succeeded in raising all the funds necessary to establish a Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh University. He urged the S.E.D. to include provisions for Gaelic within the elementary educational system. He advocated the preservation of "all things Celtic" - the works of Celtic bards, Celtic dancing, and the wearing of the kilt. He wished books to be written on every aspect of Highland life - traditions, superstitions, history, geology, etc. He, himself, wrote two books - The Language and Literature of the Scottish Highlands and The Scottish Highlands and the Land Laws.

Blackie was not concerned solely with Highland-Celtic culture and the preservation of the Gaelic language.⁸ He was just as eager to see the culture and the dialect of the Lowlands preserved. His enthusiasm for both cultures was inextricably bound up with his belief in a Scottish nationality and the necessity of a Home Rule measure for Scotland.* Blackie believed that the Scottish nationality was being crushed by the centralising machinery of London and by the infiltration of English ways into Scottish society. Those Celts and Lowlanders who wished to assimilate

*Blackie was the first chairman of the Scottish Home Rule Association.

themselves into the ways of the English sought desperately to extinguish from their manners any traditions, recollections, aspirations and associations which might identify them as Scots. If, declared Blackie, the trend was not reversed, if Lowlander and Celt did not reassert themselves through a revival of their own cultures and heritages, then Scotland would become only an extension of England.

All those elements in Scottish society - the Celtic tongue, the various dialects, traditions, music, poetry, etc. - that distinguished it from England's society needed preservation. Language, the chief characteristic of nationality, was the most important element to be cherished and developed yet Lowlander and Gael were equally guilty of neglecting their native tongues. Lowland Scots who wanted to forget that they were Scots made efforts to "extinguish broad scotch so that they may lisp ha, ha, English". Celt and Lowlander further eroded their Scottish nationality by neglecting their traditional songs and running after German and Italian novelties, which, whatever their excellencies might have been, were not the "natural element which a Scottish soul should love". Because songs were a glorious impulse to national feeling Blackie urged that their teaching, after the teaching of the Bible, should be the most important function of the school.

At this point a slight digression is necessary to note that Blackie's views did not go unchallenged. In the mid 1880's the

Educational News published a series of editorials attacking nationalism and Blackie's philosophy.⁹ The News argued that although an inward satisfaction could be gained from the study of Burns, no practical benefits could be derived from it. Education was, and needed to be, geared to practical advancement. The education of the future would be "the very antipodes of 'auld lang syne' and the songs our mithers sang". Nationality was no longer what it was, the world was becoming cosmopolitan; the distinctions of the past were melting away like the morning mist before the steamship and the railway train; to be reckoned a citizen of the world was the highest ambition of almost every cultured youth - would Blackie regard it as a compliment to be considered "a Scotchman and nothing more"?

R. Erskine (the Hon. Stuart Erskine, the self-styled Ruraidh Erskine of Marr) was yet another native English speaker who supported the Gaelic cause and Scottish nationalism - at one time he was a vice-president of the Scottish Home Rule Association. He was far more extreme in his advocacy than Blackie. Erskine saw the preservation and propagation of Gaelic, and the consolidation of Scotland under one Celtic aegis as the only solution to Scotland's salvation. In his publications,* particularly Guth Na Bliadhna and the Scottish Review, he endeavoured to ensure the emergence of a small band of journalists capable of turning Gaelic into an effective political language. Neither of these,

*Erskine was also involved with the bilingual monthly Am Bard, 1901-1902; the weekly newspaper Alba, 1908-1909; the story magazine An Sgeulaiche, 1909-1911.

or indeed any other of his publications, were aimed at the membership or leadership of the Celtic societies - both of which he disparaged: the journals were aimed at the thinking folk, the intellectuals within the Gaelic movement. The Scottish Review was designed to impress his ideas upon Lowlanders, to interest "the English-speaking Celt of the plains in the manners and customs of his pre-feudalised forefathers".¹⁰

In 1907, John, Earl of Marr, founded the Scottish Party (which aimed at an independent Scotland) with a programme calling for the restoration of a Gaelic-speaking community in the Highlands and for a compulsory qualification in Gaelic for every person who held public office in Scotland. Along with the Scottish Review the Scottish Party was accused of dividing the nation and of creating antagonisms and dissensions among Gaelic speakers and within the Gaelic movement. Many Gaels resented the implication and the allegations that they were nationalists or separatists who sought and wished for the breakup of the United Kingdom.

The politicisation of the Gaelic revival had its precedence and its inspiration in the Irish experience. Blackie, MacKenzie*, Murdoch** and Erskine encouraged the importation of Irish land agitation methods and Irish nationalist ideas into Scotland. Murdoch was the principal mover of this intake: of his endeavours Hunter has stated -

*Editor of the Celtic Magazine

**Editor of the Highlander

"his involvement in Irish nationalist politics marks the beginning of a transmission of Irish ideas and influences into Scotland that was to last until Irish independence was achieved and was to make a considerable impact on the emerging Scottish nationalism of these decades"." 11

Murdoch, Blackie and other Scottish land agitators and nationalists made numerous political visits to Ireland and returned to Scotland to preach and write of the methods and aspirations of both the land agitators and the nationalists. In return, Irish leaders such as E. Hugh and M. Davitt, visited the Highlands to stir the crofters into action. Their message certainly made an impact upon crofters: crofters agitated for land and founded their own political party - the Highland Land Law Reform Association, later termed the Highland Land League and more commonly known as the Crofters' Party. Blackie, Murdoch and MacKenzie were all founding members of the Party - in fact the Party came to be considered the political wing of the Gaelic revival.¹² The League was mainly active during the years 1882 - 1895, the years immediately preceeding and following the Crofters' Holding Act: when the majority of the crofters' demands had been met the main justification for the League's existence petered out. In 1909 renewed agitation for land reform brought about the formation of a new Land League but it never had the force in Gaeldom of its predecessor because the crofters remained loyal to the Liberal party. The Liberal Party under the leadership of the Scottish Secretary of State, J. Sinclair, tried unsuccessfully in 1907 and 1908 to amend the land laws.

A mutual exchange of support occurred in parliament between the Highland Land League and the Irish Parliamentary Party. The League's M.P.'s supported Irish Home Rule measures and the Irish Party supported the League's demands for land reform. Unionists resented this development. When (in 1908 and 1918) the Irish Party announced support for legislative measures which would secure for Gaelic a place within the Scottish educational system, opponents of the measures alleged that the Scots and Irish were involved in a disloyal conspiracy; that the Scots were under the influence, if not akin in their long term objectives, to Sinn Feinnism. See Chapter VIII for more on this subject.

Much of the rancour developed from the vociferous support which Scottish Gaelic extremists, such as Erskine and his followers, gave to the nationalist aspirations of Hyde, Pearse and Griffiths. The extremists' rejection of parliamentary procedure to attain independence and their support for the use of violence - as in the Easter Rising, isolated them politically. Violence was anathema to the mainstream of Scottish political thought. Liberals, Tories and the overwhelming majority of Scottish Home Rulers rejected the use of violence - so too did the Gaelic advocates, including the nationalists of the genre of Murdoch and Blackie. The Gaelic extremists were driven into the political wilderness.

Apart from Erskine's Gaelic publications there were few other Celtic-Highland journals, newspapers and magazines which did much to develop Gaelic prose writing. Even the Highlander which was

created with the avowed purpose of putting "the Gaelic into the forefront" confined serious discussions of current affairs to the English section of the paper while the Gaelic section consisted mainly of traditional stories and anecdotes.¹³ The same can be said of the regular Gaelic column carried in the Highland Echo (Glasgow, 1877 - 78), the Glasgow Highlander (1877), the Celtic Magazine, etc. The journals of the Inverness Gaelic Society and An Comunn, Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, An Gaidheal and An Deo-Ghreine, were not much of an improvement. The majority of the articles were in English - this, in itself, was an indication of the size of the task undertaken by the societies. Just one year after the foundation of the Inverness Gaelic Society, W. MacKay, co-founder and secretary, stated that he was having great difficulty in getting members to prepare papers in Gaelic. The difficulty continued into the twentieth century.

There was little or no attempt in the above publications to develop Gaelic into an effective political language and a vehicle of political dissent, nor was there much effort to develop the register of Gaelic. Despite these criticisms the importance of the publications cannot be denied - they were an attempt to awaken Gaels to the plight of the Highlands and their language, and they did provide limited outlets for Gaelic prose writings - outlets that did not exist before.

Although conceding that the above publications were weak in their Gaelic content, the fact must not be lost sight of that there were

some Gaelic publications which did attempt to develop prose writing. As a matter of fact the nineteenth century saw the beginning of periodicals in Gaelic. An Rosroine (Glasgow 1803) was the first such publication but it died after four numbers. An Teachdaire Gaelach (1829 - 1841; 21 nos) and Cuairtear nann Gleann (1840 - 1843; 40 nos) were edited and published in Edinburgh by Norman MacLeod. Although religious articles predominated his periodicals contained many articles on current affairs, markets, machinery, book reviews, etc. MacLeod's publications were important for their attempts to extend the register of Gaelic and to develop a prose style. Prior to his writings, the register was confined mostly to religious topics, and the main stylistic models that the Gaelic writers had to rely upon were religious works - the Gaelic Bible and the translations of the Puritan Classics.

Other Gaelic periodicals, some inspired by MacLeod but with less religious bias, arose only to live a short life. Some of the more important were An Teachdaire Ur Gaidhealach (Glasgow 1835 - 1836; 9 nos), Teachdaire Nan Gaidheal (Glasgow 1844 - 1848; Ca 13), Fear-Tathaich nam Bearn (Glasgow 1843 - 1850; 24 nos). Two of the longer lasting ones originated in Canada - An Gaidheal (1871 - 1877) and Mac-Talla (1892 - 1904), the first and the longest lasting completely Gaelic newspaper. Most of the publications folded because of financial difficulties.

At this point it is interesting to note how the supply of Scottish Gaelic publications compared with that of English language

publications printed in Scotland?* Between the years 1815 - 1860 there were at least 147 English language newspapers being published throughout Scotland - of these 9 were in the Highlands. During the years 1820 - 1845 there were no less than 26 periodicals being published in the English language.

Gaelic verse, poems and songs, but more strictly songs, the chief literary medium of the language and until recently the principal medium of popular journalism, is in far greater supply than Gaelic prose - primarily because of the oral tradition surrounding it. The verse of the nineteenth century is a reflection of and a reaction to the traumas which were ravaging and altering forever the traditional patterns in Highland society. The verse describes the tensions which developed in Gaeldom as a result of the religious revivals, the Clearances, the evictions, the population movements, and the reassertion of the crofters' rights as epitomised in the struggle for land reform.

Dr. **Samuel** MacLean and Dr. Donald Meek divide the major Gaelic works of the nineteenth century into two distinct although connecting epochs - the Poetry of the Clearances, dating from the late eighteenth century until about 1870, and the Poetry of the Land Agitation, dating from the 1880's until the turn of the century.¹⁴ MacLean states that the Poetry of the Clearances is fairly uniform in its portrayal of the general disintegration of Gaelic society.

*See R. Cowan, The Newspaper in Scotland: A Study of its First Expansion, 1815 - 1860 (Glasgow 1946)

The tone is "depressing and even hopeless". A common motif is the sense of complete desolation and the equation of personal and general loss. The poetry contains an uncritical idealisation of the Pre-Clearance period, a nationalist spirit and a detestation of the Lowland shepherds and shepherd farmers, and the ruined dwellings where Gaels once lived. There is also a tendency to blame the crimes of the evictions upon Englishmen and Lowlanders and not upon Highland chiefs, the usual perpetrators of such acts because poets, along with their fellow Gaels, found it difficult to accept that those who were once considered their protectors were now their exploiters. These characteristics are also evident in the poetry of the Land Agitation - with one major exception. Gone is the feeling of depression and hopelessness. In the 1880's exultation came once again into Gaelic poetry. The resurgence of hope and courage in Gaelic poetry had three main sources, and they were the same sources which inspired the crofters in Skye and Lewis to take action to secure their land claims - the stirring of working class Radicalism in the cities, the interest of the Liberal Party in the votes of the rural workers that they were to enfranchise in 1884, and, above all the example of Ireland. Unfortunately the resurgent spirit did not survive the first two decades of an active Land League.

MacLean believes that the political, economic, social and religious events that weakened the Highland people and their way of life also weakened their poetry. "This weakness is clearly reflected in the weakness, thinness and perplexity of most Gaelic poetry

in the nineteenth century". Compared with the eighteenth century, nineteenth century poetry is flabby and anaemic: it lacks power, gusto, spontaneity, "joie de vivre". In some ways eighteenth century poetry is that of a splendid, thoughtless, full-blooded youthfulness: nineteenth century poetry has nothing like its sheer power - but it does have a more humanitarian quality, largely a result of the impact of the Clearances upon the poets.

Professor Derick Thomson attributes much of the weakness in ^{the} Gaelic poetry of this period (particularly its simplicity and unambitious nature) to two factors - both pertaining to education.* He maintains that the uprooting of villages and the resettlement of the displaced populace in new communities must have severely affected the education of the people. He also maintains that Gaels were not introduced to the glories of English literature but to the simple ephemera of the elementary school room, to the chapbook and to the models of semi-literary taste. "All this is reflected in the 'new' Gaelic verse of the nineteenth century, which largely turns its back on its own relatively learned, aristocratic tradition, and grovels contentedly in its novel surroundings".

New and "less Gaelic" patterns emerged in Gaelic poetry not only because of the influence of education but because a large part of the poetry was composed by Gaelic poets resident in the Lowlands and abroad. The immediate audience for these poets were colonies of fellow Gaels in the Lowlands, whose cultural life centred around the concerts and ceilidhs organised according to local

*See footnote 14 for the source.

origins, but frequently too with the general Gaelic colony in mind. The more successful of these poets favoured a "general concept of the Gaelic people, with some semblance of cultural unity and, indeed, culturalism, which may have been influenced by their awareness of 'foreign' Lowland society". Because of the readiness of the Gaelic colony to recreate the essential stratification of rural Gaelic society, such poets quickly became literary figureheads. Their proximity to the Gaelic printing presses* guaranteed that their type of verse became the norm not only in the Lowlands but also in the Highlands as literacy increased towards the end of the century.

Thomson notes that several themes or features emerge from the range of nineteenth century Gaelic poetry. The commonest theme is the homeland wherein the Gaeltheachd is seen in a nostalgic light. It is a place of youthful associations, family, community warmth and paradise lost. The theme of homeland is frequently combined with that of love, especially lovers' partings, and occurring within idyllic settings. Although most homeland verse contains, with varying degrees of urgency, protests about the changing circumstances of the Highlanders, it is in the sub-variety of homeland verse - verse about evictions and clearances, symbolised by the sheep, shepherds and their language - that the voices of protest are most effectively heard.

In the verse about evictions and sheep the poets urged resistance to the landlords and encouraged the crofters to assert their rights.

*situated in Lowland towns

Although some of the verse (particularly that of Mary MacPherson, William Livingston and John Smith - the three major poets of the century) contains and reflects a degree of political consciousness, the verse does not advocate opposition to the existing political system: neither does it generally appeal to or reflect a sense of party consciousness. Those poets - Smith, Livingston and MacPherson - who did carry the resistance to the larger social, economic and political level, rooted their arguments not in any political philosophy but in the clan society of the pre-Cullodden era when the land was supposedly the property of the people. It followed from this that evictions were an unjust violation of a natural, although unwritten law. Landlords were viewed as imposters, usurping the role of benevolent chieftains of an earlier day and misusing the land.

The poets' failure or reluctance to attack the political system is again demonstrated in their warnings of the danger to British security which would ensue from the continued clearing of the people. The poets warned that clearing would destroy the old order and would weaken the security of the people. Sheep could never fight battles. And as the British army had long been reliant upon Gaels to man the regiments, danger to the Empire would occur when there was no longer the body of Gaels to fill the ranks. The poets also renounced the ingratitude apparent in the treatment of those who had served their country and had been a principal force in extending the Empire.

Several poets display a nationalist feeling in their works particularly when writing of land and agitation (see Eoghan MacCollum "Foghnan na h-Alba, Thistle of Scotland") but it is not a characteristic that dominates either their work or the poetry of the century. The poetry of William Livingston is the exception. Livingston was a Scottish and Gaelic nationalist whose patriotism took the form of a deep hatred of the English. His Gaelic nationalism is aptly demonstrated in his verse on Ireland in which he sees the accursed Anglo-Saxon Imperialism as the only cause of the sufferings and tragedies occurring in Ireland and Scotland. To Livingston, Islay of Clan Donald and Ireland of O'Donnell, O'Neill and Maguire were near in geography and nearer still in blood, history and culture; Ireland's tragedy was greater even than Scotland's. Livingston's "Erinn a Gul - Ireland Weeping" wherein a solidarity with the Irish Gael is combined with an intense hatred of England and all things English, is the only known, surviving major work in Scots Gaelic on Irish affairs.

Two factors account for the non-political and non-nationalist nature of the majority of verse. Firstly, the isolation and illiteracy of the village bards. The village bard was not usually literate nor was he usually in direct contact with the outside world. His reference to the world beyond his own community derived from two sources - from migrant Gaels who had returned home and from the ceilidhs where it was the custom of a literate member of the community to read and translate newspapers printed in

English. Bards such as John MacLean, the Bard Bhaile-Mhartainn, the Balemartin poet, who seldom left his native Tiree, would in such ways, hear of outside incidences and would then incorporate them into their verse. But because of their ignorance of the wider implications of particular acts, events or policies, they were not able to develop an overall or comprehensive perspective. For example, the village bard could compose a piece of poetry on the removal of families from a holding but because of his ignorance of external affairs, he lacked the insight to connect the removal to the general disintegration of Highland society or to British economic policies of the period.

Secondly, it seems that the emigrè poets who were either resident in the Lowlands or who had spent some time there did not consider verse to be a suitable medium for the discussion of politics. Poets such as Henry Whyte who, in his writings in English, advocated Home Rule and accused the Napier Commission of being sympathetic to the landlords, seemed reluctant to admit political dimensions into their Gaelic verse. The primary concerns of the poets were the threats to personal survival and the affront to personal dignity posed by the policy of the landlords. Political considerations were of secondary importance to the majority, and if they were included at all, they tended to be of localised significance. John Smith and Mairi Mhor* (and Livingston) were in that tiny minority of poets whose works had a political dimension.

*Mary MacPherson, also known as Mairi Mhor nan Oran - Big Mary of the Songs.

Mari Mhor's writings reflect a deep and personal commitment to the land struggle - a commitment borne out (as her poetry itself was) of the harrowing and humiliating experience of being unjustly imprisoned for theft. She directed her sense of personal outrage, justice and her grudge against the establishment upon the system of landholding which was inflicting such unjust miseries upon the Gaelic people, particularly those of her own beloved Skye.

Her association with John Murdoch and Fraser Mackintosh as well as her contact with the nucleus of land reformers widened her perspective of the struggle. She campaigned with Mackintosh and composed songs which contributed significantly to the victory of land law reform candidates in 1885 and 1886. For an example of her works see "Brosnachadh nan Gaidheal - Incitement of the Gaels" which was composed for the election of 1885 and "Oran Beinn-Li, Song of Ben Lee" which speaks of the land agitators in glowing terms. Perhaps her greatest contribution to poetry and to the land struggle is her poem "Nuair bha mi Og - When I was Young", a poem which is an evocation of Skye in that idealised era of Highland history before the Clearances.

Mairi Mhor may have been the Gaelic poet most personally committed to the land struggle but no poet writing in Gaelic had expressed a greater awareness of the political considerations involved in the inequities of the Highland situation than John Smith of Iarsiadar - generally considered the most reflective power of any

Gaelic poet of the nineteenth century. Smith's poetry consists of social, moral and political criticisms; it contains an unusual blend of Christian feeling and a sense of class exploitation; it exhibits a profound feeling for the suffering, folly and wickedness of man, a deep understanding of the causes of the Highland clearances and their place in the development of capitalism.*

Although inclined to see the crofters' struggle more in terms of ethics than of politics, he saw a connection between the activities of Sir J. Matheson in the exploitation of opium and the development of the Highlands as a sportsmens playground; and he was aware that the Highland problem was only one manifestation of a malaise which affected other parts of society. It was his belief that what lay behind the outrages in the Highlands was a lack of kindness, of consideration among men for their fellows. This lack was apparent in the attitude of those in national and imperial authority, ministers of the church, the landlords and their agents. Injustice and selfishness were the qualities in vogue among such men.

Smith's convictions are epitomised in his greatest poem "Spirit of Kindliness" which deals with the Bernera Riots of 1874. In this work he warned that a higher power would one day reduce the oppressor (probably Munro, Matheson's chamberlain) to the fate which he deserved. Justice and right could be denied in this life

*See "Am Brosnachadh - The Incitement"; "Oran Luchd an Spors - Songs for Sportsmen"; "Spiorad an Uamhair - The Spirit of Pride"; and "Spiorad a' Chartannais - The Spirit of Kindliness".

but not in the next: death, the ultimate leveller, would strip him of all pomp and feed him to the worms. This poem was the "most savage and final indictment of the men and the policies that cast their cloud of shame over the century..."¹⁵

The decades of the Gaelic revival (1870 - 1890) did not witness an increase in the publication of Gaelic works. Gaelic publications reached their height in the 1840's when 70 new titles appeared. And, as noted in Chapter I, the decline was accompanied by a rise in secular publications (10 - 25) and a decrease in religious publications (40 - 12). The secular literature of the 1890's comprised 10 books of poetry, 4 collections of stories and 1 translated play.¹⁶

The 1890's did see the emergence of a new type of Gaelic publication, the publication of books containing prose "Readings" - usually with songs and poems which were inspired by the "Penny Readings" and were designed specifically for entertainment at the numerous ceilidhs and concerts. The songs and poems were mostly lighthearted, with a mixture of adventure, humour and sentiment. Essentially the poetry was village poetry - although the village had changed from a Highland one to a Glaswegian or Clydeside locality. Such poetry could flourish because it was an era when the communal life of Gaels in Glasgow was well organised by the Highland societies, when communities were tight knit, when churches were well established, when shinty was still played in the "shaws" and elsewhere.

All did not agree with this popular literature and strangely enough the opposition to it was led by the non Gael and learner of Gaelic, R. Erskine. In the publications which he was either editor of or closely associated with he set out to rid Gaelic literature of the influence of its "peasant origins" and its "enthusiasm for the music hall" and to raise it to the same level as the best of English literature.¹⁷ Basically, Erskine had an aristocratic disdain for the views of the common man and sought to discourage his literary tastes and to encourage the higher and more academic Gaelic literature of the intellectuals. It is therefore hardly surprising to find that the Gaelic renaissance of the twentieth century had part of its foundations in Erskine's publications. His journals provided the opportunity and a forum for the writings and views of Gaelic intellectuals. The twentieth century also witnessed, almost entirely because of the educational system, the emergence of a core of writers who wrote in a bilingual context and without much self-consciousness about impinging on two literary traditions.* But it was not a one way street. There were Lowlanders, notably MacDiarmid, who followed in the steps of Erskine by learning some Gaelic, advocating its preservation, and connecting its existence to the Scottish nationality and the right of Scotland to an independent status among nations.

*For more information on twentieth century developments see Chapters VI and VII of D. Thomson, An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry (London 1974)

Few Gaelic text-books were published during the years 1872 - 1918. Indeed, there were only eight such works - H.C. Gillies, Gaelic Texts for Schools (Edinburgh undated); Highland Association, Scottish Gaelic as a Specific Subject (Edinburgh 1893); H.C. Gillies, The Gaelic Class Book (London 1896); D. MacIver, Bilingual Text Book: English Composition (Inverness 1900); A. MacBain, Higher Grade Reading in Gaelic with Outlines of Grammar (Inverness 1905); M. MacLennan (ed), MacLeod's Gaelic Reader (Edinburgh 1909); D. Reid, Elementary Course of Gaelic (Glasgow 1913).¹⁸

None of the publications were designed to develop the register of Gaelic. Most of them were written in both English and Gaelic, with the instructions nearly always in English. The only work concerned with Gaelic prose writing was Higher Grade Reading in Gaelic with Outlines of Grammar; this text, intended for pupil-teachers and others working for the King's Scholarship Examination, contained a few short selections from Carnaid Nan Gaidheal.

Why was there such a dearth of Gaelic text-books? The Highland societies must bear some of the responsibility for they (contrary to Irish and Welsh Celtic societies) displayed little interest in producing and publishing text books in the Celtic language for the schools. The writing of texts and grammars was left to individuals, teachers usually; Gillies, MacBain and MacLennan were all teachers in secondary schools. From its founding in 1891 until 1918 An Comunn was involved in only two works for the schools - the production and publication of Scottish Gaelic as

a Specific Subject (1893), and a new edition of Reid's Elementary Course of Gaelic (1913). The Gaelic Society of Inverness never entered into this aspect of Gaelic publication.

The debate surrounding the relevance and use of Gaelic in the schools

It is a coincidental but important fact that the Gaelic revival was just getting off the ground when the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, came into being. This coincidence of dates is probably the major reason why no representations had been made to the government requesting that provisions for the teaching of and teaching in Gaelic be included within the Act, and why the subject of Gaelic teaching was not mentioned in the Commons while the Bill was being debated. The failure to lobby on Gaelic's behalf and the government's desire to get an Education Bill passed with as few deletions, amendments and delays as possible, resulted in the Act containing no Gaelic measures. Because of this neglect Gaelic revivalists began a campaign to secure concessions for the language through the two means available - either a Minute in Council and/or an act of parliament.

The campaign was begun in the early years of the 1870's and was continued into the twentieth century. The campaign was initiated by the Inverness Society and, until the founding of An Comunn in 1891, received much of its inspiration and direction from the Society. An Comunn introduced new blood and a more aggressive element into the advocacy. Chapters V and VIII discuss the role of the two societies in the campaign.

The effort to obtain concessions for Gaelic within the elementary school system caused a long and bitter debate among people concerned with Highland education. The effort raised several questions which challenged the worth of the Celtic culture, the relevance of the Gaelic language to the operation of an efficient educational system, and the relevance of the language within a society which was increasingly demanding proficiency in English. What was the relevance of Gaelic in the social and economic conditions of an industrial and commercial society which required English? What was the use of Gaelic to the Gael who needed to migrate south to obtain employment?

All parties involved in the debate, including the Gaelic supporters, agreed that Gaels needed and should be taught English. But disagreement arose over the affects which the acquisition of English would have upon the fate of Gaelic. In acquiring English, would the Gael lose his own language and with the loss of his language, his culture, his nationality and its inherent characteristics? John Murdoch argued that without Gaelic, Gaels were no better than the "mere English hind who has no thought above his bacon, his bread and his beer"; material acquisitions would not supplant the aesthetic values of Gaelic.¹⁹ Was economic progress worth the loss of Celtic culture and was that loss necessary to economic progress or could the culture be maintained and economic advancement achieved? Opinion was divided between those who held that both could be achieved, those who held that such an occurrence was impossible and those who maintained that the preservation of the

Gaelic culture was impracticable and undesirable. Gaelic could not rid Highlanders of their poverty. Indeed, had not Gaelic and the Celtic culture been one of the causes of Highland poverty? Had they not enclosed young minds in a narrow and retrogressive manner? Had they not perpetuated mental habits which created, rather than solved, grave economic and social problems? What then, was the use of keeping the language alive? To do so was just an exercise in futility. When the Napier Commission advocated the extensive use of Gaelic in the school curriculum (see Chapter V), an editorial in the Glasgow News asked - "What possible use would it be to offer them (ie Gaels) the additional means of confining themselves to a language whose practicality is almost as valuable as the sentiment which inclines an Irish peasant to cling to the mud cabin of his ancestors".²⁰

The debate over the merits of economic progress versus cultural preservation concerned the wider implications of the language question. The more immediate and critical concern was whether, in the words of a letter writer to the Oban Times, the acquisition of English could best be attained by "the judicious and persistent use of the Gaelic language in the school or not".²¹ Both the Scotsman, no friend of the Gaelic, and the Educational News argued that Gaelic was necessary. The Scotsman said that Gaelic would serve as a scaffolding with which to erect a sound and complete system of English education" while the Educational News would have Gaelic taught "as it never has been to make it the means of cultivating the English language in every corner of the Highlands".²²

Among those who supported the use of Gaelic in the schools much controversy developed around the question of which language was to be taught first, and which was to be the medium of instruction. J. Murdoch and A. MacKenzie believed that Gaelic should be used as a medium of instruction but argued that it was more practical for Gaelic-speaking children to spend the early years of their education learning English. It would take one or two years to teach the children to read Gaelic - time which could have been spent teaching them English. "Will you", questioned Murdoch, "undertake to allow a child of a poor parent to go on for a year or two to learn Gaelic and then throw him back at the end of the time to begin with the English alphabet?"²³ MacKenzie thought it "quite unnecessary to teach Gaelic beyond the stage at which it fails to be useful in helping to a better and more intelligent understanding of their English class books, except to those who are to become ministers or schoolmasters".²⁴

Those who held that Gaelic should be taught first and that it also be the medium of instruction believed that one proceeded from the known to the unknown, from the less difficult to the more difficult. Without this method, "children did not understand the English they pretended to read and they could not read the Gaelic they might have understood and were unable to express themselves in writing in any language".²⁵

The attempts to have measures for Gaelic included within the educational system aroused considerable controversy in the "letters

to the editor" columns of the press - in both the north and the south. References within the letters indicate that the majority of writers were either Gaels still resident in the Highlands or Gaels who had moved to the south. All wrote with intensity; often they mocked the other's viewpoint. Some writers used pen names - perhaps, more than anything else, these names indicate the emotions aroused by the language question: for example, "commonsense", "anti-prejudice", "anti-faddist", "anti-spite", "pro-patria", "degenerate Highlander", etc. Sometimes the letters were idiosyncratic, for example - in response to a letter which suggested that Gaelic should be taught in the schools because a man with two legs was better able to walk than a man with one, another stated -

"With this we absolutely agree but there's a man mentioned in the proverbs and he has two feet but 'his feet are not even'. It is good to have two legs, but let them be of the same kind and of the same size for experience has taught us that in this degenerate age and in the 'lowlands' we can get along far better with two wee 'English' legs of the same size than with a big 'Gaelic' and a wee 'English' one!" 26

The attitude of the Presbyterian Churches

Because of the emphasis which the Protestant faith placed upon the authority of the Bible and the need of the people to be able to read it, the Established Church, the Free Church and the United Free Church each supported the use and teaching of Gaelic in the schools of the Highlands. The churches also concurred that Gaelic could and should be used as an aid to understanding and acquiring English. This pro-Gaelic policy was basically a continuation of

the Free and Established Churches (the United Free Church was not founded until 1901) pre-1872 policy of support for Gaelic schools and the production, publication and distribution of Gaelic religious writings, text-books and grammars.*

Neither Established nor Free church was particularly concerned with the preservation of Gaelic. When the Free Church supported the establishment of a Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh University ministers were asked to "dismiss from their minds the imagination that we may have any sentimental view to the perpetuation of Gaelic as a spoken tongue"; the church's concern was to provide for the scientific study of Celtic as a branch of comparative philology, and to "provide for young men destined to learn professions in Gaelic-speaking districts, the means of perfecting themselves in the language of the people, among whom their lives are to be spent".²⁷

In an address to the General Assembly in 1874, the Church of Scotland's attitude to Gaelic was clearly identified -

"The place of Gaelic in the education of the young in the present day is a vexed question. But, whatever theory we adopt on the general question there need be little hesitation as to religious instruction. When the child speaks no English, the channel for that must be Gaelic".²⁸

*The United Presbyterian Church is not included because the Proceedings of the United Presbyterian Synod do not contain any reference to the language issue. Perhaps this is because so few of its congregations were in the Highlands - 39 out of 600 in 1873 and 35 out of 567 in 1890. Of the 39 and 35 only six were in Gaelic-speaking districts.

