

Scottish Teachers and Educational Policy, 1803-1872:

Attitudes and Influence.

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SUMMARY

This thesis attempts to describe and analyze the position and role of Scottish teachers in the context of nineteenth century educational development in Scotland. The focal point of the thesis is the foundation of the Educational Institute of Scotland in 1847 and its relation to the national educational reform question, one of the major Scottish political issues of the mid-nineteenth century.

A number of forces, through the first half of the nineteenth century, produced significant alterations in Scottish society and its educational arrangements. Industrialization and urbanization were the most fundamental of these forces. Increasing ecclesiastical fragmentation, symbolized by the dramatic Disruption of 1843, and, what might be termed, the greater secularization of Scottish life, also had an important influence on the educational situation. The growing involvement of the central government in educational affairs from the 1830s on was yet another important factor. The interaction, and influence of these various forces and developments on Scottish education is examined in some detail.

As mid-century approached it became increasingly clear that the traditional Scottish educational system was unable to cope effectively with the new situation and a number of fundamental questions were raised. What should be done to educate the increasing number of children, particularly in the urban areas, who were reached neither by the traditional parochial schools or the best efforts of denominational or philanthropic educators? Who should control and direct these efforts? What effect might they have on the Scottish educational tradition? What kind of teachers were

needed and what role should they play? The various solutions proposed, in response to these questions, and the accompanying controversies which they in turn gave rise to, are also described and assessed.

In this thesis two themes predominate. The first is the attempt by the Scottish teachers of the period to improve their qualifications and conditions of work, to protect and enhance their occupational status, and to gain a significant degree of independence in order to participate in the formulation of general educational policy. The second is the effort, by a broadly based section of liberal Scottish public men and politicians, to reform the Scottish education system, along lines that would preserve the basic principles of the national educational tradition, while at the same time, adapting to contemporary conditions and needs. Both of these themes are related to a third important development in mid-nineteenth century Scotland - the increased concern of Scotsmen about their national identity, particularly in reference to English influence upon it.

Finally, the implications of the failure of either the Scottish teachers or of the Scottish educational reformers, to achieve their basic objectives at the mid-nineteenth century period, are examined. It is suggested that these failures were of considerable long-range significance for Scottish teachers, for Scottish education and for Scottish nationality.

I have spoken rather at length on the quality of teachers. But I think it almost impossible to overrate the importance of this branch of educational inquiry. Do what you will in building, or endowing, or encouraging a school, make for it the most convenient premises; place it in the most favourable situation - give it every advantage of government wealth or patronage - but after all the teacher is the pivot on which success or failure turns. I knew this well before I went to Scotland; but I never had it so forcibly brought home to me as there, that after all the teacher is everything.

D.R. Fearon, 1867

PREFACE

The study, of which this thesis is the result, was stimulated originally by a contemporary concern, and a desire to trace its historical roots. It seemed to me that as a teacher I and my colleagues were little more than implementers of educational policies conceived by others. Given free rein in the classroom and allowed to exert a group interest on such matters as salary, teachers, nevertheless, seem beset by external regulations, requirements, administrators and 'experts'. As I began to think seriously about this problem, to talk to other teachers about it, and to read what had been written on the question, it became clear that mine was not an isolated perception and that the role and influence of the teachers was a central issue in most education systems.

Teachers, certainly in comparison with those engaged in occupations commonly called 'the professions', have had little influence in the formulation of the broad policies which direct their undertaking, though this varies somewhat from country to country and system to system. My interest, in terms of historical investigation, was to see if this limited role was a tradition of teaching and to try to identify some of the forces which shaped that tradition.

A set of happy fortuities enabled me to conduct this investigation in the rich field of Scottish educational history. The struggle of nineteenth century Scottish teachers to assert their rights to participate in the shaping of the Scottish educational tradition, as well as to acquire more control over their own occupational destinies, and their failure to achieve this end, illuminates, for me at any rate, the problem with which I began. Moreover, the failure to reform the national education system of Scotland in the 1850's had, I believe, serious consequences both

for Scottish education and for Scottish national identity.

I would like to acknowledge my appreciation for the financial support which allowed me to study in Scotland: The Canada Council Awards in 1963-64 and 1964-65; and the William Pakenham Fellowship of the College of Education, University of Toronto in 1965-66.

I am, in addition, greatly indebted to many persons - family, friends, fellow-students, teachers and colleagues - who have contributed in many ways to this study. In particular, however, I wish to record my thanks to three whose help has been direct and crucial: Mr. J.E.A. Jones, whose interest as a friend and example as a teacher prompted the formulation of many of the ideas which led to this study; Mr. Richard Hamilton, whose encouragement, guidance, and knowledge, sustained and heartened me; and Dr. William Ferguson, whose lectures helped to chart for me so much of the unfamiliar territory I was exploring and whose interest increased my confidence. They have all led me to set my sights high; that I fall short is my responsibility.

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INTRODUCTION

The Educational Institute of Scotland was founded in 1847, and the National Education Association three years later. Both organizations were expressions of a widespread concern among Scotsmen about the state of education in their country at mid-century. By the late 1840's it was evident that Scotland's national educational tradition was in severe decline and that the international reputation as an educational leader that the country had long enjoyed was becoming increasingly tarnished. The parochial schools, upon which that tradition and reputation rested, now educated less than a third of Scottish students. Devised when Scotland was a rural farm and village society, the parochial system had proved unable to adapt to the massive increase of population. An important weakness of the system was the fact that its jurisdiction did not extend to the great urban concentrations of population which had grown up around the new centres of industry and commerce.

The Church of Scotland, guardian of the national education system, was by mid-century the national church no longer. The dramatic 'Disruption' of 1843 had resulted in the creation of its main denominational rival, the Free Church of Scotland; others were in the field as well. The Episcopalian Church continued to be the spiritual home of the Scottish landowning class. The Catholic faith was increasingly, and to most Scottish Protestants, alarmingly in evidence, as the Irish immigrated to the west coast and the Highlanders came south. Even within the Presbyterian fold itself, new ecclesiastical factions, ^{the most recent of which was} ~~like~~ the United Presbyterians, had appeared. Moreover, a variety of new secular ideas and influences were challenging and to an extent undermining the authority of

religion. The position of the churches as the arbiters of intellectual, moral and social values was increasingly open to question.

In education, despite great vigor and dedication, the combined efforts of the denominations and of philanthropic impulse were insufficient to cope with the hordes of ragged urban children, the offspring of the labouring poor, who swarmed through the streets of the city. Poverty, disease, drunkenness, and crime, were rampant, and general social and political unrest seemed to many to be rising at a pace which posed a distinct danger to the stability and established order of national life.

Beginning in the 1830's the central government began to involve itself in educational affairs. At first this involvement was both minor and indirect, but the late 1840's saw a major expansion of the government's role. For Scotland, the government's increasing intervention was a mixed blessing. Prompted primarily by the ecclesiastical and educational situation in England, and designed to operate under those circumstances, the rules and regulations of the Privy Council's Committee on Education were applied to Scotland without alteration. The problem thus posed was whether the eroding effect of the government system on the distinctive character of Scottish education was outweighed by the positive material benefits it conferred on the country.

Taken together these factors provide some understanding of why, to a broad spectrum of liberal Scots, national educational reform seemed nothing less than a mid-century imperative. Combining in the National Education Association, they sought to formulate and promote reform proposals which would both preserve and strengthen the basic principles of the Scottish educational tradition and at the same

time organize and extend the school system to meet contemporary conditions. During the 1850's a number of major legislative reform schemes were presented and debated in Parliament. Despite the fact that they were all supported by a majority of Scottish MPs in the Commons and, as far as one may judge, by a majority of the population of Scotland, all were defeated. Fundamental educational reform was, in fact, to be postponed for almost another two decades.

For Scottish teachers the period was both difficult and, exhilarating. Like other members of Scottish society the schoolmasters, were affected by and concerned about the same economic and social developments which have been mentioned above. Many of those developments, however, had a special significance for them as teachers. In a society where the only other main avenues for advancement had been the church, medicine, and the law, teaching had traditionally commanded high respect and a comparatively comfortable income. As Scotland industrialized and urbanised this relatively high status began to suffer and the schoolmaster often found himself reduced to near poverty by rising prices. As denominations and voluntary associations struggled to build and maintain schools against the flood of population, the settled independence which had come to be regarded as typical of the Scottish schoolmaster's position, became less and less applicable to more and more teachers. Increasingly restive under clerical supervision, Scottish teachers found themselves subjected to new sets of rules and regulations laid down by the central government and applied by its inspectors. As the overall educational deficiencies of the country became a matter of public controversy, numerous conflicting theories and 'solutions', all directly affecting the position and role of the teacher, were put

forward and vigorously debated. Moreover, the teachers discovered that not only were their opinions on the subject not sought, but when offered were either ignored or rejected.

It was the Scottish teachers' concern with the national educational controversy that makes the formation of the Educational Institute of Scotland particularly interesting. During the nineteenth century a number of specialized occupational groups consolidated the available knowledge concerning their enterprises, established standards of training and entrance, sought to acquire the right to license or exclude members, and began to build up the elaborate mystique that has generally come to separate the 'professions' from other occupations. Teachers were aware of these developments and strove to emulate them. Improved standards, better pay, higher status, and a 'closed shop' were matters of prime importance to Scottish teachers. Partly because of the country's educational tradition, which gave them some distinctive characteristics as an occupational group, and partly because they found themselves in the midst of a great public controversy over education, to which they felt impelled to contribute, the motivation of the founders of the Educational Institute and the declared objectives of that organization, were of broader scope and significance than simply the attainment of the privileges and status associated with a 'profession'.

The educational reform issue, however, was part of an even more fundamental Scottish problem. It becomes evident as one studies the concerns and activities of the teachers and, in turn, those of the educational reformers, that the education question was an important part of the heightened national consciousness of Scotland during the mid-century period. Most writers on nineteenth century Scottish nationalism have examined the phenomenon in terms of its political

and economic manifestations. Education, though it was one of the most deeply rooted and distinctive aspects of Scottish national life has been virtually ignored. It seems evident, however, that the educational reform issue aroused the interest and enthusiastic support of liberal mainstream Scottish opinion as no other single question did. Moreover it raised a number of the political, economic, and cultural issues cited by avowed Scottish nationalists as evidence of Scotland's grievances against England. Scotsmen, who generally found the nationalist point of view either wildly radical or quaintly romantic, waxed indignant over the cause of Scottish educational reform.

In its opening chapters this thesis attempts to establish the educational context existing in Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century and to place the Scottish teacher and his problems in that context. In the fourth chapter the mythology and the reality the Scottish educational tradition are examined and an effort is made to identify, describe and evaluate a number of the developments which were altering and eroding that tradition at mid-century. The following three chapters concentrate on the establishment, development, and influence of the Educational Institute of Scotland. The last of this group focuses on the dilemma the Educational Institute of Scotland faced with regard to the national educational reform controversy and the effect~~y~~ on its further growth and progress of the failure of the Institute to resolve that dilemma.

The eighth and ninth chapters of the thesis attempt to go somewhat beyond the bounds suggested by its title. They involve a consideration of the connection between the educational reform issue and the mid-century development of Scottish nationalist sentiment.

They also describe and try to assess the course of Scottish educational reform controversy on the public and legislative political fronts. Finally, the Conclusion rounds out the picture to the year 1872, assesses the progress of Scottish education through the late 1850's and the 1860's and speculates about the possible short and long-term influences of the mid-nineteenth century failure to reform Scottish national education in any fundamental way.

Chapter 1

The Education Setting, 1800-1850

I

The first task is to describe the educational situation in which nineteenth century Scottish teachers found themselves. The most striking impression to emerge from such a description is one of serious inadequacy. Certainly to a modern observer, the type, standards, and amount of educational provision seems gravely deficient. Moreover, many contemporary Scotsmen through this period, expressed a growing concern about the inadequacies of Scottish education and what they felt was a decline in its excellence and comprehensiveness from past glories. In this chapter I will try to give these impressions substance by assessing both the quality of Scottish education, as displayed by such matters as buildings and equipment, attendance, curriculum and method, organization and discipline, and the quantity of education available in Scotland, so far as it can be ascertained by noting social and economic trends, consulting contemporary views, and analyzing the available statistics.

According to I.J. Simpson, the historian of education in the northeast of Scotland, the typical turn-of-the-century schoolhouse was a small drystone or stone and mortar building, with a thatched or divoted roof, measuring about 30 feet in length, 12 to 18 feet in width, and 6 or 7 feet in height. The interior, lighted by three or four small windows, was partitioned, with only the master's living section floored.¹ Simpson comments, "Even important places

1 I.J. Simpson, Education in Aberdeenshire before 1872 (London, 1947), p. 141.

might be content with such a building."² The common practice of the master taking boarders added to the already cramped conditions.³

The building, especially its roof, needed regular attention and the heritors' minute books of the period are filled with references to major and minor repairs. The complaints of a schoolmaster in 1848 are typical. "Our present schoolhouse is in a very bad state", wrote William Ferguson to the managers of his school. "Turfs are falling from the roof upon us, and the rain is getting free access at several places."⁴ Heritors and managers, not surprisingly, were concerned with economy, and the maintainance of the school was often a source of tension between them and the teachers.⁵ There was a general reluctance to provide anything for the school or the teacher beyond the most basic requirements. A visiting English inspector in the 1860's was critical of the penny-pinching attitude of the burgh councils towards supplying their school with libraries or teaching apparatus. He noted that what there was had often been

2 Ibid., For example, the grammar school of the town of Cromarty, about the year 1809, was described by a former pupil as "low, long, straw-thatched cottage, open from gable to gable, with a mud floor below and an unlathed roof above". Hugh Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters (London, 1853), p. 51.

3 Simpson, Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 145. Most elementary schools, around 1800, incorporated the schoolmaster's quarters and the classroom in one small building. Later it seems to have been more common to have had a dwelling for the teacher separate from the school.

4 National Library of Scotland, MS. 2305, fol. 195. Letter from William Ferguson to the agents of Sir Thomas Cochrane, 6 March 1848.

5 Scottish Register House, Minute Book of the St. Ninian's Parish Heritors (1845-1913). In the minutes of 1 July 1852 the heritors questioned a repair bill for the schoolmaster's living accommodations on the grounds that the only alteration they had approved was "an additional breadth of six inches to the new privy."

supplied by the teachers themselves.⁶

Parochial schools in the less rural parishes and the variety of elementary schools that existed in the towns and cities were often conducted in buildings converted from some other purpose. George Combe⁷ described a typical example, St. Cuthbert's parish school in the western outskirts of Edinburgh, which he attended in the 1790's:

The school was up a stair; it consisted of two rooms having the partition wall removed at the end next the windows, and there was placed the teacher's desk, from which he could look into both apartments. The rooms were small, low in the ceiling, and without means of ventilation except by opening the windows. They were crowded with children, almost all belonging to the working classes.⁸

Dickensian descriptions of the schools of the period abound. Macaulay furnishes a full-blooded example in a speech in the Commons in 1847: "We know indeed", he charged, "that many of our day schools are dens of stench and smoke, with a heap of fuel in one corner, a brood of poultry in another; - the whole

6 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1867-68, XXVII (V). D.R. Fearon, "Report on Certain Burgh Schools and other Schools of Secondary Education in Scotland" [hereafter cited as: Fearon, Report on Burgh Schools 1867]. The only example of extra teaching equipment at the High School, Edinburgh I have come across, is a model (or models) of a Roman Bridge, which the boys used to describe historical exploits to their admiring parents at the annual exhibition. Teachers felt the need for such aids more as the century went on and there were several proposals in the 1840's and 50's for educational museums and permanent exhibitions of equipment for their benefit.

7 George Combe (1788-1858): Edinburgh phrenologist and advocate of national secular educational reform. (See Appendix A: Biographical Notes for further information.)

8 C. Gibbon, The Life of George Combe (London, 1878), 1, p. 6.

literary apparatus half a Testament, a dog-eared spelling book, and a broken slate."⁹ Macaulay here may have been thinking more of English schools than Scottish, but many of the latter would fit this description.¹⁰ Moreover, it should be noted that while the bad schools were hovels, the good schools were extremely austere in design and equipment. An English observer who visited the most famous and important of the Scottish town schools in 1866 was struck by the "extreme plainness of their construction" and the complete absence of what he diplomatically termed "architectural effect".¹¹ Combe recalled that the seats in the High School in Edinburgh had no backs and caused "suffering from an uneasy position of the body". The boys used to attempt to get a placing in the competitive classes that would result in a seat against the wall.¹² Nineteenth century Scottish education was conducted in physical surroundings that were sometimes adequate though always grim and more often both inadequate and dismal.

9 T.B. Macaulay, Speech in the House of Commons on the Government Plan of Education (London, 1847), p. 14.

10 Conditions improved only very slowly. One writer in 1867 quoted at length from the Argyll Commissioners' reports on this subject. A Free Church School, for example, was described as "absolutely unfit for human habitation in any shape". Forty-three children came to be educated in this "black wooden hut, like a dog-kennel": "The schoolmaster, an intelligent, sickly-looking young man, complained that the school building was killing him". David Milne-Home, Legislation for Elementary Schools in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1867), p. 13-14.

11 Fearon, Report on Burgh Schools, 1867, p. 38.

12 Gibbon, Life of Combe, p. 21. Walter Scott and Henry Cockburn made similar complaints about conditions at the High School.

When we examine what went on within these Scottish school buildings we find that the most serious nineteenth century obstacle to education was the brevity and irregularity of attendance. In 1836, Frederic Hill, an astute English factory inspector, estimated the average length of attendance at day schools in Britain to be 1 1/2 years, and at Sabbath schools 3 to 4 years.¹³ In the 1860's the Argyll Commission put the average length of attendance in the Scottish lowland counties at 4.5 years for boys and 4.3 years for girls.¹⁴ In 1870, Lyon Playfair quoted a Glasgow teacher who estimated that only 6 out of every 100 children attended elementary school for 4 years.¹⁵

Even these short stays at school were severely disrupted for a variety of reasons. Harsh weather prevented regular attendance, especially in rural areas. In the country, too, children were invaluable during the planting and harvest seasons, and very useful for odd-jobs in between. One inspector complained in 1860:

From May till Christmas no visit to a rural school is allowed to be well timed for what is given as average attendance and state of progress...and in consequence of this attendance, class work goes on very languidly for weeks, and the knowledge of this fact becomes an excuse for not attending sooner.¹⁶

The increasing use of child labour in the industrial urban areas, beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing through

13 Frederic Hill, National Education; its Present State and Prospects (London, 1836), 1, p. 8-9.

14 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1865, XVII. Report on the Schools in Scotland [hereafter cited as Argyll Commission, 1865], p. 392.

15 Lyon Playfair, On Primary and Technical Education (Edinburgh, 1870), p. 15.

16 H.M.I. Woodford, quoted in T.R. Bone, The Scottish Inspectorate, 1840-1872 (Glasgow: unpublished B.Ed. Thesis, 1962), p. 48.

the nineteenth, severely restricted attendance. An observer at mid-century commented on the effect of this development:

The sudden rise and astonishingly rapid growth of the manufacturing interests, has greatly changed in many districts the habits and the character of the population. Not only can boys and girls now be employed at an age in which they used to be regarded as unfit for labour, and consequently were kept at school; but, by the depression of wages, it is often necessary for them to be so employed, in order to eke out a scanty maintenance for the family...Thus the social revolution brought about by the vast increases of manufacturers of every kind, has tended greatly to lower the desire once felt for education in Scotland, and produced the ignorance and depravity which we deplore.¹⁷

Women and children were employed in the coal mines in large numbers though more numerous in the east than in the west of Scotland.

"As late as 1842", writes D.F. Macdonald, "the proportion of young persons to adults in the mines of East Lothian was nearly one-half, and in other eastern districts one third to two fifths, while in the West of Scotland the proportion was under one quarter."¹⁸ The factory legislation of 1843 only prohibited the employment of children under ten years of age, and even these regulations were not strictly enforced. The reports of the factory inspectors in Scotland showed that between 1857 and 1862, while adult male labour had fallen by 18%, child male labour increased by 53% and child female labour by 78%.¹⁹

Disease was a serious hindrance to education particularly in urban areas. "A striking feature of the mortality of the towns

17 W.M. Hetherington, National Education in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1850), p. 6.

18 D.F. Macdonald, Scotland's Shifting Population, 1770-1850 (Glasgow, 1937), p. 71.

19 Andrew Bain, Education in Stirlingshire (London, 1965), p. 142.

was the heavy toll taken of young children, particularly by smallpox."²⁰ A doctor in the late eighteenth century estimated that only half of the children born lived to ten years of age.²¹ Although smallpox became less of a killer in the nineteenth century, cholera epidemics and the particularly urban diseases of typhus and consumption²² continued to take a heavy toll. In Glasgow, which Flinn describes as, "Possibly the filthiest and unhealthiest of all the British towns of this period",²³ in 1850, slightly more than half the deaths registered were of children under five years of age.²⁴ A child's chances of survival were considerably better in the country than in the towns, of course, or in the genteel suburbs than in the teeming working class districts.²⁵ Finally, inadequate and

20 Macdonald, Scotland's Population, p. 14.

21 Ibid., p. 94.

22 Edwin Chadwick, Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain (Edinburgh, 1965, first published in 1842), ed. M.W. Flinn. Flinn writes: "The history of British towns in the first half of the nineteenth century is, to a considerable degree, the history of typhus and consumption." p. 8.

23 Ibid., p. 10. A contemporary observer made a similar judgement: "It is my firm belief that penury, dirt, and misery, disease and crime culminate in Glasgow to a pitch unparalleled in Great Britain". The same writer also believed that Scottish towns, in general, "have reached a lower depth in physical degradation than the worst of the English towns." "State of Scottish Towns", North British Review, [NBR], Vol. 7 (May 1847), pp. 30, 32.

24 Macdonald, Scotland's Population. Macdonald gave the exact figure as 50.85%, which contrasted unfavourably with Paris' 32.3%.

25 Macdonald gives figures for average mortality rates from 1835 to 1845 as 20.3/1000 in 331 rural parishes, against 26.68/1000 in the 14 chief towns (p. 12). Flinn shows a rise in the Glasgow mortality rates from 28.6/1000 in the 1820's to 30.6/1000 in the 1830's. The worst figures were for the epidemic years: 1832 (cholera) - 49.1/1000; 1836 (typhus) - 41/1000; 1847 (typhus) - 56.4/1000. (p. 14)

insufficient diet - general malnutrition - made teaching and learning more difficult when the children were in school and left them more susceptible to the diseases which kept them out.

When Scottish children did manage to attend school for any appreciable length of time, what curriculum did they study and what did they learn? Almost all such children, it seems safe to say, learned to read to some extent. Beyond this assertion lies much uncertainty. It would appear that considerably fewer children learned both to read and to write; and many fewer again learned to read, to write and to do arithmetic. Although in 1855 the chairman of the Church of Scotland's Education Committee estimated that more than half the children in the parish schools were learning writing and arithmetic, as well as reading,²⁶ a later writer claimed that boys were taught arithmetic, only after they were ten years old, and girls never took the subject at all in the parish schools.²⁷ The results of a common set of exams applied briefly to both Scotland and England in the 1860's suggested that the Scottish pupils were slightly better than the English in reading, but considerably worse in writing and arithmetic.²⁸

Flinn also gives figures for Edinburgh in the 1860's showing the variation among different types of district: Grassmarket (working class) - 32.5/1000; Grange (Middle and upper-middle class) - 13.8/1000. (p. 13). George Combe estimated the mean life expectancies of different classes in Edinburgh and Leith in 1846 as: gentry and professional classes - 43 1/2 years; merchants, traders and clerks - 36 1/2 years; artisans, labourers, and servants - 27 1/2 years. Gibbon, Life of Combe, p. 233.

- 26 Rev. John Cook. Statement of Facts Regarding the Parochial Schools of Scotland (London, 1855), p. 8.
- 27 An Educationist, Suggestions for the Administration of the Privy Council Grant for Education in Scotland with a New Plan for a National System (Edinburgh, 1870), p. 13.
- 28 Argyll Commission, 1865, XVII, p. 389-402. The exact figures were:

Nevertheless, most contemporary writers included all three of these subjects as the basic curriculum of most Scottish schools. Professor James Pillans, of Edinburgh University, giving evidence to a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1834, stated that rural Scottish children commonly learned "English reading, writing, cyphering and probably a little Latin".²⁹ Frederic Hill in 1836, included the first three subjects as the regular curriculum and added, "and sometimes a little Latin; the demand for which last is dying away".³⁰ James Norval, a Montrose teacher, described the aims of the typical Scottish schoolmaster of the 1820's:

At present if we can succeed in making the younglings under our charge scrawl a fairish hand, read pretty distinctly, cast accounts with some accuracy, and understand something of grammar, little more is required of us.³¹

Whether or not these aims were generally achieved, however, was a matter of considerable controversy. Another observer described the same educational achievements more critically as "a distinct but

<u>Failures per 100</u>	<u>Scotland (1864)</u>	<u>England (1863-64)</u>
Reading	10.89	11.87
Writing	28.6	13.98
Arithmetic	33.4	23.69

29 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1834, IX. Report of the Select Committee on the State of Education of the People of England and Wales, p. 41. [hereafter cited as Report on the Education of the People of England and Wales, 1834]. Pillans gave two days of evidence to this important committee. He had been Rector of the High School and head of Edinburgh Academy, before becoming a Professor at Edinburgh University. His remarks here reveal him to be a moderate but progressive educational theorist, with a wide knowledge of the Continental systems. He favoured a reorganization of the parochial system at this point, but was later a Vice-President of the National Education Association of Scotland in the 1850's which advocated a more radical revision.

30 Hill, National Education, p. 290.

31 A Schoolmaster [James Norval], Letters Addressed to the Parochial Schoolmasters of Scotland (Montrose, 1829), p. 15.

mouth reading, a showy penmanship, a readiness in working the common rules of arithmetic..."³²

"A little Latin", has been mentioned as a common subject of study in Scottish schools and many contemporary Scots seemed to feel that it was not unusual for children to take Latin, and indeed other advanced subjects like Greek, French or Geography. An advertisement for a parish teacher for St. Ninian's Stirlingshire, in the early 1820's asked for a candidate "Qualified to teach Greek, Latin, Practical Mathematics, and the other branches of Education usually taught in the Parish schools."³³ Frederic Hill was impressed that, for "very moderate" fees, parents could have geography, geometry, French, Greek, and several other subjects taught to their sons.³⁴ In practice, however, these options seem to have existed much more in theory than in reality. The Argyll Commission in the 1860's found only 4% of the school population studying Latin, and a tiny .5% studying Greek.³⁵ I.J. Simpson, writing about education in Aberdeenshire, an area more favoured educationally than most in Scotland, sees the development of the advanced subjects as a regular part of the curriculum, as a slow infiltration through the middle

32 "The Social Status of the Teacher", Scottish Educational and Literary Journal, [SELJ], (April 1853), p. 326.

33 Alexander Pollock, William Knox, LLD (Stirling Public Library: 1957), p. 1. Pollock quotes from the Stirling Journal of August 1823.

34 Hill, National Education, p. 290.

35 Argyll Commission, 1865, vol. XVII, p. 394.

years of the century. In his view, these subjects did not become common until the late nineteenth century.³⁶ In 1846, a clergyman writing about the need for a system of secondary schools in Scotland questioned the quality of the education given in the parish schools, using as an example, the students who came up to the University of Aberdeen:

They have received an imperfect education at country schools in the common parts of reading, writing and arithmetic. For a period, very generally not exceeding two years, they have been receiving instruction in Latin - taught, it may be in a manner unintelligent and utterly uninteresting. Many of them come to town for a limited time - in general one or two quarters - to attend the Grammar School of Old Aberdeen, and undergo a process of 'drilling' in the art of writing a Latin version, in the hope of obtaining a bursary by competition at the annual competitive trial.³⁷

It should be noted that in the Scottish curriculum scientific and practical subjects are conspicuous by their absence. This despite the fact that, as Scottish commerce and industry developed through the nineteenth century, there was a growing need for such knowledge. Schools in some areas did acquire a reputation for land surveying, or navigation, when the teacher had a special interest and the parents were willing to pay the extra fees. The development of the town academies during the 1820's and 30's was an attempt to answer the new needs and to reform Scottish educational curriculum and method. It was very difficult to break the mould, however, and as William Boyd comments, in his Education in Ayreshire, the "classical tradition remained dominant, and the demand for scientific education

36 Simpson, Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 30-31.

37 Rev. A. Anderson, Gymnasia; or, Intermediate Institutions (Edinburgh, 1846), p. 14.

proved limited.... The Academies in fact, became at an early date just superior grammar schools."³⁸

Dr. Leonard Schmitz, a distinguished classical scholar and the Rector of the High School in Edinburgh in the 1840's and 50's,³⁹ attempted with little success to reform and modernize its curriculum. Originally the school had been a Latin Grammar School and additional subjects had been tacked on, "not interwoven in the system but super-added, like patches on an old coat." Schmitz disliked the optional nature of all but the most basic subjects because these were chosen by the pupils or rather by their parents, "who in most cases are the worse judges as to what is really needful and useful to their children." Schmitz had managed to get the parents to allow occasional lectures to the boys on scientific subjects, but he was unable to persuade them to make a permanent staff appointment in natural science and he despaired of real reform, "partly on account of the opposition of the masters whose interests would be affected, and partly on account of the spirit reigning among the patrons who are of the opinion that the school should be essentially if not exclusively a classical school."⁴⁰

38 William Boyd, Education in Ayrshire (p. 112)

39 Leonhard Schmitz (1807-1890): Rector of the High School for 21 years and the first president of the Educational Institute of Scotland (See Appendix A: Biographical Notes for further information).

40 National Library of Scotland, MS. 7303, fol. 124-125. Combe Correspondence. This interesting letter from Schmitz to George Combe, dated 4 November 1849, he described as a "confession of a faith in matters of pedagogics." A reliable corroboration of Schmitz's difficulties is provided by the experience of James Bryce, who taught mathematics at the High School in Glasgow. His brother later recalled: "It was several years after he went to Glasgow before he could venture to introduce Natural History into the School; and

One of the main functions of the higher levels of the Scottish education system had been the production of an intelligent and vigorous clergy. Naturally, classical subjects were of more relevance to this aim than practical or scientific studies. The clergy, particularly in the parish schools, but also in most Scottish schools of the period, whether Church of Scotland controlled or not, were very influential in matters of educational philosophy and policy. Their view of the role of the school altered very slowly; "the clerical profession", as one writer put it, "being generally in favour of whatever is of long standing [and] averse to changes".⁴¹ Few schoolmasters were qualified to teach the new subjects, being themselves products of the system. Combe visited the Church of Scotland Normal School in Edinburgh in 1846 and found that outside of a few chapters on natural philosophy and chemistry in a reading book, there was absolutely no scientific training. One man who had attempted to

I am not sure that he ever got Nat. Phil. of Chemistry introduced at all. The Town Council, he repeatedly told me, were unfavourable to such innovations. I know he made some progress with them but whether he got them so far as to sanction those sciences I don't know". Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Letter from Dr. J.R. Bryce to James Bryce (Jr.), 31 January 1878 [hereafter cited as Bryce Papers]. It should be remembered that the development of the new science subjects was opposed as much from a religious motivation as well as from an attachment to the classical tradition. Schmitz, Bryce and almost all of their colleagues, certainly in public, were professing Christians, and George Combe went to great lengths to try to demonstrate that science was not anti-Christian or irreligious. Nevertheless, conservatives had little difficulty in representing Natural Philosophy and its advocates as threats to the nation's faith.

41 Educationist, Privy Council Grant for Education in Scotland, p. 13.

teach some practical chemistry to enable parish teachers to offer some aid in agricultural areas, had left because he had found no encouragement.⁴² J. Mason, the historian of practical rural education in Scotland, noted the failure of attempts in the 1840's to promote the study of farming:

The development of the movement was impeded by the unwillingness of the schoolmasters to adopt the subject, by lack of knowledge on the part of the teachers, and by the indifference of the public.⁴³

Teaching methods were as conservative as the curriculum. There was no formal teacher-training until the late 1820's and then only on a small scale, and little appreciation that formal drill and memory work were not the best ways to introduce children to learning or to cultivate their interest in it. Often the only books in the school, as Macaulay said, were the Bible, a Catechism and perhaps a speller. Thomas Guthrie looked back admiringly on the high moral tone and good English of the Book of Proverbs, in which he learned read, compared with 'the silly trash' of more modern primers,⁴⁴ and another writer felt strongly that the use of the Bible as the main book in school "was instrumental in forming that character for which the Scotch have been distinguished."⁴⁵ In protesting against the dominance of the Bible and the Catechism, however, one observer was moved to repeat the saying "Whiskey and the Catechism are the two

42 George Combe, On the Relation Between Religion and Science (Edinburgh, 1847), p. 24-25.

43 J. Mason, A History of Scottish Experiments in Rural Education (London, 1935), p. 91.

44 Thomas Guthrie, Autobiography and Memoir by his Sons (London, 1874), I, p. 28.

45 "The Bible in Church and School", SELJ, (May 1853) p. 355.

greatest curses of Scotland".⁴⁶ Teachers themselves felt increasingly that more suitable material should be made available and the Scottish School-Book Association formed in 1818,⁴⁷ made considerable efforts in this direction.

Very little attention was paid to the importance of explanation and comprehension in much of the work done in school. This was disastrous for the mass of the children cut off by the gulf between their everyday Scottish dialect and the language of the school - English. There was, in fact, very little sympathy on the part of the professional and upper classes for the ordinary language of Scotland. It was regarded as vulgar and provincial and its thorough elimination was a major educational aim. In 1852, a writer in the Scottish Literary and Educational Journal insisted on all young teachers "perfecting themselves in correct and elegant reading." His concern lay not with the language problem facing the children, but with "the difficulties which a teacher, especially in a rural parish, must contend with in endeavouring to insure the organs of their pupils to distinct and correct articulation." Although some great Scotsmen of the past had used their "uncouthness of accent" to great effect, "the imitation of such a model is unsafe in the present day...There should be no halting place now between provincialism and a correct accent." And he concluded:

46 Educationist, Privy Council Grant for Education in Scotland, p. 29.

47 A.J. Belford, Centenary Handbook of the Educational Institute of Scotland, [hereafter cited as Belford, E.I.S.] (Edinburgh, 1946), p. 16. This organization arose from the meetings of the Burgh and Parochial Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund and was set up, in the words of its minutes, to publish "a collection or series of reading books, as shall by the simplicity of plan, scientific arrangement, religious tendency, lowness of price and successive improvements, suggested by teachers themselves, be justly entitled to supersede any other compilation." The Association lasted until 1891 and provided a valuable service to schoolmasters.

There can be no doubt, says Johnson, and there is great encouragement in his saying so, that Scotchmen may attain to a perfect English pronunciation if they will. We find how near they come to it: and, certainly a man who conquers nineteen parts of the Scottish accent may conquer the twentieth.⁴⁸

George Combe's experience in learning to read at an Edinburgh adventure school provides a good example of the difficulties in the way of most Scottish children. "I spelled and pronounced the words in a broad Scots' accent", he recalled, "with no regard to stops and intonation; and without once dreaming that the words had a meaning".⁴⁹ The teacher did not explain, and it was only much later that Combe realised that English was a means of expression. In any case, such a realisation would have been of only limited value when he went on to the High School. There, little attempt was made to explain the connection between Latin and English.

48 W. Graham, "The Scotch Accent", SELJ (December 1852), pp. 193-195. Although the noted advocate and literary figure [Charles Neaves], in a "Letter on Scotch Nationality", Blackwoods (1839), had expressed a somewhat more appreciation for the Scottish language, he was pessimistic about its chances of survival ("Our vernacular speech admits, or has received, but a limited range of cultivation, though in some hands it has become what it was fitted to be, a most exquisite pipe of Doric minister-elsy", (p. 649) and believed that it inhibited Scottish literary expression. This attitude shifted somewhat, later in the century. [Charles Mackay], writing in the same periodical thirty years later ("The Poetry and Humour of the Scottish Language", Blackwoods, November 1869), declared that this vernacular was "a true language, differing not merely from English in pronouncement, but in the possession of many beautiful words, which are not and never were English, and in the use of inflections unknown to literary and spoken English since the days of Piers Ploughman and Chaucer" (p. 569). Mackay regretted the fact that the Scottish middle classes were imitating the gentry in their efforts to shed all traces of Scottish speech, though, he felt, the common people were still keeping the language alive. (See also [James Donaldson], "The Scottish Language", Edinburgh Review [ER] (October 1883).

49 Gibbon, Life of Combe, p. 9.

Understandably, with his double disadvantage, Combe was completely baffled by the problems of translation and grammatical analysis.

"The parents of the richer boys hired tutors, who, in the evenings taught them how to perform these tasks".⁵⁰ But Combe never understood what was wanted and was always in difficulty in class. The absurdity of such an educational situation was crystallised in a remark, quoted by Combe, of his brother, who also attended the High School:

My brother William, having discovered that in teaching Greek, the words were translated into Latin said with great simplicity: "Well! What do you think? - the English of Greek is Latin."⁵¹

Many, perhaps most, Scottish children must have suffered from the same confusions, regarding the things they "studied" in school as mysterious, sometimes interchangeable, codes, entirely without relevance to their ordinary existence.

Many of the defects of method and curriculum I have been discussing were the result of the lack of an adequate system of school organisation. The difficulties of a single teacher coping with from 20 to well over 100 children of all ages, abilities and interests, in one small room, hampered by lack of facilities and equipment, and by irregular attendance, were formidable.⁵² Even

50 Ibid., p. 16.

51 Ibid., p. 44.

52 Bain, Education in Stirlingshire, quotes from the Argyll Commission's Second Report (1867) which gave the following average attendances per teachers: Government-Aided Schools - 87; Not Government-Aided - 56; Adventure - 39 (p. 183). Belford quotes some unspecified 1865 statistics which puts the range much higher, from 122 to 377 pupils per teacher (p. 100). Although this latter estimate seems too high, single-teacher schools of well over 100 would not have been uncommon at least until the middle of the century.

such a staunch and able defender of the parochial education system as Norval admitted that "The main defect in most of our parish schools is the want of a systematic distribution of the master's time".⁵³

The monitorial system seemed to offer a possible solution for early nineteenth century education. By using more advanced students to drill the others, thus freeing the master to oversee the whole and offer special guidance to selected groups, its advocates hoped it would overcome the problems of large numbers of children and small numbers of teachers.⁵⁴ Considerable success was achieved in such institutions as the Edinburgh Sessional School, founded in 1819, but the rigid hierarchical structure of the system and the natural immaturity of the monitors were fatal flaws. In testimony to a parliamentary committee in 1816, Robert Owen was criticised for using too many teachers in his schools, thus sacrificing the advantages of the monitorial system. Owen replied:

I consider that circumstance [i.e., one master teaching many children] to be a defect in the present system; it is impossible, in my opinion, for one master to do justice to children when they attempt to educate a great number without proper assistance.⁵⁵

Monitors did not provide "proper assistance" and in their hands the new methods advocated by the supporters of the system, stressing

53 Schoolmaster, Letters to Parochial Schoolmasters, p. 68.

54 A good example of the enthusiasm and optimism which greeted the system is [John Wilson's] article, "Edinburgh Sessional School", in Blackwood's, (January, 1829).

55 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1816, IV (Part 2), Report and Evidence of the Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders in the Metropolis, [hereafter cited as Report on the Education of the Lower Orders, 1816], p. 241.

understanding and comprehension, became, as Norval unkindly noted, not "intellectual" but "parrotical".⁵⁶

The harsh discipline of the Scottish schools of the time was also partly the result of the lack of organization, the desperate resort of teachers struggling to impose order on large unruly classes. Some felt that the Scottish reliance on physical punishment in the school would be virtually eliminated by the reform of the system of organization, of the curriculum and of teaching methods. James Pillans expressed such a hopeful opinion in 1834:

When a good system of national education has once been established, and for some time in full operation, under well-trained teachers, corporal punishment would insensibly disappear even without an express law against it. Even now a master who habitually uses corporal punishment proves himself to be ipso facto inexperienced and incapable; for seeing it has been dispensed with and without injury to the discipline of schools of various kinds and of great numbers, the fact is established that it is practicable to do without it, and it is a fair inference that where it continues to be practised it is the fault of the masters and not of the children.⁵⁷

That Scottish school discipline was harsh there is no doubt. Almost every Scottish recollection of school days contained pointed references to corporal punishment; either humorous, when softened

56 Schoolmaster, Letters to Parochial Schoolmasters, p. 36.

57 Report on the Education of the People of England and Wales, 1834, p. 56. Another Scottish teacher, R.J. Bryce, felt that the basic problem lay in the lack of understanding, on the part of the teacher, of any basic philosophy or principles of education. This made the task of teaching haphazard and "disagreeable" and forced the teacher to maintain harsh discipline: "There is a degree of odium attached to the name schoolmaster, from the association of it with rigour and chastisement; that association will be broken when teachers shall be generally so far improved in the science of their profession, as to be able to govern with less severity" R.J. Bryce, Sketch of a Plan for a System of National Education for Ireland (London, 1828), p. 45.

by the passage of time, or touched with the dulled bitterness of past suffering. This seems to have been true whether the individual reminiscing was a graduate of the highest or the lowest type of school. George Combe endured the attentions of a sadistic master, named Luke Fraser at the Edinburgh High School, who called all the boys "My dears", beat them regularly, and, in Combe's final year, took to locking the classroom door, ordering the boys to remove their trousers, and hitting them with a short riding whip.⁵⁸ Granted, Fraser was more bizarre than most, but Combe recalled the ironic greeting that High School graduates used in later years; "Under whom did you suffer?"⁵⁹ At the Edinburgh Hospital Schools

58 Gibbon, Life of Combe, p. 19. Another Scot, who had gone to school in England, fondly remembered a countryman who had taught him there, "a tall, gigantically tall and muscular Scotchman". He described his disciplinary technique thus: "Good soul: even in the using of this innocuous instrument the tawse, he kept his elbow on the desk, to spare us the full sweep of his tremendous arm. There was a silly legend current among us, founded only on his physical strength, that the cane had been denied him, after his once having unintentionally cut through a boy's hand..." [W.Y. Sellar], "Day Dreams of a Schoolmaster", NBR (May 1864), p. 217.

59 Ibid., p. 13. Hugh Miller's formal education ended when he was given "a sharp cut athwart the ears with his [the teacher's] tawse", for what the master considered a mistake in spelling. When Miller refused to spell the word again the teacher attacked him so fiercely that he "filled me with aches and bruises for a full month thereafter". My Schools and Schoolmasters, p. 151 and 152. Occasionally a parish schoolmaster was charged with excessive cruelty and ill-treatment of his students and action taken against him. In one horrendous case, in 1846, the testimony against a teacher specified twelve major cases of brutality in which pupils required medical attention after being lashed on the soles of their feet, kicked in the sides, and beaten about the head until blood flowed from their ears. See "Return of...Cases...respecting Parish Schoolmasters...", Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1854, LIX, p. 65-244.

discipline was even more severe: for the boys at Heriots, the stocks and solitary confinement were "lesser punishments"; for the girls at the Merchant Maiden School solitary, bread and water rations, and shaven heads were commonplace chastisements.⁶⁰ As one teacher wrote in 1853, looking back to the earlier years of the century when he had begun teaching, "The roughness and cruelty of the boys of these times and the degradation of the master were ...countenanced by established custom".⁶¹

To ascribe all defects in curriculum, method and discipline to faulty organization, however, would be naive. In the context of the times it is not surprising that Scottish school discipline was harsh. Public floggings and hangings were common and the day-to-day battle for survival against disease, starvation, and poverty was a prime concern for most of the population. Moreover, the attitudes arising from the forbidding social conditions of the times were reinforced and legitimized by the philosophical and theological views then current. In 1850 a clergyman challenged Hugh Miller,⁶² the editor of the Free Church newspaper The Witness, to declare his views about man's basic nature: was he "fallen" or not? If Miller did not believe that man was fallen and basically sinful, as the clergyman suspected he did not, then Miller's opinions about education were worthless, based as they were on

60 A. Law, Education in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1965), p. 139.

61 "My First School; or, 'Tis Fifty Years Since", SELJ, (Jan. 1853), p. 151.

62 Hugh Miller (1802-1856): leading Free Church layman, editor of The Witness, and noted geologist and literary man. (See Appendix A: Biographical Notes for further information.)

false premises.⁶³ This pessimistic view of man had far-reaching implications and effects. It made education a negative rather than a positive force. The function of education was to restrict and restrain man's evil nature, to direct him towards Christian salvation by teaching him to read the Bible and accept its teaching. Anything beyond that was probably futile and certainly secondary to this central task. Against this prevailing opinion Scottish Rousseau's, if there were any such, kept silent.

George Combe, with all his solemnity, irascibility and eccentricity, was one of the few who challenged the pessimistic view of man and who championed the rationality and potential goodness of humanity. Combe's efforts to promote a broader curriculum emphasizing scientific subjects were violently attacked by the clergy and he responded by scornfully criticizing those "divines" who blocked change and progress "by colouring too highly the representations of man's depravity and weakness, and urging in too strong terms his natural incapacity for any good." The result of these attitudes, Combe charged, was to "repress exertion and foster indolence and ignorance".⁶⁴ In terms of school discipline, Combe felt that corporal punishment was used "as a substitute for moral and intellectual influence" in the schools and had serious detrimental consequences in society at large.⁶⁵ But Combe was almost alone in these views. Much more typical is the dour philosophy expressed by James Norval in his defence of corporal punishment:

63 Hetherington, National Education in Scotland, p. 63.

64 George Combe, Lectures on Popular Education (Edinburgh, 1833), p. 48.

65 Gibbon, Life of Combe, p. 31.

To me nothing is more nauseating than to hear teachers whining and canting about the pain it gives them to chastise children for their faults, and lamenting the dire necessity that urges them to do it. For myself, I frankly confess that this part of my duty is frequently performed not merely without reluctance, but with positive gratification.

Norval viewed the classroom as simply a miniature adult world with:

...most of the vices that molest society at large
 ...and when the civil magistrate is furnished with jails, bridewells, treadmills and the gallows, for the correction and punishment of those who have arrived at the years of maturity, surely the schoolmaster cannot be denied a leather strap or a twig of birch for the correction of his noisy community, the members of which being not yet amenable to the restraints of reason.⁶⁶

II

In any overall evaluation of a country's education system both quality and quantity must be considered. In nineteenth century Scotland it was the amount of education available that was the focus of controversy and public agitation, much more than the various aspects of educational quality I have been discussing thus far. Unfortunately, accurate information about the quantity of education is very hard to come by, despite the fact that statistical evidence of one kind and another was widely employed in the polemics of the times. In 1836 Frederic Hill expressed scepticism about the accuracy and use made of educational statistics:

We doubt not that our readers, in common with ourselves have often been amused to see tables laid down with the utmost gravity, and without

66 Schoolmaster, Letters to Parochial Schoolmaster, p. 47. I did come across one very early schoolmaster advocate of rationalism, who believed that children should be treated as rational creatures, and taught "to exert their reason and to judge rightly of men and things." James Burgh, Thoughts on Education (Edinburgh, 1747).

the slightest hint of doubt as to their correctness, showing to a fraction the exact ratio of educated to uneducated persons in a dozen different countries; while all the time one knows full well how impossible it is to obtain even a moderately correct idea of the state of education in one's own parish.⁶⁷

Interest in the collection and analysis of statistical information began to increase in the early nineteenth century, particularly in connection with the public health movement. Even so, the first Registrar-General was not appointed until 1837, and his work applied only to England and Wales. D.F. Macdonald quotes an observer who, in 1851, wrote:

There is scarcely a state of Europe relative to whose Vital Statistics we know so little as that portion of the United Kingdom called Scotland.⁶⁸

As a result, it is quite impossible to base one's estimate of the educational provision in Scotland during this period entirely on the available statistics. Other factors must be considered, particularly the general social and economic trends of the period, and the personal views of contemporaries whom one believes to have been perceptive and reliable. In this way, one may be able to make an informed guess about the quantity of Scottish education.

The nineteenth century in Scotland was a period marked by the culmination of fundamental economic changes whose roots lay in the previous century - a gradual though radical transition from an agrarian-cottage industry economy to an agrarian-factory industry economy - and by the rapid growth and drastic reallocation of the population. Scotland, whose inhabitants had numbered just over 1

67 Hill, National Education, p. xiv.

68 Macdonald, Scotland's Population, p. 2.

million in 1700 and little more than 1 1/2 million a century later, by 1850 had a population of close to 3 million and by 1900 of over 4 1/2 million.

The economic changes, the development of the linen, cotton, coal and iron industries are important to this study because of the increasing dominance of the factory, mill and mine organisations and the subsequent establishment for the first time, of an urban proletariat of such a size as to cause a serious dislocation of the traditional Scottish education system. As the figures above indicate, there was a striking increase in the total population of the country between 1800 and 1900. Even more remarkable, however, was the rapid growth of the towns. This increase was the result of the extensive population shifts occasioned by the new industrial pattern, not by a significantly higher birthrate than the national average. In 1801, 17% of the population lived in towns of 10,000 or more inhabitants; in 1851, 32% of the population lived in such towns.⁶⁹ Edinburgh's population increased from 100,000 to 160,000 in the first half of the century and other centres showed similar increases. Most astonishing was Glasgow; in 1800 a quiet town of 70,000 which in fifty years became the most important industrial and commercial city in Scotland with a population of 350,000,⁷⁰ over 10% of the nation's people.

The new economic and social patterns brought many new problems. Although the foundations of the future wealth and prosperity of the country were laid during the first third of the century, that prosperity was slow to appear among the masses engaged upon the labour of producing it. During these years the benefits of urban industry

69 Ibid., p. 52.

70 Ibid., p. 55.

and living were far less apparent to the working class in the cities, than were the problems and dislocations that the new patterns created. Probably the most serious problem was that of housing. Flinn notes that during one ten year period (1831-41) while Glasgow's population increased by 36.8% the number of houses available increased by only 18.5%.⁷¹ Naturally, this scarcity pushed rents up. Flinn refers to a recent study of Leeds which shows that the proportion of income spent by working men on rent rose from about 5% in the 1790's to between 10% and 20% in the 1830's.⁷² A contemporary observer, David Milne-Home, stated that on the basis of the 1861 census about three-quarters of the 666,786 families in Scotland lived in "objectionable" housing (i.e. two rooms or less).⁷³

Milne-Home believed that housing had little to do with what he saw as a rising tide of immorality and social disintegration. A number of his contemporaries strongly disagreed. Certainly, the crowded and unsanitary living conditions fostered the general poor health and the lethal epidemic diseases that were so common a feature of life at that time. Certainly, too, one would attribute a large degree of the prevalent social demoralisation to the stresses and strains of a rapid and chaotic urbanisation. In 1842, Edwin Chadwick wrote:

All the district(s) where I visited, where the rate of sickness and mortality was high presented as might be expected, a proportionate amount of severe cases of destitute orphanage and widowhood; and the same

71 Chadwick, Sanitary Report, p. 4-5.

72 Ibid., p. 5.

73 David Milne-Home, On Social Reforms Needed in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1867), p. 9.

places were marked by the excessive recklessness of the labouring population.⁷⁴

In Dumfries, for example, where cholera had recently taken off 1/11th of the population, Chadwick counted 79 whisky shops to 12 bakeries in one working class area.⁷⁵

In such conditions, it would have been astonishing to find an education system functioning adequately. Indeed, a number of men who had a close personal contact with and knowledge of the urban situation in the early nineteenth century testified to a serious, even critical, educational shortage in the Scottish towns. Dr. James P. Kay,⁷⁶ a graduate in medicine of Edinburgh University, whose early experience was acquired in the tenements of that city and in the slums of Manchester, became increasingly concerned with the fate of the children of the working classes. Although quite conservative in matters of general social welfare, Kay was convinced that vigorous efforts, supported by state intervention were necessary in the fields of public health and education. As an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, his attempts to improve the quality of education, and particularly the quality of teachers in poorhouses, led him to accept in 1839, the post of the first secretary to the Privy Council's newly constituted Committee on Education. Through the next decade his was the most effective influence in initiating government action to cope with the new needs of mass education.

74 Chadwick, Sanitary Report, p. 198.

75 Ibid.

76 Dr. James Phillips Kay (1804-77): - (became Kay-Shuttleworth on his marriage in 1842)-the most important single educational reformer of the period. A brilliant administrator, he did his best to promote educational reform in extremely difficult political circumstances. (see below). He was awarded a baronetcy in 1849 and an Oxford DCL in 1870.

George Lewis, a Church of Scotland minister, saw the problem from the vantage point of the back streets and alleys of Dundee and Glasgow. In Glasgow, where he was the editor of a newspaper The Scottish Guardian, Lewis was active in the Glasgow Education Association an organization which gave David Stow his early support.⁷⁷ Lewis was particularly concerned about the fate of the neglected and abandoned children who thronged the slums and, in 1834, published a thundering denunciation of Scottish education entitled Scotland - A Half-educated Nation,⁷⁸ the most comprehensive critical analysis of the early nineteenth century. The pamphlet had a considerable impact on the public,⁷⁹ especially on those connected with philanthropic or educational work, and was used as the basis of the first attempt in the nineteenth century to introduce comprehensive educational legislation in the House of Commons.⁸⁰

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- 77 Glasgow Education Association, Hints Towards the Formation of a Normal Seminary in Glasgow (Glasgow, 1835). This was one of the earliest educational reform organizations connected with the Church of Scotland. J.C. Colquhoun, M.P. was its President and Lewis and Stow were its Secretaries.
- 78 Rev. George Lewis, Scotland a Half-Educated Nation: both in the Quantity and Quality of Its Educational Institutions (Glasgow, 1834).
- 79 G.W.T. Omond, The Lord Advocates of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1883). Omond writes that Lewis' pamphlet caused, "nearly as much alarm on the subject of Scottish education as had been caused about the poor laws by Dr. Alison's pamphlet ..." (Vol. II, p. 175.) Alison worked with Chadwick on the Sanitary Report. Omond seems to be mistaken in the chronology, since Alison's pamphlet did not appear until 1841, but his estimate of the impression Lewis' work made is valid.
- 80 Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., [hereafter cited as 3 Hansard], XXIV, (1834), pp. 514-519. In June 1834, J.C. Colquhoun, M.P. for Dumbartonshire (later M.P. for Kilmarnock Burghs, 1837-41 and Newcastle-under-Lyme, 1842-47) proposed that the House grant £ 60,000 for the endowment of Scottish teachers and the extension of education in Scotland. Using Lewis's

Thomas Guthrie,⁸¹ whose statue, flanked by the figure of a small child, stands at the west end of Princes' Street Gardens, came to Edinburgh in the 1830's and plunged into the work of a slum parish, the Canongate, visiting the sick and dying, helping the hungry and the unclothed, bringing the Church into the dark stairs:

But it was not disease or death - it was the starvation, the drunkenness, the rags, the heartless, hopeless, miserable condition of the people - the debauched and drunken mothers, the sallow, yellow, emaciated children - the wants both temporal and spiritual, which one felt themselves unable to relieve - that sometimes overwhelmed me.⁸²

Guthrie's most effective and important work was one in the education of the poor children of the neighbourhood. The Ragged School was not Guthrie's own idea, as he freely admitted, but it was he who breathed real life into it and whose dedication and success with it inspired others in other cities to follow suit. But, Guthrie himself increasingly came to feel that the problems of mass urban education were too formidable to be dealt with by such voluntary institutions as the Ragged Schools, no matter how enthusiastically supported.

There were others who shared the concern of the three men I have mentioned, but generally they were in a minority. Most of those who spoke publicly and with some influence on such matters

81 Thomas Guthrie (1803-1873): leading Free Church clergyman, chief promoter of the Ragged School movement, outspoken advocate of Scottish national education reform. (See Appendix A: Biographical Notes for further information).

82 Guthrie, Autobiography, p. 196.

seemed to feel that Scottish education was very healthy. It was not until the second half of the 1830's and the 1840's that the views of men like Kay, Lewis and Guthrie began to have any impact on Scotland.

The years from the late 1820's through the 1830's form the first of three distinct nineteenth century periods of intense interest in and controversy about Scottish education. The second such period was from the late 1840's through the first half of the 1850's when agitation for a radical revision of the Scottish system led to the introduction of a series of unsuccessful legislative measures in Parliament. The third was during the 1860's and early 1870's when the Argyll Commission undertook Scotland's first comprehensive educational survey and when, at long last, a general Scottish education bill was passed. The first two periods are of especial concern to this study because they are marked by a growing realisation of the inadequacy of the national provision of education and because the first national teachers' organisation emerged at mid-century in the midst of the second period of controversy.

The main area of debate concerned the amount of education available. Was there an educational deficiency in Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century? If so, how serious a deficiency was it? These were the central questions and, bearing in mind the reservations about educational statistics I mentioned above, it is useful to see what figures were available and what claims were based on them. Almost everyone agreed that there was some sort of numerical deficiency in Scottish education. The estimated size of this deficiency, however, depended on one's definition of "adequate provision". Most educational reformers came to feel that about one

person in every six of a country's population could and should be at school.⁸³ In other words, all children between the ages of 5 and 13 should be receiving education, a period for each child of 8 years. Was this a reasonable ideal in view of the fact that, as late as the 1870's, the most reliable estimates of average length of schooling was only about 4 1/2 years.

Many people thought eight years of schooling for all was a visionary and wildly impractical aim. Critics of government intervention made the most of the variable gulf between what the educational situation was and what the reformers said it should be. A speaker at a public meeting in Glasgow called in protest against a proposed government education bill in 1855, pointed out that the allegation that 35,000 children in Lanark, Renfrew and Dumbarton were entirely without means of education, shrank ^{to} 17,696 if "adequate provision" was defined as 1/8th of the population, rather than 1/6th.⁸⁴ In 1871, another speaker told the Glasgow Working Mens' Conservative Association that the educational deficiency varied widely according the proportion used. Using 1/4 as a standard, between 57,000 and 63,000 Glasgow children were without education; using 1/6th, about 30,000 children were neglected; using 1/7th, only 8,000 were educationally destitute.⁸⁵ Nor is this debate carried on only by historical figures. E.G. West, in a recent

83 It was believed that most of the Continental countries had achieved a proportion of 1 in 6 at school. Lewis stated that the Prussian proportion was 1 in 6 and the American 1 in 4 (p. 28). Scotland was thought to be better than England, but not so good as the Continent.

84 Glasgow Public Meeting, Report of the Speeches to Oppose the Lord Advocates Education Bill (Glasgow, 1855), p. 7.

85 J.A. Campbell, The Education Question (Glasgow, 1871), p. 3.

book,⁸⁶ uses this kind of argument against Forster's 1870 Act in England. This legislation was based, in part, on a survey of Liverpool which estimated that there were some 80,000 children of school-age (i.e. aged 5-13) in that city, that 20,000 received no education at all, and that another 20,000 were inadequately provided for. West comments:

Forster's advisors, it seems, in saying the "school-age population" consisted of those between 5 and 13 years, were asserting what it "ought" to be and not what it was.⁸⁷

If, says West, Forster's advisers had used 1/8th as a standard, instead of 1/6th, the educational deficiency in Liverpool disappears. This argument cuts both ways, however, for as A.H. Halsey, in his hostile review of West's book points out:

Incidentally, on his own type of argument, it would be easy to show that the children of the 1860's were being more than 100 per cent educated by defining the population of school age as the five-to-eight-year-olds.⁸⁸

It would, of course, be a strange reformer who was content with the 'is' and did not assert the 'ought'. Even if one decided that the aim of having 1 in 6 of the population at school was an unrealistic ideal, however, the Scottish educational deficiency seems to remain, using a less optimistic standard of, say, 1 in 7, or even 1 in 8.

86 E.G. West, Education and the State (London, 1965), West's novel, though in my view perverse, thesis is that Forster's 1870 Education Act, by inhibiting the further growth of private and voluntary schools, seriously damaged the development of education in England. He maintains that the private and voluntary would have provided adequately for the nation's needs and preserved the social and spiritual benefits of free enterprise. In contemporary terms he argues for a voucher system of educational payment designed to preserve the independent schools.

87 Ibid., p. 145.

88 A.H. Halsey, "Revolutionary Thinker" New Statesman (24 December 1965), p. 1003.

In its report of 1819 Brougham's Select Committee on the Education of the Poor included a digest of parochial statistics of Scottish education. This digest reported 3633 schools educating 176,525 children, a proportion of the population of about 2 million of 1/11th.⁸⁹ If one applies 1/6th as a standard, then about 330,000 children should have been at school, and the deficiency was in the neighbourhood of 150,000. L.J. Saunders, in his Scottish Democracy, drawing on Lewis' pamphlet as well as other sources, described the national situation fifteen years later. The number of schools and students had increased to 4,320 and 236,000 respectively, and the proportion of the population had improved slightly to between 1/9th and 1/10th. But, again using 1/6th as the standard, the raw deficiency of children not at school still stood at about 150,000.⁹⁰

Lewis himself estimated that the proportion at school in the 1830's was 1/12th, but gave no overall detailed figures to justify this opinion. He did examine, however, the three main sections of the country - the Highlands and Islands, the Lowlands, and the towns - in considerable detail. For the Highlands and Islands he relied on the Brougham Committee figures for 1819 and the Church of Scotland's figures for 1831. In 1824 the General Assembly had set up an Education Committee which had devoted most of its efforts to improving educational provision in the remote uplands and island areas. Its efforts, together with those of other bodies like the Scottish Society^{in Scotland} for the propagation of Christian Knowledge, had improved the proportion of the population

89 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1819, IX (c), A Digest of Parochial Returns (Scotland), p. 1450.

90 L.J. Saunders, Scottish Democracy, 1815-1840 (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 250.

receiving education from about 1/16th in 1819 to about 1/10th in 1831.⁹¹

The deficiency of education in the Highlands and Islands had been widely recognised for some time - hence the efforts to improve it. Where Lewis' report began to shock its readers was when it turned its attention to the rural Lowland areas, generally regarded as displaying the most perfect functioning of Scotland's proud parochial system. Using the first report of the newly established Dick Bequest,⁹² Lewis estimated, on the basis of 132 parishes in Aberdeenshire, a proportion at school of only about 1/11th of the population;⁹³ a figure little or no better than the remote Highland and Island areas.