Both churches urged the S.E.D. to permit the use of Gaelic in the schools to aid the acquisition of English. In 1875 the Church of Scotland advised that "where the children were ignorant of English, Gaelic was essential to the teaching of English"; and in 1877 the Free Church suggested that Gaelic be taught "to facilitate, rather than retard the learning of English".²⁹

The rise in English-speaking congregations necessitated bilingual ministers, capable of preaching with equal competence in both languages. This need was recognised in 1877 when Dr. M'Lauchlan of the Free Church advised that, in view of the large influx of English-speaking tourists into the region, it was important that "ministers be able to represent the truth and the Church well before the English speaking portion of the community".³⁰ Eight years later Dr. Sommerville warned that "ministers would do well to cultivate English preaching for the sake of the younger generation and numerous strangers who were moving into the Highlands".³¹

The cultivation of English speakers caused difficulties within the Gaelic congregations of both churches, but especially within the Free Church. The Free Church, in purely or predominantly Gaelic congregations, had been able to substitute catechists for Gaelic ministers but this practice was an impossibility where English speakers constituted a large section of the congregation because the catechists were "not usually competent to address an audience in English".³² The desire to serve the English speakers

aroused grave problems amongst Gaelic speakers in the congregation of the churches. Gaels were used to a high standard of preaching and determined to have in their parishes only those ministers who could fulfil the standards. Gaels continued to insist that ministers be appointed or selected upon their Gaelic preaching abilities and not upon their bilingualism. Because ministers were seldom equally proficient in both languages, appointments were often delayed.³³

The high expectations caused many Gaelic-speaking ministers to serve in Lowland parishes; others left because of the greater financial, educational and social opportunities in the south. In 1879 the Free Church Committee on the Highlands and Islands spoke of its regret "when the service of preachers of character and ability who speak the Gaelic language are lost to the Highlands..."³⁴

The increase in English speakers caused ministers in certain parishes either to give up Gaelic services or to drastically reduce them. Sometimes the desire and/or the necessity for a Gaelic-speaking minister could not be met because of a shortage in the supply. For example, by 1889 the Free Church had twenty vacancies, some in large and important congregations.

The need for Gaelic-speaking ministers, their shortage and more importantly the fear of a much higher shortage,* caused the Free

*By the turn of the century both churches were referring yearly to the necessity of attracting more Gaelic-speaking ministerial candidates. See the Report of the C. of S. (1909) pp 995 - 1001.

Church and the Church of Scotland to co-operate in petitioning the S.E.D. for educational reforms, particularly with regards to the training colleges. The churches had traditionally depended upon the teaching profession to produce most of their ministers but Gaelic-speaking candidates or teachers incurred difficulties in gaining admission and securing passes in the training colleges. In 1894 a twin committee of the Free and Established churches reported that the difficulties confronting Highland men were great "owing to the high standards of attainment demanded especially in Mathematics, Latin and Greek".³⁶

The churches urged the S.E.D. to grant special concessions to Gaelic-speaking students and to Gaelic within the elementary and normal school systems. The churches recommended that Gaelic be made a specific subject, that bursaries be awarded to scholars from Gaelic areas, that teachers be given a grant for teaching Gaelic and that Gaelic be made a subject for admission into normal school. In 1894 (also) the Joint Conference of the Free and Established Churches on Education presented several resolutions to the department in the hope of securing measures which would increase the number of Gaelic-speaking teachers.³⁷ The conference asked that in the admission to normal school requirements, marks equivalent to those given for reading and writing Gaelic be given for a colloquial knowledge of Gaelic alone; that seven scholarships, to be held exclusively by Gaelic speakers, be added to the number now assigned to the training colleges of both churches;

that these scholarships be awarded even though the candidates fell as low as the third division in the official list. The department acknowledged these requests but did not implement them.

The United Free Church, founded in 1901, was concerned with the practice of "some of its Gaelic-speaking students and preachers" working in the south and depriving the Highland congregations of Gaelic-speaking ministers.³⁸ The church was also an advocate of the use of Gaelic in the school system: the teaching of Gaelic would aid the acquisition of English, enable the children to read and write in their own language, and ensure their familiarity with the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular.

When Education Bills were introduced in 1908 and 1918 the three churches made individual and joint representations to parliament and the S.E.D. for the inclusion of Gaelic measures. Invariably, each representation stressed the relationship between Gaelic and religious knowledge, and the need to ensure a total supply of Gaelic-speaking ministers (see Chapter VIII).

Chapter V: The Administrative Concessions Granted
During the Years 1872 - 1918

In 1875 the Gaelic Society of Inverness resolved that the educational system did not and could not supply the educational wants of Gaeldom, however thoroughly it might be carried out until special provisions were made for "the teaching of Gaelic in the schools of Gaelic-speaking districts as an independent subject of instruction".¹ To secure this aim, the society, in 1875, petitioned the House of Commons to ensure that arrangements were made for the teaching of Gaelic in all schools and districts where the language was spoken by the majority; that teachers be encouraged to qualify for teaching Gaelic by awarding certificates of competency in the language - certificates which would entitle the teachers to a small grant when placed in districts where Gaelic was the prevailing language and where inspectors reported that it was taught beneficially to the pupils; that Gaelic be made a specific subject; that all inspectors in Gaeldom be able to understand, speak and examine in Gaelic.²

As a result of the society's efforts, the S.E.D. in 1875, granted the first concession to Gaelic when it ordained that in Gaelic-speaking districts the intelligence of the children examined in the second and third standards could be tested by requiring them to explain in Gaelic the meaning of the passage read (article 19, C. 2/75). This concession meant that Gaelic could be the medium of explanation in examination and that it could be the medium of instruction in the early stages of education. Although some Gaelic enthusiasts welcomed the concession as a step forward, others criticised it because teachers and inspectors were not required

to have a knowledge of Gaelic, and because Gaelic was not made a branch of education which would have entitled the school boards to receive a grant for its teaching. Boards were not encouraged to have their teachers teach Gaelic and teachers were not encouraged to teach it because they were not paid for doing so.³

According to the critics the concession amounted to no more than permission to use Gaelic if the school boards wanted it, if the teachers could and would use it, and if the inspectors could and would examine it ⁱⁿ. Because it was unlikely that all conditions would be observed, the Gaelic advocates renewed their demands that Gaelic be included as a branch of education and that its teaching be made a paying proposition.

At this period the Gaelic cause was fortunate in having a distinguished Gaelic exponent in the House of Commons in the person of Sir Charles Fraser Mackintosh. Mackintosh was a Gaelic scholar from Inverness (he represented Inverness Burghs in the House and was later a member of the Napier Commission) dedicated to the preservation of the Celtic culture. He introduced the Gaelic cause into parliament and as a direct result of his pleas on behalf of the language, the Privy Council, in 1876, ordered an inquiry into the use of Gaelic in the schools of the Highlands and Islands.

The inquiry, which took the form of a questionnaire (submitted by the Gaelic Schools Society), solicited the opinions of school

boards on the desirability and practicality of teaching Gaelic in the schools. Boards were asked whether they were for or against instruction in Gaelic, whether Gaelic teachers* could be obtained, the number of public schools which would take advantage of Gaelic provisions and the number of children affected. Because the decision of each board was critical to the awarding of future concessions, advocates of Gaelic teaching advised -

"... it is the duty of all interested in the subject to watch the proceedings of the boards, and to bring all legitimate influence to bear on them on behalf of the object desired. It is impossible to secure this object without securing the sympathy and support of the boards."⁴

Of the 103 boards which received the circular 90 replied, and of the 90, 65 were in favour of instruction in Gaelic, 25 were against: 53 said Gaelic teachers could be obtained, 14 said they could not be obtained, and 23 did not answer the question: 208 schools and 16,331 pupils would be affected.

The following table, Table A, reveals how each of the school boards responded to the questions of whether they were in favour of instruction in Gaelic and whether Gaelic teachers could be obtained.⁵ In the table N.R. = no reply to the questionnaire; N.S. = the board did not reply to the question on the availability of Gaelic teachers.

*The question referred specifically to Gaelic teachers and not to Gaelic-speaking teachers, teachers of Gaelic or qualified teachers of Gaelic.

Table A

| Name of school board | in favour of instruction in Gaelic | | teachers obtainable | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|------------------------|------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| <u>Argyll (mainland)</u> | | | | |
| Acharacle | yes | | | no |
| Ardchattan & Muckairn | yes | | yes | |
| Ardnamurchan | yes | | yes | |
| Glenorchy & Inishael | | no | | N.S. |
| Kilbrandon & Kilchattan | | no | | no |
| Kilchrenan & Delavich | | no | | N.S. |
| Kilmallie | yes | | yes | |
| Kilmore & Kilbride | | no | yes | |
| Lismore & Appin | yes | | yes | |
| Morven | yes | | yes | |
| Strontian | yes | | yes | |
| Kilcalmonell & Kilberry | yes | | yes | |
| Killean & Kilchenzie | yes | | | no |
| North Knapdale | N.R. | | | |
| South Knapdale (insular) | | no | yes | |
| Coll | | no | | N.S. |
| Kilfinichen & Kilvicheon | yes | | yes | |
| Kilninian & Kilmore | yes | | | N.S. |
| Salen | yes | | yes | |
| Torosay | yes | | yes | |
| Tiree | yes | | yes | |
| Colonsay & Oronsay | yes | | yes | |
| Gigha & Cara | N.R. | | | |
| Jura | yes | | yes | |
| Kildalton | yes | | yes | |
| Kilarrow & Kilmenny | | no | | N.S. |
| <u>Perth</u> | | | | |
| Amulree | | no | | N.S. |
| Balquhidder | yes | | yes | |
| Blair Athol | yes | | yes | |
| Dull | yes | | yes | |
| Fortingall | yes | | | no |
| Kenmore | N.R. | | | |
| Killin | yes | | | N.S. |
| Kinloch Rannoch | yes | | yes | |
| Logierait | yes | | | no |
| Weem | N.R. | | | |

| Name of school board | in favour of instruction in Gaelic | | teachers obtainable | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| <u>Inverness (mainland)</u> | | | | |
| Abernethy & Kincardine | | no | N.S. | |
| Alvie | yes | | | no |
| Boleskine & Abertarff | yes | | yes | |
| Croy & Dalcross | yes | | yes | |
| Daviot & Dunlichity | yes | | | no |
| Dores | yes | | yes | |
| Duthil & Rothiemurchus | | no | N.S. | |
| Glenelg | yes | | yes | |
| Glengarry | | no | | no |
| Insh | yes | | yes | |
| Kilmonivaig | yes | | yes | |
| Kilmorack | yes | | yes | |
| Kiltarlity | yes | | yes | |
| Kingussie | yes | | | no |
| Kirkhill | yes | | yes | |
| Laggan | yes | | yes | |
| Moy & Dalarossie | yes | | yes | |
| Urquhart & Glenmoriston (insular) | yes | | yes | |
| Barra | yes | | N.S. | |
| Bracadale | yes | | yes | |
| Duirnish | yes | | yes | |
| Harris | yes | | | no |
| Kilmuir | yes | | yes | |
| North Uist | yes | | yes | |
| Portree | yes | | yes | |
| Sleat | | no | N.S. | |
| Small Isles | yes | | yes | |
| Snizort | yes | | yes | |
| South Uist | yes | | yes | |
| Stenscholl | yes | | yes | |
| Strath | | no | N.S. | |
| <u>Sutherland</u> | | | | |
| Assynt | yes | | yes | |
| Clyne | | no | N.S. | |
| Creich | N.R. | | | |
| Dornoch | N.R. | | | |
| Durness | N.R. | | | |
| Eddrachillis | N.R. | | | |
| Farr | | no | yes | |
| Lairg | yes | | yes | |
| Rogart | | no | N.S. | |
| Tongue | yes | | yes | |
| <u>Caithness</u> | | | | |
| Latheron | | no | N.S. | |

| Name of school board | in favour of instruction in Gaelic | | teachers obtainable | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|------------------------|----|----|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | | |
| <u>Ross & Cromarty (mainland)</u> | | | | | | |
| Applecross | yes | | yes | | | |
| Carnoch | N.R. | | | | | |
| Contin | | no | N.S. | | | |
| Edderton | | no | | no | | |
| Fearn | yes | | yes | | | |
| Fodderty | | no | N.S. | | | |
| Gairloch | yes | | yes | | | |
| Glenshiel | | no | N.S. | | | |
| Killearnan | N.R. | | | | | |
| Kincardine | | no | N.S. | | | |
| Kintail | yes | | | no | | |
| Knockbain | yes | | yes | | | |
| Lochalsh | yes | | | no | | |
| Lochbroom | N.R. | | | | | |
| Locharron | | no | | no | | |
| Logie Easter | N.R. | | | | | |
| Resolis | yes | | N.S. | | | |
| Rosskeen | N.R. | | | | | |
| Tarbat | | no | N.S. | | | |
| Urquhart & Logie Wester | | no | N.S. | | | |
| Urray (insular) | yes | | yes | | | |
| Barvas | yes | | yes | | | |
| Lochs | yes | | yes | | | |
| Stornoway | yes | | yes | | | |
| Uig | yes | | N.S. | | | |
| Total | 13 | 65 | 25 | 53 | 23 | 14 |

If the table is studied on a county basis and broken into two sections - the first section dealing with the willingness of the boards to permit instruction in Gaelic and the second concerning the availability of Gaelic teachers - the following facts emerge, as demonstrated in the Table B below. Again, N.R. = no reply to questionnaire; N.S. = the board did not reply to the question on the availability of Gaelic teachers.

Table B

| County & number of boards the questionnaire was sent to | N.R. | in favour of instruction in Gaelic | | teachers obtainable | | | |
|--|------------|--|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | N.S. | No | |
| Argyll | 26 | 2 | 17 | 7 | 16 | 5 | 3 |
| Caithness | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Inverness | 31 | 0 | 26 | 5 | 21 | 5 | 5 |
| Perth | 10 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Ross & Cromarty | 25 | 5 | 12 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 4 |
| Sutherland | 10 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Total | 103 | 13 | 65 | 25 | 53 | 23 | 14 |

When the tables are studied on a mainland and insular basis it emerges that 75 mainland boards and 28 insular boards received the questionnaire; 12 mainland and 1 insular board did not reply. Of the 63 mainland boards which responded to the questionnaire, 42 or 66% supported instruction in Gaelic while 21 or 33% opposed it; of the 47 mainland boards which replied to the question on the availability of Gaelic teachers, 34 or 72% stated that they were available and 13 or 27% said they were unavailable.

Of the 27 insular boards which answered the questionnaire 23 or 85% were in favour of Gaelic instruction and only 4 or 11% were opposed to it; 19 or 95% of the 20 boards which replied to the question on the availability of Gaelic teachers stated that such teachers were available. The following table, Table C, shows the responses to the questionnaire on a mainland/insular basis. N.R. = no reply to the questionnaire; N.S. = no reply to the question on the availability of Gaelic teachers.

Table C

| County | N.R. | in favour of instruction in Gaelic | | teachers obtainable | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | N.S. |
| mainland | | | | | | |
| Argyll | 1 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| Perth | 2 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Inverness | 0 | 15 | 3 | 12 | 4 | 2 |
| Sutherland | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Caithness | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ross & Cromarty | 5 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Total | 12 | 42 | 21 | 34 | 13 | 16 |
| insular | | | | | | |
| Argyll | 1 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 3 |
| Inverness | 0 | 11 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| Ross & Cromarty | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 1 | 23 | 4 | 19 | 1 | 7 |
| combined total | 13 | 65 | 25 | 53 | 14 | 23 |

It is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of insular boards wanted instruction in Gaelic since the islands were generally considered to be the stronghold of the language but what is surprising is the number of insular boards which stated that

they could get Gaelic teachers - especially in view of the fact that in the early 1880's island boards often complained to the S.E.D. of the inability to attract Gaelic teachers to their schools. Perhaps though the anomaly is caused by the fact that, beginning in the 1880's the S.E.D. laid increasing emphasis upon certificated teachers. Perhaps too, the insular boards' perceived ability to obtain Gaelic ^{teachers} was based somewhat on wishful thinking; this would seem plausible in view of the many statements in the Argyll Commission on the shortage and qualifications of teachers in the islands. It is also possible that the boards were relying upon Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers to fulfil the role of Gaelic teachers. Unfortunately board records do not shed any light upon the perceived ability to attract Gaelic teachers; but board records, both insular and mainland, do continually mention from the 1870's onwards, an inability to obtain the required number of qualified teachers of Gaelic (and of other subjects) for their schools. Chapter VI discusses in detail the problem of teacher shortage in the Highlands.

It should be noted that the availability of Gaelic teachers did not mean necessarily a willingness, on the part of the boards, to have Gaelic taught in their schools; 3 of the 53 boards (Kilmore and Kilbride, South Knapdale, and Farr) which could get Gaelic teachers were against its instruction in their schools. Of the 14 boards which stated that they could not get such teachers only 4 (Kilbrandon and Kilchattan, Glengarry, Edderton, and Locharron)

were against instruction in Gaelic; this meant that there were 10 boards which were in favour of Gaelic instruction but unable to obtain the required teachers; the 10 boards were - Acharacle and Kilchenzie in Argyll; Alvie, Kingussie, Harris, Daviot and Dunlichity in Inverness; Fortingall and Logierait in Perth; Kintail and Lochalsh in Ross and Cromarty.

In conclusion the following statements can be made - of the 65 boards in favour of Gaelic instruction, 50 were able to obtain Gaelic teachers while 10 were not; 5 boards failed to respond to the question. Of the 25 boards which opposed Gaelic instruction, 4 (Glengarry, Edderton, Locharron, Kilbrandon and Kilbride) stated that they could not get Gaelic teachers; 3 boards (Kilmore and Kilbride, South Knapdale, and Farr) stated that they could get such teachers; while 18 did not respond to the question.

To the question of how many schools and school children would be effected within the jurisdiction of each board, the following responses were submitted* -

Argyll: 14 boards (7 insular and 7 mainland) reported that 52 schools (23 insular and 29 mainland) and 2,905 children (1,150 insular and 1,755 mainland) would be effected.

Inverness: 24 boards (10 insular and 14 mainland) reported that 91 schools (44 insular and 47 mainland) and 7,196 children (3,653 insular and 3,543 mainland) would be effected.

*The figures do not reveal the total number of schools and boards which would have been effected because all the boards did not fill in this part of the questionnaire.

Ross: 10 boards (3 insular and 7 mainland) reported that 53 schools (23 insular and 30 mainland) and 5,721 children (3,477 insular and 2,244 mainland) would be effected.

Perth: 5 boards reported that 8 schools and 462 children would be effected.

Sutherland: 2 boards reported that 4 schools and 47 children would be effected.

In total 55 boards reported that 208 schools and 16,331 children would be effected.

As a result of the questionnaire two concessions were granted to Gaelic in 1878.⁶ The first concession, contained in a footnote to Article 19, C.3 (which concerned government grants for attendance at day schools) read - "Gaelic may be taught during the ordinary school hours either by the certificated teacher or by any other person specifically appointed for the purpose". Sir Charles Fraser Mackintosh explained that there was no limit to the time per week within which Gaelic could be taught - this was left entirely to the discretion of the school boards which could deal with each school separately and fix times which they deemed suitable and appropriate; "supposing that in the matter of hours equal to one day out of five is devoted to Gaelic, one-fifth of the government attendance grant, varying as the children pass the standards two and three or all up to six, would then be earned by Gaelic". The second concession contained in a footnote to Article 17, C.1 (which stated that the income of the school is

applied only for the purpose of public or state aided schools") read - "this may include part of the salary of an organising teacher, or of a teacher of Gaelic, drill, cooking or any other special subject employed by the managers of several schools". The effect was that, "the ordinary school funds and rates may be applied by the school boards towards paying teachers of Gaelic according to the importance attached by the boards to instruction in that language and which will, no doubt, vary accordingly as Gaelic may or may not be the prevailing language".

The concessions were praised firstly, for the recognition they gave to the principle that Gaelic was a subject worthy of being taught for itself and not merely for its use in aiding the acquisition of English; secondly, for allowing school boards the right to use their revenues to pay for a Gaelic-speaking teacher; thirdly, for leaving the matter of the application of the concessions entirely in the hands of the school boards and/or ratepayers. This last point was especially important and much emphasis was placed upon it. Several Gaelic enthusiasts, in praising Mackintosh for his efforts in obtaining the concessions, declared that the Gaelic measures met the educational requirements and claims so long contended for by the Gaelic people and that the government had placed "the teaching of Gaelic in the hands of school boards, which is practically to give to the ratepayers the power to enforce the teaching of that language

wherever they desire it". Consequently, in July, 1878, the Gaelic Society of Inverness adopted the proposal that -

should

"School boards throughout the Highlands take immediate steps to avail themselves of the concession made by the Education Department in the Scotch Code for 1878 in favour of teaching Gaelic in Highland schools, and desire to impress upon the ratepayers the importance of returning members at the next election who will carry out their wishes on this subject".

Despite the pleas, little use was made of the concessions because Gaelic was still not a grant paying subject. William MacKay, co-founder of the Gaelic Society of Inverness stated -

"In a number of schools it has loyally been taken advantage of, but in the great majority not a word of Gaelic has as yet been taught. The reason for this neglect is not far to seek. School boards and teachers are naturally anxious to give the utmost attention to those subjects which bring in good money results; no grant is given for Gaelic, and hence it is put aside to give place to a more paying subject." ?

To rectify the situation, it was suggested that Gaelic be made a specific subject - as such, a grant of 10s would be awarded to the school board by the S.E.D. Once Gaelic was made a paying proposition a greater number of boards would include it in the curriculum.

During its years of existence, the Board of Education had supported the teaching of Gaelic in schools: it once stated -

"In districts where Gaelic is the language chiefly in use among the people, we venture to suggest that in any public school where the teacher is qualified, the school board in framing the time table, might properly provide that a lesson in Gaelic during one or more of the attendances weekly, should be given to those scholars who desire such instruction. In this way the schools

might be benefited without any risk of impairing either the resources or the efficiency of the school."⁸

Although the Board had no financial powers to assist the teaching of Gaelic it can be argued that it was an influence in securing the concessions granted to Gaelic during the years 1874 - 1878. It is hardly a coincidence that after its demise in 1878 no further concessions were granted to Gaelic until the creation of the position - the Secretary for Scotland and Vice-President of the S.E.D. in 1885. Up to this date, except for the input of the Board of Education, the Scottish educational system was devoid of any direct Scottish input and influence: the system was controlled and operated by Englishmen unfamiliar with the long traditions and aspirations of Scottish education.

But it would be wrong to attribute the 'de-anglicising' of the department solely to the creation of the new portfolio; much of the credit must go to Henry Craik, the first Scotsman to be appointed Secretary of the S.E.D. During his period of office (1885 - 1904) the entire aspect of Scottish education changed because he geared and reorganised the system along Scottish lines to meet Scottish needs. Among other things, he abolished payment by results and made education free for all between the ages of five and thirteen. His innovations within the higher educational system allowed the children of the poorer classes the opportunity to receive secondary schooling (see chapter II). These measures reflected the traditional although not always practiced Scottish ideal that all children, whether lairds of the pairts or sons

of lairds should have the opportunity to acquire an education.

Craik's concessions were no less important. While in the years up to 1878 concessions had been made, they had been made within the existing financial structure; no additional grants had been provided for the teaching or use of Gaelic. Gaelic was not a grant paying subject and no funds were available for the training of Gaelic-speaking teachers. Under Craik's recommendations of 1884, as senior examiner, and later under his regime as permanent secretary, additional funding and concessions were provided to encourage the teaching of Gaelic and to assist the training of Gaelic-speaking teachers.

Craik's measures were not the result of a sudden eruption of positive feelings towards the language; rather, they were a reaction to the pressures exerted upon the S.E.D. by the advocates of Gaelic, particularly the Napier Commission.* In 1884, on the eve of the creation of the new secretariat for Scotland, A. Mundella, Vice-President of the Committee of the Council on Education, asked H. Craik, then senior examiner within the S.E.D., to prepare a report on the feasibility of enacting Napier's suggestions on Gaelic. Before examining Craik's recommendations it is first necessary to take a look at the Napier proposals.⁹

*It can be argued that the S.E.D.'s reaction to the pressure from the Gaelic advocates, on the eve of its takeover, was an indication of its newfound sensitivity to Scottish desires.

The Commission had approved of the concessions so far granted to Gaelic but believed that they had not gone far enough - the use of Gaelic, "ought to be not merely permitted but enjoined". The Commission acknowledged that Gaelic had been used by many of the best teachers with the best results but argued that it had not "been sufficiently encouraged by persons in authority". To encourage a wider use of Gaelic five recommendations were made; that bursaries be given to increase the supply of trained Gaelic-speaking teachers; that grants be given to school boards to employ qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers; that Gaelic be made a specific subject and "the same grant as allowed under the Scottish Code for other languages should be given for Gaelic, where the teacher has proved his ability to give suitable instruction, and the pupil has been presented for examination in English Literature"; that in teaching Gaelic-speaking children to read Gaelic, "Gaelic should be taught first and English afterwards";

"That in the examination of a school where Gaelic is the habitual language of the inhabitants, the inspector should be required to report specially that, in examining the children as to their intelligence, he had satisfied himself that the teacher had, during the year, made profitable use of their native language in testing their understanding of the English they were being taught. In consideration of the difficulties and disadvantages under which teachers and children in such circumstances labour, we recommend that grants under article 19,C.1 and 2 of the Code should be increased from 2 s per scholar to 4s".

Because of the practical difficulties involved in the operation of the scheme (such as the shortage of teachers and books) the Commission suggested that qualified pupil-teachers be employed

in teaching the younger scholars to read their native language and that a small grant be given to the pupil-teachers. To increase the financial resources of the school boards it was suggested that inspectors encourage the teachers to teach the children to sing Gaelic songs so that the music grant could be earned. The Commission concluded that, "a knowledge of the language ought to be considered one of the primary qualifications of every person engaged in the carrying out of the national system of education in Gaelic-speaking districts, whether as school inspectors, teachers or compulsory officers".

The reactions to the proposals were mixed. The editor of the Celtic Magazine commented that the recommendations were so eminently wise and so important to Highland education that they could not fail to receive the cordial approval of all the friends of the Gaelic language and of all intelligent and competent promoters of Highland education.¹⁰ Others disagreed; an article in the Dundee Advertiser stated that it was "one thing to ease the Highland burdens and make the best possible provision for their (sic) educational wants and another to run hastily into such schemes as those recommended by the commissioners ..."¹¹

Napier's recommendations prompted two inspectors, J.L. Robertson (a Lewisman, a Gaelic-speaker and later chief inspector of the Highlands) and J. Sime (a non-Gael but Gaelic speaker with ten years experience in the Highlands) to write critical departmental memos on the Napier Report.¹² Robertson stated that on educational

matters the evidence was remarkably limited; the reference to education by the witnesses was incidental and seldom subjected to the intelligent cross-examination which was so valuable a feature of the inquiry on land matters. The Commission was selective in whom it questioned; school board members, teachers and compulsory officers were not encouraged to testify "in their special character" and the northern inspectors were not invited to a special meeting held by the Commission in Inverness in 1883. Robertson was forced to conclude that education was not a major concern to all the commissioners and that, "the comprehensive statement in the report was sectional in authorship and in some of its conclusions merely expressed the prepossessions of its authors" - a reference to Professor D. MacKinnon, Sheriff A. Nicolson and Sir Charles Fraser Mackintosh, all prominent advocates of the Gaelic cause.

J. Sime concurred with Robertson. Sime alleged that the report on education was an a priori production and that it derived any value it possessed from the opinions formed by the commissioners on grounds other than those which appeared in the evidence. The a priori nature of the recommendations was nowhere more apparent than in the references to Gaelic. Sime said, and this is confirmed in an examination of the evidence, that only fifteen out of 775 witnesses testified on the language issue. The fifteen witnesses were: Professor John Blackie, Professor of Greek at the University of Edinburgh; John Murdoch, editor of

the Highlander; four schoolmasters of whom one gave evidence contrary to the report, two gave a reluctant preference to Gaelic-speaking teachers and another, in the course of testimony "which would hardly be allowed in a court of law", agreed that Gaelic teachers were necessary in Gaelic-speaking districts; four crofters and two clergymen wanted the children literate in Gaelic so that they could read the Gaelic Bible; one crofter wanted English, not Gaelic taught and one factor, the only businessman examined, manifestly opposed the teaching of Gaelic; the chairman of the Lewis school board (whom Sime knew to be personally in favour of English teaching) stated that the board attempted to secure Gaelic-speaking teachers for its schools.

Sime noted that the questioning of the fifteen witnesses was done almost entirely by two men - Sir Charles Fraser Mackintosh and Professor D. MacKinnon; the questioning was mostly confined to the earlier part of the inquiry and thus left large sections of the region unexamined. Most of the concern displayed was over the teaching of the Gaelic Bible - "a matter already in the power of the local boards and one in which the Education Department had no power to interfere". Sime advised that "no concession be made to a few interested and clamorous individuals, who must certainly represent no one but themselves"; the feeling of the people was "directly contrary to the desires of their professed representatives and to the recommendations of the commission".

Sime gave four pieces of evidence which he believed proved his points. No school board seemed to have taken advantage of the provisions for Gaelic contained in the footnotes to Article 17 C.1 and Article 19,C.3 of the code; nor did the boards seem to have been urged to do so by their constituents. The only attempt known to him to teach the Gaelic Bible had lasted four weeks. Very few schools attempted to conduct their religious instruction in Gaelic; there were none in his district - the board of Barvas had tried to do so but gave up and had now about £50 worth of Gaelic Bibles on hand, useless. Although Sime frequently conducted examinations in Gaelic he had been rarely asked to do so; on those few occasions it was because the teachers supposed that he knew no Gaelic.

Sime was convinced that Gaelic-speaking teachers were unnecessary in the Highlands but suggested that, for quietness sake, when an inspector ruled that a Gaelic-speaking teacher was required, the department should ensure that the managers provided one. This would not satisfy the gaelophiles but it would leave them no case in the opinion of sensible men.

Robertson was far more sympathetic to the use of Gaelic within the curriculum than Sime. Robertson believed that Gaelic could beneficially be used as a tool in English instruction and that it could also be used to test the intelligence of the children. In his part of the Long Island he worked to ensure that each school had some member of staff capable of giving bilingual

instruction to the younger children.

But Robertson disagreed with the suggestion that Gaelic should be a primary qualification of every teacher in a Highland school - this demand had never had any hearty local response "as the practice of school boards and the apathy of the natives clearly prove". This advocacy was primarily made in centres where educated and partly educated Gaels had migrated. Robertson stressed that many non Gaelic-speaking teachers had earned a high reputation and many had so thoroughly won the approbation both of managers and of people that no inducement to remove them would be entertained. He also pointed out that in most Highland parishes there was a modicum of English and that children readily picked up the common English vocables - a skilful teacher could utilise this ability with surprising effect.

Robertson argued that although there were many Gaelic-speaking teachers who did excellent work there were some who did not "seem to have the requisite skill in utilizing their Gaelic as an educational tool".

"They easily fell into the vicious habit of using their native language too exclusively, with the inevitable result that the pupils, especially the younger, make little progress in conversational English and are often far more backward in comprehending and explaining their reading lessons than children in the same parish taught by a non-Gaelic teacher."

Robertson therefore held that no language restrictions should be placed upon boards in their selection of teachers; managers should be allowed to employ the best teachers their salaries

could command. But this did not mean that Gaelic could or should be excluded from a school - provisions needed to be made to ensure that some member of the school staff was qualified to give systematic bilingual instruction chiefly to the junior scholars; this was the only solution to the difficulty consistent with unrestricted educational progress. Where there was no Gaelic-speaking member of the staff, the code could be amended to offer a grant of £5 per year for a Gaelic-speaking monitor; this would be a cheap and effective substitute for the enlarged grant recommended by the Napier Report under Article 19, C.1 and 2.

Robertson found the Napier recommendation that Gaelic reading be taught irrelevant because it was already provided for in Articles 17 and 19 - besides this, there was no time in the ordinary curriculum for such an expenditure of teaching power.

Robertson agreed that Gaelic could be made a specific subject, but argued that few would take advantage of the provision.

The department could not ignore Napier's Report, and Craik, as noted earlier, was asked by Mundella to report upon the feasibility of the proposals "with regard to the teaching of Gaelic and the best means by which it may be encouraged up to the point to which it may appear expedient to encourage it and the means of inducing Gaelic-speaking teachers to return to Highland schools and take charge."¹³

Craik based his recommendations upon the admission that some

Gaelic teaching was likely to be of great benefit; the question to be answered was - "How far then is it possible to secure that Gaelic, at least as a medium of interpretation, shall have a fair amount of consideration?"¹⁴ He dismissed the Napier suggestion that Gaelic should be taught before English and he rejected the suggestion that each school be required to have a certificated Gaelic-speaking teacher because there was an insufficient number and the boards would oppose the idea. He agreed with Robertson that Gaelic should be a consideration but not the primary one in the hiring of teachers; he advocated the hiring of Gaelic-speaking teachers when other qualifications were equal. Craik rejected the suggestion that a special grant be given when a certificated Gaelic-speaking teacher was employed because he believed that the grant would either be regarded as a personal payment to the teacher or that the boards would look upon it as a means of relieving the rates. He also rejected the idea that a payment be made if the inspector was satisfied that the teacher had made profitable use of Gaelic during the year; this would be difficult to test and would cause undue use of Gaelic, "which we all agree in thinking an evil".

To increase the future supply of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers Craik recommended an extension of the pupil-teacher system and an end to the difficulties within the system which hindered Gaelic-speaking aspirants. The difficulties were several. Firstly, Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers' careers were often

broken off by their failure to pass the entrance examination to the training colleges; secondly, the schools were usually small and scattered and could not meet the attendance requirement of 60 scholars which entitled the school board to a payment for employing a pupil-teacher; thirdly, the teachers in such small schools did not always possess the class of certification which entitled them to supervise and train the pupil-teachers.

To overcome these difficulties, Craik recommended that the usual gratuities for pupil-teachers (Article 19,E) be allowed in schools where the attendance fell below 60 and that a special rate of payment of 10s per child (i.e. the infants and standard I children) be made when taught by Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers (the code allowed for a 10s grant where each infant was taught by a certified teacher but most Highland schools did not have such teachers). To increase the supply of pupil-teachers Craik recommended a programme of bursaries to allow the students (i.e. pupil-teachers) to study at a central school and to receive special instruction which would prepare them for the Queen's Scholarship Examination, and a shortened term of apprenticeship which would entitle Gaelic candidates to the advantage in the examination which was accorded to pupil-teachers who had completed their apprenticeship. Craik also urged that a certain number of marks be given for Gaelic in the Queen's Scholarship Examination for pupil-teachers.

Craik's final recommendation was that Gaelic, including reading,

recitation and a slight amount of grammar, be made a specific subject; this would encourage an intelligent knowledge of Gaelic, make its interpretation more lucid and would "meet all fair complaints of the neglect of the vernacular in these districts".

The reforms which resulted from Craik's report are found in the Minute on Special Conditions in Parliamentary Grants Applicable to Certain Specified Counties in Scotland, 1885. The intentions of the concessions to Gaelic (as stated in the introduction to the Minute) were to provide -

"the means whereby Gaelic-speaking children may most speedily overcome the difficulties of mastering English, and whereby such encouragement may be given to the teaching of Gaelic as may eventually provide a body of certificated teachers specially fitted, by a knowledge of the vernacular, to take charge of schools in Gaelic-speaking districts".

The Minute dealt with grants for infants, with pupil-teachers, and it made Gaelic a specific subject. Grants for infants arose under Article 19, B (1) (b) which gave a grant if pupils under seven were taught in a separate department by a certified teacher of their own. The Council ordained that the grant could be given where infants were partly taught by a Gaelic-speaking pupil-teacher whose services were not required under Article 32, C; a footnote limited the number of such pupil-teachers to one. The amendment concerning pupil-teachers allowed them to be examined in Gaelic reading, translation and composition provided that, "the candidate, having been employed in giving bilingual instruction to Gaelic-speaking children, becomes a pupil in some

school sanctioned by the Department preparatory to entering a training college". Lastly, the Minute ruled that Gaelic could be taken as a specific subject, provided it was taught upon a graduated scheme submitted by inspectors to the Department and approved by the Council.

The Minute was criticised on several points. The concession which allowed for pupil-teachers to be examined in Gaelic was attacked for being indefinite and unsatisfactory because there was no machinery either to provide for instruction or to insist upon examination in Gaelic; until the examination was made compulsory, Gaelic would be in an almost impossible situation.¹⁵

Another critic suggested that a definite number of marks be given to each pupil-teacher according to the degree of proficiency shown in each examination.¹⁶ And the restriction on the number of Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers to one was held to be unnecessary.¹⁷

The provision which placed Gaelic among the specific subjects was not without defects.¹⁸ The great majority of Highland teachers were "by the deficiency of their training not readily competent to undertake the methodical teaching of the language" and would therefore need every possible encouragement and assistance if they were to make use of the concession. The 10s grant which accompanied the classification of specific subjects could only be earned in the larger schools and/or centres and when taught by a university graduate: it was argued that the grant should be made general and that specific subjects be extended to smaller schools.

The concessions were minimally used. In 1887 - 88, the Report of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland stated that although the Code recognised Gaelic as one of the specific subjects, advantage had been taken of this opportunity "only to a very limited extent".¹⁹ Much of the fault was blamed upon the scarcity of Gaelic-speaking teachers. The Education Committee of the Church of Scotland stated that the Minute "could not attain the ends which those specially interested in the Highlands and Islands had always aimed at, until teachers who spoke the language of the children they taught were sufficient in number to meet the requirements of the Gaelic-speaking parishes".²⁰ One Gaelic-speaking teacher said that the financial concessions to school boards which hired Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers were too minimal for the boards to hire them; the teacher also asked, who was to teach the pupil-teachers, if they were to pass their examinations?²¹ The only solution to the teacher shortage was to add to the supply of Queen's Scholars a sufficient number of Gaelic-speaking students; in this regard the Free Church Education Committee urged the necessity of some "adequate arrangement being made in connection with training colleges for providing teachers capable of giving bilingual instruction in those parts where Gaelic was the spoken language of the people".²²

To facilitate the admission of Gaelic-speaking students as Queen's Scholars to the training colleges, the Code of 1887 permitted pupil-teachers from the Highland counties to take a

paper set in Gaelic in the examination for entrance into the colleges. For a variety of reasons this concession was not taken advantage of on a large scale and the shortage in Gaelic-speaking teachers continued. (See chapter six for a discussion on this.)

The next major concession to Gaelic was granted in 1904, when Gaelic was put on the list of voluntary subjects for the Leaving Certificate. The measure had first been suggested by the Gaelic Society of Inverness in the summer of 1900 and shortly afterwards the Directors of the Royal Academy of Inverness asked the Department to set a Gaelic paper for their pupils who were taking the Leaving Certificate; the Department did not do so but their response was sympathetic; the 1904 Minute was the first issued by the new Permanent Secretary of the Department - Mr. J. Struthers.

What exactly did the 1904 Minute do for Gaelic? It took Gaelic out of the elementary section of the school and placed it upon the secondary platform; it was intended for pupils who required the language, "not for the simple purpose of the acquiring of English, which was an important thing, but for the purpose of studying the language as a linguistic exercise ..."²³ W.J. Watson of the Royal Academy and later Professor of Celtic at Edinburgh University said the Minute gave Gaelic a standing and prestige which it had never had before; the Minute was a great innovation.²⁴

Both Watson and MacKay* agreed that the only difficulty in using

*Co-founder of the Inverness Gaelic Society

the concession would be to get teachers to teach the pupils who desired to take the certificate; the pressure of the school curriculum would make it hard for teachers to find the necessary time to teach the language. To encourage teachers and pupils, two suggestions were made. Firstly, that Highland societies give a premium to teachers who presented a certain number of candidates for the Gaelic examination and that prizes be awarded to the pupils who passed the examination; secondly, MacKay suggested that enthusiastic Highland societies in the south "leave the Gaelic question as it was for a time, and help the teachers and pupils to take full advantage of the provisions now made".²⁵ Watson agreed that it was best to mark time to utilise what had been granted, with a feeling of confidence that the department would consider favourably any further concessions if they were reasonable and calculated to enhance the value of those already made.²⁶

The placement of Gaelic among the Leaving Certificate subjects opened the way for Gaelic's recognition as a subject for the preliminary examination to the university. In 1904 Watson had questioned why the universities did not recognise Gaelic as a fifth subject for the bursary examinations; why was it necessary for a student from the West Coast to have to choose French, German or dynamics? Why could he not choose Gaelic? The universities responded favourably both to the logic of Watson's questions and to the enhanced status of Gaelic within the secondary educational system; between the years 1908 - 1911 Gaelic became a subject for

preliminary examination and for bursary competition in the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

An Comunn Gaidhealach and the Gaelic Society of Inverness attempted to secure two further concessions for Gaelic in the 1908 Education (Scotland) Bill.* They asked that there should be a special grant to assist Highland school boards in providing Gaelic-speaking teachers for Gaelic-speaking children; and that in Gaelic-speaking districts boards should provide instruction in continuation classes to young persons above the age of fourteen in the Gaelic language and literature. The first request was denied but the second was granted in a measure providing instruction "in Gaelic-speaking districts, if the school boards so resolve, in the Gaelic language and literature" - section 10 (1), 1908 Education (Scotland) Act. In an explanatory statement, the S.E.D. emphasised that it was not the duty of the boards to provide Gaelic instruction; it was to be done only if they chose to do so; there was no compulsion involved.

In 1909, a circular was issued by the S.E.D. to the Secondary Education Committees regarding grant distributions to school boards (section 17, subsection 9) - the grants enabled boards to supply a staff beyond the bare requirements of the code: the circular pointed out that grants could be offered -

*See Chapter VIII for more information on this matter.

"to secure the employment of teachers with such special qualifications as may be thought to be most useful in view of the circumstances of the district - a knowledge of Gaelic, for instance, when Gaelic is the home language of the children".

An article in An Deo Ghreine expressed the hope that school boards would not fail to avail themselves of the opportunity of obtaining, in this way, such financial assistance as would enable them to attract and retain the services of Gaelic-speaking teachers and that the Secondary Education Committees for the Highland counties would carry out their power under this section in a sympathetic and liberal way.²⁷

Since the foregoing pages of this chapter have been concerned with the role of Gaelic within the curriculum it seems appropriate to take note of the other subjects which constituted the curriculum - including those subjects which were compulsory and those which (with Gaelic) were fighting to be put on the grant earning list.²⁸

The Scotch Code of 1873 ordained that in standards I to III all children were to take reading, writing and arithmetic; in standards IV to VI history and Geography were also to be taken; needlework was compulsory for girls. Specific subjects (article 21) were introduced from standards IV to VI upwards; originally thirteen in number they were extended to sixteen by 1886 and from 1892 to 1898 the number ranged from twenty to twenty-four. The original thirteen subjects were - English literature and language, Latin, mathematics, Greek, French, German, physical geography,

biology, botany, the two branches of physics, chemistry, mechanics and domestic economy. Mathematics was considered more of a man's preserve than a woman's and so too were the "real sciences", physics and chemistry; the "lesser science", biology, was thought more suitable for girls. While the code of 1876 ordained that all girls who presented in any specific subject had also to present in domestic economy it did not stipulate which branch - but the code of 1879 prescribed that all had to present in both branches; a pass in either branch earned a 2s grant.

The code of 1876 recognised the principles of agriculture as a subject eligible for science and arts grants; in the code of 1883 it became a specific subject. Despite the demands from rural teachers and boards for its placement within the category it never became very popular - probably because it was taught mainly from the text book, with limited practical work.

The code of 1886, apart from including Gaelic within the category of specific subjects, also included a change in subject classification. Pupils in standard IV were no longer permitted to take specific subjects and class subjects were introduced. English literature and language, the most popular specific subject, was made a class subject along with geography and history, elementary science, drawing and needlework for girls; reading, writing and arithmetic remained the standard subjects.

The code of 1890 reduced the prescribed list of specific subjects to seven - mathematics, Latin, Greek, French, German, agriculture

for boys and domestic economy for girls; managers were allowed to select any other subjects as specific subjects provided that a graduated scheme of teaching the subjects had been approved by the department. In 1892 shorthand, book-keeping, navigation, woollen manufacture and geology were added to the list of potential subjects and in 1898 physiology and ambulance, physiography, hygiene, physical science, physics and commercial work were added. The increase in ^{the} number of subjects was designed to allow more freedom to managers and teachers to provide specific subjects which matched the individual capabilities of the teachers, the practical requirements of pupils, and the desires of the local populace - for instance, communities which were either dependent or partially dependent upon the sea might have wished for a navigation course to be included in the curricula of their schools.

The number of presentations according to subjects shows that, in general, the most popular subjects were English literature (before 1886), mathematics, Latin, French, physical geography (until 1890) and domestic economy which remained compulsory for girls. After 1890 the number of pupils presented in mathematics and foreign languages, except Greek, increased more rapidly; the number in agriculture increased at first but soon dropped while the number in shorthand and book-keeping grew. The science subjects, other than physical geography and biology, never attained an important place during the entire period; by 1898 French had become the most popular subject.

There was a correlation between the popularity of subjects and those which could be taken at the university, as well as with the subjects required for entrance to university. In 1892 the arts curriculum was widened. A broader range of honours groups, alternative to the ordinary course, was introduced. Ordinance 11 of 1892 added Semitic languages, Indian languages, Modern languages, English and history to the already existing groups of classics, natural science, mathematics and mental philosophy. University preliminary examinations were also established in 1892; but success in the examination was not made a condition for entrance; to encourage students from rural areas and less favoured schools junior non-qualifying classes in Latin, Greek and mathematics were retained. But for all degree courses the preliminary examination demanded certain entrance requirements - in arts passes in English, Latin or Greek, mathematics and another language or dynamics; in science the same with the substitution of French or German for Latin or Greek; in medicine English, Latin, elementary mathematics, with Greek or French or German. Meanwhile, from 1888, passes in the new Leaving Certificate had been accepted by the universities as denoting that students were capable of entering the ordinary class.

The number of pupils presented in the specific subjects grew from around 19,000 in 1876 (the second full year in which the regulations of the code were in effect) to nearly 69,000 in 1886, the year of the first code under the newly constituted S.E.D. The numbers fell to approximately 47,000 in 1888; thereafter, with the exception of the year 1892, they ranged irregularly

around 50,000. The percentage of the total number of pupils presented in specific subjects of the average number in all inspected schools increased from 5.7% in 1876 to 14.20% in 1886; dropped to 9.33% in 1888; rose to 9.81% in 1890 and thereafter remained around 8% for the following years of the period.

The sudden drop in the number and proportion of the pupils presented after 1886 was due mainly to the changes which had been made in the code of 1886 - as mentioned earlier. In this code pupils in standard IV were no longer permitted to take specific subjects; class subjects were introduced wherein English language and literature, the most popular specific subject, was made a class subject along with geography and history, elementary science, drawing and needlework; reading, writing and arithmetic remained the standard subjects in the elementary years. After 1892 the merit certificate and the admission of pupils from the state aided schools to the Leaving Certificate examination operated as factors checking the growth of specific subjects.

The following table, Table A, reveals the numerical development and decline of the specific subjects - as outlined above.²⁹

Table A

| Year | Pupils presented in specific subjects | Average number in attendance in all inspected schools | Total number presented in specific subjects of the average number in attendance |
|---------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1875/76 | 18,760 | 329,083 | 5.70 |
| 1877/78 | 33,777 | 377,257 | 8.95 |
| 1879/80 | 50,881 | 404,618 | 12.58 |
| 1881/82 | 58,210 | 421,265 | 13.82 |
| 1883/84 | 61,429 | 448,242 | 13.70 |
| 1885/86 | 68,722 | 483,996 | 14.20 |
| 1887/88 | 46,883 | 502,046 | 9.33 |
| 1889/90 | 51,000 | 519,738 | 9.81 |
| 1891/92 | 42,965 | 549,420 | 7.82 |
| 1893/94 | 47,332 | 578,455 | 8.18 |
| 1895/96 | 50,930 | 601,518 | 8.47 |
| 1897/98 | 50,780 | 618,319 | 8.21 |

The following table, Table B, compares the total number of pupils presented in Gaelic with the total number presented in all the specific subjects:³⁰ in a way the comparison is unfair because it is unlikely that unilingual English speakers resident outside Gaeldom would have considered taking Gaelic as a specific subject.

Table B

| Year | Numbers presented in Gaelic | Total number presented in specific subjects |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1885/86 | 99 | 68,722 |
| 1887/88 | 107 | 46,883 |
| 1889/90 | 141 | 51,000 |
| 1891/92 | 271 | 42,965 |
| 1893/94 | 239 | 47,332 |
| 1895/96 | 271 | 50,930 |
| 1897/98 | 286 | 50,780 |

The Gaelic concessions were voluntary; there was no duty placed upon the boards to enact them; Gaelic could be used and taught at will. Although many Gaelic advocates were pleased with the measures, others were not. Militants within An Comunn argued that the concessions could not and were not ensuring the widespread teaching of the language because of the weaknesses inherent in them, because of the hesitancy of school boards to adopt them, and because of the shortage of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers. The militants thus began a campaign to have legislation enacted which was neither voluntary nor permissive, but compulsory. Chapter VIII discusses the campaign in detail; the following chapter, Chapter VI, examines the criticisms which were levied against the compulsory measures.

Chapter VI: The practical problems involved in the application of the Gaelic concessions

The supply of qualified teachers

The attitude of the school boards

The attitude of the inspectors

The supply of qualified teachers

As noted in Chapter II great difficulties were encountered in developing a sufficient supply of qualified teachers. The rural areas of the nation bore the brunt of the shortage. The larger, richer, urban boards could usually offer higher salaries and greater social amenities to attract certificated teachers: rural boards had often to manage with a disproportionate number of unqualified teachers. To overcome the deficiency in the supply of qualified teachers, the S.E.D. relied upon the development of the pupil-teacher system, but even within this system, rural districts were at a disadvantage.

While the rural areas of the Lowlands and the Highlands in general suffered from the insufficient supply of qualified teachers, the Highlands were hit particularly hard because the widespread application of the concessions awarded to the Gaelic language (outlined in Chapter V) depended upon there being a supply of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers: the supply, seldom, if ever, met the need. In 1884 fewer than six Gaelic speakers were in attendance at the training colleges - few Gaels were sufficiently proficient in English to gain admittance to the training colleges.¹ To keep the schools open certificated unilingual English-speaking teachers were employed: often these teachers were ones who, because of personal problems such as temperament and alcoholism, could not secure positions in the south - not even in rural schools.

The measures initiated by the S.E.D. (outlined in Chapter V) to

secure a supply of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers through changes in the pupil-teacher system had little effect because of three factors, two of which operated also against pupil-teachers in rural areas of the Lowlands. Firstly, although certificated teachers were supposed to instruct the pupil-teachers in the Higher Grade courses, overworked headmasters in the understaffed rural schools did not always have the time, qualifications or the inclination to prepare the pupils in Latin, Greek, French, German or any of the sciences up to the standards required. With little instruction few rural pupil-teachers could expect to pass their entrance examination to the training colleges. Thus the concession which allowed Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers to be trained in a school with less than sixty pupils was almost nullified. Secondly, many Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers could not take advantage of the Gaelic paper for the entrance examination to the training colleges because they were "totally unfit to pass a test of any difficulty in grammar".² Thirdly, rural pupil-teachers were not usually in a position to buy the text-books which were easily accessible to pupils in the central schools and training colleges, nor ^{to} afford to spend a year at a central school in preparation for the entrance examination to the training colleges - the expenses of boarding, travelling, etc., were too heavy to be borne without the aid of a bursary, but there were seldom enough bursaries to meet the demands. The failure of rural pupil-teachers to obtain entrance to the colleges ensured that a rapid increase in the supply of qualified teachers would

not occur: in Gaeldom, the failure decreased the chances for the widespread application of the Gaelic concessions incorporated within the education codes.

There were other factors which impeded the certification of pupil-teachers, and, in the long term, the application of the Gaelic concessions. Low salaries and the hesitancy of boards to hire certificated female teachers discouraged female pupil-teachers* from obtaining certification. While the salaries of male certificated teachers, including headships, averaged £137 per year in 1882, women received only half that amount.³ Rural boards were particularly hesitant to hire women, except for teaching the infants and the smaller children, because of a belief that they could not discipline the older children. Parents too were against the hiring of women - many felt women could teach only knitting and sewing, not "booklearning". Inspectors continually urged boards and parents to set aside their prejudices. In 1885 Mr. Scougal of the southern division argued that small, rural schools would be more economically taught by mistresses and masters: the money saved on salaries could be applied to educational facilities, if not to a system of direct central schools.⁴ The year before, Craik had stated that the hiring of women teachers in small schools would avoid the expense of an industrial teacher and "would not probably be less efficient".⁵

There were other discouragements to certification, namely the cost of boarding and the content of the curriculum. The majority

*The majority of pupil-teachers were women.

of pupil-teachers came from poverty-stricken households and could not afford the expense of private lodgings: in 1877 residence in the Church of Scotland's boarding house in Glasgow cost £18 a year, and in 1908/09 private lodgings in Glasgow cost students between 3s and 9s per week.⁶ Another discouragement to certification was the curriculum: apart from studying the regular teaching subjects women had to spend long hours in the theory and practice of domestic economy - part of which involved dreary hours of sewing, cleaning and scrubbing. Thus discouraged many women were content to remain uncertificated in the small, rural schools, without any prospect of advancement - yet assured that they could still earn a living without entering less favoured occupations and trades, such as farm service or the fishing works. The failure of so many to obtain certification was not only a loss to the teaching profession but within Gaeldom was one more nail in the coffin of the Gaelic concessions. As will be seen in later pages the application of the concessions was dependent upon certificated teachers competent to teach Gaelic.

The institution of the junior student system in 1906 (to replace the pupil-teacher system) did not ease the difficulties confronting students from remote communities who wished to be teachers. Students still needed to study away from home and the cost of boarding and travelling remained prohibitive. The S.E.D. did, however, attempt to alleviate the language difficulties that confronted Gaelic speakers, by directing that "where the

centre is attended mainly or largely, by Gaelic speaking-students, it will be expected that the systematic instruction in Gaelic shall form part of the curriculum for Gaelic-speaking students".⁷ There are no figures to indicate the number of Gaelic-speaking junior students but there is a departmental memo from 1915 which stated that in 1914, of the 2,416 candidates for the Leaving Certificate and/or the Junior Student Certificate, just twenty-four had taken the Gaelic paper.⁸ Neither are there statistics from the training colleges which reveal the number of Gaelic-speaking trainees; but there is recorded the number of Gaelic papers presented for examination - in certain years: 11 in 1886, 46 in 1893, 22 in 1894, 40 in 1896, 49 in 1898, 54 in 1900, and 42 in 1903.⁹

In 1913 An Comunn asked the Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen training colleges how many students were continuing their education in Gaelic, how many held the Intermediate Certificate in Gaelic, what arrangements existed for instruction in Gaelic, and the nature and extent of the instruction given.¹⁰ "A miserably, small number", 43, took Gaelic courses. The Glasgow training centre had made special arrangements with the university whereby teacher trainees were allowed to attend the regular university Gaelic classes: 21 trainees (17 of whom held the Intermediate Gaelic Certificate) did so. The Edinburgh training centre had made no provisions for Gaelic courses, nor had it made any arrangements for its students to attend university Gaelic classes. Two Edinburgh students attended the university

classes - on their own initiative. Dundee, like Edinburgh, had no provisions for Gaelic instruction or Gaelic classes - but, then, it had no Gaelic students. Aberdeen, alone of the centres, made its own provisions for Gaelic classes: 20 students took a course of 30 hours per year (in Gaelic grammar, language and literature). Despite Aberdeen's efforts An Comunn was critical - because the scheme did not provide instruction in methods of teaching Gaelic.