91 Church of Scotland Education Committee, Educational Statistics of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1833), p. 28.

92 The Dick Bequest was a sum of money left by a successful merchant, James Dick, (1743-1828) to be devoted to improving the quality of education in the three north-eastern counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Moray. The means chosen to do this was the parochial schoolmaster. Through a system of examination and inspection the schoolmaster could supplement their regular income and add prestige to their school and lustre to their own reputations. The Bequest furnished about £ 5,000 per year for this purpose and, because its rules and regulations were formulated and implemented in Scotland, by Scots familiar with and sympathetic to the Scottish educational system, it had a wide and beneficial influence. Indeed, it could be maintained, that what was commonly described as the 'typical' Scottish parish school, with all its virtues, was in fact representative only of the north-east parish schools operating under the influence of the Dick Bequest. The best notion of its workings is to be gathered from I.J. Simpson's account in Education in Aberdeenshire and Alexander Morgan's description in Makers of Scottish Education (London, 1929), pp. 140-146.

93 Lewis, Scotland, Half-Educated, p. 32.

Finally, Lewis turned to what he saw as the most serious area of educational deficiency, that which existed in the cities. "Unfortunately", he wrote, "no provision was ever made for extending the parochial school to the inhabitants of the towns; and, save for erecting and endowing a burgh or classical school the corporations of our cities have done absolutely nothing for education."⁹⁴ When the urban centres had been small towns the situation had been less serious, although the education of poor classes in the towns had always been a no-man's land. The ~~Scottish~~ ^{in Scotland} Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, which had its headquarters in Edinburgh, had long been concerned about the deficiencies in the city and in 1759 had presented a report to the Town Council. This report listed 24 "English" schools in the town, 2 of which were free, supported by charity, and the rest of which charged fees, plus 5 or 6 dame schools. Altogether about 800 out of 3000 children of school age (here defined much more narrowly as ages 6 to 9) were getting some education.⁹⁵ As a result of this report the Town Council opened 4 "English" schools of its own in June 1759.⁹⁶ This only reduced the deficiency by about 200 however and, despite strenuous philanthropic efforts by ministers and concerned citizens, in 1781 the clergy connected with one charity school concluded that, "after all that has been said and done, the education of a great number of poor children is totally neglected".⁹⁷

94 Ibid., p. 36.

95 Law, Education in Edinburgh, p. 49.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., p. 219. In the concluding paragraph of his book, Law writes: "It [the Edinburgh system of English and High Schools] was a system that provided schooling, either free or at modest rates for all...With establishments like these, private schools

Lewis was not able to give any overall figures on town education in the 1830's. Instead he gave examples of the kind of educational crisis that existed in a number of working class districts, of the large towns. In Edinburgh he estimated that only about 800, of the Canongate school-age population of 1600, were at school.⁹⁸ In Glasgow the picture was more complete, but no brighter. Out of a population of some 200,000, 200 schools provided education for about 13,000 children, leaving a deficiency of 20,000 to 25,000.⁹⁹ In some of the slum sections, scarcely 1 in 30 of the population was at school. This gloomy picture is corroborated by Frederic Hill who, although he felt that Lewis' overall survey was too pessimistic, noted that the Factory Commissioners were "much disappointed at the state of education in such of the large towns as they had occasion to visit."¹⁰⁰

There is no doubt that the publicity given to the flaws in the Scottish education system by Lewis's attack and by other reports created a more general concern about the problem and sparked considerable effort during the 1830's and 1840's to improve the situation. Before discussing the significance of these efforts,

in considerable numbers, Hospital schools for the children of burgesses in distressed circumstances, and Charity schools for the poor, Edinburgh may be said to have been generously provided with schools in the eighteenth century." (p. 220). Any such conclusion about the sufficiency or deficiency of education must, as I have tried to show, be of necessity more impressionistic than statistical. Nevertheless, it seems to me that Law has quoted evidence in the body of his book which would indicate a quite contrary conclusion. (eg: nn. 42, 43, 102-104).

98 Lewis, Scotland, Half-Educated, p. 37.

99 Ibid., p. 38.

100 Hill, National Education, p. 287.

it is useful to look ahead to their overall results, as they appeared to mid-century observers. There was, it will be noted, considerably more variety in the estimates of the situation than had been the case in the 1830's.

The view of the Church of Scotland is perhaps particularly worth noting because of its entrenched interest and its hostility to any radical alteration of the education system. Nevertheless, in 1850, its Education Committee reported only a slight improvement in the proportion at school to 1 in 9.5, which, using 1 in 6 as the standard again, would leave a more serious raw deficiency of about 170,000 children not at school.¹⁰¹ Other estimates were more optimistic. Rev. W.M. Hetherington, a member of the Education Committee of the Free Church, put the proportion at about 1 in 8.5, which would mean a deficiency of about 80,000 children.¹⁰² An anonymous author in 1853 estimated the proportion at school as 1 in 7.5, but on his figures the raw deficiency still stood at about 88,000 children.¹⁰³ John Cook, the chairman of the Church of Scotland's Education Committee, gave the most favourable view. In a pamphlet in 1855 he listed 5257 schools educating 426,500 students, a number which, with a national population of over 2,900,000, indicated a proportion

101 Church of Scotland Education Committee, Report of the Committee ...for Increasing the Means of Education in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1850). This report gives no student population figures for the 815 schools connected with denominations other than the Church of Scotland, so I have used Cook's figures (see below) for 1855, in order to make an overall estimate.

102 Hetherington, National Education in Scotland, p. 5.

103 The Education Question in Scotland (Cupar-Fife, 1853), p. 6. This may possibly have been written by John Cook.

of 1 in 6.8 and a deficiency of about 61,000 children.¹⁰⁴

Cook's survey contrasts strikingly with James Kay-Shuttleworth's impressions. In his book Public Education, published in 1853, Kay-Shuttleworth estimated that there were about 4500 schools in Scotland educating roughly 225,000.¹⁰⁵ Using, unlike most of the critics, a standard of 1 in 8 as his definition of "adequate provision", Kay-Shuttleworth estimated that there were 133,848 educationally neglected children and concluded "little doubt can be entertained that barely two thirds of the children who ought to be at school are in attendance on any school in Scotland."¹⁰⁶

As I stated at the outset, it is impossible to choose any one set of figures to represent the "true" position of Scottish education during this period. One can draw, however, some general conclusions about educational development between 1835 and 1855. On the positive side, the proportion of the population receiving education had improved somewhat, from 1 in 10, or slightly worse, to 1 in 9, or slightly better, and the number of children attending school had risen from about 200,000 to between 300,000 and 400,000. On the negative side, the number of children whose education was totally neglected, which in 1835 had amounted to something like 150,000 had been barely halved, at the best estimate, may well not have been significantly lessened, and even may have increased. Certainly, when one considers these rough and ungainly statistics with the other relevant evidence that is available, the conviction grows that, despite the best religious, philanthropic, and voluntary efforts, Scotland's educational crisis would not be resolved without radical legislative revision.

104 Cook, Statement of Facts, p. 12.

105 Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, Public Education (London, 1853), p. 370.

106 Ibid., p. 371.

Chapter 2

The Schoolmaster in Scotland (I)

I

To achieve a general impression of Scottish teachers in the first half of the nineteenth century, the answers to a number of questions must be sought. How many teachers were there and of what types? What income levels and occupational security did they have? From what social backgrounds did they emerge and what were their own educational experiences? What social position did they occupy and what roles, public and occupational, did they play or try to play?

To begin with numbers, there were in mid-century about 5,000 schools in Scotland, an increase of 2,000 since 1815.¹ Of the variety of schools making up these totals, the most constant and unchanging type was the rural parish school sustained by the established Church of Scotland; in 1815 there were 942 such schools, in 1855 there were 963. These schools provided basic elementary education, although, depending on the capabilities of the master, many offered higher instruction as well. Throughout the period there were also about 70 or 80 burgh or town schools which provided some elementary education but emphasized the more advanced subjects.²

1 See Appendix B for figures for 1815, 1819, 1834, 1850, 1853 and 1855 and sources.

2 One can speak only of the tendency of the parochial schools to function as elementary schools and of the burgh schools to function as secondary schools. The parish schoolmaster attached great importance to and was very proud of the small number of students he prepared for the university. The burgh schools and town academies were able to give more considerable attention to basic education as well. It became one of the chief concerns of Scottish teachers and professors in the mid and later nineteenth century to define, much more clearly than previously, a secondary

Taken together these parochial and burgh schools, the former under the joint superintendence of the Church of Scotland and the latter under the joint superintendence of the Church and the burgh councils, made up the legislatively recognized and sanctioned school system of Scotland.

Altogether this legally established Scottish education system of some 1000 schools accounted for only about 1/3 of the total number of Scottish schools in 1815 and 1/5 of them in 1855. Of the schools constituting the remainder, the largest single type was the private, independent, or 'adventure' school. In 1815 there were about 2000 adventure schools; by 1855 there had been a gradual increase to 2500 or so. There was, of course, no uniformity among the adventure schools. They ranged all the way from 'dame' schools in kitchens with very young children learning the alphabet and catechism from a local widow or spinster, through schools in lofts or sheds where a disabled soldier, young 'stickit' minister, or failed business man taught boys and girls the 3 R's, to a very few full-fledged school buildings run by a skilled teacher for the preparation of the children of the well-to-do, in Glasgow or Edinburgh, for further education south of the border.

Between 1815 and 1855, the number of both the parochial and burgh schools and the adventure schools remained quite stable. The

level of education, between the elementary schools and the universities. See for example, J.S. Blackie's pamphlet The Nineteenth Century and Scottish University Education (Edinburgh, 1853), and articles like [J. Hanna], "Scottish Schools for the Middle Classes", NBR (Feb. 1856) and [J. Lorimer's], "The Scottish Universities", NBR (August, 1850) and "Scottish Nationality - Social and Intellectual" NBR, (August, 1860).

significant increase in the total number of Scottish schools came mainly in two areas: the development of schools which, though not part of the legally established education system, were connected with the Church of Scotland, and the development of schools of other denominations. The former began to be established in the 1820's as the Church tried to fill in some of the gaps left by the parochial school system,. Some were sponsored and supported directly by the Church to meet particular needs. Such were the General Assembly schools, the Ladies Gaelic schools, and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge Schools. Some were established by adherents to the Church of Scotland and placed under her superintendence. Such were many of the Endowed and Subscription schools. Some schools were maintained by a combination of these methods. Such were many of the Sessional schools. Altogether, by 1855, there were over 900 schools in connection with the Established Church. The latter, schools affiliated with denominations other than the Church of Scotland, reflected the growing schisms which developed in the Presbyterian establishment as the century progressed. Saunders estimated that there were over 400 of these schools by the mid-thirties and this figure was more than doubled as a result of the Disruption in 1843.

The only schools which would not be single-teacher establishments would be the burgh schools, some of the more prosperous adventure, endowed, or subscription schools, and a few parish schools with assistant teachers. It seems reasonable therefore to assume that the total number of teachers in Scotland in 1850

was between 5,500 and 6,000.³ The variations among these Scottish teachers were enormous and, therefore, it is necessary to examine each type of teacher separately. There were essentially three categories: the parochial teachers; the burgh teachers; and "the rest". Of course, 'the rest' were in fact made up of the teachers of other denominations, non-parochial Church of Scotland teachers, and adventure teachers, and the variations within each of these groups were considerable. But by virtue of their legally established position the burgh and parochial schoolmasters had an importance and influence far beyond their numerical strength. The parish school and its dominie or the burgh school and its master were the standards against which all other schools and schoolmasters were measured. In each category one must try to determine the nature of this standard.

The parochial system and its teachers were regulated by the terms of an act of the Scottish parliament of 1696. This legislation consolidated a system in which a school was provided in almost every parish, supervised by the Church and supported by the assessment of the local landowners (heritors) and the fees of the parents. The heritors and minister in each parish determined the subjects to be taught and the fees to be charged for each. The minister and his presbytery were responsible for the examination, appointment and periodic inspection of the schoolmaster and, in cases of neglect of duty, immorality, or cruelty, were to take action to dismiss him.⁴

3 Belford gives figures for the mid-century period of 1170 parochial teachers, 4464 non-parochial teachers and 650 Free Church teachers, a total of 6289. He gives no sources for these figures. Belford, E.I.S., p. 56.

4 One must avoid the assumption that the structure and procedures were universally established and enforced; they were not. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the Scottish educational tradition.

The income of a parish schoolmaster consisted of a basic salary paid by the heritors (under the 1696 Act this was set at 100 to 200 merks, or roughly £ 5.11.1 sterling, per year)⁵; the parents' fees, the total amount of which depended on the subjects taught and the number of children in attendance; the indirect benefits of a rent-free house and garden; and usually a fee for acting as kirk-session and heritors' clerk. When all of these sources operated, which was certainly not always, the income they provided was modestly comfortable in a country as poor as seventeenth and early eighteenth century Scotland.⁶ Undoubtedly the great majority of Scottish teachers were

5 The source of the estimate of equivalent sterling value is [Francis Russell], "The Education Question in Scotland", NBR (May 1861), p. 261.

6 The proviso is added because of considerable evidence that the heritors were often uncooperative. "Only...by threats of legal action, could the local church courts meet the refusal of the heritors to face their statutory liabilities, a refusal that was to become only too common as, with experience gained, the heritors became masters of the tactics of delay and postponement". Bain, Education in Stirlingshire, p. 48. A much less generous view of the role of the heritors was provided by Thomas Guthrie. After recalling how the heritors in the early nineteenth century provided only the barest minimum to the school and the teacher, Guthrie concluded: "To them, with honourable exceptions, the country owed little gratitude. They grew rich by the spoils of the Church; starved their teachers, and opposed with dogged determination every reform in Church and State, reminding one of what Dr. Chalmers related as the speech of a professor at St. Andrews to his students. 'Gentlemen', he said, 'there are just two things that never change. These are the fixed stars and the Scotch lairds'. Guthrie, Autobiography, I, p. 44.

On the other hand, D.J. Withrington's assessment of the heritors' role is much more positive. Withrington writes: "Indeed, the common assumption that the summit of the educational achievement of any parish in the seventeenth century was the provision of a single school - and that even that provision was frequently not made - is not borne out by the evidence of our seven parishes. In this area the obligation placed on the heritors by successive acts of Parliament were quickly met by them and often surpassed". D.J. Withrington, "Schools in the Presbytery of Haddington in the Seventeenth Century", Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquaries and Field Naturalists Society (October, 1963), p. 22.

considerably more impecunious than their parochial brethren and regarded their economic position with admiration and envy.

Nonetheless, to the parochial teachers themselves, their income seemed meagre enough and there is strong evidence that, during the course of the eighteenth century, their economic position became more and more inadequate by any standards. According to a schoolmasters' petition in 1782 their average income was only £ 13 per year, compared with an artisan's average annual income of £ 15.⁷ This was only slightly better than a field labourer's income of £ 10 to £ 12 per annum.⁸ As George Lewis charged in 1834, by the turn of the century, "the profession of schoolmaster had become synonymous with poverty".⁹

Indicative that the parish schoolmaster's plight was grave was the fact that Parliament acted in 1803 to pass legislation echoing the 1696 Act in almost every detail, but raising the teachers' salaries to a range of from 300 to 400 merks, or £ 16.13.4 to £ 22.4.5. In an attempt to give this figure some relation to the cost of living, it was based on the average price of grain or meal over the previous 25 years and, it was understood, would be reviewed at 25 year intervals.¹⁰

7 Belford, E.I.S., p. 2; J.C. Jessop, Education in Angus (London, 1931), p. 4.

8 Milne-Home, Social Reforms in Scotland p. 12. He gives a field labourer's wages in 1791 as 9 pence to 1 shilling a day.

9 Lewis, Scotland, Half-Educated, p. 17. Simpson writes: 'Until about 1800...in rural parishes only the heritors and the ministers were above the poverty line'. Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 1.

10 Cook, Statement of Facts, p. 10.

The 1803 Act improved matters somewhat, though Lewis called it a "small pittance".¹¹ L.J. Saunders states that, in 1818, the average parish teacher's salary was below the £ 22 maximum.¹² In 1820, 300 schoolmasters responding to a questionnaire put their average salary at £ 19 and reported that they collected something under £ 30 per year in fees, thus indicating an average total income of approximately £ 45-50.¹³

In 1827, on the basis of the exceptionally high price of grain and meal during the period of the Napoleonic Wars, the salary range was further increased to between £ 25.13.4 and £ 34.4.4.¹⁴ That their incomes were still highly unsatisfactory is illustrated by the bitterly resigned words of one parish schoolmaster in 1829:

If such rewards [i.e., the satisfactions resulting from good, diligent teaching], with the bare competency of maintenance, be not sufficient to content the parochial teacher, let him at once renounce the

11 Lewis, Scotland, Half-Educated, p. 17.

12 Saunders, Scottish Democracy, p. 283.

13 Ibid., p. 285. The source Saunders uses here, Papers Relating to Parochial Education in Scotland, Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1826, XVIII. [Hereafter cited as Parochial Education in Scotland, 1826] consists of 979 pages of schoolmasters' responses to a ten-item questionnaire. It does not appear to have ever been fully analysed. That some schoolmasters in particularly favoured parishes did much better than the average is illustrated by the return of William Knox, schoolmaster of St. Ninian's, Stirlingshire. Knox's income was made up of the following: salary - £ 22.4.5; school fees - £ 75; session and heritors' clerk fees - £ 28; a total of £ 125.4.5. (p. 942)

14 Report on the Education of the People in England and Wales, 1834, p. 516. [Russell], "Education Question", p. 261.

name and occupation of schoolmaster; for vain will be his hope, at the present rate of his fees and other emoluments, that expects a more substantial remuneration.¹⁵

A writer in a Blackwood's article in 1849 reported that parish teachers collected about £ 28 a year in fees and payment for acting as session clerks, which would give them an annual income of £ 53 to £ 62.¹⁶ In 1855, the convener of the General Assembly's Committee, John Cook, wrote that the parish teacher's average income "has been frequently stated as rather above £ 50 a year on an average; but many have considerably less".¹⁷ Again, comparative figures are hard to come by, but in 1850 Hugh Miller estimated the average income of farm

15 Schoolmaster, Letters to Parochial Schoolmasters, p. 100.

16 [William Lee], "National Education in Scotland", Blackwood's (May 1849). This article was revised and printed as a pamphlet in 1854 under the title National Education in Scotland: A Word or Two for the Parish Schools. (The reference is to the pamphlet, p. 3.) A pamphlet in 1856 attacking the Church of Scotland's educational-political policies charged that the parochial schoolmasters received all the political patronage clerkships. They were usually Poor Law inspectors which gave them an additional £ 15-30 a year. In one county with 47 parish registrars - a post worth £ 5 - £ 25, - 36 of them were parish or Church of Scotland teachers. A Country Presbyterian, The Parochial Schools and the Established Church (Edinburgh, 1856.)

17 Cook, Statement of Facts, p. 12. Hugh Miller put the average at £ 60 per annum. Thoughts on the Educational Question (London, 1850), p. 59. In a letter to James Bryce in 1850, one John Rainey, the master of the Pathead School, Kirkcaldy, gave his income as £ 65 a year, £ 10 of which he received for conducting a Sabbath School. Bryce Papers. The government inspector John Gordon reported the average salary in the south-west of Scotland at £ 70, made up of a salary of £ 27 and the remainder in fees. Russell, "Education Question", p. 263.

labourers as between £ 23 and £ 30, and of skilled workmen, such as printers, as about £ 52 annually.¹⁸ A former parish teacher provided an Edinburgh public meeting in the 1850's with considerable entertainment by recounting his economic fortunes:

I myself am a practical man. I had a school in Caithness, with a salary of forty [pounds] a year, and a 'but' [house] and a 'ben' [^{inn, room} garden], and a poor 'but' and a poorer 'ben' (laughter). I worked through my duties tolerably well, but I got tired, and heard that I might get two forties if I came to Edinburgh. I accordingly did come and laboured hard. I got twice forties there - saw other men get on in trade, and set up for myself as a rag merchant - (roars of laughter) - and a paper merchant, and I also dealt in butter (renewed laughter). The consequence is that I am making far more by selling butter than I would by teaching (laughter).¹⁹

The evidence suggests a reasonable conclusion ^{might} ~~would~~ be that the legislation of 1803 and the adjustment of 1827 had improved the parochial schoolmasters' economic position, relative to such groups as farm workers and unskilled labourers. This seems to have left him just on a par, and very often below it, with artisans, skilled factory workers and small businessmen. Only in the three shires where the famous Dick Bequest augmented the parish teachers' salaries to

18 Miller, Thoughts on the Educational Question, p. 59. George Lewis, in 1834, compared the teachers' incomes with those of the clergy which he put at a range of £ 150 to £ 500 a year with an average of around £ 200 a year. Scotland, Half Educated, p. 57.

19 The speaker, a Mr. Grant, made these remarks while proposing an incredibly garbled amendment to a motion concerning teachers salaries. Apparently not even Mr. Grant understood it, for a counter-motion defeated it unanimously. National Education Association [N.E.A.], Report of the Public Meeting of the Friends of National Education (Edinburgh, 1854), p. 40.

about £ 80, pushing their incomes to nearly £ 100 a year, were the schoolmasters "finally removed from indigence".²⁰ That income level, while still below that of the clergy and of doctors and lawyers, allowed them to live in "reasonable comfort".²¹

In towns and cities where there was a sufficient middle-class population to support a subscription school or where a wealthy citizen had endowed a school, a few elementary school teachers enjoyed greater prosperity than the parochial schoolmasters. Law notes, for example, that the teachers in Edinburgh's 'English Schools' in the late eighteenth century had incomes of £ 45 a year. Far more typical, however, are the two charity school teachers he mentions who had annual incomes of £ 12 and £ 20 respectively, in 1725.²² J.C. Colquhoun in a speech in the House of Commons in 1834, advocating increased government aid for Scottish education, stated that the average annual income for private teachers in the Highlands was £ 13, and that the income of adventure teachers in the cities was even lower.²³ In 1843, reporting on three presbyteries where the average income of the parish teachers was £ 71.2.5, John Gibson, the government inspector, reported the annual income of subscription school teachers as £ 28.16.8, and of private teachers as £ 23.9.-.²⁴ Clearly then, the great majority of Scottish

20 Simpson, Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 113. Russell notes that the Dick Bequest increased the parish teachers average incomes from £ 55.12.5 in 1853, to £ 101.1.7 by 1854. "Education Question", p. 263. By the late 1850's this average was up to about £ 150 Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 128-129.

21 Ibid.

22 Law, Education in Edinburgh, p. 63, 64.

23 3 Hansard, XXIV, (1834), p. 516.

24 Bone, The Scottish Inspectorate, p. 23.

elementary teachers had incomes considerably below those of the parochial schoolmasters.

Only one group of teachers, besides university professors of course, did consistently better economically than the parish teachers - the burgh teachers.²⁵ Although nominally under the supervision of the presbyteries, these schools were established, supported and controlled by the burgh councils. Because they emphasized the higher subjects and had a greater population of secondary level students on which to draw, their revenue from fees was much higher than in the parish schools. Although, in the 1730's the annual income of the Rector of the Edinburgh High School was only £ 65, by the last decade of the eighteenth century the Rector, Dr. Adams, received about £ 400 a year, and his masters, £ 200.²⁶ The variations from school to school and from town to town however, were considerable. Law notes that in the 1790's, masters at the Canongate High School in Edinburgh had average incomes of £ 100.²⁷ A later example, is the Rector of the Dumfries Grammar School, Charles Maxwell, who stated in 1855 that his salary, half from the town magistrates and half from an endowment, came to £ 64, which, together with his fees, provided him with an income of £ 120. At the same time, Maxwell complained to Professor Blackie that teaching the higher subjects, particularly the classics,

25 James Bryce referred to "the burgh schools, yielding incomes which are sometimes as high as £ 400 to £ 800 or £ 1000 per annum" and university chairs "of which the best are worth £- 1200 to £ 1500 a year". "The Minutes of Council viewed in connection with Scottish Conditions", Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1860 (London, 1861), [hereafter cited as Transactions, S.S.A.], p. 336.

26 Law, Education in Edinburgh, p. 63.

27 Ibid., p. 64.

in Scottish rural towns was ill-paid, frustrating work and that in 14 years as the Rector of the Academy at Annan, he had never received more than £ 80 a year.²⁸ Again, only a few private school teachers or tutors in the largest centres would do better financially than the average burgh teachers.

This then was the outline of the economic pyramid formed by Scottish teachers in the nineteenth century. To generalize, using the estimate of about 6,000 teachers in 1850, one can speculate that at the apex, with annual incomes of £ 100 or better, were the burgh teachers and some private town teachers, numbering no more than 200 at the outside.²⁹ A few of these would make several hundred pounds a year, but most were probably in the £ 100 to £ 200 bracket. At the next level, were the nearly 1,000 parochial schoolmasters with income of £ 50 to £ 100. There were probably no more than one or two hundred elementary private teachers whose incomes were as good or better. Altogether, then, there were probably no more than 1200 to 1400 teachers in mid-century Scotland with incomes of £ 50 per annum or better.³⁰

28 National Library of Scotland, M.S. 2624, Letter from Charles Maxwell to Professor Blackie, October 23, p. 57, 82.

29 Russell quotes a parliamentary return listing of 61 schools in 36 towns with 113 teachers. "Education Question", p. 262.

30 Educational statistics summarized from the 1851 Census gave the following average figures for schoolmasters' incomes: burgh schools - f113; parochial schools - f50; other Church of Scotland schools - f35; Free Church schools - f40; United Presbyterian schools - f39; Episcopalian schools - f52; Roman Catholic schools - f43. "Educational Statistics", SELJ (June 1854), pp. 408-409.

Witnesses to the Argyll Commission in 1865 (Argyll Commission, 1865, XVII) put the average salary for parochial teachers at £ 44. This would have given them an average income of about L-75-85. John Gordon believed that "a good many" received

II

Whatever the income level of the parochial schoolmasters compared to other groups and occupations in Scotland, their economic position among teachers was obviously a favoured one. Besides this relative financial advantage, the other fundamental attraction of a parish teaching appointment was its security of tenure. As one teacher wrote, the great feature of the position which largely made up for the drudgery, poverty and isolation of the life was "the permanency and independence of the schoolmaster's office."³¹ This security was guaranteed by the terms laid down in the legislation of 1696 and 1803, which established an ad vitam aut culpam tenure situation.³² Complaint

the maximum legal salary of £ 70 (the St. Ninian's Heritors' Minutes show that William Knox did) which would yield an annual income of about £ 100. S.S. Laurie estimated that the Dick Bequest teachers' incomes were better than £ 150 per year, but that non-parochial teachers had annual incomes of no more than £ 50. William Knox told the Commission: "I am nearly done with it, and therefore may state my opinion freely: I think the maximum [salary for parish teachers] ought not to be under £ 100", p. 217. As for the Free Church teachers, Kennedy and Purves testified that of schools under inspection the average salary was £ 86, but noted 117 Free Church teachers with salaries of £ 50 or less (p. 298). Belford quotes Privy Council statistics giving certificated teachers' salaries for 1869 as follows: Church of Scotland - £ 99; Free Church - £ 96; Episcopalian - £ 82; Roman Catholic - £ 80. Female teachers salaries were £ 30- £ 40 below these figures. Belford, E.I.S., p. 100. Finally, in 1887, A.C. Sellar gave the average Scottish teachers' income as £ 150. He noted 250 teachers who made more than £ 200 a year and £ 130 who made over £ 300. A.C. Sellar, Scotch Educational Progress, 1864-1887 (Glasgow, 1887), p. 8.

- 31 "The Educators and the Education Bill", SELJ (April, 1854), p. 293.
- 32 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1802-03, I, [hereafter cited as, Parochial Schools (Scotland), Act (1803)] p. 245. A Bill for making better Provision for the Parochial Schoolmasters and for making further Regulations for the better Government of the Parish Schools in Scotland. The bill is printed with many of the details left blank. For a good discussion of the further history of Scottish teachers tenure experience, see T. Bone, "Teachers and Security of Tenure, 1872-1903" (unpublished article).



against the schoolmaster on the grounds of neglect of duty, immorality, cruel or improper treatment of his scholars, or "from any other Cause", could be presented to the presbytery by the heritors, the minister, or the elders. The presbytery was to serve the schoolmaster with the charges against him, circulate the charges to the parties concerned, and, with due notice, conduct a hearing. Finally, "having taken necessary Proof", the Presbytery Court, in cases where guilt had been established, was to pass sentence, a sentence which might result in censure, suspension from duty, or deprivation and removal from the office, buildings and remunerations of the position of parochial schoolmaster. The judgement of the Presbytery Court was legal and permanent, that is, "final, without Appeal to or Review by any Court Civil or Ecclesiastical". If the teacher failed to comply with a removal verdict within a certain period, the Sheriff or Steward of the County or Shire was to take appropriate action to eject him.³³

Such tenure arrangements seem reasonable enough, but, in the nineteenth century the permanence of office they afforded was unique. No other group of teachers had such protection. A few of the burgh teachers had similar agreements with the town magistrates, although their legal validity was doubtful. The great majority of the burgh, along with denominational, subscription, and endowed school teachers held their offices at the pleasure of their employers or for specified

33 Such action must sometimes have been necessary. I have come across no examples concerning parochial teachers but Baird recounts the case of a town teacher in the early 18th Century who, when dismissed by the magistrates, refused to comply, and was "forcibly ejected from his dwelling along with his Dutch wife; while his books and furniture were flung into the street". J.G.A. Baird, "An Edinburgh Account Book of Two Hundred Years Ago" Scottish Historical Review [SHR], IV (1908-09), p. 147.

fixed periods, subject to renewal.³⁴ Adventure teachers, of course, had no security of tenure at all. Moreover, the legislation regarding parochial teachers placed a double onus on the church authorities, who were required both to follow due legal process and to ascertain proof. The teacher was given ample opportunity to prepare and present a defense and, to be successful, the complainants had to make and substantiate serious and specific charges.³⁵ This meant, as one parish teacher put it, "Prejudice and petty malice may annoy, but they cannot permanently injure him".³⁶

The teachers of Scotland, parochial and non-parochial, were in no doubt that this feature of the parish school system constituted one of the main reasons why the Scottish educational tradition was held in such high esteem. "Security of office, independence of local control, and decent remuneration, have made the parish school the lever that has raised Scotland to her present pinnacle of greatness as an educated country", wrote the parish teacher quoted above.³⁷

34 In one burgh the teacher was elected for a one-year term. At the end of each year, before vacation, he had to leave a shilling rent, the key to the school, and a letter of resignation with the town treasurer. Before he could re-open the school again, the town council had to officially re-elect him. W. Brunton, "State of Intermediate Education in Scotland" Transactions, S.S.A., 1860, p. 323.

35 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1861, III, p. 714. Parochial and Burgh Schools (Scotland) (No. 2) [hereafter cited as, Parochial and Burgh Schools (Scotland) Bill, 1861]. A Bill to alter and amend the law relating to Parochial and Burgh Schools, and to the Tests required to be taken by the Schoolmasters in Scotland. See also, Bone, "Teachers and Security of Tenure" David Smith, "Report as to the Changes made by the [1861] Act ...on the Powers of Ministers and Presbyteries in regard to Parish Schools and Parish Schoolmasters" (Edinburgh, Scottish Register House, M.S. in CH 1/5/94).

36 A Parochial Schoolmaster, A Plea for the Parish Schools (Edinburgh, 1867), p. 1.

37 Ibid., p. 7.

Less fulsome, but basically in agreement with this view, was the testimony of a Free Church teacher, James Purves, to the Argyll Commission in 1865. "One of the great secrets of the success of the parish schools", Purves told the Commissioners, "is, that you put a man down there with a salary inadequate as it might be, but secure. He was permanently there; but that was not carried to an undue extent, as he could be dismissed for neglect of duty".³⁸

In all the mid-nineteenth century discussions of the possible establishment of a truly national system of education in Scotland, the teachers were virtually as one in their emphasis on the necessity for adequate tenure arrangements along the lines of those enjoyed by the parish teachers. "The children of free and independent men must be educated by free and independent men", wrote a teacher in 1854 and his colleagues agreed.³⁹ A resolution on the subject of national education by a group of Edinburgh teachers in 1850 stated their support for the principle of local school boards, but maintained that the "teacher's tenure should be independent of the local board".⁴⁰

38 Argyll Commission, 1865, XVIII, p. 297.

39 "Educators and the Education Bill", p. 294.

40 The Scotsman, 23 February 1850. A meeting of parochial schoolmasters in March 1854 gave, as one of their main objections to the Lord Advocate's Bill of that year, the fact that under it, "their position is entirely changed, their tenure of office which, at present, is secure and permanent, rendered precarious, the contract which they entered into with the parochial authorities, under legislative sanction, violated, and the legal rights springing out of that contract summarily taken away". Parochial Teachers, "Meeting on Lord Advocate's Bill", SELJ (April 1854), p. 326.

Similarly a resolution passed in 1867 by the Scotch Border Counties Education Association, an organization made up mainly of the teachers of the area, stated, "That the arbitrary dismissal of the national teacher without cause assigned and without appeal to any court, would be degrading to the teacher, repel men of talent and spirit from the profession, and consequently very injuriously affect the education of the country".⁴¹ Alexander Weir, who conducted a sessional school in Glasgow, told the Argyll Commission, "I think a permanent appointment is necessary to give security to those that are willing to discharge their duty faithfully and efficiently, in order that they may exercise discipline without fear of immediate consequences".⁴²

Among independent observers, however, tenure arrangements became a matter of considerable controversy. A few, such as Hugh Miller, the editor of the Free Church paper The Witness, supported the teachers in their concern for strong security of tenure. In a pamphlet in 1850, Miller proposed a national education board, one of the functions of which would be to conduct inquiries and to pass judgement in cases of complaints against schoolmasters. In Miller's opinion, "it would serve neither the ends of justice nor the interests of a sound policy to erect his immediate employers into a court competent to try and condemn".⁴³ If local boards possessed such power, "great injustice

41 Milne-Home, Legislation for Elementary Schools, p. v.

42 Argyll Commission, 1865, XVIII, p. 279. William Knox expressed similar sentiments: "I am extremely anxious that any new committee of management should not have the power of unnecessarily interfering with the teacher. If they had such a power, it would not only ruin the status of the teacher, but it would ruin education. I have seen examples of that in my own parish, where a local committee took the management, and everything went to ruin from their interference with the master." (p. 217)

43 Miller, Thoughts on the Educational Question, p. 82.

might be done to worthy and efficient men, and one of the most important classes of the community placed in circumstances of shackled despondency, which no right-minded teacher could submit to occupy".⁴⁴ Others, however, saw the vaunted and admitted independence of the parochial teachers as a danger to duly constituted legal authority and as a detriment to educational vigour and quality. They used the example of the parish teachers' security of tenure as an argument against extending similar provisions to a larger system and in favour of severely modifying the tenure arrangements of the parochial schools themselves. According to these critics, the development of a government role in education in the 1830's and 1840's had undermined the superintending authority of the Church of Scotland without replacing it by a corresponding civil authority. As a result, they charged, it was all but impossible to get rid of a parochial schoolmaster under any circumstances.

A passage in Kay-Shuttleworth's book, Public Education, published in 1853, is typical of this position; "The Parochial Schools of Scotland have continued to be under the authority of the Church, though that has gradually come to be subject to restraints, giving an independence to the position of the Schoolmaster, neither originally contemplated, nor in all respects consistent either with the interests of the scholars, or with the public advantage".⁴⁵ Thomas

44 Ibid., p. 83.

45 Kay-Shuttleworth, Public Education, p. 326. This view is echoed by Saunders in Scottish Democracy: "In these circumstances [i.e., the increase in Privy Council Power and the decline of Church authority] the presbyterial power of censure and dismissal was whittled away.... In the conduct of the school itself the teacher was left virtually independent". (p. 284).

Guthrie, in a characteristically spirited speech before the National Education Association in Edinburgh, the following year, painted a similar picture:

I have known a daft man in a parish school wearing a beard as long as that (holding his hands about a yard apart); and I know the case of one who for thirty years was a parish schoolmaster, and who was a great drunkard in the parish, or in half-a-dozen parishes around, yet he died in office.⁴⁶

According to William Fraser, writing in 1858, the consequences of divided authority had been disastrous for education:

The teacher's position became so strengthened, that the Presbytery cannot dislodge him because of incompetency and inefficiency, however manifestly detrimental to the interests of the parish. The most incompetent, though for years with scarcely a pupil can retain the school, the dwelling house, and the stipend. In short, on the concurrent testimony of the witnesses examined before the Select Committee of the Lords in the Session 1845, it is evident that the authority of the Presbyteries 'to remove masters for neglect of duty, cruelty, or immorality, has become inoperative'.⁴⁷

Which of these two views of the tenure position of parochial schoolmasters is most valid, the positive or the negative one? To decide, it is necessary to examine the evidence of how the parish tenure regulations actually functioned and to distinguish among the various grounds on which it was possible to attempt to dismiss a parochial schoolmaster. There were two main categories of offense which constituted sufficient grounds for instituting dismissal proceedings. The first was what might be called gross misconduct. This included such matters as immorality and unchastity, cruelty,

46 N.E.A., Report of Public Meeting, 1854, p. 63.

47 [William Fraser], "Popular Education in Britain and Ireland" NBR (November, 1858), p. 265.

drunkenness, dishonesty, and irreligion. The other main category could be called neglect of duty. Under this head came a group of offenses ranging from outright desertion of the schoolmaster's position and responsibilities, through the pursuit of other occupations to the detriment of his teaching duties, to mismanagement and inefficiency in the conduct of the school. Between 1791 and 1853, there are records of 139 cases brought against parish teachers, roughly 94 of which fall clearly into the category of gross misconduct. Of the rest 25 mention "neglect of duty", but include in the charge some reference to gross misconduct as well. Only 20 of the charges were brought entirely on the grounds of some aspects of neglect of duty.⁴⁸ This last is worth noting because it illustrates that it was easier to press and substantiate accusations in the area of gross misconduct than in neglect of duty.

48 Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1837-38, VII, pp. 437-450; and 1854, LIX, pp. 65-244. [hereafter cited as, Cases Against Schoolmasters]. These two sets of returns list the presbyterial records of cases in which charges were brought against parochial schoolmasters under the legislation of 1803. The figures are not complete. The first list covers the period 1791-1836, the second, the period 1838-1853. Not all the presbyteries reported and there are gaps of several years in the returns.

The categories I have used to analyze these cases - gross misconduct and neglect of duty - though based on the causes specified in the 1803 Act, are my own and the assignment of offenses' and cases to one or the other necessarily somewhat arbitrary. The distinction between the two types of cases is a useful one, however, in assessing the validity of the charges of inefficiency brought against the parochial schoolmasters.

The following is a more detailed breakdown giving the number of cases in which a particular offense was involved: immorality and unchastity (eg., "ante-nuptial fornication", "adultery with aggravations", "indecent exposure", "fathering an illegitimate child", etc.) - 35; drunkenness - 26; cruelty - 14; dishonesty (eg., embezzlement, fraud, etc.) - 8; inefficiency - 3. Forty-three cases involved irreligion, 32 of which occurred in 1843 and 1844 and were connected with schoolmasters who went out, or were sympathetic to those who went out, in the Disruption.

A good example of the atmosphere and procedure in a straightforward case of gross misconduct is the trial of John Byers, a parochial schoolmaster in Roxburgh, who was charged with habitual drunkenness in 1819.⁴⁹ On 3rd July 1819, Byers was given notice by the officer of the Presbytery of Kelso that a complaint had been laid against him by "his Grace James Duke of Roxburgh, Robert Kerr, Esq. of Chatto, and the other Heritors of the Parish of Roxburgh". The complaint read that, whereas, under the laws of Scotland, a schoolmaster "should be diligent and attentive in the discharge of the duties of his office, and a person of fair character and reputation, having a sober, religious, and christian [sic] deportment not addicted to vice and immorality...[Byers]...in place of showing a pious moral example...has for several years past...betaken himself to the immoral and vicious habit of drinking amounting almost to total intoxication, which has rendered him totally unfit to discharge the duties of a Schoolmaster..." Byers was informed that the Presbytery would hold a hearing of the case on July 13, and was furnished with a list of the witnesses who would appear against him.

At the hearing, a succession of witnesses testified that Byers drank habitually, had several times suffered hallucinations, occasionally struck his wife (onee he threw a full tea-tray out the window), sent pupils regularly to buy him whiskey and often fell asleep in school smelling of drink, did not attend the parish church, and failed to perform the duties of the parish session clerk. Over the objections of his "Agent", the testimony of adults as to what

49 National Library of Scotland, M.S. 3126 (1819), Proceedings against John Byers, Schoolmaster at Rox burgh.

their children told them had happened was accepted by the court as admissible, on the grounds that "Parents have no other means of ascertaining the conduct of their Children's Teachers...". The testimony of the children themselves was taken, although the evidence of one Margaret Huggan, aged eight, was declined on account of "her tender years and appearance". At a further hearing on August 24, 1819, Byers was able to present witnesses who testified on his behalf, but to no avail, since sentence of deprivation was passed and carried out later that same year.⁵⁰

A similarly clear-cut case of neglect of duty was that of John Miller, a schoolmaster in the Presbytery of Peebles. In November 1839 a complaint was presented to the Presbytery charging Miller with "having for a long period neglected to open and teach the school, and with having recently removed from the parish altogether with his family and furniture to Edinburgh", despite entreaties to stay and teach. At its January meeting in 1840 the Presbytery approved of the terms of a libel charge specifying that Miller had kept the school closed for three months in 1839, had moved to Edinburgh without permission from the parish or presbyterial authorities, and had sent an unauthorized and "irresponsible person" from Edinburgh to teach in his stead. In this case, Miller unlike Byers, decided not to fight it and the March meeting of the Presbytery received and accepted a letter of resignation from Miller and dropped the proceedings against him.⁵¹

50 In the manuscript of the Proceedings the outcome of Byers trial is not given. However the case is included in Cases against Schoolmasters, 1837-38, referred to above, and the sentence, passed and carried out, was deprivation.

51 Cases Against Schoolmasters, 1854, p. 230-231.

Of the 139 cases in which charges were brought against parochial schoolmasters, verdicts are recorded for 127 of them.⁵² Of these, the verdict of the Presbyterial Courts in 81 cases was to depose and remove the schoolmaster. In 23 more cases the schoolmaster resigned before a formal verdict was reached. In a further two (2) cases the schoolmaster agreed to retire rather than be deposed. Altogether 106, or about 84%, of the cases resulted in the schoolmaster vacating his office. Conversely, in only three (3) cases were the complaints dismissed or "not proven" and in only one (1) was the schoolmaster "honourably acquitted". In the remaining 17 cases the defendants were temporarily suspended (2), rebuked (7), or admonished (8).⁵³

In three cases in the period 1791 to 1836 Presbyterial Court verdicts of deposition were set aside by the Court of Session (2) or the House of Lords (1). In each case, however, the decision of the appeal court was taken not on the substance of the case, but on the technical ground that the proceedings of the Presbytery Court had been informal or irregular in some way. No doubt it was extremely frustrating to those responsible for the conduct of a parish school to have a strong case overturned merely because proper legal procedures had not been followed. Probably too the complexities and expense of bringing charges against a schoolmaster discouraged some authorities from doing so even when they had ample grounds. Nevertheless, on the basis of this evidence, it would appear that, when due process was followed, the verdicts delivered by the Presbyterial Courts and supported by the civil authorities consistently

52 Ibid., 1837-38 and 1854. The results of ten are not recorded. In two cases the defendant died before a verdict was reached.

53 Ibid.

and overwhelmingly favoured the complainants, not the defendants.⁵⁴

Moreover, it should be noted that legal proceedings were only the ultimate, most official method of exerting pressure on recalcitrant schoolmasters. In the parliamentary returns used here, for example, Dunkeld Presbytery reported three cases of complaints against teachers, in none of which did the Presbytery "find it necessary to proceed to libel". Deer Presbytery reported two similar cases.⁵⁵ Sometimes the mere threat of legal proceedings would have been enough to encourage a teacher to alter his conduct or to submit his resignation. A variety of indirect pressures could be employed to make the schoolmaster's life unbearable. His salary could be very slow in coming, the minister and heritors could support other schools and encourage local parents to withdraw their children from the parish school, repairs to his house and school could cease altogether and so on.

One serious flaw in the parochial schoolmasters' tenure regulations, both its defenders and its critics agreed, was the lack of provision for aged or infirm teachers. The problem this could create is symbolized by a fictional case in John Galt's Annals of the Parish:

54 Ibid. The contention that the original dismissal procedures against parochial teachers had become less effective or inoperative during the course of the century (see Kay-Shuttleworth and Fraser above) does not seem sustained by the available evidence. Leaving aside the unusual Disruption years of 1843 and 1844, in which 19 and 13 cases were considered respectively, the years with the highest number of cases were 1806 (4), 1811 (5), 1830 (5), 1834 (4), 1847 (4), 1848 (4), 1850 (4) and 1853 (5). If the dismissal arrangements were inadequate or inoperable, it would seem that they were so throughout the entire period.

55 Ibid. 1837-38, p. 446.

It was in this year that Patrick Dilworth, (he had been schoolmaster of the parish from the time, as his wife said, of Anna Regina, and before the Rexes came to the crown), was disabled by a paralytic, and the heritors, grudging the cost of another schoolmaster as long as he lived, would not allow the session to get his place supplied, which was a wrong thing, I must say of them.⁵⁶

Galt's example was an eighteenth century one, but the problem remained a pressing one throughout most of the nineteenth as well. Sometimes the heritors did provide, voluntarily, a retiring allowance which would enable the schoolmaster to resign. More often, apparently, they did not and the teacher, "when disabled by age or any other cause, still clings to his office as his only means of support".⁵⁷ Moreover, as in the case of Mr. Dilworth, usually the heritors did not seem anxious to undertake proceedings to remove such teachers. Perhaps it was the expense of such proceedings that deterred them⁵⁸ or perhaps there was some doubt that age or infirmity was sufficient cause for dismissal, although the legislation did not seem to exclude this. Perhaps too the heritors were reluctant to ruthlessly cast aside a man of long service to the community and preferred to let the school languish and the schoolmaster subsist on his salary until nature took its course:

56 John Galt, Annals of the Parish (Edinburgh, 1821), p. 11.

57 Rev. A.M. Leitch, The Scottish Education Question (Edinburgh, 1856), p. 5.

58 In a complaint of gross misconduct against an Arbroath teacher in 1836, the heritors informed the presbytery that they were "not willing to bear any part of the expense of the libel...as the heritors have some expectation of accomplishing the same object...by some private arrangement with Mr. Graham". The presbytery agreed to postpone the case even though the agreement was never reached and the case came up again in 1843 and in 1847. In the latter instance the presbytery officially appointed a man as Graham's assistant and successor (the man had apparently been conducting the school, in fact, since 1840) and, when Graham died in 1848, confirmed his position as the parish schoolmaster. Cases Against Schoolmasters, 1854, p. 19.

In the summer of this year, old Mr. Patrick Dilworth, that had so long been doited by the paralytiks, died, and it was a great relief to my people, for the heritors could no longer refuse to get a proper schoolmaster.⁵⁹

Whether the best way to cope with this problem was to provide adequate pensions or to make it easier to dismiss parochial schoolmasters became a matter of considerable debate. An Act in 1861 went some distance in both directions by specifically including age and infirmity, as judged by a government school inspector, as sufficient grounds for dismissal of a schoolmaster and also by allowing the heritors to grant a pension of at least two-thirds of the teacher's salary and a living allowance.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the 1861 legislation was not obligatory on the heritors and pensions remained a matter of concern and controversy for many years.⁶¹

On the other hand, as its supporters claimed, the parochial tenure arrangements did seem to protect the teachers from arbitrary

59 Galt, Annals, p. 20. There were equally unsatisfactory variations on this. A speaker told the National Education Association in 1854 of an example in his parish of "a parish schoolmaster 71 years of age, quite beyond all active labour in his profession; the business of teaching left in the hands of an irresponsible assistant, appointed by this teacher, and whose payment consists of £ 10 a year and his board - the wages of a domestic servant...". N.E.A., Report of Edinburgh Meeting, 1854, p. 40. Graham's case quoted in the preceding footnote is another example.

60 Parochial and Burgh Schools (Scotland) Bill, 1861, p. 714. By 1865 there were 63 retired parochial teachers receiving an average annual pension of f33/12/5. Argyll Commission, 1865 (Evidence of John Gordon), p. 3.

61 Even as late as 1873 when William Knox, who had been the parochial schoolmaster of St. Ninian's for fifty years, finally decided to retire, the only way he could extract £ 35 in back pay and a £ 30 per year pension from the newly constituted local school board, was by threatening not to.

or vindictive measures. Although a schoolmaster in Kintyre was eventually removed, following a complaint that he had absented himself from public worship in the parish church in consequence of a quarrel with the minister, the Presbytery offered to retain him if he would just apologize to the offended clergyman. When he refused, and was deposed "three members of the Presbytery subsequently protested against the judgment, as being precipitate and irregular".⁶² In a similar case in 1834, where the complaint was that the schoolmaster was "preaching in the immediate vicinity on the Sabbath, he not being a licensed preacher of the Gospel", the Presbytery decided "the amount of charges against Mr. Nicholson would not justify them in proceeding against him", and dismissed the case.⁶³ In another case in 1822, a dispute arose in the Presbytery about the merits of a schoolmaster, with some members wishing to institute a general investigation of his conduct. The Synod, when appealed to, ruled that the Presbytery, though it had the right to investigate specific complaints that might be lodged against a schoolmaster, did not have the right to launch a vague general inquiry.⁶⁴

The evidence I have surveyed suggests that the positive view of the parochial teachers' tenure position is more valid than the negative. The contention by its critics that the removal of a schoolmaster for misconduct or neglect of duty was almost impossible does not seem to be sustained. Nor is their charge upheld that the application of the dismissal procedures had become less effective over this period.

62 Cases against Schoolmasters, 1837-38, p. 448.

63 Ibid., p. 449.

64 Ibid., p. 448.

That the serious defect of a lack of pension facilities would be adequately dealt with by making dismissal easier is highly questionable. In any case it seems doubtful that this defect outweighed the advantage of the protection the tenure arrangement provided for the parish teachers against petty harrassment or arbitrary treatment. Scottish teachers themselves recognized all this and were unanimous in their admiration for and defense of the security of tenure offered by the parochial school system.

III

At the time, however, the critics were not satisfied by the arguments offered in defense of security of tenure for the parish teachers. One reason for this was the fact that the parish school system became a central issue in the great debate over national educational reform. The Church of Scotland insisted on retaining full control of the parochial system and thus made the existence of that system the major obstacle to sweeping change. The proponents of national education, in their zeal for their cause, often exaggerated the defects of the parish schools. In this context, the actual merits or demerits of any particular feature of the system tended to become submerged in the wider debate. Another even more basic reason for the critics continuing dissatisfaction with parochial security of tenure was that, although they talked a good deal about those arrangements in terms of gross misconduct and neglect of duty, they seemed more deeply concerned about a third factor - something they called "inefficiency".

Efficiency, and its twin quality, economy, were paramount, almost obsessive, public concerns in the Victorian period. The roots of this concern lie in the fundamental economic and social changes of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, industrialization required the

rationalization of method and standardization of procedure, and free enterprise economics insisted upon efficient, economic production and performance to achieve the profit that meant survival and success. On the other hand, severe social problems and dislocations accompanied the development of industrialization and a competitive economy and demanded government intervention and action for their alleviation. A tension was thus created between what could be roughly termed industrial-commercial values and social-humanitarian values. The latter attacked the former for selfishness and callousness and forced some reform action on the most pressing and obvious social problems. The former inhibited and sometimes crippled the latter with constant warnings against the dangers of centralization and increased government expenditure.

In matters of educational reform this tension was acute. The government inspectors' reports through the 1840's and 1850's revealed not only great areas of educational deficiency, but also wide diversity of educational aims, school accommodation, and teaching qualification and method among the educational facilities that did exist. This led to positive efforts to provide more and better schools, to devise more adequate standards of method and examination, and to train and certify teachers who could use and apply them. At the same time, however, the inspectors' reports provided ammunition for those who believed that public money for education was being largely misspent, that government expenditure should be kept to a minimum, and that the same standards of economy and efficiency so successfully employed in industrial and commercial enterprise should be rigorously applied to schools. In England these beliefs were the central motivation of the Newcastle Commission of 1858 from whose recommendations emerged the Revised Code of 1861, the dismal era of "payment by results" and the

retrenchment of government spending in education.⁶⁵

Despite the supposed national penchant for considerations of thrift, Scotland was never so carried away by this preoccupation as to follow the English example in education, although it shared the deep concern about whether the public was getting full value for the money spent on education. It is this concern that underlies much of criticism of the parochial tenure arrangements. These attacks frequently made no clear distinction between the problems of efficiency, gross misconduct, and neglect of duty,⁶⁶ yet however confused in expression it is evident that their main concern was the fact that, as Kay Shuttleworth put it "Presbyteries have no power to depose for mere inefficiency."⁶⁷ That this charge was true, however, reveals not so much the inadequacy of the parochial tenure regulations as it does the difficulty inherent in the attempt to apply a crude concept of efficiency and economy to education.

65 Alexander Tropp, The School Teachers (London, 1959). Tropp gives a most convincing analysis of the Newcastle Commission and its recommendations. He contends that these recommendations went directly against the tenor of most of the evidence on which it was supposedly based. That evidence was generally opposed to payment by results, especially to the particular form of payment by results that the Commission chose to endorse. Tropp writes, "The Report itself was strongly selective in the evidence it used... The almost unanimous evidence of the inspectors and witnesses in favour of the existing system was completely discounted and their reports and evidence were combed for quotations which could be used to attack it". (p. 77.)

66 A good example is the quotation from William Fraser (see above p. 57). In it he quotes a conclusion referring to the ineffectiveness of dismissal procedures on charges of gross misconduct and neglect of duty, to support his contention that it is ineffective in cases of incompetence and inefficiency.

67 Kay-Shuttleworth, Public Education, p. 327.

This fundamental difficulty is worth considering briefly before proceeding to an examination of the defects of the parish dismissal procedures regarding inefficient or incompetent teachers. In evaluating education in terms of economy and efficiency the basic problem is one of definition. What constitutes an "efficient" or "inefficient" teacher? What constitutes an "economic" or "uneconomic" school? As in the contemporary controversies about so-called 'merit pay', while it is easy to agree that teachers should be graded and rewarded according to their merit, efficiency, and competence, it has proven extremely difficult to construct and apply reasonable and effective criteria of these admirable but elusive qualities. The system of 'payment by results', instituted in England in the 1860's, bears convincing testimony that the tendency to equate the educational process with the industrial and commercial ones, was powerful, unsubtle, and educationally reactionary in the nineteenth century.⁶⁸ Much of the criticism of the parochial security of tenure on the grounds of inefficiency was a Scottish reflection of this same tendency, and little attention was given by the critics of defining relevant criteria of educational efficiency.

Certainly, it was the case that "inefficiency" was not one of the specified grounds for dismissal listed in the legislative tenure regulations. Obviously, "neglect of duty" was open to wide interpretation and the general escape clause, "or any other Cause", offered

68 The appearance of the Revised Code in 1861 was greeted with a roar of protest by most of those closely connected with education. No protester was more eloquent or telling than Matthew Arnold. See "The Twice Revised Code", March 1862; "The Code out of Danger", May 1862 in Democratic Education edited by R.H. Super; "The Principle of Examination", March 1862 in Essays, Letters and Reviews by Matthew Arnold, edited by F. Newman; and Matthew Arnold, Reports on Elementary Schools, 1852-1882. This tendency was also a target of Dickens' in Hard Times.

the authorities a possible category for dealing with cases in which inefficiency seemed the central problem. Doubtless complainants and Presbyterial Courts tried to frame the libels against schoolmasters in terms of the clearer charges whenever they could. In all the 134 cases listed in the parliamentary returns, there were only five in which "inefficiency" or "mismanagement" is a specific charge. The most significant of these is that of John Inverarity, the schoolmaster of Lochmaben, who in August of 1842 was complained of to the Presbytery in the following terms:

That the petitioners have no cause of complaint against the said John Inverarity as a competent scholar, but they have much reason to complain, and do complain of his 'neglect of duty' as a parish schoolmaster, arising from his inability to communicate to his pupils that instruction which he is bound to give, his total want of system in the school, his want of discipline, his perfect indifference whether his scholars attend to or benefit by his instructions or not, and great waste of energy.⁶⁹

The Presbytery proceeded to send a committee to visit Inverarity and discuss the complaint with him. The schoolmaster, after some hesitation, decided to reject the charges and to fight any libel action that might be brought against him. He engaged a Mr. Baird, a "writer in Lockerbie" (i.e., solicitor) to act as his agent and sent a letter to the Presbytery in which he denied the charges and declared loftily that "I have always been taught to consider efficient teaching as the sole prerogative of the Father of Lights, who teacheth sparingly and to profit; and, therefore, to ascribe such epithets as efficient and effective to any mere instrument, must be regarded as nothing less than an impious surrogation of the honours righteously belonging to the Eternal."⁷⁰ This tone can scarcely have endeared him to the

69 Cases Against Schoolmasters, 1854, p. 213.

70 Ibid., p. 215.

Presbytery, which, overruled Baird's basic defense that the charges were not relevant to "neglect of duty", but to "inefficiency" and that "a charge of inefficiency is not one of those charges which the Presbytery can be called upon to make the foundation of a libel", and announced its intention to frame a proper libel against Inverarity.⁷¹ In December 1842, the heritors of the parish declared their support of the Presbytery and agreed to sponsor the libel. The formal charge, which was presented to the Presbyterial Court in June 1843, was a detailed and convincing indictment of Inverarity on the grounds of inefficiency and neglect of duty.⁷² In August of 1843 the Presbyterial Court heard full arguments relating to the validity of the terms of the charge, overruled Baird's objections again, found the libel "relevant in all its articles" and called for the complainants to present the evidence of their charges on the first Tuesday in September.

Unfortunately, the case was suspended at this point. At the end of the August hearing the heritors' agent had requested that "in consequence of the appointment of Mr. Inverarity to a Church in Leith, proceedings...might be postponed", and in April of 1844 the presbyterial clerk reported that Inverarity had resigned "in consequence of his

71 Ibid.

72 The document charged that since his appointment in 1834, Inverarity had kept no regularity or discipline in the school (eg., pupils smoking, fighting, talking, etc.); made no effort to explain the work or to answer questions; sat reading or writing at his desk all day; had not had a student in Greek, French or Latin since 1834; had let the attendance decline from about 50 to three or four; had been severely criticized by presbyterial inspections; and, when parents had complained about the situation, "you... replied that you did not care whether you had a scholar or not, as you could live and act independently of any scholars". Ibid. p. 218.

appointment to the Presbyterian chapel at Longtown".⁷³ As far as one can judge on the basis of the material available, the heritors and presbytery in this case were prepared to pursue their libel on the grounds of inefficiency and neglect of duty to a verdict. It seems extremely likely that this verdict would have gone against the defendant, but there is no way of knowing whether it would have been upheld by the higher courts as being valid. Either way, it would have been a valuable test case on the issue of efficiency and parochial tenure.⁷⁴

An attempt to accurately determine the level of "efficiency" of the parochial teachers in particular and Scottish teachers in general is impossible to accomplish. Even if it were possible, it would only complete part of the picture. This is what the liberal Churchman, W. Milligan, seemed to be getting at when he attacked what he saw as a confusion between "efficiency" and "quality". The two were not synonymous, he insisted; far too much attention was being devoted to the former with consequent damage to the latter:

Take the parochial schools of Scotland now, and we shall find in the most efficient of them, men of every variety of method, differing widely from one to another in the organization of their classes, in their mode of communicating instruction, in the means which they employ for exciting the animation and zeal of the children. They will be found equally successful;...well-educated men, interested in their profession, need no rules but are a 'law unto themselves'.⁷⁵

73 Ibid., p. 219, 220.

74 In another "inefficiency and misconduct" charge in 1849-50, the presbyterial committee reported that they had begun to investigate the charges, "but that the said master of the original parish school, to spare trouble to himself and to the Presbytery, had relinquished his office...". Ibid., p. 107.

75 Rev. W. Milligan, The Present Aspect of Education Question in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1857), p. 29.

Making the necessary allowances for denominational enthusiasm, Milligan's point is a sound one. "Efficiency" was usually either so vaguely or so crudely defined so as to obscure the real quality of teachers and their schools, rather than reveal it. Other factors which would throw some light on the question of quality include the procedures for the appointment of teachers, their educational backgrounds, the regularity and seriousness of inspection, and the various contemporary estimates of quality that were made.

IV

"To make sure of the right men getting in, is the best way to have little to do in turning out", was one teacher's view of the tenure controversy in 1854.⁷⁶ The election of parochial teachers was in the hands of the heritors and the Act of 1803 outlined specific steps which were to be followed in announcing and filling vacancies. A candidate, after being elected by the heritors was then to be examined "in respect of Morality and Religion, and of such branches of Literature as...shall be deemed most necessary and important for the Parish".⁷⁷ Although Pillan's impression in 1834, was that "a considerable portion of the schoolmasters of Scotland do not undergo that examination before being inducted into their office and entering upon their functions",⁷⁸ I.J. Simpson's view is that the Presbyterial exams were generally fair and open, though the

76 "Educators and the Education Bill", p. 299.

77 Parochial Schools (Scotland) Act, 1803, p. 245. An advertisement in the Stirling Journal in August 1822 read, "Schoolmaster Wanted for the Parish of St. Ninians Qualified to teach Greek, Latin, Practical Mathematics, and the other branches of Education usually taught in the parish schools. Knowledge of French will be a recommendation" Pollock, William Knox.

78 Report on the Education of the People of England and Wales, 1834, p. 36.

candidates seldom failed.⁷⁹ Until 1843 and the Disruption, which excluded a great number of potential candidates from the parish schools, there is little doubt that the competition for parochial vacancies was keen and that this helped maintain higher standards than in other types of school. The attractiveness of each vacancy depended of course on its location, its wealth, and its population. In 1861, the year that the parish schools were opened to non-Church of Scotland adherents, there were 135 applicants for the post of William Knox's assistant teacher in St. Ninians, one of the most attractive parishes in the country. The following year, there were 37 applicants for the post of female teacher in the same parish.⁸⁰ It would be wrong to suggest that the degree of competition for the St. Ninian's post was typical - for one thing, the successful candidate was expected to succeed Knox whose school had acquired a high reputation - but, keeping in mind the advantages of salary and tenure already discussed, it is likely that there was some competition for almost every parish in Scotland.

79 Simpson, Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 71. Simpson does comment that occasionally "other considerations than scholarship and fitness to teach weighed with the electors" (p. 71). A fictional story in the SELJ in 1852, "A Tale of Certificates", tells how a dissolute young man from Edinburgh, with scarcely any teaching experience, manages to get elected to a parish school over a capable experienced assistant teacher, by procuring a number of testimonials and certificates from prominent individuals and using them, together with a superior tone, to impress the heritors. (SELJ Oct. 1852, pp. 13-19).

80 Scottish Register House, Minute Book of St. Ninian's Heritors. From the 135 applicants a short list of nine was selected. Knox and a heritor visited each candidate's school and seven were invited to sit a competitive exam. Unfortunately the man finally appointed resigned two years later over a disagreement with Knox and the heritors about his "legal position" as assistant teacher.

This was certainly the case with masterships and rectorships in the burgh schools. Here again the power of appointment seems to have been exercised mainly in the interests of the schools by the burgh councils and magistrates who possessed it. A group of Edinburgh teachers, who passed a resolution advocating that appointment to the burgh schools be transferred to a more independent and expert body than the burgh councils, did so on the principle that it was open to abuse, but acknowledge^d that, in fact, the burgh councils had usually exercised it well.⁸¹ D.R. Fearon, in 1867, reported that "The patrons appear to have always been most scrupulous in their choice of teachers, to have been sincerely anxious to make the best appointments they could, and to have fully felt the weight of responsibility which lay upon them". He could find no such "scandalous instances of favoritism or carelessness" as occurred in appointment to the English grammar schools he had inspected.⁸²

As we have seen, it is clear that the charges which were levelled against the parish teachers and which tended to focus on the tenure arrangements of the parochial system, were as much, if not more, aimed at the Church of Scotland's general superintendence of that system as at the men who occupied its teaching posts. Though these criticisms must be seen, therefore, in the context of the wider controversy about national education, they were not merely polemical weapons. The Church of Scotland's superintendence was certainly open to criticism. There does seem to have been a lag for example in the quality and efficiency,

81 Scotsman, 23 January, 1850. "Resolutions of Edinburgh Teachers on National Education".

82 Fearon, Report on Burgh Schools, 1867, p. 22. Candidates were subjected to both written and oral examination he found, although these were sometimes waived when the candidate had an outstanding university record.

and in the energy and interest of the Church of Scotland's superintendence, of the parochial system during the period from 1800 to 1840, reaching its depth in the 1830's. James Pillans' view that the Presbyteries were not carrying out their examining duties with new appointments has already been quoted and the Church of Scotland's Education Committee itself admitted in 1833 that the parish schools had been allowed to run down and were "in most respects inferior as seminaries of instruction, to what many years ago they are well known to have been".⁸³ George Lewis' explosive pamphlet in 1834 put forward the thesis that the church had failed to cope with new conditions and was allowing the nation to live on past and now empty glories. Guthrie, who was a country parish minister from 1830 to 1837, did not "recollect going into the parish school, though it was next door, for the purpose of examining into its efficiency, with the exception of that single day once-a-year, when the Presbytery Committee came to examine it." As for the annual examination, "it was just...very much a decent sham...the driest business I ever had to do with".⁸⁴

Whether this state of affairs continued until the 1850's however is very doubtful. In reaction to internal criticism, and even more in reaction to external threats against the parish system and to competition from rival systems, the Established Church increased its efforts to encourage and supervise the parochial system. By 1856, one Church of Scotland minister claimed that the annual Presbyterial examination was complemented by a constant clerical vigilance:

83 Church of Scotland, Education Committee, Educational Statistics, 1833, p. 6.

84 N.E.A., Report of Public Meeting, 1854, p. 63.

The minister frequently visits the school; by means of his kirk-session, and his own acquaintance with the parents and children, he is constantly kept informed of its precise condition, of any complaints that may arise; and consequently he can, by advice or interference, at once put a check to whatever might impair its efficiency.⁸⁵

More reliable evidence than that of the Rev. Leitch was furnished by the Lord Advocate, James Moncrieff, in a speech in parliament in 1854. Moncrieff, while very critical of the motivation behind the Church of Scotland's renewed concern with the standard of the parochial system, did admit that great exertions had been made since the early 1840's, with the result that the parish schools "are probably now in a condition of greater efficiency than they have been for many years".⁸⁶

To return, then, directly to the question of the quality of the Scottish teachers of this period, an important factor in this assessment is their educational background. A high proportion of parochial teachers were reputed to have had some sort of university education.⁸⁷ This tradition originated because of the large number of candidates for the ministry, who taught in the parish school part-time while they were attending university, and full-time while they were awaiting a

85 Leitch, Scottish Education Question, p. 5. In 1865, William Knox told the Argyll Commission that most clergymen took an active and positive role in relation to the school: "In general he takes a very great interest in the school and visits it very frequently". Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 220.

86 James Moncrieff, Speech on the Bill for the Education of the People of Scotland (London, 1854), p. 16.

87 For example, G.E. Davie in The Democratic Intellect (Edinburgh, 1961) writes that "a fairly high proportion - a third, at least, it was said - of the parish schoolmasters had been through college". (p. 27). William Fraser, in 1858, made this observation: "The status and scholarship of the National Teacher were comparatively high...The teachers must have a classical education and be of irreproachable character; they were usually men of liberal sentiments, who had spent several years, often seven or eight, at one of our Universities..." "Popular Education" NBR, p.7.

parish appointment.⁸⁸ Non-divinity students too found that they could combine teaching and university education. Thomas Guthrie, who came up to Edinburgh University in 1815, with his parish teacher, who was also in attendance there, described the custom:

By the help of the salaries and fees accruing to a parish teacher, many a poor lad was able to work his way through the expenses of a university all the more if he had obtained a bursary there. He taught school during the summer, and filled it with a substitute during the five months which he passed at College.⁸⁹

A Scottish university in the first half of the nineteenth century, however, was a very different institution from its modern successor.⁹⁰ The lines between the elementary, secondary, and university levels of education were indistinct and blurred and the advanced subjects of the parish schools, the wider curriculum of the burgh schools, and the general arts subjects of the first years of university all merged. The students entered very young -- Guthrie went to Edinburgh, when he was twelve - and spent much of their time at what would now be considered secondary level work. Emphasis was on attendance at the university as much, if not more, than graduation from it. Guthrie, who spent eight years at Edinburgh and still emerged from theology too young to be a licentiate of the church,

88 Whether or not these 'stickit' ministers made good teachers became a subject of controversy. There was a feeling that they "couldn't see the school for the steeple". Simpson, Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 63. As Hugh Miller put it in a bitter schoolboy couplet, "Tho now he wields the knotty birch/His better hope lies in the church". Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters", p. 153. The proportion of disappointed or prospective clerical candidates in teaching seems to have decreased from the mid-eighteenth century on.

89 Guthrie, Autobiography, p. 41.

90 See Davie, Democratic Intellect.

found himself completely at sea at first, "a mere boy, pushed on too fast, and sent to the University much too soon".⁹¹ George Combe who attended Edinburgh for one year, 1802-03, found himself utterly unprepared and spent his time pleasantly day-dreaming in lectures and recuperating from his trials at the High School. He had no difficulty, however, in procuring from his professor a class certificate attesting that he had "prosecuted his studies with great diligence and success".⁹²

Nevertheless, the raw invigorating atmosphere of the Scottish university of this period did have a broadening and stimulating influence on those future teachers who attended, many of whom did more to earn their class certificates than did Combe. Certainly most commentators on Scottish education were high in their admiration of the effect of university experience on teachers. Scotland's educational reputation, wrote R.J. Bryce in 1852, had always been attributable "not to the number of schools, but to the quality of the schoolmasters, of whom a goodly proportion were men of superior education and cultivated minds; by the contact of whose intellects, independently of school drill, a superior character was impressed on youth of the country".⁹³ These observers were also strong in their desire to have this university tradition continued and expanded to include more teachers:

91 Guthrie, Autobiography, p. 51.

92 Gibbon, Life of Combe, p. 63.

93 R.J. Bryce, Practical Suggestions for Reforming the Educational Institutions of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1852), p. 11.

Never will Scotland possess an education system worthy of her ancient fame, or adequate to the demands of an age like the present, until at least every parish school possess among its other teachers its one university-bred-school-master popularly chosen, and well paid....⁹⁴

Fearon, in the 1860's was impressed with the philosophical and psychological emphasis on the Scottish university degree which he felt would "render an ordinary Scotch graduate more likely to succeed as a teacher than an English graduate".⁹⁵ The Scottish universities, he noted, "provide the burgh schools with the means of obtaining teachers, at a very reasonable rate, and on the whole much better qualified for the office than a majority of English grammar-school teachers".⁹⁶

Probably an estimate that throughout this period something between a third and a half of the parochial teachers had some university experience would be accurate as possible. Saunders, basing his figures on the 1826-27 Parliamentary Returns on Parochial Education in Scotland, states that of the 906 parishes reporting, over 400 had schoolmasters who had attended the university.⁹⁷ This proportion probably declined somewhat through the middle years of the century, although in the Dick Bequest area of the north-east it was always a

94 Miller, Thoughts on the Educational Question, p. 60.

95 Fearon, Report on Burgh Schools, 1867, p. 45.

96 Ibid., p. 34. James Bryce objected to the pupil-teacher system precisely because, whatever its influence in England, it would have an adverse effect on the quality of Scottish teachers. Products of the new system would, in his view, suffer from a "want of an enlarged general education, and...liberality of mind, comprehensiveness of view, and improvement of all the faculties which are imparted by a mixed education". (J. Bryce, "Minutes of Council", p. 337).

97 Saunders, Scottish Democracy, p. 290.

"much greater proportion" than elsewhere.⁹⁸ In the burgh schools, at least two-thirds of the masters were university graduates. In the other types of Scottish schools, the proportion of teachers attending or graduating from university was much lower than in either the parish or burgh schools. Saunders estimated that in 1826-27 about 200 non-parochial teachers had attended university.⁹⁹ In 1847 an inspector reported on 104 teachers, 47 of whom had attended university and 16 of whom were in non-parochial schools.¹⁰⁰ In the controversy over the Free Church Education Scheme, Hugh Miller charged that not only were many Free Church teachers too poorly paid to be eligible to take the examination which qualified them for a government grant, but also that "a preponderating majority were themselves too ill taught to successfully compete for Government money".¹⁰¹

V

Some general conclusion about the standards and quality of the various types of nineteenth century Scottish teacher are possible. From a low point at the beginning of the century the quality of the

98 Simpson, Education in Aberdeenshire, p. 66. An 1858 estimate put the number of university graduates in Aberdeenshire, Banff, and Moray as 100, out of a total of 124 parish teachers. [Russell], "Education Question", p. 265.)

99 Saunders, Scottish Democracy, p. 290.

100 Bone, Scottish Inspectorate, p. 21. In a series of articles by A.J. Belford, "Foundation Members of the E.I.S." SELJ (1936 and 1937) on 51 Scottish teachers, information is given on the educational background of 47. Half had attended university: 7 of 22 elementary level teachers; 16 of 24 secondary level teachers; and one unclassified adventure teacher.

101 Miller, Thoughts on the Educational Question, p. x. Miller claimed that only 129 of the 689 Free Church teachers had received these grants.

parochial teachers gradually improved, with a partial setback through the 18 years from 1843 to 1861 when the office was closed to all but Church of Scotland adherents.¹⁰² "The standard of acquirement was very high at one time", William Knox told the Argyll Commission in 1865. "I think it is very respectable just now".¹⁰³ Moreover, as a group, the parish teachers consistently maintained higher standards than any other Scottish elementary level teachers. With considerable justice W. Milligan claimed that the parochial teachers were the "most highly educated, the most enlightened, and the most successful body of teachers in the country, equalled by few and surpassed by none...",¹⁰⁴ though by this time this claim was being challenged more strongly than ever before by the Free Church teachers. Whatever edge the parochial teachers had over their rivals was due largely to two factors; a guaranteed salary and security of tenure. These attracted men of some education, scholarship and independence to the position, and enabled them to exploit its potential when they were appointed. This is not to say that the parish teachers and schools had achieved some golden pinnacle to educational quality. It is to say that in the context of the times, the parish system, for all its many flaws and failures, was the best there was.

102 The low point corresponds with the worst economic position the parish teachers ever occupied. S.S. Laurie wrote of that stage, "with salaries now less than those of village mechanics, the profession began to degenerate so rapidly that towards the end of the [eighteenth] century it became impossible to induce men to accept parochial schools who possessed acquirements above those common among the rustics around them...". A Layman, The Present Aspects of the Scottish Education Question (Edinburgh, 1856), p. 19.

103 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 217.

104 Milligan, Present Aspect of the Education Question, p. 21.

There was one group of teachers whose qualities and standards were markedly higher than even the parochial teachers; the secondary level burgh teachers. Their superiority did not depend on guaranteed salaries or security of tenure, for they had neither. Instead, they had the opportunity in the bustling, affluent, ambitious cities and large towns to make the most of their talents. A man with a good university education, a bent for teaching, and plenty of energy could make a comfortable and sometimes a handsome living and achieve a considerable standing in society as a burgh schoolmaster. D.R. Fearon, the English inspector who reported for the Argyll Commission in 1867 is a reliable witness to their quality. Fearon was impressed by the burgh schools and by the Scottish teachers in comparison with the English grammar school teachers with whom he had had most of his experience as a government inspector and whom he held in low regard. He was struck by the general pride and confidence of the Scottish burgh teachers. Unlike their English counterparts, they showed no reluctance to let him visit their class rooms and carried on their teaching while he was present in a perfectly normal and uninhibited way. In the teaching of classics, although the top four or five boys at an English public school of the highest calibre might have had deeper scholarly acquirements, Fearon thought that the Scottish teachers stimulated their students' interest and intelligence to a "remarkable degree" and produced "a larger, more intelligent knowledge of Latin (if not of Greek) in the average boy of 16".¹⁰⁵ Among the burgh teachers he observed both a general method and an attitude, which set them above English teachers he knew. This superiority

105 Fearon, Report on Burgh Schools, 1867, p. 50.

seemed to him to spring from an atmosphere and approach in which the Scottish teacher "handled his textbooks, his subjects, and his scholars in so much more a philosophical and cosmopolitan a manner, with so much more power of illustration, with such an apparent knowledge of the peculiarities of individual scholars, and of the temper and tone of the class".¹⁰⁶

As for the rest of the Scottish teachers, with a few exceptions, their quality and efficiency was considerably below the level maintained by the parochial and burgh teachers. Here again Milligan's candid, though sympathetic, view is worth quoting:

But with no wish to disparage a class of men...it cannot be contended that the non-parochial schoolmasters have, for the most part, either received that education, or that they now enjoy those facilities for the right conduct of a school, which are indispensable for its success. They would be the first to acknowledge this. From their poor lodgings and miserable incomes, there could be told innumerable tales, which would place their poverty in a light only less striking than their patience and self-denial, or that heroic perseverance... with which they struggle to lay by a few pounds which may help them through a year's education at University. The labour for the most part unbenefited, uncared for except by the poor.¹⁰⁷

106 Ibid., p. 48. An American school inspector was quoted by a speaker at a public meeting in defense of the parochial school system thus: "I do not exaggerate when I say, that the most active and lively schools I have ever seen in the United States must be regarded almost as dormitories, if compared with the fervid life of the Scotch schools; and by the side of theirs, our pupils would seem hibernating animals, just emerging from their torpid state...". Glasgow Public Meeting To Oppose the Lord Advocates Bill, p. 12.

107 Milligan, Present Aspect of the Education Question, p. 7. An indignant article, "A Word in Defense of the Scotch Teacher", SELJ (May 1853), p. 338, took issue with a similar unfavourable view of Scottish adventure teachers voiced by Kay-Shuttleworth in Public Education. The writer maintained that to denigrate a group of teachers, "by whose means...a great part of the higher and middle classes are taught" (p. 338) was extremely unfair. Relative to the whole however this type of teacher made up only a small proportion.

Chapter 3

The Schoolmaster in Scotland (II)

I

"I never intrude into the company of persons of quality when it is not necessary for me to be there in attendance on my Lord. I never debase myself by converse with servants or tradesmen - the one is as far below my spirit, as the other is above my desires". So wrote a Scottish tutor to his father in the 1680's and the description of his middling, uncomfortable social position can serve as a symbol for the uncertain social status which has always been the lot of the teacher.¹ That Scottish teachers in the nineteenth century were generally concerned and often dissatisfied with their social status is certain. Since social status is determined by a combination of factors, the teachers' concern and dissatisfaction emerged on a number of issues. A basic issue was their economic situation.² Some of course denied that mere income was a crucial factor, as did a

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- 1 The letter was from an Archibald Colme, then tutor to the children of Lord Elibank and later a schoolmaster at Aytown, defending himself against certain rumours of indecorous behaviour that had reached the ears of his father. Northern Notes and Queries, IV, p. 33.
- 2 Money, of course, cannot buy prestige and status immediately, but it certainly makes life pleasanter while one is waiting. In the increasingly secular, commercial atmosphere of the nineteenth century, the value of money as a ticket to social mobility and acceptance was on the rise. George Combe divided society into three classes: upper - the gentry and the professionals (including, I think, the clergy, though at the lower end of the scale); middle - such persons as merchants, traders, and clerks (there is no indication of how he viewed manufacturers, but they would probably be included in this range); and working - artisans, labourers and servants. The teachers' traditional position somewhere in the middle group was increasingly less certain by contrast with the rising income and aggressive aspirations of the traders, manufacturers and artisans.

parochial schoolmaster in 1867. The schoolmaster's "claims to social status", he maintained, "are readily conceded by all who have the slightest pretensions to mental culture or gentle breeding, though moneyed vulgarity not infrequently affects to treat him with contempt".³ This, however, sounds a bit like whistling in the dark. William Knox, himself a parish teacher for fifty years, was clearer on the matter. He told the Argyll Commission that he thought the social status of the schoolmaster had "greatly improved since the commencement of this century, though it is not at all equal to what it was at the beginning of the last century". When a commissioner asked him, on what he based this view, he replied, "On the change in the value of money".⁴

On the basis of income, then, if my previous assessment of the various income levels of Scottish teachers is accurate, one could say that university professors, burgh and academy teachers, a few adventure school teachers, and a very few parochial schoolmasters were established, and recognized, as middle or upper-middle class. That is to say that they considered themselves and were accepted generally as, the social equals of clergymen, doctors and lawyers. Most of the parochial teachers and some sessional, subscription and non-parochial teachers could be considered to be in a lower middle class social position, but the great bulk of the Scottish teachers would have been struggling to survive at a lower class economic level, while striving to attain a socially middle class position.

3 Parochial Schoolmaster, Plea for the Parish Schools, p. 5.

4 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 217.

Money, however, is not the only factor involved in social status. The parish teacher quoted above thought that "mental culture and gentle breeding" conquered all. While he probably overrated the importance of educational and social background, there is no doubt that these contributed to social position. Some attention has already been given to the educational background of the Scottish teachers. Information on their social background, however, is harder to come by. James Pillans told a parliamentary committee in 1834, "It is hardly possible to describe them as belonging to any one class". Pillans used class in a somewhat different way than we usually understand it, however, as he went on to describe those men who had set out to be ministers, and, for one reason and another, had become teachers, a group he called "the most numerous and valuable class of our teachers". Returning to a social usage of the word, he concluded that many "among the poorer classes are directed to this profession by some natural or accidental incapacity to labour with their hands, and these generally become valuable teachers".⁵ None of this kind of evidence throws much light on the social origins of Scottish teachers.

Somewhat more useful is R.J. Bryce's reference to the "class of people from among whom schoolmasters are taken, that is, the small independent farmers and artisans".⁶ In discussing the subject of pupil-teachers in Scotland, an inspector appearing before the Argyll Commission in 1865, commented on their social background:

5 Report on the Education of the People of England and Wales, 1854, p. 31.

6 R.J. Bryce, Plan for National Education for Ireland, p. 40.

Female pupil-teachers come from a superior class to that which furnishes male pupil-teachers. The female pupil-teachers come from schoolmasters, farmers, and shop-keepers; the male from a somewhat inferior class.⁷

Though one is struck here by a distinction in social background between female and male teachers which still seems to be a sociological fact today, this evidence is unsatisfactory because pupil-teachers were a relatively new development and it is doubtful that they were representative of Scottish teachers as a whole before 1850.

In a series of biographical sketches of 51 of the founding members of the Educational Institute of Scotland, written by A.J. Belford in 1936 and 1937, he found some background information on the social origins of 10 teachers. Though this is sorely inadequate base for any flights of sociological interpretation, it does nothing to contradict the general impression I have that most Scottish teachers tended to come from the lower middle - upper working class level of society. In Belford's ten cases there is only one teacher whose father was clearly an unskilled workman and only one whose father was a doctor. Another from the upper end of this scale was the son of a clergyman. Both he and the doctor's son became outstanding burgh teachers. Of the rest, two were the sons of skilled workmen, an 'artisan' and a weaver, two were farmers' sons, one was the son of a shopkeeper and two were the sons of teachers.⁸ Clearly, much more digging would have to be done, before any conclusive generalizations could be made, but some speculation is possible.

7 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 20.

8 Belford, "Foundation Members" (1936, 1937).

The majority of the burgh, academy, and high calibre adventure school teachers probably came from solid, respectable middle-class backgrounds. The bulk of the parochial and a large number of the other types of teachers we have mentioned - denominational, sessional, subscription and so forth - were probably the lower middle-class or drawn from upper working class levels. Two points are worth making here. The first is that there was no sharp distinction among the teachers along class or teaching level lines, a distinct contrast with the English situation. Enough teachers from lower class backgrounds often with some elementary teaching experience, taught in the burgh schools to foster an impression of occupational mobility and unity. The second point is that the general level of social background of the Scottish teachers teaching at the elementary level was significantly higher than the English elementary teachers and the new pupil-teacher group which appeared in mid-century, to which Gordon referred above.⁹

9 Dicken's splendid and moving portrait of the English elementary school teacher Bradely Headstone in Our Mutual Friend (New York, University Society, 1908) remains the classic literary description of the status problem all teachers faced. Headstone is deeply concerned about respectability. "Bradley Headstone in his decent black coat and waistcoat, and decent white shirt, and decent formal black tie, and decent pantaloons of pepper and salt, and his decent silver watch in his pocket, and decent hairguard round his neck, looked a thoroughly decent young man of six and twenty" (p. 244). His attitude to his social background was a painful mixture of shame about his humble beginnings ("Regarding that origin of his, he was proud, moody and sullen, desiring to be forgotten") (p. 225) and fierce pride in the distance he had risen ("You reproach me with my origin, you cast insinuations at my bringing-up. But I tell you, sir, I have worked my way onward, out of both and in spite of both, and have a right to be considered a better man than you, with better reasons for being proud") (p. 304). Throughout the novel Headstone writhes with burning impotent rage at his social betters, who despise him and sneeringly call him "Schoolmaster". Though the starkness of the situation and the agony of the character must be somewhat qualified and tempered when

Social eminence is never divorced from social milieu. That is to say that the relative weight of the items I have mentioned - income, educational background, social origin - varies considerably from one social context to another. A teacher in a poor rural parish, though with a very modest income, might enjoy a degree of status and influence because of his respectable family background and his university education, denied a teacher of much more substantial wealth in a bustling, industrial, 'purse-proud' city. One of the reasons Scottish teachers were so concerned with their status in the nineteenth century was that its traditionally high position was being undermined and devalued in the new Scotland wrought by industrialization, commercialization and urbanization. In pre-industrial Scotland occupational opportunities had been much more limited and "scarcely any means existed by which the most ambitious spirit could push himself out of the rank in which he was born...". Consequently, "to the large mass of the people no object seemed more tempting than the prospect of being a Schoolmaster".¹⁰ The fact that a legally constituted education system existed, sanctioned by the State and encouraged and sponsored by the Church, established the schoolmaster in a recognized position:

At the same time, the teachers of the Parochial Schools themselves, with the energy of self-interest, cooperated in spreading an opinion of the uses and necessity of their calling. They not only extended

considering the social position and occupational attitudes of Scottish teachers, Dicken's insights furnish a helpful illustration of the painful problems of social status.

10 Rev. C. Anderson, A Statement of the Experience of Scotland with Regard to the Education of the People (Dumfries, 1825), p. 14.

the desire for instruction, but they qualified individuals to administer to it; and they qualified them in such a degree, that they could find no more suitable occupation, in a country where manufactures and commerce were still on the most limited scale, than to impart the knowledge they had received.¹¹

By the 1830's however, this high traditional status was looking tattered and worn. George Lewis saw the main reason for this as the fact that the need for improving the teacher's economic position had been "manifestly ignored" and he described the results of this neglect:

As a class, they possess not that influence and status which they ought to possess in society. Even a parochial school is too often the refuge of the disappointed in other professions, or with the young a step to some other and more lucrative occupation; but few look upon it as a profession to be desired for life and to be cultivated with professional ardour and enthusiasm.¹²

II

One factor which certainly affects the morale, attractiveness and status of any occupation, and one which I would like to explore at some length here, is the degree of independence and self-determination which its practitioners possess. This factor became of increasing importance to the Scottish schoolmasters in the nineteenth century and they began to raise some fundamental questions about position: what was the proper role of the church in the superintendence of education? Was the teacher's role mainly religious or mainly secular? What was and should be the relationship between teachers and the clergy?

11 Church of Scotland Education Committee, Educational Statistics, 1833, p. 4.

12 Lewis, Scotland, Half-Educated, p. 7.

The central - some would say the dominant - role played by the clergy in the affairs of Scotland since the Reformation has often been remarked upon. Certainly no study of Scottish education could ignore their presence and influence. One of the most distinctive features of John Knox's vision was the heavy emphasis he placed on the school as an agent in fostering "religious and moral edification".¹³ An intimate church-school partnership was established at the outset, in which, "by early instruction the schoolmaster in common with the pastor, eradicated the errors of Popery, and planted the faith of the Gospel in the hearts of their countrymen".¹⁴ The first teachers were clergymen and "even when laymen began to teach, they did so, in a manner, as the substitutes or assistants of the clergy, who thus by long established tradition, came to have the superintendence of education as an unquestioned right".¹⁵ Often the teacher was, though at the time a layman, a prospective minister and most occupied some minor ecclesiastical positions. Thus there was no conflict of aim or interest between the clergy and the teachers:

In many districts the reader was the sole officer of the Church, acting at once as reader, preacher, and teacher. But even where the schoolmaster existed as a distinct functionary, his chief duty was the inculcation of the doctrines of the Reformed Church, and the sole aim of his reading-lessons was to enable the people to read their catechisms and Bibles.¹⁶

13 Bain, Education in Stirlingshire, p. 34.

14 Lewis, Scotland, Half-Educated, p. 7.

15 Russell, "The Education Question", p. 261. "Her clergy were the guardians of education, and the schoolmaster was but the assistant of the Minister"; Lewis, Scotland, Half-Educated, p. 29.

16 A Layman [S.S. Laurie], The Present Aspects of the Scottish Education Question (Edinburgh, 1856), p. 11.

That the church was the main architect and support of Scottish education at the beginning is undeniable. That Knox's educational blueprint in his First Book of Discipline was never adequately implemented is also clear. In the opinion of W.C. Dickinson the results of this partial fulfillment were unfortunate because the people "remained largely uneducated and thereby the ministers gained a hold over their lives and thoughts which would have been otherwise denied. Because of that, the ministers became as infallible as former priests, and later 'new presbyter' was to be seen as 'but old priest writ large'."¹⁷ Whatever the advantages or disadvantages of an active and powerful Presbyterian ministry on Scottish attitudes and culture generally, for the teacher the presence and influence of the parish minister was an inescapable fact of his working, and to a considerable extent, his private life.

Nevertheless, as the country developed and as the number and types of school grew, education became a matter of secular concern

17 J. Knox, History of the Reformation in Scotland, ed. by W.C. Dickinson (London, 1949), p. iii. The role of the Scottish clergy was the subject of some interesting comments in correspondence between Richard Cobden and George Combe. In 1836, Cobden wrote, "How I pity you in Scotland - the only country in the world in which a wealthy and intelligent middling-class submits to the domination of a spiritual tyranny". Gibbon, Life of Combe, I, p. 315. Combe agreed and, in a letter to Cobden in 1840, observed: "Scotland never was honestly liberal. Her liberal divines were in a wrong position, and never ventured to avow liberality or to give reasons for it. They preached and wrote under the hope, I presume, that advancing reason would insensibly destroy superstition, but the French Revolution disgraced reason, and the people went back to their old standards". Ibid., II, p. 124. It was Cobden, however, who urged Combe to support whatever liberal tendencies the clergy displayed, and who expressed the view that that clergy was coming around to enlightened thinking gradually.

as well as ecclesiastical interest, and teaching began to develop an occupational identity distinct from the ministry. The burgh teachers were the first to develop this distinct identity occupying as they did a more independent position protected somewhat from the direct influence of the clergy by the interests of the town councils who shared in their superintendence. But the parochial teachers too began to acquire a self-consciousness as parliament took an increasing interest in the educational arrangements of the country during the course of the seventeenth century. For the teachers, the most important piece of legislation of this period, according to S.S. Laurie¹⁸ was that of 1696, which regarded education as "intimately connected with the Church, yet, in some respects distinct from it, requiring separate consideration and an independent, though subordinate, constitution".¹⁹ The implications of this legislation were profound:

A great step in advance was here taken in the ample recognition of popular education as a State concern, and also towards the elevation of the teacher to the position of an independent servant of the commonwealth in direct relationship to the civil power.²⁰

In the century following the passage of this act teachers began to take a more conscious interest in their own occupation and its

18 S.S. Laurie (1829-1909): Secretary of the Church of Scotland's Education Committee (1855-1905); Visitor and Examiner to the Dick Bequest (1856-1906); and first appointment to the Chair of Education at Edinburgh University (1876-1903). (For further information see Appendix A: Biographical Notes.)

19 Layman, Present Aspects of Scottish Education Question, p. 15.

20 Ibid., p. 16.

educational role and more concerted efforts to exert some influence. Most of these efforts were instigated by teachers connected with the established church and most were motivated by economic concerns - dissatisfaction with low incomes and a desire to provide relief for aged or infirm teachers and their dependents - although the need to overcome their occupational isolation and to seek mutual assistance on pedagogic and intellectual matters played a part. Teachers in the Edinburgh area seem to have been active from the 1730's on and a number of other local associations appeared later in the century.²¹

On several occasions, teachers from a wide area met at Edinburgh to discuss their economic grievances and to petition the General Assembly and Parliament for redress. Laurie saw one such gathering in 1749 as the teachers' "first self-assertion as a distinct profession".²² At this meeting the teachers drew up a "moderate, sensible, well-written paper, stating their case" and presented it to the General Assembly with an appeal that the Assembly support a teachers' petition to Parliament.²³ It was unfortunate for the teachers that the clergy were considering a similar approach to the government on their own behalf, and symbolic of the clergy-teacher relationship that the Assembly ruled out their plan as "inopportune, and threw out their application for support on a point of form".²⁴

21 Belford, E.I.S., p. 5 passim. Glasgow teachers were unsuccessful in their first attempts to organize in 1771, but established a society in 1794 which lasted until the 1830's.

22 Layman, Present Aspects of Scottish Education Question, p. 18.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., p. 19.

Greater success was achieved later in the century and in the early 1800's in the schoolmasters' efforts to ensure some provision for the families of deceased teachers, which culminated in 1807 with the legislative establishment and recognition of the Burgh and Parochial Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund.

Though far from an adequate response, the 1807 Act was significant in providing the first national structure for teachers.²⁵ Since all the parish and burgh teachers were required to contribute it was necessary to organize both local and national associations and to hold regular and annual meetings to collect the funds and conduct the business. Though the workings of the fund were quite straightforward and could be dealt with quickly "there seemed nothing to prevent informal conversation upon educational topics".²⁶ That the Fund organization did provide such an opportunity was illustrated by the establishment of the Scottish School Book Association in 1818. The proposal for such an association was put to the 1817 annual meeting of the Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund, which issued a circular to all burgh and parochial teachers and sponsored an organizational meeting in September 1818. The purpose of the S.S.B.A. was to publish "a collection or series of reading books, as shall by the simplicity of plan, scientific arrangement, religious tendency, lowness of price and successive improvements, suggested by the teachers themselves be justly entitled to supercede any other

25 Belford, E.I.S., p. 15; Saunders, Scottish Democracy, p. 284.

26 Belford, E.I.S., p. 14.

compilation".²⁷ Thus did the Scottish teachers demonstrate an interest extending beyond the basic 'bread and butter' issues so important to any occupation. Through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, then, Scottish teachers grew out of "their former pupillage to the adolescence, at least, if not to the maturity of an independent life".²⁸

III

Adolescence, however, is a highly unsatisfactory stage of life and there was evidence of an increasing tension between the teachers and the clergy. This tension was only one factor in the whole range of changes and strains to which religion in general and the established Church of Scotland in particular were subjected through this period. Her educational facilities were increasingly overwhelmed by the rapid growth and shift of population. Her position as the 'national church' was steadily eroded by dissent and the Disruption reduced her adherents to only about 1/3 of the population. The opinions and influence of clergymen of all denominations, though

27 Quoted by Belford, E.I.S., p. 16. The S.S.B.A. flourished from the outset and lasted until 1891. It published a wide range of texts, some of which gained a reputation outside Scotland, and made them available at low prices. Between 1855 and 1883, when its publishing facilities were sold to Collins for £ 6000, it distributed £ 17,680 in profit to its members. It also used its surplus funds in a variety of other ways: supplying bursaries to the sons of needy members; providing equipment, apparatus, and maps for schools; and, according to Belford (p. 17) supporting the efforts of the parish teachers in their attempts to influence educational policy.

28 Layman, Present Aspects of Scottish Education Question, p. 17.

still of great weight and importance, were countered, dismissed or ignored more confidently than ever by the power of science, and industry, and business. Though the teachers remained for the most part divided and relatively powerless, some of them too began to question the traditional assumptions about the aims and organization of education. Although, in 1850, staunch Church of Scotland ministers could still defend the tradition by which "schoolmasters and professors were classed as 'ecclesiastical persons' and subjected to the same ecclesiastical superintendence and discipline",²⁹ as early as 1827 William Knox, himself no rebel against the established church, was politely pointing out to his superiors, that, "In forming a correct estimate of the parochial schoolmaster's emolument, I humbly conceive that the fees arising from the offices of Session clerk and clerk to the heritors, ought not to be included, as these are not inseparable from the office of parochial schoolmaster, although at present they are conjoined..."³⁰ One reason that Simon Laurie, whose views have been quoted extensively through this section, had such sympathy with the frustrations and aspirations of the nineteenth century teachers was that he had

29 Rev. J. Bryce, Public Education in its Relation to Scotland and its Parish Schools (Edinburgh, 1854), p. 65. This Bryce also authored the very conservative account of the events leading up to the Disruption. Ten Years of the Church of Scotland: 1833-43 (Edinburgh, 1850) and was no relation to the very liberal teaching-clerical Bryce family to which much reference is made in this thesis. A similar view of the teachers' position was expressed by the Rev. A.M. Leitch in The Scottish Education Question: "The teacher must be a member of the Church and this implies a religious profession. He holds an ecclesiastical position. He is often an elder of the Church, and Session-Clerk". (p. 6.)

30 Parochial Education in Scotland, 1826, p. 942.

experienced some of the same frustrations and restrictions of ecclesiastical prejudice and control in the course of his educational career.³¹ Leonhard Schmitz, though he was more anti-clerical than most, expressed what must have been a widely held feeling among teachers when he wrote of his son who was studying medicine that, "his profession will free him from the shackles under which I must stifle my convictions".³²

Just as the public controversy on the merits of the parochial teachers' security of tenure was really part of the larger debate about national education, so too the mid-century examination of the proper role of the teacher was part of the same debate. One of the major arguments of those who opposed radical reform was that the teacher's role was basically clerical or religious,³³ that the Church

31 In his correspondence with George Combe (National Library of Scotland MS 7302, 7391, 7392, 7334, 7342, 7349) he regrets the clerical attacks on William's Secular School and suggests a pamphlet to "uproot the prejudice of the people..." (11 Dec. 1849); complains that his prospects have suffered because he had not attended church for eighteen months (28 October 1853); discusses the problem of not offending other people by his personal religious opinions, while, at the same time, not going through life "in disguise" (28 January 1854); laments his failure to successfully promote some of Combe's ideas on agricultural and industrial education with the Privy Council and General Assembly (1 June, 24 October, 2 November 1855); regretfully requests Combe not to publish any of their correspondence because, "I am ashamed to say that it would damage me by increasing to a great extent that suspicion with which I am already regarded, and thus depriving me of my influence (20 October 1857); and, finally, expresses a wish to leave his position as Secretary of the Church of Scotland's Education Scheme in these terms; "I am certainly able to accomplish a good deal in my present situation, but I am most desirous to be free from my present close ecclesiastical connection". (2 July 1858).

32 National Library of Scotland, Letter to Combe, MS 7336 (5 June, 1853).

33 Rev. J. Bryce, Public Education. The "schoolmaster is expressly directed to give religious instruction as the point of everything else". (p. 35.)

as the supporter and defender of religion must therefore guarantee the religious soundness of the teachers by close supervision and control, and that a national secular or non-denominational system would destroy this essential ecclesiastical power. A good early example of this position was expressed by J.C. Colquhoun in a pamphlet consisting of the correspondence between himself and James Simpson a leading secularist of the 1830's.³⁴ Whatever the arguments Simpson used to describe the advantages of a non-denominational education scheme and to defend himself against charges of irreligion, Colquhoun consistently and successfully managed to reduce the issue to one simple level. His objection was that Simpson's plan was one "in which the schoolmaster is not to teach the Bible".³⁵ Unless the "blessings of Scriptural education" were preserved, Scotland would be subject to the "withering curse of public infidelity".³⁶

This view prevailed in the Church of Scotland throughout the whole period under study here. John Cook, the convener of the established church's education committee made a clear statement of its official position in 1856:

34 J.C. Colquhoun and J. Simpson, Education: Correspondence between Mr. Simpson of Edinburgh and Mr. Colquhoun of Killermont, M.P. (Glasgow, 1837). James Simpson (1784-1853) was a noted Edinburgh author and advocate. Along with the Combes, he founded and contributed to the Phrenological Journal and strongly supported a national non-sectarian education system. In 1837 he was a witness to A Common's committee investigation of Irish education. (see D.N.B., LII, p. 270.)

35 Ibid., p. 16.

36 Ibid., p. 17.

Every parish schoolmaster in Scotland, according to the present constitution of the schools, was just as much a religious teacher of the young committed to his care as were the professors in the universities, who held those chairs for the training of young men for the office of the holy ministry.³⁷

Nor was this attitude restricted to the established church alone. Until the 1850's at least the breakaway Free Church looked on its teachers in much the same way. Robert Candlish, the convener of the Free Church Education Scheme, saw its school system primarily as the defender of the faith "in the coming age to stem the storm of infidelity, profligacy, and Popery that is now setting in".³⁸ He outlined his sentiments regarding the qualifications and role of the teacher in terms remarkably similar to Cook's:

I am quite sure that you are all aware of the very strict attention that is paid to the religious and spiritual qualifications of the teachers. I would dread, above all things, a mere scheme to encourage young men to give themselves to the office of teaching, if it were not connected with proper guarantees to secure their religious and spiritual character.³⁹

There were some observers who took a more moderate position on the religious/secular problem of the role of the teacher, one which would allow both church and state their educational due. In an article in Blackwood's in 1828, a writer discussing the state of education in Ireland, defined this view succinctly:

37 Rev. Dr. J. Cook and Dr. J. Robertson, Speeches Upon the Parish Schools' Bill (Edinburgh, 1856), p. 6.

38 Rev. Dr. Candlish, Speech on the Sustentation of Schoolmasters (Edinburgh, 1846), p. 14.

39 Ibid., p. 12.

Schools are in their nature partly civil and partly religious; and ministers of religion have no right to interfere with them beyond what is necessary for the proper protection of their respective creeds. To this their interference should be strictly limited, for the sake of the laity and the state...⁴⁰

As a later Free Church writer put it, the teacher occupied "the precise department where the interests of both Church and State unite, and therefore is related to both, but not solely the functionary of either".⁴¹ These moderates were open to reform proposals which made some provision in a non-denominational scheme for denominational access and instruction at specified periods, or even for schemes which simply assumed that Scottish public opinion would not tolerate a school or schoolmaster where no provision was made for the teaching of the common protestant precepts of the major denominations.

There were only a few in mid-century Scotland who took a more radical view. Such were, of course, the secularists led by Combe, and the Unitarians. There were not, however, very many of either party. What was significant was that their cause was joined by some influential and unimpeachably presbyterian figures in the 1850's. The most outspoken was Hugh Miller. Miller did not think highly of the vaunted contribution which the parochial schools were held to have made to the religious stability of the Scots:

I never knew anyone who owed other than the merest smattering of theological knowledge to those institutions, and not a single individual who had ever derived from them any tincture, even the slightest, of religious feeling. In truth, during almost

40 D. Robinson, "The Ninth Report on Education in Ireland" Blackwood's (March, 1828), p. 357.

41 Hetherington, National Education in Scotland, p. 25.

the whole of the last century, and for at least the first forty years of the present, the people of Scotland were, with all their faults, considerably more Christian than the large part of their schoolmasters.⁴²

Miller had pointed out elsewhere that there existed "no statutory provision for the teaching of religion" in the parish schools⁴³ and challenged the traditional view of the basic purpose of education and the role of the Scottish teachers:

Practically, and to all intents and purposes, the schoolmaster, in the eye of the membership of our Church, and of all the other Scottish Churches, was simply a layman, the proper business of whose profession was the communication of secular learning.⁴⁴

Miller, therefore, contended that "the schoolmaster possesses a purely secular, not ecclesiastical standing"⁴⁵ and quoted the late and greatly revered Thomas Chalmers in support of this contention.⁴⁶

42 Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters, p. 381.

43 Miller, Thoughts on Educational Question, p. x. A writer in 1854, arguing against an advocate of a denominational school system, acknowledged that Scotland had been famous for establishing a school in every parish and the resulting diffusion of education. "But", he continued, "we are persuaded that [the advocate of the denominational system] will have some difficulty in convincing us that this superiority is in any measure the result of that close connection which has all along subsisted between church and school, school-house and manse". A Layman, Strictures on the Reverend William Wilson's 'Plea for Congregational Schools' (Dundee, 1854), p. 5.

44 Ibid., p. 19.

45 Ibid., p. 23.

46 Miller wrote that in private conversation in the last year of his life Chalmers had agreed that the state had a duty to instruct the population and that the role of the schoolmaster was "inherently secular". Ibid., p. 22.

Miller was supported by some clergy like James Begg, the Free Churchman, who maintained that the schoolmasters position was as secular as a "judge or policeman", and that he should be limited in religious instruction, to the "mechanical act" of catechism and Bible reading. Begg felt that it was dangerous to let teachers, unschooled in theology, go beyond this and reported that he had heard "the grossest heresy propounded unconsciously by such raw practitioners".⁴⁷ Adam Black,⁴⁸ took a more political approach in a speech to the National Education Association in 1854. He dismissed the argument that the godly upbringing of Scottish children rested solely upon the schoolmaster and that the godliness of the schoolmaster rested solely upon his membership in the Church of Scotland and his submission to her tests; "The great object of the Presbyteries", he charged, "is to maintain the monopoly of schoolmasters to their own sect. All the pretence about godly upbringing is simply cant".⁴⁹

It would be incorrect to imply that, in the midst of all this public discussion and controversy over their role, Scottish teachers were united in their opinions on the subject. Officially, the parochial teachers stood solidly with the clergy of their church. Their

47 Rev. James Begg, National Education for Scotland Practically Considered (Edinburgh, 1850), p. 24. It must be recorded, however, that Begg completely reversed this position and, by 1869, was writing: "The spirit of religion ought to pervade the whole teaching, and the liberty of the teacher in this respect ought to be perfectly secure". The Duke of Argyll's Bill on National Education Considered (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 10.

48 Adam Black (1784-1874): prominent Edinburgh bookseller, publisher, and liberal politician; served as treasurer to the burgh in the 1830's and was twice Lord Provost in the 1840's; succeeded Macaulay as M.P. for Edinburgh in 1856.

49 N.E.A., Report of Public Meeting, 1854, p. 92.

policy consistently upheld the view that any reform which separated the parish system from the ecclesiastical control and superintendence of the Church of Scotland would destroy "the only practicable guarantee for the purity of moral and religious instruction in the schools".⁵⁰ Nevertheless there were tensions between the clergy and the teachers. In 1821, for example, the Roxburghshire Friendly Society of Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters actively interveded on behalf of one of its members in a dispute with a parish minister:

It was stated to the Meeting the Mr. Little, Schoolmaster of Kirkston, had for considerable time past been treated in a very unusual and unbecoming way by W. Elliot the Minister in denying him access to and from his House...The Meeting with a view to enable them to [sic] his Right and to bring the Case before a proper Court, appoint the following Gentlemen as a Committee to assist him in drawing up a Memorial to his Visitors...

This committee duly met, but decided to take no action until the decision of the heritors, who were considering the case, was known. Apparently the decision was favourable to Little for no further mention is made of the matter in the minutes. Again in 1816 this concern for the rights of the schoolmaster in his relations with the clergy and the managers of the schools was evident when the society had printed and distributed 150 copies of a Court of Session decision resulting from a dispute involving a master and the directors of the Inverness Academy, a decision they considered "highly interesting to Teachers".⁵¹

50 Parochial Schoolmasters, "Resolutions on National Education" SELJ (February 1854), p. 231.

51 Minute Books of the Roxburghshire Friendly Society of Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters (1811-1827) [Edinburgh, E.I.S. Office]. From the minutes it is obvious that it was a great struggle to survive financially. Nevertheless it does demonstrate the interest some teachers were beginning to take in educational issues.

Parish teachers were ready to take an active part in wider matters of occupational concern as well. In 1834 the Jedburgh Branch of the Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund discussed the propriety of making an application to parliament for an "augmentation of Salary and amending the Schoolmasters Act of 1803". A sub-committee drew up a petition, communicated with the Edinburgh teachers in order to coordinate their actions, and forwarded the petition to the M.P. for Roxburgh and to the Marquis of Lothian for submission to the Commons and the Lords. Moreover, the branch demonstrated interest in broader educational issues in 1839 when they requested their M.P. to send them a copy of the hearings of a Commons' committee on education. Later, the minutes expressed thanks to the M.P. and particular interest in the testimony of the two eminent Scottish witnesses, Professor Pillans and James Simpson.⁵² From the time of the Disruption in 1843, onwards, however, the increasingly fierce attacks directed against the Establishment prompted the parochial schoolmasters to play down their occupational grievances and restrain their interest in schemes of general educational reform in order to join forces with their clergy in defense of the larger interests of the Church of Scotland.

That this loyalty was sometimes a heavy price for them is illustrated by a paradoxical and sometimes contradictory defense of the parochial school system and its control by the Church of Scotland, written by "A Parochial Schoolmaster" and published in

52 Minutes of the Burgh and Parochial Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund (Jedburgh Branch), (1824-1872) [Edinburgh, E.I.S. Office]. Mostly the minutes are very brief and deal with the business of the fund (i.e., accounts, collections, etc.)

1867.⁵³ The whole tone of the pamphlet is bitterly pessimistic about the influence of the clergy in the schools. On the one hand the author feels that religious denominations should not control education, but doubts that "popular opinion is as yet fully prepared for banishing clerical influence from educational councils".⁵⁴ As things stand, once a teacher has been appointed to a school, "his further professional advancement may be said to depend almost entirely on the favourable testimony of clergymen".⁵⁵ To open the schools, however, in some kind of non-denominational system, he argues, would increase, not diminish, clerical and sectarian interference in "priest ridden Scotland":⁵⁶

Does anyone believe that sectarian influence can be wholly excluded from educational affairs, in a country where, to so many, religion is practically of less note than sect; where a metaphysical quibble worthier of the schoolmen of the middle-ages than of modern clergymen, may rend a Church into fragments; where every movement in a parish, from the formation of a public library of the assertion of a public right, to a boat race or a holiday, is conducted more or less in reference to sectarian distinctions...⁵⁷

To place the teacher at the mercy of all the sects rather than just mainly of one, as at present, would be to make him the "shuttlecock of all parties". He would have to devote more attention to pleasing the predominant faction than to "imparting even such beggarly

53 Parochial Schoolmaster, Plea for the Parish Schools.

54 Ibid., p. 22.

55 Ibid., p. 26.

56 Ibid., p. 22.

57 Ibid.

elements of knowledge that a man occupying so degraded a position might be expected to possess".⁵⁸ The nature and strength of the anti-clerical resentment and frustration that ran just below the surface of the official support the parochial teachers unfailingly gave to their church in its defense of its education system will be further examined below. Here it is only necessary to make the point that the growing hostility towards the ecclesiastical control of and interference in their occupation was not restricted to non-parochial teachers.

Among other types of teachers, especially burgh and town teachers it was more obvious and articulate. Its most forceful and outspoken exponent was William Gunn, a Free Churchman and a master at the Edinburgh High School.⁵⁹ At a meeting of teachers in Edinburgh considering the issue of national education, reported in The Scotsman in January of 1850, Gunn directed a bitter attack at ecclesiastical and denominational control of education, rejecting the churches' claims to a predominant role in this area as "Jesuitism". He went on to challenge the assertion that some special value or quality resulted from the close connection between school and denomination:

Could anyone tell them if there had ever been a body that had exercised a more inefficient and more useless superintendence than the Church legislatively had done in this country? (Hear. hear.) The truth was that it was absurd for any man in this country to stand up and say that the country had gained, or had hitherto

58 Ibid., p. 23.

59 William Gunn (1806-1851) was the Classics Master at the High School and one of the most militant and radical of the mid-century Scottish teachers (See Appendix A: Biographical Notes for further information).

gained, anything by the superintendence of the clergy. (Applause). The system might be in any hands better than in the hands of the clergy... if the Church claimed the right to conduct the education of the young upon the grounds of the benefit conferred by their superintendence there never was a more baseless claim made. (Applause).⁶⁰

When several other speakers remonstrated with Gunn for these remarks, he apologized for causing offence, but defended his own frankness:

He hoped he had said nothing disrespectful to any Churches or any individual; he had not intended to do so; but they as teachers, had a right to express their opinion, and he trusted the days were ahead when the voice of the teacher should be heard openly and manfully giving his opinions on everything connected with his profession.⁶¹

Before the National Education Association in April of the same year, Gunn denounced the denominational system as the best way "to swamp and keep under water the teachers of Scotland":

The very essence of that system was that the teacher should be an appendage of the minister enabling that reverend functionary to say - 'My teacher is so and so', just as he says 'My beadle John'.⁶²

Most teachers did not allow themselves such candour - and for good reason. As a result of his outspoken views, Gunn's appointment as a government inspector for the Free Church schools was vetoed by Candlish.⁶³ Nonetheless, the resentment was there among many teachers

60 Scotsman, 23 January 1850.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., 10 April 1850.

63 In a letter to James Bryce, dated 21 November 1850, Professor Pillans remarked, "you are no doubt aware ere now, that Cardinal Candlish has annulled Gunn's appointment and stultified the Council of Education" Bryce Papers, Box FA 1. A correspondent to The Scotsman described Candlish's action as "absolute persecution" (see three letters under the title, "Dr. Candlish and Dr. Gunn", 23 November, 27 November and 7 December 1850).

and it shows up in private correspondence or anonymous publication. Schmitz complained bitterly that "the priests hold their invisible sway over thousands who would be indignant, if you were to tell them so".⁶⁴ He attributed his defeat by one vote in favour of a clergyman for the headship of Dulwich College, England, in 1858, to the fact that "the prejudice in favour of priests was too strong". He lamented to Combe, "Is it not a grievous thing that all the higher education is in the hands of the clergy, the persons least fit to train and develop free mental powers".⁶⁵ From time to time this kind of frustration even showed through the usually uncontroversial articles of the Scottish Educational and Literary Journal. In 1854, a writer blamed the grievances of the teachers on their own "supineness". Would doctors or lawyers stand for the treatment teachers received he asked? No M.P. "cares a straw for what the teachers think and only ask themselves, when considering an educational matter, 'What will Dr. Muir say to this? how will Dr. Candlish look at that? how will this go down with Dr. Harper?, or how will that digest with George Combe?'"⁶⁶ Similarly, another writer observed that in

64 National Library of Scotland, Letter from L. Schmitz to George Combe (17 October, 1848), MS 7297.

65 Ibid., Schmitz to Combe, (1 May 1858), MS 7374. Schmitz, who in 1846 expressed his hearty support for Combe's views on national education and declared, "If all men would thus speak out their minds boldly and fearlessly, we should have a different state of things from what we now see around us". (12 December 1846), nevertheless declined to publicly support William's Secular School, when Combe asked him to do so in April 1850. Many persons, he wrote to Combe, would interpret such support "as an open declaration of my religious faith" and this would damage "The little influence I have in promoting liberal views on matters of education". (29 April 1850).

66 "A Colloquy on Various Points", SELJ (June 1854), p. 400. The inclusion of Combe in the list was, I suspect, a tactic designed to protect the author from charges of fanatic anti-clericalism.

education it "is not the community, so much as the clergy of various denominations, that our legislators try to satisfy..."⁶⁷ It would be a great improvement, he thought, if educational issues were to be considered independently of this close ecclesiastical link, and, he continued: "The best means of rendering the school thus free and distinct is to separate it from the church and to place the schoolmaster in a position of equality, with the clergyman, not of subordination to him".⁶⁸ Yet another writer agreed and cast unflattering aspersions on the motives of the clergy:

What the profession requires is emancipation - emancipation at once from internal jealousy, and from external domination and interference,,. The school has too long been under bondage to all and sundry influences - educational to ecclesiastical polity; the schoolmaster to the clergy in particular...We are ever at a loss, indeed, to know why the clergy have ever been so anxious to overburden themselves by interfering with its conduct; unless, indeed, we trace it to the tendency of the priesthood, in all ages, and under all religions, unduly to avail themselves of every means of extending its power.⁶⁹

A few ministers of the time were willing to withdraw from their traditional role of educational supervisors. Speaking at the 1854 meeting of the National Educational Association in Edinburgh, one clergyman noted that many of his brethren had participated in the proceedings and interpreted their support for a national non-sectarian education system, "as a kind of solemn renunciation or abdication of all claim, title or pretence to make this a clerical question or to arrogate any peculiar dictation in regard to any prospectus or

67 A Teacher, "The Two Education Bills", SELJ (May 1855), p. 195.

68 Ibid., p. 196.

69 QV., "The Profession; Its Position and Prospects", SELJ (Feb. 1855), p. 106.

particular scheme, other than belongs to every citizen of the great Scottish community".⁷⁰ Such a view was, however, distinctly a minority one and the teachers' increasing resentment, through the 1840s and 1850s, of clerical control was not alleviated by the attempts of various denominational spokesmen to defend and justify that control. For, however well-intentioned or traditionally beneficial, ecclesiastical control was undoubtedly paternalistic. Church of Scotland officials, contending both with the discontent of their own teachers and with external attacks on their school system, offered some illustrative examples of a condescending attitude and tone which must have been galling to teachers concerned with growing beyond the 'adolescent' stage of their occupation. In 1854, John Cook described the nature and benefits of Church's supervision this way:

From the long subsistence of the connection between them, the Parochial Teachers are well aware of what is required from them in the discharge of the duties of their office, and which the Church, as the superintending power, is bound to enforce; and the long experience of the temperate exercise of that power disposes them cheerfully and readily to conform themselves to the rules, which, for their guidance in the conduct of the religious education of the young, have been laid down.⁷¹

The conviction that one essential factor in the elevation of the status of the teacher was a greater independence from ecclesiastical superintendence gained strength with mid-century educational observers as well as with the teachers themselves. Hugh Miller declared that "there can be no harm if the teacher^s_^ of the country

70 N.E.A., Report of Public Meeting, 1854, p. 86.

71 Rev. J. Cook, A Letter to an M.P. on the Parochial Schools of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1854), p. 5.

as a class, and of the Free Church in particular, occupied more independent positions. Their characters, not less than their general circumstances demand that they be freed from the iron collar of subjection and subserviency".⁷² Professor J.S. Blackie, while he felt that the chief obstacle to the development of an influential and independent group of teachers lay more in themselves than in any external resistance, acknowledged that they had been "for a long time either confounded for the churchman or kept in too humiliating a position to attract public notice...".⁷³ It was difficult, he felt, for teachers to exert their independence because they "have been for so long accustomed to a slavish dependence on other powers".⁷⁴ Proponents of a reformed national education system more and more included as a great advantage the new influence and status of the occupation of teaching, which would thus result:

Among the advantages of such a scheme as we have sketched, one of much importance is, that it would tend to elevate teachers to the rank of an independent profession, and give them a sense of liberty and responsibility, which would tell with much advantage on their work. No intellectual profession can survive as a pendicle to a profession of a different sort. The animosities often prevailing between the minister and schoolmaster would be lessened if the latter were independent. Our belief is, that on the whole the teacher would become a much more valuable coadjutor to the minister, and that the two would cooperate far more pleasantly than they do.⁷⁵

72 Miller, Thoughts on the Educational Question, p. 91.

73 Blackie, Nineteenth Century and Scottish University Education, p. 19.

74 Ibid., p. 20.

75 [Russell], "Education Question", p. 268. Lord Brougham in his presidential address to the Social Science Association in 1861, advised the conference to thoroughly examine the

Perhaps the most convincing example of the weight of church control of education and the teachers and of the necessity of altering the situation to make the teachers more independent is the sober, eloquent appeal of Simon S. Laurie on the subject. Laurie's view is especially significant because of his peculiar position: closely connected with education, though neither a clergyman nor a teacher;⁷⁶ and an official of the established church, loyal to it, but with a deep concern for the basic strength of the Scottish educational tradition. In his pamphlet of 1856, he wrote:

From this period, [mid-nineteenth century] the Church and the school must be regarded as co-operative and parallel institutions, both working (the former, perhaps, with too partial and one-sided an action) under the same laws and towards the same noble ends. The teacher, yielding to no man in the source of his inspiration, in the dignity of his vocation, and in the humanizing charity of his life, can henceforth acknowledge no superior save his fellow-citizens associated in the same corporate form.⁷⁷

He then went on to note the misapprehensions which the notion of an independent teaching profession commonly raised and to urge that

"whole subject of the teacher's position and qualifications... especially with the view of raising in the public estimation that most important class". The teachers, Brougham believed, "form a fourth learned profession, not necessarily connected with the other three - not even with the clerical body, though of course more with them than with the others". Transactions, S.S.A., 1861, p. 18.

76 As a young man Laurie had been a tutor to a well-to-do family in Ireland and, later, to one in England, but he never taught a school-class.

77 Layman, Present Aspects of Scottish Education Question, p. 22.

the highest ideals must be employed in the training, rewards, and responsibilities of "the class of men who are to work this most delicate part of our social machinery".⁷⁸ He warned that education could never attain its proper function or quality by depriving the teacher of "his freedom as an independent servant of the public, and converting him into a mere tool of denominations".⁷⁹ Finally, Laurie emphasized the crucial connection between freeing and elevating the teacher and realizing the full potential of the Scottish national educational tradition:

We have not yet such men, it is true, as we have been assuming the popular teacher to be, though the elements of many such; but we may have them, and shall make a great step towards the achievement of our object, if, in addition to augmenting the rewards and multiplying the prizes of the profession, we liberate it from subjection to a class. The school has gradually attained the character of being a national not an ecclesiastical institution, and we would now claim for it what has yet been only very partially conceded, total exemption from all save 'civil' control. The school is broader than the Church. Through the elevation of the teacher can it alone be placed in its true position.⁸⁰

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

Chapter 4

Scottish Education at Mid-century

I

The emergence in Scotland in the late 1840's of a national teachers' organization markedly different in conception, attitudes and aims from anything that had gone before, can only be understood if the several important factors which combined to form the context for this development are examined. This emergence was related, first of all, to the larger social and political tendencies of the period in Britain as a whole. One of the most fundamental and striking of these tendencies was the remarkable administrative growth and interventionist thrust of the central government during the decades following the Reform Bill of 1832. As part of this general movement, the government made various attempts to deal with mass education, attempts which profoundly affected school teachers. Another important factor was the relationship of the Scottish educational tradition to changing conditions within Scotland and to English educational controversies and reform. It is valuable, first of all, to critically examine the concept of a 'tradition of Scottish education'. One can then consider the role of that tradition, both in the debate concerning possible approaches to Scottish educational problems in the nineteenth century and in relation to the educational policies and regulations formulated by an English oriented and dominated government. These policies and regulations, though usually formulated directly in response to the peculiar difficulties of the English situation, were applied to Scotland with little or no regard for the often subtle, but nonetheless important,

differences. These factors - the growth of British government and administration, the role of the Scottish tradition in the educational controversies of the period, and the tension between Scottish educational custom and English educational policy - all significantly affected the course of Scottish education and the situation of Scottish teachers.

As David Roberts so convincingly demonstrates in his Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State, educational development during this period must be studied as part of a more generalized reform effort to grapple with the most critical and glaring social problems of the times. "Very few in the two decades after 1833", Roberts writes, "embraced wholeheartedly a centralized paternalistic state, one that would regulate labour, clean towns, educate the poor, control the Church, commute tithes, supervise asylums and manage lighthouses. And yet from 1833 to 1854 Parliament created such a state".¹ That this creation was a haphazard construction often contradictory and confused in action, and that many of the reforms instituted were diffuse and shallow must be emphasized,² and is

1 D. Roberts, Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State (New Haven, 1950), p. 100.

2 In 1877 in a review of a book on English education by a German professor, Matthew Arnold agreed with the authors' observation that the result of the English prejudice against bureaucracy was that, whenever government machinery was set up to deal with some problem or other, the worst aspects of bureaucracy were inevitably incorporated into it because it was ill-designed and understaffed and only partially empowered to perform its duties. Arnold concluded that the central problem was to convince 'the great English middle class of an unpalatable truth: that what they achieve by their boasted repudiation of State interference is simply...to maintain the aristocratic class in its preponderance and the middle class, their own class, in its vulgarity', 'German Letters on English Education' in F. Neuman (ed.), Essays, Letters and Reviews by Matthew Arnold, p. 210.

amply acknowledged by Roberts elsewhere. Nonetheless a new governmental structure and direction was established.