When trained, many Gaelic-speaking teachers chose not to return home but to remain in the south where the financial, social and professional advantages were greater and their Gaelic useless. A member of the Inverness (Burgh) school board stated that it required some courage and self-sacrifice for teachers to decide to spend their school days in far away corners, where there was no intellectual life except what they created themselves.¹¹

Housing conditions were also a factor: in some areas the conditions of the teachers' houses and the schools, although usually better than those of the crofters, were not up to the standards of southern teachers or of native teachers who had spent some time in the south and aspired to a status above that of the crofter. In 1903, H.M.I. MacDonald complained to the school board about the dirty conditions of the floors, walls and ceilings of the schools in Barra; he praised the board for improving the buildings in Castlebay, for adding to the accommodation at North Bay and for building houses for the principal assistants at Brevig - the

last was expected to induce those teachers who found it difficult to obtain suitable living quarters to remain in the board's service.¹² In 1910, the E.I.S. alleged that the schools in Lewis were insanitary and a threat to health - sanitation was conspicuous by its absence; the supply of water for teachers' houses was generally unsatisfactory in quality if adjacent to the school premises, and often there was no provision made for a supply within a convenient radius of the schoolhouse; the water supply for scholars was almost non-existent, and when it was available there was a lack of pails and drinking vessels; often the children had to resort to neighbouring streams "more or less contaminated by their own habits and by refuse, etc., from the adjoining crofter settlements".¹³

The Institute also alleged that there was little to counter-balance these disadvantages, not even higher salaries because, as a rule, salaries were inferior to those paid in Highland towns and in the Lowlands generally. It was not the starting salaries that were the cause of this discrepancy, but the yearly increments: this is evidenced in the wage table for headteachers in the parish of Barvas, 1910.

*The medical officers of Lochs, Uig and Barvas denied the allegations.

| School | Average roll | Commencement salary | Present salary | Years of service in Lewis |
|-----------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Shader | 234 | £135 | £135 | 24 |
| Barvas | 127 | 115 | 115 | 2½ |
| Bragar | 209 | 140 | 145 | 10 |
| Cross | 245 | 145 | 145 | 9 |
| Lionel | 380 | 160 | 160 | 1¼ |
| Shawbost | 200 | 130 | 130 | 30 |
| Skigersta | 38 | 50 | 50 | 2 |

These salaries can be compared with those of the Stornoway board recipients and with the average salary received throughout Scotland. The headmaster of a school under the Stornoway board, with a school roll of 132 received £145.

Even the Stornoway salaries were below those of the rest of Scotland - in 1903 the average salary of a male certificated teacher was £143 (£74 for women) and £166 (£87 for women) in 1913.¹⁴

The Institute and the teachers' journal, the Educational News, argued that teachers in remote posts needed and deserved large salaries, not just to compensate for isolation and poor living conditions, but also to meet the high cost of living and the difficulty of obtaining higher education and suitable employment for their children. Chief Inspector Robertson* agreed that higher salaries would help to overcome the disadvantages but argued that

*Robertson was appointed manager of those school boards in Lewis which came under management of the S.E.D. in 1888.

the remote boards did not have the funds to pay large salaries - consequently, boards were forced to pay low salaries and to hire uncertificated teachers.

The Highlands were not the only region of the country which had to resort to unqualified teachers to keep the schools open. Rural and remote areas of the English-speaking northern and southern regions experienced the same situation - a fact continually noted by inspectors in their reports. For instance, Mr. Andrew in 1893, referred to the steadily growing difficulty of Orkney boards in securing the services of suitable teachers for their schools: in 1894 it was "becoming a serious question how some of the schools are to be kept open" - even with the offer of good salaries. The difficulties continued in future years.¹⁶ Mr. King of the southern division said (in 1894) that even when good assistants went to the country towns they stayed only for a short period, preferring to go to Edinburgh and Glasgow where they received better incomes, better chances of advancement, and "where life was apparently more agreeable".¹⁷

When boards resorted to the use of pupil-teachers and monitors to supplement certificated teachers' duties, the academic progress of the children could be slowed down - a point which worried inspectors. Dr. Ogilvie, in his reports for the north in 1895 and 1896, stated that the growing preponderance in the untrained element in the teaching staff formed the most serious obstacle to the satisfactory advancement of the profession, and to the efficiency of the

educational system. In Gaelic-speaking districts educational efficiency was in greater peril than elsewhere because most of the pupil-teachers and monitors had little facility in English. H.M.I. Munro Fraser stated:

"The department encourages the engagement of bilingual pupil-teachers, who are expected at the earliest stages of instruction to interpret the English lessons to the children, but partly from a slender sense of responsibility to their charges, partly from a disinclination to use a language with which they themselves are not thoroughly conversant, and perhaps partly from lack of supervision by head-teachers (who have plenty of work to do in their own division of the school) they have not in many¹⁸ cases contributed materially to the efficiency of the schools."

The E.I.S. alleged that, in Lewis, the habit of hiring monitors rather than certificated teachers, imperilled the efficiency of the educational system. Chief Inspector Robertson denied this accusation.¹⁹ He pointed out that even in schools like Kingussie and Dingwall difficulty was experienced in obtaining qualified teachers. But the crux of his argument was that the Lewis situation was due to attempts to improve the standard of teaching: the pupil-teacher system, a prominent feature of the staffing in Lewis, was being phased out, and Art. 79 assistants (see chapter II) were being sent to the training colleges. Vacancies could have been filled by appointing qualified applicants who had been manifestly jettisoned by other boards but this he refused to do and instead appointed temporary young substitutes (including native monitors) who had been recommended by their headmasters. It was very easy to get an unsatisfactory teacher into Lewis, but it was difficult to get him out when he was entrenched behind the Mundella Act.

This Act (1882) ensured that teachers could not be dismissed without proper deliberation. In 1908 a right of appeal was added which allowed that teachers, within six weeks of dismissal, could appeal to the department for an inquiry: if the board was found at fault, the department could not force reinstatement but it could compel the payment of up to one year's salary. Robertson concluded that the only satisfactory solution to the question of subordinate staff in Lewis was an adequate supply of trained native teachers who knew the actual social conditions and could adapt to them; such teachers could give what he regarded as practically indispensable in the junior section of the schools - bilingual teaching of a superior kind.

Not all qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers went south: some remained at home. What contribution did these make to the teaching of Gaelic and to bilingual instruction? The answer is difficult to determine as official records contain little information on the subject. What information exists surrounds the concessions which made Gaelic a specific subject and a subject for the Leaving Certificates.

When, in 1886, Gaelic was made a specific subject, boards were encouraged to hire qualified teachers to teach it because the department awarded the boards a 10s grant for each pass achieved. Although not obliged to do so, boards usually gave this grant to the teachers - thus encouraging the teachers to teach Gaelic skillfully. But, the effect of this concession was minimised by the provision which stipulated that a university graduate had to

be a member of the staff in any of the schools where Gaelic was taught. Thus, for the grant to be obtained ^{and} for the subject to be taught, a qualified teacher plus a university graduate had to be teachers within the school - a requirement almost impossible in the majority of Highland schools which taught specific subjects. This provision diminished the number of teachers who could teach the subject (even if qualified) and correspondingly decreased the number of pupils who might have taken Gaelic as a specific subject. Despite this, inspectors' annual reports indicate that the number of students who took Gaelic gradually increased over the years - from a low of 99 in 1887/89 to a high of 343 in 1899/1900²⁰.

When Gaelic was dropped as a specific subject in 1900 many teachers stopped teaching it because they no longer received any financial remuneration. And when Gaelic was made a subject on the Leaving and Intermediate Certificates (1905,1915) the Gaelic grant became a cause for dissension between teacher and board. Although some boards offered to share the grant, others refused: Farr, in 1907, and Applecross, in 1908, rejected the request of their teachers for participation in the grant - the teachers' salaries covered all their services and no special payment was to be made for Gaelic teaching.²¹ Such attitudes on the part of the boards did little to encourage teachers to teach Gaelic and might help to account for the small number of students who took the Intermediate and Leaving Certificates - between 70 and 80 a year took the Intermediate paper. The shortage of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers contributed in yet another way to the few students who took the

Gaelic papers - when a teacher of Gaelic received a promotion in another school the Gaelic class was likely to lapse since a qualified successor could not easily be found; and when the promoted teacher went to a school where the teaching of Gaelic was not required, the loss to the language was doubled.²²

The attitude of the school boards

Gaelic militants alleged that if the boards had made a greater demand for the services of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers, ways would have been found to meet the needs. These militants further alleged that the boards did not do so because they were indifferent, if not hostile, to the use and fate of Gaelic. Were these allegations correct? Once again the answer is difficult to determine. Board records reveal few discussions on Gaelic: when discussed it was usually only in relation to the Gaelic grant, inspectors' reports, the hiring of teachers, and petitions received from societies urging an increase in the use of Gaelic within the curriculum. It is the last source which provides the best indication of board attitudes towards the teaching of Gaelic and the hiring of Gaelic-speaking teachers. Two petitions particularly illustrate their attitudes - the 1876 circular from the Gaelic Schools Society (already analysed in Chapter V) which asked boards if they could and would hire Gaelic-speaking teachers; and a petition from An Comunn (1908) urging support for legislative measures which would make the teaching of Gaelic compulsory in Highland schools.*

*The legislative measures are discussed in detail in Chapter VIII

Before studying the results of the petitions it is useful to note the contrasting stages of development in the history of the school boards during these two periods - 1876 and 1908.

In 1876 school boards were in their formative years and many were just beginning to discover what was involved in establishing an educational system in their districts. The difficulties were immense. Buildings had to be built and somehow heated, either by pupils bringing their own peat or the board providing it; sanitary facilities had to be supplied, and at times were not; epidemics and resultant school closures required continual readjustment in curriculum and financial planning; books had to be supplied - often few were available; accommodation for teachers had to be found and maintained at adequate standards; children had to be coerced into attending school when neither they nor their parents saw advantage in it; teachers had to be hired and salaries negotiated; a level of rates had to be determined, which could be afforded, and then passed on to the parochial board for approval and collection. Financial matters worsened when school fees went unpaid and low attendance figures resulted in reduced attendance grants. On top of these and the multiple other difficulties which ensued in the daily workings of school programmes, boards had to ensure that all the academic regulations outlined by the S.E.D. and the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, were applied. Jealousies and sectarian differences amongst board members and within communities could, and often did, hamper the efficient operation of the boards.

With so many demands placed upon them, it is not surprising to discover that boards did not allot either much time or attention to the role which Gaelic might perform within the educational system. By 1908 little had changed. Boards were still immersed in many of the problems which occupied them in 1876: more than a few boards were overwhelmed by the evergrowing demands placed upon them: in some cases educational efficiency was imperilled. Well before 1908 voices were raised (especially that of the E.I.S.) demanding that the board system be altered, or the boards eliminated.

Much of the discussion centred on the question of enlarged areas. Many advocates of reform thought that if the school board areas were to be remodelled, public primary, intermediate and secondary education, with all the funds administered by the Secondary Education Committees, ought to be placed under one authority (and this an ad hoc authority), in order that effective co-ordination of the different classes of schools might be attempted with some prospect of success. The population covered by many school boards was too small to warrant the provision of any secondary education within their borders. Of the 972 boards, 916 dealt with a population of 2,396,588 while the remaining 56 dealt with a population of 2,075,515.²³

Disagreements arose over which area should be selected as the most likely to foster educational progress; whether county or district, or whether parishes could be retained as subsidiary units but combined to form administrative districts based on size, geography,

and educational needs. Teachers, boards and the department itself, disagreed over what was the best method available. The controversy was **raging** by the time of the introduction of the 1908 Education (Scotland) Bill: indeed, it was so great that the government, in fear of losing the Bill altogether, dropped the issue of board reform. Change would have to wait until 1918.

With the threat of abolition hanging over their heads few boards were willing or in the mood to devote much time and energy to An Comunn's demands in 1908 for the compulsory use of Gaelic in Highland schools. In 1918 when their disbandment was almost a foregone conclusion, even less interest was paid to An Comunn's plea for compulsory measures.

As seen in Chapter V, the circular of the Gaelic Schools Society of 1876 received the following responses: 65 boards supported the teaching of Gaelic and 25 opposed it; 53 boards said Gaelic-speaking teachers could be obtained, 14 said they could not (the questionnaire did not stipulate qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers). Because of the little information contained in board records it is almost impossible to ascertain the reasons - personalities, principles, etc. - which induced some school boards to react differently from others; the records of some boards, however, do contain guarded and limited statements which at least shed some light on why particular positions were taken.

The support of many boards was given upon the condition that the curriculum would not be interfered with and that there would be a

sufficient supply of Gaelic-speaking teachers. Lochbroom (Ross), welcomed any proposal for the teaching of Gaelic provided it did not interfere with the recognised subjects, and that the grant received for such teaching did not cause the loss of any other grant: the chairman dissented because he held that the time for education was limited and the teaching of too many subjects would be more injurious than beneficial.²⁴ Blair Atholl (Perth), supported the teaching of Gaelic but stated that there was "difficulty in obtaining the services of teachers who are acquainted with Gaelic and who, at the same time, are equally efficient in other branches".²⁵ Kilninian and Kilmore (Argyll), opposed the appointment of Gaelic-speaking teachers unless they "otherwise prove efficient".²⁶ Kingussie (Inverness), supported the proposal but said there was the greatest difficulty in obtaining Gaelic-speaking teachers and that the difficulty would become greater unless the "department give special encouragement and grants to boys and girls who wish to become teachers to enable them to prepare themselves for entering training colleges"; the board also petitioned the Duke of Richmond "to make suitable provision in the code for the teaching of Gaelic in the public schools where it is the spoken language of the people".²⁷ Locharron (Ross), "would approve the teaching of Gaelic in their schools", but for the great difficulty in getting Gaelic-speaking teachers and "to their having only one Gaelic-speaking teacher out of their four at present".²⁸ Other boards such as Uig (Lewis), Barvas (Lewis), and Kinlochranoch (Perth) thought Gaelic-teaching desirable and believed there would

be no difficulty in getting teachers. The Abernethy and Kincardine Board (Inverness), was initially divided on the matter but later "resolved not to support the application of the Gaelic Schools Society"; no reason was given.²⁹ Killarrow and Kilmeny (Argyll), stated that it "would not be beneficial" to teach Gaelic in any of their schools.³⁰ Duthill (Inverness), was "not interested in the matter".³¹ And presumably the twenty-five boards which did not respond to the circular were not interested either.

Two points must be made on the responses of the boards to the circular. Firstly, board minutes do ^{not} reveal why boards took the views they did; secondly, even if boards said they could get teachers they might be wrong (and often were).

An Comunn's proposal to make the teaching of Gaelic compulsory through amendments to the 1908 Education (Scotland) Bill aroused considerable opposition amongst school boards - because of the financial hardships which they would incur through the loss of the residue grant*, the difficulties involved in securing qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers, and the belief that the provisions for Gaelic were already sufficient. Although a few boards such as Oban, Kilbrandon and Kilchattan in Argyll, Kilvaxter and Portree in Skye, and Laggan in mainland Inverness supported the amendments, the majority of boards did not.

*Any school which did not comply with the proposals would lose the residue grant of 7/- per unit of average attendance. See Chapter VIII for more information on this (and on the amendments).

Boards such as Tarbert (Harris), Dingwall, Lochgoilhead, Eddrachillis, Balquhidder and Stornoway all agreed with the voluntary teaching of Gaelic because it aided the acquisition of English, but they rejected compulsion. Stornoway, whose chairman Dr. Murray, was a member of An Comunn, argued that any interference with the discretion of local communities was an indication of distrust in the Highland people, an unwarranted restriction of local liberty and contrary to the democratic tendencies of modern legislation.³²

Boards such as Kilarrow and Kilmeny, Glengaray and Inveraray, protested that there was a shortage of qualified teachers and an even greater shortage of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers. Harris (Inverness) declared that compulsion would narrow the selection of teachers and decrease the efficiency of education in English - "... some of our best schools have non-Gaelic head teachers with native subordinates".³³

Almost every board objected to the loss of the residue grant. The boards of Lochs, Uig and Barvas complained -

"The additional financial penalty involving a loss of 7/- per unit of average attendance, the board regards as tyrannical, especially in view of the fact that the total rates in the parish are 15/11 per £ of assessable rental and the board is and has been for years subsidised by the Department in consequence of the utter inability of the parish to support itself from local resources".³⁴

After the proposals were defeated in the Standing Committee of the Bill, a new measure was introduced in the Report Stage: the

measure stipulated that additional revenue would be made available to assist the training of Gaelic-speaking aspirants to the teaching profession. This proposal was more favourably received because it would help to increase the number of teachers and because all financial restrictions on the boards were removed.

Boards such as Stornoway, Uig, Lochs, Barvas, and the Inverness (Burgh) Board which had opposed the original amendments gave almost total support to the new proposal. When the Rev. Mr. Connell of the Inverness (Burgh) Board moved the motion of support for the new amendment he spoke of the "necessity and propriety of Highland school boards fostering the teaching of Gaelic and the facilities which the operation of this proposal would place in their hands for doing so".³⁵ The Rev. Mr. MacKenzie, in seconding the motion said, "there were many Gaelic-speaking teachers who were able to teach English subjects in any part of Scotland who went where they got the biggest salary". If Highland boards could increase the salaries of the teachers, there would be no shortage of Gaelic-speaking teachers in the region.

It should not be assumed that opposition to the amendments necessarily meant opposition to Gaelic teaching in general or that the boards did not employ Gaelic-speaking teachers in their schools. Kilchoman (Argyll) disapproved of the amendments but in 1904 it had petitioned the S.E.D. in favour of Gaelic teaching (the board had the same membership in 1904 and 1908). The board

believed that two conditions were necessary for Gaelic teaching - a larger supply of Gaelic-speaking teachers and the payment to teachers of a government grant based on the average attendance of pupils receiving instruction in Gaelic.³⁶ The board of Urquhart (Ross) opposed the 1908 amendments but, in 1905, it had supported the establishment of a training centre for Gaelic teachers in the Highlands and it supported the awarding of grants to Gaelic-speaking teacher trainees. In 1908 it stated:

"The board while sympathetic with the desires of An Comunn that Gaelic-speaking children should receive instruction in the vernacular are of the opinion that in order to secure an improvement where such seems needed, in existing provisions for that purpose, it is not necessary to seek parliament's sanction".³⁷

Because so few Highland school board Minutes are complete (many no longer survive, particularly those of the Western Isles), because so many board Minutes just note (without comment) the arrival of An Comunn's petition, and because so few boards responded to the petition, it is difficult to determine any kind of pattern - geographic or otherwise - of opposition to, or support for, the amendments. The S.E.D. received only fourteen board petitions against the amendments, and five in support. Two of the boards which supported the measures, Greenock and Rothesay, were outside the Highlands. The following table, Table A, shows support and opposition on a county basis. The table was composed from information contained in S.E.D. files and school board minutes.

Table A

| School Board | Oppose amendment | Support amendment |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Ross</u> | | |
| Barvas | Yes | |
| Lochs | Yes | |
| Uig | Yes | |
| Stornoway | Yes | |
| Urquhart | Yes | |
| Dingwall | Yes | |
| Rosemarkie | Yes | |
| <u>Inverness</u> | | |
| Harris | Yes | |
| Inverness (Burgh) | Yes | |
| Laggan | | Yes |
| Portree | | Yes |
| Arisaig | | Yes |
| <u>Argyll</u> | | |
| Dunoon | Yes | |
| Glengaray & Inveraray | Yes | |
| Killarow & Kilmenny | Yes | |
| Kilchoman | Yes | |
| Kilninian | Yes | |
| Tarbert | Yes | |
| Kildalton | Yes | |
| Lochgoilhead | Yes | |
| Glenurchy & Inishail | Yes | |
| Kildalton & Kilbrandon | | Yes |
| Kilmodan | | Yes |
| Tiree | | Yes |
| Oban (Burgh) | | Yes |

(continued)

Table A (continued)

| School Board | Opposed to amendment | Support amendment |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Sutherland</u> Eddrachillis | Yes | |
| <u>Perth</u> Balquhiddy | Yes | |
| <u>Outside Gaeldom</u> Greenock | | Yes |
| Rothesay (Burgh) | | Yes |
| | Boards in support - 9 | |
| | Boards opposed - 20 | |

It is interesting to compare, where possible, board responses to the circular of 1876 and to the amendments of 1908. The following table, Table B, makes this comparison. The table was composed from information contained in S.E.D. files, school board minutes, and the 1876 circular from the Gaelic School Society.

Table BComparison between the circular of 1876 and the amendments of 1908

| School Board | 1876 | | 1908 | |
|-------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | support | oppose | support | oppose |
| <u>Argyll</u> | | | | |
| Kilarrow & Kilmenny | | yes | | yes |
| Kilninian & Kilmore | yes | | | yes |
| Kildalton | yes | | | yes |
| Kilbrandon & Kilchattan | | yes | yes | |
| Glenurchy & Inishail | | yes | | yes |
| <u>Ross</u> | | | | |
| Lochs | yes | | | yes |
| Uig | yes | | | yes |
| Barvas | yes | | | yes |
| Stornoway | yes | | | yes |
| Urquhart | | yes | | yes |
| Kintail | yes | | yes | |
| <u>Inverness</u> | | | | |
| Laggan | yes | | yes | |
| Portree | yes | | yes | |
| Harris | yes | | | yes |
| <u>Perth</u> | | | | |
| Balquhidder | yes | | | yes |

Of the fifteen boards, eleven supported and four opposed Gaelic teaching in 1876. In 1908 the exact reverse happened - eleven opposed and four supported the Gaelic proposals. Eight of the eleven which were in favour of Gaelic teaching in 1876 opposed compulsion in 1908. Only one board, Kilbrandon and Kilchattan, switched its position from opposition to support in 1908.

Militants within the language movement denounced the boards for their negative responses. The militants alleged that the boards were unsympathetic to Gaelic because boards were dominated by men from the higher classes - lairds, factors, clergy, farmers, and doctors: men who were strangers to the people and to their aspirations, men with little knowledge of and/or sympathy with the requirements of the crofters and cottars - the Gaelic speakers. The militants themselves were of the 'higher classes' - many were exiles who had achieved success in the south. Although removed from the crofters in status and/or geography, the militants believed that they were far more aware of the needs and concerns of the ordinary Gaels than the higher class men who sat on the school boards.

Although the boards were, especially in the early years, dominated by men from the better off in society,* were the Gaelic militants accurate or even fair in attributing Gaelic's minimal use in the schools to the boards' composition? The answer is difficult to determine but some facts are worth noting. To counter the election of the so-called anti-Gaelic board candidates, An Comunn during board elections urged Gaels to elect pro-Gaelic candidates. In 1906 Gaels were advised to -

"Demand from candidates for school boards, at the approaching elections, a promise, which will in most cases be given, that they, if elected, shall lose no time in endeavouring to introduce Gaelic teaching into their schools. See to it, above all, that the children are taught to read the scriptures in the mother tongue, and the result will be its own reward."³⁸

*As noted in Chapter II there is little evidence to suggest that crofters were widely represented on the boards.

Electors were advised to be "well prepared beforehand to select and support those candidates only who will, if elected, pledge themselves to have the teaching of Gaelic placed in the curriculum of all schools in the Gaelic-speaking districts".³⁹ But familiarity with the candidates' positions on Gaelic was not sufficient to guarantee the election of pro-Gaelic candidates. The Reverend G. MacKay, Vice-President of An Comunn (in 1917) acknowledged the vital role performed by the social conditions in the election of candidates in the crofting parishes:

"Anyone who understands the complex social fabric of many of our Highland parishes knows well that the existence of a majority of electors genuinely in favour of Gaelic is not inconsistent with a majority returned not enthusiastic about Gaelic. There are so many cross currents at work, so many cross interests at play, ecclesiastical, social, commercial and otherwise that it is often difficult for the Gaelic feeling and desire to receive adequate expression."⁴⁰

Not all the advocates of Gaelic agreed with MacKay. A number of them complained that Gaels did not elect pro-Gaelic board candidates because they were apathetic about the fate of the Gaelic language. One even stated that in future years Gaels would be regarded as traitors to their mother tongue; Gaels were "men without a backbone" who stood "meekly by without a word of protest" while "poor Gaelic, though the vehicle of a culture older and more enobling than that of the modern Huns is refused recognition in her own land".⁴¹

Such criticisms of Gaels presume that they were aware that the Gaelic language was in a state of decline, that they were also

aware of an excessive use of English within the schools and that they had a knowledge of the workings of the educational system.

How Gaels were to be aware of these facts, the Gaelic societies do not reveal. Neither the journals of An Comunn nor the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness had a wide distribution within the Highlands. The branches of An Comunn were not numerous and during elections their members could do only limited campaigning. Perhaps most important of all, the men in charge of educational affairs were stressing the need for English, not the need for Gaelic.

But even if crofters were aware that Gaelic was in a state of decline, and that failure to use it in the schools threatened its existence still further, would they have protested? In planning the campaign for the 1911 board elections, one member of the executive committee of An Comunn suggested that competent persons should be selected to lay the claims of Gaelic before the people because "there was much misapprehension in certain parts of the Highlands as to the utility of the language at all".⁴² The speaker accused the Gael of becoming a cold utilitarian because he recognised that the state of advancement lay through English. He went on -

"prudence was required to convince him that a knowledge of his own language did not militate against a sound knowledge of English. The whole thing centred on the difference between culture and knowledge, or on educational values - a principle which few boards did not seem to grasp, and still fewer of the ordinary people".

An Comunn cannot be absolved from blame for the failure of the 1908 amendment. To suggest that the generally poor Highland boards should forego certain financial revenues for failing to implement the compulsory clause was an almost suicidal proposition. This proposal invited opposition, especially while the supply of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers could not ensure the enactment of the clause by each board.

Whether the boards, in their opposition, adequately reflected the feelings of the Gaels on the issue, is another matter. It is difficult, if not impossible, to judge the degree of Gaelic which Gaels wanted to have included in the curriculum; but, it is reasonable to state that the overwhelming majority wanted their children to acquire English for the economic advantages which its knowledge presented. It would appear that the Gaels associated school with the acquisition of English and not with the development of Gaelic.

The attitude of the inspectors

There are many similarities between the decline in the Scots tongue and the decline of Scottish Gaelic. The beginnings of the demise of Scots can be traced to Reformation times when the only available Bibles in print were in English, not Scots. As connections with England - social, political and economic - grew stronger, as literacy increased and as educational systems evolved, Scots apparently declined in use among the aspiring and well-off sections of society. It has been asserted that

during the eighteenth century the Scottish tongue was thought unsuitable for all serious and practical purposes - for all written and spoken discourses on formal occasions, even for familiar letter writing.⁴³ By the end of the eighteenth century English is said to have supplanted Scots in fashionable circles, in the pulpit, the university, and on the public platform.

The extensive use of the Scots tongue in the literature of the nineteenth century was insufficient to reverse the trend. As urbanisation, industrialisation, commercialisation, and education advanced, so too did English. The near exclusion of the Scots language from the educational system created in 1872 determined that it would continue further in its decline. This relegation of Scots to the back burner of the educational system was merely an extension of the process established in the schools of the eighteenth century. Even while Scots remained the vernacular of the masses, the oral cultural tradition, particularly the purity of the tradition was affected by literacy in English. Literacy "both removed the *raison d'être* of oral composition and exposed people to new literary modes and criteria, new kinds of language and a new method of composition".⁴⁴ As industrialisation changed the social condition of the people so too did it change the quality of the songs and poems sung and composed by the masses. Songs and poems were no longer traditional modern and sub-literary productions. Even in the rural districts, and in the textile industries of the North-East,

where the traditional forms of oral composition are held to have survived, the great weight of social change ensured that the compositions would be altered by the new and evolving conditions of the time.

So we have in the nineteenth century the two languages of Scotland declining and under the threat of yet further decline because of the changing socio-economic conditions and the educational system of the period. In reference to the role of Scots and Gaelic within the educational system of 1872 two facts are worth noting. Firstly, while Gaelic was assigned official recognition within the code in the 1870's and 1880's no recognition was extended to Scots until 1907 (see page 259). Secondly, as with Gaelic, Scotsmen concerned with educational progress and the cultural development of the nation, argued over whether a role should be assigned to Scots within the curriculum. While men such as Blackie lobbied for its use in the school others, particularly the Educational News, opposed its inclusion (see Chapter IV). The inspectorate was also divided over the merits and demerits of Scots in the curriculum, just as they were over Gaelic. In both Gaeldom and in the Lowlands the inspectors' disagreements over the language issue centred on the degree of Gaelic and Scots necessary to ensure that the masses acquired an efficient and sufficient knowledge of English. English was a foreign language to the children of the lower classes in both regions of the country yet it was needed by them if they were to advance economically and socially in life.

Within Gaeldom some inspectors argued for the minimal use of Gaelic while others insisted that Gaelic needed to be used extensively in the curriculum. The viewpoints of H.M.I.'s Jolly, Ross, Munro Fraser, Boyd and Walker, demonstrate clearly the division of opinion within the inspectorate.*

W. Jolly, a Lowlander who had studied Gaelic literature through English translations, was an ardent supporter of the use of Gaelic and the Scots tongue within the educational system of the Highlands and Lowlands. He believed that Scots and Gaelic could aid the acquisition of English; that the use of Gaelic would instil in Gaels an appreciation of the power and beauty of their own language; that Gaelic could and should be used within the elementary and higher branches of education in Gaeldom.

Jolly's advocacy of Gaelic did not extend to the teaching of Gaelic before English. Because the time in school was short, because English was the foreign language, and therefore the more difficult to learn, it was to be taught before Gaelic. To ensure that the children understood the English they were taught, Gaelic was needed as a medium of instruction, translation and communication - particularly in the infant classes where most of the children spoke Gaelic only. As children progressed

*Because the S.R.O. files of the S.E.D. do not contain the original reports of the inspectors, their printed reports have to be relied upon for information: S.R.O. staff believe the original reports have been destroyed.

in their knowledge of English, the use of Gaelic was to decrease accordingly - Gaelic, when used unnecessarily, retarded the progress of English. In this particular area of his advocacy Jolly was not unique - as will be seen shortly; but in two other spheres he differed considerably from his fellow inspectors, particularly from Sime, Ross and MacLeod.

Firstly, he suggested that when competency was achieved in the reading and speaking of English, Gaelic reading could be introduced: at this stage it was a simple matter for the children to apply their power of reading English to speaking Gaelic, and since Gaelic was the native language, it could be mastered with ease. Secondly, while others merely raised no objections to Gaelic being made a specific subject, Jolly urged its placement within the specific subject category. Gaelic in the higher classes would not hinder educational progress for it would afford the important intellectual gymnastics of inter-translation between two languages, and would give Gaels the intellectual gain claimed for the study of two languages. Apart from this, Gaelic had a literature which was worthy of study and preservation: the literature was abundant, varied, powerful, and full of fine feelings, practical wisdom and natural life. Jolly was no less enthusiastic over the great richness and national heritage contained within the literature of the Scottish tongue: he argued forcefully for the study of

Scottish literature within the educational system.

To those who wished Gaelic "stamped out", Jolly advised that the object could best be attained not by its exclusion from the curriculum but -

"by a judicious cultivation of Gaelic in teaching English, so as to train the intelligence through it; because the more English is intelligently understood and used by Gaelic (sic) children, the sooner will it become the general speech of the people, and the sooner, therefore will Gaelic die".⁴⁵

Thus, both friends and enemies of Gaelic had an interest in securing its use within the educational system; but Jolly, a friend of Gaelic, wished to see it live a long life.

Although D. Sime, J. MacLeod, and D. Ross, three Gaelic speakers, agreed that some Gaelic was necessary as a medium of communication (in the early stages of education), and that Gaelic could (not should) be made a specific subject without harming the children's acquisition of English, all were ardently opposed to the extensive use of Gaelic within the school. They believed that the time in school should be spent learning English - not speaking and reading Gaelic. While Sime was generally content to confine his views to the S.E.D. (see Chapter V), MacLeod and Ross wrote to the Irish Education Department (in 1884) urging it to refrain from making any use of Gaelic whatsoever in its schools.⁴⁶ Since the views of the three men are so similar, only Ross's will be discussed here.

Ross argued that several of those who had been most emphatic in recommending Gaelic literature as an instrument of the highest

culture, had only such knowledge of its contents as might be gathered from the outskirts of hearsay - no doubt a reference to Jolly - while others who loudly asserted its superiority over Latin and Greek were unable to translate a single line of Virgil or Homer.

Ross denied that Gaelic had either much educational value or much of a literature. There was not a single Gaelic newspaper, not a series of class books in Gaelic, and until the eighteenth century there had been no Gaelic version of the Scriptures. The literary heritage of the past was neither extensive nor great. There was no great poem, no great history, no work of philosophy or science in Gaelic. What existed were a few modern translations of popular religious works, and a few other books of no great literary value, and a few articles from the able pen of Dr. N. MacLeod. The existing written Gaelic literature was meagre in quantity, and in quality found its parallel every Saturday in the year in the columns of the provincial press.

Ross also argued that Gaelic's character and the circumstances of the country rendered its adoption into the time table of the school very difficult. Thousands of Highlanders learned English but few Lowlanders learned Gaelic. The language had deficiencies which made it almost impossible to teach. There were several Gaelic dialects but few people competent to teach them; there was no definite standard of spelling - the custom was for each writer to form a standard for himself and to do

battle with all who differed from him. "The earlier written specimens were phonetic to a marvellous extent, the same author writing the same words in many ways."⁴⁷

As noted above, Ross admitted, grudgingly, that two Gaelic concessions could be allowed which would not hinder the acquisition of English: Gaelic could be made a specific subject, and it could usefully be employed by teachers in remote corners to explain the lessons to the children, just as Broad Scotch was employed in several parts of the country. (Ross did not develop his views on Broad Scotch).

Inspectors A. Walker and Munro Fraser believed that since the children were exposed to so much Gaelic at home and to so little English, progress in English could be achieved only if the children were exposed to English in season and out of season. This did not mean Gaelic's exclusion from the curriculum: in the junior classes, where most of the children had little or no English, Gaelic-speaking teachers would "wisely" make use of their Gaelic until the pupils knew enough English to justify the dropping of it. But, in the senior classes, the less Gaelic that was used the better: at this level Gaelic only impeded progress in English. Indeed, Walker had found -

"... the best knowledge of English and the greatest facility in using it in schools taught by persons who had no knowledge of Gaelic whatever; and naturally so, because the scholars were compelled to use English in their answers to the teachers, there being no other medium of communication, and the teacher being bound to make the scholars understand him, had to vary his expressions and multiply his instances until he found a form of words that would serve his purpose".⁴⁸

Munro Fraser was also very concerned about the difficulties which Gaelic-speaking children in isolated communities were confronted with in reading because of the 'foreign' content of the textbooks. Not only were the children unfamiliar with many of the terms, events and articles referred to, but they also ran into trouble over the definitions used by the teachers to explain them.- all too often the definition was as unintelligible to the children as the word itself; because of this problem Fraser advised that reading needed to be judged more leniently than other subjects. ⁴⁹

Inspector Boyd supported teaching in Gaelic and the teaching of Gaelic reading to a greater degree than even Jolly.⁵⁰ Boyd argued that children who were taught to read only English did not fully understand what they read, nor did they read with ease: because of this factor many gave up reading once they left school - and after a few years any facility in reading that they might have possessed was lost. Boyd argued that it was natural and reasonable that the children be taught to read the only language which they understood - this teaching would not diminish the amount of English teaching, rather it would "afford to the better acquirement of English". Reading the one language would not hinder the reading of the other, "and translation from the one to the other from an early stage would be of distinct educational value". Boyd advised the department that in Gaelic-speaking

districts schools should be allowed to have the second reading book required by the code in that language - i.e. Gaelic.

While testifying to the fruitful results obtained from the excellent use of the Gaelic vernacular by some teachers, he cautioned those teachers who used Gaelic "to save themselves trouble for the time, but who fail to give it any living contact with the English books which their children are reading".

There were other inspectors such as Kerr, Bathgate, Harvey and Wilson who occasionally advocated the use of Gaelic and the awarding of some concessions to the language, but there was no concerted demand by them or any of the others mentioned (save Jolly) for the enactment of Gaelic concessions or a Gaelic programme. Still others, such as Stewart, Sime and MacLeod, opposed the granting of any, but the most minor ones, to the language. And, as will be seen in chapter VIII, the inspectorate, led by Robertson and Munro Fraser, opposed the efforts to make the use of Gaelic compulsory in Highland schools.

Schooling in the Lowlands was affected by two problems related directly to language. Firstly, the children's vernacular was so far removed from the literary English taught in school that the children neither learned to read easily nor to understand and retain what they read; and secondly, - once the children had left school their use of English largely disappeared from their speech and from their reading - if they read at all when they were away from school.

Inspectors such as Jolly, Smith, Wilson, Walker and Scougal believed that this situation existed because teachers failed to convey the relevance and meaning of English words and texts to the students; such failure occurred because of the insufficient use, if not the exclusion of, the vernacular from the classroom; the children would only acquire an understanding and working knowledge of English if and when more use was made of the Scottish language, including the reading and singing of Scottish poems, prose and song.

Inspector J. Smith noted that in the most destitute parts of the mining districts of South Lanarkshire girls were especially susceptible to "losing" their education: after a couple of years out of school many were almost unable to read. Their reading abilities were hampered because they could not understand the vocabulary in either newspapers or books.

"The extent of their vocabulary is very limited, being confined to the expression of their simplest and most immediate wants, and so far as the structure of a sentence is concerned, there is little else than interjectional ejaculations or the formation of the simplest possible sentence".⁵¹

Smith saw only two ways of improving the vocabulary - by the teachers allowing the children to paraphrase readings into their own vernacular, and by the syllabus of the IV and V standards being revised to include modern historical and political developments in Britain - topics which might sustain the interest of students while in school and out of school. If the interest could

be sustained there was a greater possibility that children would continue to read when school days were over.

Inspector Walker also argued that much of the fault for the children's dislike of reading lay with the text-books. Who, he asked, wanted to read books, the words of which they did not understand? More interesting text-books with a more basic vocabulary "would erase this ugly blot upon the page of our educational results".⁵²

A. Scougal advised teachers that their role was not to attempt to overcome the intonation peculiar to certain regions of the country, or to foist a foreign pronunciation upon Scotch children: their role was to endeavour to root out slovenly speech and to secure a clear and crisp pronunciation.⁵³

Several inspectors believed that the national poetry and songs of Scotland were being, but did not deserve to be, neglected in the schools. Wilson, a supporter of the vernacular (and Gaelic) in the schools, said that "so much of the real life of a nation is interwoven with the national song that it is surely not too much to expect, that in the national schools the national airs should get, at least a fair share of the time and attention devoted to singing".⁵⁴ Whereas it should be the rule to hear songs like "Scots Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Bled" and the "Garb of Old Gaul", it was the exception. Almost all the inspectors in the Highlands encouraged the singing of Gaelic songs, but the

churches, particularly the Free Church, encouraged resistance to singing, especially secular singing and the use of musical instruments such as the harmonica. Often this resistance to singing was the cause of a school receiving, if not a small singing grant, no singing grant whatsoever.

Mr. Galloway wrote of his regret that Gaels, through their ignorance of the classical Scotch dialect, were debarred from its beauties: * "... to be debarred from enjoyment of the pithiness of Scotch prose and the pathos of Scotch ballad poetry, is not only to lose a keen emotional pleasure, but to be outside the national tradition".⁵⁵ This was not an educational fault but it was an educational misfortune.

It would be wrong to imply that all inspectors approved unequivocally of the use of the dialect and of national songs. Mr. Stewart, no great lover of the Banff-shire dialect, concluded that it was unfortunate that the influence of the well-educated and cultured teacher did not extend to the eradication of the horrible accent and vernacular in some parts of the north. If the accent were pleasing like the melodious intonation of the Highlanders, he would not recommend such a course. Although he

*This was not exactly accurate. There were at least three publications which translated traditional Scottish songs and poetry, including Burns' Auld Lang Syne and Tam O'Shanter, into Gaelic: see MacLean, Typographia Scoto-Gadelica, (Edinburgh 1915)

did not wish pronunciation to be reduced to a dead level of uniformity, "a most undesirable consummation", "a number of excrescent branches might usefully be lopped off"; and "the tree would be no worse for the operation".⁵⁶

Inspectors MacLeod and Dunn were worried about the peculiarities of teachers' speech. Dunn believed that because of the extensive migration of teachers from one district to another it was desirable that peculiarities of pronunciation should be removed and an approach made to "the established norm of English speech".⁵⁷ He insisted that he was not advocating an anglicised mode of speech (which was often affected) nor was it possible to eradicate completely provincial peculiarities, "but the effort should be made to secure a close approximation to the form of utterance prevalent among many educated people in general".⁵⁸

A departmental memorandum to teachers and managers, in 1907, outlined the department's attitude to the use of the Scots and Gaelic languages.⁵⁹ The memo stated that, Lowland Scots, "being historically a national language", was not to be treated as a provincial dialect; that the teacher was not to discourage the use of Lowland Scots by children "in those familiar talks through which he seeks to give them confidence", nor was he to hesitate to use it himself when English failed as a medium of communication. The same principles were to apply in "full force" where Gaelic and Gaelic-speaking children were concerned.

Scottish songs, poems and ballads were to be used in literature classes; tales and poems of local repute were not to be disdained in their native localities for they laid at the roots of popular literature. Exercises in oral composition (singing, rhymes, etc.) were to be designed to encourage the children to speak freely, whether in English, in Scots or Gaelic.

This memorandum was initiated within a year of Mr. Scougal's appointment to the position of senior chief inspector. It would be interesting to know how much of a hand he had in its composition: it certainly does reflect some of the ideas which he espoused as an inspector and chief inspector.

Whether the guidelines were followed is yet another matter and a subject for further research. Certainly the impression conveyed in the writings of Craigie and Buchan do not reflect an educational system (of this period) espousing and perpetuating either the Scots language or its culture. Indeed, the writings suggest only the most minimal use of it.

What conclusions can be drawn from the attitudes of the inspectors to the language issue? Although credit can be given to those individuals who encouraged the use of Scots and Gaelic in the curriculum, their efforts left much to be desired. The inspectors neither encouraged, developed nor participated in the development of programmes and projects in Scots and Gaelic:

although some inspectors in the Lowlands urged the printing of more meaningful text-books there are no indications that they participated in such a task - just as the inspectorate in Gaeldom failed to do. The efforts of the inspectorate on behalf of the Scots and Gaelic languages are seen in a much dimmer role when they are compared with the active and participatory role played by the Welsh and Irish inspectors on behalf of their national languages (see Chapter VIII).

Many of the problems which confronted school boards in Gaeldom were similar to those which faced remote and rural boards in the Lowlands: the next chapter is concerned with a comparison between two boards in Gaelic-speaking districts and two in English-speaking districts.

Chapter VII: A Comparison of the Problems Confronting
Highland and Lowland School Boards During
Their Formative Years

This chapter is concerned with a study of the problems that were involved in establishing an educational system to conform to the demands of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, in Lowland and Highland districts of similar economic circumstances, geographic conditions, and population levels. The task was made difficult by the non-existence of the Minutes of many boards, and the incomplete nature of most of those that do exist. The lack of information in more than a few minutes complicated the effort even further. It would have been ideal to compare one or two of the boards of the Outer Hebrides for Highland Boards with a Lowland Board but the only complete minutes which exist are those of Barvas and Uig; since these boards were discussed so thoroughly in Chapter II it would have been repetitious to do so again.

The boards of Kells (Kircudbright), Blair-Athol, Dunning and Logierait (all in Perthshire) were finally selected. The high property valuation of these boards makes the study somewhat unsatisfactory as the high valuation meant that the school rate would not be the burden upon the ratepayers that it was in poorer parishes. But as the reader will see this high valuation did not prevent the boards from exercising frugality, if not parsimony, when it came to paying teachers and providing suitable accommodation for the children. The reader will also see that several of the problems which confronted the four wealthy boards were similar to those which confronted the poorer ones.

The minutes indicate that the four boards were faced with three major problems during their formative years - obtaining and maintaining suitable accommodation; attracting a supply of qualified and competent teachers; establishing a low school rate - a task made difficult by the non-payment of school fees, and by the loss of government grants through irregular attendance, unsuitable premises, and inefficient teaching. Any loss in revenue from these sources had to be made up from the rates - a consequence that was anathema to the members of the four school boards. In the following pages each school board is examined individually but the pattern outlined above develops quickly.

Although Blair-Athol, a very extensive parish (30 X 18 miles) located in north-west Perthshire, had a higher valuation than many other Gaelic-speaking parishes, the problems confronting the school board were similar to those of most other Highland boards.¹ The size of the parish and the remoteness of its communities ensured that there would be difficulties in attracting teachers and establishing suitable accommodation.

What of the educational provisions and economic conditions in the years before 1872? The N.S.A. noted that much of the land was either arable or hill pasture; that Atholl Forest contained 7,000 red deer; that there were black cattle and black-faced sheep; that the total rental of the parish was £14,000 (including the rent for shooting grounds). There was no market

in the town and it "can scarcely be said that there is a village in it". The parish had a population of 2,384.

Gaelic was the language of the parish but there were few under thirty who could not read, write and speak English.

"The elementary books now in Gaelic and the numerous publications of the present day in that language, whether well or ill-executed, and the more general reading of Gaelic in the schools, are but indirect methods of enabling the children to acquire a knowledge of English with greater facility."

There were seven schools in the parish (including two society schools) which taught 358 children. In the parochial school about 80 children were taught Latin and the "other usual branches of education". In the districts of Bolespick, Glenerichty and Glengarry there was "scarcely the semblance of a school, except for three months in winter".

At the time of the Education (Scotland) Act the parish had a population of 1,718 and required additional schools but the school board was hesitant about building because of the costs involved. The board was extremely conservative where the spending of the money was concerned.

The school board was composed of two ministers of the Free and Established churches, the proprietor of Blair Hotel, and two landowners (one of whom was the chairman). The board remained unchanged for most of the years under examination but the scanty minutes do not indicate whether the elections were contested

or not. Throughout the years 1873 - 1895 the chairmanship changed hands only once.

When the board took office there were six schools in the parish - Blair, Struan, Pittagowan, Strathtummel, Tummel Blair, and Glenerichty. Although the board admitted that additional schools were needed it decided that some children could use a school just a few yards outside the parish boundary; others would be accommodated through the extension of classrooms and the erection of partitions. An example of this policy occurred when the board approved of the erection of an additional classroom in Blair school in 1874 at a cost of £250, payable in ten years. Meeting after meeting was taken up with the discussion of this matter because the board was determined to get the classroom built at the lowest possible price; more than once the architect received his plans back with suggestions for change.

The board was content to patch up the schools and school houses in Glenerichty and Glengarry but the inspectors were not willing to allow matters to continue in such a way. In 1881 the inspector ordered that the premises be made more comfortable; the children had been very cold during the winter as "the snow had more than once found its way through the thatch". (The children had each to pay 1s for fuel during the winter). In 1884 the Glenerichty school house was so damp that the board itself finally declared it almost uninhabitable and unhealthy for teachers and scholars. The condition of the Struan house was so bad that (in 1884) the

teacher resigned because of it. It was only as circumstances gradually grew worse that the board took constructive action to improve the premises. It built a new school at Glengarry and improved the other schools and teachers' houses. In doing so, the board became almost obsessed with the expenditure involved.

The reluctance of the board to spend money on accommodation was surpassed by its unwillingness to pay teachers a high salary. This might partly account for the difficulty the board always incurred in maintaining a supply of teachers. When the board advertised for a female certificated teacher* for Glenerichty school (August/73) only one person applied and she was judged to be unsatisfactory. The board wrote to the principals of the Free Church and the Church of Scotland training colleges asking for the names of people who might be considered. In December a woman was hired for £30 with a house and the government grant - but she resigned the following September. Several candidates applied for the position but all were ineligible or unwilling to accept the conditions. The board re-advertised at a £40 salary and, at the same time, advertised for a pupil-teacher in case a qualified teacher could not be obtained. Finally a Miss Reid was hired (December/74) but she left three months later. A pupil-teacher was hired for three months at a salary of £10

*The board preferred females because they were cheaper and easier to obtain than males.

with the use of the house and the school fees. Miss Reid later announced that she would resume the position if paid £40, travelling expenses, and if the school and house was suitably refurbished so as to make it habitable. The board agreed to the conditions but she lasted less than a year; an unqualified teacher then taught at the school for an unspecified period of time.

Similar difficulties were encountered in Glengarry school in 1876; it took the board eight months to get a certificated female teacher (the board felt that it could not afford a qualified male teacher) at a wage of £60. Until one was found the school was kept open by an unqualified teacher.

The problems surrounding Blair school*are interesting because they involved a Gaelic qualification. In 1878 the assistant male teacher, the headmaster, and the female certificated teacher all resigned. The advertisement for the headship asked that applicants possess a knowledge of Gaelic. Of the three candidates who applied only one was a Gaelic speaker but he was not chosen because his Gaelic was limited, and because his qualifications were inferior to those of the monoglot English-speaking candidates.

In 1882 the inspector noted that the school at Tummel Blair

*The largest school in the parish.

had been taught by four different teachers since his last visit. Part of the problem was the preference of parents for a male teacher. In December/81 a Miss Morrice had been engaged to teach "but there being in the district a strong feeling in favour of hiring a male teacher it was resolved to advertise again for a male teacher". When, several months later, the board managed to get a male teacher he was dismissed for ill-health (drunkenness). One of the ministers took over the school for a week to ensure that it would not close; an unqualified male teacher was found some time later. The school did not receive grants that year because the number of meetings was not sufficient to earn them.

There was also a problem at Struan. In 1884 the Gaelic-speaking teacher was dismissed because of his inefficiency which resulted in school attendance dropping to about a dozen scholars - but he was unwilling to resign and it took the board six months to secure his resignation. After his departure an unqualified teacher was hired.*

What attitude did the board display towards Gaelic? As noted, it did advertise for Gaelic-speaking teachers although it did not always hire them. In 1876 the board supported the application of the Gaelic School Society (see Chapter V) for special

* In 1887 another dismissal occurred at the school because of inefficient teaching.

grants to encourage the teaching of Gaelic in Highland schools. But the board admitted (and was apparently justified in doing so) that there was difficulty in obtaining the services of teachers who were acquainted with Gaelic and, at the same time, equally proficient in other departments. The board stated that Glengarry school (20 children) and Blair school (150 children) would benefit from the proposals. In addition there were two unnamed schools in the parish, not under the control of the board, which would benefit from grants to Gaelic teaching.

In 1891 the board applied to the Trust for Education in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (see Chapter I) for a Gaelic grant for classes at Blair, Pittagowan and Strathtummel schools. These schools had, in various years, received the music grant for their Gaelic and English singing.

The board minutes do not contain much information on finances - either in regards to rates, the collection of fees, or the receipt of government grants. There is usually a one line statement stipulating the assessment needed for the forthcoming year and another one liner saying that the accounts were presented to the chairman for his signature. There are indications that the board lost unspecified sums from the parliamentary grant each year because of irregular attendance and sometimes for unqualified teachers; some money was also lost through the failure to pay school fees. Irregular attendance* was particularly bad

*In 1873 there were 261 children of school age, 206 on the roll and 195 in attendance; many attended for only three to six months.

during the years 1876 and 1877 in all the board's schools; in 1879 it was especially bad at Blair school. Throughout 1879 the board warned that action would be taken to secure a higher attendance but the Minutes do not reveal if it was. As noted earlier, attendance at Tummel Blair was so poor (largely because of staff changes) in 1883 that the board lost its government grant. In 1884 small and irregular attendance at Struan school (occasioned by teacher inefficiency) resulted in a minimal grant. In 1887 the inspectors commented on the extreme irregularity of attendance in all the board schools.

The Minutes give the impression that the board was almost reconciled to irregular attendance. No parents were prosecuted - although the compulsory officer was occasionally ordered to remind them of their duty.

Fees ranged from 2s to 4s per standard per quarter. Although there are often references to the non-payment of fees there are few notations of measures or attempts to collect them. The threat, in 1881, to take action to secure the fees is an exception - and there is no evidence that any action was taken.

The impression is left, as with attendance, that the board was reconciled to the fact that parents were either unwilling or too poor to pay the fees. The loss of monies through non-attendance and the failure to pay school fees did not (apparently) affect the rates as they remained low. The low rates might

have been due to a combination of factors - a high rateable value of property, the lower amount of money paid to teachers because of the board's dependence upon female certificated teachers and pupil-teachers, and the savings accrued through its policy of repairing rather than building schools. Money was also saved, in the 1880's, when the board chose not to develop a programme of secondary education - see the following page. The table below, Table A, outlines the rate of assessment for the years 1873, 1878, 1883 and 1888:

Table A

| Year | Rate of Assessment | Amount raised | Property valuation |
|------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1873 | 2d | £150 | £18,000 |
| 1878 | 4d | £350 | £21,000 |
| 1883 | 4d | £370 | £22,200 |
| 1888 | 5d | £450 | £21,600 |

While specific subjects were taught in the board's schools it was not keen to develop secondary education - as it would have to spend more money on teachers and buildings. In 1881 the board replied to a query from the S.E.D. that it had been encouraging in Blair public school the teaching of the higher

branches "not withstanding the obvious difficulty of combining that with the branches prescribed in the school time table"; because of distance the board did not believe that a central school for higher education was possible -

".... where the schools are situated widely apart and the population sparsely located it is almost impossible to make one central school subserve the minor schools in the matter of advanced teaching, as parents, having to send their children from home to reside, prefer to send them direct to a higher class school in a town".

The board minutes contain only occasional references to the reports of H.M.I's. More regular mention is made of the ministers' comments on their examinations in religious knowledge. There is nowhere contained any references to the need to preserve the Gaelic language or its culture; nor is there any reference to the Scottish culture and Scottish nationality. The board members were concerned solely with the day to day operation of their schools.

Kells was a very extensive parish (16 X 8 miles) in Kircudbrightshire with a population of 1,121 in 1841.² The N.S.A. states

that the parish was almost exclusively pastoral. In the neighbourhood of New Galloway (a Royal Burgh) the rent of the land was £2 an acre but in the other parts of the parish where the land was attached to extensive farm stocks (sheep), no fixed sum could be applied to the value per acre. There was ample room for improvement in drainage, collecting manure, and in general farm management. Agricultural improvements had not kept pace with the rest of the Stewarty because of the expense of lime and the attention devoted to livestock. There were 17,000 sheep and over 900 head of Highland and Galloway cattle. Between 1836 and 1842 the poor of the parish had suffered greatly from the failure of the potato crop, the advance in the price of meal, and the scarcity of peat owing to the wet summers.

The only school was the parochial one in New Galloway which taught the elementary branches, Latin, Greek, French and Geography for fees of 2s-6s. The school was well taught but another was needed in the northern portion of the district.

When the school board assumed responsibilities for education (in 1873) population had decreased to 1,007 but additional accommodation was still required. Unfortunately the board minutes do not reveal the occupation of board members until 1885 when three were identified as a builder, a joiner and a farmer. In 1873 the board contained one minister and four other persons.

The board's main problem centred around providing sufficient accommodation for those children who lived on the outskirts of the parish and a considerable distance away from one of the board's schools. The board sought to avoid erecting buildings and hiring teachers to educate these children through exchanging facilities with neighbouring boards in similar circumstances.

Balmaclellan refused to co-operate in maintaining a school at New Galloway station and Minigaff refused to join in an arrangement to provide schooling for a small number of children in the Water of Dee district. Minigaff's refusal caused the board to protest to the Board of Education. Kells argued that the amount of rates derived from the district did not justify the erection of a school. The Board of Education replied that the number of children was too tiny for it to suggest a method of education but insisted that some form of schooling had to be provided. In 1874 Kells secured permission from the S.E.D. to hire an itinerant teacher (an ex-pupil-teacher) for the Water of Dee and Garroch Burn districts of the parish - at a salary of £45 plus board and lodgings. Despite the salary the board had difficulty in getting a teacher (see page 276).

Kells and Balmaghie had agreed (in 1873) to co-operate in managing Mosssdale school but the school was insufficient in classroom space and was in a physical state that endangered lives. After much argument and the recommendation of the inspector it was decided to erect a new building to accommodate

30 - 35 pupils.

Disagreements on details and the cost delayed the construction of the school - and this dealy dominated the minutes of Kells' board for almost five years. Balmaghie insisted that it should pay 3/7th of the cost and Kells 4/7ths. Kells believed that the cost should be shared equally, but in the end gave in because it did not want to have to build a school for eighteen children. Kells told Balmaghie that it would pay the 4/7ths sum but only on condition that its contribution would not rise above that figure. The chairmen of both boards were to alternate as chairmen of the combined board and each board was to have equal representation on the combined board. Apparently the arrangment worked well.

Kells applied for permission to borrow £250 from the Public Loans Commission for its share of Mossdale's expenses but the S.E.D. approved of only £225, repayable in ten years. Kells had also borrowed to add a classroom to Kells public school - H.M.I. had recommended that additional facilities were needed.

The board did not(apparently)have any major difficulties in attracting teachers to its schools - excepting in acquiring an itinerant teacher for the Water of Dee district. The board's first choice turned down the offer and the applicants to its second and third readvertisements did ^{not} possess the requisite qualifications. Kells wrote to the Board of Education for

advice but the response is not contained in the minutes; neither is there any information on when a teacher was found.

Kells public school had a certificated male teacher (£144 inclusive of fees) and a pupil-teacher. When the pupil-teacher died in 1876 a certificated male teacher was hired as an assistant at a salary of £50. When the head teacher requested an ex-pupil-teacher to help out in 1878 the board refused and employed a lad as a monitor because the money involved was less. When further assistance was requested in 1879 the board suggested that the female assistant teacher help the head teacher in his duties; after much arguing the board surrendered and hired a pupil-teacher for £12 a year.

As indicated in its treatment of teachers and building programmes, the school board was very wary of how it spent its monies. The board also kept a sharp eye on attendance* and the payment of school fees. At almost every board meeting the compulsory officer was advised to visit parents and warn them of the consequences of neglecting their children's education and failure to pay school fees. But the minutes do not elaborate much further; when attendance was low or fees were late the minutes would read "indifferent attendance and difficulty in

* In 1873 there were 229 children in attendance at four schools.

collecting fees by sundry individuals" or "arrears of fees due by sundry individuals". Apparently summonses were not executed until 1883, when two defaulting parents refused to pay the fees. The clerk was instructed to take out small debt summonses for the Sheriff Circuit at Kirkcudbright. Summonses were taken out but the results are not revealed in the minutes.

Fees were to be paid per quarter and in advance; in case of illness fees were not exacted.* Originally the board charged fees by subject but the S.E.D. stated that they had to be levied by standards. In 1873 the following fees were exacted - writing and arithmetic 2/6; Latin and Greek 5/6; Mathematics 6/-; German 6/6; French 7/-; book-keeping or mensuration, if taught, 5/-.

In 1882 the board declared that when four or more children from one family were attending school, one-fourth of the total fees charged were to be refunded. Fees were not charged to the children who received instruction from the itinerant teacher. In 1882 a motion to reduce the fees was rejected; in 1884 fees ranged from 1/6 to 3/6.

The minutes do not contain any discussion on the rates or the sum derived from the assessment; neither is there any reference

* This was the only board of the **four** to make such a provision.

to there being any difficulty whatsoever on their collection, probably because the rate was so low that all but the poor could afford to pay them. The only comments pertain to either the level of assessment decided upon or the sum which the board wished to derive from the school rate; for some unknown reason the minutes never contained both. The boards accounts are not presented either. Table B reveals either the amount of assessment or the sum which the board wished raised for the years 1874, 1879, 1880, 1883 and 1884.