It is symbolic of the intimate association of educational reform with wider social reform issues, that the most important and effective educational figure of the period, James Kay Shuttleworth, was a medical doctor who became concerned with education through his involvement with the problems of epidemic diseases in the cities and towns of England and Scotland. No other single issue in fact aroused such widespread indignation and zeal for reform amongst those concerned with urban health, housing and sanitation, and working conditions in factories and mines, as the plight of the swarms of neglected and exploited children of the urban proletariat. Almost all the great reform figures of the time, whatever their special interest, gave considerable thought to possible educational solutions for this problem.

It should be noted, however, that few of the leading reformers of the day made connections between the various strands of reform interest, to produce a comprehensive radical analysis of the period and its problems. That is to say that, although they attacked specific abuses (eg: bad health conditions or child labour), and those often led them to confront other related social problems (eg: masses of uneducated children), they did not put these various themes into a coherent pattern or suggest more fundamental reforms (eg: public housing or income redistribution). In the contemporary mid-century Scottish literature I came across only one article that suggested that isolated reform activities were futile unless linked in a concerted program. The article, "State of Scottish Towns", was written by an anonymous author and published in the North

British Review in May 1847.³ It is of particular interest because it tries to put education in a wider social setting than was customary. The author sets out to challenge the traditional Scottish smugness about their educational superiority over the English, by contending that living conditions were much worse in Scottish towns than in their English counterparts. "Whatever, therefore, be the superiority of our working population in the education of letters", he declared, "we must not shut our eyes to the deplorable fact that this education of letters has been wholly unable to prevent the masses in the towns from sinking into a physical state in house and person, which to an Englishman...were unbearable".⁴ The mistake was to imagine that "school training is to counteract the training of homes and neighbourhood that are strangers to decency and comfort".⁵ He criticized the educational reformers who apparently imagined that it was only necessary to "count the proportions at school, or to enumerate the readers and writers and arithmeticians, to know the measure of the well being of the people...".⁶ Other environmental pressures were simply too powerful to be overcome by such superficialities. "Bury the proudest and most notable housewife that a Scottish town contains in a vennel or close and notions of cleanliness and decency rapidly deteriorate".⁷

3 "State of Scottish Towns", NBR.

4 Ibid., p. 31.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 32.

7 Ibid.

Until the "dense and dark and cluttered" tenements that bred filth and disease were cleared and replaced by decent dwellings the promotion of general educational measures would be useless. The author concluded by arguing that the expense of a great national housing effort would quickly be repaid by the decreases in epidemics and immorality and that such a reform would provide common ground for cooperative effort by all the denominations presently squabbling over the education question. Such perception about the force and influence of social environment, was rare indeed. Even for the most sincere and dedicated social reformers, such considerations were usually quite outside their frame of reference. And, in any case, there was sufficient objection to the limited reforms they did propose to make more comprehensive or radical measures seem even more likely to fail.

Opposition to effective reform of any kind, that is, to the establishment and implementation of government machinery and procedures to deal with a whole range of social problems, was various in its origins and motivation, vociferous and well organized in its objections, and extremely powerful. On no other issue, however, was the opposition more sensitive and strong or the solution more difficult of formulation or realization, than on the subject of education. Educational reform raised 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 and with it, controlling political power, lie - with the insatiable central government, the corrupt, impotent municipal

corporations, or the conservative, parsimonious country landlords? It was this combination of controversies that made the education situation almost impenetrably complex and, as Samuel Whitbread in 1807, Henry Brougham in the 1820's, and J.C. Colquhoun in 1834 discovered, impossible of sweeping or radical reform.⁸

By the late 1830's, it became apparent in England that any suggested proposals which attempted to basically alter the ecclesiastical management of the schools were doomed to failure. In order to accomplish anything, therefore, it was necessary for the government to avoid tampering directly with the control of the system and to attempt to support, expand and improve the schools in other ways. In 1833 the government initiated its first interventionist effort in education by granting funds through the Privy Council for the initial construction of schools. Although the amount was negligible, the precedent was vital. The opportunity was provided to gather educational information and statistics, in order to award grants wisely and to offer information and even advice on matters of design and procedure to the schools' managers.

In 1838 and 1839 the Whig government of Lord John Russell attempted, with partial success, to further expand the government's role in education. The immediate impetus came from the evidence

8 See Whitbread's Parochial Schools Bill (Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, IX (1807), pp. 796, 853, 1049, 1174); Brougham's proposed legislation in 1820 (New Series Parliamentary Debates, I (1820), pp. 39, 1319; II (1820), pp. 49-91, 365) and his speech on the subject in 1833 (3 Hansard, XVI (1833), p. 632), discussed below, and Colquhoun's proposal for a Parliamentary grant of £ 60,000 to Scottish education in 1834 (3 Hansard, XXIV (1834), pp. 514-519). Whitbread's bill was hoisted by the Lords, and both Brougham and Colquhoun withdrew their motions.

presented to a Select Committee of the Commons in 1837 and 1838. This evidence simply reiterated, with greater precision and volume, the same picture of national educational destitution as Lord Brougham's committees had drawn in the early 1820's. One of the most persuasive of the witnesses appearing before that Select Committee was James Kay-Shuttleworth and it was he, with the co-operation of the Prime Minister and Lord Lansdowne, President of the Privy Council, who drew up the ensuing government proposals.

First of all, in 1838, the government, by Order-in-Council, established a Committee of Education of the Privy Council and appointed Kay-Shuttleworth as its first secretary.⁹ This method of establishing what was in fact a puny department of education was adopted of necessity, because it was extremely unlikely that any legislative proposal effecting the same thing would be successful. As it was, the government was severely criticized for employing this stratagem, and fears were expressed, by the opponents of state intervention in education, that this was the first step towards the construction of a colossal and autocratic bureaucracy. They bitterly attacked the recommendations of the Committee. These were threefold: first, the establishment of a government-run teacher-training school; second, the extension of construction grants to include schools run by dissenting denominations as well as by the Church of England; third, the imposition of government inspection of the secular instruction in all schools accepting government grants. The storm of protest which greeted these

9 See Letter from Lord John Russell to Lord Lansdowne (Feb. 4, 1839) in J.S. Maclure, Educational Documents: England and Wales, 1816-1913 (London, 1965), pp. 42-45.

proposals was sufficient to force the government to drop the teacher-training scheme, but it held firm on the recommendations for wider grants and government inspection.¹⁰ Although Roberts notes that its opponents greatly exaggerated the powers of the Committee of Council on Education, which was "answerable to Parliament for every penny spent and every order given",¹¹ he concludes that they were fundamentally correct in their assessment of its long-term significance. "Meagre as was this initial measure, the State now had assumed a responsibility for educating the people and had added another department to its expanding central administration, a department which would be fertile in new schemes".¹²

The Committee on Education had two important advantages over most of the other new administrative agencies the government established during this period; the power to withhold or award grants and the leadership of an extremely skilful and dedicated Secretary. The financial power was fundamental because it gave the inspector's opinion "-formerly a naked voice'...certain golden arguments very potent in their persuasiveness".¹³ Even armed with this basic weapon, however, it is doubtful that the Privy Council's Committee could have survived its difficult early years without a man of James Kay Shuttleworth's subtlety and energy. The secretary appointed inspectors who were both acceptable to the

10 Roberts, Victorian Origins, p. 58.

11 Ibid., p. 57.

12 Ibid., p. 59.

13 [James Moncrieff] "Progress of Popular Education in Great Britain" NBR (February, 1852), p. 288.

denominations managing the schools and sufficiently independent-minded to examine the schools critically and report their findings forcefully. Having selected men with personal backgrounds of learning and scholarship,¹⁴ Kay Shuttleworth left his inspectors free to operate in their own styles and with their own preferences. His overriding directive to them was that they must tread lightly with the school managers at all times, support and encourage the teachers wherever possible, and generally clothe the steel of the Committee's grant power in the velvet of positive diplomacy. All the evidence indicates that this approach was highly successful; the inspectors quickly gained the respect and trust of the local managers and teachers of the schools they inspected.

14 Roberts analyses the family backgrounds of 140 education inspectors through the period and concludes that most came from the "upper ranks of the middle class" and that none of them came from the "proletariat". Victorian Origins, p.152. Sixty-three of the 140 had university educations, 47 of them at Oxbridge, and were, across the board, better educated than the other groups of government inspectors. There was a noticeable difference between the Scottish inspectors and the English; the Scottish were from the outset drawn almost entirely from the ranks of the teachers, whereas, as Bone puts it, in England, "it was thought that there were no teachers of sufficient social standing to mix with the managers and the clergy". Scottish Inspectorate, p. 40. Though this reflects the relatively higher social status of the teacher in Scotland, it also had its disadvantages. Commenting on the fact that the Scottish inspectors failed to object to the Revised Code as strenuously as did the English, Bone writes: "Possibly most of the Scottish inspectors failed to see those dangers or thought them less important than the benefits of the new system. But it is equally possible that they did not feel sufficiently independent to criticize boldly; perhaps the English inspectors, with the powerful church connections and the friendship with M.P.s that many of them enjoyed, could feel more free to criticize than those who had once been teachers, at the top of their profession perhaps, but still not very well paid. Perhaps an Education Department which wishes its inspectors to be loyal is right to choose teachers, especially young, ill-paid teachers; men like Matthew Arnold were much less dependable". Ibid., p. 81.

Moreover, Kay Shuttleworth encouraged the inspectors to report in great detail on the schools they visited and to speculate on general pedagogic and educational problems at length. These reports were published as annual reports to Parliament and were available for public sale. They achieved a limited but important circulation among MP's, public men, the clergy, and all those connected with schools, and were reviewed and commented upon by the periodical and public press. Thus was created by the Committee on Education a much better informed public concern about educational questions and a basis for further government involvement in education.

As noted above, the experience of educational reformers in England in the 1820's and 1830's demonstrated that root and branch reform of the educational arrangements of that country was impossible to achieve and that somehow other measures would have to be employed, measures which, on the surface at least, would not disturb the overall denominational control and management of the schools. The 1839 proposals had aimed at affecting two aspects of the problem - the buildings and the teachers. In its proposal to increase its role in granting aid towards the construction of schools the government was successful. Moreover it also had managed to incorporate in this measure, the eminently respectable utilitarian principle that the government had a right to know how its money was spent, even if other bodies spent it, by setting up an inspectorial system. In the long run, of course, the inspection principle was deeply subversive of the traditional management of the schools.

In its other proposal - to begin to alter the quality and quantity of education by improving the qualifications of teachers through a system of training - the government had failed. Nevertheless

despite the fact that the main work of the Committee on Education was concerned with the erection and maintenance¹⁵ of school buildings, its secretary continued to explore ways in which the teacher's quality could be improved and his numbers increased. For one thing, the work of the inspectors brought the government for the first time into direct contact with the teachers. For the most part this had a liberating and beneficial effect on the teachers during the 1840's at least.¹⁶ Though his proposal to establish a government training establishment had been blocked, Kay Shuttleworth made strenuous private efforts to promote the development of teacher-training,¹⁷ and returned to this theme officially in the Committee's Minutes of 1846.

15 In 1843 the grants were extended to include school apparatus as well as buildings.

16 Because of the quality of the inspectors and the policy of the Committee, the effect of their visits was to begin to break down the traditional isolation of the teachers and to relieve them partially of the sole supervision and restrictions of their particular schools' managers. The policies and appointments which later made the inspectorial stereotype a bureaucratic martinet were not initiated until the Revised Code era in the 1860's and did not reach full flower until after the national education legislation in the 1870's. There is ample evidence that the teachers held most of the inspectors of this early period in high esteem. Matthew Arnold replying to a presentation by 250 teachers of a silver claret jug to mark his retirement in 1886 declared, "To the Government I owe nothing... (except) to have been allowed to survive for thirty-five years", attributed the cordial relations he had always had with the teachers to the fact that "I have been fair and I have been sympathetic", and urged the Elementary Teachers Union to "Insist on having a Minister for Education". His speech which was printed in the Times and the Pall Mall Gazette in November 1886 is in F. Neuman (ed.), Essays, Letters and Reviews, p. 305.

17 Kay Shuttleworth, along with another government official, E.C. Tufnell, personally financed the first training college for teachers at Battersea in 1839. At the outset Kay Shuttleworth lived at Battersea and supervised the school. In a number of ways his ideas about teacher education were influenced by the Scot, David Stow.

The Minutes of the Committee on Education issued in December 1846, were a further attempt to improve educational arrangements by exerting a direct influence on the quantity and the quality of the teachers. In effect it was a more extensive and detailed version of the same plan the government had been forced to withdraw seven years before. In an anonymous pamphlet, The School in its Relation to the State, the Church and the Congregation published in 1847,¹⁸ Kay Shuttleworth described and defended the record of the governments' role in education, outlined the reasons behind the new regulations, and vigorously attacked the Committee's critics. This pamphlet merits review in some detail.

A number of arguments are used by Kay Shuttleworth to justify the government's intervention in education. On the one hand, he accuses opponents of government action of class bias. "It is characteristic of such controversies", he writes, "that the interests of the common people are sacrificed to those of the middle classes: the well-being of the State is postponed to promote the triumph of a party".¹⁹ On the other hand, he appeals directly to this same middle class bias by warning against "a class of evils

18 [Kay Shuttleworth], The School in its Relations to the State, the Church, and the Congregation: being an explanation of the Minutes of August and December, 1846 (London 1847). Its authorship must have been widely known. Moncrieff in his North British Review article of 1852 refers to it as the "semi-official pamphlet of 1847", p. 288.

19 Ibid., p. 15.

which arise from ignorance", evils like trade unionism.²⁰ After mentioning a number of other such errors of ignorance among the working masses, the author concludes:

Those who pretend that public liberty is endangered by the rewards which the Government desires to give to efficient schoolmasters and their assistants (representing it as an invasion of an army of Government stipendiaries) appear to forget how many thousand troops of the line are employed to protect the institutions of the country...and how vast is the outlay which sustains the indigence of orphanage and bastardy, of improvident youth, sensual maturity and premature age.²¹

20 *Ibid.*, p. 17. An appendix describes the Preston spinners' strike in detail, emphasizing the influence of "agitators" and the loss of production value of over £ 100,000. Roberts describes Kay-Shuttleworth as "a Victorian liberal, advanced in his opinions, enlightened in his views, yet prudent and orthodox". Victorian Origins, p. 149. His biographer, Frank Smith, quoted from one of his pamphlets in which Kay Shuttleworth defines the tasks of the schools and the teachers thus: "...to rear the population in obedience and to fit them to strengthen the institutions of the country by their domestic virtues, their sobriety, their industry and forethought". The Life and Work of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth (London, 1923), p. 87.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 19. In another appendix Kay Shuttleworth estimates the total social cost of all this as something over two million pounds annually. Critics of the government's role in education did not hesitate to paint lurid pictures of the horrific consequences of school inspectors and educational legislation. The most prominent, Edward Baines Junior, launched this attack on the Privy Council's Committee on Education in 1856: "The agency of Government functionaries! - a vast educational police! - a host of prowling Inspectors, thrusting their noses not only into every school, but into every workshop, of the kingdom! - a system of penalties, under which every employer of labour will be liable to be fined by the Magistrate if he does not provide to pay for the education of every boy and girl in his employment until fifteen years of age! Will Englishmen submit to this odious despotism, brought by Lord John Russell from Russia and Austria...". E. Baines, National Education: Remarks on the Speech and Plan of Lord John Russell (London, 1856), p. 20.

Similarly, though he praises the principle established in 1839 (i.e., "the right and duty of the legislature to promote the extension and improvement of education, and the interest of Parliament and the public in the condition of every school aided by the Government") and the ensuing record of the government,²² nonetheless he emphasized the minimal effect this had had so far. Clearly much more is needed. The fundamental argument of the pamphlet is contained in a lengthy and eloquent section in which Kay Shuttleworth describes the low state of English elementary education in the 1840's, and attributes the main cause of the deficiency to the fact that "the master of an elementary school is commonly in a position which yields him neither honour nor emolument". The result of this in turn is that the typical teacher has "a scanty knowledge even of the humblest rudiments of learning, meagre ideas of the duties of his office, and even less skill in their performance".

There is, in Kay Shuttleworth's view, little to tempt a man of intelligence, talent or energy into teaching. The teacher's income is low and uncertain and leaves him entirely at the mercy of ill health and old age. In order to supplement his income he must seek out a variety of extra employment which exhausts him and further reduces his effectiveness as a teacher. This situation was being made still more obvious and critical by the improvements the government was trying to encourage. In his words:

To entrust the education of the labouring classes of this country to men involved in such straits, is to condemn the poor to ignorance and its fatal train of evils. To build spacious and well-

22 *Ibid.*, p. 34. In some detail he defends the constitution and power of the Committee, the procedures for awarding grants, and the appointment and functions of the inspectorate.

ventilated schools, without attempting to provide a position of honour and emolument for the masters is a cruel illusion. Even the very small number of masters now well-trained in Normal and Model schools, will find no situation in which their emoluments and prospects will be equal to those which their new acquirements and skill might insure, if they should desert the profession of an elementary schoolmaster. While their condition remains without improvement, a religious motive alone could induce the young men who are now trained in Normal schools, to sacrifice all prospects of personal advancement for the self-denying and arduous duties of a teacher of the children of the poor. Unless, therefore, concurrently with the arrangements made for training masters of superior acquirements and skill, efforts be also made to provide them with situations of decent comfort, and the prospect of a suitable provision for sickness and old age, they will be driven by necessity, or attracted by superior advantages, to commercial pursuits.²³

It was this basic problem of financial support for both prospective and practicing teachers, which the Privy Council's Minutes of 1846 were designed to attack. In August 1846 the Committee had expressed concern at the "very early age at which children acting as assistants to schoolmasters are withdrawn from the schools to manual labour", and had announced its intention to devise a scheme which would ensure that "such scholars as might be distinguished by proficiency and good conduct were apprenticed to skilful masters to be instructed and trained, so as to complete their education as schoolmasters in a Normal School".²⁴ This scheme, the details of which were announced in December, was a brilliant device to accomplish Kay Shuttleworth's basic objective, that is, to provide financial support and moral encouragement by the government in the

23 Ibid., p. 37.

24 Committee of Council on Education, Minutes of August and December, 1846 (London, 1847), p. 3.

day-to-day functioning of mass education. Having initially involved the government in the construction and equipping of new schools, and the oversight of their instruction in 1839, the Committee sought to extend the government's role greatly by addressing itself to a number of problems all connected with teaching. Again, no direct or sweeping interference was undertaken regarding the management of these schools, though the Minutes were a further erosion of the power of this management.

The major proposal concerned the supply and training of teachers. Two apprentice programs were set out: a five-year course of study for "Pupil Teachers" and a four-year course for "Stipendary Monitors".²⁵ If a school and its master met certain standards laid down by the government, it was eligible for one of these two schemes. At about age 13 a youth could become a pupil-teacher. Besides assisting the schoolmaster in the running and instruction of the school, the pupil-teacher was to receive instruction from the master, following a detailed government curriculum. At the end of each year the pupil-teacher would be examined by the inspector. If successful in his duties and his studies, the pupil-teacher would receive a government grant, increasing in value each year.²⁶ For his cooperation and effort, the master also was to receive a government grant per pupil-teacher.²⁷

25 The latter was simply a less rigorous version of the former, designed for rural schools in England.

26 The value of each grant was: year 1, £ 10; year 2, £ 12/10; year 3, £ 15; year 4, £ 17/10; year 5, £ 20.

27 To prevent exploitation, a ratio of 1 pupil-teacher to 25 pupils was set. A schoolmaster might have several pupil-teachers at once depending on the size of the school. The grants were: £5 for one pupil-teacher; £ 9 for two; £ 12 for 3.

At the end of five years then, a young man or woman of about 18 years of age would have acquired a good deal of practical teaching experience as well as an extended education. To complete the process and produce a fully capable, well-trained teacher, it was proposed that the successful pupil-teachers should sit a competitive exam for "Queen's Scholarships" worth £ 20-25, to enable them to proceed to Normal School. The Normal Schools in turn would receive an annual government grant for every student successfully trained.²⁸ Teachers who had successfully completed one, two, or three years of Normal School would be eligible for government grants of up to £ 20, £ 25, or £ 30. A fundamentally important condition, however, was that in order for their teacher to be eligible for these grants, the managers of a school had to supply him with a rent-free house and "a further salary, equal at least to twice the amount of this grant".²⁹

The intention throughout these Minutes was to exert the maximum possible government influence in the promotion of education, short of a full-scale reorganization of the existing systems. Each specific proposal was part of a broader plan, the total import of which was a massive and unprecedented infusion of government money and influence in mass education. For the first time formal provision and financial support was available to prospective English schoolmasters or mistresses³⁰ throughout the 'secondary' and Normal School stages of their education. For example, a young man who completed

28 The Normal School would receive £ 20 for the first year, £ 25 for the second, and £ 30 for the third.

29 Ibid., p. 8.

30 Women were eligible for grants at two thirds the men's rates.

his pupil-teacher apprenticeship and won a Queen's scholarship, might receive a maximum of £ 100 from the government during the course of this program. If he completed a three year Normal School course he would be eligible for an annual government grant of £ 30. If he in turn instructed one or more pupil-teachers, a grant for each would be added to his income.

Strong indirect pressure was directed towards the managers of the schools. Already government financial inducements were available if local school managers could raise certain sums for construction and equipment. In the Minutes of 1846, more inducements were added. The pupil-teacher scheme was only possible where local managers met certain government standards in terms of school buildings, qualified masters and good inspectoral reports, and the annual government grants to Normal School graduates were only available when the managers provided housing and adequate salary. It was, however, on precisely this ground that the fundamental weakness of Kay Shuttleworth's admirably conceived plan lay. Its foundation was the principle, so cherished by Victorian society, that government support and assistance should always supplement and never supplant local initiative and action. The invariable practical result of this principle was that the localities most desperately in need of government support and assistance were least capable of demonstrating the necessary initiative and action. In effect the poorer areas and more educationally passive religious bodies were discriminated against in contrast with more prosperous communities and the Church of England's active denominational school society. As one sympathetic critic put it, the Minutes of 1846, "leaves in the cold shade those places which are really too

poor to purchase its aid, or in which what wealth there is is in unfriendly, or careless, or niggard hands".³¹ This basic dilemma arose primarily from the prevailing attitudes of the times and the unrelenting determination of the denominations to maintain their control of education. In any case, Kay Shuttleworth stoutly denied that the Minutes favoured any particular denomination. If the Dissenters were unable or unwilling to accept the grants, he insisted, it was a "self-inflicted privation, by no means inherent in the measure".³²

As for the teachers, if the Minutes of 1839 had brought them much closer to the government, the Minutes of 1846 made this new relationship intimate. The teacher was now offered new opportunities, subjected to new strains and pressures, and placed between two separate and not always harmonious controlling bodies; the government and the local managers, the inspector and the clergyman. Ideally, the fully-trained and qualified teacher would now teach in a well-constructed and equipped schoolhouse and would enjoy a basic income of £ 90 per annum, 2/3 provided by the managers and 1/3 by the government. His house would be provided rent-free and he might well add £ 10 or £ 15 to his annual income by instructing pupil-teachers. This ideal, was for the great majority of teachers, however, a very long way off and in the struggle to achieve it the

31 [Moncrieff], "Progress of Popular Education", p. 295.

32 [Kay Shuttleworth], The School, State, Church and Congregation, p. 81. Bone notes the changed role of the inspectors under the new regulations: "Up to this time they had been reporting on the deficiencies of the schools, and endeavouring to disseminate new ideas, but now they became the agents of a Government which was offering aid towards improvement, and their main task was to see that as many schools took proper advantage of that aid as possible". Bone, Scottish Inspectorate, p. 35.

teacher found himself in the late 1840's and early 1850's in a fundamentally different position and atmosphere than before.

II

In their arrangements of 1833, 1839 and 1846, the government's and Kay Shuttleworth's primary concern was the English educational situation. This was entirely understandable. Politically, England was the foundation of any government's support; socially, the hordes of poor and uneducated children were most numerous and evident in the great English manufacturing districts; and, ecclesiastically, England was a battleground for the forces of establishment and dissent. Nevertheless, the grants, inspection, teacher-training schemes, and regulations formulated in the English context were applied to Scotland. Was the Scottish educational situation sufficiently different from the English to make this an important consideration? Considerable reference already has been made to something called a Scottish 'tradition of education' and, certainly, many have thought that such a tradition was both real and important. Consider, for example, the illustrative exchange on the subject of Scottish education which took place in the House of Commons in 1807.³³ Samuel Whitbread had introduced a bill to establish a parochial system of education in England, giving magistrates power to levy local rates for its support, and had included a laudatory reference to Scottish education in its preamble. Whitbread felt strongly that the industry and stability which Scottish society reputedly enjoyed was due in no small measure to its educational system.

33 Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, IX (1807), p. 1052.

Exception was taken to this praise of Scottish morality by one M.P. on the grounds that the Scottish educational experience was irrelevant to the English context, because "the character of the Scotch contributed more to obtain reading and writing, than reading and writing ~~form~~ the character of the Scotch".³⁴ Another, perhaps with a glance at the Scotsmen in the House who represented English constituencies,³⁵ offer another objection:

The Scotch are a people that do not appear to be educated for remaining at home, they being in general inclined to move beyond their country. Their education would render them totally discontented, if they did not travel into other countries.³⁶

Nevertheless, an amendment to delete the Scottish reference from the preamble was defeated.

What is significant here is that all the comments in the 1807 debate seemed to agree on the assumption that Scottish education was in some way better than English education. This assumption was shared by most Scots. They felt that Scotland, traditionally, had demonstrated a concern for education not displayed elsewhere, certainly not south of the Border.

Like all traditions, the Scottish educational tradition was based partly on reality and partly on romance. The problem in assessing its integrity and vitality is to separate sober fact from fanciful

34 Ibid.

35 G.P. Judd, Members of Parliament, 1734-1832 (New Haven, 1955), Although there were only 45 seats allotted to Scotland in the unreformed House of Commons, the average number of Scottish MP's during this period was 65. During the same period a total of only 13 Englishmen held Scottish seats. "The appearance of the Scots in increasing numbers aggravated the traditional resentment which the English bore them". (p. 13.)

36 Cobbett, p. 1053.

exaggeration.³⁷ Several factors seem to me to have comprised the reality of the Scottish tradition. These combined to develop in Scotland, prior to the nineteenth century, a national consensus in favour of some form of education for all citizens. This was partly due to the fact that the presbyterian reformers had seen education as an integral part of their program from the outset, though their ideals were never fully realized. This attitude, in a society where ecclesiastical affairs played so central a role, made an important contribution to the creation of, what one observer rather extravagantly called, the "universal appreciation of the vast imperative of education".³⁸

Another important contributing factor to this tradition was that responsibility for the provision of educational facilities in Scotland was laid on public authorities, both national and local, as well as on parents, churches and philanthropic impulse. As the Lord Advocate, James Moncrieff, put it in 1854, the Scottish school system was "founded on the premise that the State has a duty to discharge in educating her citizens, and is bound to make provision for this object which shall not be dependent on merely voluntary efforts".³⁹ It should be noted particularly that the principle that local landowners should be taxed for the support of the school

37 This is not to say that a tradition may not have an important symbolic reality, even if not quite warranted by a close examination of cold fact. The advantages and disadvantages of the Scottish educational tradition, in this sense, are discussed below.

38 Begg, National Education for Scotland, p. 3.

39 Moncrieff, Speech on Education for the People of Scotland, p. 7. For a discussion of the important act of 1696, see above, Chapter 3.

and teacher, early accepted in Scotland, was of fundamental importance. It remained, in England, a crucial contentious issue in the efforts to legislate a national provision for education.⁴⁰

This principle of public responsibility in education was intimately linked with the aspirations of the early ecclesiastical reformers in the creation of a national concern and support for the idea and the structure of education. This was fully recognized by the Established Church, before the 'Ten Years' Conflict' and the 'Disruption' at any rate. In 1833 the Education Committee of the Established Church emphasized this link and its beneficial results, in these terms:

Proceeding from the authority of the State, they [the parochial schools] proclaimed the importance attached to instruction by those who consult for the welfare of the people; and naturally the people respected what they perceived to be so patronized. It was by this legislative interference that honour was secured for education among the people of Scotland, long before they appeared to have tasted of its benefits.⁴¹

It is ironic that, after 1843, this same Church became the most intractable and effective opponent of "legislative interference" in the educational affairs of Scotland.

A third major factor constituting the reality of the Scottish educational tradition was the fact that parish schools, burgh schools and universities actually arose in sufficient number, connection, and similarity of purpose to warrant the term 'national system'. At a period during which few other countries were either very much aware

40 Paul Smith, Disraelian Conservatism and Social Reform (London, 1967), pp. 74, 134.

41 Church of Scotland, Education Committee, Education Statistics, 1833, p. 4.

of or moving towards the concept of national education, Scotland had about 1000 parochial schools, three or four score burgh schools and four universities in operation. This fact was the core of the Scottish educational tradition. R.J. Bryce believed that one essential feature of the system was that the "schools and universities of Scotland form one structure"⁴² and his younger brother James, put the idea similarly some years later: "The schools and Universities form one fabric; and the teachers of rich and poor one class".⁴³

In attempting to describe the state of Scottish education in the first half of the nineteenth century and to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, I have often touched upon aspects of the three factors in the Scottish tradition of education discussed above; the aims of the ecclesiastical reformers, the involvement of the state, and actual school system that emerged. The Bryce brothers' quotations point to another very important strand in that tradition - the relation of the Scottish school system to social class. The social composition of Scottish schools and the role of those schools in terms of social mobility are problems worth detailed examination, because they indicate a significantly different tendency from the English experience. As with the Scottish educational tradition as a whole, this strand was composed of large elements of myth, as well as fact. Most Scotsmen thought of their education system as classless. The parochial and burgh schools it was felt, promoted social mixing and compatibility:

42 R.J. Bryce, Reforming the Educational Institutions of Scotland, p. 5.

43 James Bryce, "Minutes of Council" Transactions, S.S.A., 1861, p. 336.

On its [the parochial school's] benches social distinctions vanished; - class met class in the fervour of equal and honourable competition; - the friendships between rich and poor were formed, which, ripening in future years, genialized the community and made compacter its structure.⁴⁴

In the 1820's, the parochial schoolmaster James Norval, attacked the new Edinburgh Academy on the grounds that it was a betrayal of ~~this~~ feature of the Scottish educational tradition. Its supporters, he charged, were less interested in its reformed curriculum and methods than its social exclusiveness. At the Academy, Norval concluded scornfully, "the rabble will be excluded, and this, of course, will relieve her ladyship from the 'horror of horrors' bare idea of her hopeful lordling being seated on the fag end of a form where the brat of her groom or coachman sits dux".⁴⁵

This image - the sons of the gentry and professional classes sitting shoulder to shoulder with the progeny of chimney sweeps, butchers and labourers - was much favoured in the after dinner speeches of prominentⁿ nineteenth century Scotsmen, but was greatly exaggerated.⁴⁶ The degree of social mixing varied in different

44 Fraser, "Popular Education", p. 265.

45 Schoolmaster, Letters to Parochial Schoolmaster, p. 3.

46 English educational reformers often added to this exaggerated view. Kay Shuttleworth saw as the Scottish system's most "beautiful feature" its social mixture: "Upon its benches the children of every rank in life have met, and have contended for the honours, earned only by the highest natural gifts, or superior moral qualities. Those whom the accidents of rank and fortune have not yet separated ~~have~~ here formed friendships, which have united the laird and the hind through life, by mutual service and protection". Public Education, 1853, p. 335, (underline mine).

regions of the country, according to the social conditions of each region, but generally two groups of Scots may be said not to have attended the parish schools, the aristocracy and wealthy classes and the lower echelons of the rural and urban proletariat. "Vastly better, there is no comparison", replied an English witness to the Brougham Committee in 1816 when asked whether the Scottish lower classes were better educated than the English.⁴⁷ A more balanced view however is offered by the English inspector Frederic Hill:

There can be no doubt that in Scotland the rural population at least is much better educated than the same class in England; though it must be admitted that neither the amount of instruction nor the number of recipients justifies the opinion usually entertained of the subject in this country [England]. As respects the urban population, indeed we doubt whether our northern neighbours are at all in advance of ourselves.⁴⁸

The widest social mixture occurred in the most prosperous rural, small village and town areas. William Knox described the social composition of his school outside Stirling as consisting of the "children of the smaller heritors, farmers, manufacturers, and all the labouring class".⁴⁹ Regarding a similarly prosperous farming region, John Cook maintained that "every respectable hind in East

47 The witness, James Miller, Assistant Secretary to the British and Foreign School Society was mainly concerned with the plight of the English poor and the entire inadequacy of a Sunday School system. Doubtless this helps explain his enthusiasm for the relatively better Scottish situation. Report on the Education of the Lower Orders, 1816, p. 229.

48 Hill, National Education, p. 284.

49 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 222. It should be noted, however, that Knox's parish school only accommodated a very small proportion of the children of the area.

Lothian considers it as much his duty to send his child to school as to give him clothes and food".⁵⁰

In the marginal farming areas and in the Highlands and Islands, as the work of the Church of Scotland's Education Committee vividly demonstrated in the 'thirties and forties', the schools, where they existed, drew on a much narrower social range. The educational deficiency, resulting from the exclusion of the lower end of the social order, as has been noted, was most evident and serious in the cities. Alexander Law provides an early example which tends to reinforce the point Hill made regarding urban education in Scotland. He records the objections of eighteenth century teachers and parents to the introduction, by the Edinburgh Town Council, of a "mean ill-dressed company" into the classrooms of the 'English' schools. The teachers complained that:

Charity schools being set on foot at the same time when theirs [the 'English' schools] were instituted, it was evident that theirs was not intended for the meanest of the people...⁵¹

Despite a great deal of evidence showing that education for lower class Scottish children was becoming more and more inaccessible, especially in the cities, the notion that the schools were entirely open to all classes persisted well into the nineteenth century. Gladstone, for example, in a speech to the Glasgow Mechanics' Institute in October 1848, attributed Scotland's eminence in a wide range of endeavours to the "advantage which consists in every labouring man in Scotland having had the means of sending his

50 Ibid., p. 53.

51 Law, Education in Edinburgh, p. 53.

children to a school where they would receive the benefits and the blessings of education".⁵²

Given the necessary qualifications about the degree of classlessness in Scottish schools, it remains nonetheless true that there was a fairly wide range of social classes in attendance at those schools, particularly at the parochial school level. The parish schools, though not the acme of egalitarianism, were not simply schools for the poor nor for the middle-classes.⁵³ Perhaps, L.J. Saunders' is the best balanced view of the social composition and influence of the parish schools:

The average parish school gave the oncoming generation an early experience of a simplified world which there were few artificial distinctions; it inculcated some universal standards of self-respect' and an appreciation of intellectual and moral effort.⁵⁴

Certainly, in contrast with England, the degree of social egalitarianism of Scottish schools is striking. In a recent book on nineteenth century educational innovators, Stewart and McCann write about Barbara Bodichon's experimental school in these terms:

Portman Hall School further outraged Victorian propriety by mixing together different social classes. Children of middle-class parents

52 Lee, National Education in Scotland, p. 13 (underline mine.)

53 James Cumming, when asked by the Argyll Commission whether he found that "practically...it is only the children of the labouring poor who attend these schools", replied, "Oh no, a great many of different classes attend. That varies in many schools: but in many schools there is a considerable proportion of the children of a higher class". Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 29.

54 Saunders, Scottish Democracy, p. 242 (underline mine). I would emphasize that some fundamental "artificial" distinctions did remain.

sat side by side with boys and girls of neighbouring tradesmen and artisans.⁵⁵

It is difficult to imagine a similar passage in reference to Scottish education, since these were precisely the classes of children - middle-class and upper-working class - who were most likely actually to be sitting 'shoulder-to-shoulder' in a parochial school. In England there seems to have been a considerably greater prejudice against educating the 'lower orders' than in Scotland. Kay-Shuttleworth remarked on the "difference of popular opinion in Scotland on the advantage of education for the child of a poor man, as compared with that sentiment in England ...", and pointed to the high worth placed on education by the Scots as "remarkable proof of the natural influence of a system of national education, in raising the estimate among the poor of the value of mental and moral endowments".⁵⁶ R.J. Bryce in considering the skepticism sometimes raised in Britain about the value of education for the poor, retorted, "Surely no Scotchman asks that question?" The answer to it lay, he thought in the "intellectual character of the Scottish people".⁵⁷

Education which reached a fairly large proportion of the lower classes was essential, of course, if another aspect of the Scottish educational tradition was to be preserved, that of social mobility. It was and still is widely held that the boy of intellectual talent, but humble origins - the 'lad o' pairts' - could

55 W.A.C. Stewart and W.P. McCann, The Educational Innovators, 1750-1880 (London, 1967), p. 311.

56 [Kay Shuttleworth], The School, State, Church and Congregation, p. 53.

57 R.J. Bryce, Reforming the Educational Institutions of Scotland, p. 11.

rise educationally and socially through the Scottish school system. Whereas in England there was "an impassable gulf between the Primary schools and the Universities",⁵⁸ in Scotland, the "glory of the parochial system consists in the provision it makes for leading the poorest man's son to the gates of the university".⁵⁹ By provision for the teaching of higher subjects in the parochial schools and maintenance of burgh schools in the main centres, it was thought that the Scottish education system was an active and beneficial agent of social adjustment and change. Again, the reality of this function was often distorted by the rhetoric surrounding it. For example Thomas Guthrie, looking back on his education in Brechin, emphasized its effect in terms of social mobility:

The result of this cheap and efficient education was that the sons of many poor and humble people pulled their way up to honourable positions in life, and that Brechin had many of its children in the ministry at home and in important offices abroad, while the parents had not their self-respect lowered by owing the superior education of their children to others than themselves.⁶⁰

But Guthrie seriously compromises this assessment by going on to describe the school he and his brother very soon attended, a subscription school, "instituted by a few of the better conditioned families in the town".⁶¹ If, in fact, the social base of the parochial school system was reasonably broad, it narrowed considerably at the stage where the study of the higher subjects or attendance

- 58 William Fraser, The Educational Condition of Scotland: A National Disgrace (Paisley, 1859), p. 8.
- 59 Parochial Schoolmaster, Plea for Parish Schools, p. 14.
- 60 Guthrie, Autobiography, p. 34.
- 61 Ibid., Guthrie was himself the son of a "well- conditioned" merchant who was the town's provost.

at a burgh school occurred. A report of the Argyll Commissioners noted the social, as well as the intellectual elite, at the top of the parish schools:

In those old fashioned parochial schools which we visited we found, not infrequently a class of three or four boys in Latin, two of them perhaps the minister's sons and one of the teachers! About one quarter of the school able to read well, and to write well in copy books, and do a little Arithmetic, but the other three quarters unable to spell, or to do the simplest sums in Arithmetic, and able to read indifferently.⁶²

The social composition of the burgh schools too was narrower than was generally believed. Lyon Playfair, for example, maintained that the "peculiar merit of the Scotch national system", from the sixteenth century on, had been that "schools be so connected with each other that the meritorious poor, without favour or patronage, and by the freest competition, should find an easy ascent to the University through different roads representing varieties in their talents and achievements".⁶³ John Gordon, however, told the Argyll Commission that in the area he inspected only 3 of 15 burgh schools

62 Bone, Scottish Inspectorate, p. 99. Today when the link between socio-economic background and academic achievement is so much more clearly recognized, this statement seems unremarkable. At the time, it challenged a strongly, if vaguely, held assumption that the Scottish system was an effective escalator up from the lower classes. One writer in 1850 referred to the long list of eminent Scots "who could trace the first dawning of their greatness to the light which burst upon them, in their native glen or hamlet, under the humble roof of the Parochial School". "Scottish National Education", NBR (February, 1850), p. 261. The social backgrounds of these eminent Scots were not considered relevant by this writer.

63 Playfair, Primary and Technical Education, p. 4.

contained sufficient lower class children to be considered eligible for government grants. "The unaided burgh schools", he declared, "are mainly for the children of the middle and upper classes...".⁶⁴ Viscount Bryce, in a memorial to his father who had a distinguished career at the High School in Glasgow, wrote that his was a life "most conspicuously of a great teacher's through whose hands thousands of boys of the middle and upper classes have passed".⁶⁵ The higher subjects in a parish school or attendance at a burgh school meant increased school fees, which eliminated most labouring class children. Even if they overcame this hurdle, they were still at a disadvantage. George Combe recalled the difficulty of keeping up to his classmates, most of whom had private tutors to bolster or repair the work of the High School. Though the universities were open, in theory, to all classes, most of the poor children were weeded out long before they reached that stage of the system.

Whatever the excesses of its admirers, however, the traditions of social classlessness and social mobility associated with Scottish education, were more than just empty romanticisms. "No other system" wrote a parochial teacher in the '60's, "has ever attempted to combine in the same manner, elementary and advanced instruction; and no other system has been able in the same degree, to meet the needs of

64 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 14.

65 Viscount Bryce, Dr. James Bryce: In Memorium (Belfast, 1877 or 1878), p. 14. It may be objected, with some merit, that this description reveals more about the extent of the younger Bryce's Anglicization than it does about the actual social background of the students at the High School. Certainly, James, the father, had been very concerned about the influence of the English regulations, which recognized only 'children of the labouring poor' as eligible for government aid. This, he believed, would create completely separate schools for the lower and middle classes, in opposition to the Scottish tradition. Nonetheless, the Viscount's description does serve as a corrective to such overstatements as Playfair's "easy ascent".

poor but promising students".⁶⁶ This was a reasonable claim. William Knox, though he readily admitted that he only sent two or three boys, out of about eighty students a year, to the university from his parish school, was adamant in his defense of the custom:

I think it desirable that, however small the population and however rural it may be, there ought to be provision for teaching the languages. You may find a boy, whose parents are not able to send him to any other school than the parochial school, who gives such promise that you may lose a very fine scholar unless he has the means of getting the necessary education at the parish or district school.⁶⁷

Similarly, though exaggerated notions of the egalitarian nature of the Scottish burgh schools are misleading, it should be noted that they were not rigidly exclusive. D.R. Fearon, in his burgh school survey, concluded that they were essentially middle class but were "so managed that the poorer class is not shut out from them, but shares to some extent the benefit of their influence".⁶⁸ Some prominent men of letters, medicine, law and commerce did actually come off the land and out of the cottage, through the parish school, and thence to university. Thomas Guthrie quoted a statistic which showed that, whereas one Scot in 5,000 attended university, only one Englishman in 16,000 and one Irishman in 22,000 did so.⁶⁹ Whatever the accuracy of such figures, it is perhaps remarkable enough in nineteenth century Britain that humble origins, the humbler the better, were looked upon as a source of pride for well-educated and successful Scot.

66 Parochial Schoolmaster, Plea for Parish Schools, p. 15.

67 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 220.

68 Fearon, Report on Burgh Schools, p. 23. The key phrase is "to some extent".

69 Guthrie, Autobiography, p.

It is doubtful, however, that Scottish society was very mobile. Few 'lads o' pairts' began, in fact, at the bottom echelons of society, and those who did probably only rose into the upper-working classes or lower middle classes. At the same time, however, it seems to have been a good deal more mobile than English society. Saunders, though he may sometimes over-emphasize the democratic atmosphere of early-nineteenth century Scotland, is close to the mark when he concludes that the practical effect of the Scottish educational system was to "recruit the professional and business groups in Scotland from a wider range of the population than elsewhere".⁷⁰

In summary, Scottish education did possess, it seems to me, a number of distinctive and identifiable features which, taken together, constituted a 'tradition'. A national consensus, based on the educational ideals of the presbyterian reformers and including the principle of state and public responsibility, did exist in favour of widespread education. This consensus had found at least partial expression, in the development of a system of parish schools burgh schools and universities which provided a basic education for a fairly wide range of social classes and some opportunity for boys of talent from the lower classes to rise to a higher position. The universities were reasonably cheap and open and the line between education for the poor and education for the middle and upper classes was much less clearly demarcated by distinctive types of schools than in England. The teacher's role and social position was, in theory certainly and to some extent in practice, widely respected, university

70 Saunders, Scottish Democracy, p. 243.

attendance was considered an advantage, and some upward mobility within the occupation was possible. None of these distinctive features had ever been completely realized, but they had been sufficiently achieved to give a basic validity and credibility to the term, the 'Scottish tradition of education'.

III

In the light of her tradition and accomplishments, Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century, seemed ideally situated to undertake educational reforms which would enable her school system, formerly suitable to a rural agrarian society, to cope with the challenges of urban industrial conditions. Certainly her position in this regard seemed far in advance of England's. A number of factors, however, acted to inhibit these reforms and impede the modernization of the Scottish education system. Some of these took the form of conscious and organized opposition to any proposals involving major alterations to the status quo. This opposition, most notably of the Church of Scotland and of the powerful country landowning class, will be dealt with in detail below. Some of these inhibiting factors, however, were more subtle and were, interwoven with the same factors which constituted the advantages of the Scottish education system. A prime example of such an inhibiting factor was the Scottish educational tradition itself. A tradition is a double-edged weapon: reformers use it to argue that changes must be made in order to maintain the tradition and fulfill its promise; conservatives argue that major changes will undermine the basis of the tradition and destroy its promise. Ironically, but not surprisingly, as the actual quality and adequacy of Scottish education

declined through the first half of the nineteenth century, praise of Scotland's great educational tradition became ever louder and stronger. Thomas Macaulay glowingly described the benefits of the tradition. Until the end of the seventeenth century Scotland, he claimed, "had stood almost at the bottom...of nations pretending to civilization. It is notorious that two hundred years ago, and even later, Scotland and Scotchmen were ~~proverbs~~ of contempt in London. Even Scottish statesmen looked with ^{despair} ~~despise~~ on the barbarous rudeness and ignorance of their poorer countrymen". The Act of 1696, however, had changed all that. "From the day on which that Act was passed dates an improvement to which the history of human affairs furnishes no parallel...before the system of state education had been in operation forty years, all was changed. The language of contempt was at an end. The language of envy had succeeded". Macaulay did admit that there were some defects in the Scottish system, but the main emphasis of his remarks fell on the benefits and strengths of the system, not on its weaknesses.⁷¹ This kind of attitude persisted despite the fact that as early as the 1830's Lewis, Colquhoun, and others had begun to seriously question the continued existence of the adequacy or excellence of the Scottish schools. In 1834, Colquhoun had attacked this kind of complacency.

71 Macaulay, Speech on the Government Plan of Education, p. 16. Macaulay's pride was widely shared. "Civilized Europe has never witnessed a nobler spectacle than the first Protestants of Scotland in the assembly of the nation, demanding that from the funds before abused by licentious superstition, one third should be devoted, not to increase the revenue of the Reformed Church, but to educate - the universal education of the youth in all departments of instruction from the highest to the lowest". (Anon, "Scottish National Education", p.260). "One parish school for all the children within a reasonable distance, has been our glory". Milligan, Present Aspect of the Education Question, p. 10.

"He was aware", he told the Commons, "that Scotland ranked high in the estimate of all, on the subject of education. He was sorry to contest that opinion, but it was the best and the truest policy to exhibit clearly the state of the case, in order that the evil might be remedied".⁷² A teacher, George Corken, writing twenty years later pointed out that pride in the 'tradition' acted as a block on further progress:

Assuredly the most effectual way to prevent progress is to be well satisfied with our present attainments ...is there not some danger that the sentiments of self-satisfaction with which we in Scotland have come to regard ourselves...may form a serious barrier to the progress of education in the country? Our meetings are constantly garnished with complacent allusions to the high rank of Scotland among the nations, our excellent and time-honoured system of education, and the incalculable benefits it has conferred on the country.⁷³

Corken had just visited some schools in Belgium and went on to warn that "other nations, long our inferiors, are making rapid and steady advances".⁷⁴ Even in the 1870's, Lyon Playfair could still write, "On this glorious recollection of the past we are apt to reason with complacency, when in truth it is a national system no longer".⁷⁵

72 3 Hansard, XXIV, (1834), p. 515. An even earlier example is contained in the Rev. C. Anderson's 1825 pamphlet, A Statement of the Experience of Scotland with Regard to the Education of the People. Anderson charged that only the framework of the splendid old system then existed, "deluding Scotchmen with the belief that their country still possessed the full advantages of education" (p. 18).

73 George Corken, "A Teachers' Meeting in Belgium", SELJ (Feb. 1855), p. 99.

74 Ibid.

75 Playfair, Primary and Technical Education, p. 6. Playfair, himself, contributed somewhat to this complacency (see above). R.J. Bryce related that Professor Pillans had given a course of lectures in 1827 to some country teachers, which had been somewhat critical of various aspects of Scottish education:

On the other hand, in theory at least, the Scottish educational tradition possessed a huge potential for easy and effective reform.

"When a statesman now proposes to communicate the benefits of education to a people", wrote a Scottish minister in the 1820's, "he is endeavouring to realize no untried theory or speculation...".⁷⁶

James Begg made a similar point in 1850 when, after describing the principles of a successful public education system, he wrote:

Some persons may think this chimerical, theoretic and speculative. Let them cross the border, and visit Scotland, and they will find it a sober fact...⁷⁷

Once it had been fairly established that the system needed reform, and by the 1850's certainly, to put it at the very least, there was strong evidence to that effect, many thought that reform could be brought about without undue strife and delay. The Lord Advocate rather hopefully noted, at the beginning of the 1850's, Scotland's common religious heritage and continued, "It will be strange if there is not wisdom enough, or mutual forbearance enough, found among us to take advantage of this important fact".⁷⁸ But, at the end of that decade, William Fraser was to write in despair:

"we are sorry to add, that this truly patriotic undertaking exposed him to a most merciless attack from 'some person or persons unknown', who either under the influence of culpable jealousy, or a mistaken esprit de corps, thought fit to consider his enterprise as an insult to the body of Scottish schoolmasters". Bryce, Plan for National Education for Ireland, p. 39. The attack referred to was probably that contained in James Norval's Letters to the Parochial Schoolmasters, published as a pamphlet in 1829.

76 C. Anderson, Experience of Scotland, p. 10.

77 Begg, National Education for Scotland, p. 28. Begg was here urging the reform possibilities of the Scottish system. He was not complacent of the actual state of the schools.

78 [Moncrieff], "Progress of Popular Education", p. 297.

In no country in the world ought the establishment of a sound, comprehensive system of National Education be an easier task than in Scotland; in none has every attempt at legislation for this purpose awakened hotter contests and been followed by pettier and more contemptible party triumphs. We have been ever demanding, yet defeating legislation, until now, our educational condition is a national disgrace.⁷⁹

It was true that the Scottish education system, especially in comparison with the overall English education system, appeared to be much more adequate and comprehensive than it actually was. This was particularly the case in regard to those classes which profited most from the system, the upper, middle and even the higher working classes. These were not directly affected by the serious national educational deficiency and the gulf between them and the urban masses protected them from comprehending its severity for the increasing majority of the population. It is obvious that if some sort of social crisis directly affects those able to exert political and economic influence, reform is much more likely to occur quickly and effectively, Flinn points out that it was much easier to arouse the middle and upper classes to action in preventing outbreaks of cholera, a classless disease which struck through the water supplies of all homes, than it was to enlist their support for steps against typhus, which arose from the squalor, overcrowding, and insanitation endured by the poorer sections of the community.⁸⁰ In a memorable passage Edwin Chadwick remarked on this phenomenon:

The statements of the condition of considerable proportions of the labouring populations of the towns into which the present inquiries have been carried have been received with surprise by

79 Fraser, Educational Condition of Scotland, p. 3.

80 Chadwick, Sanitary Report, p. 10.

persons of the wealthier classes living in the immediate vicinity, to whom the facts were as strange as if they related to foreigners or the natives of an unknown country. When Dr. Arnott with myself and others were examining the abodes of the poorest classes in Glasgow and Edinburgh, we were regarded with astonishment; and it was frequently declared by the inmates, that they had not for many years witnessed the approach or the presence of persons of that condition near them. We have found that the inhabitants of the front houses in many of the main streets of these towns and of the metropolis, have never entered the adjoining courts, or seen the interior of any of the tenements, situated at the backs of their own houses, in which their own workers or dependents reside.⁸¹

Similarly in education, most of the middle-class and some of the upper, seemed to have used the parochial and burgh schools of Scotland for part of their children's education; but this use was heavily supplemented by a variety of fee-paying institutions, special subject masters and private tutors. Able, by this method and for relatively modest sums, to procure a sound and general education for their children, they did not realize that for the mass of the poor the public system was seriously inadequate and the private system quite out of reach.⁸² Thus, a complacent pride in the Scottish tradition of education, together with the continued benefits which the Scottish school system continued to confer on those in a position to benefit from it, combined to produce not so much an active opposition to reform as a basic inertia regarding educational change. This inertia, located among a section of the

81 Ibid., p. 397 (underline mine). Judging by the ignorance of modern middle class suburbanites of the slum or ghetto conditions they drive past every day on their way to work, this situation remains much the same today.

82 Thomas Guthrie's educational experience described above is a good example of this.

population of crucial political significance, was the major obstacle to reform until the middle years of the century.

The overcoming of this obstacle was made considerably more difficult by the fact that, even among those who realized that Scotland was facing new educational problems of considerable seriousness, the question of what was an adequate and appropriate response was hotly debated. Some sought a radical revision of the parish school system and a massive increase in state aid to education. Many more, at the outset at least, believed that increased efforts by voluntary organizations and individual philanthropists, coupled perhaps with a mild reform of the parochial schools, would be sufficient to fill the gaps which were becoming more evident. Take for example the views of Henry Lord Brougham, the more significant for the fact that they completely reversed themselves.⁸³

In 1816 Brougham had been the chief instigator of a Parliamentary enquiry into the education of the English poor in urban areas, In its first interim report the Committee stated that it "had found reason to conclude that a very large number of poor children are wholly without the means of instruction, although their parents

83 Brougham was primarily concerned with the English situation. Nevertheless the opinions of this eminent Scotsman received much attention north of the Tweed and were used as ammunition by those embroiled in Scottish affairs. Indeed, it is one of the problems of a Scottish study that, even if one has sympathy towards the 'vindication of Scottish rights' position, one cannot ignore the many Scots who themselves refused to acknowledge the border and acted and spoke as 'Britishers' or, since it was virtually synonymous, 'Englishmen'. Brougham's influence on Scottish affairs was far from an un~~mixed~~ blessing for, as Ferguson crisply puts it, "He was supposed to understand Scottish questions (which he rarely did)..." (William Ferguson, Scotland: 1689 to the Present (Edinburgh, 1968), p. 310).

appear to be generally very desirous of obtaining that advantage for them". Although it was not ready to report in detail, the Committee was "persuaded that the greatest advantages would result to this Country from Parliament taking proper measures...for supplying the deficiency...".⁸⁴ In 1820, Brougham proposed a bill to establish a state-aided parochial education system under the control of the Church of England.⁸⁵ As he later recalled, he had admired the voluntary effort then in evidence but had felt it to be of a "temporary fleeting and fluctuating nature",⁸⁶ insufficient for the adequate education of the English masses. This bill, and another in 1826, had been withdrawn because of the objections of the Dissenters. In 1828, however, the repeal of the disabilities on Dissenters seemed to Brougham to open the way for a large education measure and so he again undertook to inquire into the state of education, this time on his own. The results of this private inquiry completely changed his attitude.⁸⁷ Whereas in 1818, he estimated, there had been about 14,000 unendowed day schools educating 478,000 - which had left, he thought then, about 2 million children without any education - in 1828 there appeared

84 Report on the Education of the Lower Orders, 1816, p. 1.

85 Parliamentary Debates, New Series, I (1820), pp. 39, 1319; II (1820), pp. 47-91, 365.

86 3 Hansard, XVI, (1833), p. 634.

87 Serious question should be raised as to the accuracy of Brougham's inquiry in 1828. His 1820 view had been based on the parliamentary committee hearings and on the general returns of Church of England clergy. In 1828 he simply sent out 500 letters to clergymen chosen at random and calculated for the whole country on the basis of their response. Neither the 1820 nor the 1828 surveys were very satisfactory but the latter seems decidedly less so than the former.

to be about 230,000 unendowed day schools educating over a million children.

Under these circumstances, he became a convert to the opinion of those who thought it would be unwise to disturb a state of things which produced such admirable results; and therefore he abandoned his plan for establishing a compulsory rate for the purposes of education.⁸⁸

There were, in fact, only two areas where a "perfect reliance" could not be placed on voluntary effort; small, remote, rural parishes, and large cities and towns.⁸⁹ In the latter particularly Brougham still felt that there was a serious problem that could only be cured by state intervention, but the apparent defection of such a prominent Scot from the cause of a national legislative educational reform was a serious one and gave much comfort to its opponents.

George Lewis, on the other hand, was completely convinced of the inadequacy of partial remedies or half-measures. "All that has yet been done for the education of the poor in Glasgow", he declared in 1834, "serves only to evince the entire impotency of the voluntary system to educate either an entire city, or an entire nation".⁹⁰ The most striking and vivid description of the impotency of such efforts in an urban situation that I have read is contained in a pamphlet by Francis Hook, a prominent Anglican clergyman, published

88 Ibid., p. 635.

89 Ibid. The fact that it was precisely the educational deficiency in the large cities and towns, where an increasing proportion of the population lived, that was the heart of the matter was not stressed by Brougham.

90 Lewis, Scotland Half-Educated, p. 44. Lewis was specifically taking issue with Brougham's view and was doubtless thinking of Thomas Chalmers' work, in the 1820's in the slums of Glasgow, to make the old voluntary parish system cope with the problems of poor relief and education. Despite valiant effort this attempt had failed.

in 1846.⁹¹ His picture of the plight of the minister and the teacher is as applicable to a Scottish as an English city and is worth examining at some length.

According to Hook, the minister's first task was to raise enough money to rent a room and engage a teacher. The teacher "had confided to him, as a great privilege, the sole charge of a 100 or a 150 little, dirty, ragged urchins...and he is expected, as by a miracle, to convert them, in as short a space of time as possible, into clean, well-bred, intelligent children, capable of passing a creditable examination, if by chance an inspector or organizing master pass that way...". Since he could not teach all the children himself he had to devise some sort of monitorial system; "the result of which is, that while a portion of the children are vain, conceited and puffed-up, a larger proportion are left in their ignorance..."

The situation was made worse by the fact that the teacher was forced to undertake extra work in order to survive and, together with the minister, had to devise the means, "from a letter to the Queen Dowager down to the holding of a bazaar", of expanding and maintaining the school. Moreover, the teacher had "always the

91 Rev. W.F. Hook, On the Means of Rendering More Efficient the Education of the People: a Letter to the Lord Bishop of St. Davis (London, 1846). Again I refer to an English source because the debate about government aid versus voluntaryism in education was British in scope, though I would argue that the validity and applicability of the arguments varied considerably according to national location. Moncrieff considered Hook's pamphlet in conjunction with Kay Shuttleworth's efforts, to be the main reason for the acceptance of the Minutes of 1846 and wrote, "...it would be difficult to overrate the effect produced on the minds of thoughtful Englishmen by the adhesion of so staunch a high-churchman to the cause of unrestricted education". [Moncrieff], "Progress of Popular Education", p. 287.

prospect before him of being reduced to greater want, at the very time that his family is increasing, by the defalcation of the pence of the children, upon which, either wholly or in great part, his subsistence is made to depend". Finally, each successful project only served to emphasize the ineffectiveness of voluntarism as a general solution. "From the increase of the population", Hook concluded, "the clergyman, meanwhile, as soon as one school is built, has to commence another; and when all is done, he has the satisfaction of feeling that it is only as a drop in the ocean".⁹²

Two examples in particular may be said to demonstrate the failure of voluntarism in Scotland; the experience of the Church of Scotland's Education Committee from the 1820's on, and the efforts of the Free Church, for several years after the Disruption, to create a complete education system in connection with that church. As early as 1824 the Church of Scotland had recognized that the parochial system had some gaps by establishing an Education Committee of the General Assembly, whose particular concern was to be the Highlands and Islands region. In its annual report for 1833, after eight years in operation, the Committee noted the achievement to that point - about 86 schools with 20,000 children - with satisfaction, but emphasized the desperate need still to be provided for. It estimated that at least 384 additional schools were needed and regretted that it had not been able to entertain more of the many applications for support which it had received:

The funds at the command of the Committee, would permit no further extension of the scheme; and with the strictest economy

92 Ibid., p. 15.

scarcely sufficed to maintain the schools they have already established...⁹³

The expenditure in 1832-33 had been over £ 2,000, which had left a balance of £ 15. This had been wiped out however, by a previous deficit of £ 510 from 1831-32. An appeal for funds had brought in only £ 15.16.5 1/2 from 145 parishes and the situation had only been saved by the personal donation of an emigrant American Scot in New York, "where there is happily no want of elementary education".⁹⁴

In 1850 the Committee found itself in a very difficult position. On the one hand it had to defend the Church of Scotland's superintendence of the educational system, which was under increasing attack as inadequate and inefficient, but on the other, it had to enlist the support and contributions of parishoners by describing this same inadequacy. Although it tried to strike an optimistic note when it described the 179 Highland Schools, the improved teaching, and the beneficial use being made of limited government assistance, it had also to express "the utmost anxiety...about the thousands of children in the midst of our civic population, who are growing up in a fearful state of ignorance and crime".⁹⁵ In its final appeal for support for its work in the north and elsewhere the Committee struck an even more sombre note than the 1833 report: There was an outstanding deficit of £ 3,500:

93 Church of Scotland Education Committee, Report on Increasing the Means of Religious Instruction and Education in Scotland and particularly in the Highlands and Islands (Edinburgh, 1833), p. 11.