Table B

| Year | Rate of assessment | Amount raised | Property valuation |
|------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1874 | | £200 | |
| 1879 | | £170 | |
| 1880 | | £170 | |
| 1883 | 3d | | |
| 1884 | 3d | £125 | £10,000 |

Kells, with a lower property valuation than Blair Atholl, managed to level a lower rate of assessment than it.

One other issue dominated the board meetings of Kells - a scheme of bursaries provided in the will of the late Dr. Davis. He had left a sum of £500 to the school of New Galloway (Kells public school) and placed it in trust to the minister of Kells Manse, the provost and the school master. Meeting after meeting was concerned with the arrangements for examination and the

prizes to be awarded in the junior and senior standards. And when the condition of the bursaries changed, the minutes reveal endless correspondence and disputes between the trustees and the board.

Reports from H.M.I.'s were not included in the minutes but there were references to the ministers' examining the children's proficiency in religious knowledge. There was no mention of the need to preserve the Scottish culture, the reading of Scottish literature (even here in Burns' back yard), or the singing of Scottish songs. The minutes reveal a board wrapped up entirely in matters such as the provision of maps, clocks, the enlargement of playgrounds and repairs to the school grounds.

Logierait, a parish (12 X 5 miles) in north-central Perthshire had a population of 2,774 in 1841.³ Gaelic, the language generally spoken by the people, was not "getting into disuse as the language of the fireside among the common people", but it was falling into manifest decline as a branch of education.

The parish, an agricultural one, had a rental of £8,000 (exclusive of land in the hands of proprietors); the rent of arable land varied from £1.5 to £2.10 per acre. The reporter to the N.S.A. noted two obstacles to improving agriculture - the prevalence of small holdings and the consequent want of capital to expend on improvements by that class

of agriculturalist.

Although there were ten schools (one parochial, one free or endowed and eight private adventure) another school was needed in the northern district of the parish. But by the time the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, came into force there was a sufficient number of schools - because of the declining population*, and because the board combined with neighbouring boards to share educational facilities and costs.

The school board (composed of one minister, three landowners and a farmer) arranged to share educational facilities with the boards of Dull and Fortingall. For instance, Logierait had thirty of its children attending a school under the jurisdiction of the Fortingall board, while children from Fortingall and Dull attended Logierait's school in Aberfeldy.

Dull and Fortingall shared the expense of the school and the teachers' salaries (payable out of the rates) in proportion to the number of children sent from the parishes - or in proportion to the rentals of the respective portions of the three parishes.

* In 1881 the population was 2,323; in 1891 it was 1,773

The above arrangement was not without disputes. Fortingall refused to adhere to the financial agreement; it wanted to make a flat payment for each child in attendance and threatened to withdraw unless allowed to do so. The issue was taken to the Board of Education and months went by before an agreement was reached which allowed Fortingall to pay 12s for each of its children in attendance. Dull and Logierait seemed to get along much better. The following is an example of how the expenses were met. From October/73 to May/74 Aberfeldy school (with an enrollment of 234) had a deficiency in funds of £63. It was calculated that the rate per child to make up for this deficiency was 5/5¹. Dull's contribution (based on an attendance of 135) was £36. This arrangement with Dull worked smoothly until 1877 when Logierait declared a deficiency of £160 in Aberfeldy's funds. Dull protested that its contribution (£86) was too high but Logierait reassured it that the expenses would be less next year because the assistant teacher "is now dispensed with" - a pupil-teacher was hired at a much lower salary and one that was payable out of the government grant.

In 1886 a new school was needed at Aberfeldy and the cost was shared between the two boards. Dull paid £1,127 for its 125 children and Logierait paid £775 for its 86 children.

Logierait experienced many problems in obtaining qualified and competent teachers and, as a result, used pupil-teachers and

monitors extensively. At times this resulted in the loss of government grants - as in May, 1885 when pupil-teacher faults in instruction cost the board £11. The board deducted the loss from the pupil-teacher's salary; in 1883 one of the pupil-teachers failed to pass his examination and was not awarded his certificate.

There were problems with the male certificated teacher (MacDonald) in Logierait school. In 1873 he was absent for a period of time without notice or explanation and was warned by the board. He later received two unsatisfactory reports from the inspectors. The board then fired him (1875) - for inefficiency and incompetency, caused by "his dissipated habits and indulgence in intoxicating liquors"; the board also refused to pay him a retiring allowance. The teacher protested to the S.E.D. and the ratepayers joined in the argument; some ratepayers supported the teachers while others opposed him. Finally, eleven months after his dismissal, the board secured his resignation with the promise to pay a pension of £15 for ten years.

MacDonald's successor, Blair, did not have an easy time with the parents. In Febraury/77 the board received petitions for and against him; because the report of the inspector had been satisfactory the board tried unsuccessfully to arrange a reconciliation between Blair and the disaffected parents. The controversy resumed and Blair's resignation was requested. Blair refused and the S.E.D. was again involved. After a 31% failure rate from the inspector, Blair resigned in July/78.

Blair's replacement, Kennedy, was a Gaelic speaker hired because the parents of the pupils were "very desirous that the teachers of the school should be well acquainted with the language". In 1880 Kennedy was in conflict with the board over his salary of £96 to which was added one-third of the government grant and all the fees. The board warned him that he could leave if he so chose; he remained and continued to earn the music grant for the school through Gaelic singing.

What was the attitude of the board towards Gaelic? The board supported the application of the Gaelic Schools Society in 1876 because of the large number of Gaelic speakers in the parish.* The board stated that there was difficulty in obtaining teachers who were acquainted with Gaelic to the extent which the board thought required, who were at the same time, equally efficient in other branches. In an almost contradictory fashion the board declared that there were no schools under the board in which advantage could be taken "at present" of any special provision that might be made for giving effect to the proposal of the Gaelic School Society; but it was not improbable that circumstances might arise in which it would be necessary to take advantage of any such special provisions.

*In 1891, 70% of the population spoke Gaelic.

Early board minutes do not indicate whether the first of the board's teachers were Gaelic speakers but it is probable that MacDonald of Logierait school was. His successor, Blair, was not. In 1876 Blair requested the board to allow Miss Stewart, female teacher in Logierait, to teach the children Gaelic one hour per week instead of sewing; the board simply replied that it did not want her to teach Gaelic. As noted, Blair's successor was a Gaelic speaker. The minutes contain no other information on the use or non-use of Gaelic.

There is little information on finances in the minutes. Anything to do with financial matters seemed to have been decided before hand and the decisions recorded. The rate for the coming year was stated; the chairman signed the annual balance sheets which were then despatched to the accountant of the Board of Education. No accounts of expenditure were contained in the minutes - apart from when a meeting authorized the payment for a door, a map, etc.

The board had many problems in securing adequate attendance figures* and the regular payment of fees but as with most other boards it hesitated to prosecute. The first reference to enact legal proceedings against all parties in arrear of fees appears in 1883, but the board then stated it was up to the clerk to decide whether to prosecute or not. Minutes after this do not clarify whether proceedings were taken or not.

*In 1873 there were 399 children of school age, 242 in attendance and 57 not receiving an education.

Fees were to be paid quarterly and in advance. In 1880 fees ranged from 2/6 for infants to 5/- for students in standards V and VI. In 1884 fees were to be paid at the opening of schools after the holidays; payment ranged from 2/- for infants to 4/6 in standards V and VI. The non-payment of fees and non-attendance were a particular problem in the years 1880-1884, especially in Aberfeldy school. Much of the blame was shouldered by the male certificated teacher, Mr. Allan, whose term of office also co-incided with unsatisfactory teaching reports from the inspector. During each year of his headship (apart from a reduction in the attendance grant and the collection of fees) the school received a reduction in grants for faults in instruction. Passes decreased - only 17 out of 57 passed in arithmetic in 1883; the pupil-teachers had problems in passing their examinations and receiving their certificates. In 1884 the school received another poor report and a loss in government grants. In 1885 the school achieved a pass rate of 72% but this was not enough to save Allan because the board had demanded an 85% standard. Allan and his assistant (who had also received a poor report from the inspector) were asked to resign; both resignations were secured.

As noted, there is little discussion of rates in the Minutes. The level of assessment was low- probably because the property valuation was high. Table C shows the level of assessment,

the amount raised and the property valuation for the years 1876, 1882, 1885, 1888 and 1890.

Table C

| Year | Rate of Assessment | Amount raised | Property Valuation |
|------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1876 | 4½d | £270 | £14,310 |
| 1882 | 4 | £260 | £15,600 |
| 1885 | 4 | £285 | £17,100 |
| 1888 | 5 | £355 | £17,040 |
| 1890 | 5 | £355 | £17,040 |

As with the other boards studied, Logierait demonstrated no interest whatsoever in anything or any issue that did not immediately concern the daily operation of its schools. There was no mention of the need to preserve Gaelic, no mention of the contribution which Gaelic could make to learning English, and of its contribution to Scottish society and culture.

The Minutes do not contain H.M.I.'s reports, only occasional excerpts when a loss of grants occurred; the one reference in the inspectors' reports to Gaelic was the awarding of the music grant for Gaelic singing.

Dunning was an agricultural parish (7 X 4 miles) in Lower Strathearn, Perthshire, with a population of 2,125 and an average rental of £2 per acre in 1841.⁴ The N.S.A. contains little information on the parish except the statement that there were several mills (corn, flour, woollen, etc.) and five schools (one parochial and four endowed) teaching English, writing, arithmetic and Latin. The population was a declining one because of the absorption of small farms into large ones. The decline continued into the later years of the twentieth century; in 1871 the population was 1,823, in 1881 - 1,635, and in 1891 - 1,345.

The school board minutes for the parish do not reveal the occupation of three of its board members in 1873 - one was a minister and another a doctor; in 1876 the occupations are identified as - farmers (three), minister (one), doctor (one); in the 1880's another minister joined the board at the expense of a farmer.

The board encountered problems in attracting teachers - partly because of its unwillingness to offer a high salary. When teachers were hired there was constant haggling over increases in the salaries. There were also disputes about the number of teachers required in the schools. In 1873 there was an argument over the hiring of a female certificated teacher for Dunning Female school (soon to become mixed); one of the board members felt that the school could be closed and the children taught in

other schools, thus saving the board an extra salary. The teacher was hired because of the distance which the children would have to travel to the other schools. When the teacher resigned (1875) the board could not get a replacement - after three separate advertisements. Finally, the board wrote to the principals of the training colleges and managed to secure one, through them, at a salary of £40 plus fees and a house. She was to teach all boys under seven and all girls that might come to her from other schools; she was also to teach sewing free to the girls attending Pitcairns schools.

In 1878 it took the board over four months and constant re-advertisements to find a certificated male assistant teacher for Dunning school* - at a salary of £80. Shortly after his appointment he was warned against his insobriety; he managed to last the year before resigning because the board refused to grant him a rise. The board was looking for assistant teachers every second year because of the policy regarding salaries. When a teacher resigned at a salary of (say) £75 the board would offer the position at £65 or £70 and hire the teacher with a promise of a rise if the reports from the inspectors were good; then the board would refuse to pay and a resignation would occur. This policy lasted throughout the 1880's and continued into the 1890's. At one point, in 1892, when the

* It refused to consider female applicants for the post.

assistant teacher left after three months, his replacement, the only applicant, resigned before he even arrived in Dunning. This caused the board to change its attitude on female teachers and appoint one to the post at £60 - but she stayed only three months. The board then resumed its advertisements for a male at a salary of £80. Until an appointment was made four female monitors assisted in running the school. Finally, a Mr. Menzies was hired but his health broke and the monitors were again resorted to. When Menzies resigned after a year the board encountered more difficulties in finding a replacement; one was finally found - in Liverpool.

The board preferred to build on to its schools rather than build new ones - to save money. A furious and long lasting row broke out amongst board members over this policy*. The board had decided to enlarge Dunning school and close the school at Pitcairn; the children from Pitcairn were to attend the enlarged school. The members who opposed this joined with parents in petitioning the Board of Education; a counter petition was then launched. Both sides argued that the other method was uneconomical and would cause inconvenience to the children involved. The argument raged for four years. After several visits from a representative of the Board of Education (which wanted Pitcairn closed) the decision on closure was finalized.

* The split amongst the board continued to appear as other issues developed.

Dunning had some of its children attending schools under the jurisdiction of Forgandenny and Forteviot school boards. Forgandenny charged 12s annually for each of Dunning's children in attendance but Dunning continually argued over this method of payment. In 1876 Dunning offered £2 for its students; Forgandenny refused and the matter went to the Board of Education which recommended a £5 payment. The Board's suggestion did not end the friction - it lasted for years and dominated numerous meetings of the Dunning board. In 1888, at the insistence of the S.E.D., a binding and lasting agreement was hammered out. It was agreed that -

"a sum equal to the cost per head, after deducting fees and grant, be allowed on the average number of children in attendance throughout the year from Dunning parish, at the Path of Condie school, the cost to be calculated on the general average attendance".

The school rate fluctuated with the deficiency in the school fund. The fund itself fluctuated as school fees, and government grants for teaching efficiency, attendance, etc. varied. The costs of teachers' salaries and erecting additional classroom space also contributed. There was a degree of conflict between the school and parochial boards over the level of the school rate - this friction reached a peak in 1876 when the school board asked the parochial board to raise the sum of £322. The parochial board questioned why such a sum was necessary when the school board appeared to have assets which

did not indicate the need for £322. The school board reminded the parochial board of its duty to raise the amount stipulated by the school board. The Board of Education was contacted and it replied that the parochial board was bound to pay the school board the whole sum certified without any deduction for whatever reason. The clerk of the school board then wrote to the parochial board demanding the balance owed in order "to avoid legal proceedings between the two boards, which would both be unseemly and expensive to the ratepayers whose interests both boards are alike bound to care for". The parochial board complied.

The board extended its concern for money saving to the curriculum. In July, 1877 the board refused to spend money on materials for an advanced drawing class -

"...it would be unjust to the ratepayers to provide advanced instruction in more than one school, and unfair to the pupils in attendance at one school to be denied a benefit conferred on those in attendance at the other school".

There were continual problems in securing a regular attendance* and the payment of school fees. Much of the difficulty was attributed to the frequent changes in teaching staff. The board reconciled itself to the non-payment of fees; in 1877 the board acknowledged that the fees (payable monthly and in advance) were the main cause of non-attendance. The irregular attendance of infants was attributed to the failure of parents to appreciate

*In 1873 there were 318 children of school age, 311 on the roll and 284 in attendance.

the value of education. In 1878 twelve parents were brought before the board because they failed to send their infant children to school. No action was taken by the board as it wished "to avoid the expense and grief and shame which would be incurred by them if prosecuted for their neglect of duty". In reality it was probably the board which wished to avoid the expense.

Table D shows the level of assessment and/or the sums derived for the years 1874, 1879, 1886, 1889, 1893 and 1894.

Table D

| Year | Rate of Assessment | Amount Raised | Property Valuation |
|------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1874 | 3d | £179 | £14,320 |
| 1879 | | £261 | |
| 1886 | | £180 | |
| 1889 | | £220 | |
| 1893 | 4½ | £231 | £12,243 |
| 1894 | 5½ | £271 | £11,653 |

The school board of Dunning was concerned exclusively with matters relating directly to its schools; no outside issues were discussed. It was parsimonious in its dealings with its teachers and neighbouring boards. Of the four boards studied it was unique in that it allowed its internal conflicts to appear in its Minutes.

What conclusions can be drawn from this chapter? Firstly, it cannot be denied that the higher property valuation of the four parishes allowed the school boards to keep a low rate of assessment - whereas boards in Lewis and the Uists were forced to establish a much higher rate because of the value of property. For instance, in 1883 South Uist levied a school rate of 8d, based upon a property valuation of £5,220 to raise £174 while Dunning needed to levy a rate of only 4½d, based upon a property valuation of £12,243, to raise £231. Table A compares South Uist, Barvas, Lochs and Kells during the year 1884; Table B compares Logierait, South Uist, Lochs and Barvas during 1885.*

Table A (1884)

| Parish | Rate of Assessment | Amount Raised | Property Valuation |
|---------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Kells | 3d | £125 | £10,000 |
| S. Uist | 8d | 212 | 6,360 |
| Lochs | 68d | 1,050 | 3,625 |
| Barvas | 34d | 400 | 2,800 |

Table B (1885)

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|------|---------|
| Logierait | 4d | £285 | £17,100 |
| S. Uist | 6d | 172 | 6,880 |
| Lochs | 54d | 750 | 3,450 |
| Barvas | 47d | 550 | 2,750 |

*The tables were composed from board minutes, the Commission on Lewis, 1901 and the Commission on the Uists.

The members of the boards of Kells, Dunning, Logierait and Blair Athol were extremely frugal when it came to enlarging and constructing schools; this frugality was assisted and evidenced by the ability of boards to combine their schools and share the costs of operation; this ability meant that less money would be spent on accommodation and the salaries of teachers - thus easing the burden upon the ratepayers. Such an occurrence was seldom a possibility (apparently) in those remote regions of the Hebrides (Lewis, the Uists, etc.^{*}) where the population was large and scattered. A sharing of costs may have taken place along common board boundaries but no such sharing could occur in 'inland' areas. The Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland (April, 1885) acknowledged that the burden of maintenance "must at all times be considerable when a number of small schools, with separate staffs, are required".

Three of the four boards (Kells was the exception) incurred difficulties in attracting competent and qualified teachers - despite their abilities (although not always willingness) to pay a high salary. How much greater must have been the task confronting poverty-stricken boards in the hinterlands and backwoods of the nation? Note the difficulties which H.M.I. Robertson specified in regards to attracting certificated teachers to Lewis (see Chapter VI). Almost undoubtedly the

*The records of these boards do not mention this as an occurrence.

task of teacher selection would have been (and at times was - see Chapter VI) that much more difficult if the boards in Gaelic-speaking districts had insisted upon hiring only qualified teachers acquainted with the Gaelic language. This qualification would have rendered a difficult job very much more difficult and would have reduced any freedom of selection.

The same comment is applicable to the collection of fees and attendance. Since the wealthier boards were so evidently hesitant to go through the expense of prosecuting parents for failing to send their children to school and to pay their fees, it is no wonder that the poorer boards (with even lower attendance figures), were reluctant to do so. The Minute of 1885 noted that in the counties of Argyll, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland the average attendance was "only about 50% of the number of school age children; and in the more remote islands it is much less". In Harris, only 457 out of 1,035 children were in average attendance. Low attendance resulted in the attendance grant being proportionately diminished; it also meant that many of the children were not qualified by attendance to be presented to the inspector; the lowering of the general efficiency caused by irregular attendance led to a lower scale of grant all round.

What of the other issues considered in this thesis - the

attitude of school boards to the Scottish tongue and the Gaelic language, the use of Scottish literature in the schools, the need to preserve and enhance the Scottish culture, the existence of a nationalist feeling, the prevalence of religious and sectarian strife, etc. The only issue discussed - mentioned is the more accurate word - was the rather positive response of Logierait and Blair Athol to the circular from the Gaelic School Society. Yet, neither board made any reference to the benefits of Gaelic teaching and the contribution of Gaelic to the Scottish culture and national identity. This is not exceptional as none of the other Highland school board minutes studied in the research of this thesis considered this particular aspect of the Gaelic issue. On the question of nationalism, culture and language, Kells and Dunning failed to comment. It must be admitted that the failure of these topics to appear in the minutes does not mean that board members neglected to consider or care about them; they may well have done so but failed to include their considerations in the minutes.

The minutes of Kells provides clear evidence that all issues discussed at board meetings were not recorded. For instance, in May of 1873, the minutes state that the meeting was "adjourned to Shiel where they (i.e. the members) took other business into consideration". In 1882 the minutes began referring to "sundry matters" with no elaboration on what the matters were.*

*This was not an unusual occurrence; Balquhiddar board minutes make frequent reference to "sundry matters".

While on the subject of minute contents it should be observed that the minutes do not present an agenda of the board meetings; the minutes only note the discussion of certain matters that arose. The records of each meeting (the boards usually met about four times a year) seldom run beyond three or four pages - often under two pages; at times their length is reduced to one or two paragraphs. Once again Kells provides the best example. The minute of each meeting in May, September, November and December of 1875 consisted of a one paragraph summation. Notoriously brief recordings also occurred in 1876, 1879 and 1880. Kells did not bother about a quorum - in May, 1875, the two members in attendance decided to hire an itinerant teacher for the outlying branches of the parish.

After studying the minutes one is left with the feeling that they were written after the board meetings, that the high point and the decisions made are included but not the debates. There is also the feeling that most issues were resolved before the meeting - which was just a formality. Finally, one is left with the overwhelming impression that board members were concerned solely with getting on with the job of managing the schools - not with general issues pertaining to nationalism, culture or the community at large. Boards, it seems, were busy enough tending to the ordinary, mundane questions that affected the efficient running of the schools - whether teachers of the desired qualifications and salaries could

be obtained, whether attendance and fees could be secured, whether a new grate or a new map should be purchased, when holidays should commence and end, whether the schools should be let for dancing classes, whether a teacher should be allowed time off to attend a wedding or a funeral, etc. That such questions often concerned board members and, at times, dominated board meetings is not to demean either the members or their work; these are the issues that local authorities, local management and governing bodies were all about in the nineteenth century - and today.

Chapter VIII: The Struggle for Political Reforms

The movement for compulsory use of
Gaelic in the educational system

The 1908 Education (Scotland) Bill

The 1918 Education (Scotland) Bill

The movement for compulsory use of Gaelic in the educational system

After the turn of the century (roughly 1906 - 1918) militants within An Comunn argued that statutory provisions were necessary to ensure that Gaelic's place in the curriculum was removed from the caprice of school board officials. While the teaching of Gaelic remained the prerogative of school boards, Gaelic would be taught only here and there, precariously and on sufferance.

The militants maintained that Welsh and Irish were considered (officially, if not always in practice) an integral part of their respective educational systems. Why should Scots Gaelic not be so considered? Two factors had prevented this development. Firstly, Craik's successor as Secretary of the S.E.D., J. Struthers, was a notorious anglicizer and an insistent anti-traditionalist. In his seventeen-year term of office he granted only two concessions to Gaelic, and one of these - the placement of Gaelic within the subjects of the Leaving Certificate examination - was probably the result of Craik's influence or work since it was granted in the year of Craik's retirement, 1904*. It is therefore hardly a coincidence that the effort to obtain compulsory measures for Gaelic was initiated

*The second concession (1909) allowed Secondary Education Committees to use their grants under(sec.17,9) to help secure/finance the services of Gaelic-speaking teachers.

and concluded during Struthers' term of office (1904 - 21). Secondly, the degree of political and popular support which the language movements had in Wales and in Ireland was much greater than that which Gaelic had in Scotland. It is worth a digression at this point to explain exactly what was the position of Welsh and Irish Gaelic in the school systems of their respective countries.

Within Ireland and Wales nationalist and religious elements had combined, from the seventeenth century onwards, to champion the language cause. In Wales, educational reformers such as S. Hughes, G. Jones, J. Rhys, and T. Charles, were not concerned with civilising the people through religion and the English language but with saving the souls of the people - through the use of the vernacular. Thus the seventeenth-century Anglican - supported S.P.C.K. schools and the first national system of schools in Wales, the Sunday School (eighteenth century), used Welsh as the working language of the classroom.

From the time of the English conquest of Ireland, Protestant churches and their organisations, especially the Incorporated Society and its Charity Schools, tried to civilise the Irish through the use of the English language and the eradication of Catholicism. Meanwhile the Catholic Church, the church of the people, used Gaelic in its daily work and in its schools - particularly the Hedge Schools of the eighteenth century. Thus, Gaelic symbolised not just the religion of the people but Irish

resistance to English domination: English symbolised Protestant apostalysing and conquest. No Protestant-English church could gain acceptancy among the Irish people without Gaelic: several tried but none succeeded.

The alliance of religion and language was accelerated in the later decades of the nineteenth century when powerful and influential Celtic societies arose in Ireland and Wales to secure the protection and extension of language rights, and, through this, the growth of the Celtic culture. These societies exerted tremendous pressure upon educational administrators and politicians - especially politicians.

In Wales, the two leading societies, the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and the Society for Utilising the Welsh Language, conveyed their aims to all parliamentary candidates in Wales and Monmoutshire.¹ In 1886 the societies made recommendations to the Royal Commission on Elementary Education. In 1888 the Commission's Report accepted the proposals, and from this time onwards extensive provisions were made for Welsh within the country's educational system.

In Ireland the Council of the Gaelic Union and the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language enlisted the support of influential members of the Irish community (clergy, teachers, etc.) to petition the National Board of Education to grant concessions to Irish. In Ireland, more than in Wales or

Scotland, the language movement was associated with the nationalist movement: this association was epitomised in the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic League (see Chapter IV). The establishment of Sinn Fein in 1908 brought a new level of consciousness to the Gaelic nationalist movement and struck terror into the hearts of many British parliamentarians and imperialists. For an indication of the support which Irish politicians gave to Irish Gaelic measures, see Hansard, May 21, 1909.

What exactly were the Welsh and Irish provisions? The Welsh measures numbered six.² Firstly, in all standards and in all subjects taught in school, bilingual reading books could be used. Secondly, a rational system of teaching English as a class subject by means of a graduated system of translations, and an appeal at each step to the intelligence of the children, could be substituted for the requirements in English grammar in all standards; a grant of two shillings per child on the average of the whole school would be paid if the examination results were satisfactory. Thirdly, the geography of Wales could be taught throughout the whole school, by means of bilingual books; a grant of 2s per head on the average of the whole school could be earned for each of these subjects if the examination results were satisfactory. Fourthly, Welsh grammar could be taught as a specific subject in standards V, VI, VII, and a grant of 4s per head paid if each child passed his examination. Fifthly, schools which took up the

new method of teaching English could substitute translation from Welsh to English for English composition in the elementary subjects, and thus reap a double benefit. Sixthly, the small village and country schools could, for the purpose of class teaching, rearrange the standards into three groups - group 1 (standards I, II), group 2 (standards III, IV), and group 3 (standards V, VI and VII) - this would be a material relief to understaffed schools.

In 1889, the Welsh Intermediate Act came into force and Joint Education Committees for each county or county borough were established. Because the system was organised according to the pattern of the old grammar and endowed schools in England, the Welsh language was given only a subsidiary place in the curricula schemes. This changed in 1896 with the formation of the Central Welsh Board - constituted to co-ordinate the work of the new county schools and to undertake responsibility for their examination and inspection. This Board was to have great consequences upon the Welsh language because two of its chief operators, Owen Owen - chief inspector, and Thomas Powell - the Board's examiner in Welsh, were committed to the teaching of Welsh and continually sought to have it taught pari passu with English. With such encouragement teaching of the language naturally increased, but not ^{to} the extent desired.

The Education Act of 1902 transferred the responsibility for elementary education from the school district boards to county

and borough authorities. Many of the ardent supporters of Welsh-teaching became members of these authorities and soon they prepared schemes for the teaching of Welsh in their areas. (The movement in favour of Welsh was not confined to the North: Cardiff, in 1906, adopted a Welsh scheme in its schools).

In 1907, the Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools in Wales was modified so as to permit almost any use of the Welsh language which the local authorities desired. Also, in this year, the Welsh Department of the Board of Education was founded and O.M. Edwards, a Welsh language advocate, was appointed Chief Inspector of Schools.

To provide teachers with training in Welsh teaching, the Welsh Language Society, in 1903, inaugurated its highly successful programme of summer schools. Over the years this voluntary programme flourished under the staffing of individuals eminent in their particular fields. By 1916 at the elementary training colleges (where there was no special grant received for taking Welsh) practically all students took Welsh, and at Glamorgan Training College every student took Welsh; in Secondary Training Colleges the students took Welsh if they were going to teach it.

By 1916 the separate grants for teaching Welsh had ceased and were merged with the ordinary school grant: obtaining the grant depended upon whether the place of Welsh in school satisfied

the regulation of the Welsh Education Department. Welsh was expected to be taught, to some extent at least, in every elementary school: while there was no expectation regarding secondary education, the majority of secondary schools did teach the language. Welsh was the medium of instruction in teaching Welsh and Welsh literature always: in teaching Scripture and Welsh history, where possible. Yet, it must be stressed that all these provisions for the Welsh language were not compulsory: they were, in effect, permission and encouragement to teach the language; and there were, much to the disgust of the language enthusiasts, certain local governing bodies which did not apply the concessions.

The differences between the Scottish Gaelic and Welsh concessions were mainly three. In Scotland there were no provisions for the use of bilingual text-books; a programme of summer schools for teachers did not exist until 1920; and there was not the expectation in Scotland, as in Wales, that the Celtic language be taught - primarily because Gaelic was less widely spoken in Scotland than Welsh was in Wales. While Welsh was still spoken throughout the land, Gaelic was almost exclusively restricted to the very fringes of the north and west coastal areas and to the Hebrides.

The Irish concessions, all of a voluntary nature, numbered seven.³ Firstly, teachers were advised to use the vernacular as an aid to the elucidation and acquisition of English.