94 Ibid., p. 13.

95 Church of Scotland Education Committee, Report, 1850, p. 14.

It is obvious, therefore, that the funds of the Committee are now completely exhausted, and that in future their operations must entirely depend upon the liberality with which means are supplied them... At a time when the national importance of a sound religious education is so generally admitted, and the office of the Church in promoting it is so well acknowledged, the Committee cannot permit themselves to doubt that the members of the Church of Scotland, not merely zealous for the interests of this Church, but anxious to promote the external well-being of thousands of children in their native land, will respond to the urgent call which is now made upon them.⁹⁶

Unfortunately, the Committee had to report that the appeal for the previous year "has not been adequately responded to".⁹⁷

Besides the Church of Scotland's educational activities, the most ambitious voluntary educational scheme of the first half of the century was the Free Church's attempt to establish a school beside every one of its churches. D.J. Withrington has described the way in which the initial enthusiasms with which the scheme was supported - the achievement of financial pledges of £ 60,000 and a target of 500 schools - gave way to a "much more subdued" tone in the middle '40's, as the realization grew that the new church's resources were over-extended and that pledges did not necessarily guarantee actual contributions.⁹⁸ The scheme was at least temporarily saved, in Withrington's view, by the system of government aid to teachers initiated in 1846. There was a small party within the Free Church, whose nucleus was made up of Thomas Guthrie, James Begg, Hugh Miller and William Gunn, which believed on principle that the national

96 Ibid., p. 23.

97 Ibid.

98 Withrington, "Free Church Educational Scheme".

parish system should be opened up and extended and that the Free Church should devote its efforts to that end. This party was badly defeated in a bitter controversy in 1850 and the Free Church, led by Robert Candlish the convener of its Education Committee, managed to establish some 700 schools, a remarkable achievement. Yet, even that was not enough. By 1854, both Candlish and Guthrie were appearing on the same platform in support of national education legislation. Candlish, in recommending that the Free Church petition in favour of the Lord Advocate's Education Bill of that year, put the need for legislation in the strongest terms: "...there is no necessity for a preliminary inquiry; ...the case now crying for legislation lies bare, naked, and open before Parliament".⁹⁹

IV

By 1854, then, there was widespread agreement in Scotland, with the notable exceptions of the Church of Scotland, and the country landowners, that the nation's educational problems were grave and that they could not be solved without major government legislations and involvement. This consensus had taken at least twenty-five years to emerge and for the last decade of that period an important external factor had been added to the confusion and controversy; the growing activity and influence of the Privy Council's Committee on Education. The circumstances of the inception of this committee and the aims and policies it developed have already been described. To Scottish educational reformers its influence was regarded generally as being detrimental. "It will be a great mistake if the Council

⁹⁹ Free Church of Scotland, Education Bill (Edinburgh, 1854), p. 10.

attempts to square Scottish on the model of English schools" warned a writer in 1854. "They have an eminent young Scotsman holding a high situation in their office in London: we trust they will not fail always to consult distinctly Scottish authorities, before they make rules for Scotland".¹⁰⁰ Another observer, acknowledged that the Privy Council system had brought considerable benefits to England, but continued:

In Scotland it was far otherwise. There the system came into contact with an established organization of public schools, which in many respects it has affected injuriously. Its tendency is to disassociate them from the Universities. It has improved the mechanical part of teaching, but is introducing a lower class of teachers; less cultivated and of inferior education, as compared with those who in the best districts, occupy the parish school.¹⁰¹

The criticism of the influence of the Committee of Council on Education focused on several specific areas. The first concerned its affect on the wide social base and greater social mobility of the Scottish system. "The object of the Privy Council grants is to effect the education of a class; the object of the parochial schools was to overtake the education of the people", was the way one Scottish teacher put it.¹⁰² This emphasis, in the English context, had clear implications for school organization, curriculum and teaching. The gulf between the elementary schools and the

100 A.C. Tait, "Popular Education in Scotland", NBR (Nov. 1854), p. 40. This was in all likelihood a retrospective warning since, by that time, the Committee had been in operation for 20 years. The "eminent young Scotsman" may have been Simon Laurie.

101 Russell, "Education Question", p. 265.

102 Argyll Commission, 1865 (A.C. Weir), p. 272. Two other Scottish teachers, also witnesses to the Commission put it similarly: "The Scotch people have always been opposed to class schools" (W. Kennedy and J. Purves, p. 288).

universities in England was indeed all but impassable. The background and skills required by the teacher of the poor were obviously less advanced than those needed by the middle and upper class school teachers. "In both countries, England and Ireland", commented James Bryce, "those who are instructors of the lower classes are a totally distinct set of men, with whom the teachers of the upper and middle classes have no intercourse and even few sympathies. To set up a like distinction in Scotland is the manifest tendency of the provisions introduced under the Minutes of Council - and this constitutes our greatest objection to the Privy Council system".¹⁰³ The Minutes Bryce was referring to were those outlining and elaborating the pupil-teacher and Queen's scholar teacher-training scheme introduced by Kay Shuttleworth in 1846 and 1847. Teachers would be educated in Normal Schools which stressed the basic subjects, without the benefit of any university experience or capacity for the higher subjects. "A university man in a school would soon become a rare phenomenon", wrote a parish teacher in the 1860's, "and the Normal School would have a monopoly of the training, although already Latin is practically expunged from their time-tables, and the range of other subjects appears to be narrowing...compound division and bills of parcels would become the limit of instruction in the National Schools".¹⁰⁴

It may be doubted that the English, Kay Shuttleworth in particular, set out to deliberately erode the principles upon which the Scottish education system was based. William Fraser, an ardent

103 James Bryce, "Minutes of Council", Transactions, S.S.A., 1861, p. 337.

104 Parochial Schoolmaster, Plea for the Parish Schools, p. 17.

educational reformer, specifically exonerated him from such a charge:

Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, most explicitly assures us that the Committee never looked on these arrangements as applicable to Scotland, and did not contemplate their extension to us. They felt confident that a National System could be easily established in a country where the obstacles were so slight. Our own divisions have been our feebleness and folly and are perpetuating our educational disgrace.¹⁰⁵

The testimony of Ralph Lingen, Kay Shuttleworth's successor, before the Argyll Commission in 1865, tends to substantiate this view. Lingen was frank in his admiration for the Scottish education tradition. "I think it is an enormous matter to have established education, as you have established religion, at the time of the Reformation; and really to have secured in theory at least, by law, the education of the people. Our system offers nothing equivalent to that".¹⁰⁶ Lingen also expressed his opinion that the Privy Council system "never can unite really these three qualities: that education shall be voluntary, that it shall be efficient, and that it shall be universal".¹⁰⁷ At the same time, however, the secretary did testify that many of the Committee's regulations were applied to Scotland in exactly the same way as in England, and after maintaining that all Scottish schools except the parochial were the same as English voluntary schools, confessed, "Of course, on these Scotch matters, I speak subject to very great correction, and I can only state the conclusions which I have drawn from official papers".¹⁰⁸

105 Fraser, Educational Condition of Scotland, p. 9.

106 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 325.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., p. 324.

However innocent the motivation, then, it seems clear that the Privy Council system, applied to Scotland in the 1840's and 1850's, was beginning to alter the character and atmosphere of Scottish teachers, students, and schools, and in a direction contrary to the spirit of the Scottish educational tradition. The Rev. W. Milligan emphasized this in a vivid passage worth quoting at length. He had been regretting the degree of uniformity that the government regulations and teacher training had been imposing on the diverse and free spirit of the Scottish school, and he continued:

Surely we are not ready to abandon this. They will be changed times indeed, with our teachers, when such a change takes place; when the vigorous and bold development to which they have been accustomed shall exist no more; when the busy life of their own native energy will be checked; and when they will have to submit themselves to a uniformity chalked upon the walls of some dingy room in Downing Street. Let our Normal Schools be a warning to us. Valuable as they are in many respects, we appeal to those who have been long of our school life, whether they are not checking the free development of our school life. We begin to miss our old kings among our teachers, those spirited old men whose native force of character and native talent had never known a check; who, amidst the undeniable degredation of the schools in many parts of the country, lent such a lustre to the profession that all men spoke well of it; and to whom the mind yet turns with pleasure as memorials of the past's unfettered life.¹⁰⁹

109 Milligan, Present Aspect of the Education Question, p. 13. That Milligan's, though an exaggerated and romanticized view of Scottish schools and teachers, was not an impression wholly without substance, is illustrated by the description offered by D.R. Fearon in his report on the burgh schools (see Appendix C.)

Chapter 5

The Educational Institute of Scotland: The Beginning

I

Sometime in the late fall of 1846,¹ a group of teachers from Glasgow and the surrounding area met to form an organization, whose aims would be, "to elevate the status of teachers and to improve the modes of education".² Besides setting up a schedule of monthly meetings to discuss matters of mutual concern, the Glasgow group also decided to establish contact with teachers in Edinburgh and to propose to them the establishment of a national teachers' organization.³

In response to this initiative, a group of Edinburgh teachers met in the School of Arts⁴ on December 12th, 1846, to consider the national teachers' organization proposal. This meeting appointed a committee to discuss the idea and to work out some definite plans for making it a reality. After working through December and most of the following month, the committee presented a set of detailed

- 1 The following sketch of events is compiled from Belford, E.I.S., [Alexander Reid], "The Educational Institute of Scotland: Its Origin, History and Objects", Tait's Edinburgh Magazine (Dec. 1847), and various other sources as indicated. Belford's account though it contains some invaluable material, is somewhat spotty and confused. Nonetheless, from it and from the other sources, the sequence of events is clear enough.
- 2 Belford, E.I.S.; quoted on p. 27. According to Belford the core members of this group were Free Church schoolmasters.
- 3 The group called itself the Glasgow Teachers' Association and, by the end of 1846, had 50 members. Ibid.
- 4 The Witness, Sept. 20, 1848. The exact location was later recalled by the Rector of the Free Church Normal School.

resolutions to a general meeting of Edinburgh teachers on the 29th and 30th of January 1847.⁵ These resolutions were discussed, amended and approved, and twenty^y-three hundred copies were ordered to be printed and circulated as widely as possible among the teachers of Scotland. The copies of the resolutions were sent out in March accompanied by a letter which filled in some relevant background information and strongly supported the intent of the resolutions. The letter suggested that teachers meet together in their local areas to discuss the proposal and that they send in any suggestions or amendments to the corresponding secretary by May 15. It also called for a further meeting to be held in Edinburgh in June to plan an official founding assembly.

The Glasgow and Edinburgh teachers' groups met together in May, along with representatives of the parish schoolmasters whom they had invited to join in their discussions, and began to draw up a draft constitution. Meanwhile, the response coming back from all parts of the country was extremely favourable. According to Belford by the middle of May, teachers from all but 15 of Scotland's presbyterial units had communicated with the corresponding secretary.⁶ In a few places, it would have been relatively easy for these teachers to gather to discuss the circular and the resolutions. In Aberdeen, for example, the Aberdeen Society of Teachers, an organization established for "mutual communication on professional

5 The Minutes of the third Annual General Meeting of the E.I.S. record that a Mr. Macdonald was to copy out the minutes of the Edinburgh Committee of Teachers. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any such document. Proceedings of Third General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1849).

6 Belford, E.I.S., p. 73.

subjects"⁷ had been holding regular meetings since 1838.⁸ In most other places, however, no such forum existed and special arrangements had to be made. In Kirkcaldy, for example, 17 teachers met in the Town Hall, by special permission of the Provost, on June 12, 1847. They expressed their support for the resolutions and appointed three representatives to attend the meeting called for Edinburgh a week later.⁹

That meeting, and further planning through the summer, led to the coming together, at the High School in Edinburgh on Saturday, September 18th, 1847, of over 600 teachers, "the most numerous assemblage of the Brethern which ever congregated in this, or perhaps in any other city",¹⁰ to found, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Leonhard Schmitz, the Educational Institute of Scotland.¹¹ From the first Glasgow meeting to the large Edinburgh convention, the whole organizational enterprise had taken less than a year.

II

The E.I.S. did not, of course, spring full-blown from a vacuum.

7 Ibid.; quoted pn p. 20.

8 This organization became the Aberdeen Local Association of the E.I.S. in 1847. The first president of the Society of Teachers, Dr. James Melvin, Rector of the Grammar School, became one of the 5 original vice-presidents of the Institute.

9 Kirkcaldy Local Association, E.I.S., Minute Books, 1847-64, (E.I.S. Office, Edinburgh).

10 [Reid], "Educational Institute", p. 11.

11 Belford indicates that this name began to be used for the proposal organization in the spring of 1847, over such alternative suggestions as the Scholastic Association of Scotland and the Association of Teachers in Scotland.

A number of important nineteenth century developments - the altered conditions of Scottish economic, social, and religious life; the concomitant pressures on and decline of a traditionally vigorous and comprehensive school system; the increasingly interventionist educational activities of the central government, culminating in the Minutes of the Privy Council of December 1846 - have been considered above. All of these contributed to a heightened self-consciousness among Scottish teachers. One other particularly relevant development should be added to the list at this point, and that is the growth of the so-called 'professions' during the period.

"All professions are conspiracies against the laity".¹² A famous charge, and one with much truth, but, like any simple one-line description of a human activity, not the whole story.¹³ Besides their private interest, professionals do exhibit a genuine concern for the public welfare; as well as displaying a crass materialism, they are often moved by lofty idealism; and, in addition to the most snobbish craving for social eminence, they

12 George Bernard Shaw, The Doctor's Dilemma (1906), Act. I.

13 See W.J. Reader, Professional Men; The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England (London, 1966). Reader's book is refreshingly free from the piety and cant which clogs much of the writing about 'the professions'. He gives them their due, but no more. Of the position of physicians in the early nineteenth century he writes: "It is fairly clear that the physician's chief professional asset was an impressive manner, bolstered by experience and guarded by elaborate etiquette of which one of the cardinal rules was to make certain that the patient knew of no difference of opinion that might arise in consultation" (p. 19). Of this etiquette later in the century, he comments: "Some of the finer points of professional etiquette, especially among lawyers and doctors, looked to outsiders rather like restrictive practices and demarcation agreements, designed to protect the practitioner rather than his client". (p. 160).

also desire to increase their influence in order to bring their knowledge and skills to bear on important social problems more effectively.¹⁴ As W.J. Reader puts it, a study of the development of the professions in the nineteenth century:

...is especially a study of the English [with some distinctions his comments could also be applied to the Scottish] middle classes at three of their characteristic activities: earning a living, raising the moral tone of society, and social climbing. They did all these things with great energy and earnestness, and each reacted on the others to produce a conception of the professions, which, with its subtle blend of self-interest and public spirit, is perfectly intelligible to us today.¹⁵

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the rise to professional status of a number of occupations which had not previously been so regarded. The three traditional professions, of course, had been the clergy, physicians and barristers, and the main thrust of the new groups came from men connected with the 'lower branches' of the last two, medicine and the law. The first of the new professionals to organize themselves were the Surgeons who received a Royal Charter for their College in 1800. The surgeons had separated from the barbers in the middle of the eighteenth century, but had long remained at the status level of skilled tradesmen, far below the lofty eminence of physicians. What improved their position essentially, was the increase in knowledge and skill in surgery, a process in which a number of Scots played a leading role and Edinburgh became an acknowledged center. Accordingly, the surgeons, most of whose social origins were not above the middle ranks, were

14 That the same combination of high-minded, as well as base, motivations can be ascribed to other less prestigious or affluent occupations is true, if seldom acknowledged.

15 Reader, Professional Men, p. 1 (brackets mine).

able to demand better fees, exert a more forceful influence on medical affairs, and even begin to claim some equality with physicians. Even more successful, were the apothecaries, the first profession to establish "a system of qualification and registration on modern lines"¹⁶ and who, through the Apothecaries Act of 1815, were given the power to prevent anyone calling himself an apothecary, who had not satisfied the profession of his qualifications.¹⁷

Similar developments in other branches culminated in the Pharmaceutical Society, chartered in 1844, and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, chartered in 1847. The attorneys received official recognition in the Law Society, established in 1825, chartered in 1831, and re-chartered in 1847, and besides these occupations connected with the traditional professions, entirely new professional organizations began to appear. The Institution of Civil Engineers was established in 1815 and chartered in 1828; the Institution of British Architects was established in 1835 and chartered in 1837; and in the 1850's and '60's the accountants and actuaries in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen organized themselves and received Royal Charters:

16 Ibid., p. 41.

17 The Act brought together and sanctioned three principles basic to professional standing. The first was the establishment of a system of professional education, examination and licensing; the second was the exercise of professional self-discipline through registration and disciplinary proceedings; the third was the official recognition of the rights of the qualified practitioner with the power of sanctions against the unregistered. This last, Reader comments, was probably the most sought-after mark of professionalism. "This is what every professional man and would-be professional man longs for: the closed shop with an Act of Parliament to lock the door" (p.68). The surgeons did not, through this period, possess this legal power, a fact of which I think some of the E.I.S. founders were not aware.

By 1860, or thereabouts, the elements of professional standing were tolerably clear. You needed a professional association to focus opinion, work up a body of knowledge, and insist upon a decent standard of conduct. If possible, and as soon as possible, it should have a Royal Charter as a mark of recognition. The final step, if you could manage it - it was very difficult - was to persuade Parliament to pass an Act conferring something like monopoly powers on duly qualified practitioners who had followed a recognized course of training and passed recognized examinations.¹⁸

The Scottish teachers who founded the Educational Institute of Scotland in 1847, were well aware of most of these developments and as, in a manner of speaking, a 'lower branch' of one of the traditional professions - the clergy - they were both irritated and encouraged by the spectacle of the energetic and resourceful, though no better born or educated than themselves, surgeons, apothecaries, and attorneys scrambling higher and higher on the ladder of wealth, position and influence. Scottish teachers had made some attempts to organize themselves before mid-century, though usually with little success. Nevertheless, the Burgh and Parochial Schoolmaster's Widows' Fund, established since 1807, did provide an embryonic model for further organization, and the Scottish School Book Association, which had grown from it, demonstrated that teachers could play a useful role in educational problems, beyond their own immediate welfare. The Disruption of 1843 created a whole new group of teachers in the Free Church schools, who, involved as they were in the struggle to establish and expand a nationwide denominational system of schools fit to rival the old parochial structure, exhibited a fresh interest in educational problems and issues and began

18 Ibid., p. 71.

to organize local teachers groups to discuss them. Finally, the appearance of two teachers' organizations outside the bounds of Scotland, the Ulster Teachers' Association in 1840 and the College of Preceptors in England in 1846, had a powerful impact on the Scottish teachers who founded the E.I.S. and spurred them on in their efforts.

Of the two, the Ulster Teachers' Association is of particular interest in a study of the E.I.S. Its inaugural meeting in 1840 was both chaired and addressed by the Rev. Dr. R.J. Bryce,¹⁹ the long-time headmaster of the Belfast Academy and a man of enlightened and advanced educational views. Bryce's ideas are of considerable interest on a number of grounds, but especially because they reflect an acute awareness both of the Scottish educational tradition and of the strategies other professions were using to achieve a position of greater status and influence. James Bryce,²⁰ R.J.'s younger brother, was the first treasurer of the U.T.A. and he provides a direct link with the Educational Institute of Scotland. In 1846, he moved from a teaching position at his brother's school to become Mathematics Master at the Glasgow High School. He was one of the most active E.I.S. founders, serving as one of its

19 Reuben John Bryce (1798-1888): headmaster of the Belfast Royal Academy from 1824 to 1878; writer and lecturer on educational subjects; applicant for the chair of education at Edinburgh University in 1875; uncle of James Viscount Bryce, the historian and politician. (See Appendix A: Biographical Notes for further information).

20 James Bryce (1806-1877): brother of R.J. and father of James Viscount Bryce; mathematics master at the Glasgow High School from 1846 to 1874; eminent geologist with wide interests in education and politics. (See Appendix A: Biographical Notes for further information).

original vice-presidents in 1847-48, as its president in 1852-53, and on its most important committees right through the '50's and most of the '60's. Like R.J., James Bryce was deeply concerned about the Scottish educational tradition and convinced that teachers should and could exert a positive influence on national educational policy.

In his address to the Ulster Teachers' Association in September 1840, R.J. Bryce drew attention to a pamphlet he had written some twelve years previously and emphasized a number of the main points he had made in it. This pamphlet, titled Sketch of a Plan for a System of National Education for Ireland; including Hints for the Improvement of Education in Scotland,²¹ written when Bryce was about 30, was a lengthy exposition of the basic educational ideas he espoused throughout his long career. His views on the organization of education stood on three main principles: first, that the government had a responsibility to take an active role in education; second that its efforts should be directed towards general or universal education, rather than education solely for the poor; and third, that

21 R.J. Bryce, Plan for National Education for Ireland. The pamphlet was put out jointly by six publishers in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin and Belfast. In a fulsome dedication to Thomas Chalmers, Bryce thanked him "for the cordial and polite manner in which you have consented that I should take shelter under your distinguished name", and sought to forestall the attacks that were bound to arise in response to any plans concerning Irish education, particularly one which advocated the separation of religious and secular schooling, by declaring that "no one will suppose, that the person who thus addresses you is either an enemy or a lukewarm friend to that Divine Truth in whose defence and propagation you have been made the instrument of such wide and splendid usefulness". The pamphlet itself, a rather rambling and repetitive production of about 55 pages, is also a remarkably sensible and farsighted proposal. Certainly at this period, it is the most broadly conceived and enlightened treatment of the problem of Irish and, in general, public education I have discovered.

the proper education and role of the teacher was of central importance to the success of any educational endeavour. At this point, in the late '20's, he did not feel that the government should supply all or even the major portion of a nation's educational needs. Rather, he felt that the government should set a standard by providing from a quarter to a half of the necessary schools.²² This, he thought, would stimulate interest and voluntary effort in supplying the remainder, and the two parts of the system would profit mutually from the ensuing competition.²³ As regards his other two principles, however, he admitted of no qualification at all. All the schemes as yet put forward in theory or in practice, had, he declared, "one radical error" and "one fatal defect".²⁴ The error was that they were calculated only for the education of the poor and the defect was that they omitted any provision for the proper education of teachers.

"That a good system of education for the lower classes, distinct from the rest of the people, cannot exist"²⁵ Bryce was

22 At the outset he discusses education both as "an article of trade" (p. 10) with appropriate reference to the Wealth of Nations, and as a contribution to social stability and improvement. "The science of jurisprudence tells the legislator to excite, if he can, a demand for education where it is wanting [i.e.: by partially supplying the necessary schools]: the science of political economy teaches him to leave the supply to be regulated by the demand". Ibid., p. 12 (brackets mine).

23 His model was clearly the Scottish parochial school system and the additional voluntary and adventure schools. As the century progressed and the educational crisis worsened, there is some indication that his view of the role of the state altered. Though never completely abandoning a touch of free trade doctrine, he, and certainly James, came to feel that this role would have to be considerably larger.

24 Ibid., p. v.

25 Ibid., (emphasis his).

convinced. He argued, as did most of the Victorian educational reformers, that the rich and upper middle classes were ~~not~~ sober, law-abiding, industrious and so forth^{not} because of their economic and social position, but because of the kind of education they had received. Therefore, it followed, that the same kind of education would render the lower-classes more amenable to right conduct and less susceptible to the "hollow empiricism of political agitators".²⁶ More positively Bryce maintained, the poor should have just as good an education as those above them "in order that persons of talent might have the means of improving themselves, and of rising by means of knowledge, to distinguish themselves and benefit society".²⁷ Finally, Bryce believed that a general education system was essential to attract high calibre teachers. Although the teacher of the poor might not require "the same extent of learning, or the same knowledge of the world" as the teacher of the rich, he needed "even more skill and dexterity in his art, because the minds on which he is to work are in an inferior state of cultivation". Such highly qualified persons would not enter teaching if they were to be forever limited to teaching the poor with no hope of advancement:

But scarcely any man of talent and spirit will take charge of a pauper school, though he will have no objection to a school with a small income and attended by humble pupils if he is to be one of a profession, all whose members may claim a connexion with one another, so that honour is reflected on all, from the respectability of those who are at the head of it.²⁸

26 Ibid., p. 32. One is reminded here of the Whitbread debate (see above, Chapter 4) concerning the connection between Scottish education and Scottish national characteristics.

27 Ibid., p. 34.

28 Ibid., p. 44.

Throughout this argument, Bryce was expressly using the Scottish system as his model, in principle at least. That system, he felt, was cheap enough to be accessible to the poor, and good enough to attract the children of "the moderately rich at least".²⁹ Its teachers had some liberal education and saw themselves as members of one professional group. It was at this point, however, that Bryce went beyond anything yet suggested for the education of teachers. Having contended that there was no such thing as a good education for the poor only, he further maintained:

That all endeavours to improve education, however zealous and generous they may be, must utterly fail, as to every purpose of real value, unless means be provided for enabling teachers to study education as a liberal art, founded upon a philosophy of the Human Mind.³⁰

The only way to achieve this would be to "erect Teaching into a fourth learned profession, by establishing a Professor of the Art in every University", and to require "from those who study under him a good previous education, and, in particular, an acquaintance with the science of the mind...".³¹ Bryce did not regard this science as very advanced. Rather, he wrote, "it is a new world, in the act of emerging from a chaos".³² Nevertheless, he did believe that enough was available in the work of Stewart, Pestalozzi, the Edgeworth's, Elizabeth Hamilton, Professor Pillans, and

29 Ibid., p. 38. His references to the Scottish system, while mostly admiring were not entirely uncritical. The Irish, he recommended, should, "imitate Scotland when she is right, supply what she has omitted, and avoid her footsteps when she is wrong". (p. 41.)

30 Ibid., p. v.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 44.

others to begin to establish some basic principles of mind and learning and to explore their practical implications for teachers, "in order that they may be able to act rationally and effectually in their endeavours to manage and instruct the minds of their scholars".³³ The proposed Professors of Education would try to link theory and practice in such a way that, at its highest:

"teachers of genius would enter upon the profession with more knowledge of it...than they could acquire in many years: they would be able to follow up the high task of discovery and improvement: both because their knowledge would prevent them from throwing away their attention upon abortive schemes, or subjects already explored; and because the correct views which they had been helped to form the general principles of their art, would enable them to pursue their investigations in a philosophical and effective manner".³⁴

Besides improving the quality of education, the development of this kind of philosophy of education and teacher training would have another benefit, which Bryce, in common with most of his fellow teachers, thought of great importance; it would dramatically improve the status of the teacher, and raise teaching to the prestige and influence of a true profession. Bryce's model here was the rise of the surgeons from their early connection with barbers. In his mind the basic reason for this rise was clear: "the profession of a surgeon was identified with that of a barber, till surgeons began to be men of science".³⁵ Only by building on a similarly firm base,

33 Ibid., p. 15.

34 Ibid., p. 19.

35 Ibid., p. vi. In an article in 1850, advocating university reform, James Lorimer expressed somewhat similar views. Discussing the role of the Faculty of Arts he wrote: "Its chief and peculiar office is the education of the lay instructors of the community [i.e.: teachers]; a class who, most unfortunately for this country have never yet been properly regarded

could the teachers attract men of greater talent and spirit to their ranks and successfully demand greater public attention and respect for their views on educational questions. Bryce saw three main reasons why "few men of talent became teachers from deliberate choice".³⁶ Because the work was completely unsystematic, not based on any underlying principles, it was therefore "disagreeable". Similarly, the occupation suffered from "a degree of odium" due to the fact that teachers, again because of their lack of any firm grasp of educational philosophy, were forced to rule with a severe hand. Finally, the low pay, impermanence, and limited prospects of teaching, all of which would be altered by a national education system, offered little to men of energy and imagination.³⁷ As things stood, teachers were seldom consulted on educational matters and little heed was paid to their opinions. In terms which were to be echoed almost exactly by the founders of the E.I.S. twenty years later, Bryce indignantly suggested that this was an unsatisfactory state of affairs:

in the light of professional men". To the failure to see teacher education as the prime function of the Faculty of Arts, Lorimer attributed "the low esteem in which all teachers, with the exception of the few attached to the Universities, are held...". This low regard was understandable since "a precise and definite place has never been attached to it in the University system". [James Lorimer], "The Scottish Universities", NBR (August 1850), pp. 163-164.

36 Ibid., p. 30.

37 Ibid.

"When a plan for draining bogs is in contemplation, engineers are examined; when hospitals are to be founded or regulated, physicians are consulted; and the framers of a plan for national education ought to seek for information from schoolmasters, both professional ones and amateurs. In particular, the higher class of masters in the Scotch schools, who have the experience of a good system, with some defects, daily before their eyes and among their hands, could give information and bring forward views that would be of the greatest use".³⁸

In summary, then, Bryce advocated two major developments, the provision by the state of the basis of a national school system, accessible to all, and the establishment of university level teacher education, aimed at linking what was known about the mental processes of learning to the task of teaching children. The combined force of these two developments, he was convinced would radically improve the quality of education and the status and influence of teachers.³⁹

38 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

39 Though not central to this discussion, the pamphlet is also notable for what it reveals of Bryce's views and opinions on a number of educational subjects. On the education of the young: Bryce emphasized the natural aptness and curiosity of young children and the harm done in repressing and dulling these by unrelieved drill and rote learning. He felt a reasonable basic education, for the masses at least, could be provided in four or five years, if only the teachers of the lower orders "were qualified to handle the delicate texture of the infant mind without crushing it and breaking it". (p. 30.) On the problem of teaching Irish-speaking children: Bryce believed that Irish children should be taught to read and write in their own language. This, he contended, was the best and most effective way to educate them generally and the only way to lead them to want to learn English. He noted that past attempts to teach Irish-speaking children in English, from the start, had failed. They must, because, although it was possible to force them to memorize and parrot English words, they could "never catch the spirit of the language". (p. 46.) On the influence of universities when situated at several locations in a country: Bryce was very opposed to establishing a central university and suggested that Oxbridge be dispersed around the country so as to have a greater more beneficial influence, an idea which, perhaps, still has considerable merit. "Were the four universities of Scotland transferred, with all their architecture and endowments", he wrote, "to a central spot...the literature of the extremities

It was to these two main themes that Bryce returned in 1840.⁴⁰ He began, in fact, by referring specifically to his 1828 pamphlet and stating that his basic views had not altered since its publication. He was, however, much less hopeful than he had been twelve years before, that the government would act in any really constructive way in education or that the public could appreciate the need for it to do so. "I have seen enough of statesmen and their views", he told his audience, "to enable me to warn you that the utmost you have to expect from them is a little better pay as barber-surgeons".⁴¹ Politicians were notable in their educational pronouncements for "telling men that they are to put forth every effort of body and mind for the benefit of the public, but that this same public will

would languish. Were the different colleges which are clustered together in Oxford and Cambridge, detached and planted up and down the kingdom...their students, and consequently the literature of England, would be multiplied immensely". (p. 37). On the problem of religious instruction in the schools: Bryce felt that it was impossible to combine religious and "ordinary" education in Ireland and that, therefore, they should be provided separately. "We are inclined to believe", he went on, "that, at present, by far the best way of proceeding would be to make no regulation about religious instruction at all. Leave it to the feeling of each neighbourhood; and, in the Act of Parliament, constituting the schools, let not one word be said about it, either in the way of injunction, prohibition, or regulation. Thus, an opening will be left for its introduction, if the people are agreed upon it; but if they cannot agree, one of two things will happen: either they will omit it altogether, and the matter will fall into the charge of Sabbath-schools; or else they will divide into two parties, set up an opposition school, quarrel violently for a few months, and in a few years be as good friends as ever, and the country will have two schools, in place of one". (p. 50).

40 R.J. Bryce, Address to the Ulster Teachers' Association (Belfast, 1840; reprinted London, 1845).

41 Ibid., p. 6, (emphasis his).

allow them to pine in neglect and indifference".⁴² In 1828, Bryce recalled, he had been hopeful that the public would develop an interest and enthusiasm for the improvement of education, but the experience of the intervening years had convinced him that, "the public in general have no idea whatever of what education is, and, as a natural consequence, they have not a proper feeling of its importance".⁴³ Nor were the managing bodies of denominational schools any more perceptive or forceful. "Accordingly you must look for a better state of things neither to Societies (i.e.: denominational school managers) nor to statesmen; - I repeat it, you must do the work yourselves".⁴⁴

His convictions about the kind of school system that was desirable were unshaken, but he was more concerned about calling the teachers to take whatever voluntary, independent action they could to improve their conditions, than in outlining a blueprint which depended on government implementation. Teachers, he reiterated, must "study their art philosophically",⁴⁵ and must unite as members of one profession to improve the quality of their work and their own position and status. The greatest obstacles to educational progress, he believed, was the "great gulph that is fixed between teachers of the higher and lower orders",⁴⁶ and he exhorted the

42 Ibid., p. 8.

43 Ibid., p. 9.

44 Ibid., (brackets mine).

45 Ibid., p. 4.

46 Ibid., p. 13.

U.T.A. to try to bridge this gulf wherever possible. Again, Scotland was the model he used as an example of a system in which teachers were united, where they could move from village schools to university chairs, and where, "consequently the humblest walks of the profession are very respectable".⁴⁷

III

It is striking, in examining the declared motivations and aims of the founders of the Educational Institute of Scotland, to see how similar their concerns were to those discussed by R.J. Bryce.

47 Ibid., p. 13. Possibly because of the disappointments of the intervening years, possibly because of the nature of his audience and the purpose of his address, Bryce's references to the Scottish educational system, particularly as it related to the role and position of the teacher, were more glowing and less balanced than in the earlier pamphlet: "In Scotland a man may go from the very lowest to the highest degree of teaching, as well as in respectability and emolument" (p. 14); "It is an extraordinary fact that the best teachers of Scotland seldom leave their native country...it is generally speaking (I know there are exceptions) only the inferior Scottish teachers who emigrate; because the profession as a profession, meets with more encouragement at home". (p. 14). In any case, Bryce's remarks, according to the Belfast News-Letter, were listened to attentively and "frequently interrupted by bursts of applause" (p. 15), and the Ulster Teachers' Association was officially established. It defined its purposes rather specifically and narrowly, these being twofold, - "mutual improvement and adequate remuneration" - and cautioned that, "any topic not bearing upon these shall not be entertained by the Association" (p. 15 - Appendix - Rules and Regulations). It declared itself as recognizing, "as a fundamental principle, that the Christian Religion is the basis of all good morals" (p. 16). It admitted members by ballot, "one black bean in five to exclude" and set its only requirement as being that the candidate have a good character (p. 16). Whether any Roman Catholics joined, or wanted to, I was unable to determine. Among Protestants it was non-denominational. It also admitted women, an unusual innovation for the period. The U.T.A. apparently established several branches, sponsored lectures on educational subjects and tutorials for young teachers, and provided a list of job vacancies for its members. It functioned until about 1858 (Belford, E.I.S., p. 18).

The E.I.S. organizers articulated these concerns in two documents, one a covering letter sent out with the Edinburgh teachers' resolutions in March 1847⁴⁸ and the other, an anonymous article which appeared in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine in December of that year.⁴⁹ The letter, signed by the corresponding secretary, George Ferguson, the Classics Master at the Edinburgh Academy,⁵⁰ emphasized the poor economic situation and inferior status of the teacher and the need to improve them. It described the rise of other professions and the general prosperity of all groups in the country, with one exception: "The Schoolmaster, in Scotland at least, still occupies his former humble and unhonoured position, unnoticed by the great, and regarded as an inferior by the middle-classes".⁵¹ In the overall economic progress of Scotland "he alone has not participated in the general prosperity".⁵² Much of the blame, lay with the teachers themselves who, "while the members of every other liberal profession have broken through the trammels which formerly fettered

48 Belford, E.I.S., pp. 61-70.

49 Reid, "Educational Institute".

50 Although the letter was signed by Ferguson, its contents undoubtedly were approved by his colleagues before it was sent out. Ferguson was another example of the high calibre of the teachers behind the establishment of the E.I.S. He was an M.A. from Edinburgh University and had been Classics Master at the Edinburgh Academy since 1824. In November, 1847, Ferguson was appointed Professor of Humanity at King's College, Aberdeen, a post he held until his retirement in 1860. In the same year he was awarded an LLD by the University of Aberdeen. Despite his change of status, however, Ferguson continued to serve as the Educational Institute's Secretary until the 1860's. Information, from Fasti of King's College and Faculty Minutes, contained in a letter from M. Matthews, Assistant Librarian, King's College Library, University of Aberdeen, 16 April 1969.

51 Belford, E.I.S. p. 66.

52 Ibid., p. 67.

them, ...have rested satisfied with the empty praise which has been liberally bestowed upon them".⁵³ The time was now ripe, however, with education such a prominent issue of the day, for the teachers to imitate other professions, rectify their past apathy, and gain eminence and respect. In the example used, one can detect perhaps the hand of James Bryce, since it was his brother's favorite, the rise of the surgeons. They had first "adopted the necessary means of improving their professional skill" and had then placed before the public a "strong and well-merited claim". The result had been that, from their former lowly association with the barbers, they had established themselves as a "separate and independent body" controlling and certifying their own members, equal in status to their former superiors, the physicians. The teachers could do the same. Their knowledge and skills "are not inferior to the Surgeons" and if they united and followed the same strategy, they could achieve the same result. "It would be difficult to show", the letter contended, "why they should not fix the standard of professional attainment, license their own members, and regulate the matters which concern their peculiar duties and interests, as well as the Physicians, Surgeons, Clergy, Lawyers or any other professional body".⁵⁴ As

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 68. The accompanying Resolutions stressed the same points. Beginning by describing the importance and influence of the teacher's office, and the necessity of maintaining high standards in filling it, the first resolution continued: "... as there is no organized body in Scotland whose duty it is to ascertain and certify the qualifications of those intending to enter upon this office; and whose attestation shall be sufficient recommendation to the individual and guarantee to his employers, the Teachers of Scotland, agreeably to the practice of other liberal professions, resolve to unite for the purpose of supplying this defect in the educational arrangements of the Country, and of thereby increasing their efficiency, improving

expressed in this letter, then, the primary aim was clearly the improvement of the economic, educational, and social position of the teacher through broad united action and control of their own profession.⁵⁵

The appeal went on, however, to indicate a broader, more public concern as well:

But the Association does not aim merely at selfish purposes; while it points to the elevation of the social grade of the Teacher, it looks forward to that as the necessary result of higher attainments, and increased professional skill...It will be the duty of the Association to devise the best means of improving the education of the country, and of diffusing among the members a knowledge of the most approved methods of practical teaching.⁵⁶

Finally the circular closed with a rather tart comment about the Scottish tradition of education, particularly as it related to the teachers:

Scotland, though, in other respects, supposed to be in advance of either of the sister kingdoms in matters of education, has been the last to make a combined effort to improve the social condition of the Teacher, and to raise the general standard of education.⁵⁷

The magazine article, entitled "The Educational Institute of Scotland: Its Origin, History and Objects", was written by Alexander

their condition, and raising the standard of Education in general". (p. 71). Resolution 5, declared the intention of the proposed organization to apply for a Royal Charter incorporating its Members and constituting them the legal organization of the Teachers of Scotland, with power to grant Diplomas according to their own regulation. (p. 73).

55 The association was "to embrace Teachers belonging to all Christian Denominations, and furnish ground on which they may meet for the purpose of promoting the general welfare without compromising their individual opinions". Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., p. 70.

Reid⁵⁸ the Rector of the Circus-Place School in Edinburgh, and was an attempt to explain to the public in general what the new organization was about. Its tone and emphasis was significantly different than the Ferguson letter, being both more militant and more public spirited.

Reid began by observing that it was not often that "the brethren of the scholastic profession have attempted to force themselves on public notice".⁵⁹ On the contrary, teachers were usually quiet, inoffensive and dedicated to their tasks. A number of factors however had altered this amiable state of mind and, like meek animals driven to fury, "so this retiring and passive body of men, when once roused to vindicate their claims upon society, may urge them with irresistible energy and perserverance".⁶⁰ Reid then went on to briefly trace the organizational background of the E.I.S., mentioning the example of the Ulster Teachers' Association and the College of Preceptors, and outlining the events beginning in late 1846 and culminating in the founding convention in Edinburgh the following September. He then turned his attention to the grievances which had produced this remarkably rapid and unified effort on the the part of the teachers, grievances he claimed which lay deep in the Scottish educational situation.

58 Alexander Reid (-1860): Edinburgh teacher and writer; one of the first vice-presidents of the E.I.S.; mentioned as author of the article in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine in E.I.S. Minutes. Proceedings of the Interim Committee of Management, 25 December, 1847.

59 Reid, "Educational Institute", p. 11.

60 Ibid.

The basic one, as in Ferguson's letter, was that "among teachers of all grades and denominations, there has long been a growing feeling of their degraded social position", an increasing awareness that, "as a class, teachers occupy a position far below that of any other body of educated and professional men in Scotland".⁶¹ Poverty and an inferior standard of entrance into teaching had traditionally been two reasons for this low status, but now, with an increasing public agreement on the great importance of education and with an improvement in the calibre of men being attracted into teaching, one grievance in particular rankled; that was, the indifference with which the teacher's professional opinions and advice were treated. In words that echoed R.J. Bryce's comments twenty years before on the neglect of teachers' views by those concerned with educational matters, Reid charged:

Even on subjects connected with their own avocations they are not considered worthy of being consulted. If, on some educational question, evidence is being given before a committee of Parliament, lectures are to be delivered to a philosophical institution, or a public demonstration is to be made, lawyers, professors, clergymen, booksellers, any theorist who has written a letter or published a pamphlet on education, but who could no more conduct a class of fifty boys than he could command the channel fleet, are summoned to London, requested to give a short course, or invited to the platform; but no person seems to think that the opinion of practical teachers is worth having.⁶²

Teachers did not even seem to be prime candidates for appointment

61 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

62 *Ibid.* "Education", he adds later, "is a subject on which everyone thinks he is qualified to give an opinion; and teaching is an art which, it is thought, anyone may practice". (p. 13)

as inspectors of schools. In various schemes proposed or enacted for Scottish education in recent years no provision had ever been made "for practical educational questions being left to the decision of practical men",⁶³ and "not one of the many eminent teachers whom Scotland contains has ever been consulted".⁶⁴ Rather, the entire direction and execution of these plans rested "with a committee and with church courts, which do not necessarily contain a single individual professionally conversant either with the art or the science of education". "What", Reid asked, "would be thought of any other scheme, from the law and medical departments of which all lawyers and physicians were excluded".⁶⁵

The Educational Institute, Reid made it clear, was not just interested in improving the economic and social position of the teacher, but, through "professional union", would strive to improve education as a whole:

In other words, they aim, first, at self-improvement, which they can accomplish without external aid; secondly, at self-government, which they wish to have legalized by a charter from the Crown, constituting them a separate profession; and, thirdly, at the elevation of the whole matter and manner of education throughout the country.⁶⁶

63 Ibid., p. 12.

64 Ibid., p. 13.

65 Ibid. In this, Reid contended, Scotland compared badly with a number of European countries. "It is not so in those continental states where the greatest and most successful efforts have been made for the education of the people. There the affairs of education are conducted by men engaged in education". (p. 13.)

66 Ibid., p. 14.

After 1847, admittance to membership would be by examination only and ranked Diplomas would be awarded as a result of each candidate's performance. These Diplomas would specify the branches in which a teacher had been examined and the proficiency he had demonstrated. Thus, the diploma would be "not only evidence of the standing which the possessor of it holds in the profession, but a certificate of the precise department in teaching which he is qualified to fill".⁶⁷ Reid looked forward to this diploma attaining a very high reputation:

The time may come when the fact of his having passed the examining Board of the Educational Institute will be reckoned a sufficient recommendation to any teacher, but in the meanwhile, the agency of the Institute may...cooperate most beneficially with all other electing and superintending bodies...and, therefore, we trust, that from them the Institute will receive all countenance and support.⁶⁸

In the wider sphere, Reid believed that the Institute could play an important role in the educational controversies that were so prominent in the 1840's:

A numerous body of men of all Christian denominations, harmoniously cooperating for the objects already specified, may do much to counteract that spirit of sectarianism, which, in the opinion of many, is rather fostered than discouraged by recent educational operations and enactments.⁶⁹

Finally, like Ferguson, Reid referred to the Scottish tradition of education, but in a more hopeful way:

It was the first country which could boast for a national system of schools; the Scottish nation was long the best educated in Europe;

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., p. 15.

69 Ibid., p. 16.

and in Scotland will have been formed the first really national association of teachers, and teaching will have been first raised to its proper dignity of being a distinct learned profession.⁷⁰

IV

The initial success of the Educational Institute of Scotland in attracting to its membership a large number of teachers, representative of all types and conditions of schools, was impressive. In December of 1847, Schmitz reported that the membership had reached 1300 and that between two and three hundred applications were being considered.⁷¹ At the Annual Meeting the next year, the secretary announced that 1689 certificates of membership had been issued to teachers organized into 38 local associations.⁷² The Royal Charter of 1851 claimed that the E.I.S. represented 1800 Scottish teachers,⁷³ and a speaker in 1852 gave the membership figures, to that date, as 1931 teachers in 65 local associations.⁷⁴ James Bryce, in his presidential address to the Institute in 1853, put its strength at

70 Ibid.

71 E.I.S., Proceedings of Interim Committee of Management.

72 E.I.S., Proceedings of the Second General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1848). Apparently a great many teachers were initially admitted as "Members", with no rank assigned to them (i.e.: Junior or Senior Associate, or Fellow).

73 E.I.S., Warrant of Royal Charter and Rules and Regulations (Edinburgh, 1851).

74 P. Stratton, "Toast to the E.I.S.", SELJ (February, 1853), pp. 237-240.

about 2000 members in 60 local associations.⁷⁵ It seems likely, however, that these last few estimates were somewhat more hopeful than accurate and that the actual membership during the early 1850's was closer to 1500 than 2000.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, in its size, its quality, and its composition, the membership the Institute attracted from the outset was a remarkable demonstration by Scottish teachers of their concern about their position and role and of their determination to have a voice in decisions affecting that position and role, if not in more general educational matters as well.

Though the efforts and aspirations of the teachers behind the formation of the EIS immediately received enthusiastic support from a large number of their colleagues, it may be doubted that the emergence of an organization of Scottish teachers in 1847 was cordially received in all quarters. Indeed, at least three sources of opposition to any attempt by teachers to gain control of their own occupation come readily to mind. The patrons and managers of Scottish schools were likely to view with the deepest suspicion any interference with what they considered their right to appoint whomever they wished to a teaching post, especially if such interference was likely to cost them more money. In his Presidential Address to the Institute in 1851, William Hunter, the Rector of Ayr Academy, referred to the suspicions of the school managers and sought to allay them:

75 James Bryce, Address at the Annual Meeting of the E.I.S. (Edinburgh, 1853).

76 In 1854, in contrast to Bryce, A.D. Robertson gave the membership figures as 1200 in 58 local associations. A.D. Robertson, "Presidential Address, EIS-1854", SELJ (October 1854).

But though our intentions have been approved by many, whose good opinion we value, certain persons have averred that the Institute designs to deprive Patrons of their rights. We state that our object is to furnish to the Patrons a guarantee of the acquirements and fitness of teachers for the duties required of them. Whence, then, this discrepancy? It is well known that individuals, whose motives we wish not to scan, whispered that our aim was to become electors. But the calumny has been exposed; the slanders seek the shade; and parties once deceived, now plainly avow that the objects of the Institute are 'laudable' and 'deserving of encouragement'.⁷⁷

The clergy, as well, was likely to exhibit jealousy and resentment about the claims of the teachers for a degree of independence from their former mentors and a share with them in deciding educational matters. One prominent clergyman, in 1850, complained that a member of the Educational Institute "seems to have thought that a meeting of Schoolmasters was the place for administering a smart lecture to the church, and I dare say, ...we may lay our account to get warnings and lessons as often as we need them, when the boards of Teachers and Professors are set up and the 9000 Schoolmasters are embodied and organized in the great Educational confederacy".⁷⁸ Another teacher, writing in 1855, complained of the coolness of the clergy towards the E.I.S.:

77 E.I.S., Proceedings of the Fifth General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1851), p. 4. For example one patron, Lord Viscount Strathallan, commented favourably on the behaviour of an incumbent schoolmaster: "Mr. Peterkin is a man who attends to his own business, and to that of no one else". "Obituary of John Peterkin", SELJ (April, 1855), p. 174. The observation may be taken as representative of the views of school managers regarding the proper department of teachers. Their "business" certainly did not include matters of general school policy.

78 E.I.S., Proceedings of the Fourth General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1850), p. . The teacher complained of was likely William Gunn. President James Cumming quoted this complaint in his retiring address, but went on to defend the right of teachers to express their opinions freely, especially among their colleagues, just

How many clergymen, since the setting up of our Institute, have attended our general or local meetings? Or have they not rather looked on us with jealousy and distrust and deemed us unworthy of any countenance?⁷⁹

Finally, the government, despite Kay-Shuttleworth's disclaimers about obstructing the progress of Scottish education, was unlikely to suspend its newly announced system of certifying and aiding teachers simply because a group of Scottish teachers had appeared who claimed to be able to do the job. The nature and impact of the government's opposition will be discussed below. Here, it is enough to note that, as in all educational matters, a special concession or measure affecting Scottish interests might be taken and used as a precedent in the tortured and explosive English setting. The government was, therefore, very wary about granting such a concession and, having just managed to quietly install one system which was having a direct impact on the schools and the teachers, was reluctant to jeopardize its influence, no matter how worthy of support the E.I.S. might be.

There were, to be sure, a few voices which welcomed the appearance of the E.I.S., but very few. Most of the Institute's friends were not its champions. Though Schmitz reported to the first meeting of the General Committee of Management in December, 1847, that it had attracted wide public comment in the press, almost all

as ministers were wont to do in presbytery. Cumming himself was a clergyman, Rector of the Glasgow Academy and, later, the first government inspector of the Free Church schools in Scotland (1851-1874). He maintained, in his remarks, that there was no real diversity between the schoolmaster and the clergyman, though the evidence is, I think, somewhat to the contrary.

79 "Our Local Associations", SELJ (April, 1855), p. 157.

of it favourable,⁸⁰ the E.I.S. did not get much notice in the newspapers. The Scotsman, the Edinburgh Evening Courant, and The Witness, for examples, carried full reports of its annual meetings, but very seldom made any editorial comment concerning the E.I.S.⁸¹ Since its enemies were content to remain silent until their own positions were threatened by any real progress by the teachers, the chilly atmosphere in which the Institute found itself from the beginning was much as one teacher described it in 1854:

We have no open declared enemies - but assuredly we have no friends; and at the present moment, many would rejoice...at our fall.⁸²

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- 80 E.I.S., Proceedings of Interim Committee of Management. The exception, apparently, was an attack in a Fifeshire paper, but Schmitz gave no details.
- 81 These reports, from their similarity to the official minutes and proceedings of the E.I.S. were probably supplied by the secretary. It would require a more extensive survey of the Scottish press to determine conclusively that the EIS received little coverage and it is possible that it received more attention in the local, provincial press than in the metropolitan journals. Nevertheless my impression is that little notice was taken of it. Similarly among those writers, particularly clergymen, who took a prominent part in the pamphlet war on the subject of educational reform, the E.I.S. is very rarely mentioned. For example, the Rev. William Fraser who wrote in favour of reform and who advocated some of the same improvements the EIS supported made no reference to the Institute. In an address to the graduating class at the Glasgow Free Church Normal School in 1861, Fraser urged his audience to become well-informed on educational questions and to seek wide professional association. Teachers had never deserved to exert an influence on educational policy "because educated teachers have never yet succeeded in establishing a professional organization and status such as lawyers, doctors and clergymen sustained". William Fraser, The Educational Equipment of the Trained Teacher (Edinburgh, 1861), p. 10. Yet, there was no acknowledgement of the Institute's attempt to do precisely this.
- 82 "Present Position and Duty of the Educational Institute of Scotland", SELJ (March, 1854), p. 256. One notable exception to this statement was Charles Cowan, the M.P. for Edinburgh. At the inaugural meeting of the National Education Association in 1850, Cowan singled out the E.I.S. for generous public praise, an occurrence so rare as to warrant quoting his remarks: "Mr. Cowan concluded by saying that the felt great pleasure in

In assessing the position and strength of the E.I.S. in the late 1840's and early 1850's it should not be overlooked that it also faced internal problems, as well as external enmities. It was clear from the beginning that not all its members shared all its aims to the same extent. The membership represented roughly three main blocs or types of teacher.⁸³ The largest single group was the parochial schoolmaster's which constituted about one third of the total.⁸⁴ Another, but much less cohesive third was made up of other types of 'elementary' school teachers, the majority of whom were connected with the Free Church.⁸⁵ Higher level Scottish

watching the rise and progress of the Scottish Educational Institute. It was certainly delightful in these times, when so many opinions existed on the subject of education, to see accomplished and intellectual instructors of youth associated together, with a catholic spirit, for the purpose of raising the status of the teacher to a far higher position in the scale of society, and also in obtaining better remuneration for him. He trusted they would be successful in their object, and that they would be the means of producing a far better state of things in connection with the Educational Institutions of Scotland" (Cheers)". Scotsman, 9 April 1850.

- 83 E.I.S., List of Members (1853-54), (Aberdeen, 1854). This was the most complete return of the Institute's membership during this period. The lists give totals and some idea of the affiliations of the teachers, though these identifications are often unclear. About 1300 names are listed, organized into 58 local associations. The ten largest associations were: Edinburgh (203); Glasgow (75); Stirling (48); Greenock (37); Ayr (37); Dundee (36); Linlithgow (32); Paisley (31); Aberdeen (30); and Hamilton (30). The three smallest branches were Forres, Langholm, and Lewis with 6 members each.
- 84 Ibid. About 475 names appear to be of parochial schoolmasters. In addition there were 50 or so members teaching in schools connected with the Church of Scotland, which would likely further add to the strength of the parish group.
- 85 Ibid. Only 94 of the 440 names I classified in this category were clearly identified as Free Church teachers, but I think that number is much too low.

teachers accounted for about one quarter of the membership,⁸⁶ with the remainder being clergymen, professors, school inspectors and normal school masters.⁸⁷ As articulated in Ferguson's letter and Reid's article, there were three main areas of concern for Scottish teachers. The first was a concern about the economic position of the teacher and how it might be improved. The second was a concern about the maintenance and improvement of the standard of education, and included such matters as the education of teachers, the promotion of sound teaching principles and methods, and the control of entrance and certification of teachers. The third was a concern about the organization and functioning of the education system, about educational policies in general. Here, the teachers were concerned with the independence of their occupation, with the opportunities for the appointment and promotion of teachers to important educational posts in the growing educational civil service, and with the contribution teachers could make to public questions concerning educational policy.

In examining the attitudes of the main groups of teachers involved in the Educational Institute, it becomes clear that the burgh and 'higher level' urban teachers, who played the most central and

86 Ibid. These comprised 200 High School, Grammar School, or Academy masters, 40 Rectors and 65 special subject teachers. The denominational affiliations of these teachers are impossible to identify, other than to say that they were various. As a group these teachers were the most independent-minded of all and their occupational loyalty made them less subject to the denominational pressures the other schoolmasters felt so keenly. They were certainly very active in the affairs of the Institute: an examination of the E.I.S. executive lists, through the first ten years of its existence, reveals that seven of its presidents were either rectors (3) or masters (4). Similarly, of the 24 men who served as EIS vice-presidents during this period, 16 were either rectors (5) or masters (11).

87 Ibid. There were 9 clergymen, 11 professors, four government school inspectors, and 11 normal school masters.

active role in setting up the E.I.S., were motivated by all three areas of concern. If anything, they were more exercised by the second and third areas of concern than the first. It will be recalled that these teachers occupied the most favored positions in the field of teaching. Their social background was solidly middle-class, they were mostly university graduates, and they were more economically favoured than other Scottish teachers. Their concern was probably less with achieving a reasonable economic position and social status, than it was protecting, maintaining and improving their traditionally comfortable income-level and respected social position from the decline it seemed to be experiencing, in comparison, at least, with other occupational groups which were clearly on the rise. They tended therefore to emphasize the problems of attracting men of quality to their occupation, of training and certifying them properly, and of ensuring that they would have the independence to exert their talents once appointed to a teaching post. They felt strongly that their knowledge, talent, and experience entitled them to occupy the increasing number of administrative posts in the educational system and to speak out on public issues of educational policy. They did, however, feel a genuine sense of unity with other Scottish teachers in less favoured circumstances and fully supported efforts to improve their economic situation, at the same time that they themselves were chiefly concerned with these more advanced questions of status, and influence.

The Free Church, and other dissenting and independent teachers, one would have to say, were concerned, as a first priority, with economic matters. Their position was, by any standards, as we saw above, precarious. That said, it is also true that their concerns

included the broader issues as well. They had demonstrated a desire to improve their own teaching methods and were interested in how teachers were educated and admitted into the occupation. They shared the resentment of the shackles of outside and unsympathetic management and the desire for greater independence. Finally, they were concerned with the public issues of educational policy, both because of a concern about the educational welfare of the country and because the outcome of the controversy would vitally effect their own position and status. That is to say, that the reorganization of Scottish education would bear directly on their income, their working conditions, their independence, their education and training, and all the other problems described above.⁸⁸

Finally, one must consider the other main element in the membership of the Educational Institute, the parish teachers. Here too, we may say that the parochial teachers were trying to protect and improve a traditionally favoured position. True, they were at a lower level on every count than the burgh teachers, but their economic position and certain aspects of their working conditions had advantages not enjoyed by the Free Church or other types of teachers. Like teachers in general, however, they were concerned with raising their incomes, increasing their independence, and improving both the quality of education and their own status. Their common concern stopped short, however, of the third area of concern, that of general educational policy. The Church of Scotland, as we shall see, was adamantly and resourcefully against any major reorganization of

88 According to Belford all of the Local associations of Free Church teachers which had been established by 1847, joined the Institute. (p. 22).

education that would alter the position of her parochial school system. The parochial teachers, too, could not see how any radical change could occur without adversely affecting their positions. It was, therefore, on this ground, that the major area of tension existed among the teachers involved in the establishment of the E.I.S.

This tension was evident from the start. Ferguson's letter and Reid's article for example illustrate what might be termed the 'narrow' and the 'broad' interpretation of the purposes and aims of the Educational Institute. Ferguson's appeal for support, it will be noted, emphasized the fundamental issues of economic position and social status. Teachers should unite in order to improve their own knowledge and teaching methods and to gain control over the entrance and quality of the persons wishing to teach. As the standards rose, teachers would be able to improve their incomes and increase their influence. Little mention is made, however, of E.I.S. participation and influence in educational questions of a wider and more controversial nature.⁸⁹ In Reid's article, by contrast, it is exactly this last aspect of the E.I.S.' possible role that is played up. That is not to say that the bread-and-butter issues are not included, but they are dealt with rather summarily. What really interests and enthuses Reid is the role that teachers could, indeed ought to, play in issues of broad educational policy.

89 The letter did state that it would be the "duty of the Association to devise the best means of improving the education of the country..." (Belford, EIS, p. 73) so the issue was not ignored, but, rather, was muted. Ferguson and Reid were both, it should be noted, strong advocates of a 'broad' interpretation of the Institute's role, but the letter signed by the Ferguson, as corresponding secretary, did have a significantly different emphasis than Reid's article.

The same tension was illustrated even more clearly at the E.I.S. Inaugural meeting. The chairman was Dr. Leonhard Schmitz, the highly respected Rector of the High School and one of the leaders of the Edinburgh group of teachers who had been instrumental in establishing the Institute.⁹⁰ He argued forcefully for their broad and militant conception of the Institute in his remarks to the 600 or so assembled teachers.⁹¹ The familiar themes of teacher resentment and frustration resulting from their low incomes, inferior status, and lack of influence,⁹² and of teacher determination to take steps, similar to those taken by other professions, to improve their situation through united action and mutual assistance,⁹³ were reiterated.

90 It is significant of both Schmitz' interest and of the prestige of the High School that the E.I.S. first met there and continued to hold its annual meeting there for many many years.

91 I was unable to locate the official accounts of this first general meeting. Fortunately the full text of Schmitz' speech is printed in Belford, E.I.S. (pp. 82-85), and a complete account of the proceedings was carried in the Edinburgh Evening Courant of Monday, 20 September, 1847. [hereafter cites as Courant].

92 "It was believed that a person good for nothing else was good enough for a Schoolmaster; and parents accordingly looked upon Schoolmasters as a sort of nurse for naughty children - who received wages for their services and ought not to meddle with the affairs of the world". Belford, E.I.S., p. 82. Teachers were "treated little better than servants or menials or, as some facetious professor recently put it, were regarded only as half-men". Courant, 20 September, 1847.

93 "What, therefore, is needed first of all is the confidence of the public; we must by our conduct and by our acts endeavour to gain that confidence; for, if that be obtained, it will become a matter of course that no Teacher will or can be employed who does not go forth with our recommendation". Belford, E.I.S., p. 84. If the government and school managers would make teaching economically attractive, "we shall take care that there will be a sufficient number of qualified teachers from among whom candidates for office may be chosen - that no unworthy members intrude themselves into the profession". Ibid., p. 85.

But Schmitz devoted most of his attention to the question of the overall state of education in the country:

Every one of you is aware of the insurmountable obstacles which the Government has met within its several attempts, as well as the ill-digested plans it has proposed from time to time, though I must say they arose from timidity and a fear of offending certain powerful parties in the State, more than from any ill-intention. No satisfactory results have been gained, and matters are left in an unsettled state.⁹⁴

According to Schmitz this sense of being adrift in a sea of educational controversy and confusion had provided the teachers with one of the main stimuli to organize themselves. He noted the establishment of the Ulster Teachers' Association and the College of Preceptors but concluded that the former was on too small a scale and the latter on too narrow a base⁹⁵ to really come to grips with or effectively influence the organization of national education. "For Scotland", Schmitz declared, "was reserved the glory of forming a truly national association of teachers of all denominations in the country",⁹⁶ and it was this fact that would enable it to play a major role in the educational direction of Scotland, if it were bold enough to exert its influence.

Schmitz was very aware of the Scottish tradition of education and was careful to pay tribute to the parish and burgh schools. Though certain defects had become apparent, he maintained, those

94 Belford, E.I.S., p. 83.

95 Schmitz attacked the 'public' and middle-class teachers in England for failing to support the College of Preceptors - an abstention, he said, due to the fact that "their nests are built in such secure places, and are so well-feathered". Ibid., p. 83.