Secondly, Irish was placed in the extra subject category and teachers awarded a 10s grant for each pass obtained. Thirdly, the requirement that pupils pay a 2s fee, per quarter, to the teacher, for each extra subject taken was dropped for those who took Irish. Fourthly, at the intermediate level of education, Irish was placed within the curriculum of the preparatory, junior, middle and senior grades; prizes were awarded to those who obtained high marks in the translation of English into any of the following subjects - Greek, Latin, French, Irish, Italian or Spanish. Fifthly, the majority of Irish training colleges offered Certificates of Competency in Irish; Irish was also on the curriculum of the Royal Irish University. Sixthly, to encourage teachers to qualify to teach in Irish, Irish was accepted as a subject in the programme of examination of candidates for the first class. Seventhly, every second appointment to the inspectorate had to have a knowledge of Gaelic; and there were six inspectors especially engaged to organise Gaelic instruction.

There were several differences between the Irish and Scottish Gaelic concessions. For example, after the abolition of specific subjects and payment by results in 1890, Scottish teachers received no extra remuneration for teaching Gaelic; and, although Scottish Gaelic was on the Higher and Lower Leaving Certificates, prizes were not awarded to students who obtained merit in passing. Also, Scottish inspectors were not engaged to organise a Gaelic programme, nor were there

any regulations requiring Scottish inspectors to know Gaelic. But the greatest difference between the concessions, and the chief reason for their wider application, was the broad level of support given to Irish Gaelic by community leaders. For instance, the memorial presented to the National Board of Education by the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, in 1878, contained the signature of hundreds of clergy, including all sixteen bishops and archbishops of Ireland. In addition, twenty-five teachers' associations, fifty-eight learned societies, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, forty Irish M.P.'s, and the Primate of all Ireland petitioned their support for the memorial.⁴ Such support was not only an indication of the enthusiasm for the Irish language but was also a reflection of the nationalist feeling which was growing, and would grow, in strength, as the century progressed.

It can be argued that the concessions granted to Irish and Welsh were a response to the impact which nationalist feeling had upon politicians and educational authorities within the borders of both countries. Such an influence was missing within Scotland - why? Scottish nationalism never had the broad appeal and strength of Irish and Welsh nationalism, nor did the language issue assume the critical role in Scottish nationalism as it did in the nationalism of Ireland and Wales. And whereas Welsh and Irish nationalists could be concerned with the development of their Celtic tongues only, Scottish nationalists (some, not all) were worried about the fate of

the Scottish dialect as well as the Gaelic language. Although men such as Blackie and Murdoch were in the forefront of the Scottish nationalism that emerged in the 1880's, neither the Gaelic/Celtic aspect of Scottish nationalism, nor the Celtic nationalism* which they espoused, became an integral feature of Scottish nationalism at large. Erskine's idealised concept of a Scottish nationalism based upon a Celtic Scotland also failed to take root.

When in 1908 An Comunn actually organised its dissatisfaction into a concerted campaign to secure compulsory provisions for Gaelic's use in the educational system through amendments to the 1908 Education (Scotland) Bill, it urged Irish and Welsh M.P.'s "to give their united support in view of the close affinity of the Gaels of Scotland by race and language to their respective countries".⁵ This appeal to the Irish and the subsequent support received from the Irish Parliamentary Party caused opponents of the measures to accuse the Gaels of association with Sinn Feinism.⁶ Political unrest and not educational advancement was the object foreseen.

The 1908 amendments were defeated but An Comunn tried again (this time successfully) with the Education (Scotland) Bill, 1918; and, once again voices were raised against the Irish

* The development of closer ties between the three Celtic nations - Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

affiliation. The charge of Sinn Feinism did so much damage that An Comunn was moved to declare that although it welcomed Irish support, it in no way advocated or sympathised with the goals of Sinn Fein.⁷ Even the Under Secretary for War* felt compelled to state that none of the supporters of the amendment had "any wish to pursue the suicidal policy of Sinn Feinism by seeking to establish Gaelic at the expense of English".⁸ The backing of the Irish was, to say the least, a mixed blessing.

Other objections were raised to the compulsory measures. Objectors feared that the measures would decrease the supply of teachers; the acquisition of English by Gaels would be negatively affected; and English monoglot children would be forced to learn Gaelic. The Scotsman commented, "the fact that it is difficult or impossible to provide competent teachers for the purpose contemplated is eloquent of the social as well as the financial current of influence that set (sic) steadily against the plans and hopes of those who dream of a Celtic Renaissance".⁹ The Educational News warned of the "insidious danger to many thoroughly competent public school teachers".¹⁰ The Glasgow Herald warned that Gaelic itself would ultimately suffer "through the impoverishment of the general education" (which would result because of the depletion of teachers) and a grave injustice would be done to English-speaking children in Gaeldom.¹¹

*

MacPherson, a supporter of the amendment.

Since the objections to the 1908 and the 1918 amendments were similar, it is interesting to speculate upon what factors had changed since 1908 and/or what new factors were present in 1918 that allowed passage of the 1918 amendment? One major factor was the opposition aroused amongst school boards, the press, M.P.'s., and even Gaelic moderates over a provision in the three 1908 amendments (see later pages) which would deprive boards of the residue grant if they did not or could not provide teaching in and of Gaelic. There was amongst the objectors a general consensus that several years would elapse before there would be a sufficient number of qualified teachers competent to teach the language; and that it would be unjust to withhold revenue from those boards which could not obtain the teachers. The 1918 amendment did not demand that any restrictions or penalties be imposed upon any authority which failed to comply: it simply stated that Gaelic be an essential subject within the curriculum of schools in Gaelic-speaking districts.

Another major factor was the changed attitude of the government - from opposition in 1908 to acceptance in 1918. What brought this about - apart from the wording of the measures? Much was due to the composition of the 1918 government. Six Highlanders held positions within the coalition and two were to exert considerable influence on behalf of the Gaelic amendment. R. Munro (Liberal - Wick Burghs), a native of Ross, was Secretary of State for Scotland, and alleged to be in favour

of the amendment. The amendment was seconded by the Under Secretary for War, J.I. MacPherson (Liberal - Ross and Cromarty), the only Gaelic speaker in the House. Since Lloyd-George, the Prime Minister, was a supporter of the Welsh language, and had on at least one occasion publicly urged the continued use and preservation of Gaelic, it is fairly safe to presume that the amendment had his behind-the-scenes support.¹²

Few members of the House expected Munro to accept so readily the amendment - "... so unexpected was it (i.e. his acceptance) by some that no one thought of speaking against the proposal until after the Scotch Secretary had accepted Morton's amendment".¹³ Consequently, less than two hours (1½) were spent discussing it. The parliamentary debate on the proposal can be found in later pages of this chapter.

The 1908 Education (Scotland) Bill

The Education Committee of An Comunn drafted three proposals to be included in the 1908 Education (Scotland) Bill:¹⁴ (1) Gaelic was to be taught and used as a medium of instruction in continuation classes through the addition of the words, "and in Gaelic-speaking districts*" for their instruction in the native language and literature", to clause 9 (1); (2) funds

*"Gaelic-speaking districts" in the official sense were not defined until after the passage of the 1918 Act: An Comunn's definition can be found on page 331.

were to be provided to finance the hiring of Gaelic-speaking teachers through an amendment to clause 15 (10) - "a special grant to assist school boards in providing Gaelic-speaking teachers in order that Gaelic-speaking children may be taught to read and write their native language, shall be a first charge upon the same - to be extended under this subsection"; (3) Gaelic was to be taught and used as medium of instruction in day schools through the withholding of the residue grant from schools which did not comply - "in Gaelic-speaking districts participation in this residue grant shall be conditional on adequate provisions being made for the instruction of Gaelic-speaking children in reading and writing the language" (this amendment concerned clause 15 (11) of the Bill).

After a circular had been distributed throughout Gaelic Scotland, and to the authorities concerned, and after considerable opposition had been aroused, the amendment to clause 15(11) was reworded to read: "In allocating the residue in Gaelic districts regard shall be had to adequate provision being made for the instruction of Gaelic-speaking children in reading and writing the Gaelic language".¹⁵ Confusion exists over which phrase was moved in the Standing Committee stage of the Bill: **Committee** records were not kept until 1919. The historian therefore has to rely upon external sources such as newspapers, and there the proposal is only referred to as the Gaelic amendment or Lamont's amendment (Lamont was the M.P. who sponsored the measure) without

giving the wording of the amendment. Irrespective of the wording, the amendment failed - as did the amendments to clause 9 (1) and clause 15 (10).

An Comunn did not give up and had yet another amendment moved in the Report stage of the Bill. It read:

"To making to school boards in Gaelic-speaking districts of such sums as may be necessary to make adequate provision for instruction in reading and writing the Gaelic language, and also of such sums as may be necessary to increase the number of bursaries available both before and after the junior student stage, for Gaelic-speaking children intending to become teachers".¹⁶

This amendment also failed to gain approval. Before examining the debate which ensued in the House of Commons over this last amendment and the three earlier ones let us first take note of the support and opposition which the proposals aroused outside parliament.

To demonstrate support for the measures, meetings were held throughout Gaeldom and in Lowland cities. Circulars containing the original proposals were distributed to 106 school boards, 16 Highland branches of the E.I.S., 68 Highland societies and 189 M.P.'s.¹⁷ Pressure was put on M.P.'s, especially Highland ones, "to exert their best endeavours to secure the statutory right of every Highland child to be taught to read and write his or her mother tongue."¹⁸ Nineteen M.P.'s, several of whom were Irish and Welsh, responded by petitioning Sinclair to support the amendments.¹⁹

Several church associations supported the measures. The Catholic Association of Glasgow wrote to Sinclair on the benefits which the amendments would bring to the Gaelic populace; forty-seven ministers of the United Free Church petitioned that Highland children "should be familiar with the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular"; and thirty Highland ministers from the Church of Scotland forwarded their own petitions of support.²⁰

Numerous Gaelic communities, such as Broadford, Sleat, Uig and Portree, all in Skye, petitioned their support for the amendments; and so did the rate-payers of Oban, Tiree and Tobermory in Argyllshire; Invergarry and Raasay in Invernessshire; Gairloch, Inverasdale and Poolewee in Ross-shire; Fortingall and Balquhidder in Perthshire; and Scourie in Sutherland-shire. But, activity was greatest in Lewis - especially among the Crofters' and Cottars' Association. Individual branches of the association such as Miavaig, Carloway and Port Ness, telegraphed their support to Sinclair* and Struthers; and other branches (Point, Back, etc.) telegraphed support, in opposition to the negative stand taken by their school boards to the proposals.

The E.I.S. took no official stand on the proposals, perhaps because of the dissension which they aroused among the Institute's Highland branches. For instance, the Wester Ross branch agreed with the amendments but the South West branch

*Secretary for Scotland

did not understand "how any sane person could harbour such a proposal" as to exclude Gaelic-speaking districts from a share in the grant which wealthier parts (i.e. English-speaking districts) received.²¹ The Inverness branch believed that the amendments would cause friction between non-Gaelic-speaking teachers and school boards, and would lead to the dismissal of such teachers.²²

An Comunn denied that it advocated the dismissal of unilingual English teachers: its policy was that "when vacancies occur, other qualifications being equal, preference should be given to Gaelic-speaking teachers".²³ Despite this statement, many members and several branches of An Comunn, hesitated in their support. The Inverness branch supported the clause 15 (10) amendment with "due regard being had to the interests of existing non-Gaelic teachers".²⁴ Lochaber approved of the principles involved but advised that the teaching of Gaelic "should be employed mainly as a means towards securing a thorough knowledge of English".²⁵

William MacKay, An Comunn trustee and co-founder of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, believed that the imposition of such a severe statutory penalty upon the boards which did not or could not conform, placed school boards, officials and others who favoured a reasonable use of the language, in a situation of apparent antagonism to it; and thus gave to the cause which the amendment's authors had at heart a serious setback. He

sympathised with the zeal of the militants for the language but wished that the zeal had been more tempered with discretion, and that it had been more guided by a knowledge and appreciation of the difficulties in the way, such as the scarcity of teachers and the poor finances of many Gaelic parishes.²⁶

Principal MacAlister of Glasgow University, the president of An Comunn in 1908, and Lochiel, Chief* of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, 1908, rejected compulsion.²⁷ Both believed that the S.E.D. had been sympathetic to the Gaelic cause and would continue to grant concessions to the language once the schemes already in existence were taken advantage of. It was up to the Gaels themselves, not coercive legislation, to ensure that Gaelic was used in the schools.

The attempt to secure compulsory measures for Gaelic caused a widespread debate to occur in the newspapers of the day. And, as noted in Chapter IV, the debate was not confined to the pages of the Highland press. It can be argued that the Lowland press (because of the large number of Gaels resident in the south, because of the circulation which the southern press had in the Highlands, and because of the perceived repercussions which compulsory Gaelic provisions would have upon unilingual English pupils and teachers) was as involved with the issue of

*Each year the society elected one of its members chief for that year.

compulsion as was the Highland press: it is as easy to find comments on the Gaelic amendments in the southern press as it is in the Highland press. Numerous editorials were written and almost innumerable letters to the editor were published on the pros and cons of the amendments. Almost all the letters came from Gaels resident at home or in the south.

The Scotsman was against the compulsory clauses. In an editorial it argued that local authorities were

"up against the hard realities of the problems which are not of a kind that can be removed or resolved by the sentiments of admiration for vanished or vanishing greatness and beauty - of faithfulness to a lost or loosing cause - which have been invoked in support of the proposal to make participation in the residue of the education fund dependent, in the Gaelic-speaking districts, on provision being made for instruction in the Gaelic tongue".²⁸

The paper recognised that these sentiments would always meet with a response in Highland breasts and that they were deserving of a certain measure of sympathy and encouragement - but they were not deserving of financial support from the treasury: its money could be more usefully applied in more needed spheres. If Gaelic needed financial support, prizes and bursaries could be provided by private and local authorities.

The Scotsman was also concerned that the measures would impede the advancement of English teaching in Gaeldom; and it warned that the plan of using Gaelic to dam back English was as hopeless as that of trying to keep out the Atlantic with a broom.

The Glasgow Herald could see "no good purpose" being served by the amendments.²⁹ All that was reasonable and necessary for Gaelic was being done by the school boards - freely and in accordance with the wishes of their constituents. To force anything in excess of this would benefit neither Gaelic nor Gaels. The paper rejected the comparison with Wales; as a rule the Welsh were bilingual; they had Welsh newspapers and a modern Welsh literature; and they had industries to maintain them in their own country. In Scotland, even in Gaelic-speaking districts, there were children who spoke no Gaelic even though their parents did; Scottish Gaelic literature was limited; and Gaeldom was without an industrial base.

Although the Educational News sympathised with "every legitimate movement for the furtherance of the cultivation of the Gaelic language" it strenuously opposed the amendments because they would result in the unfair dismissal of unilingual English teachers - teachers who had gone into Gaeldom at the request of Highland school boards because qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers could not be obtained.³⁰

"Pro-Patria" wrote, in a letter to the Scotsman, that despite the fact that Gaelic was a dead language its spirit appeared like the ghost of the dead king in Hamlet at critical moments in the history of northern education.³¹ He urged the young to cherish all that was good in the national life and character

of the Celt but to remember that there was a world of difference between the past and the present, and to resist the efforts of those who desired to impose an antiquated order, a cast iron system, upon a progressive generation. A "degenerate Highlander" wrote in the Glasgow Herald, that personal contact with Highland pupils had convinced him that they looked upon Gaelic teaching as a "virtual humbug"; they did not want it; they had plenty of it - perhaps too much. With Gaelic as with other things enough was as good as a feast.³² "Commonsense" stated that the schemes of the Gaelic advocates would never succeed until they, themselves, used Gaelic as their daily speech. How many, he asked, of "our scholars" converse in Gaelic while travelling on board west Highland steamers and elsewhere?³³

The opponents of the Gaelic amendments did not have it all their own way in the "letters" column. One Kenneth Campbell contended that Gaelic's survival was in spite of past and present educational systems - both of which attempted to crush out all sense of nationality, true patriotism and racial self-respect.³⁴ The amendments reflected the wish of Highland parents to have their children educated in both languages - an ambition that was educationally sound, eminently praiseworthy and deserving of encouragement from parliament. "Cathram na Feinne" insisted that the amendments would not hinder the acquisition of English: they would ensure it while at the same time preserving Gaelic.³⁵ R. Erskine, editor of Guth na Bliadha, alleged in a letter to

the Dundee Advertiser, that the school boards opposed the amendments because they were composed of members unsympathetic to the Gaelic cause: the composition of boards resembled that "of the notorious Spanish juntas during the time of the peninsular war, being three parts reactionary matter, and the rest sheer incompetence".³⁶ Until Gaels removed these "toadies, nobodies and blockheads" from the boards (during elections) Gaelic would never be taught throughout the length and breadth of the Gaeltheachd.

Little reference was made to the Gaelic amendments within the S.E.D. memoranda - although there was massive comment on the Bill itself. Public statements by Struthers indicate that he was opposed to the amendments; that he believed there was already sufficient provisions within the code for Gaelic, if the local authorities chose to activate them. The Educational News and the Glasgow Herald report Struthers as stating that, "there was no ground for any teacher excusing himself from teaching the older pupils, if Gaelic-speaking, on the ground of an overcrowded curriculum".³⁷ It was his personal belief that Gaelic-speaking pupils should have a mastery of both languages before they left school.

The amendments when put forward in the Standing Committee of the Bill received little support, primarily because of the extra burden which compulsion would place upon school boards. Sinclair, the Scottish Secretary of State, said he did not think the

institution of a system which laid considerable burdens on the boards was a wise proposal and suggested an amendment which would leave boards free to teach Gaelic or not, provided they taught the minimum courses required by the code.³⁸ Henry Craik, former Secretary of the S.E.D., and now Conservative M.P. for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, said it was impractical to compel the teaching of Gaelic and it would be ruinous to the pupils if such were done; if Sinclair would give more money for the training of Gaelic-speaking teachers, he would give his support. Sir John Dewar, (Liberal - Inverness-shire) believed that the supply of teachers was inadequate to meet the demands of the proposals and stated that he had never received so many representations against a measure as he had received against these propositions. Mr. A.C. Morton (Liberal - Sutherlandshire) denied the suggestion of Mr. Annan Bryce (Liberal - Inverness Burghs) that Highlanders were satisfied with things the way they were and suggested that every effort be made to assist Gaelic instruction. Sir. A. Bignold, (Liberal: Wick Burghs), Chief of the Gaelic Society of London and President of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, R. Munro-Ferguson (Liberal-Leith Burghs) and a Welsh Liberal, one Mr. Jones (there were three Welsh Liberals by the name of Jones sitting in the House at the time and I have been unable to identify which) spoke in favour of the amendments - to no avail. The amendments were negatived without a division and an amendment suggested by Sinclair was accepted by a vote of

thirty-three to four. The amendment read-"instruction should be given in Gaelic-speaking districts if the school boards so resolve, in the Gaelic language and literature".* Craik said that the boards already had this power, and that the proposal was "merely shop window dressing" to appease a few extremists: the amendment would make nonsense of the Bill.

In the Report Stage of the Bill another amendment was moved (as mentioned earlier) which would provide the funds for teaching Gaelic; no restrictions would be placed upon boards; and they would be assured of an increase in the supply of Gaelic-speaking teachers. (The boards, as noted in Chapter VI, generally accepted this proposal). Lamont stated that Parliamentary financial assistance was needed because the grants which the boards were receiving for the use of Gaelic in the school and which were intended to supplement the teachers' salaries, were instead being used to reduce the rates.³⁹ He maintained that the supply of Gaelic teachers had to be increased because it was impossible for a child to receive a proper education without Gaelic being taught to him first: the amendment met these goals by making a better provision for instruction and by increasing the supply of teachers. Mr. Ainsworth (Liberal - Argyllshire), who seconded the amendment, said that the districts affected were in the poorest area of Scotland; he also mentioned that funds would have to come from either clause 15, the central fund, or clause 16, the county council fund. Sinclair argued that clause 16 (9)

*When the Bill became the 1908 Education (Scotland) Act, this amendment was just applied to clause 9 (1) which pertained to continuation classes: day schools were not referred to (see chapter five); the day school clause was defeated in the vote of the House on the Bill.

provided for the continuance of the grants which were being given to the boards. The funds could be distributed subject to the discretion of the boards and the District Committees. This arrangement permitted the local authorities to open the door wide to Gaelic teaching; the question was whether the arrangement was to be upset or not. He thought not, and advised the House that the best action it could take on behalf of Gaelic was to leave the matter as it was. Sinclair also stated that the logical corollary to the amendment was to give Lowland districts a grant out of national funds to teach French or German. Mr. Pirie (Liberal - Aberdeen North) disputed the statement and said that English was the foreign language to the Gaels, not Gaelic. Mr. J. Weir (Liberal - Ross and Cromarty) expressed the hope that Sinclair would change his mind "as the amendment was supported by all members representing Gaelic-speaking districts in which there were thousands of old people quite unable to speak anything but Gaelic"; he also pointed out that there were thousands of Highlanders in all parts of the world - great soldiers, commercial men and statesmen, who had attained their positions not because they spoke Gaelic but, because it had helped them to acquire other languages. Mr. Boland (Irish Parliamentary Party - Kerry), "speaking with a knowledge of what had been done to develop the Irish language, to which Gaelic was closely akin", strongly supported the Gaelic measure on behalf of the Irish Party.

The amendment was defeated by 192 - 109 votes. Much to the

dismay of An Comunn only nineteen Scottish members had supported the proposal. (The number nineteen is not to be confused with the nineteen members from across Britain who made a representation to Sinclair and Struthers on behalf of the Gaelic amendment.) Of the nineteen members who supported the measure fourteen were Liberals, two belonged to the Labour party and three were Conservative/Unionists. The following table names the members, their parties and their constituencies.⁴⁰

| Name | Party | Constituency |
|----------------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| D. Mackenzie Smeaton | Liberal | Stirlingshire |
| H. Watt | " | Glasgow University |
| Sir J. Ainsworth | " | Argyllshire |
| J.G. Weir | " | Ross & Cromarty |
| Rt. Hon. Sir.A. Williamson, Bart | " | Elgin & Nairn |
| J. Cathcart Wason | " | Orkney & Shetland |
| Rt. Hon. R.C. Munro-Ferguson | " | Leith Burghs |
| A. Ponsonby | " | Stirling Burghs |
| A.R. Rainy | " | Kilmarnock |
| Halley Stewart | " | Greenock |
| D.V. Pirie | " | North Aberdeen |
| Sir A.C. Morton | " | Sutherlandshire |
| N. Lamont | " | Buteshire |
| J. Annan Bryce | " | Inverness Burghs |
| A. Wilkie | Labour | Dundee |
| Rt. Hon. G. Nicoll Barnes | Labour | Blackfriars, Glasgow |
| R. Duncan | C/U | Govan, Lanarkshire |
| Lt. Col. Anstruther-Gray | C/U | St. Andrew's Burghs |
| Sir. G. Younger, Bart | C/U | Ayr Burghs |

It is almost impossible to determine why these men voted in favour of the amendment, except for the four who represented Highland counties: they probably voted "yes" in the belief that it was what their constituents wanted. It is possible that Lamont sponsored and voted for the amendments because of his Celtic ancestry and his membership of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. Duncan might have supported the proposal because his father-in-law was H.M.I. Jolly. Pirie and Munro-Ferguson might have voted for the amendments because of their belief in Home Rule - Gaelic might have represented a distinctive element within Scottish culture and society. The support of Younger and Anstruther-Gray, two Unionists^{*}, is the most mysterious of all to account for.

Most of the nineteen M.P.'s had connections with England; indeed four were English (Stewart, Morton, Ponsonby, Anstruther-Gray) - three of whom (excluding Anstruther-Gray) had contested seats in England before winning Scottish constituencies. It is possible that their votes for the Gaelic proposal were meant to illustrate their concern and commitment to Scotland and things Scottish. Eleven of the nineteen had residences in the south and most had business connections there.

Seven of the nineteen were educated in English public schools, six in Scottish private schools, three in Scottish schools (unidentified), one in an English, unnamed school, one was educated in Canada, and one was educated in England and Scotland (schools unknown).

*Duncan was the third Unionist.

Of the nineteen, five attended English universities, four Scottish universities, one attended English and Scottish universities, one went to Sandhurst, another to two English agricultural colleges, and one attended a Canadian university.

From the group of **nineteen** two future knights, a future viscount and a future governor-general were to emerge. One of the nineteen was the grandson of the famous Dr. Guthrie, another the son of the illustrious Dr. Rainy; another was the son of a Congregationalist minister; and the father of still another had been private secretary to Queen Victoria.

Eight of the group were directors of banks, insurance and railway companies, manufacturing and family firms. Three were involved in engineering and construction firms; three held army commissions (but only one with a Scottish regiment); one was a surgeon-occulist; and one had no profession listed in his biography.

The 1918 Education (Scotland) Bill

The Gaelic activists were undaunted by their defeat and continued to press for a compulsory measure. The advocacy continued throughout the war years. Gales were urged to unite and organise politically. In 1915 Gaels were advised:

"While we do not think that it is desirable that any agitation should be set agoing at this time of stress and strain, it does not follow that our M.P.'s should remain inarticulate for all time. It has been said that they might as well be in Timbuctoo as in Westminster, for all they have done in the interests of the national language of Scotland."41

In 1917 Gaels were told:

"There must be persistent propaganda work until parents and others realise their duty to the language. A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull together. Elimination of jealousy, self-seeking, small mindedness. We must take a leaf out of Wales and Ireland. We must be at our M.P.'s and give them no rest till they help to secure our just claims".⁴²

To exert pressure on the M.P.'s and to demonstrate public support for an amendment, An Comunn circulated a petition throughout the Highlands.⁴³ The petition contained four proposals: (1) that in all schools in the Highlands attended mainly by Gaelic-speaking children, Gaelic would be an essential subject of instruction, and in all other Highland schools attended by Gaelic-speaking children, instruction would be available to all who desired it; (2) that suitable provisions be made at Junior Student Centres and by all Provisional Committees for the training of an adequate number of Gaelic-speaking teachers capable of teaching the lower and higher stages of the language; (3) that the salaries of teachers be improved to a degree sufficient to induce Gaelic-speaking teachers to take up work in the Highlands on the completion of their training and to remain in the Highlands; and (4) that an Education Board for the Highlands be established and that it have adequate funds at its disposal for developing the efficiency of Highland schools.

To obtain signatures on the petition, An Comunn divided the Highlands into three sections and set a sub-committee over each.

Many communities were visited by activists who encouraged the people to sign the petition and to send individual and group representations to their M.P.'s and to the S.E.D. At least 12,000 signed, but estimates vary up to 18,000.

Clan and Highland societies were appealed to, and they, in turn, were asked to petition on behalf of the proposals. The Glasgow Gaels Association (its meetings were always conducted in Gaelic) presented a resolution, passed by a meeting of 600, which urged the government to provide a "generous scheme offering full and adequate facilities for the teaching of Highland children in and through the medium of Gaelic, with due attention to the music, literature and history of the Gael".⁴⁴

The Free Church, the Church of Scotland, and the United Free Church sent a delegation to Munro^{*} which contended that no public money was spent for the purpose of teaching Gaelic and that no provision was made for the training of teachers certified and competent to teach the Gaelic language. The delegation emphasised that Gaelic would not be obligatory upon all children but that instruction should be provided in Gaelic-speaking areas or where it was a "condition of the parish minister's appointment that he shall be able to preach in Gaelic". The ministers noted "the generous provisions made by the government for the teaching of Welsh and Irish Gaelic".⁴⁵

The Scottish School Board Association presented a resolution in

*Secretary for Scotland

favour of a Gaelic amendment; a delegation from the North interviewed Munro and permanent officials from the Scottish Office; forty-five scholars from throughout the United Kingdom signed the An Comunn petition; and a variety of individuals wrote of their support to Munro.

An Comunn presented its proposals to Munro and he declared that he had an open mind about them and suggested that An Comunn might clarify the proposals "by defining a Gaelic-speaking area, and stating, if it (i.e. Gaelic) was to be an essential subject, what was to be its relation to children of non-Gaelic-speaking people".⁴⁶ In response, An Comunn recommended that the amendment read - that "the new local authorities in the Highland counties in preparing their scheme of instruction shall in every school mainly attended by Gaelic-speaking children include Gaelic as an essential subject of instruction and in other schools attended by Gaelic-speaking children provide instruction in Gaelic if desired".⁴⁷ This wording made it unnecessary to define the areas which were Gaelic-speaking: the school and its composition of scholars - not the area - would be the determining factor. In regard to English-speaking children, the association stated that there was no desire to force Gaelic teaching on children who spoke English only. Members

"were not demanding that Gaelic should be taught to all children attending schools throughout the Highlands; their demand is that every Gaelic-speaking child should be taught to read and write its own language and that instruction should be available for all others who desire it".⁴⁸

Despite Munro's personal disposition to the proposals and his declared open-mindedness about them, he did not include a Gaelic provision in his Bill. In his reception of the An Comunn delegation he had indicated that a provision might not be possible - he observed that to lose the Bill for any reason, at this time, would be nothing short of a national calamity. Under the Bill, the Education Authority in a district in which Gaelic was spoken would have the opportunity of making provision for the teaching of Gaelic, in such manner and to such extent, as was thought proper. If it were represented to the department that the authorities had not made reasonable provision for the teaching of Gaelic, it would be his duty to have "careful inquiry made into the report", and, if satisfied that it was well founded, to insist on amendment of the scheme.⁴⁹

Although disappointed, An Comunn did not give up. It resolved - "to frame our amendment, get some sympathetic and influential member to become responsible for it and bring all pressure possible on members to support it".⁵⁰ Munro made no public comment.