96 Courant, 20 September, 1847.

schools still provided the basis necessary for further improvement and were still "a fertile soil, which it is only necessary to plough and work well, in order to reap the noblest fruits".⁹⁷ The government and public, he believed, should be grateful to the Institute for pledging itself to see that education "shall be conducted on principles most advantageous to the community" and the teachers could do much to alleviate the "many bitter feelings which have been excited by recent proceedings" and to avert "any danger or humiliation that may be impending".⁹⁸ In his peroration, Schmitz called on the members of the Institute to protect and strengthen the national educational heritage:

Scotland was the first country in the world in which a regular system of education was established...Scotland also is the first country in the world that has a National Association of all her teachers, resolved and determined to provide their country with the best system of education they can devise and to accomplish an object which several successive Governments have been unable to arrive at. I feel convinced that this day will form a great epoch in the history of education in Scotland, and if we carry out our plans well, we shall secure to ourselves the gratitude not only of our own contemporaries, but of all time to come. May God bless our work!⁹⁹

No sooner had this call to arms been issued, however, than the leader of the parochial teachers rose to sound a warning note. The Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund met annually in September in Edinburgh.¹⁰⁰

97 Belford, E.I.S., p. 83.

98 Courant, 20 September, 1847.

99 Ibid.

100 This was undoubtedly one reason why that site and time of year was chosen for the EIS annual meetings.

On this occasion about 200 delegates had gathered on Thursday, September 20, to conduct their business¹⁰¹ and had agreed to meet again on the following Saturday morning to consider joining the new teachers' organization. Their decision was affirmative, but, as William Knox¹⁰² put it, they did have certain reservations. "No difference of opinion has ever been entertained with regard to the objects which this Institute had in view", he told his audience. "There were, however, great doubts entertained as to the best means by which these objects could be accomplished". Despite these doubts, the parish teachers, Knox emphasized, were not motivated by narrow interests and were prepared to cooperate with the Institute and to support it in "raising the status of teachers, promoting the good of the professors, and through them, the good of the public and of society at large".¹⁰³ There, for the moment at least, the matter was left, and the meeting went on to consider and approve the organizational details and policy decisions previously drafted and to elect a slate of officers.

101 One important item of that business, significantly, had been the parish teachers' rejection of the government's new grants to teachers scheme (see above, Chapter 4), apparently on the grounds that the examination acquirements were insulting and out of character with Scottish custom. (See the Courant, Saturday, 18 September 1847, and an editorial in The Scotsman supporting their stand. Wednesday, 22 September 1847).

102 William Knox (1799-1874): the parochial schoolmaster of St. Ninian's, near Stirling, from 1823 to 1873; the leader of the parish teachers through much of this period; chosen as the second president of the E.I.S. (1848-49); an advocate of teacher independence but a strong opponent of E.I.S. involvement in the national education controversy. (See Appendix:A: Biographical Notes for further information).

103 Courant, 20 September, 1847.

VI

The organization officially established that Saturday in 1847 was a relatively straightforward and uncomplicated one. The Annual General Meeting was to be held in late September¹⁰⁴ and one of its tasks was to elect a General Committee of Management, consisting of 48 members plus the executive to carry on the business of the Institute throughout the year. This Management Committee was to meet three times a year - in December, May, and just before the September general meeting - and had wide discretionary power to take any action or appoint any sub-committees it thought necessary.¹⁰⁵ A fifteen man Finance Committee, selected by the Management Committee from among its numbers, was to supervise and control both the central and the local collection and disbursement of monies.¹⁰⁶

In keeping with its declared aim of providing the public with firm assurance of a teacher's qualifications and attainments, the most elaborate structure the E.I.S. developed was that dealing with its exam and admittance procedures. A special 20-man Board of Examiners, the members of which were all to be senior and highly qualified members, was set up to devise and supervise a range of exams which would govern the admittance and ranking of candidates

104 Specifically on the Saturday following the third Friday of that month. The annual general meeting was to be attended by the executive of the E.I.S., the executive of the local associations and one delegate for every six members of each local association. Emergency meetings could be summoned on the request of forty members. E.I.S., Royal Charter and Rules and Regulations.

105 Ibid. The quorum of the Committee of Management was only nine. One-third of the Committee was to retire annually.

106 Ibid. The annual dues of the E.I.S. were 5 shillings, half to the central organization and half to the local association.

for membership in the E.I.S.¹⁰⁷ The exams covered all the subjects in the regular curriculum, and included science, music, drawing and modern languages. On the basis of his performance on the appropriate set of exams, the candidate was to be admitted to membership in the E.I.S. at one of three ranks. Young and relatively inexperienced teachers¹⁰⁸ were admitted as Junior Associates. Teachers with at least five years teaching, or three years teaching and two sessions at the university, were admitted as Senior Associates. At the top, was the rank of Fellow. These were elected annually by a meeting of the other Fellows on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners or of Local Associations, and were to be "bestowed upon only those Members who have attained to a prominent place in the profession".¹⁰⁹ In order to be eligible for election as a Fellow, a candidate must have either taught for twelve years "publicly and satisfactorily" or have taught eight years and "gone through a complete course of four years at a University".¹¹⁰

"The Institute believes the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God, considers religious training a supreme importance in the Education of the young, and regards it as the duty of Teachers to impart religious instruction to the pupils entrusted to their care, so far as opportunity admits and

107 Ibid. The original Board of Examiners which had the formidable task of devising all these exams was considerably larger.

108 Ibid. Candidates had to be at least 18 years old and to have taught at least two years.

109 Ibid., p. 23.

110 Ibid. Entry fees varied according to the rank: 1 guinea for Junior Associates; 1 1/2 guineas for Senior Associates; 2 guineas for Fellows.

circumstances require...".¹¹¹ So ran the declaration later contained in the Rules and Regulations, but within this solidly Christian framework the E.I.S. stressed its multi-denominational character and was careful to eschew any "ecclesiastical jurisdiction", leaving doctrinal questions up to each individual and church.¹¹²

The executive was to consist of the President, six Vice-Presidents, the senior two of whom were to retire annually, a secretary and a Treasurer. At the beginning of each annual general meeting the retiring president was to give an address and, at its conclusion, present an executive slate for approval for the forthcoming year.¹¹³ Leonhard Schmitz was chosen unanimously as the first president for 1847-48 along with William Knox and James Melvin, James Bryce, Alexander Reid, and James

111 Ibid., p. 16.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid. The executive was always presented by the outgoing President as a slate and was never, during the twenty or so years included in this study, opposed. In 1866, the outgoing president, W. Kennedy of Moray House, told the general meeting that he had consulted several senior members "but that no name had been put in his hands, and in these circumstances he left the nomination in the hands of the meeting". E.I.S., Minute Book, II, p. 500. One name was nominated and unanimously approved.

Cumming, as his vice-presidents.¹¹⁴ William Cooper, Mathematics Master at the High School in Edinburgh, was elected as Treasurer and Professor Ferguson as Secretary. With this distinguished leadership, with a sensible and well-organized structure and several expanded committees of teachers eager to set the Institute on a firm footing, with the support of all the major groups of teachers in Scotland, and with a rapidly increasing membership, the Educational Institute of Scotland, set out on its first year of existence, hopeful that the many obstacles it faced without and the unresolved differences it contained within could be dealt with successfully.

114 Why there were only 5 Vice-Presidents in the first executive, I have no idea. From then on it was always six.

Chapter 6

The Educational Institute of Scotland: The Early Years

I

That the membership of the Educational Institute of Scotland represented, in the late 1840's and the 1850's, the highest quality of Scottish teachers there is little doubt. As William Knox put it in 1849, "If the Institute does not include the whole of the Teachers of Scotland, it comprises at least the greater proportion of the elite of the profession."¹ These were the teachers most concerned about the educational and social issues raised by the founders of the Institute, the teachers who struggled hardest to overcome their traditional isolation in order to improve their knowledge and skills, as well as to improve their economic and social position. Self-improvement had been the first of the aims that Reid had outlined in his article, and self-improvement was for these first members of the E.I.S., a very important activity from the beginning.

In conjunction with its Annual Meetings, the Institute sponsored lectures by prominent teachers or professors on practical and theoretical educational questions. In 1849, for example, lectures were delivered by G. Macdonald, a Lecturer in English at the Edinburgh School of Arts on "Moral Training", by William Gunn on "The proper status of the Educator and the best means of attaining it", and by James Cumming on "The nature of the Education to be imparted, and the best mode of imparting it".² In 1850, Professor

1 E.I.S., Proceedings of the Third General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1849), p. 6.

2 Ibid.

Pillans gave two lectures on the use of the modified monitorial system and James Bryce talked on "Education and Philosophy".³ The following year, William Graham spoke on "Teaching English Composition",⁴ and these lectures, usually delivered on the Thursday or Friday evenings before the Saturday meeting, continued to be given through the years. In a more modest and more frequent way, this was the central activity of the local associations throughout the country. The consideration of such educational topics was a main item of most of their monthly or quarterly meetings. The Kirkcaldy Local Association Minute Book, for example, describes a meeting on January 27, 1849, where a local teacher presented a method of teaching grammar and gave a demonstration lesson to a group of pupils assembled for the purpose. After the lesson, the other teachers had a chance to question the pupils and then a general discussion ensued.⁵ At another meeting, one of the members described a system of mathematics exercises which effectively prevented the pupils from copying the answers from each other. The response to this revelation was extremely enthusiastic and the secretary urged other teachers to come forward with secrets from their store of tested techniques.⁶ In short, such activities

3 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1850.

4 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1851.

5 Kirkcaldy E.I.S., Minute Book, 27 January 1849.

6 Ibid., 28 April 1849. The Kirkcaldy Association, which seems to have been remarkably enterprising, even wrote to a number of publishers requesting complimentary copies of their books and received a favourable response from at least one, Oliver and Boyd, in Edinburgh.

in the local associations of the E.I.S. did much, as the Kirkcaldy Association's secretary hoped it would, "to correct the injurious effects of that unavoidable isolation to which Teachers, from their peculiar position, are more doomed than almost any other class of professional men".⁷

Such activities, however, were entirely voluntary, carried on in the teacher's time and at his expense, if any expense was incurred. This was a severely inhibiting factor in launching the more broadly based educational activities for the E.I.S. membership which would have complemented and added great vitality to the efforts of the local associations. In his presidential address of 1853, for example, James Bryce mentioned that plans had been worked out to conduct summer courses for young teachers.⁸ These plans, however, were never implemented. Another recommendation, the same year, that the E.I.S. establish libraries, to provide teachers with better collections than "the ephemeral trash which public libraries, even where they do exist, are too often stored"⁹, also came to naught. Repeated efforts in the late 1850's and early 1860's to get the Institute to establish a Model School, a Museum, and a Library of educational materials were almost as futile, although at the Annual Meeting in 1861 ten pounds each was granted to the Edinburgh and Glasgow Associations to add to the small library collections they had been building up independently, and to serve as a focus for

7 Ibid.

8 James Bryce, Address at Annual Meeting of E.I.S., 1853.

9 "Are, and Ought our Teachers to be, Literary Men?", SELJ (June, 1853), p. 425.

development of these facilities in the future.¹⁰ The main obstacle to the implementation of this and similar ideas was not a lack of enthusiasm, but a lack of funds.¹¹

Of all the proposals and schemes directed towards the self-improvement and mutual exchange of information and ideas among teachers, the most ambitious was the attempt to launch and maintain an educational journal. Its inauguration and continued appearance, if only for a limited period, was a considerable achievement; at the same time, the difficulties it encountered in trying to keep afloat, and its eventual failure, is significant of both the scarcity of resources available to the Institute and the internal diversity of interest that plagued the E.I.S. The Annual Meeting of 1848 had decided on the recommendation of the retiring president, Leonhard Schmitz, that the Educational Institute should sponsor a journal. Originally it was thought that the editor should be entirely independent of the Institute and that all views on educational affairs should be expressed because the views of the membership were so

- 10 Here again the Kirkcaldy Local Association took an active role presenting notions on this subject to the Management Committee or the Annual Meeting in 1859, 1860 and 1861. See E.I.S., Minute Book, II, (1854-1868) [E.I.S. Office, Edinburgh].
- 11 In 1856, for example, the Cupar Local Association proposed that the E.I.S. collect, digest, analyse and distribute the various annual published reports on the state of education in Scotland. The Management Committee praised the association for its initiative, and imagination, but recommended against the proposal. The subject was, of course, more controversial than the Library scheme (The Management Committee noted certain "difficulties generally connected with the subject") but equally important was the problem of finding a teacher able to undertake such a formidable task or the money necessary to print and distribute the results. E.I.S., Minute Book, II (1856), p. 268.

diverse that no single voice could represent its collective opinions.¹² It was not until 1852, however, that acceptable guidelines for the publication were worked out. The journal was to be called the Scottish Educational and Literary Journal and, William Graham,¹³ a private Music and Elocution teacher and President of the Institute in 1851-52, was selected as its editor.¹⁴

The general principles approved in 1852 had laid down that "Lectures or Essays on Education, either General or Special, shall form an essential part of each Number, and that all matters relating to Politics or Controversial Theology shall be expressly excluded".¹⁵ The question of content and format proved difficult to deal with, however, and further modifications were made before the first issue actually appeared in October of 1852.¹⁶ The introductory notice in the first issue stated that the main emphasis would be on "the development of the best modes of instruction..."¹⁷ and asked for both

- 12 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1848. The following year Knox urged the members to study a prospectus, presented by the Management Committee, which proposed that the journal be published quarterly by A & C Black at 2/6 per issue. EIS, Proceedings of General Meeting, 1849.
- 13 Graham is identified differently at various points in the Minutes. As president he was identified as teaching at the Scottish Naval and Military Academy and elsewhere as a private teacher. There is, of course, the possibility that these were two different William Grahams.
- 14 According to the plans at this point, the S.E.L.J. was to be published as a monthly, running to 48 pages at 6 d. an issue, by James Hogg of Edinburgh. E.I.S., Proceedings of the Sixth General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1852), p. 19.
- 15 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1852, p. 6 (underline mine).
- 16 Graham was indeed the editor, but the publisher was Sutherland and Knox of Edinburgh.
- 17 S&LJ (October, 1852), p. 1.

the support of the Scottish teachers and the fruits of their experience and skills. The Journal would carry accounts of teachers meetings, E.I.S. exams, papers on methodology and organization, literary essays, and even an occasional humorous article, "if it conduces to harmless entertainment".¹⁸ Regarding controversial matters, the Journal would strive to take a middle-road between an open forum and the prohibition of any views at all. It would avoid "party discussions"¹⁹ but it would not "prevent an historical exhibition of the movements of parties, nor the consideration of those arrangements in a general scheme of Government Education which may effect the condition of the Teacher"²⁰, and everything in proposed educational legislation would be "narrowly scanned which shall trench on the respectability, efficiency and comfort of the Teachers".²¹

The Journal did carry a wide variety of material²² and though certainly serious-minded was well written and occasionally lively.

18 Ibid., p. 2.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 3.

21 Ibid. One writer in 1853 expressed the hope that the Journal would eventually become "the 'Lancet' of educationists" SELJ (December, 1853), p. 135.

22 As promised there were lectures on educational topics - Schmitz on the role of the classics in education; Finlay Dun on "The Advantages of Studying the Theory along with the Practice of Music" (both in October 1852); G. Lawson on "Botany as a Branch of School Education"; Dr. Dubuc on "Physiology as a Part of General Education" (November 1852); and the like - along with reviews of books on a wide variety of subjects, There were also special articles, possibly written by the editor, on themes like "The Education of Adults" (October 1852) and "School Prize Abuse" (November 1852). One of the most lively features was a regular piece by a 'Herodotus Smith' titled "Literary Letters from London", which consisted of witty and acidic comments on the literary, social, and political scene in the capital.

Despite the fact that it maintained a high level in terms of quality from its first issue in October 1852, Bryce had to report to the Annual Meeting a year later that the Journal had "not received that support from the members of the Institute which the committee was entitled to expect".²³ This support did not increase apparently and it was reported in 1854 that the editor was having great difficulty in getting sufficient material written by Scottish teachers for each issue, that the circulation was under 600, and that the Journal had cost the E.I.S. £ 142/6/5 over its first year of operation.²⁴ At this point the Institute decided to modify the format and intentions of the Journal to try to keep it above water and increase its readership. From the fall of 1854, the Journal was smaller, plainer, with fewer general articles, and more specifically directed at practical occupational and methodological questions and E.I.S. business. It was, apparently, sent out free to all E.I.S. members. All this was to little avail however and in September 1855, the Committee of Management reported that the cost of £. 195 through 1854-55 was too heavy and recommended to the Annual Meeting that the Journal be discontinued. This recommendation was accepted and, despite some indignant objections,²⁵ the last issue appeared in November 1855. The editor commented, in closing, that there was no reason for the Journal to be "supposed

23 James Bryce, Address at Annual Meeting of E.I.S., 1853, p. 5.

24 E.I.S., Minute Book, II, (1854).

25 The Arbroath Local Association passed a resolution calling the demise of the Journal an event "disgraceful to the teaching body in Scotland" SELJ (November, 1855), p. 373.

exempt from the laws of gravitation, and to be kept up without support".²⁶

Why had the Journal failed? One reason, as with a number of other E.I.S. schemes, was the financial burden. The S.E.L.J. was certainly an ambitious undertaking which demanded a solid contribution both in time, for teachers to supply it with articles, reviews and essays, and in money, a commodity of which the general membership had all too little. Undoubtedly it was of considerable interest and value to those teachers who did have the opportunity to read it and it was an adornment for the Educational Institute to have such an ambitious publication which included between its covers items of general interest, pedagogical and philosophical theory, and classroom management and technique. As one correspondent, put it, until the appearance of the S.E.L.J. there was widespread ignorance about the E.I.S. in outlying areas of the country:

In this way, before falling in with your publication, I was led to the supposition that the Institute was merely a body of men in Edinburgh, who met now and then to talk over educational matters, very much to their own glorification.²⁷

In time, indeed, the Journal might well have gained a wider readership than the Institute's membership or even than teachers, but it did not survive long enough to build this up.

But the failure of the Journal reflected more than just the pressures of time or money. Its malaise was that of the Institute's;

26 SELJ (November, 1855), p. 362. The Management Committee in May 1856 arranged to purchase twelve complete sets of the Journal and wound up its financial affairs. E.I.S., Minute Book, II, (1856).

27 Jacobus, "The Diplomas of the Institute", SELJ (April, 1855), p. 163.

an underlying tension about the burning public political-educational questions of the day. It was impossible to keep aloof from these issues, as one legislative measure after another was presented to Parliament and hotly debated, there and in the public press. At the same time, so fierce were the convictions held on these matters, that any opinion expressed in the Journal was bound to cause friction and hostility which tended to be directed as much at the publication, as the author who expressed it. Whatever the qualifications and disclaimers, with which authors tried to defuse or deflect this hostility, the views they expressed were necessarily explosive and, since all such articles were anonymous, were often taken as being the official view of the Journal or even the Institute, by those who disagreed. A typical example of the difficulty was illustrated by an article entitled "The Educators and the Education Bill" which appeared in April, 1854. The author began by noting that all political controversy was 'wisely excluded from these pages' and denying that he had any personal fondness for "polemical discussion".²⁸ Nevertheless, he continued, in view of the educational legislation before Parliament, at that time; "it may be allowable in some slight degree to infringe the general rule by admitting allusion to some points which may not be precisely within the scope of this publication".²⁹ These allusions, he claimed, would strictly limit themselves to considering the legislation, only as it directly affected the teacher, but, in fact, the remainder of the article was a spirited defense of the parochial school system, a denial of the

28 "Educators and the Education Bill", p. 291.

29 Ibid., p. 292.

ability of the government to cope with the educational deficiency, and an attack on the legislation, which concluded with an appeal for the Institute to speak out and petition against the bill.

This article was followed the next month by a similar piece opposed to the government's proposed legislation³⁰ and in June by a rejoinder. This last was in the form of a dialogue between a professor and a parish schoolmaster, in which the professor defends the Lord Advocate's Bill and takes the E.I.S. to task for timidly staying out of the fray.³¹ The difficulties of the Journal were pointed up in the final exchange in this article when the professor accuses the parochial teacher of having written the previous two articles attacking the Lord Advocate's Bill. The schoolmaster denies this and declares that he doesn't even have a subscription to the Journal, let alone write for it, because he doesn't agree with the opinions expressed in its pages. The professor berates him for this and even shames him into taking out a subscription on the spot. At the conclusion of the article the editor added a rather plaintive footnote: "While Colloquists are free to talk, the Editor does not hold himself responsible for the opinions they advance".³²

30 "A Few Remarks on the Education Bill", SELJ (May, 1854).

31 "Colloquy", SELJ (June, 1854).

32 Ibid., p. 403. It might be noted here that a writer, two years later, charged that the E.I.S. was dominated by the parochial schoolmasters and added: "I believe it was this, more than anything else which led to the death of the last Educational Journal" 'Alpha', "The Educational Institute and Certificated Teachers", Scottish Educational Journal [hereafter cited as SEJ], (August, 1856), p. 246.

Such declarations of neutrality, however, did little to blunt the antipathy of many on whose support the survival of the Journal depended.

The disappearance of the S.E.L.J. was regretted by many teachers, however, and in March 1856 a second publication was launched under the title of the Scottish Educational Journal. Although associated with the E.I.S., looking to the membership for articles and subscriptions, the new venture was apparently backed by a Glasgow publisher, Griffin, and the Institute was not liable for any costs. "If teachers will neither write themselves nor countenance and encourage their brethern ~~when~~ they attempt it, let them at least leave off the lugubrious lament, that everybody save the teacher is listened to on education".³³ Thus exhorted the "Introductory Remarks and Prospectus" of the new Journal, with considerable justification. In terms similar to the founders of the E.I.S. the Scottish Educational Journal declared that it had as its objects "to advance the cause of Education" and "to maintain the rights and independence of teachers". It was concerned with "improving their social position" and with forming "a bond of union to the whole profession".³⁴ It did not attempt to avoid the problem of controversy, but opened its pages to the free expression of all views, pledging that "as to questions relating to the position of the Government towards Education, the views of no one party will be given without equal opportunity and space being afforded to the opposite".³⁵ Despite this fresh and frank beginning and despite

33 SEJ (March, 1856), p. 4.

34 Ibid., p. 37.

35 Ibid., p. 36.

continued good quality, the Scottish Educational Journal experienced the same difficulties as its predecessor and for the same reasons. No issues seem to have been published after February 1857.

II

Even without the complications of controversial issues, which tended to trouble and divide its members, the long-run success of E.I.S. schemes of self-improvement and mutual assistance depended to a large degree on the kind of official sanction and public recognition the Institute received. Without such endorsement, the Institute depended entirely on the voluntary participation and private resources of its members and, as we have seen, the pressures and difficulties of the teacher's situation placed considerable obstacles in the path of such involvement. With established public status, on the other hand, the voluntary and private contributions of its members, basic to its strength and vitality, would be greatly enhanced, membership in the Institute would become highly attractive, and the many plans to improve the quality and position of the teachers of Scotland would flourish. The specific sanction essential to the E.I.S. to assure its prosperity was the recognition of its diplomas as a prerequisite qualification for appointment to a teaching post.

Whatever the differences of opinion about controversial questions of national educational policy, the members of the E.I.S. were united in their desire to acquire such a recognized position in the educational system. Reid had described this aim in its most ambitious terms as "self-government, which they wish to have legalized by a charter from the Crown, constituting them a separate

profession",³⁶ and had looked forward to the day when an E.I.S. diploma would be "reckoned a sufficient recommendation for any teacher".³⁷ Accordingly the first Annual Meeting had put a large committee to work drafting a whole range of examinations to be used to admit and to rate its membership. These exams were ready for use by September of 1848 and Schmitz, like Reid, looked forward to their application and general recognition:

Up to the present moment, I am not aware that either a public body or a private individual has ever applied to the Institute to recommend a teacher; but I hold that we shall not have fulfilled our mission until the time arrives when no public or private body of individuals will employ a teacher who is not sanctioned or recommended by the Educational Institute.³⁸

According to W.J. Reader, recognition of an occupational organization by a Royal Charter, and the granting of licensing power to such a body, were two separate and distinct steps; the first was relatively easy, requiring only the action of the cabinet; the second was extremely difficult, requiring the legislative assent of parliament. The E.I.S. founders, either because they did not fully appreciate this distinction, or because they felt it would be overlooked in the case of the Institute, hoped to combine the two and receive licensing power through a Royal Charter. As William Knox put it in 1849, the Institute was seeking all the powers and privileges which had been granted to the College of Preceptors, plus "certain additional powers - to which we think our status and

36 [Reid], "Educational Institute", p. 14.

37 Ibid., p. 15.

38 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1848, p. 5.

the national character of our Institute fully entitle us".³⁹

Specifically, the Institute wished "that Membership of the Institute shall in itself constitute eligibility to certain offices, or, in other words, that the Institute's Diploma or Certificate shall be required of all candidates for these offices..."⁴⁰ The Annual

- 39 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1849, p. 6. The College of Preceptors, though in some ways apparently similar to the E.I.S. had much more limited objectives and operated in an entirely different context. It enjoyed much less success than the Institute. W.J. Reader in his Professional Men comments that the College of Preceptors, was an organization "which, with a Royal Charter and a system of qualifying examinations, looked very much like a genuine professional institution, and which, from the start, made special provision for women". It was not very successful, though, and it hardly could be, as long as the conception of a teacher's job remained so low and there were so many women who, in the absence of other possibilities, were only too anxious to find some source of income, however small. (p. 172).

As Knox' comments indicate, the E.I.S. founders, while they acknowledged the significance of the establishment of the College of Preceptors and wished it every success, clearly saw themselves as representing an entirely different and distinctly Scottish tradition. The College had sent a delegate to the Annual Meeting in 1848 and some remarks addressed to him by William Gunn serve to illustrate this point. Gunn observed that, in England, the College of Preceptors was regarded "with an indifferent and evil eye" and had not been supported by the 'Public School' teachers. In Scotland, by contrast, "The Educationists of Scotland, from the highest to the lowest - if there was such a class as the lowest - were bound up as one man in one great cause - the promotion of the educational interests of the country, whether for the peer or the peasant". Gunn concluded on a rather condescending note by hoping that, through its association with the E.I.S., the College would be helped to rise to "that position in which they themselves [i.e.: the E.I.S. members] proudly stood" (E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1848, p. 14.)

- 40 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1848 p. 6. Knox, of course, disclaimed any selfish motive in the teachers' desire to achieve such power. Despite the disingenuousness of this declaration, there was certainly a real concern among better teachers about the harmful educational effects of unrestricted entry into teaching. "The quackery in education is more extensive than in medicine, and more pernicious, and requires...a repressive hand", one teacher charged "The Certification of Teachers", SELJ (Feb. 1853), p. 192. That the problem of occupational and economic status also loomed large is apparent.

Meeting approved a draft of the terms of the royal charter which contained a clause regarding the position of the E.I.S. which read that:

for all schools in Scotland supported, in whole or in part, by legislative enactment, or by grants from the Consolidated Fund, it shall be indispensable for the applicants to produce the Certificate or Diploma of the Educational Institute...⁴¹

That such a clause, if actually proposed, let alone granted, would have roused the most active hostility against the Institute on the part of denominational education committees, school management boards, and probably of the Privy Council's Committee on Education, can hardly be doubted. An article in the Journal later recalled that: "Much indignation was shown by several parties that the teachers of Scotland should presume to insert such a clause, - a proceeding which was represented as interfering with the rights of presbyteries".⁴² As indeed, it was. In the event, however, the

41 Ibid., p. 17. It is important to note here the solidarity among teachers like Knox, Schmitz, Gunn, Ferguson and Bryce, since especially Knox and the other parish teachers differed from them so vehemently on other issues.

42 "Certification of Teachers", p. 193. A good example of this indignation is furnished by a letter in the Scotsman in 1850, attacking the Institute, which it called this "Infant Hercules", for presuming to claim independent status and power and warning it "to strike "a lower pitch at its meetings" and to avoid insulting "any sincere labourer in the cause of education" if it hoped to gain public sympathy: "The imagining even of a charter, constituting this most numerous, and irregular, and irresponsible body, a tribunal of educational qualifications - an aspiration suppressed only because rebuked by legal opinion - is a symptom of alarm enough to render it doubtful what may be tried next". Scotsman, 19 October 1850. A rejoinder to this letter, presumably written by a schoolmaster, denied that the "Infant Hercules" intended to insult, usurp or crush anyone, but merely wished "out of swaddling clothes - out of the arms of that nurse who has so long stunted him in his food, crippled his limbs and benumbed his energies". Scotsman, 13 November 1850.

clause was not included in the final draft of the royal charter proposal. At the Annual Meeting in 1850, Ferguson reported that he had consulted Charles Neaves, a noted Edinburgh advocate, who had advised the Institute that it was impossible for the Crown to grant such monopoly power and had suggested that all the clauses in the Royal Charter should be worded in a very general and comprehensive way so as to allow for maximum future flexibility of interpretation and implementation. Accordingly, the drafting committee⁴³ drastically revised the proposal in this light.⁴⁴

The Royal Charter, which was formally applied for by the 1851 executive in the spring of that year, and was officially granted on May 30, 1851, included its main objectives in one paragraph of its preamble. This preamble gave some information about the founding of the E.I.S. and described the Institute as an association:

comprehending Teachers of various Christian Denominations, for the purpose of promoting sound learning, of advancing the interests of Education in Scotland, and also of supplying a defect in the Educational arrangements of that country, by providing for the periodical Session of a Board of Examiners competent

43 This committee included the President, the Secretary, Knox, James Gloag and John Johnston (both advocates of an activist role for the Institute) as well as a legal advisor, Charles Morton of Edinburgh.

44 The Journal article referred to above (see n. 42) had a different and, I think, incorrect recollection of the reason for altering the draft charter, particularly the clause dealing with the E.I.S. diplomas. "The clause, however" it stated, "was, for the sake of peace, expunged" (p. 193). This implies that serious objections to it were raised within the Institute. In fact, as emphasized above, all the teachers, including the parochial schoolmasters, seem to have been united in their desire for and their hope of acquiring licensing powers for the Institute. At the time the Scotsman reported that the clause had been dropped on the grounds that "while all thought it an extremely desirable point to be gained, it was one which, they believed, would not be conceded under existing circumstances,

to ascertain and certify the qualifications of persons engaged, or desiring to be engaged, in the Education of Youth, in that part of our Dominions, and thereby furnishing to the Public, and to the Patrons and Superintendents of Schools, a guarantee of the acquirements and the fitness of Teachers for the duties required of them, and thus securing their efficiency, and raising the standard of Education in general.⁴⁵

In effect, then, the E.I.S. was recognized as having the capacity to examine and evaluate teachers, but no inducement or regulation was provided to encourage teachers to sit its examinations or managers to require its certificates. Had the Institute's exams been the only ones in the field, this might have been sufficient, but they were not. The Dick Bequest examinations had been in operation in the north-east for some time and the Privy Council's exams and certificates had been introduced in 1847. Both of these schemes offered an immediate financial award to the teacher, as well as enhanced prestige and thus, an improved bargaining position. The Institute's diplomas were therefore bound to suffer by comparison, being at least, if not more, difficult to acquire, having no financial benefit attached, and possessing an uncertain prestige with school managers and government inspectors.

The position of the Institute's certificates was rendered even more unstable by the fact that, in the beginning, the founders had decided that anyone who joined the E.I.S. in its first year of

while their demanding the prerogative contained in the clause might frustrate the attempt to get the charter at all".
Scotsman, 23 February 1850.

45 E.I.S., Royal Charter and Rules and Regulations, p. 4.

operation would be admitted on the basis of written testimonials and would not be required to take an examination. Doubtless this was a sound strategic move at the time as it attracted an impressive number of Scottish teachers to join the new organization immediately. On the other hand, it proved difficult to decide upon and enforce a deadline, after which date membership would be through examination only. This deadline was originally set as December 31, 1847, but was extended through 1848, and then 1849, and appears only to have been put into effect in the late spring of 1850. Despite this anomaly, a few candidates did enter the Institute by way of examination during these early years: in 1849 there were nine successful candidates; in 1850, three; and in 1851, five.

The bland endorsement provided by the Royal Charter in 1851, did not improve the situation. The real threat to the Institute's diplomas came from the Privy Council's certificates. Although the Parochial Teachers had opposed the system when it was first proposed in 1846 and 1847, mostly on the grounds that, with their university background and liberal education, parish teachers did not need to submit themselves to government examination, and fewer of them took the exams during the ensuing years, the government certificates were generally well received. As T.R. Bone writes in his study of the nineteenth century Scottish inspectorate, for teachers other than the parochial schoolmasters, "certification became extremely attractive, and the Government parchment was widely coveted".⁴⁶ Besides the financial award, the acceptance of the government certificate as a positive qualification in a teaching

46 Bone, Scottish Inspectorate, p. 43.

applicant's favour by school managers and patrons did much to enhance its desirability. Again, to quote Bone:

All the evidence is that the certificates became annually more popular, as those who wished to obtain good teaching posts found that the man with the parchment was most likely to be successful.⁴⁷

Even among the parish teachers the government certificates gained ground gradually through the 1850's. Although in 1854 only about 125 of the more than 1000 parochial schoolmasters were certificated, a relaxation in the exam requirements for older teachers and the increasing tendency of their assistants and eventual replacements to get the certificate, began to change the picture. William Knox told the Argyll Commission that although he never "had taken the benefit" of a government certificate, his assistant teacher possessed one.⁴⁸ Another Church of Scotland witness, John Cook, described the increasing practice of making new appointments from the ranks of the certificated:

...the majority of the teachers are elderly men, who were settled in before they became so common, and there is a great disinclination on the part of these men to submit to the exam: but whenever there is a vacancy it is almost invariably filled up by a certificated teacher.⁴⁹

As the Normal School system, which was tied in with the Minutes of 1846, began to produce more and more graduates, they too became certificated by the government. By 1855, according to one writer, there were 577 government certificated teachers in Scotland⁵⁰ and,

47 Ibid., p. 46.

48 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 215.

49 Ibid., p. 48.

50 'Beta', "The Educational Institute and Certificated Teachers", SEJ (September, 1856), p. 277.

by 1865, it was reported that 1708 Scottish teachers of all denominations held government certificates.⁵¹

The extremely serious threat that this development posed to the Institute did not go unrecognized or unprotested by its members. One writer pointed out that, while "the various sects of the community are discussing the question, without coming to an agreement, the Government are quietly carrying out their own views, and framing a system which it will be found all but impossible at last to supersede". One of the main methods by which this was being accomplished he argued was by building up a generation of government certificated teachers and by ignoring the E.I.S. diplomas and the Scottish tradition.⁵² A parish teacher, though attacking a proposed piece of legislation in its entirety, was particularly scathing on the bill's failure to recognize E.I.S. diplomas. This omission he claimed would "retard the Institute, or altogether destroy it".⁵³ Another teacher felt that the government should have no reluctance to grant the Institute this licensing power, since the E.I.S. had been "regularly organized and solemnly chartered for the express purpose both of improving the education of the people and the condition of the teacher".⁵⁴

At the time that the secretary had reported Neave's opinion that no official sanction for E.I.S. diplomas could be obtained through a royal charter, several members, indeed, had objected

51 Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 32.

52 "Government Certificates of Merit", SELJ (January, 1854) p. 163.

53 "Remarks on the Education Bill", p. 336.

54 "The Position of the Teacher as Affected by the 'Minutes of Council'", SELJ (February, 1854), p. 206.

That this would render the Institute useless and irrelevant. One suggested that the Institute should approach the Privy Council directly to request that the powers then exercised by the inspectors in examining pupil-teachers and established teachers, applying for government grants, be transferred to the E.I.S.:

The Institute would then have a fixed and recognized position, with certification functions to perform, in the exercise of which they only claimed the superintendence over entrants into their profession, which all other professions possessed.⁵⁵

For somewhat different reasons both James Bryce and William Knox opposed taking any action at that point. Bryce feared that such an attempt might "bring their harmony and union to an end, and would in effect, be committing them to an approval of the Government Scheme of Education",⁵⁶ that is, to the Minutes of 1846-47, which he and others opposed. Knox declared that to acquire such a role would be to "render themselves mere organs or instruments for conducting the Examinations", which would then be accepted or approved by London, not by the Institute.⁵⁷ For the moment, the leaders of the Institute preferred to rely on the high standards of the E.I.S. examinations and the excellence of those who held its diplomas to win over the confidence of the public and the school managers and the official sanction of the government.

55 E.I.S., Proceedings of the General Meeting, 1850, p. 18. The speaker was a Falkirk teacher, David Middleton.

56 Ibid. Just as the solidarity in the Institute on the issue of desiring and seeking official sanction for its diplomas shows the support of the parochial teachers for this objective, Bryce's opposition to taking public or aggressive action at this time shows the conciliatory policy followed by the more activist leaders during the early years.

57 Ibid.

As the government certificates won increasing favour, while the Institute diplomas did not, this policy soon came under fire. A writer in 1853 blamed the central government for treating teachers as if they were "utterly incapable of self-regulation or organization" but laid a good deal of the responsibility on the E.I.S. members themselves:

If they had organized themselves sooner, or even if they were to contend earnestly for the legislative recognition of their claims as a liberal profession, no branch of the executive could long maintain the position of which we complain.⁵⁸

It was James Bryce himself who recommended a reversal of the policy he had previously supported. In his presidential address in 1853, noting the obvious disinclination of Scottish teachers to sit two sets of exams and the manifest disadvantages that the Institute examinations bore in comparison with the government's, he called on the government to allow the Institute to take over their examination system:

Gentlemen,...we ought to offer to the Government to relieve the Committee of Council and the various Inspectors of the very troublesome duty of examining and certificating teachers, to show them that it is the proper province of this Institute, that we could do it much better and at much less expense to the country, the whole machinery being set up and at work.⁵⁹

Whether Bryce seriously believed that the government would allow itself to be relieved of that "troublesome duty" is questionable. In any case, a committee was established by the Management

58 "Minutes of Council on Education, 1853", SELJ (December, 1853), p. 120. The author went on to the familiar contention that no government would dare to treat clergymen, lawyers, or physicians as they treated schoolmasters.

59 James Bryce, Address at Annual Meeting of E.I.S., 1853, p. 10.

Committee in May of 1854⁶⁰ to attempt to get the government to recognize Institute diplomas held by Scottish teachers "as a sufficient attestation of their Professional qualifications, and therefore rendering unnecessary an Examination by any Officer appointed for the purpose...⁶¹ That the feeling that the E.I.S. should make a strenuous effort to establish some sort of official status and recognition was widespread among its membership is demonstrated by two sets of strongly worded resolutions submitted to the Annual Meeting from Local Associations, those in Meigle and Forfar, to the same general effect.⁶²

Bryce reported to the next Management Committee meeting in December, 1854, that, on the basis of these resolutions, the committee had had an interview with the Lord Advocate, James Moncrieff, "who received them most courteously - agreed generally with their views,

60 E.I.S., Minute Book II, (1854), p. 109. Bryce proposed the establishment of the committee which included Knox, A.D. Robertson, a parochial teacher and E.I.S. President in 1853-54, Glog, Pryde, the Secretary and Treasurer, and seven others.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., pp. 151-152 and 172. The Meigle resolutions read: "That it is desirable that the diplomas which are granted by the Board of Examiners should be recognized by the Government as evidence to all concerned of the qualifications of parties in whose favour they have been granted, and thus the Institute be permitted to exercise more effectively the powers conferred by the Charter for raising the qualifications of teachers and satisfying the educational requirements of the country: That the General Committee of the Institute should endeavour without delay, to take such steps as they deem best fitted for attaining the above object"; the Forfar resolutions read: "That this Association overture the General Meeting of the Institute...to memorialize the Government, that in any future bill to be introduced into Parliament by Her Majesty's Ministers, relative to education in Scotland, a provision be inserted that the examination of the Institute shall be held as sufficient guarantee for the qualification of the candidate to teach the branches specified in his Diploma".

and recommended them to memorialize Lord John Russell on the subject"⁶³ Accordingly, the committee was instructed to proceed to draw up such a petition, which was dispatched to London in early 1855. The memorial was a rather lengthy, but very carefully organized, document, addressed to the Right Honourable the Earl of Granville, President of the Privy Council.⁶⁴ The first three sections described the Institute, its membership and its purposes, - quoting in part from the Royal Charter, - the structure and functions of the organization, and the nature of the E.I.S. diplomas. Parts four and five described the organization and progress of the Institute's examination system, stretching a point somewhat by claiming that the E.I.S. "has examined many parties" desiring to become members and teachers.⁶⁵ A set of examination papers were enclosed for the Privy Council's perusal. The Institute, part six declared, wanted to give Scotland "the fruits of its labours".⁶⁶ Its Board of Examiners was made up of "the most successful and distinguished Teachers in the Country, embraces men of various shades of opinion, both political and religious, who all cordially cooperate..." in the Board's responsibilities, who were eminently suitable to guarantee the quality of successful candidates.⁶⁷

The next section described the beneficial influence the Institute was having on teachers through the work of the local associations in discussing topics of practical and theoretical value, on the confidence

63 Ibid., p. 177.

64 Ibid., (1855), pp. 179-182.

65 As nearly as can be determined from the reports presented at the Annual Meetings only about 25-30 candidates had taken the exams by 1855.

66 E.I.S., Minute Book, II, (1855), p. 180.

67 Ibid.

and position of teachers through the fostering of professional unity, and on education in general, through the improvement of teaching methods and organization. These points led directly to the nub of the petition contained in part eight. The good effect the E.I.S. was having already, it argued, would be "greatly strengthened" by "authoritative" recognition by the government and by school patrons.⁶⁸ Many more young men would thereby be induced to undertake a full study course in preparation for the Institute's exams, from which they, and education, would benefit markedly. Although the members of the E.I.S. would not presume to know the best way to introduce this "authoritative" endorsement:

...they would respectfully suggest to your Lordship...that the recognition of the Diplomas of the Institute in Parochial and National Schools and in all others under the influence of having the aid of the Government, as affording sufficient evidence of the qualification of the Candidate without his being subjected to any further examination, would be a simple and effectual measure.⁶⁹

The memorial concluded by mentioning that the views it contained had been presented to the Lord Advocate and had "generally met with his Lordship's concurrence", and expressed the hope that Granville would favour them similarly.⁷⁰

In April, 1855, the Secretary of the Privy Council's Committee of Education, R.R.W. Lingen, replied to the E.I.S. petition in terms which must have dashed any hope its members might have had for

68 Ibid., p. 181.

69 Ibid. There were two more sections which dealt with teacher training and which will be considered below.

70 Ibid., p. 182.

support or encouragement from that quarter, and confirmed the worst fears of those like Bryce who saw the Privy Council's system as a major threat to all that was distinctive in Scottish education.

Lingen wrote:

I am directed by the Lord President to inform you, in reply to your letter of the 27th ultimo, enclosing a Memorial from the Educational Institute of Scotland, that the Committee of Privy Council on Education has undertaken to ascertain schools for the labouring-classes who seek to share in the Parliamentary Grant, by means of special examinations superintended by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, and that their Lordships could not, consistently with their responsibilities to Parliament delegate this duty to any independent Board by accepting its diplomas.

My Lords were under the necessity of replying in similar terms to the College of Preceptors in London.⁷¹

It is interesting to speculate what Kay-Shuttleworth's reply might have been to the Institute's memorial.⁷² He had expressed understanding and sympathy for the Scottish tradition of education on more than one occasion. His whole policy had been to make as

71 *Ibid.*, p. 183. Lingen's response to the Institute's proposals regarding teacher education will be considered below.

72 Such speculation is not merely fanciful. More than one scholar has commented on the extent to which the Privy Council's education policy - and certainly its interpretation in practice - was determined by the secretary. The members of cabinet were usually unfamiliar with the intricacies of the educational situation and were often more occupied with political issues and business. The secretary, too, was not replaced as frequently as the Privy Council members. That Kay-Shuttleworth would have reacted differently is no more than a possibility, however, since the official policy on the Privy Council's Education Committee had always been set in English terms. To mention only one illustration, the newspaper advertisements, run by the Committee to publicize its certificate exams, directed their information to "THE MANAGERS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS for the CHILDREN of the LABOURING CLASSES" a terminology more English than Scottish. See *Scotsman*, 27 February, 1850.

much educational progress as possible wherever he could. The entire Privy Council system had been more or less smuggled past Parliament and Kay-Shuttleworth had made whatever bargains he could with the various denominational and voluntary groups also engaged in educational activities, without insisting on uniformity and standardization. It is conceivable that, in the E.I.S. memorial he would have seen another opportunity to promote educational progress in a country he believed was much closer to national educational reform than England. Lingen, however, was a very different personality with a very different attitude and educational policy. He was, along with Lowe, the main framer of the Revised Code several years later, a good indication of his general views on the functioning and purposes of education. Although he later professed admiration for the Scottish system of education to the Argyll Commission in the 1860's, he freely admitted he really knew little about its background and context.⁷³ Nevertheless, though it may be an exaggeration to detect a tone of haughty condescension in his reply, it is fair to say that Lingen did not admit any such limitations on this occasion; indeed, he proceeded with confidence on assumptions which were uncompromisingly English. To Lingen, the parochial and other schools were "schools for the labouring-classes" and the E.I.S., like the College of Preceptors, was composed of teachers of the labouring-classes. The interpretation of the Privy Council's duties and responsibilities were to be interpreted strictly, and, under no circumstances, could its power be delegated, or even shared, with an "independent Board".

73 Argyll Commission, 1865. "Of course, on these Scotch matters, I speak subject to very great correction, and I can only state the conclusions which I have drawn from official papers". (p. 334.)

That, as far as official recognition or sanction for its diplomas was concerned, was that. Blocked at every turn from achieving even a limited role and status in the Scottish education system, the morale and prospects of the Institute suffered a critical blow. The number of candidates sitting its exams dwindled to one or two a year.⁷⁴ One president in 1854 had gloomily predicted that unless its diplomas were recognized the membership of the Institute would have died out within 25 years.⁷⁵ In 1856, James Gloag pointed out that, although the standard of the existing membership was very high, the Institute "has not enlisted into our ranks that number of young, promising and aspiring teachers, which we had anticipated",⁷⁶ and yet another president, in 1859, expressed great concern at "the rapidity with which its own ranks are thinning".⁷⁷

In 1854 the S.E.L.J. had carried a brief notice to the effect that a Certificated Schoolmasters' Association had been formed in Ayreshire in July 1853, composed entirely of teachers holding the Privy Council's certificate.⁷⁸ Apparently other such associations

74 The single exception was in 1858, when 25 candidates applied and 10 actually sat the exams. Apparently this was due to the fact that it had seemed, briefly, that the EIS might receive legislative recognition. The government's bill was defeated, however, and the normal state of affairs returned. In no other year between 1855 and the 1870's were there more than two candidates.

75 Robertson, "Presidential Address, E.I.S. - 1854", p. 13.

76 Dr. James Gloag, Presidential Address. E.I.S., Proceedings of the Tenth General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1856), p. 10.

77 R. Burton, Presidential Address, E.I.S. - 1859, (Edinburgh, 1859), p. 10.

78 "Ayreshire Certificated Schoolmasters' Association, SELJ (January, 1854), p. 182.

were formed through the mid-fifties and the feeling began to be expressed within the Institute, as its own hopes for recognition faded, that perhaps it would have to save itself by admitting members on the strength of a government certificate, rather than on its own exams. In August 1856 an article signed 'Alpha' appeared in the S.E.J. attacking the E.I.S. for its exclusiveness, charging that it was dominated by old Church of Scotland teachers, predicting that a General Association of Certificated Teachers would eventually be formed which would include "a considerable majority of the teachers of Scotland", and recommending that government certificates be accepted as sufficient recommendation for membership in the E.I.S.⁷⁹ A number of the points made by 'Alpha' were duly refuted by 'Beta' in the following issue, but on the basic suggestion there was agreement. 'Beta', in fact, suggested that the certificated teachers make a formal approach to the Institute to request membership.⁸⁰

In December 1856, a group of certificated teachers from Aberdeen made such a formal application. They expressed a desire for unity in order to improve the position and influence of teachers and "to rank as an independent profession".⁸¹ In requesting that the government certificate be accepted by the E.I.S. as the equivalent of its own diplomas, the Aberdeen group expressed the conviction that "in making these statements, they only express the opinion of a great majority of the Certificated Teachers of Scotland who are not members of the Institute, and were such a concession to the foregoing effect made to them, they would become Members of it, thus giving that body a

79 Alpha, "E.I.S. and Certificated Teachers", p. 247.

80 Beta, "E.I.S. and Certificated Teachers".

81 E.I.S., Minute Book, II, (1856), p. 265.

considerable addition of numerical strength".⁸² Over the course of the next two or three years the Institute wrestled with this problem. Officially it seems to have decided, by May of 1859, that, although all prospective members had to enter the E.I.S. through examination, the Board of Examiners could "diminish" the rigour of those exams if the candidate were judged to be otherwise qualified.⁸³ By the early 1860's it appears that the local associations were admitting members, without examination, on the strength of their holding a government certificate.⁸⁴ In any case, it is doubtful whether any great increase of members accrued to the E.I.S. during the 1860's because of its relaxation of entrance qualifications. The certificated teachers continued to have their own organization⁸⁵ and, although relations between the two were cordial, the vitality and morale of the E.I.S. were at such a low ebb during this period that the organization probably had not the same attractiveness which it had formerly possessed. By 1871, in fact, the Institute had lost all hope of obtaining a share of licensing power and the President was advising that "we should cling less tenaciously to the hitherto vain hope of being recognized as the great licensing body for teachers in Scotland."⁸⁶

82 Ibid., p. 266.

83 Ibid., (1859), p. 319.

84 Kirkcaldy E.I.S., Minute Book, 26 July 1862. Belford records that, in 1857, the Institute had decided to admit holders of first and second class government certificates, but, though such a step was recommended, the debate seems to have gone on unresolved until 1859. EIS, Minute Book, II, (1857-1859).

85 In 1868 the Certificated Schoolmasters Association sent a letter to the President of the E.I.S. suggesting continued "watchfulness" over proposed educational legislation. E.I.S., Minute Book, II (1868), p. 541.

86 Quoted in Belford, E.I.S., p. 126.

III

Besides the aims of self-improvement and self-government, the original founders of the Educational Institute had had another, equally important objective. As has been noted above Scottish teachers in the late 1840's and early 1850's, found themselves in the midst of unprecedented controversy regarding the policies, organization and function of the country's education system.⁸⁷ The ground for this controversy had been prepared by the efforts of several writers, clergymen and members of parliament in the 1830's to bring to the attention of the country ~~to~~ the fact that the old educational system was sinking under the weight of the new problems caused by the economic and social changes that were taking place in the early nineteenth century. The ecclesiastical political battles of the late 1830's and the early 1840's, and the continued failure of voluntary efforts to make serious inroads on the more and more obvious educational deficiencies of the country, prompted efforts in this mid-century period to radically reform the Scottish education system, preserving its traditional character and strengths, but improving, rationalizing and extending it to meet the new context of Scottish society. Various bills were prepared and discussed in parliament towards the end of the 1840's and though they came to nothing they clarified and intensified the debate. In 1850 the National Education Association was formed, a loose grouping of liberals and dissenting clergy who favoured some sort of sweeping reform of the Scottish education system. During the following three or four years

87 This was the second and probably most crucial of three periods of educational debate in the nineteenth century. The first occurred in the late 1820's and early 1830's (see Chapter 1), and the third in the late 1860's and early 1870's.

the N.E.A. actively campaigned for legislative reform, canvassed a wide variety of opinions on the subject, and seemed to gain and reflect the assent of a majority of the Scottish public. Against this movement the Church of Scotland took a leading role, finally forming in 1853, an extremely effective committee of the General Assembly expressly for the purpose of combatting the efforts of the N.E.A. and its sympathizers. Drawing on the support of the ^{conservative} landlords, ~~some~~ ^{of whom were} largely Episcopalian in religious persuasion, the Church lobbied in London, bombarded the public press with articles and letters, and M.P.'s with petitions, and contributed generously to the pamphlet war on the subject.

The founders of the E.I.S. believed that the teachers should not stand aside from the controversy surrounding this great national question, but should make a positive contribution towards the "elevation of the whole matter and manner of education throughout the country".⁸⁸ Though Alexander Reid did not elaborate further in his article, in order to attain such an objective it would be necessary first for the Institute membership, to work out a position which would find wide support among Scottish teachers, and then to effectively publicize and promote whatever policy emerged. From the beginning, however, serious difficulties were encountered in trying to accomplish that first step. At the very first general meeting in 1847, when Schmitz had urged a very forceful policy and a militant strategy on this question, William Knox had cautioned immediately that, although such aims as expressed by Schmitz might be laudable, he and others had considerable reservations about the means to be

88 [Reid], "Educational Institute", p. 14.

used in supporting and achieving them. During the early years of the Institute's existence, it seems to have been decided by those who favoured the broad interpretation of the E.I.S.'s objectives and outspoken, activist tactics to promote them, that a direct confrontation on the fundamental issue of national education should be avoided and that energy should be mainly devoted to establishing the Institute on a firm foundation, to working out a sensible internal structure, and to attracting as large a number of Scottish teachers to its ranks as possible.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, an undercurrent of tension on the national education question was evident through this period. One place where it showed up was in the annual addresses of its retiring presidents.

Perhaps because of the exchange between himself and Knox in 1847, Schmitz entirely avoided the issue in his address in 1848, preferring to stress the theme of unity among the teachers of Scotland and discussing the hopes of the Institute for its examination system and the need to re-organize Scottish secondary education in relation to the universities.⁹⁰ It was Knox, in fact, who re-opened the controversy in his remarks to the general meeting the following year. He reviewed recent educational developments in Europe and then turned his attention to England and Scotland. Of the two, he thought that Scotland was not so far ahead as fifty years before, but since the

89 In his presidential address in 1853, James Bryce recalled that many E.I.S. members wanted the Institute to become actively involved in the national education question from the beginning, but the leaders, like himself, had restrained them. By 1853 Bryce was "inclined" to think that an activist policy would have been the "wiser course". Address at Annual Meeting of E.I.S., 1853, p. 8.

90 E.I.S., Proceedings of the General Meeting, 1848.

improvements being made in English education were already enjoyed by Scotland "England may be said to be an imitator rather than a partner".⁹¹ However necessary and beneficial these reforms were for England, the difficulty was that "the love of uniformity, which been a prevailing foible of all Governments in all ages has prompted them to administer the same recipe to Scotland...⁹² Even the authors of such schemes, and here the reference was to Kay-Shuttleworth and the Minutes of 1846-47, admitted "that it has nothing of a national character, and that it is no way calculated to benefit the most destitute localities".⁹³

Knox' line of argument, thus far, would not have offended Schmitz, Bryce, Gunn or any of the more radical members of the E.I.S. Where Knox parted company with them was in his assessment of the educational needs of Scotland itself. "It is the Scottish system, organized upon the Scottish soil, that has produced the present state of Education in Scotland, such as it is", Knox declared.⁹⁴ By this Knox meant the burgh and parochial school system plus those additional denominational and voluntary agencies that had developed as a supplement to it, a state of affairs that he thought worked reasonably well and required only some extension and adaptation to function even better. These remarks provoked a short debate in which several speakers took issue with Knox, the upshot of which was a decision that future presidential addresses should be printed separately from the proceedings of

91 E.I.S., Proceedings of the General Meeting, 1849, p. 4.

92 Ibid., p. 5.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

the annual meeting in order to make it perfectly clear that the views contained in them were not official E.I.S. policy.

In 1850, the third president, James Cumming, Rector of the Glasgow Academy and soon-to-be-appointed Free Church government inspector, returned to the subject with a more favourable point of view. Rather than urging a particular policy on national education, however, Cumming dealt with the subject indirectly, contenting himself with advocating the development and support of some definite policy by the E.I.S. The teacher's opinion and voice should be prominent in the national debate:

Not that we expect exemption from criticism, or from the control of public opinion. Not that we claim any intrinsic authority which may not be fully discussed and canvassed...But, on the other hand...surely when Education is made a matter of national interest and keen discussion, there is something wrong, either in ourselves, or in the public, if we cannot obtain a hearing.⁹⁵

Cumming acknowledged that "in this matter there is a difference of opinion among us", but expressed the hope that "as we become more united and better acquainted with each other's views and feelings... we may be enabled to take an influential part in those measures which active and earnest men are devising for the Education of our country as a nation".⁹⁶ He went on to describe the various interested parties, both selfish and public spirited - the philanthropist, the Christian, the sectarian ecclesiastic, the secularist, and the "class legislator" - involved in the controversy and concluded by contending that of all these groups, there were no interests other than the teacher's, "more nearly identical with those of the

95 E.I.S., Proceedings of the General Meeting, 1850, p. 5.

96 Ibid., p. 7.

community, whose rising members are subjected to his influence and entrusted to his care".⁹⁷

The next two presidents avoided the subject almost entirely in their remarks⁹⁸ and the Scottish Educational and Literary Journal, which published monthly from October 1852, was also circumspect on the subject during its first year of operation. The Journal limited itself to brief notices of educational developments in England and elsewhere, the odd article emphasizing the need for the continued connection of secular and religious instruction, and occasional attacks on the Privy Council grant and teacher-training system. Despite this partial hiatus, the hope that the E.I.S. would play an influential role in the national educational controversy was not abandoned. One indication of this was contained in a circular sent out to the members by the secretary, George Ferguson in July of 1852. The purpose of the circular was to appeal to those teachers who had taken out a membership, but who had not yet paid their fees or become active in the Institute, to pay their arrears and become involved. The Institute was well-organized, officially chartered, and functioning smoothly, and, Ferguson argued, now in a position to take a stand on the great issue of the day:

97 Ibid. Since it was now understood that the president's address was simply a personal expression of opinion, there was no debate following Cumming's remarks.

98 One of these addresses, that by William Hunter the Rector of the Ayr Academy was notable chiefly for its extreme length and its density of style, being illumined by sentences like: "How doltish was that judge who lately declared in a place where mammon had votaries not a few...etc." Proceedings of the General Meeting, 1851. Most of the other E.I.S. presidential addresses, however, were quite readable.

It is only by remaining united that the Teachers of Scotland can expect to work out for themselves any improvement in their social position, or to raise their Profession to its proper level; and it is surely the duty of each individual Member to do his utmost in effecting an object so desirable. The subject of a national system of Education for Scotland must come before the new Parliament during its first session; and the Members of the Institute, as an Incorporated Body of Teachers, will be entitled to express an opinion. The practical Teachers of Scotland may thus, for it is the first time, have an opportunity of assisting the Legislature in bringing to a satisfactory conclusion a question not less difficult than it is important, which has been fruitlessly agitated for several years.⁹⁹

99 E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1852), p. 60. The Management Committee commended the secretary for his efforts to rouse these inactive E.I.S. supporters.

Chapter 7

The Educational Institute of Scotland and the
National Education Controversy

I

To study the difficulties the E.I.S. encountered in coming to grips with the question of national educational reform is to see, in microcosm, the shape and tensions of the nation-wide controversy and to observe many of the factors relating to the role and position of the teacher, factors with which this thesis has been concerned, operating with particular clarity and force. Scottish teachers as members of denominational factions, as objects of increased government attention, and as observers of the pamphlet and newspaper battles that raged about them, were well aware of the educational ferment in which they found themselves. Many of them, felt strongly that they should and could have a voice in determining the fate of an enterprise with which they were so intimately connected. It is this fact that gives the founding and early development of the E.I.S. a special significance. Doubtless, even without a major public controversy over the aims and organization of education, Scottish teachers would have made efforts to unite, to improve their economic position and their social status, and to try to acquire professional independence, sooner or later in the nineteenth century. But, at mid-century, for most of the energetic teachers who founded the Educational Institute of Scotland, these concerns were only part of their motivation. Blended with their occupational, economic and social objectives, was a keen awareness of the national educational tradition and a desire to enhance not only its future development and vitality, but also, more widely, the future development and

vitality of Scottish society and culture. Though they were inhibited from dealing with the problem in any direct way within the Institute, during its first few years of existence, those teachers who advocated educational reform, as well as those teachers who opposed it, were involved, in varying degrees, in the increasingly intense public debate on the subject, and were certainly affected by it. A number of E.I.S. members took an active role in this controversy outside the bounds of the Institute, and it is well, at this point, to examine the positions they adopted, since these were brought to bear inside the Institute when the E.I.S. finally came to confront the issue.

This examination should begin by considering the parochial schoolmasters, since they were the group of teachers most immediately affected by the increasing attempts to initiate legislative educational reform. It will be recalled that the parish teachers' salaries had been set by Parliament in 1803, based on the average price of oatmeal over the previous twenty-five year period, to be reviewed at the end of every subsequent twenty-five period. The first such review had occurred, therefore, in 1828, and the second was scheduled for 1853. The parochial teachers were naturally anxious to see a legislative readjustment occur that would improve their economic position. The advocates of educational reform, however, were firmly and vociferously opposed to any such adjustment without a corresponding review and overhaul of the entire Scottish education system. The Church of Scotland was totally opposed to any reform which would alter the organization and management of the parish schools, and the parochial teachers, though caught in the middle, supported their church.¹

1 The degree of solidarity of this support is a question which will be considered below. At this point, it is enough to say that,

The parochial teachers, from the outset, appear to have taken a firm line against any government plan that was introduced or proposed. In 1847, just before joining the E.I.S., the parish teachers had voted solidly to reject the scheme contained in the Minutes of 1846-47² and, although, as we have seen, the government grants did make inroads upon the parochial system and its teachers, they did so only gradually and were viewed with much greater hostility and suspicion by them than by any other denominational groups. Their position on all such questions was a very difficult one. They could not argue that the state had no right to interfere in education, because their own position was based squarely on legislative recognition and approval. They were probably correct in fearing that any successful legislation would worsen their economic position and greatly damage the security of tenure and independence which they enjoyed. In adamantly opposing all such attempts, however, they risked giving the impression of being concerned only with protecting their own selfish privileges. They were gently reminded of this by James Cumming, in his presidential address of 1850, when he referred to "the assurances which have been recently given in strong terms to our Parochial Brethern, of earnest desires to consult their

whatever the internal tensions between the parochial schoolmasters and the Church of Scotland, the official loyalty of the parish teachers was unwavering.