The movement for compulsion continued to arouse considerable opposition, especially within the S.E.D. This opposition is reflected in intra-departmental communiques (this is contrary to 1908 when departmental files do not include any representations

or mention of the Gaelic issue). H.M.I. Duncan Fraser, in a memo to Struthers, attacked the Gaelic "Highfliers".⁵¹ His main objection to the amendment was that it would take the matter of Gaelic teaching out of the hands of the people and put it in the hands of those whom he considered the leaders of the movement - "a noisy coterie" resident chiefly in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. Fraser criticised the ambiguous wording of the proposal: he presumed that 'adequate provision' equalled no provision at all where there were no Gaelic-speaking parents (in areas such as Campbeltown or Inveraray). He concluded by asking Struthers to excuse his random cries - "I had to get them off my chest".

An unsigned memo admitted that there were weaknesses within the Code which operated against Gaelic, but contended that an amendment was unnecessary to increase the use of Gaelic.⁵² The Bill (without the amendment) allowed the local authorities to prepare the educational schemes for their districts so that Gaelic could easily be made a subject for instruction. To tell the local authorities what to include in the curriculum was defeating the purpose of local autonomy and revealed a want of confidence in the judgement and fairness of the authorities. Besides, the department did not have the power to compel obedience.

"The only effective remedy in the case of a recalcitrant authority would be to deprive them absolutely of their powers for the time being and for the Department to step in and

administer at their own hand the scheme which they decree the proper one. Any such proceeding is, of course, out of the question".

The writer feared that the amendment would establish a dangerous precedent - "once the process of specific mentioning is started, I am perfectly certain that you will have representations from other bands of enthusiasts who will want the local authorities to be compelled to make provisions for the teaching of their favourite subjects" (such as needlework). In the end, the department would have "the whole code back again"

H.M.I. Munro-Fraser, also advised against the removal of the freedom granted to the school boards and warned that an Act of Parliament could not be changed.⁵³ He attached no value to the petitions because they were initiated by outsiders, and those who signed just meant to express the opinion that Gaelic should not die. The churches supported the amendment to "influence the production of Gaelic-speaking ministers" but thought the dearth was due "to the same causes as the dearth in the supply of all churches (I include priests in the term ministers) and has nothing to do with the teaching of Gaelic". He dismissed the comparison with Ireland and Wales since they were distinctive nationalities.

"In Ireland, of course the teaching of Gaelic has been for the most part advocated in the interests of 'separation' and though Wales is not disloyal the sentiment of nationality is so strong that it craves for expression in a manner that would not commend itself to the Highlanders. The result, I believe, is very indifferent English speaking in North Wales."

J.L. Robertson, Chief Inspector in the North, and recognised Gaelic scholar, opposed the amendment.⁵⁴

"As the Department knows I have worked hard all my official life to utilise Gaelic in a reasonable way in the general curriculum, and having regard to the profound social and economic advantages to these people of a fluent and intellectual knowledge of English, my deep conviction is that the matter of further Gaelic teaching should be left to the self-determination of the Local Education Authorities, present or imminent ..."

Robertson believed that the people in his district agreed with him. He recounted a conversation with his fellow managers (a crofter fisherman and a crofter merchant) of Bernera Public School: they believed that -

"children learned English in the same way as they learned Gaelic by hearing it constantly spoken, and with the well illustrated text books now in use the children understood the simple English of their class and indeed they needed full practice there, as Gaelic was the only language they heard when out of school."

The managers also said that when the people signed the An Comunn petition they never thought that it would interfere with the work of the schools. The managers believed that Gaelic could be freely used in the school, as at present, but they were sure that the Lewis people would refuse to be tied down to it in the way prominent members of An Comunn wanted. As an aside, Robertson mentioned how the managers had commented upon the fact that the leading propagandist (unnamed) for An Comunn had been in Bernera and that his little boy spoke not one word of Gaelic -

although both parents were Gaelic speakers.

The managers (a Free Churchman and a Free Church elder) objected to the support which the churches gave to the amendment.

"The churches long ago had stopped the old Gaelic Schools and that though there was a scarcity of students for the church. There were three or four times more Gaelic-speaking students at the universities now than there were twenty years ago. It was not want of Gaelic (sic) students that made the scarcity for the churches and they hoped the department knew this and would resist the attempt to make Gaelic compulsory in the schools."

Robertson also stated that his two sub-inspectors, both Lewismen, agreed with his views.

Despite the general and official approval of the churches for the amendment, there were some Gaelic-speaking clergy who strenuously opposed it. The Rev. A. MacIver (U.F. Church, Glenurquhart), a member of school boards since 1900, a member of the Inverness Secondary Education Committee and educated in a Gaelic/English school in Lewis, agreed that Gaelic-speaking children should be able to read and write Gaelic but he was convinced that making Gaelic an essential subject of instruction in Gaelic districts "would be the source of divisions injurious to education ...": compulsion would mean, "the infliction of second rate teachers with the necessary knowledge of Gaelic, but lacking efficiency in other subjects".⁵⁵

The Vicar Capitular of the Roman Catholic diocese of Argyll and the Islands, (a native Gaelic speaker, a school board member

for thirty-two years and the chairman for the last six) said that although in the past he had encouraged all reasonable measures for the use of Gaelic, he viewed "with no small measure of alarm this agitation for making Gaelic a compulsory subject of instruction".⁵⁶ He anticipated -

"increased difficulties in securing competent and efficient teachers for most schools in the Highland area and the securing of such for schools where Gaelic-speaking Catholics predominated will prove practically impossible. While admitting that Gaelic-speaking teachers are - ceteris paribus - preferable, I do not fail to recognise that the selection of such for the Gaelic-speaking area would entail restriction no less making for difficulty than dangerous as regards educational efficiency".

The Vicar alleged that not a few of An Comunn's active members were "ignorant of the Gaelic language while so many of who (sic) have signed their petition have, avowedly, done so far no other reason than they were asked".

Some papers like the Glasgow Herald and the Scotsman continued to oppose a Gaelic amendment. Both believed that ample facilities existed for the study of Gaelic and viewed the amendment, in the words of the Herald, as "distinctly retrogressive and susceptible of working mischief....." - namely forcing Gaelic on English-speaking children who lived in the Highlands, and employing only Gaelic-speaking teachers.⁵⁷ The Scottish Educational Journal, successor to the Educational News, contained few references to the amendment. The Journal was mainly concerned with securing the passage of the Bill, as was the E.I.S.

Many letters were written to the editors - as in 1908. "Uilleam

Domttnulloch" instilled fear in the hearts of many with his view that Gaelic should be taught in all the schools of Scotland: he argued that it was foolish to teach foreign languages - dead and living - within Scottish schools when Scotland's Gaelic went untaught.⁵⁸ Louise E. Farquharson of Invercauld and ex-chief of the Gaelic Society of London challenged the concept that Gaelic lacked commercial value.⁵⁹ She noted that Mr. MacPherson, the Under-Secretary for War had not been handicapped by Gaelic: it did not prevent him from filling one of the most difficult posts in government with brilliant success. His Gaelic speeches were as convincing as his English ones, and his high character and patriotism were none the less admirable because their exact commercial value could not be measured. In response, Chattan from Aberdeen, commented that all MacPherson's parliamentary abilities would be wasted if he knew only Gaelic: he would be a "parliamentary deaf mute".⁶⁰ Chattan also noted that "in order to gain the sympathy of Lowlanders and sassenachs for the teaching of Gaelic in Highland schools, Miss Farquharson has to revert to English for the simple reason that Gaelic has no universality and therefore no commercial value".

Meanwhile An Comunn secured parliamentary sponsors for the introduction of a Gaelic amendment. The amendment to clause 6 (1) (a) - "including adequate provisions for teaching Gaelic in Gaelic speaking areas" - was introduced into the Scottish Grand Committee by Sir. A.C. Morton (Liberal: Sutherlandshire -

a supporter of the 1908 amendment) and seconded by J.I. MacPherson, (Liberal: Ross and Cromarty), Under Secretary for War. Of MacPherson's intervention, one paper commented "it was very unusual - indeed almost unprecedented in recent times - for a member of a government to support an amendment on which the responsible minister has not declared his position".⁶¹ In his address MacPherson insisted that it was an elementary principle of education that a child be taught the rudiments of its education in its mother tongue.*⁶² Although in favour of the existing Gaelic measures, he criticised them as pertaining mostly to secondary education and not to the elementary stages: "it was irrational policy to recognise a subject at an advanced stage and leave it unrecognised without any definite attempt to shape its uncertain way at a period when by all the laws of nature it should require control and recognition most in the interests of the pupil". The amendment, apart from developing the child's Gaelic, would ensure that the child received its "general education without handicaps and with the greatest profit to itself and the greatest advantage to the state". To the objection that there was nothing to prevent the local authorities from using Gaelic, MacPherson responded:

*Speeches delivered in the Scottish Grand Committee were not (during this period) printed in Hansard. Such speeches, and MacPherson's was no exception, were printed in some newspapers - seldom in detail or fullness. Fortunately, MacPherson's complete speech was printed (years later) in the Transactions and it is from this source that his comments are drawn.

"But, this spirit of individual judgement does not invariably prevail among the School Boards directly concerned. They do not regard it as their duty to take the initiative. They look for that to My Lords of the Education Department, and if My Lords do not feel inclined to give them this initiative and place Gaelic as an essential subject in the curriculum they are content to obey with unfaltering loyalty a code as it is established for them in Dover House."

It was Parliament's duty to suggest on behalf of those boards a proper and sane initiative.

MacPherson asked that the same privileges which were given to Welsh and Irish be given to Gaelic. No comparable grants were given to Gaelic - it had to be "content with grants from endowments and trusts, merely because the representation of Scotland, and particularly of the Highlands, has never fully or adequately realised its responsibility in so important a direction".

Other speeches of support were given by Sir. D. MacLean (Liberal - Peebles and Selkirk; Deputy Chairman of Committee, House of Commons), a Highlander, who spoke of the Welsh language movement; Mr. D. Holmes (Liberal - Govan Division of Lanarkshire), and Mr. A. Whyte (Liberal-Perth City), who referred to the loss which Scotland would sustain from the disappearance of Gaelic; Mr. Boland who again spoke on behalf of the Irish Parliamentary Party; and Mr. Wilkie (Dundee) who spoke on behalf of the Labour Party. When Mr. Munro accepted the amendment, J.M. MacLeod (Conservative - Central Division of Glasgow), C. Price (Liberal - Central Edinburgh) and Sir J. Ainsworth (Mr. in 1908; Liberal - Argyllshire)

congratulated him with enthusiasm.⁶³ Just two M.P.'s spoke against the amendment - Sir Henry Craik (Conservative - Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) who had opposed the 1908 amendments, and Mr. W. Pringle (Liberal - North-West Lanarkshire). Craik had doubts about the expediency of making the provisions of Gaelic teaching mandatory upon the Education Committees and questioned whether Highland parents desired instruction in Gaelic. None of the Gaelic-speaking inspectors recommended the proposals and he mocked those in the House who advocated the amendments but spoke no Gaelic themselves. Pringle thought the supply of Gaelic-speaking teachers would be insufficient to enable the local authorities to fulfil their responsibilities; he also alleged that Munro and MacPherson had "arranged all this to advertise themselves to their constituents".

Munro announced that he had accepted the amendment because it was just and the correction of a great wrong; it was also a practical proposal - administratively possible and simple. He acknowledged the "absolute precedent for this proposal in the Welsh Act ..." and stated that the amendment was likely to be accepted by every Education Authority in the Highlands, once parliament had given assent to it.

The measure, as contained within the context of the Act, read:

"Section 6 (1) It shall be the duty of every education authority within twelve months after the appointed day to prepare and submit for the approval of the Department (a) a scheme for the adequate provision of all forms of primary, intermediate and

secondary education in day schools (including adequate provision for teaching Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas) without payment of fees, and if the authority think fit for the maintenance or support (in addition and without prejudice to such adequate provision as aforesaid) of a limited number of schools where fees are charged in some or all classes."64

Although the amendment made the teaching of Gaelic compulsory in all levels of education, in all Gaelic-speaking districts (as yet officially undefined), it still fell short of the provisions made for Irish and Welsh - primarily because there were no financial provisions to encourage the teaching of Gaelic and no provisions to secure a supply of teachers competent to teach the language; also there was no 'built in' machinery to ensure that Gaelic would be taught. These were major weaknesses. They were the same ones which confronted Gaelic when it was a voluntary subject of study and instruction. Supporters of Gaelic in the post war era would have to struggle as hard as the pre-1918 advocates to secure a meaningful place for Gaelic in the curriculum of Highland schools.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that it was socio-economic conditions that gave rise to the establishment of the Scottish educational system in 1872 and that it was these conditions which caused large numbers of Gaels to migrate. Migration required English and the school was considered the most natural and effective method of teaching English.

School managers, teachers, inspectors, M.P.'s, the press and even Gaelic advocates themselves divided over the degree to which Gaelic could assist progress in English. Their opinions were derived as much from age old preconceptions of Gaelic's aesthetic and commercial value as from contemporary language teaching methods.

Although the Gaelic activists did not always agree upon the methods used to advance Gaelic teaching, they must be credited with the uphill struggle they waged. Few school boards in Gaelic Scotland supported the teaching of Gaelic, few made demands upon the S.E.D. for measures and assistance favourable to the language and few took steps to implement seriously the concessions - when granted. Those boards who wished to apply the concessions often found their efforts hampered by a lack of funds and an insufficient number of qualified Gaelic-speaking teachers. Critics of the boards acknowledged that difficulties existed but argued that if the boards had made a united and consistent demand for such, the S.E.D. would have acted upon the request. No widespread demand

was made (the critics alleged) because the boards were either prejudiced against Gaelic or convinced that it had little utility in regard to English. Prejudice is difficult to prove but there is ample evidence that firstly, many boards did not believe in Gaelic's utilitarian value; and secondly, that there was a shortage of certificated Gaelic-speaking teachers and the facilities for teaching Gaelic.

The S.E.D. can be and has been (occasionally) credited with granting the concessions, but it has been attacked for leaving the implementation of them entirely in the hands of local school managers and for not giving more financial, as well as verbal, encouragement to ensure their application. In defence of the department it can be argued that the concessions were considerable - in view of the divided and conflicting (and often negative) opinions it received from concerned bodies. One can only speculate whether, if the advice given had been less conflicting and more positive, the department would have responded in a more definite and favourable way. It would seem that letting Gaelic be taught at will was its way of responding to the demands both for and against the language.

In fairness to the S.E.D. and the local authorities it must be pointed out that (rightly or wrongly) the language issue did not have the urgency about it which other issues (especially in the years immediately after the passage of the Act) had. The erection and maintenance of buildings, the procurement of teachers, funding,

etc., dominated the concerns and efforts of school officials: Gaelic only did so when the occasional petition arrived from an interested party.

The low priority accorded to the native language was not a feature peculiar to school authorities in the Highlands. As noted in Chapter VII, educational officials in the Lowlands were also preoccupied with such matters as the supply of teachers and the daily maintenance of the schools, etc., - these concerns precluded (apparently) any widespread discussion regarding the Scottish dialect and its culture. In both Gaelic and English-speaking Scotland the preservation of the native languages and their respective cultures was not a major priority of the local education authorities.*

The thesis noted that the concessions granted to the Irish and Welsh languages were of greater substance and wider application, and were secured with less difficulty than those granted to Scottish Gaelic - because the Welsh and Irish language pressure groups aroused a larger and more widespread degree of support within their countries than did the Scottish Gaelic advocates. Gaelic did not have the united support of the churches in Gaelic

*This is not to deny that there were some school boards (particularly in the Aberdeen or north-eastern area in the 1880's) which occasionally voiced concern over the fate of the local dialect.

Scotland which both the Welsh and Irish had in theirs - the Welsh in its Evangelical churches and the Irish in the Roman Catholic. The Scottish churches were neither wholly committed to the Gaelic advocacy nor concerned with the fate of Gaelic outside the service which it could render to their respective ministries. It would seem that the churches in Ireland and Wales saw their fate and faiths inextricably interwoven with the fate of their national languages and thus fought to have the languages preserved and developed on as wide and deep a national scale as possible. Whereas the Scottish Presbyterian Churches sought limited provision for Gaelic and then only until Gaelic was no longer needed, the churches in Ireland and Wales argued for their languages because they were needed and sought to ensure that the need would always be continued; they were not looking for or towards an end to their national tongues - the Scottish Churches were.

The Scottish Gaelic advocacy did not have the widespread literary and intellectual support which the language movements in Ireland and Wales had. A speaker at the Celtic Conference (1917) referred to the indifference of Scottish intellectuals to the Gaelic language:

"One cannot help noting the number of eminent and scholarly men associated with the language movement in Wales, and wondering why scholars in our own country stand aside in a condition of benevolent neutrality. Movements like that of An Comunn Gaidhealach would acquire greater force were more of our outstanding countrymen to range themselves definitely on the side of Celtic culture ..." 1

The Gaelic movement did not have the degree of support from the

Scottish parliamentary figures which the Irish and Welsh movements had from their politicians (except during the brief spell of Highland Land League M.P.'s in the 1880's); Scottish Gaelic had no national, charismatic, political leader championing its cause - it had no Butt, no Davitt, no Lloyd George; neither Fraser MacIntosh, the M.P. and sponsor of early Gaelic reform measures nor J. MacPherson, the Under Secretary for War 1914 - 1918. and sponsor of the 1918 Gaelic amendment, were of the stature of Lloyd George, Davitt or Butt. And although attempts were made to join the language advocacy and the movement for land reform, they were not co-joined in Scotland as they were in Ireland - primarily because the two major Gaelic societies, An Comunn Gaidhealach and the Gaelic Society of Inverness, were not politically aligned; the Highland Land League was primarily concerned with land reform - language was a secondary (if, indeed that) aspect of this struggle; when land claims were secured, the party died and crofters returned to traditional political allegiances.

Neither was the Scottish Gaelic movement associated with the Home Rule or the nationalist movement to the extent that Irish Gaelic was with Ireland's; attempts by several leading Scottish Gaelic nationalists (Prof. Blackie, John Murdoch, Rory Erskine, etc.) to unite the two movements (i.e. language and nationalism) achieved only minimal success - again largely because of the desire of An Comunn and the Inverness Society to remain aloof from political entanglements.

But, perhaps the greatest obstacle in the way of the Scottish

Gaelic movement was the failure of it to take root or catch on with the people. Gaels, apparently, did not think, were not aware, that their language was threatened. They did not seem to associate learning English with losing Gaelic; there was no correlation between the two. Gaelic was a language they had and would always have: there was no question, no thought of ceasing to speak Gaelic. They did not view the future of their language over decades and generations: they viewed their own and their children's present and future without English. For decades, Gaels had been told their path to prosperity lay outside of Gaelic Scotland and with English. This is the hard fact of life which Gaelic language supporters have always come up against and will continue to meet. Their efforts would be considerably helped and would have been assisted had the so called natural leaders (i.e., clergy, businessmen, educationists, etc.) of Gaelic communities encouraged the people to keep the language while acquiring English. As we have seen, the leaders did not do so and the people let Gaelic go.

Gaelic advocates must bear some of the blame for this development because they, their societies and their journals, failed to communicate to Gaels that the native language was declining and its cultural heritage threatened. The Gaelic supporters failed to develop a Gaelic press which could communicate this message and a printed literature which could reverse the trend towards decline. The advocates neglected to develop a forum or an organisation which could develop the orthography of the Gaelic

language and extend its register. These tasks were left to individual efforts.

The involvement of the Gaelic activists in politics, particularly with nationalist and Irish politics, weakened their appeal to educational authorities, and perhaps to large segments of the Gaelic-speaking population.

Yet it would be unfair to place too much blame upon the Gaelic activists - after all, they did secure the educational concessions outlined in this thesis. The failure to implement the measures fully rests not with the Gaelic activists but with the school authorities. The provisions had enabled the authorities to use as much Gaelic as they pleased - the problem was their reluctance to develop a comprehensive Gaelic scheme because of their lack of confidence in Gaelic as an educational tool (even in its ability to assist the acquisition of English). Instead of inaugurating a policy of concerted action on behalf of the Gaelic language and culture, half-hearted policies were occasionally adopted and applied.

If this is a true interpretation then the fault for the neglect of Gaelic within the school system of Gaeldom lies not primarily with the outsider operating in Edinburgh or London (as so often has been alleged) but rather with the insider - with those school boards which failed to use the powers available; with those ratepayers and consumers of

education who hesitated to press their educational representatives and authorities to include more Gaelic in the curriculum. For the minimal use of Gaelic within the school system Highlanders (Gaelic and English speaking) are largely responsible - just as they are responsible for the decline in use of Gaelic within the Highlands.

The socio-economic conditions of Gaeldom hardly allowed otherwise. That Gaelic has survived, at all, within the school system and within the Highlands, is a tribute to the tenacity of the language and to those Gaels who refused to let it die, despite the socio-economic conditions of the Highland region.

Appendix

Table A (pertaining to Chapter II) gives an example of some of the English words and phrases for which there was no Gaelic equivalent in the 1870's.

Table A

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| orthography | consonant conjugation |
| phonetics | periphrastic tenses |
| consonants | semi-auxiliaries |
| immutable | recitation |
| declension | preface |
| inflexion | vocabulary |
| interrogative pronouns | subordinate clause |
| indefinite pronouns | synthesis |
| prepositional pronouns | gravity |
| subjunctive | gasket |
| imperative mood | telephone |
| conjugation | post-office |

Table B (pertaining to Chapter III) compares the rates of natural and actual increase of population in the Highland counties and Scotland, 1861 - 1920. (Flinn is the source).

Table B

| | 1861 - 1871 | | 1871 - 1881 | | 1881 - 1891 | |
|-------------------|----------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|------|
| | Actual Natural | | Actual Natural | | Actual Natural | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Highland Counties | -1.9 | 8.9 | 0.1 | 7.8 | -1.2 | 8.4 |
| Scotland | 9.7 | 13.6 | 11.2 | 14.0 | 7.8 | 13.6 |
| | 1891 - 1900 | | 1901 - 1910 | | 1911 - 1920 | |
| | Actual Natural | | Actual Natural | | Actual Natural | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Highland Counties | -1.0 | 5.7 | -2.3 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 1.2 |
| Scotland | 11.1 | 12.4 | 6.5 | 12.1 | 2.6 | 9.1 |

Tables C and D (pertaining to Chapter III) show the trend of later marriages within the Highlands, 1861 - 1921. (Flinn is the source).

Table C

% of selected male age-groups married

| Highland Counties | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 20 - 24 | 6.3 | 4.7 | 5.1 | 3.4 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 5.3 |
| 25 - 29 | 30.6 | 27.3 | 26.8 | 22.2 | 24.0 | 21.7 | 25.9 |
| 30 - 34 | 55.0 | 53.1 | 50.7 | 45.7 | 45.4 | 42.9 | 48.6 |
| 50 - 54 | 84.4 | 82.6 | 81.0 | 78.6 | 76.6 | 74.3 | 75.3 |
| Scotland | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 |
| 20 - 24 | 16.7 | 15.8 | 15.2 | 13.4 | 12.6 | 11.6 | 14.6 |
| 25 - 29 | 52.3 | 51.3 | 50.7 | 46.4 | 45.0 | 41.8 | 46.2 |
| 30 - 34 | 71.7 | 71.4 | 71.3 | 68.2 | 66.6 | 64.0 | 68.3 |
| 50 - 54 | 86.8 | 87.1 | 87.5 | 87.1 | 86.1 | 84.9 | 84.0 |

Table D

% of selected female age-groups married

| Highland Counties | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 20 - 24 | 15.2 | 13.5 | 14.7 | 11.3 | 12.0 | 10.7 | 14.8 |
| 25 - 29 | 41.1 | 39.9 | 41.7 | 36.4 | 37.7 | 34.0 | 38.3 |
| 30 - 34 | 59.1 | 58.8 | 59.3 | 57.1 | 55.3 | 54.2 | 56.5 |
| 50 - 54 | 75.5 | 73.6 | 72.5 | 72.2 | 71.7 | 71.0 | 71.2 |
| Scotland | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 | 1921 |
| 20 - 24 | 25.9 | 26.2 | 26.5 | 23.6 | 23.6 | 21.8 | 24.6 |
| 25 - 29 | 54.0 | 55.7 | 56.9 | 52.2 | 52.5 | 49.7 | 52.0 |
| 30 - 34 | 68.9 | 69.8 | 71.2 | 68.8 | 68.2 | 66.7 | 67.8 |
| 50 - 54 | 79.6 | 80.1 | 80.7 | 81.5 | 81.4 | 79.7 | 79.7 |

Table E (pertaining to Chapter III) reveals the average age at marriage in the Highland counties and in Scotland, 1861 - 1921. (Flinn is the source).

Table E

| | | <u>Male</u> | | <u>Female</u> | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | <u>year</u> | <u>mean</u> | <u>median</u> | <u>mean</u> | <u>median</u> |
| <u>Highland Counties</u> | 1861 | 31.3 | 29.2 | 26.5 | 25.3 |
| | 1871 | 31.7 | 29.6 | 26.9 | 25.7 |
| | 1881 | 31.5 | 29.4 | 26.9 | 25.7 |
| | 1891 | 32.0 | 30.1 | 27.5 | 26.5 |
| | 1901 | 32.2 | 30.5 | 27.9 | 26.9 |
| | 1911 | 32.8 | 31.1 | 28.6 | 27.4 |
| | 1921 | 32.9 | 30.8 | 28.6 | 27.3 |
| <u>Scotland</u> | 1861 | 28.6 | 26.3 | 25.6 | 24.0 |
| | 1871 | 28.6 | 26.3 | 25.8 | 24.0 |
| | 1881 | 28.5 | 26.3 | 25.7 | 23.9 |
| | 1891 | 28.8 | 26.9 | 26.1 | 24.4 |
| | 1901 | 28.8 | 27.0 | 26.3 | 24.6 |
| | 1911 | 29.4 | 27.5 | 26.7 | 24.9 |
| | 1921 | 29.5 | 27.4 | 26.4 | 24.6 |

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Logierait 5/72/1

Ross

Applecross 3/3/1

Locharron 3/4/3

Lochbroom 3/1/1

Lochs, Uig, Barvas

Stornoway

Sutherland

Farr 3/1/5

The above School Board Minutes and the references to other minutes within the thesis are not located in the S.R.O. They are under the custodianship of the education authorities for each county - Perthshire and Kirkcudbrightshire are exceptions; their records are under the custodianship of the central libraries in Perth and Galloway.

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33. Ibid., 26/6/08
34. Northern Chronicle, 25/5/08
35. Glasgow Herald, 6/6/08
36. Dundee Advertiser, 12/6/08
37. "Rural Teachers and Rural Schools: the Bill, a Protest", loc cit., and the Glasgow Herald, 6/6/08
38. This and other statements pertaining to the debate in the Standing Committee stage of the Bill are found in the Scotsman and the Glasgow Herald, 14/6/08
39. This statement and all the quotations and arguments which follow on this point are contained in Hansard, 1908, Vol. 197, Nov 24 pp. 152 - 158
40. The information on the M.P.'s is taken from editions of the Parliamentary Who's Who and Who's Who

41. "Financial Aid to Gaelic: Scotland vs Ireland", An Deo-Ghreine Vol. X No. 10 (1915), pp. 147 - 148
42. "The Gaelic Question in Scotland", An Deo-Ghreine Vol. XIII No. 2 (1917), pp 19 - 24
43. See "The Gaelic Question in Scotland", loc cit., and An Deo-Ghreine Vol. XII No. 2 (1916), p. 26
44. Resolution from the Gaels Association, 2/3/18 S.R.O. ED 14/84
45. The Scotsman, 11/7/18
46. "The Teaching of Gaelic: Scottish Churches and the Dearth of Ministers", An Deo-Ghreine Vol. XIII No. 7 (1918), pp. 99 - 104.*
For further elaboration see letter to D. MacDonald from Munro, 11/7/18 S.R.O. ED 14/87 and the Aberdeen Free Press, 24/7/18
47. Letter from An Comunn (i.e. M. MacDonald) to Munro 2/7/18 S.R.O. ED 14/84
48. Letter from N. Shaw, Sec. of An Comunn to Munro 1/1/18 S.R.O. ED 14/84
49. "The Teaching of Gaelic: Scottish Churches and the Dearth of Ministers", loc cit.
50. "The Education Bill", An Deo-Ghreine Vol III No. 10 (1918) p. 158
51. Memorandum from Duncan Fraser to Struthers 31/10/18 S.R.O. ED 14/87
52. S.E.D. Memorandum - unsigned and undated. S.R.O. ED 14/87
53. Letter to Struthers from H.M.I. Munro Fraser 20/7/18 S.R.O. ED 14/87
54. Letter to Struthers from Robertson 8/7/18 S.R.O. ED 14/87
55. Letter to Struthers from the Rev. A. MacIver 1918 S.R.O. ED 14/87
56. Letter to Struthers from the Vicar Capitular of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Argyll and the Isles 18/7/18 S.R.O. ED 14/87
57. Glasgow Herald, 31/7/18
58. Aberdeen Free Press, 31/3/18
59. Ibid
60. Ibid. 8/4/18
61. Ibid., 31/7/18

*The article traces the efforts to obtain a Gaelic clause and not just the role of the churches.

62. This statement and the following quotations of MacPherson are contained within Transactions Vol. XXXV (1929-30), pp. 174-180
63. See "The Education (Scotland) Bill", An Deo-Ghreine Vol. XIII No. 12 (1918), pp. 179-180, and the Aberdeen Daily Journal, 31/7/18 for this and the following quotations.
64. Education (Scotland) Act, 1918

Conclusion

1. "The Celtic Conference (1917) Report", An Deo-Ghreine Vol. XIII No. 10 (1918), pp. 19-22