- 2 This opposition was noted by The Scotsman which commented that the scheme had been "repudiated on a considerable variety of grounds by the very men who, in our humble opinion, it unduly favoured". Since one of the arguments used by the parish teacher against the proposed system was that it would foster and encourage the growth of sectarian schools, the paper advised the government to come forward with a revised scheme which would make all Scottish schools truly national, an extension of their argument which the parochial schoolmaster certainly had not intended to suggest. Scotsman, 22 May, 1847.

comfort and advance their interests",³ Such efforts, Cumming told them, would be watched with great interest by all teachers. If successful, he trusted that "the favoured section of our body will neither forget nor despise their less fortunate brethren".⁴

These efforts were not successful, and were not, in fact, particularly vigorous. In 1851, some hint of tension between the parish teachers and the Church of Scotland was indicated at the Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund annual meeting. Apparently, sometime during the previous year, the teachers had asked the Church's Education Committee to make representations to the heritors to increase their salaries, prior to any parliamentary review. The Committee had rejected this request and had expressed doubt about "the propriety of any augmentation of salary being required to be made by their heritors". The parochial teachers, meeting in 1851, in turn, objected to this ruling, argued that the heritors had always demonstrated a willingness to support the parochial school system, and appointed a standing committee to protest the decision.⁵ Despite this difference of opinion over salaries, on the larger question of educational legislation the schoolmasters and their church remained as one. The 1851 meeting, for example, also recorded a vote of thanks to three clergymen for "the manner in which they

3 E.I.S., Proceedings of the General Meeting, 1850, p. 6. The assurances probably had come from the Education Committee of the Church of Scotland, in conjunction with some prominent heritors, to the effect that the schoolmaster's case would be energetically presented in parliament.

4 Ibid.

5 Witness, 27 September, 1851. The account was reprinted from the Dundee Courier.

had defended the constitution of the Parochial School Establishment of Scotland; and for the support they had uniformly given to the schoolmasters' claims".⁶ As the agitation to pass educational reform measures increased, so too did the efforts of the parochial schoolmasters in supporting their church's fierce opposition to such legislation. In September, 1852, for example, a deputation led by William Knox met the Lord Advocate to discuss "the whole bearings of the question, at present of such vital consequence, not only to the schoolmasters, but for the whole interests of Scotland".⁷ Such deputations, both on their own and on their church's behalf became a regular part of the responsibilities of the leaders of the parochial schoolmaster. Not only did Knox, A.D. Robertson,⁸ and others interview the Lord Advocate and other prominent Scottish M.P.'s and heritors in Scotland, but, on occasions when educational legislation was being presented in parliament, they journeyed south to the capital to put their views, usually in company with clerical

6 Courant, 23 September, 1851.

7 Witness, 22 September, 1852. The deputation consisted of six other teachers, all of whom were active members of the E.I.S. Five of the seven, indeed, served as the president of the Institute at one time or another. Evidently the deputation was impressed by Moncrieff's grasp of the complexities of the situation and came away with the impression that the government was sympathetic to the claims of the parish schoolmasters. Since Moncrieff was a consistent advocate of national education reform, this would seem to have been only a partially correct impression.

8 A.D. Robertson was the parochial schoolmaster in the parish of Saline. He was active and held office in the Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund and served as a vice-president of the E.I.S. from 1850-51 through 1852-53, and as its president in 1853-54. Together with William Knox, Robertson led the schoolmasters' fight against legislative reform of Scottish education outside the Institute, and against E.I.S. involvement in the controversy.

representatives of the Church of Scotland's Education Committee, before English and Irish members of the Lords and the Commons.

In sharp contrast to the position taken by the parochial schoolmasters, was that taken by those teachers, mostly from the Edinburgh area and teaching in higher level schools, who had played the central role in planning and forming the E.I.S. Most of them - men like Schmitz, Reid, Ferguson, Gunn, James Gloag and William Cooper, of the Edinburgh Academy and the High School respectively, and John Johnston, the principal teacher at George Watson's Hospital School, - were strongly in favour of some sort of sweeping reform of the Scottish school system, and began to meet to discuss the problem in the late spring of 1849. On the second of June, The Scotsman carried an account of a meeting which had been convened by Schmitz at the request of a number of Edinburgh and area teachers. The purpose of the meeting, held on May 26 in a classroom on George Street, was to discuss ways of removing the religious tests, which excluded from office in the parochial schools and universities all those who were not members of the established church. Although Gunn declared that it was "high time they were beginning to make known their sentiments...to those who were likely to act on the public mind either in the legislature or elsewhere", Schmitz was careful to point out that their concern was not with the question of national education, valid though that was, but merely with the opening of teachings posts in parochial schools and universities to qualified candidates of every denomination. Accordingly, the meeting limited itself to passing several resolutions condemning the tests.⁹

9 Scotsman, 2 June, 1849. It should be noted that the resolutions also emphasized the great importance of the connection between religion and education and were neither anti-clerical nor secularist in tone.

Apparently, however, the meeting also set up a committee, with Schmitz as its convener, to attempt to work out some policy statements on national education. This committee met a number of times over the course of several months and, in January 1850, called another meeting to consider its proposals.¹⁰ Between sixty and seventy teachers assembled at the High School to hear Schmitz introduce the committee's views by pointing out that movements, "were going on in every part of the country, the object of which was either the same as their own, or at least very similar to it; and he thought that, in a question which affected them so closely, they certainly should not sit idle and let other persons determine their fate and fortunes".¹¹ James Gloag then presented a series of resolutions dealing with the parochial school system in relation to the educational needs of the country. Though full of praise for the parochial tradition, the resolutions dealt mainly with the system's present "manifest defects", believing it to be "lamentably insufficient" for the requirements of the times. The list of defects was lengthy: the parochial teachers were badly paid; their ranks were limited to members of one denomination thereby excluding many Scottish teachers of high talent; the courts of the established church were no longer in a position to effectively supervise the system and, at the same time, the teacher was left in a subservient and helpless position;¹² patronage was in

10 This meeting was advertised in The Scotsman on 16 January, was held on 19 January, and was reported in the issue of 23 Jan. 1850.

11 Ibid., 23 January, 1850.

12 Ibid., "...while every man must be heard in support of what nostrums he might, the poor teacher was not to be allowed to express an opinion upon any subject connected with his own profession; and even with regard to the proposed system of national education, every man's opinion was to be taken **but** that of the teacher..."

the hands of men whose sole concern was not necessarily the excellence of the candidate, though this power generally was not abused; and so on. The result of all these evils was "a universal conviction that the extension and improvement of the present system was utterly impracticable". The committee felt that the parochial system could form a basis for an improved and extended educational scheme, but that it would have to be radically altered in order to do so.¹³

After these resolutions had been adopted, George Lees, a teacher at the Edinburgh School of Arts, presented a set of principles, upon which, the committee believed, any national educational reform should be based. These principles stated that educational facilities should be adequate to the population, should expand to keep pace with future increases and should aim at raising a "virtuous and intelligent population universally"; that teaching should be considered an art and skill requiring training, practice and experience, and teachers should be well-paid in order to attract men of talent; and that protection should be afforded both to the public, against "neglect, inefficiency, or immoral conduct" by teachers, and to teachers, against "the influence of caprice" by the public. While a large degree of the superintendence and curriculum should be left in the hands of enlightened local control, a "central authority, popularly constituted, and free from local influences and prejudices, is necessary to watch over and regulate the working of the system..."¹⁴

Finally, William Gunn proposed a set of resolutions. In his introductory remarks he sought to answer the various arguments sure

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

to be raised against the teachers taking any active part in the controversy and went on to express some very anti-clerical and militant opinions.¹⁵ The resolutions he put forward dealt directly with the problem of religious instruction in the schools. While, again, the importance of such instruction and the necessity of having teachers of sound religious convictions were emphasized, it was proposed that the Bible and Shorter Catechism provided a common basis for general religious instruction and that no legislative notice needed to be taken of religious instruction because the "parentage" of Scotland, operating through the local boards, would provide a sufficient guarantee for the security of religion.¹⁶

It was at this point that the difficulty began, some objection being taken to Gunn's criticism of the churches' superintendence of education, and Mr. Fulton of the Free Church Normal school expressing dissatisfaction with the terms concerning the security of religious instruction. Accordingly it was decided that the principles and the final set of resolutions needed further study and their adoption was postponed until a further meeting. At that meeting, held early in February, Fulton presented some resolutions dealing with religious instruction which would have given the proposed central board more power in overseeing and enforcing religious

15 Some of these have already been quoted above. (See Chapter 3) Gunn himself was an active elder in Thomas Guthrie's congregation and was mentioned in The Scotsman of 30 March 1850, as a leading participant in the annual meeting of the Edinburgh Sabbath School Teachers' Union.

16 Ibid. Gunn's resolutions also proposed that an E.I.S. diploma or a Normal School graduation certificate be considered necessary prerequisites for teaching. Teachers, the resolutions also declared, should be well paid.

education throughout the country. These caused a further debate concerning what could or could not be guaranteed in securing religious instruction and what role the church ought or ought not to have in educational superintendence. Johnston proposed that a sub-committee study the issue and try to work out a compromise.¹⁷ This compromise, a rather tentative one which left control of religious instruction up to both the central and the local boards, was finally approved at a further meeting on February 18.¹⁸

The Edinburgh teachers' deliberations continued through the winter and early spring of 1850. In April, the group published a set of resolutions in the public press. Apparently, the substance and tone of these resolutions had been even further modified from their original versions and, as a result, were far from satisfactory from the point of view of the more militant schoolmasters. Replying to a comment in a letter from George Combe, Leonhard Schmitz bitterly attributed the modifications to the "treacherous conduct of some of Candlish's creatures, who cannot draw the clerical chain around their own necks tight enough".¹⁹ So subservient was the tone of the resolutions that Schmitz was considering withdrawing from the movement:

17 Ibid., 6 February, 1850.

18 Ibid., 6 February, 1850.

19 National Library of Scotland, Letter from Schmitz to George Combe, 14 April, 1850, MS 7311. Combe had written the day before, "I regret to see the terms of the Teachers' resolutions in the newspaper today". (13 April, 1850). Unfortunately, I have been unable to track down these resolutions, though their general nature is clear from the accounts carried of previous meetings.

Considering the view I hold, I must give up my connection with the teachers so far as their movement for National Education is concerned. I feel ashamed of my name being connected with such a document.²⁰

During the same period, and doubtless acting as a spur to the more militant teachers, the National Education Association of Scotland was formed, a loose-knit alliance of clerical and public men of liberal persuasions who desired national educational reform. More attention will be given to this organization below, but for the moment it is of interest because it included in its supporters a number of prominent Institute members. It first appeared on the public scene on January 26th, 1850, with a manifesto printed in The Scotsman and signed by a committee which included Thomas Guthrie and James Begg, the prominent Free Church clerical advocates of national education reform, Adam Black, the publisher and former Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and Charles Cowan, a Scottish M.P. who had taken an active interest in the subject. Although no teachers' names appeared in that issue, a further list of signers of the manifesto was printed in The Scotsman on February 2nd. This list included James Bryce, Cooper, Gunn, Johnston, Schmitz, Gloag and a number of others.²¹ James Purves, a leading Free Church elementary

20 Ibid. Schmitz does seem to have become less active in the E.I.S. from the early '50's on, though some of his comments here may have been framed for their effect on Combe, whose views on national education were very advanced.

21 These included William Brunton, Rector of the Grammar School, Paisley and president of the E.I.S. in 1857-58; William Hunter, Rector of the Ayr Academy and likewise a president of the Institute in 1850-51; John Macmillan, a master at the High School Edinburgh and later a vice-president of the E.I.S.; and Thomas Henderson, a Fellow of the E.I.S. and Rector of the Highlanders Academy, Greenock.

teacher and E.I.S. member²² was involved in the sponsorship and planning of first Edinburgh public meeting of the N.E.A., as were most of the others. The platform party at the meeting, held in the Music Hall on April 9th, 1850, included Bryce, Gloag, Cooper, Macmillan, and Lees, and both Schmitz and Gunn addressed the meeting.²³ There is ample evidence, therefore, provided both by their involvement with the N.E.A. and their independent efforts in the Edinburgh meetings, to support the contention that those teachers who had led in establishing the Institute had not set aside one of their main objectives - "the elevation of the whole matter and manner of education throughout the country"²⁴-although they had adopted a very restrained policy in pursuing it within the Educational Institute itself.

Between the parochial teachers entrenched in opposition to legislative attempts to accomplish national educational reform, on the one hand, and a number of higher-level militant urban teachers actively campaigning to promote such legislation, on the other, stood the teachers of the Free Church schools. Their church was engaged in a bitter controversy through the late 'forties and early 'fifties over national education. Initially the faction which wished to continue to try to establish a nationwide Free Church school system carried the day. This attempt,

22 Purves was an E.I.S. vice-president (1862-63) and president (1863-64) and was one of the four teachers connected with the E.I.S. to appear before the Argyll Commission.

23 Schmitz made a short speech on the Scottish tradition of teachers attending university and Gunn reiterated some of his severe criticisms of ecclesiastical superintendence of schools and teachers. Scotsman, 10 April, 1850.

24 [Reid], "Educational Institute", p. 14.

though it accomplished much, was ultimately unsuccessful and, by 1854, the Free Church officially came around to a position of strong support for legislative reform.²⁵

The Free Church teachers were in perhaps the most difficult position of any of the major groups of teachers. That denomination's Education Committee encountered many difficulties, lack of finances being the major one, in establishing and maintaining its schools, and the teachers bore much of the weight of these problems. They were of course much less firmly established than the parochial teachers

25 There is some room for debate about precisely what position the Free Church took on the national education issue during this period. Robert Candlish, the chairman of its Education Committee and leader of the group which defeated an attempt in 1850 to have the Free Church champion the cause of educational reform, claimed that he had never opposed a national system in principle, but that in the late 1840's such a system simply was not feasible, whereas by the mid-fifties it was. Therefore, according to Candlish, it was perfectly reasonable for the Free Church to concentrate on building up its own denominational system, while waiting for the conditions that would allow it to support a national, non-denominational education scheme. (see R. Candlish's 1846 Speech on Sustenance of Schoolmasters, in support of his version). To Hugh Miller, and other Free Church advocates of national education reform, to support the development of a denominational system was completely incompatible with favouring a national, non-denominational education system. Both Thomas Guthrie and William Gunn resigned from the Free Church Education Committee in 1850 on these grounds, Gunn charging that the Free Church "scheme now presents and is actually intended by many of its most active supporters to present a barrier to the supply of this country's greatest want" (quoted in Withrington, "The Free Church Educational Scheme, 1843-1850", p. 14). Leonhard Schmitz, for one, held a very jaundiced view of the Free Church's education policies. In a letter to George Combe in 1849, Schmitz reported that he had it on good authority (probably Gunn) that the Free Church was about to launch a campaign to abolish the religious tests in the parochial schools. That they objected to the tests on principle, he very much doubted, "for I suppose they would have no objection to any test, if the door is left open to them, and they oppose the present test only because it shuts them out" (National Library of Scotland, Schmitz to Combe, 26 March 1849 M.S. 7303).

and their terms of office were less clearly defined. Though a number of them took a prominent part in founding the Institute and promoting an activist role for it, the controversy and the shifts in official policy on national education within their own church were disconcerting and divisive. Nevertheless, many Free Church teachers, as mentioned above, seem to have supported the E.I.S. from the beginning and, in 1848, they went on to form an independent Free Church Teachers Association as well. The chairman of its inaugural meeting, Fulton, the Rector of the Free Church Normal School, was quick to declare, however, that the F.C.T.A. was in no way "antagonistic" to the Institute.²⁶ Its establishment had been long-planned, he went on, from the time Free Church teachers "had got up local associations many years ago in different parts of the country" with the aim of eventually forming a general association. Many of them had participated in launching the E.I.S. and would continue to support it, but there was still a need for an organization to deal with issues particular to the Free Church education system and to prosecute "the same cause on better-defined Christian principles than the Institute would admit of".²⁷ Free Church teachers were particularly concerned with two aspects of their own position, their salaries and their independence. Their salaries, they felt were too low and had to be

26 Witness, 20 September, 1848, "Account of Meeting Held at Moray House on September 14, 1848, to Form Free Church Teachers' Association".

27 Ibid. The four objects of the F.C.T.A. were: (1) "To improve the professional qualifications of teachers"; (2) "To cooperate with the Education Committee of the Free Church in carrying out the Education Scheme"; (3) "To promote the cause of education generally"; (4) "To secure and maintain a suitable status to the teacher".

increased "either from the Free Church or from the Government, or from both".²⁸

The salaries of the Free Church teachers, in fact became part of the larger policy debate within the church in 1850, and was made a major issue by Hugh Miller in a scathing attack on Candlish and his Committee.²⁹ In 1846, Candlish had estimated that the Free Church was responsible for supporting about five or six hundred schoolmasters of various types.³⁰ The highest salary then paid, he reported was only f20 and many were receiving less.³¹ Twenty pounds, he declared, must be established as the absolute minimum salary, not the maximum, and the target should be of a salary of about f35-40.³² In 1850, Miller accused the Education Committee of pursuing a disastrous policy and of betraying its undertaking to the Free Church teachers. Instead of a ranked salary scale of f15, f20, or f30, as promised, because of "chronic insolvency" the Committee could only pay f10, f13 1/2 and f20.³³ The expansion of the system must stop, Miller demanded, until this situation was rectified. In his opinion, "the Education Committee

28 Ibid.

29 Miller, Thoughts on Educational Question.

30 Withrington quotes a Free Church General Assembly report, in 1843, that put the number of Free Church teachers at 360 (i.e.: 80 ex-parochial teachers; 57 Assembly School teachers; 27 SPCK teachers, and 196 private teachers). "The Free Church Educational Scheme", ff, p. 105.

31 Candlish, Sustentation of Schoolmasters. The figure did not include the fees, but even so the total income would be low.

32 Ibid. The amount was to vary according to which of three rank levels a teacher occupied.

33 Miller, Thoughts on Educational Question, p. 54.

is not morally at liberty to add a single school to its list, until all its existing schoolmasters are paid according to the terms of the original agreement".³⁴ Furthermore, the Free Church must cease its "Sisyphian work" and support a "great national scheme".³⁵ Both the Education Committee and Candlish hotly denied Miller's charges. The latter, while admitting that the Committee had been too optimistic, maintained that, in terms of the teachers, no pledge had been broken:

We owe not a farthing to our teachers. We have done our best, and acted fairly and above board towards them; and they know that, beyond a fair division of our income from year to year, they have no claim whatever upon us.³⁶

Miller was far from satisfied with this defense, nor, he claimed were the teachers. When the promised salaries failed to materialize, Miller wrote, "the Free Church edifice in York Place had occasionally its indignant visitors, - threadbare, alas! and thin, who somewhat obstreperously insisted that they stood in the relation of rightful creditors to the Education Scheme, and that...the money was unquestionably owing to them".³⁷ It was not the suffering teachers who were mistaken in their understanding of the Free Church's responsibilities to them, but rather the men who were in charge of the scheme, who "ere they were at all able to provide for them [the teachers], called

34 Ibid., p. 56.

35 Ibid., p. 57.

36 Ibid., p. 94. Miller included in his pamphlet, both his charges and Candlish' and the Education Committee's replies. The whole exchange had originally appeared in the Witness.

37 Ibid., p. 101.

them into professional existence by the score and the hundreds, and fixed them down in barren and hungry localities, in which it was impossible they could provide for themselves".³⁸ Miller quoted several letters from schoolmasters supporting his interpretation of the situation, one of whom remarked that it was "astonishing how quietly most of the teachers have borne this treatment...".³⁹ Perhaps however it was not so surprising. Miller himself noted that schoolmasters were the least numerous group of former Church of Scotland adherents to have come out with the Free Church in 1843, and, certainly, their position, as the new denomination struggled to build its churches and schools, was unenviable. It has already been noted that Candlish was alleged to have taken action to punish William Gunn, because of their disagreement on the national education issue,⁴⁰ and Miller charged that on the question of the salaries, similar pressures were being brought to bear:

Nay, we understand heaven and earth is to be moved, and sea and land compassed, in order to get out schoolmasters induced to sign a document to the effect that they really did not regard our Education Committee as in any degree bound to them, whether legally or morally, for their salaries. Alas, unhappy teachers of the Free Church! you have been miserably in error, if you held that want and neglect were the worst evils to which you were to be subjected, in your state of sad depression and perilous dependency. But you must now either take your stand as honest men, or be content to add to the sorrows of poverty and degradation of debt, the sufferings of outraged conscience.⁴¹

38 Ibid., p. 105.

39 Ibid., p. 113.

40 See above, Chapter 3, p. 17.

41 Ibid., p. 91. Miller quoted one teacher, who was under pressure to sign, thusly: "Politicians...speak of the protection of the

Besides their difficult economic position, the Free Church teachers felt keenly their insecurity of tenure, and therefore, their occupational dependence, especially in comparison with the parochial schoolmasters. Two Free Church witnesses to the Argyll Commission⁴² testified that, at the time of the Disruption, it had been the understanding of those parish teachers who supported the Free Church that, when they resigned or were expelled from their teaching posts and undertook the same duties for the new denomination, that they would enjoy the same terms and conditions of office as they had possessed as parochial schoolmasters.⁴³ It later developed, however, that the Education Committee of the Free Church considered all its teachers to be holding office solely at the pleasure of or under specific agreement with the school managers. "I have no hesitation", one such former parish teacher declared to the Argyll Commissioners, "in saying

ballot; but it is we, Sir, the poor country teachers, who need the protection of the ballot. The votes would in this matter be very different if we could vote concealed. But what are many of us to do? We are dependent and prostrate; and if we do not sign, we become marked men..." (p. 91). The Scotsman saw this "quietly fierce controversy about the state of the Free Church education scheme and the general question", as one of a number of encouraging developments on the educational reform scene. It thought that the "Editor has as yet immensely the advantage... over the Doctor" and concluded: "The reverend Doctor's supernatural acuteness enables him to perceive that, notwithstanding his majorities, his ancient solitary reign is not so secure as it has been - that he must now govern less autocratically, if he govern at all". Scotsman, 2 March 1850.

42 James Purves, a former parochial schoolmaster and teacher of the Free Church school at Musselburgh, just outside Edinburgh, and William Kennedy, a master at the Moray House training college. Both held office in the F.C.T.A. and both were vice-presidents and presidents of the E.I.S. (Purves was president in 1863-64 and Kennedy in 1865-66). Officially, they were appearing before the Commission as representatives of the Free Church teachers organization. Argyll Commission, 1865, pp. 287-306.

43 Ibid. Teachers, other than ex-parochial schoolmasters, it was understood would hold office simply "according to agreement" (p. 305). As it turned out, however, "it transpired that the

that if I had dreamt I was to be at the will of any local party, I would never have been a Free Church teacher for a day"; and he implied that this view was widely shared by other teachers who had come forth from the established church during the memorable events of 1843.⁴⁴

Further evidence of the strained relations between the Free Church and its teachers is demonstrated by the fact that the Free Church Teachers' Association encountered some difficulty in gaining recognition from that denomination's Education Committee. In 1850 the management committee of the F.C.T.A. reported that a degree of official status had been granted, but that its definition was not entirely satisfactory and that the teachers' efforts were still viewed with suspicion by a number of clergymen and school managers.⁴⁵ In 1851, the president referred to the continuing difficulties in the way of the Association's progress.⁴⁶ The main issues for the teachers, and doubtless the main causes of these difficulties, were salaries and tenure conditions. At its annual meeting in 1853, for example, the F.C.T.A. discussed the tenure problem at length, presenting examples of unfair and arbitrary procedures, and passed resolutions strongly recommending that the Deacons' Courts of the Free Church should not have "the irresponsible power" of dismissal and that Free Church

[Free] Church considered both classes to be on the same footing". Kennedy, p. 305.

44 Ibid., p. 305. It was Purves who stated this view, a statement which might seem either to cast some doubt on the strength of his religious beliefs or to stand in testimony to the depth of his educational convictions. The dilemma of such divided loyalties was, in fact, a real one for many teachers and one that bore upon them with particular force through the period under consideration.

45 Witness, 21 September, 1850.

46 Ibid., 20 September, 1851.

teachers should hold office ad vitam aut culpam.⁴⁷

Like other members of their denomination during the late 1840's and early 1850's, the Free Church teachers were divided on the issue of national educational reform. In 1850 for example, the president, a Mr. Hislop of the Glasgow Normal School, devoted his remarks to a blistering attack on Fox's English education Bill of 1850, heartily approving of its defeat on the grounds that it was godless legislation, and criticizing the "strenuous efforts...for the purpose of stirring up the public mind" on the issue, which he had noted the past spring in Scotland".⁴⁸ In his view, all loyal Free Church teachers should give unequivocal support to their denomination's education scheme, which was progressing splendidly, and to Candlish and his committee, who respected the teachers and had their best interests at heart. Apparently some debate about these views ensued and Hislop was indirectly chided by James Cumming, the prominent Free Church teacher and outgoing president of the E.I.S. that year. Cumming expressed relief that the teachers had not taken a definite stand at the meeting against national education legislation. He spoke, he said, as one who "had a longing desire for a national system of education, as, in his opinion, it was the only thing that could fully overtake the wants of the country (Applause)".⁴⁹ Until acceptable legislation was presented, Cumming agreed that they should all

47 SELJ, (November 1853), pp. 90-91.

48 Witness, 21 September, 1850. Hislop was probably referring to the National Education Association formed the previous spring precisely to stir up the public mind on the subject.

49 Ibid.

all bend every effort for the Free Church system, but they should support any such legislation unreservedly.⁵⁰

The following year, the subject arose again, this time with the president, a Mr. Steele of Moray House, treating it more favourably. The Privy Council's Minutes of 1846-47, were, he thought, conferring "inestimable blessings" on the education of the masses, but serious deficiencies remained, requiring further government action. Steele was very concerned lest the inclusion of religious instruction with secular education be abandoned, but he spoke favourably of a national education scheme "emanating from leading members of the Free Church" as a plan which would fill the needs of the country and protect this principle.⁵¹ Again, these remarks were challenged. George Corken, the Rector of a Free Church school in Arbroath, pointed out that this plan had caused considerable debate within the Free Church, among its teachers, and with the general public, and he wished to make it clear that Steele's remarks were not the official view of the F.C.T.A.⁵²

It is likely that, unfettered by their denomination's official policy 'against' national education legislation until 1854, the great

50 Ibid. Cumming's views accorded closely with Hugh Miller's, the editor of the paper.

51 Ibid., 20 September 1851. The scheme referred to was likely that proposed by Begg, Guthrie, Miller and Gunn, though it should be noted that Steele was much more convinced of the benefits of religious instruction and clerical involvement than were Miller or Gunn.

52 Ibid. Corken was later a F.C.T.A. president (1853-54) and was an E.I.S. vice-president from 1852-53 to 1854-55. He seems to have been a staunch supporter of the official Free Church education scheme and an active opponent, during the early 'fifties at least, of those urging national education reform. Miller identified him as one of the main instigators and promoters of the petition supporting Candlish in the salary dispute between the Free Church Education Committee and its teachers. Miller, Thoughts on Educational Question, p. 91.

majority of the Free Church elementary and higher-level teachers would have declared in favour of a national education scheme. As it was, however, they were split on the issue, although some of the most militant members of the E.I.S., most notably of course William Gunn, were Free Church teachers. On the other hand, many Free Church teachers were restrained or altogether silent in expressing their opinion, and a few, mostly it would seem, like Hislop and Corken, occupying the better positions in the Free Church system, strongly supported the official policy. These last were bitterly criticized by Hugh Miller in 1850, who accused these teachers of putting their selfish privileges ahead of both the welfare of their fellow Free Church schoolmasters and the interests of the country. Miller warned:

...our better paid schoolmasters should be made to reflect that the circumstances of their position are very peculiar; and that should they take a zealous part against what a preponderating majority of the laity of their Church must of necessity regard as the cause of their country, their opposition, though utterly unimportant in the general struggle, may prove thoroughly effectual in injuring themselves.⁵³

By 1854, of course, the Free Church was actively supporting national educational legislation, but, in terms of that denomination's teachers the important point to note here, is that, during the formative period of the public debate on national education, they were divided or inhibited by their church's official policy. More particularly, within the E.I.S., the Free Church teachers were not able to throw their weight as solidly with the advocates of a militant, involved, outspoken role for the Institute in this controversy as they otherwise probably would have done. For the Institute, 1854 was too late.

53 Miller, Thoughts on Educational Question, p. xiii.

In the early 1850's, then, as the debate about national educational reform intensified, Scottish teachers were actively involved in the public controversy, outside the bounds of the Educational Institute; the higher-level teachers advocating such reform, the parochial teachers opposing it, and the Free Church teachers, probably mostly in favour of reform, but remaining divided and silent on the issue because of their church's official commitment to its own denominational education scheme. Within the E.I.S., though these various groups of teachers united in a common effort to establish the organization on a firm footing, to initiate a variety of plans for the improvement of its members, and to acquire some sort of official recognition for the Institute's diploma, it was impossible to completely suppress debate concerning the proper role of the Institute in the public controversy or the particular policies Scottish teachers should support or oppose. It was in 1853 that this debate finally came fully into the open in the E.I.S. During the course of that year the Institute sought to come to grips with the problem, to resolve the differences of opinion among its membership, and to formulate a sound position on the issue.

II

The year 1853 was the date set for the 25-year review of the salaries of the parochial schoolmasters of Scotland. This meant that Parliament would be forced to take some notice of Scottish education, however reluctantly. Advocates of national educational reform saw this as the perfect opportunity to introduce radical legislation which would re-organize the country's schools in keeping with the great Scottish educational tradition. The Church of Scotland and

its allies saw these aspirations as nothing short of an open assault on the privileges of the established church, and an affront against the cherished traditions of Scotland. It sought to limit parliamentary consideration solely to the question of the schoolmasters' salaries. The Lord Advocate, it was known, was preparing a Scottish education bill for presentation in 1853 or 1854, and both sides anxiously awaited its appearance.

At its regular May meeting in 1853, the Management Committee of the Educational Institute of Scotland adopted a resolution, proposed by two higher level teachers,⁵⁴ to appoint a sub-committee "to take into consideration the whole question of National Education" and to report to the Management Committee at its June meeting.⁵⁵ This sub-committee consisted of the Institute's president and secretary and ten of its leading members.⁵⁶ Of the group, only the two parochial

54 E.I.S., Minute Book, I (1853), p. 10. The proposers were John McNeil of the Kinnoul Street Academy in Perth and A. Inglis, Rector of the Bathgate Academy. McNeill was elected a vice-president of the E.I.S., later that year, and served three terms until 1855-56.

55 Ibid. Such a move had been under discussion for some time. In his September presidential address, James Bryce recalled: "During the past two years it [i.e.: the question of E.I.S. policy on national education] has been repeatedly spoken of at the meetings of the General Committees, but no motion was made which could have brought the question before an annual meeting". Bryce, Address at the Annual Meeting, E.I.S., p. 10.

56 Besides Bryce and Ferguson the members were: George Corken, Rector of the Educational Institute, Arbroath; James Gloag, mathematics master at Edinburgh Academy, E.I.S. president in 1855-56; William Graham, private teacher, editor of S.E.L.J., E.I.S. president in 1851-52; A. Inglis; John Johnston of George Watson's in Edinburgh, E.I.S. vice-president from 1856-57 to 1858-59; William Knox; John McNeill; James Pryde, mathematics master at the Edinburgh School of Arts, E.I.S. president in 1861-62; A.D. Robertson; John Smith, arithmetic and writing master at the Perth Academy, E.I.S. president in 1854-55.

schoolmasters, William Knox and A.D. Robertson, were adamantly opposed to any kind of radical educational reform or E.I.S. involvement in the controversy. George Corken, the Free Church rector, had been strongly opposed previously to any reform which might have damaged the prospects of his denomination's school system, but, since the official policy of the Free Church was swinging behind national educational reform, he apparently supported what emerged as the majority view of the sub-committee. It held its first meeting on 28 May 1853 at the Ship Hotel in Edinburgh and, after "long and anxious deliberation" and "careful examination of the Royal Charter and the Rules of the Institute", drew up a set of five resolutions on the subject of national education.⁵⁷

On the first resolution, which advocated that the Institute actively seek official recognition of its diploma as a "sufficient attestation" of teaching qualifications, all were agreed. To the remaining four, however, Knox and Robertson, took strong exception, on the general ground that "the subject of these resolutions does not come within the scope of the constitution of the Institute".⁵⁸ The second resolution unequivocally recommended the establishment of a general, national and undenominational system of education in Scotland. The third declared that the office of the teacher should be made attractive to "able and well-educated men" by providing ample salaries and adequate pensions, and the fourth advocated that in the "superintendence and management" of a national education system,

57 E.I.S., Minute Book, I (1853), p. 11. See Appendix D for the resolutions in full. The original version was later revised to improve its style and it is the latter I am quoting.

58 Ibid.

Scottish teachers should be "duly and fairly represented" by colleagues selected by and responsible to "their respective constituencies". Finally, the last resolution emphasized that any new system, or alteration of the present system, which did not "provide for the independence of the teacher, and guarantee the permanence of his appointment" would have an "injurious" effect on Scottish education.⁵⁹ After the adoption of these resolutions, the two parochial schoolmasters declared their intention of presenting detailed arguments against them at the next Management Committee meeting in June. They also took care to see that an official record of all the proceedings was in order and readily available.⁶⁰

The lines along which this dispute was to be conducted had become fairly clear through the early years of the Institute's development. The central issue was whether the objectives and role of the E.I.S. were to be defined narrowly or broadly and pursued cautiously or militantly. The parochial teachers and their supporters, maintained that the Institute had only two aims, self-improvement and the examining and licensing of teachers. The higher-level teachers and their supporters added a third; the participation of teachers, through the Institute, in questions of educational policy. To include this third aim, the parish teachers insisted, would plunge the E.I.S. into a maelstrom of partisan conflicts and divisive animosities which would destroy the organization and make it totally useless. Not to include this aim, the higher-level teachers retorted would be to abandon the fate of the teachers entirely to others,

59 Ibid., p. 18.

60 Ibid. In the words of the minutes, Knox and Robertson "took instruments in the clerks hands and craved extracts".

neglect their national tradition and responsibility, and render the Institute totally irrelevant. In 1853, as the issue finally emerged from the background to occupy the full attention of the members of the Educational Institute, the parochial teachers, as represented by Knox and Robertson on the sub-committee, pushed their opposition even farther. Not only would it be unwise and very probably disastrous for the E.I.S. to involve itself in the public controversy over national education, they argued, but also it would be illegal, under the terms of the Royal Charter or the Rules and Regulations, for the Institute even to consider, let alone involve itself in, the issue. This claim the advocates of a broad and militant role for the E.I.S. vehemently denied.

The parties of this dispute all being teachers, it was appropriate perhaps that it was conducted partly in terms of grammatical analysis and interpretation - the arguments focusing on the precise construction and intention of certain crucial passages contained in the Royal Charter and the Rules and Regulations.⁶¹ The wording of the descriptions of the aims of the E.I.S. were slightly different in each. The preliminary statement of the Rules and Regulations emphasized the importance of the teacher's office and the absence of any organized evaluation and licensing procedures which would provide school managers and the general public with a guarantee of a teacher's qualifications. The statement described the formation of the Institute as the uniting of Scottish teachers "for the purpose of supplying this defect in the educational arrangements of the country, and thereby of increasing their efficiency, improving their condition, and raising the standard of

61 Both were published together in 1851. E.I.S., Royal Charter and Rules and Regulations.

Education in general".⁶² In other words, this passage strongly implied that the aims of the E.I.S. were to be achieved solely, or at least mainly, through its activities as an examining and diploma granting body. This description, of course, supported the narrow interpretation of the Institute's intended role, put forward by the parochial schoolmasters. The E.I.S., they claimed, "was incorporated solely and entirely as a licensing body, for the purpose of ascertaining and certifying the qualifications" of prospective teachers.⁶³ The preliminary statement of the Rules and Regulations clearly indicated this, they argued, and such a role constituted the only condition under which the parochial teachers would have joined the new body.

The Royal Charter, on the other hand, was somewhat more general in its description of the aims of the E.I.S. and much less precise about the methods intended to achieve them. It described the Institute as formed "for the purpose of promoting sound learning, of advancing the interests of Education in Scotland, and also of supplying a defect in Educational arrangements of that country", by providing an examining and diploma granting machinery.⁶⁴ Here the activist majority took their stand. The Royal Charter, they argued, was the "real constitution" and the Rules and Regulations merely the administrative details.⁶⁵ The Charter specifically gave the Institute the power to alter or elaborate its provisions so long as such alterations

62 Ibid., p. 15.

63 E.I.S., Minute Book, I (1853), p. 13.

64 E.I.S., Royal Charter and Rules and Regulations, p. 4.

65 E.I.S., Minute Book, I (1853), p. 13.

did not run contrary to the Charter or the law. Though most clearly defined, the examining and licensing function was only one of the means of achieving the objectives of the Institute forseen by its founders. The outlining of other possible or probable functions had been left vague intentionally so that these could be developed and altered as time went on in any manner appropriate to the circumstances. This procedure, they pointed out, was similar to that used by the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in the development of those professions.

These, then, were the basic positions taken by the opposing forces, within the sub-committee in the spring of 1853 and among the general membership of the E.I.S. These contending interpretations were very fully described by the Secretary, George Ferguson, in a brief he prepared for the Institute's law-agent Mr. Charles Morton.⁶⁶ On the basis of this statement of the situation, Ferguson asked for legal advice on several points. Firstly, he wanted to know, whether the sub-committee was competent to prepare these resolutions, approve them, despite the dissent and protest of the parochial teachers, and recommend them for the consideration of the Management Committee. Secondly, he inquired as to the proper way to handle this dissent and protest. Finally, he asked whether, if the Management Committee was in favour of the resolutions, it was competent to act on them before they had been considered and approved by the Annual Meeting in September.

In view of later developments, Morton's opinion is of considerable interest. "I have no doubt", he began, "of the competency of

66 Ibid. Ferguson's summary of the situation and the accompanying questions was dated 2 June 1853.

the Institute to entertain and pass such Resolutions as those in question".⁶⁷ The last clause of the Rules and Regulations, he pointed out, specifically cleared the ground for a wide interpretation of the aims of the Institute and the means by which to attain them, and the Royal Charter "removes all doubt".⁶⁸ Any duly constituted committee of the Institute could, therefore, investigate and recommend on any subject connected with education. Morton also noted, however, that no procedures for dealing with protests or appeals had been worked out, and, although, strictly speaking, if the Management Committee favoured the resolutions it could take any immediate steps it saw fit, it might be advisable, on an issue about which feelings ran so deep, to postpone action until the Annual Meeting had considered and approved the resolutions.⁶⁹

This legal opinion and advice, Ferguson conveyed to the second meeting of the sub-committee, which convened again at the Ship Hotel on 10 June, 1853. He also read to its members a lengthy statement of dissent from Knox and Robertson, dated June 6th and sent from London, where they were part of a deputation opposing national education legislation.⁷⁰ In it they made explicit and detailed their earlier

67 Ibid., p. 14. Morton's reply was dated 9 June, 1853.

68 Ibid. It will be recalled that, when the Royal Charter application was being prepared in 1850-51, another lawyer, Charles Neaves, had advised the Institute to avoid precise and limiting definitions (see above, Chapter 6).

69 Ibid.

70 Witness, 11 June, 1853. According to the paper, the schoolmasters and the clergymen who formed another Church of Scotland deputation in London, were advocating that parliament maintain the pre-1853 parish teachers' salaries (apparently a re-adjustment on the basis of the average price of grain over the period 1828-53 would have resulted in a decrease). To this the Witness was strongly opposed on the grounds that the "real object, of course, is to postpone

general protests. The founders of the Institute, they claimed, had recognized that association "was practicable only on the condition that the objects of the Institute should be strictly limited to those on which the teachers of every class and of every denomination were agreed".⁷¹ Common ground did exist on the objective of raising the quality and status of teaching by providing examining and licensing facilities, and cordial, united action had ensued on this. To have engaged in larger questions involving the constitution and management of the schools, however, would have led to disunity and strife. Because of this, the Institute's founders had "felt themselves constrained to check the more ambitious views of some of its original promoters, and to limit the functions of the Institute to those of a licensing body".⁷² The two parochial schoolmasters stood by the narrow interpretation of the intent of the Rules and Regulations and argued that the only true grammatical and ethical reading of the Royal Charter supported this. To attempt "to extend the functions of the Institute beyond the limitations of the constitution", they charged, "is to violate the original compact and break faith with those who joined the Institute on the terms of the constitution and who would not have joined it on any other".⁷³ Knox and Robertson were adamant in opposing such an extension and claimed

indefinitely the question of school reform". On 18 June, the paper noted that Candlish was leading a Free Church deputation in London whose purpose was to oppose any interim measure dealing with the salaries of the parochial schoolmasters. Such external manoeuvres can only have added heat to the internal Institute debate.

71 E.I.S., Minute Book, I (1853), p. 15.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., p. 16.

that the Institute was "incompetent...so long as there is one dissident member to engage in any purpose beyond those set forth in the constitution, and that one single member has the power, by an appeal to the law, to check such illegal procedure on the part of any majority, however numerous".⁷⁴ Even if it were not illegal to discuss the question of national education, they concluded, it would be unwise because it would "produce immediate disunion, and the ultimate dismemberment of the Institute".⁷⁵ Such a discussion "would at once lead the Institute into the arena of political agitation" and E.I.S. members would "lose their literary, to put on a political character; thereby drawing upon themselves the jealousies both of the community and of the government".⁷⁶

After a great deal of discussion concerning all this, the subcommittee decided not to attempt to answer the dissent, but to table it for the consideration of the Management Committee. They added one further resolution, recommending the "thorough instruction of young men in the theory and practice of teaching, in addition to the usual course of education", revised the previous five, and submitted the whole set to the Management Committee, with a recommendation for its adoption.⁷⁷

At this juncture, matters apparently came to a halt. The Management Committee, which met the following day at the High School,

74 Ibid., p. 17.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., p. 18. Appendix D includes the sixth resolution.

considered the report of the sub-committee and its resolutions. It unanimously approved the first and sixth resolutions dealing with areas of common agreement; that is, the desirability of official recognition of E.I.S. diplomas and improvement of teacher training. On the basis of the views expressed thus far, however, the Management Committee decided, in effect, to suspend further consideration of the national education issue. Accordingly, it passed a carefully worded resolution which, although it explicitly waived judgment on the question of the legal competency of the Institute to examine and discuss the problem, concluded that it was "inexpedient to proceed farther at present with the consideration of the subject of National Education".⁷⁸

There the issue rested through the summer until the Management Committee's September meeting, two days prior to the Annual Meeting, at the High School. The Committee, at that time, did not consider the national education question in any direct way, but a sub-committee formed to draw up the agenda for the annual meeting, included a series of resolutions on national education, presented to it by the Caithness Local Association. These resolutions are of particular interest for two reasons: first, they were more direct than the E.I.S. sub-committee's resolutions had been, and dealt specifically with the problem of the parochial schools;⁷⁹ second, they were proposed by a local association whose membership consisted predominantly, of parochial teachers.⁸⁰

78 Ibid.

79 See Appendix E for the full text of the Caithness Resolutions.

80 An examination of the Caithness Association in the membership list of 1853-54, as well as some external evidence, indicates this. (see below).

The Caithness resolutions, both acknowledged the past contribution of the parochial schools and their present inadequacy for the needs of the country. They then went on to advocate the establishment of a national system "founded on an extended liberal and Scriptural basis", aimed at establishing well-endowed schools in every locality requiring them, staffed by teachers of all denominations, and under government inspection. Though the schools were to be separated from the established Church, the resolutions proposed that all teachers officially pledge themselves not to teach or act in any direct or indirect way which would be to the "prejudice of the Church of Scotland as presently established". Finally the resolutions urged that ample salaries and pensions be provided to raise the status of the teacher, attract good candidates to the occupations, and support those who had faithfully performed their duties.⁸¹

An examination of the Caithness Association's membership indicates that most of its twenty members were either parochial schoolmasters or teachers in schools affiliated with the Church of Scotland.⁸² This impression is strengthened by the tribute later paid to the resolutions by James Bryce. They were, he thought, an outstanding example of self-sacrifice and of the "expressed readiness of certain brethren to denude themselves of special priveleges long enjoyed".⁸³ If this interpretation is correct, the resolutions would seem to raise some question as to the solidarity of the parochial teachers in their opposition to national education reform. There are a few hints that

81 E.I.S., Minute Book, I (1853), p. 22.

82 E.I.S., Membership List, 1853-54. Ten of the members were parochial schoolmasters and four more were teaching in Church of Scotland schools.

83 James Bryce, Address at Annual Meeting of E.I.S., 1853, p. 15.

perhaps this opposition was not quite so united and intransigent as Knox and Robertson claimed. In 1850, for example, James Gloag, addressing a meeting of Edinburgh teachers, declared that the manifest defects and inadequacies of the parochial school system had created "a feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction on the part of not a few of the Parochial teachers themselves".⁸⁴ In March of the same year, The Scotsman carried a letter in which a parochial teacher took issue with his colleagues' "obstructive resolutions" regarding national education and described some of the reasons for their lack of independence on the question. "The present holder of the humble office of parish dominie (I speak feelingly, as I am one myself)", he wrote, "is entitled to great consideration from his helplessness".⁸⁵ Because of his low salary, barely equal to the wages of a day labourer, the schoolmaster was forced to augment his income by a variety of minor secretarial and inspectoral duties. "On account of these small appointments, which can only be held so long as the schoolmaster is under the patronage of the clergyman, it was not to be expected that many of the body would be disposed to make a manly

84 Scotsman, 23 January, 1850. The previous year William Gunn, in attacking the religious tests which excluded members of other denominations from teaching in the parish schools had also indicated that the parochial schoolmasters did not unanimously or heartily endorse their church's policy: "Their brethern in the parochial schools could hardly be expected to take a very prominent part in this movement at the present time; but he looked forward to the time when they would cordially co-operate in the endeavour to remove the obstructions which were now complained of". Scotsman, 2 June, 1849.

85 Jedediah Cleishbotham, "The Parish Teachers and Educational Reform", Scotsman, 16 March, 1850.

stand and to petition the Legislature for emancipation".⁸⁶ On the other hand, the correspondent did expect the parochial schoolmasters to recognize that the national education movement was in their own, as well as their country's, best interests, and to abstain, at least, from attacking or undermining it. He believed that their active opposition was being instigated by those teachers who intended to become ministers and, therefore, to control the schools themselves, but he warned that, "if bona fide teachers will consent to follow them, they deserve to remain in the land of Egypt, the house of bondage, with the downcome of 1853 hanging over them".⁸⁷ It is, however, impossible to accurately assess the depth of such dissatisfactions among the parish teachers. There was certainly evidence of tension between the parish teachers and their church on specific issues, such as salaries, but on overall policy the Caithness resolutions remain the outstanding example of any open difference of opinion. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the national education issue was finally brought to full discussion at the Educational Institute's annual meeting through the action of a local association dominated by parochial and Church of Scotland teachers.

On September 17th, 1853, James Bryce rose before some 300 delegates assembled at the High School in Edinburgh to deliver what stands as the most comprehensive, challenging and important presidential address of the Educational Institute's first quarter century. Bryce began by reviewing the development of the E.I.S., noting that the early years were mostly devoted to building up the membership, creating an examining structure, seeking official recognition for Institute

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

diplomas through the acquisition of a Royal Charter, and instituting a number of schemes in the local and central organizations aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of its members. During this period, he added, the "ulterior motives, which had often been put forward as highly worthy of attainment" were set aside in the hopes that they could be pursued more effectively when the organization was chartered and consolidated.⁸⁸

The outgoing president then went on to discuss the background and nature of the national education issue, the "most grave and solemn" crisis faced by the nation in the past 250 years.⁸⁹ Scotland's strength, he believed, lay in the national and religious nature of her schools. This tradition was in a state of decline and so, therefore, was the strength of the nation. The E.I.S. itself had sprung out of the strengths of this tradition, and had felt unanimity on most things:

But it will be your recollection, that we never yet mixed ourselves up with the agitation of any public question - any matter by which our fellow citizens around us are apt to be moved - anything external to our own organization, or calculated to call forth the expression of opinions which we may entertain, other than those formed upon purely professional experience. From such questions it is impossible for us any longer to keep aloof.⁹⁰

88 James Bryce, Address at Annual Meeting of E.I.S., 1853, p. 4. Bryce was using "ulterior" in a neutral, or even positive, sense, rather than perjoratively.

89 Ibid., p. 7. Bryce did feel, however, that much of the talk about the educational deficiency was exaggerated and much more applicable to England than to Scotland.

90 Ibid., p. 8. Bryce noted that some members had wanted to become involved in the public educational controversy long before 1853. Although, as has been noted, Bryce had been one of those who counselled a very moderate policy in the early years, he now confessed that he was "inclined" to think that a more militant involvement would have been "the wiser course". (p. 8.)

"The time has arrived", Bryce declared, "when the parochial system must be re-adjusted, in conformity with the social changes of late years".⁹¹ Agitation on the issue had been building up for several years and the government was preparing legislation, legislation that would likely propose sweeping changes, to be introduced in the next session. "Is any man so sanguine", Bryce asked, "as to imagine that this Institute will be consulted in respect of such changes, or that the advice of any practical teacher will be taken? If so, it will be a new thing under the sun".⁹² The Institute, he contended, must not wait to be asked, but must take steps to make its views known:

Our duty now is, Gentlemen, to make the Government acquainted with our objects, and the provisions of our Charter; and we must assert our right to have a voice in the educational arrangements of the country, and a much larger share in the management than we have hitherto enjoyed; - to have the schoolmaster placed at least on a level with the clergyman in respect of all matters in which education is concerned. If we limit ourselves as hitherto, to the licensing of teachers, and the certification of their qualifications, I fear that our charter will be but waste paper, and our existence fruitless and short-lived.⁹³

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid. On the same theme, he recalled his brother's complaints on this score, gave an example of a teacher who had been rejected for a government appointment on quite irrelevant religious grounds, and called Kay-Shuttleworth's failure to mention the E.I.S. in his recently published book, Public Education, "an omission quite unpardonable in one who undertook to write on the subject of Scottish education". (p. 19).

93 Ibid., p. 9.

Bryce then went on to discuss in some detail the features that, in his view, made the Scottish system unique,⁹⁴ and the damage the imposition of English assumptions and procedures was doing to these. These traditional features had been originally embodied in the parochial system, Bryce acknowledged, but they were no longer vigorous and they must be strengthened and revitalized.⁹⁵ The great danger was, however, that the changes likely to come in the present circumstances would be based on English, rather than on Scottish ideas:⁹⁶

Against such changes, should they be introduced, it is the duty of every one of us, as lovers of our country, and as pledged to promote the objects of this Institute, not only to enter our solemn protest, but to take prompt and vigorous action.⁹⁷

Finally, after suggesting some positive policies which would improve the Scottish tradition, such as chairs of education, Bryce

94 Ibid. These were the familiar themes of a nationally established system, teachers at all levels united in a common enterprise, and the school as an instrument of social and occupational mobility.

95 Ibid. "You will not, however, understand me, in saying this [i.e.: praise of the old parochial system], to approve of the parochial system in its present state; and those gentlemen who differ from me will bear with me when I express my conviction that the spirit of this age, the social changes of late years, and the altered ecclesiastical relations of the country, demand a change". (p. 12).

96 Ibid. In his remarks, Bryce had previously pointed out that the Institute's diplomas were at an increasing disadvantage with the government's certificates and that the Privy Council system, of which those certificates formed a major component, had already "paved the way for an assimilation of Scotland to England" (p. 10). The implication here was that the educational "assimilation" was part of a wider process of national cultural and social absorption.

97 Ibid., p. 12.

entered upon a ringing peroration, calling on the Institute to confront the crisis squarely, to rise above their denominational interests, and to forge and begin to publicly support a policy on national education. Before the next annual meeting, he predicted, the government was sure to present educational legislation which they must try to shape and influence:

The character of these [i.e.: educational legislative arrangements], as affecting the status of the schoolmaster must depend upon ourselves - management, control, status, will not be offered to us - and the only security we have that we shall not be in a worse position than before is simply, that important vested rights, which have grown up through centuries, must and will be respected.⁹⁸

But, they were concerned with more than just their own welfare. The Institute now was firmly established, the Royal Charter had been obtained, opposition had been overcome, and the time was ripe for the Scottish teachers who formed its ranks to be true to their "mission of securing the most lasting benefits for this land, hitherto so highly favoured":

Scotland stands forth, Gentlemen, before the world in the proud aspect of the land of sacrifices for conscience's sake - sacrifices of worldly income and social standing - and of what is much more difficult to lay down on the altar of principle - long cherished opinions for which men argued and battled. Instances need not be given - they are fresh in the recollections of all of you - I have a firm hope that this day will present us with another example of that noble forgetfulness of self, to which I have referred; and that the record of the day's proceedings will show a united harmonious and vigorous effort for carrying out the great objects for which we are associated.⁹⁹

98 Ibid., p. 15.

99 Ibid.

The issue of national educational reform, which had so permeated and surrounded the early development of the E.I.S., despite all efforts to ignore or evade it, now, finally, lay before the delegates to its annual assembly. After the election of a successor to Bryce - the parochial schoolmaster A.D. Robertson - the vote of thanks to the retiring president, the secretary's report on the meetings of the Management Committee and its sub-committees, and Ferguson's re-election, it was decided to move directly to the consideration of the Caithness resolutions.¹⁰⁰ The discussions which followed lasted all afternoon and though certainly vigorous did not display that mutual forbearance and unity of purpose Bryce had hoped for.¹⁰¹ All the old ground was covered. R.J. Bryce, who was present, perhaps because of the importance of this debate, expressed his surprise at the diversity displayed and spoke strongly in support of the Caithness resolutions. He contended that there was no real diversity of interest among teachers and that they must cooperate for their own and the good of the country, since, whatever they did, a reform measure was bound to be passed by parliament. Pryde, James Bryce, McNeill, and others, all supported the resolutions, but Knox,

100 Significantly, this decision was prompted by a resolution to that effect proposed by William Knox, an acknowledgement by the leader of the parochial teachers that a show-down could no longer be avoided and should be dealt with quickly. E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1853), p. 22.

101 Unfortunately no detailed description of the debate is carried in the Minutes which simply referred to it as "much discussion". Ibid., p. 22. A somewhat fuller account was carried by The Witness, 21 September, 1853. Both the Minutes and The Witness printed the final resolutions that emerged and the recorded votes. Despite the scarcity of detailed information, the main lines of the debate are quite clear.

Robertson and other spokesmen for the parochial group were unpromising in their opposition.¹⁰² A number of resolutions were proposed and withdrawn¹⁰³ and finally, sometime after 6 P.M. in the early evening, with the numbers at the meeting dwindling, besides the original Caithness resolutions, two motions remained on the floor. Both of these amounted to a rejection of the appeal for action made by Bryce and the 'broad' interpretation of the role the Institute should play in Scottish education. The first motion, put by Knox, called for the rejection of the Caithness resolutions on the familiar ground that the Institute was "incompetent", according to the constitution, to consider the subject. The second motion, put by a supporter of Institute involvement in the controversy, John Johnston, more or less admitted defeat, reading: "That, as there is at present no likelihood of entering on the discussion with advantage, the meeting in the meantime allow the overture to lie on the table, but distinctly asserts its right to interfere in the question of national education at any time when this shall appear expedient".¹⁰⁴ When these were put to the vote, the Caithness resolutions and the Johnston motion both passed, but very narrowly, 43 to 39.¹⁰⁵

At this point, Knox took his usual steps of requesting an official record of the proceedings to be used as a basis for further actions,

102 Witness, 23 September, 1853.

103 E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1853), p. 22.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid. The Witness reported that this narrow majority was challenged by the parish teachers who claimed that there was some irregularity about the Glasgow delegation. The majority, therefore, may have been but a single vote.

and presented a formal "Representation and Protest" signed by himself and three other prominent parish teachers.¹⁰⁶ This document reiterated all the points the parochial teachers had made in the course of the several months' discussions, and protested against the Caithness resolutions, against their adoption, against their entry in the Minutes, and against any use of them as Institute policy, implementation using Institute funds, or circulation to the Institute's membership. If this protest was not heeded, they warned that "it shall be competent for us to restrain such proceedings by applying to the civil courts or otherwise as we may be advised...".¹⁰⁷ In the face of this unwavering and aggressive opposition, the meeting further adopted a motion that the whole matter should be presented to the Lord Advocate and the Dean of Faculty for a legal opinion, from the highest sources, on the competency of the Institute to consider the national education question, formulate a policy, and promote its views. Then, finally, the most crucial meeting of the Institute's brief history, adjourned.

There is no doubt that, after all the months and, indeed, years of debate, their failure to overcome the stubborn opposition of the parochial schoolmasters and to rally a solid majority of the E.I.S. membership behind a broad, activist policy, was gravely demoralizing to those who had hoped that the Institute would prove to be the vehicle through which the teachers of Scotland could make their influence felt, not just upon bread-and-butter issues or even matters of pedagogy, but also on vital national questions of educational

106 A.D. Robertson, William Murdoch of Kinnoul, near Perth, and A.S. Thomson of Inverarity near Forfar.

107 E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1853), p. 25.

policy. George Ferguson, who was preparing the brief, together with the Institute's legal advisor Charles Morton, to be presented to the Lord Advocate and Dean of Faculty, wrote gloomily to James Bryce in November of 1853, complaining about the slowness of the printers in preparing the memorial and deploring the frustrating situation in which the Institute found itself and the complacency and apathy of many teachers:

In the meantime the Institute must be suffering from the position in which it is placed; and the Resolutions of the General Meeting can have no effect in the Educational discussions which are at present going on. In the North we disregard the spoutings of the wiseacres in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and rest satisfied that matters will continue hereafter as they have been in our times, and in the times of our Fathers. But notwithstanding our fancied security, a crisis is evidently approaching.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, a lengthy statement was prepared, reviewing the entire course of the controversy up to and including the resolutions so narrowly approved by the 1853 Annual Meeting, and was presented to the Lord Advocate and Dean of Faculty in late November or early December. Several items contained in it throw additional light on the background and development of the dispute. For one thing, William Knox and the parochial teachers were permitted to include their own statement of their position in the presentation. In it, they returned to and elaborated their interpretation of the objectives of the Institute, as stated in the Royal Charter and Rules and Regulations, in the narrowest and strictest possible sense.¹⁰⁹ In support

108 Bryce Papers, George Ferguson to James Bryce, 12 November, 1853.

109 The parochial schoolmasters claimed that in every draft of the Royal Charter considered before October 1850, the final clause of the crucial sentence had read "for the purpose of promoting sound learning, of advancing the interests of Education in

of this interpretation, Knox described the parochial group's original attitude thus:

The Parish Schoolmasters could never have become Members of it on any other terms. They knew that their interest, as an established body, were to some extent in opposition to those of the non-established Teachers of Scotland; and they knew also that these non-established Teachers by far out-numbered them; and that a vote on any subject involving their peculiar interests in an association composed of all Teachers whatever, would infallibly be against them. They therefore at once objected to join the Association if it was to interfere with the political question of Education, or was to be recognized as the organ, on such subjects, of the Teachers of Scotland. They became Members solely in the belief that the objects were to be strictly limited to those on which the Teachers of every Class and of every Denomination were agreed - viz. such as had reference to the attainments and status of the Teacher, and the business of the School-room. Accordingly, neither the Charter, nor the Rules appended to it, contain one single word as to the Institute becoming the recognized organ of the Teachers of Scotland.¹¹⁰

To this interpretation of the stated positions of the groups who originally agreed to join in forming the Institute, the representatives of the majority view in the presentation, responded sharply:

in Scotland, and of supplying a defect in the Educational arrangement of that country..." In the revised version of the draft, however, the word "also" had been inserted, so that the final version read, "...and also of supplying a defect...". This charge, the parish teachers contended, provided the sole basis for any claim that the Institute was to have functions beyond that of self-improvement, examination and licensing - a claim they insisted was not only grammatically erroneous, but illegal and immoral as well. The activists, responding to this in the presentation, dismissed the parochial interpretation as a mere debating point; with or without the word "also", according to them, the passage had to be read as describing three basic aims, "separate and independent" of one another. E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1853), pp. 38-39.

110 Ibid., p. 38.

The Memorialists cannot enter upon what may have been the views or intentions of the Parochial Schoolmasters in regard to the Institute; but it is right to state that no expression of such views and intentions as are here referred to, was made by them at any meeting.¹¹¹

Indeed, from the available records, it would seem that those who had advocated a broad and militant role for the E.I.S. had made their opinions known a good deal more clearly ~~from~~ the outset.¹¹² This is not to say that they were unaware of the general misgivings of the parochial schoolmasters.¹¹³ The moderate and gradualist tactics the activists adopted in order to try to achieve their more ambitious aims were, in fact, a direct response to those misgivings. The opposition of the parish teachers, in turn, became more precise and articulate as developments outside the E.I.S. and pressure from its activist members moved the Institute towards confronting the major political-educational question of the time.

Further, the parochial schoolmasters adopted somewhat inconsistent positions on different, though related, issues. The authors of the majority position in the presentation to the Lord Advocate and Dean of Faculty were quick to point this out. They recalled that in the original draft of the Royal Charter in 1850 the parochial teachers, along with all other groups in the Institute, strongly supported a clause "as to the Institute's Diplomas being rendered essential for every appointment of a Teacher in every school

111 Ibid., p. 39.

112 Ferguson's circular, Reid's letter and Schmitz' inaugural speech all it seems to me illustrate this.

113 William Knox's statement at the founding meeting in 1847, did in a general way, indicate that the parochial teachers had some reservations, not about the overall objectives of the EIS, but about the appropriate means of achieving them.

established by Legislative Enactment, or supported wholly or partially by Public Grants".¹¹⁴ It was undeniable that the political implications of such a clause, directly interfering with the management of the schools, were considerable. Certainly, the memorialists were on firm ground when they went on to claim that, along with another proposed clause in the Royal Charter, which gave wide latitude to the E.I.S. in the use and disposal of its surplus funds, the parish teachers' support for this position "gave much more sanction to the Resolutions now objected to than the word 'also' in the substituted Draft, upon which the Dissients say so much; and...went greatly farther in the direction to which the Dissients now take objection".¹¹⁵ In comparison with that attempt to attain an official and recognized position in the educational organization of the country, the memorialists argued that their present desire to have the Institute discuss the issue of national educational reform, try to formulate some policy on the question, and even actively support and promote such a policy, was relatively innocuous. The clear implication was that the altered view of the parish teachers was both unreasonable and selfish.

Whatever the merits of the case presented by the memorialists may seem to be in retrospect, however, they did not effectively carry the day with the eminent legal minds to whom the presentation was submitted. On 17th December 1853 the Lord Advocate, James Moncrieff, and the Dean of Faculty, John Inglis, sent down their opinion, an opinion which must have severely disheartened the most optimistic proponents of an active and bold E.I.S. The statement

114 E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1853), p. 39. For the original version see above, Chapter 6).

115 Ibid.

was succinct and is worth quoting in full:

We are of the opinion that, while the Resolutions of 17th September 1853 are beyond the scope and object of the Educational Institute, we cannot say that there is any incompetency in the Institute discussing and passing those Resolutions; but at the same time, we are of the opinion that it would be clearly illegal to employ any of its funds in carrying out the measures contemplated by them.

While giving the foregoing opinion, we venture to take the liberty of strongly advising the members of the Institute to abstain from introducing and discussing controverted public questions, inasmuch as these are matters which are beyond the scope and object of the Incorporation, and very likely to impair or destroy its usefulness.¹¹⁶

The advice here offered seems somewhat curious and even contradictory but was nonetheless, influential and significant. The lawyers seemed to agree with the parish teachers' claim that it had never been intended that the E.I.S. should take a public stand on such questions as national education. On the other hand, they disagreed that the Institute was incompetent to take such a stand if it wished. Despite this competence, however, they felt that it would be illegal for the Institute to employ any of its funds in "carrying out the measures" they supported. By this, Moncrieff and Inglis presumably meant publicizing E.I.S. views, sponsoring petitions and meetings, or otherwise actively promoting Institute policy. Finally having got this far, the Lord Advocate and the Dean left the law behind entirely to advise the teachers to have nothing to do with public educational controversies, not only because such participation was not, in their opinion, contemplated by the founders of the Institute, but because it would inhibit or destroy the organization. Whatever the cogency of these views, for Moncrieff, as the leading proponent

116 Ibid.

and instigator of Scottish educational reform, to counsel the teachers to avoid involvement in the subject, revealed the prevailing public attitude of the role and function of the teacher, - all the more restrictive when voiced by one so sympathetic to educational matters. The overall effect of this opinion, of course, was to strongly influence the members of the Institute to abstain from further involvement.

Together with the inconclusive vote on the national education resolutions presented to the 1853 Annual Meeting, the discouraging legal opinion and advice received late in the same year was extremely demoralizing for the activist members of the Educational Institute of Scotland. John Johnston, for example, wrote to James Bryce in February 1854, expressing his depression and frustration at the neglect of Institute affairs by the Edinburgh teachers, reporting that "except for Pryde and myself almost nobody takes the slightest interest". Apparently, despite the December legal opinion, it had been decided to try to carry the national education question further, but not enough money had been found to even print the Institute's memorial to the Lord Advocate and Dean of Faculty. "But the truth is we are quite apathetic in this quarter..." Johnston concluded, and he advised Bryce to "try yourself to get the Teachers of Glasgow to move - and don't wait for us".¹¹⁷

III

Whether the Educational Institute of Scotland took any direct action or not, however, the national education question refused to go away. It raged ever hotter, in fact, through 1854 and 1855, as

117 Bryce Papers, John Johnston to James Bryce, 11 February, 1854.

legislation and counter-legislation was presented, debated, and defeated or set aside. Scottish teachers as individuals and as employees of various denominations or independent groups of managers were, of course, vitally interested in the problem. One evidence of their concern was the fact that, despite the official neutrality of the E.I.S., the pages of its Journal were filled, as never before, with articles discussing, supporting or opposing these bills and, incidentally, re-affirming or challenging the Institute's policy on national education. Ironically, in view of the parochial schoolmasters' uncompromising opposition to becoming involved in the issue, it was they, or writers supporting their views, who took the initiative in this activity. The Journal carried a few articles though the winter of 1854 dealing indirectly with matters relating to government involvement with the teachers and in April printed a synopsis of the Lord Advocate's education bill without comment. The same issue, however, contained an article titled "The Educators and the Education Bill", spiritedly defending the constitution and quality of the parish schools. Though it admitted that a serious educational deficiency did exist, it defended the role that the adventure schools had traditionally played in the country's education system and attacked the bill in almost every particular, concluding that, if not radically altered, it deserved the "most strenuous opposition".¹¹⁸ This article was followed, the next month, by an equally critical piece which accused the legislation of being a "direct act of spoliation" against the parochial schools.¹¹⁹

118 "Educators and the Education Bill", SELJ (April, 1854), p. 300.

119 "Remarks upon the Education Bill", SELJ (May, 1854), p. 334.

These two articles prompted a rejoinder of sorts in the June number, entitled "A Colloquy on Various Points (The Professor and the Schoolmaster)".¹²⁰ In it the professor chided the schoolmaster, obviously one of the parochial variety, with confusing the essential features of the Lord Advocate's bill with the trivial, and with not giving "more generous consideration to the position and interests of your benefactor", the Lord Advocate, "the first of his tribe that has proposed a reasonable remuneration or a retiring allowance".¹²¹ If the teachers were less supine they could do much to improve the clauses of the bill, but instead they chose to attack it root and branch. Further, the professor accused the Institute of not "manfully facing the difficulties", and of seeking "to limit its functions to the mere granting of honorary distinctions".¹²² When the schoolmaster objected that the charter of the Institute would not permit more militant action, the professor replied: "Then why get such a charter? What influence could presbyteries exercise on public opinion, if they were to restrict their operations to the mere licensing of preachers?". The ensuing exchange precisely sums up the dilemma the E.I.S. faced:

Schoolmaster - we were afraid of discord and agitators, that might end in breaking up the Institute itself.
 Professor - Pooh! nonsense! You never can ventilate public questions too much; and if the Institute be a pack of cards that cannot stand an ordinary agitation like other bodies, it is high time that it were reconstructed.¹²³

120 "Colloquy", SELJ (June, 1854), p. 396.

121 Ibid., p. 399.

122 Ibid., p. 400.

123 Ibid.

Various attempts were made, of course, to smooth over the bitter differences within the Institute's membership aroused by the 1853 resolutions and exacerbated by the continuing controversy. One writer in the Journal, for example, counselled caution for the present but looked forward to a bright and influential future for the E.I.S., a time when Scottish teachers would make their united voice heard on educational issues:

But the time is not yet. Let us, however, hold together; this we reckon the main condition at present. Let there be mutual forbearance - no reckless blowing of smouldering ashes; this is not the time for it. Mens' minds are at present in a state of fermentation on such matters, which if left alone, may soon subside, but which, if recklessly tampered with now, may cause an amount of mischief that many years will not repair, and retard the results that we all long to see.¹²⁴

In the same spirit, Bryce's successor as president A.D. Robertson, the parish schoolmaster, congratulated the Institute on the tone of its meetings during his term of office through 1853-54 claiming that they had been free "from all acerbity of feeling, and all political and personal contests - not a word in the heat and hurry of argument having escaped from any member that was calculated to

124 "The Principles of Education", SELJ (March 1854), p. 241. Another author, in the same issue, urged a similar policy of restraint:

We ought to have no concern with this public strife, in which we feel that we are not admitted as parties, for in any way acknowledged, unless to be depreciated; but we ought to be instructed by it that our duty is to keep united, and be prepared to take our position when our time shall come, which it assuredly shall do sooner or later. "Present Position and Duty of the E.I.S.", p. 257.

give even momentary pain to the most sensitive minds".¹²⁵

It was difficult, however, as the public and parliamentary debate continued, not to see the Institute's abstention as increasingly sterile and futile. The case for pressing forward, despite internal division and external disapproval, and becoming actively involved in the national education question had been well put by the chairman of the Perth Local Association, Robert Foggo, at the Institute's Annual Meeting in 1854. He argued strongly:

That the contradictory opinions, even by lawyers of authority, respecting the legal competence of the Educational Institute to discuss the question of National Education, show that the law is not directly applicable to the case, but is a matter of mere interference, from considerations of expedience, not more appreciable by lawyers than by men of intelligence; and that the true voice of these considerations affirms the competence of the Institute to deal with this subject.¹²⁶

After an initial period of despondency, which lasted most of 1854,¹²⁷

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- 125 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1854, p. 7. Robertson himself cast some doubt on the validity of this description, however, by following these remarks with a spirited attack on the most recent legislative proposals concerning education - an attack which would certainly have pained the sensitive minds of some of his audience - before returning to the theme that the best policy for the E.I.S. was to keep entirely aloof from the national education controversy.
- 126 E.I.S., Minute Book, I (1854), p. 176. Foggo made these remarks in the course of moving for the establishment of a special committee to make a full investigation of the subject, to be presented to and discussed by a special general meeting of the Institute. In fact, his resolutions were referred to a sub-committee, chaired by Bryce, which reported to the Management Committee in December 1854 that, "not seeing their way to the carrying out of the object contemplated by these Resolutions, they [i.e.: the sub-committee] had agreed to refer them to the committee [i.e.: the Management Committee]". No further action was taken. (p. 178).
- 127 Resolutions, favouring national educational reform, from the local associations in Perth (1853) and Arbroath and Hamilton (1854) got no further than the Management Committee which took no action on them.

the activists began to recover their spirits and to press once more for an E.I.S. policy on the question. A writer in the Journal in May 1855, noted that all the leading clerical bodies had declared their positions publicly on the proposed education legislation and that "what they have all said indicates only narrow-minded selfishness and party aggrandisement...sectarian possessiveness and sectarian hate...".¹²⁸ There was nothing in them of a desire for the general welfare, and certainly there was "on every hand an utter disregard of the good of teachers".¹²⁹ A neutral policy was impossible, the writer concluded, quoting the lines:

He that would be free himself
Must strike the first blow!¹³⁰

The result of this renewed agitation was, what turned out to be, the final attempt of the Educational Institute of Scotland to deal squarely with the issue of national educational reform. At the Annual Meeting in September 1855, the outgoing president, John Smith, like James Bryce two years before, used his official presidential address to urge action upon the delegates. For how long, Smith asked, could the Institute abstain from the national debate; "... are we to come here from year to year, to go through some routine of business, retire in isolated confusion, and leave the management of our affairs entirely in the hands of the committees and sub-committees [i.e. of the E.I.S.] to manage the matter as they will?"¹³¹ True,

128 SELJ (May 1855), p. 194.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 E.I.S., Proceedings of General Meeting, 1855, p. 34.

these committees had been taking some action regarding particular aspects of the legislation proposed, but this was not enough. "If the subject of national education is to be taken up at all, it must be taken up in earnest, and we must be resolved not only to expand time but money upon it...".¹³² Together with James Bryce, Smith proposed a motion, "That a committee be appointed to consider the question of national education".¹³³ The Annual Meeting approved this motion and appointed a large committee to consider the subject and to try to ascertain what the E.I.S. membership thought about it.¹³⁴

The committee met four times during November and December of 1855 and discussed, at length, every possible alternative for re-organizing Scottish education. Despite the obviously wide range of views represented, Johnston had hoped for a "unanimous finding" by the committee,¹³⁵ and there did seem to be some tendency for compromise on both sides. Bryce, for example, proposed a set of principles which would have built a national education scheme squarely on the parochial system, rather than creating totally new organizational basis.¹³⁶ The parochial group, by late 1855, had

132 Ibid.

133 E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1855), p. 216.

134 Ibid. The committee consisted of twenty-nine members including John Johnston, its chairman, the executive of the Institute, and Knox, Bryce, Robertson, Smith, Pryde, Steele, Corken, and Foggo. As well as struggling with the national education question, the committee was to "watch over the interests of the Institute in reference to any measure which may be submitted to the legislature...".

135 Ibid., p. 220. This hope was expressed at a Management Committee meeting in November 1855.

136 Ibid.

apparently accepted the need for some sort of educational legislation, but they now hoped to deal with the parochial schools and 'the rest' in two separate bills.¹³⁷ But these compromise tendencies were simply not strong enough. Robertson's proposals were attacked as "a refusal of all concession on the part of the Parochial Schoolmasters"¹³⁸ and it was proposed that the committee divide into two separate groups to prepare recommendations, because a united recommendation was obviously impossible. The combined committee, however, persevered. As far as any proposal building a national system upon the foundation of the parish system, however, Knox wrote to a further meeting requesting that it be "announced to the Meeting...that if any scheme is proposed involving a change in the constitution of the Parochial Schools, he would feel it his duty to protest and to oppose the measure by all means competent".¹³⁹

In other words, the old familiar stalemate was reached despite the best efforts of those concerned. A special sub-committee failed to devise any "definite statement as to National Education"¹⁴⁰ and the main committee split hopelessly on various individual proposals and motions. Regretfully, it reported its failure to the Management Committee on 29 December 1855, which, in turn "expressed regret that the Committee had not been able to bring forward a Statement on the subject of National Education...".¹⁴¹

137 Ibid., p. 222.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid., p. 224.

140 Ibid., p. 228.

141 Ibid., p. 229. Johnston's committee was instructed to continue its watching brief on educational legislation.

The discussions of late 1855 were the last attempt the Educational Institute of Scotland ever made to come to grips with the national education question as a whole, though it continued to try to exert an influence ^{on} ~~of~~ particular aspects of educational legislation and policy. Its failure to formulate a policy on this vital issue had, I believe, the most serious effects on its own progress and vitality and on the long-run status and influence of the teacher. For despite all denials, the failure of this important group of Scottish teachers to take any forceful part in a burning national issue of great and direct consequence to themselves, seriously demoralized its membership and critically undermined the schoolmasters' claims to higher status, greater influence, and occupational independence. In October 1853, The Scotsman, in an editorial comparing Scottish educational progress unfavourably with those of the British colonies in North America had noted the Institute's predicament:

While here ecclesiastics are fulminating, and statesmen shilly-shallying - while even in Scotland an Educational Institute composed of the best of our teachers, can get no further than debating whether they dare to debate the question - our colonies have decided the matter on the broadest and freest principles, and have given the strongest possible proof of being in earnest by assessing their own pockets.¹⁴²

The Institute's failure to deal in any vigorous way with the problem made it appear timid and ^a ~~a~~emic. As one teacher expressed it scornfully in 1855:

I have always been one of those who thought that the Institute made a false step in resolving to abstain from interfering with the question of national education. It has always appeared to me a palpable absurdity that a body, calling themselves the custodiers of the educational interests of Scotland - numbering as its members

142 The Scotsman, 5 October, 1853.

those who, both from their theoretical and practical knowledge, ought to speak with some authority, and be listened to with some deference, on the subject - should quietly stand aloof when the most important matters affecting these interests are agitated, and submissively listen to the splendid twaddle of prosy town councillors and other equally enlightened individuals.¹⁴³

And a palpable absurdity it increasingly seemed. Silence on the matter was virtually an admission of powerlessness, of disunity, of occupational dependence, and, indeed, in view of the ferocity and importance of the educational controversy, of irrelevance. The Institute suffered accordingly. It has already been noted that failure to receive some official recognition for its diplomas kept the number of candidates sitting its annual exams to a mere handful and, as time went on, led to the formation of associations of government certificated teachers composed of men who would have added strength and numbers to the E.I.S. The problem of resignations also appeared from time to time during the early years, mostly concerning teachers who had taken up Institute diplomas, but who had never paid for them and preferred to withdraw when pressed to do so. After the failure of the Institute in the mid-fifties to deal with the national education question, however, resignations due to apathy or disillusionment seem to have increased. In an appeal for greater support in 1855, the revised version of the Journal referred to this problem, in the course of pointing out that teachers were bound to be ignored and slighted if:

We are to present to the public such a spectacle of disunion in action and sentiment as we do - so much mutual jealousy - so much ignorance of each other's real opinions and feelings as to educational matters - fearing to communicate our own,

143 A Teacher, "Two Education Bills", SELJ (May, 1855), p. 196.

and caring little what those of our neighbours might be; and, when such an edifice as the Educational Institute of Scotland has been set up, to see members cautiously and jealousy peeping in at the door, while others, like timorous and guilty cowards, are gliding out.¹⁴⁴

Another indication of the decline of interest and support for the E.I.S. lies in the size of the attendance at its annual meetings. From its enthusiastic beginnings when the attendance in 1847, 1848 and 1849 was about 600, 500 and 400 respectively, the attendance levelled out at around 300 for the years 1851 to 1856. In 1857, 1858 and 1859, the attendances were down to 256, 274 and 213 respectively. No lists are available in the minutes for the first half of the 1860's, but when the next attendance list was entered for the 1865 annual meeting, only 143 names appear and the following year only 169. The annual financial reports, too, reveal a pattern of stagnation and decline. From 1850, when the balance on hand was almost f1600, the assets gradually decreased until, in 1857, the statement showed a balance of slightly over f600, with f145 in unpaid dues. At the general meeting where this state of affairs was reported there was some controversy over the management of the Institute's finances. A motion proposing the establishment of a sub-committee directed to "ascertain what has become of the Funds which at one time appear to have amounted to not less than f1624", was defeated by one directing a sub-committee to devise "the best means of economizing the Funds of the Institute...".¹⁴⁵ These measures, whatever they were, seemed to have had effect, because the balance remained steady at between six and seven hundred pounds

144 SELJ (January, 1855), p. 3.

145 E.I.S., Minute Book, I, (1857), p. 582.

for the next several years and even began to increase slowly through the late sixties. Both in membership and in finances, however, the Institute can hardly be said to have prospered after the mid-1850's.

What could serve as the epitaph of this period of the Institute's development is a passage in Viscount Bryce's tribute to James Bryce, recalled his father's connection with the E.I.S.:

Convinced of the importance of organizing the profession in a body which should exert some control over its members, and be able to guarantee its fitness, he had as far back as 1847, taken part in founding the E.I.S.; had been one of its earliest presidents; and a warm advocate for the establishment of an unsectarian, though religious, system of national education. Partly through the obstinacy of ignorance of the Government, partly from the apathy of the educational profession itself, which was too much divided by ecclesiastical partisanship to unite for a common purpose, the Institute though it continues to exist has not obtained the full official recognition which it claimed; and Dr. Bryce, who was himself very free from party passions, had latterly begun to feel that in the present state of the parties there was little likelihood of its success.¹⁴⁶

As we have seen it was an ambitious hope to believe that teachers, in the face of deep and powerful outside opposition, and occupying, for the most part, dependent and vulnerable positions, could achieve a degree of unity sufficient to overcome these disadvantages and seize a position of influence and independence. Even, without the steadfast opposition of the parish teachers, the chances for success would have been slim; with that opposition they were nil. That James Bryce, who worked ardently to establish, develop and maintain the Institute and who continued to actively and energetically participate in its affairs and support its efforts long after his appeals for a unified

146 Viscount Bryce, In Memorium (London, 1877), p. 11.

policy on national education had come to naught, should despair of the success of the E.I.S. was a true measure of the fundamental failure of that organization to overcome the considerable obstacles that it faced.

Chapter 8

The Struggle for Reform, 1850-1854

I

In 1856 the president of the Educational Institute of Scotland observed that, during the preceding half-dozen years, the subject of educational reform had so thoroughly "taken possession of men's minds, that in no similar period...had the same number of educational improvements been suggested to the notice of Parliament or discussed by the public press".¹ The period was certainly one of unprecedented discussion and controversy. Between the years 1850 and 1856 four major legislative proposals for the comprehensive reform of Scottish education, as well as a number of more restricted or specialized measures, were presented to Parliament for consideration.² Almost annually, in the first half of the 1850's, the various political and ecclesiastical factions which had skirmished periodically, over the course of twenty years or more, joined in clamorous and bitter public battle. Having examined the nature and development of this controversy, particularly as it related to the E.I.S. and affected Scottish teachers, it seems appropriate here to take a broader view and to try to describe and assess the wider educational, political and national implications of the volatile issue of Scottish educational reform.

1 Gloag, Presidential Address, 1856, p. 10.

2 Viscount Melgund presented a major bill in 1850 and again in 1851. The Lord Advocate, James Moncrieff, proposed similar measures in 1854 and 1855, and a more restricted bill in 1856. Several bills for the relief of the parochial schoolmasters' salary difficulties were submitted during these years as well as measures affecting the religious tests for professors at the universities. Legislation was also proposed dealing with Irish, English and Welsh education through this period.

A number of the background factors, which combined at mid-century to produce this unprecedented concern and activity, have been discussed already in this thesis. The earlier writings of such educational-social critics as George Lewis, Thomas Guthrie, George Combe, James Simpson and R.J. Bryce in the 1820's and 1830's had prepared the ground and had prompted various denominational and philanthropic efforts through the 1830's and the 1840's to alleviate the glaring deficiencies they had exposed. By mid-century, however, it was clear to most observers that these efforts were achieving only very limited and partial success³ and the contrast between the vaunted Scottish tradition of education and the reality of the country's educational imperfections was more striking than ever before. In the ecclesiastical realm by the 1850's the furore created by the Disruption had subsided somewhat. The Free Church was by now firmly settled and more confident of its position. The Church of Scotland could no longer pretend that its upstart rival would collapse or disappear and was forced to begin to adjust to its own minority position. Despite increased denominational fragmentation, however, the great majority of the people still shared the basic tenets of Presbyterianism; a common foundation - or so it seemed to many - upon which a single school system might well be raised.

Another factor adding to the urgency of the educational reformers' case, was the growing recognition of the increasing influence of the Privy Council's system of regulations and procedures - an influence

3 Nevertheless, the influence of these partial successes, in inhibiting the force of arguments for more comprehensive reform, was considerable. As Saunders put it: "For thirty years the discussion was to circle around an impasse, partly because so much good was accomplished that it became the enemy of the better" (Scottish Democracy, p. 368). The debate within the Free Church provides a classic example.

that was markedly English in its assumptions and inimical to some aspects of the Scottish educational tradition. Moreover, this recognition coincided with a much wider Scottish public concern at mid-century; namely, that the whole range of English social, economic, political and cultural influences to which Scotland was exposed was inexorably altering the national traditions and character of Scotland. The emergence of Scottish nationalist sentiment at mid-century and the place of the Scottish educational tradition within that movement deserves some detailed discussion.

In a recent article,⁴ H.J. Hanham finds the roots of mid-century Scottish nationalism in the sense of loss and inferiority resulting from the failure of Scotland to survive independently and the consequent necessity of Union. He then goes on to trace its development through the eighteenth century enlightenment period and the folkloric 'tartan-frenzy' phase of the early nineteenth century. Until the middle years of the latter century, Hanham argues, Scottish nationalism "consisted of an outpouring of emotions about the past rather than of political aspirations for the future".⁵ By the 1850's, however, more and more Scotsmen were feeling and were beginning to

4 H.J. Hanham, "Mid-Century Scottish Nationalism: Romantic and Radical", in R. Robson, ed., Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain (London, 1967). Because his article is focused on the period I am discussing and because my interpretation of the influence of the education question on Scottish nationalism differs considerably from his, I give a good deal of attention to Professor Hanham's views in this section. Also relevant, however, is Sir R. Coupland's Welsh and Scottish Nationalism (London, 1954). Tom Nairn's treatment of Scottish nationalism in "The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism", New Left Review, #49 (May-June, 1968) differs radically from either and provides an extremely perceptive and stimulating examination and critique of the movement, past and present.

5 Hanham, "Scottish Nationalism", p. 147.

express a "good deal of uneasiness about the relations between Scotland and England".⁶

Like other writers on this subject, Hanham emphasizes that few of these expressions of "uneasiness" took the form of advocating repeal of the Union.⁷ Rather, a number of particular grievances, arising from the operation of Union, were put forward: matters such as the under-representation of Scotland in Parliament;⁸ the cavalier handling of Scottish business in London;⁹ the unequal distribution

6 Ibid., p. 150.

7 As Coupland put it, Scottish nationalists contended that the operation of the political system, established by Union, was unfair and inefficient" Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, p. 281. Hanham believes Coupland's view is too narrow - that is, that mid-century Scottish nationalism contained an important romantic strain - but largely agrees. Nairn, too, sees Scottish nationalism in this British context. Whatever the romantic elements present, he believes the Scottish nationalist tradition differs markedly from many other European countries: "It makes the purpose of 'independence' into a minor administrative problem. Autonomy becomes an antidote for some of the worst damage done by the reckless past evolution of the capitalist system", "Three Dreams", p. 14. See also the denial of a leading nationalist, Sir Archibald Alison, that he or his associates wanted to repeal Union. Quoted in Ferguson, Scotland, p. 321.

8 According to Coupland, by 1853, in terms of proportionate population, Scotland should have had 89 MPs instead of the 53 assigned to her in 1832. In 1863 the number of Scottish representatives was raised to 60 and later, in 1885, to 72. Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, p. 282.

9 The Lord Advocate was, besides his legal role, in charge of all Scottish business but he was not a member of the Cabinet. Scottish MPs complained that matters of importance to Scotland were postponed or squeezed into hours that were late or short, or both. Hanham describes the "intense Scottish indignation", "Scottish Nationalism", p. 151. In the late 1840's when important Scottish legislation was not carried through the House because "English ministers, preoccupied with other matters, clearly thought that Scottish legislation could wait, just as they thought Irish legislation could wait". Ibid., p. 151. They "would not set aside parliamentary time for dealing with Scottish business and...when they did, they made the Scottish MPs sit up all night because English business was always taken up before Scottish". Ibid., p. 152.

of government revenues in Britain;¹⁰ and the centralization of government agencies, like customs and postal administrations, in the English capital. These practical grievances constitute, for Hanham, the "radical" component of mid-century Scottish nationalism. But there was another side to the phenomenon as well, one that was concerned with the less apparent and more indefinable aspects of life in Scotland that were felt to be distinctively Scottish and which seemed increasingly to be threatened with extinction or vulgarization under the pressure of English custom and influence. The degrading of Scottish heraldic symbols was one such concern, the use of 'England' for 'Britain' and of 'Scotch' for 'Scottish' another, and the disappearance of Scottish usage and expression yet a third.¹¹ Though Hanham feels that the contribution of what he calls this "romantic" element to mid-century Scottish nationalism has been underrated,¹² he dismisses most of it as trivial or reactionary and clearly regards

10 Coupland writes that "Scottish revenue in 1850 considerably exceeded the cost of Scottish administration", Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, p. 282.

11 Though it remained necessary, then as now, to cultivate 'correct English' if one was to rise to a fashionable or professional level, there began to appear among literary men and others a greater appreciation of the vitality and beauty of traditional language in Scotland. The change is evident in the contrast between articles like "Letter on Scotch Nationality" ([Charles Neaves], Blackwood's, May 1839) which is romantically attracted to the language but is clearly opposed to its continuation or cultivation on practical grounds, or "The Scotch Accent" (W. Graham, SELJ Dec. 1852) which is decidedly hostile, and later articles like "The Poetry and Humour of the Scottish Language" ([C. Mackay], Blackwood's, Nov, 1869) or "The Scottish Language" ([J. Donaldson], Edinburgh Review Oct. 1883) which are much more admiring and encouraging.

12 Coupland declared that the mid-century Scottish nationalists "were agitated only by a dry and practical question - the machinery of government" Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, p. 281. Hanham feels this takes insufficient account of what he calls the 'romantic' stimulus of nationalist sentiment.

the "radical" grievances as more realistic and justifiable.¹³

In this analysis, Hanham, like other writers on the subject, virtually ignores the role of the Scottish educational reform controversy in the development and intensification of mid-century national consciousness. Education is relegated to the "romantic" rather than the "radical" wing of the nationalist upsurge. Although Hanham seems to accept the notion that there was such a thing as a distinctive Scottish educational tradition,¹⁴ and even acknowledges that its defence was one of the "more practical ways of preserving Scotland's national heritage",¹⁵ in the end he reduces efforts to preserve it to mere romantic posturing:

13 With the movement as a whole Hanham apparently has little sympathy. Like Coupland he writes from a firm British perspective which tends to view such movements as provincial aberrations. He concludes his article with the tart comment that, "as always they [the Scots] wanted the advantages of the Union without its disadvantages", "Scottish Nationalism", p. 179. In contrast, Tom Nairn, whose object is to reveal the basic non-radical nature of Scottish nationalism past and present and whose conclusions are in some ways similar to Hanham's, writes much more perceptively, it seems to me, about its psychological and cultural roots and with much more sympathy for its underlying integrity: "Resisting the forces of assimilation with extraordinary strength, the country has retained through its half-life a dream of true existence: that is, of wholeness expressing its life instead of hiding it, a three-dimensional being freeing the national will and tongue from their secular inhibitions, a realness to startle itself and the watching world", "Three Dreams", p. 17.

14 Hanham reports the eighteenth century national pride that "the Scottish peasant was better educated than his English counterpart" ("Scottish Nationalism", p. 143) without, apparently, disbelieving it. He notes that in the nineteenth century Scotland's educational arrangements, as well as its legal and local government systems, remained largely "intact" through the reforms of the 1830's and remarks that "the Scottish education system gave Scots an advantage" in England and elsewhere in the Empire". *Ibid.*, p. 149.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

The campaign for a distinctively Scottish system of education, whether sponsored by Dr. Begg or James Lorimer or John Stuart Blackie, was no more than an extension of Hugh Miller's cult of the Scottish personality.¹⁶

As a result of this perspective, Hanham quite naturally focuses almost all his attention on the short-lived and ineffective National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights (hereafter referred to as the Scottish Rights Association - S.R.A.)¹⁷ and largely ignores the National Education Association (hereafter referred to as N.E.A.) which both pre-dated and out-lived the S.R.A. Moreover, because of his rigid and artificial distinction between 'political' affairs and 'educational' matters, Hanham is led to some highly debatable conclusions regarding the general course of Scottish nationalism in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ For Hanham, the main interest of Scottish nationalism in the 1850's was "political" in substance. When its political objectives were thwarted, the movement "largely turned into

16 Ibid., p. 178.

17 The S.R.A. was certainly ineffective in short-run terms. This is not to say, however, that it was insignificant in terms of the continuing development of Scottish nationalist feeling. On the contrary, in Ferguson's words, as with chartism, its failure in the period under discussion "is hardly a sufficient verdict" on its significance: "There was scarcely been a single position later advocated by Scottish nationalists...that was not anticipated by some members of the association". Scotland, p. 322. My point here is that by concentrating all his attention on the 'political' aspects of the movement in the 1850's, as represented by the S.R.A., and ignoring the activities of the 'non-political' N.E.A., Hanham, and others, have missed a very important aspect of mid-nineteenth century Scottish nationalism.

18 The artificiality of this distinction is well-illustrated by a comment of James Moncrieff, the Lord Advocate during most of the 1850s and 1860s. Recalling the educational controversies of the period he wrote that the educational reform question "was one of the few political questions which impressed itself on my emotions as well as my convictions". Educational Retrospect, p. 8, (my underline).

educational channels"¹⁹ in the 1860's. "It was not again to turn to politics until the eighties..."²⁰ This chronology, simply does not, in my view, reflect the actual sequence of educational or nationalistic controversy. Education became a central national issue of great interest and controversy in the years between 1850 and 1856. The late 1850's and early 1860's were by contrast relatively quiet,²¹ and it was only in the late 1860's, when the reports and recommendations of the Argyll Commission led to new attempts to reform the Scottish schools, that educational matters once again attracted widespread public and political attention.

I believe there is strong evidence to the effect that the question of the reform of Scottish education was an integral part of and made an important contribution to the increased nationalist sentiment that appeared in the early 1850's. To a remarkable degree the educational reform issue combined aspects of those cultural, social, political and economic problems which concerned a wide range of Scotsmen. First of all, unlike some other Scottish characteristics proclaimed by nationalist enthusiasts, the Scottish educational tradition, though its virtues were often exaggerated, was neither trivial nor bogus.²² However much there might be disagreement about the extent or vitality of the tradition, it was universally acknowledged that certain ancient

19 Hanham, "Scottish Nationalism", p. 177.

20 Ibid.

21 One piece of very significant but limited legislation was passed in 1861 eliminating the Church of Scotland's exclusive control over the parochial schools.

22 See above Chapter 4, for a discussion of this tradition.

and honorable customs, markedly different from those of England, characterized the schools of Scotland. It was also increasingly recognized, that these customs instead of being strengthened and expanded, were being weakened and contracted by a combination of influences including industrialization, urbanization, sectarianism, and, perhaps most significant, English social attitudes and administrative practices. Indeed, no other Scottish national tradition was so widely acknowledged, its decline so greatly lamented, or proposals for its renewal so broadly supported as the perceived national tradition of education. While conservatives and radicals, associated in uneasy and eventually incompatible alliance in the Scottish Rights Association, promoted this or that national grievance and demanded, to no avail, its immediate redress, a broad spectrum of Scottish liberal opinion cooperated effectively, through the National Education Association in the unrelenting advocacy of comprehensive educational reform. That, as has often been noted, this same body of opinion was usually an important anglicizing influence in Scottish history, and notably unsympathetic to most other national grievances - 'romantic' or 'radical' - makes educational reform a unique mid-century nationalist issue.²³

23 As Coupland puts it, unlike Wales, where the upper-classes were the anglophiles, the Scottish lairds and gentry retained a romantic attachment to past customs and glories. "It was the Whigs...the party led by the professional middle-class who were the anglicizers, assimilationists in Scotland" Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, p. 246. Hanham describes the hostility of the Scotsman, a paper which Ferguson calls "no longer radical but rather the mouthpiece of the prim Whig establishment of Edinburgh" (Scotland, p. 320), to the nationalist movement, "Scottish Nationality", p. 159, p. 166-167. Nairn offers a somewhat different view of the Scottish middle-class liberal character, at once more scathing and more flattering: "No West African or Asiatic comprador bourgeoisie has aped the external forms of English civility more sedulously - or

In fact, any attempt to arrest the decline of the Scottish educational tradition and to revitalize and modernize it necessarily involved and illuminated a number of the other national grievances raised through this period. The political implications of the education question, for example, were considerable. Any major Scottish educational reform had to be considered and approved by Parliament, a requirement which, as it turned out, vividly illustrated both the under-representation of the Scottish popular will in that body and also the indifference and carelessness with which Scottish business was treated in the legislature. Similarly, the difficulties inherent in administering and financing Scottish education from London, provided ammunition for those Scots who argued that the return of certain government agencies to Scotland and a more equitable distribution of state revenues were essential to the health of their country. Finally, the legislative debates on Scottish educational reform revealed not only differences among Scottish representatives, but also, more generally, marked differences of attitude between Scottish and English M.P.'s on such matters as religion, social class, and the role of government. Thus the education question exemplified, in several ways, the subtle and complex factors which many Scots felt constituted a national heritage importantly different from their far more powerful southern neighbour.

remained more stubbornly itself, underneath them". "Three Dreams" p. 15. All this is not to say that there was not a widespread concern about the preservation of some kind of distinctive Scottish national character at mid-century among Scottish liberals as well as conservatives and radicals. This "uneasiness" as Hanham puts it, was not urgent enough, however, to win the S.R.A. widespread active public or parliamentary support. It did, I would argue, greatly contribute to the support and encouragement the N.E.A. received from precisely those Scots who could not bring themselves to enlist under the S.R.A. banner.

The significance of the Scottish educational tradition, as an important theme in the campaign to preserve and strengthen the development of a wider national culture and heritage, was recognized by many of those contemporary writers concerned with arousing national consciousness at mid-century. In 1846, the author of an article entitled "Scotch Nationality", a spirited defence of Scottish national character against what the author saw as the distortions of English historians, made a typical reference to the Scottish educational tradition as a part of the national heritage. "In spite of local circumstance", he wrote, "this people had early taken a part in the intellectual struggle of Europe. A national system of schools had spread the benefit of education through all classes".²⁴ Moreover, a number of writers, addressing themselves directly and primarily to the question of Scottish educational reform, did so quite consciously within the context of the wider issue of the preservation of Scottish nationality. In 1850 James Begg, the outspoken Free Church reformer, published a pamphlet, National Education for Scotland Practically Considered,²⁵ a work which H.J. Hanham calls "the first clear statement of the Scottish national case...".²⁶ No less important, however,

24 "Scotch Nationality", N.B.R. (November, 1846), p. 70. For similar references to the educational tradition see [W. Aytoun], "Scotland since the Union", Blackwoods (September, 1853); [James Lorimer], "Scottish Nationality - Social and Intellectual", N.B.R. (August, 1860); [W. Smith], "Mr. Buckle on the Civilization in England", N.B.R. (August, 1861).

25 James Begg, National Education for Scotland Practically Considered, (Edinburgh, 1850).

26 Hanham, "Scottish Nationalism", p. 153. Curiously, Hanham interprets the pamphlet almost exclusively in terms of what he defines as 'politically' significant and largely ignores its educational/political implications. Similarly he emphasizes Begg's role in the S.R.A. rather than his equally, if not more, vigorous contribution to the N.E.A., of which he was one of the original directors.

was Hugh Miller's Thoughts on the Educational Question, significantly sub-titled The Battle of Scotland,²⁷ or an article in the North British Review, entitled "Scottish National Education", both of which also appeared in 1850.²⁸ These authors clearly saw the connections between the Scottish educational tradition and Scotland's national heritage as a whole. They wanted to preserve the former not only for its own sake but also because of the contribution it made to the vitality of the latter.²⁹

27 Hugh Miller, Thoughts on the Educational Question; or, "The Battle of Scotland" (London, 1850). As with Begg I find Hanham's interpretation of the remarkable Hugh Miller's role unsatisfactory in its emphasis. Begg and Miller were allies within the Free Church in the late 1840's, urging that their church support comprehensive national educational reform. Miller used The Witness through the '40s and '50s to advocate education reform and to support the National Education Association from its inception in 1850. As a Scottish nationalist then, Miller, was primarily and consistently committed to educational reform as perhaps the most important single national issue of the time. That is not to say, however, that he and Begg and others who shared that commitment were uninvolved in other issues as well. As Hanham points out Miller and The Witness "became identified with the statement of national grievances against England..." ("Scottish Nationalism", p. 150) and lent their support to the Scottish Rights Association when it was founded in 1853. But, as Hanham also acknowledges, Miller recognized that the S.R.A. was "a most strange specimen of heterogeneous coalition" (Ibid., p. 168), a condition which quickly proved fatal to the organization.

28 "Scottish National Education", N.B.R. (February, 1850).

29 Much the same can be said of a number of other educational observers of the period. See R.J. Bryce, Practical Suggestions for Reforming the Educational Institutions of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1852); [J. Moncrieff], "Progress of Popular Education in Great Britain", NBR (February, 1852); [A.C. Tait], "Popular Education in Scotland", NBR (November, 1854); A. Layman, The Present Aspects of the Scottish Education Question (Edinburgh, 1856); W. Milligan, The Present Aspects of the Education Question in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1857); W. Fraser, The Educational Condition of Scotland: A National Disgrace (Paisley, 1859) and The Educational Equipment of the Trained Teacher (Edinburgh, 1861); and [F. Russell], "The Education Question in Scotland", NBR (May, 1861).

These expressions of concern for the Scottish educational tradition found a more organized public expression during the spring of 1850, with the founding of the National Education Association.³⁰ On April 9, a public meeting was held in the Music Hall in Edinburgh for the purpose of discussing national educational reform, considering a number of resolutions on the subject, and officially forming an association which would promote the ideas contained in those resolutions. From the lists carried in the classified section of The Scotsman the following morning, the leadership and membership of the N.E.A. was impressive, composed of a wide selection of liberal opinion from the academic, professional, and political spheres of Scottish life. The president of the Association was Sir David Brewster, the principal of the United College of St. Salvator and St. Leonards at St. Andrews, and among its vice-presidents were the Lord Provosts of Glasgow and Aberdeen, two Members of Parliament, Charles Cowan of Edinburgh and Alexander Hastie of Glasgow, Professors James Pillans and Sir William Hamilton of Edinburgh University, the eloquent Thomas Guthrie, and two leading teachers, James Cumming and Leonhard Schmitz.³¹ Seven lengthy resolutions were presented, discussed and

30 The N.E.A. deserves more detailed study than I have been able to give it. Certainly it attracted an impressive array and wide spectrum of prominent Scottish liberals and, as I indicate below, apparently had a significant public and parliamentary influence.

31 The Scotsman carried the names of 21 vice-presidents and 143 directors. The latter consisted of 38 clergymen (James Begg among them); 7 professors (including John Stuart Blackie); 6 teachers (James Gloag, William Gunn, Thomas Henderson, William Hunter, and George Lees, all members of the EIS, were in this group); 4 Lord Provosts (Ayr, Paisley, Cupar-Fife and Dumfries); 7 magistrates; 3 sheriffs; 4 city treasurers and one councillor; 6 advocates; 7 doctors; 7 Writers to the Signet; and 16 merchants and commercial men. I think, though I am not certain, that Duncan McLaren, another prominent nationalist, was among this last group.

approved by the meeting which, The Scotsman congratulated on its "gravity, attention, and well-regulated enthusiasm".³²

The resolutions began by painting a gloomy picture of the state of Scottish education. Great deficiencies existed, particularly in the towns and remote rural areas and even where the quantity of education was sufficient, its quality was defective. It was agreed that, altogether, "there can be no doubt that as a people we have greatly sunk from our former elevated position among educated nations...". Not only were the parochial schools "quite inadequate" to cope with this situation, but they were also "defective and objectionable" on principle, excluding, as they did from their control and management, all parties but the established church and the large landowners. Only "a general system of national education, on a sound and popular basis, and capable of communicating instruction to all classes of the community" would meet the national educational need. All the existing schools, including the parochial, should be incorporated into the system, normal schools should be established for the training of teachers, arrangements should be set up for the examination and certification of school masters, and better provision made for them in terms of salary and living conditions. Finally, a general national educational system should be supervised by popularly elected local boards (the electors to be all "male heads of families being householders"), their management to be overseen by a prestigious and powerful national board "so constituted as to secure the public confidence, and to be responsible to the country through Parliament". No specific mention was made of any grievances

32 Scotsman, 10 April, 1850. [See Appendix F for the full text of the resolutions].

against the Privy Council system and English influence, but the resolutions were all based on a positive assumption of the existence of a distinctive and independent Scottish educational tradition.³³

The resolutions also gave a great deal of attention to the problem of religious instruction, with no less than three dealing specifically with this contentious question. Such instruction, it was emphasized, was of "vital and primary importance" and went hand in hand with the Scottish people's desire for extended and improved education. This importance had been demonstrated and established over many years in all types of schools and there was no reason to believe that the proposed local boards would be less zealous in their concern for religious instruction than had been the supporters of voluntary schools, or the heritors. Because the natural concern of those who would be elected to these boards would provide "a far better security than any that at present exists both for a good secular and a good Christian education", there was no need for any legislative reference or protection for religious instruction.³⁴ This then was the basis on which the liberal educational reform coalition combined to establish the National Education Association. Later in

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid. The "late lamented" Dr. Chalmers opinion was quoted as the best statement of this position: "That in any public measure for helping on the education of the people, Government (should) abstain from introducing the element of religion at all into their part of the scheme, and this not because they held the matter to be insignificant - the contrary might be strongly expressed in the preamble of their act - but on the ground that, in the present divided state of the Christian world, they would take no cognizance of, just because they would attempt no control over, the religion of applicants for aid - leaving this matter entire to the parties who had to do with the erection or management of the schools which they had been called upon to assist. A grant by the State upon this footing might be regarded appropriately and exclusively the expression of their value for a good secular education". There was a continuing debate during the next few

April the resolutions were republished with a view to furthering their dissemination and generating general public support for educational reform. Committees of the N.E.A. were organized in the larger towns and public meetings were held in various centres throughout the spring of 1850.³⁵

II

It was against this background of organized agitation for educational reform and wide public discussion of the issue, that Viscount Melgund (W.H. Elliot), Member of Parliament for Greenock Town, introduced, in May 1850, the first of, what turned out to be, a series of Scottish education bills presented to the House of Commons.³⁶ Melgund had taken an interest in the question for several years, expressing particular concern about the influence of the Privy Council's regulations on the Scottish educational tradition,³⁷ and his bill embodied

years concerning Chalmers' opinions on national education (See Miller, Thoughts on Educational Question and "Dr. Chalmers Testimony on National Education", Scotsman, 9 March, 1850.)

- 35 Committees were organized in Edinburgh, Glasgow, St. Andrews, Aberdeen and Dumfries (Scotsman, 27 April) and public meetings were held in Glasgow, (Glasgow Herald, 3 May; Scotsman, 4 May), Dundee, Perth, Ayr (Scotsman, 18 May), Paisley, Stirling, Dunbar (Scotsman, 25 May) and Kelso (Scotsman, 22 June). James Begg and William Gunn were among the most active in the movement, speaking at a number of the meetings listed above. James Bryce, George Lees, and William Brunton were other prominent E.I.S. members who spoke at one or more meetings.
- 36 The bill was given first reading with no discussion on 1 May, 1850, and fully debated at second reading on 19, June 1850. 3 Hansard, CXII.
- 37 In 1848, he had risen during the debate on the question of granting funds to the Privy Council's Education Committee to object to the "new system of encouraging schools in Scotland, as tending to promote sectarian differences - the very thing the State should prevent". 3 Hansard, CIV, 18 August, 1848.

most of the features of subsequent legislative proposals. Parish schools were to be opened to teachers of other Presbyterian denominations, besides the Church of Scotland, and to this end, the religious test which had restricted schoolmasters to those who subscribed to the doctrines and regulations of the Established Church was to be abolished. The problem of religious instruction was to be handled exactly as Chalmers had originally suggested and as the N.E.A. had approved. The school system would be controlled and administered by local elected boards, with certain concessions to the Church of Scotland and the heritors in the case of parochial schools. The system as a whole would be supervised by a national Board of Education for Scotland. Financial support would be forthcoming from local taxation of ratepayers and of heritors, with supplemental grants to be supplied from central government revenues. With regard to teachers, the legislation proposed easier dismissal procedures, with less protection for incumbents but at the same time provided better arrangements concerning salaries, dwellings and pensions.³⁸

The debate on the bill established the basic lines of argument which, with some variations in emphasis were to be heard during the next five or six years. Supporters of the bill argued that such a reform was completely in line with the Scottish educational tradition, which the Privy Council system was constantly eroding. They pointed out that the differences which had arisen between the Presbyterian denominations "were not so much based upon questions of religious doctrine, as upon questions involving political consequences"³⁹ and

38 3 Hansard, CXII, 19 June, 1850.

39 Ibid., p. 80.

asked; "was there any country in the world where one system of education could more easily be established?"⁴⁰ They contended that no more guarantee of "godly upbringing" of the youth of Scotland was needed than the natural influence of the churches and parents⁴¹ and dismissed as unthinkable the suggestion that a local board might hire a schoolmaster who was unsuitable religiously or morally. They described the plight of the growing number of uneducated children, especially in the cities, a number that Melgund estimated to be about 150,000 or "two fifths of the whole juvenile population of Scotland...",⁴² and urged the extension of educational facilities as both a moral and political imperative. Unless there was "timely interference by the State", warned one member, "there would be a more dangerous interference made by the people". Finally, they claimed to speak for a majority, and an increasing majority, of public-spirited and liberal Scotsmen.⁴⁴

The opponents of the bill took the position that the most fundamental principle of the Scottish educational tradition was that

40 Ibid., p. 92.

41 Melgund argued that, in fact, to make any special legislative provision for religious instruction would be to do "that which had never been done in any of the previous Acts of Parliament on the subject". Ibid., p. 80.

42 Ibid., p. 77.

43 Ibid., p. 93.

44 Melgund, in making this claim, drew particular attention to the activities of the National Education Association. "He would refer to an important document on the subject, which lately had made some sensation in Scotland and which had obtained the signature of a great number of influential men of all denominations". Ibid., p. 82.

conviction which deemed education to be "the handmaiden of religion".⁴⁵ The godly upbringing of the young was the over-riding aim of education and the Established Church had been for centuries the guardian of that trust. Melgund's Bill aimed at a "serverance of the Established Church from the parochial school",⁴⁶ a separation which the Church of Scotland would never accept. To agree that the means of education should be more widely extended was not to agree to "the abolition of a system which had prevailed for centuries, and to which system Scotland was indebted for the exalted position she held amongst nations".⁴⁷ In any case, they were inclined to treat the estimates of the educational deficiency as gross exaggeration. Many children were out of school not because of lack of facilities, but because they were "by their industry a source of profit to their parents, who preferred to have them employed...".⁴⁸ Much of the urban education problem was due to the recent influx of Irish immigrants, a development which could hardly be attributed to a breakdown in the parish schools. In any case, statistics were notoriously inaccurate and incomplete and much more information should be gathered and studied before any new and drastic steps were taken. Though there were doubtless various defects and gaps in the educational arrangements of the country, they would hardly be solved by a radical alteration of the parochial schools and those who advocated such an alteration merely displayed narrow partisan and

45 Ibid., p. 84.

46 Ibid., p. 87.

47 Ibid., p. 84.

48 Ibid., p. 84.

sectarian motives.⁴⁹

Melgund's bill was narrowly defeated at the second reading by a margin of six votes. The breakdown of the vote by the Scottish members was significant. Of the 53 Scottish members, 33 took part in the division.⁵⁰ Eighteen supported Melgund's legislation, and of these 13 were representatives of burghs and towns. On the other hand all 15 who opposed the bill, represented county districts. The first major legislative proposal regarding Scottish education since the Act of 1803, thus received the assent of a majority, albeit a narrow one, of the parliamentary representatives of Scotland.⁵¹

On the whole, reaction of those who supported educational reform was optimistic. The Witness believed the passage of such legislation

49 As one country member put it, the House "would never have heard of the measure had it not been for the ambitious desire of the Free Church to get control of the parochial schools of Scotland". Ibid., p. 93.

50 Ibid. I am indebted to Mr. Mark Francis, formerly of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and now undertaking post-graduate study at Cambridge University, for his assistance in locating the voting lists for the major divisions on Scottish education through the 1850s and for identifying the Scottish MPs on them. For the subsequent analysis and interpretation of those figures, however, he is blameless.

51 The non-Scottish majority against the bill proceeding into committee was 9. Melgund's proposal was not a government bill and the cabinet stayed away from the division. According to The Scotsman (22 June, 1850) this was an accident, most of them having had a Privy Council meeting to attend at the same time, and their presence would have ensured the passage of the bill. The Witness, on the other hand, believed that the members of the government had stayed away on purpose in order to see which way the vote would go, before committing the government to such a bill (reprinted in Scotsman, 29 June, 1850). Several strong supporters of national educational reform, including Joseph Hume and Charles Cowan, abstained, apparently because the legislation did not go far enough.

was inevitable within the reasonably near future. The next proposal, it predicted, would pass the Commons narrowly and then be thrown out by the Lords. A session or two later, however, a similar bill would pass both Houses. "In ten years at farthest (more probably in five) there will be a national system of education established in Scotland".⁵² The Scotsman, advocated a considerably more sweeping sort of educational reform than that proposed by Melgund and supported by The Witness, but it agreed with the latter's analysis and termed the bill's defeat "a virtual victory".⁵³ From the outset The Scotsman had urged that the legislation, though bound not to satisfy all the supporters of reform, should receive "friendly consideration",⁵⁴ and had warned that the cause of national education faced many difficulties, "not more as to the strength of its opponents than as to the weakening dissensions among its friends".⁵⁵

As expected, the same bill was presented in 1851, but not with greater success. In fact the majority against proceeding into the Committee stage of the bill was 137 to 124, slightly greater than the year before. The Scottish vote, however, remained almost unchanged,

52 Editorial in The Witness reprinted in The Scotsman, 29 June 1850.

53 Scotsman, 22 June 1850. The Scotsman wished to see the secular and religious branches of education entirely separated, with latter left entirely to the efforts of the churches and the parents. Thus the paper, from its 'secularist' vantage point, viewed the educational reform struggle with a certain amount of detachment. It recognized that its own views were too radical for the great majority of Scottish opinion, but it was sympathetic to any improvement in the schools of the country even within a more restricted context. Because of this I think its observations particularly interesting and I refer to them often. Also of interest is the position of The Scotsman on nationalism generally and education as a national tradition, in particular.

54 Ibid., 8 May, 1850.

55 Ibid., 25 May, 1850.

a majority of two being in favour of proceeding with the bill,⁵⁶ The debate on the bill also covered much the same ground as the previous year's exchanges, although it was longer and more heated. The opposition emphasized the same points somewhat more effectively than in 1850 and the bill's supporters devoted most of their effort to attempting rebuttals.⁵⁷ Despite the facts that the government took a more active part in supporting the measure - both the Lord Advocate and the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, contributed to the debate - and that Melgund urged the House to let the bill go to committee for detailed discussion and reasonable improvement, it was to no avail.

After the defeat of Melgund's bill in June 1851, there was a parliamentary lull in the educational reform controversy of about two-and-a-half year's duration. It was clear, however, that the interruption was only temporary. It will be remembered that 1853 was the year the parochial schoolmasters' salary levels came up for

56 3 Hansard, CXVII, 4 June, 1851. A better idea of the complete Scottish vote is provided by comparing the vote in the two years. Between 1850 and 1851, no M.P. switched his vote. In 1851, 23 Scottish Members voted 'Aye', 17 of whom were burgh representatives, and 21 voted 'No', only two of whom were burgh representatives. Of the nine Scottish M.P.s who were absent in 1851, seven had voted on the question in 1850, five in favour of proceeding with the bill and two against. It is highly unlikely their attitudes had changed in the interim, so one may speculate that if they had voted, the outcome among the Scottish M.P.s would have been something like 28 in favour of proceeding and 23 against, a majority in favour of five. Since the only MPs who voted neither in 1850 or 1851, were both burgh representatives, that majority might even have gone as high as seven.

57 There were some spirited exchanges for example on the question of whether an educational reform which altered the position of the parochial schools would be a violation of the Acts of Union and Security. Indeed it would charge the opposition. Nonsense, the reformers replied. The opposition argument, declared the Lord Advocate, was "an instance of that use, or abuse, of history which consisted in drawing on the energies of our ancestors for excuse for our own indolence". Ibid., p. 417. Melgund took a slightly different tack and pointed out that the Privy Council's

25-year review.⁵⁸ Reformers were determined to use the occasion to open up the whole question of Scotland's educational policies. Conservatives were equally determined to resist such a move and to insist that the schoolmasters' case be heard separately. The Whig ministry was out of office for a time during this period, but, once back in power, presented legislation dealing with education in England and Wales.⁵⁹ On the Scottish front, the Lord Advocate saw an important measure, abolishing religious tests for most Scottish university teaching posts, - a measure which had failed in 1851 and 1852 - pass in June 1853.⁶⁰ Outside the legislature agitation for educational reform continued in Scotland through this period, confident in anticipating eventual government action on the subject.⁶¹

educational grants in Scotland "were as complete an attack on the Act of Union and the Act of Security as anything that was contained in the Bill". Ibid., p. 441.

- 58 Beginning in 1803, they were set on the basis of the average price of grain over the previous 25-year period. They had been reviewed and raised by Parliament in 1828.
- 59 According to an article in the Scottish Educational and Literary Journal, in the spring of 1853, the government had originally announced its intention of presenting a Scottish education bill and had stated that only "certain resolutions by way of preface to the future, and, perhaps distant legislation" regarding England and Wales would be introduced. Russell then presented a surprise measure, which meant that Scottish legislation had to be postponed. H.H. Smith, "Lord John Russell's Education Bill" (May, 1853), p. 361. Russell's bill was unsuccessful, and as far as the parochial schoolmasters were concerned, the House simply agreed to extend the existing salary rates for another year.
- 60 "This [legislation]", wrote the Lord Advocate much later, "was intended to open the way for the reform of the universities and a revision of the whole educational system in Scotland". Moncrieff, Educational Retrospect, p. 11.
- 61 That this confidence was well-founded is shown by an anonymous article in 1853 written by James Moncrieff, the Lord Advocate, in which he emphasized the need for government action, laid down some principles for educational legislation, and urged

III

By this time, however, the educational reform forces were encountering more vocal and better organized opposition than before. The rising tide of reform activity and support had the effect of stimulating to action those who wished things to remain pretty much as they were - most notably the Church of Scotland and the landed country gentlemen and aristocracy. The Church of Scotland had long since adopted the view that any alteration in the educational arrangements of the country which interfered with her exclusive control of the parochial school system was completely unacceptable. In 1846, for example, the Synod of Perth and Stirling had petitioned Parliament "against passing any measure which would have the effect of removing the securities, which should be maintained in every Christian country, for the continuance of a connection between Education and the Established Religion of the Land".⁶² In 1849, the General Assembly drew up a "Protest, Declaration and Testimony on the Subject of National Education" which reiterated this basic principle. The synods of the Church began forming watching committees on educational legislation in the early 1850s and regularly petitioned against any

that Scotland take advantage of its educational tradition and doctrinal similarities. "Progress of Popular Education in Great Britain", *NBR* (Feb 1852). Another significant barometer was the appearance in 1853 of Kay-Shuttleworth's book *Public Education*. In the chapter he devoted to Scotland he too stressed the need for government action, took encouragement from public opinion in Scotland as demonstrated by the National Education Association, and other expressions of support, and recognized the important differences of the Scottish tradition by suggesting an Executive Board of Education for Scotland operating under the aegis of the Privy Council.

62 Church of Scotland, *Synod of Perth and Stirling Minute Books*, Vols. 16, 17 (1843-72), 21 April, 1846, p. 73.

relaxation of the tests in the schools and universities or other measures that would alter their position.⁶³ As it became obvious in late 1853, that the government was planning to introduce some sort of comprehensive educational legislation in the months ahead, this activity increased. In October, the Synod of Perth and Stirling recommended that each presbytery should establish an education committee to prepare petitions for parliament opposing such legislation and "by their several members, to instruct congregations and awaken the minds of their people to a due sense of the importance of the present crisis...".⁶⁴

On 24 November, 1853 a special sub-committee of the General Assembly met to draw up and implement plans for a concerted and co-ordinated campaign against any alteration of the parish school system.⁶⁵ Under the chairmanship of John Cook, the convener of the Established Church's Education Committee, a very sophisticated political action organization was set up. It consisted of four specialized sub-committees. The task of the first such group was to establish and maintain direct contact with those M.P.s "connected with Scotland, so as to ascertain their views and impress upon them favourable views on behalf of the Church of Scotland".⁶⁶ Deputations were to begin

63 Ibid., 20 October 1846, 17 April 1849, 16 April 1850, 15 April 1851.

64 Ibid., 18 October 1853, p. 234.

65 Church of Scotland, Reports of Special Parliamentary Sub-Committee (1853-1862), 24 November 1853. The sub-committee had been officially appointed "to consider the best mode of proceeding with reference to ascertaining the views and sentiments of the Members of Parliament and others relative to the Parish Schools". (For the sake of brevity this sub-committee will be referred to hereafter as Church of Scotland, Parliamentary Committee.)

66 Ibid.

immediately to seek interviews with leading politicians of the government and opposition and prominent ecclesiastics of all denominations represented in Parliament. It was emphasized that all the M.P.s - Scottish, English and Irish - should be seen and "not merely those who may be supposed to be friendly but those who may be supposed to be of a different opinion - nothing should be taken for granted".⁶⁷ A second group was to carry out a similar canvas with "the Conveners of Counties and other influential landed Gentlemen".⁶⁸ A third committee was to concentrate on publicity and "to defend the Church and to support the views of the Church through the Press. There ought to be a constant succession of good Articles, Letters, etc."⁶⁹ Finally, a fourth group was to take charge of finances for these various activities.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid. One result of this group's efforts was probably the voluminous and steady stream of pamphlets through 1854, 1855 and 1856, presenting the Church of Scotland's view of the educational controversy. See, for examples: [William Lee], National Education in Scotland: A Word or Two for the Parish Schools [this pamphlet was a reprint of an article that had first appeared in Blackwood's in 1849] (Edinburgh, 1854); Rev. J. Cook, A Letter to an M.P. on the Parochial Schools of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1854); Rev. J. Bryce [no relation to R.J. Bryce's family], Public Education in its Relation to Scotland and its Parish Schools, (Edinburgh, 1854); A. Churchman, Strictures on the Recent Public Meeting in Edinburgh on the Subject of a National System of Education in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1854); Rev. J. Cook, Statement of Facts Regarding the Parochial Schools of Scotland (London, 1855); and Speech on the Lord Advocate's Education Bill (Edinburgh, 1855); Rev. W. Wilson, Eighteen Reasons for Rejecting the Lord Advocate's Bill for the Education of the People of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1855); Glasgow Public Meeting, Report of the Speeches to oppose the Lord Advocate's Education Bill (Glasgow, 1855); Rev. J. Ker, Education in Scotland (Glasgow, 1856); Dean Inglis and the Duke of Buccleuch, Speeches at Edinburgh County Meeting on Parish Schools Bill (Edinburgh, 1856); A.C. Swinton, Report on the Education Bills for Scotland (Edinburgh, 1856); Rev. J. Cook and Dr. J. Robertson, Speeches Upon the Parish Schools Bill (Edinburgh, 1856) and, finally, Rev. J. Cook, The Parish Schools and the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1856).

The campaign was launched immediately. The official support of the parochial schoolmasters was warmly welcomed. The parish teachers met in Edinburgh on 30 December 1853 and passed ten resolutions on the subject of Scottish educational reform. Though the parish teachers acknowledged the government's responsibility to involve itself in the education of the people, and emphasized that Scottish education should be treated separately and differently from English, they utterly opposed any legislation that would alter the position of the parochial schools, which, they claimed, were "never in a more efficient state".⁷⁰ The separation of those schools from the established church would destroy "the only practicable guarantee for the purity of moral and religious instruction...".⁷¹ Nor should their own teaching posts be open to candidates from other denominations, though they felt strongly that their own salaries and working conditions should be considerably improved.⁷²

The county leaders and landed gentlemen - what The Scotsman wryly referred to as the "lairdocracy" of Scotland - responded readily to the appeal by the Parliamentary Committee on behalf of the Church of Scotland and the parish schools. Though ^{many of} the gentry ^{were} ~~was~~ ~~predominantly~~ of Episcopalian persuasion, and sent their own children to be educated in England or at denominational schools, ^{they} ~~most~~ readily signed

70 Parochial Schoolmasters, "Resolutions on National Education" SELJ February 1854, p. 231.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid. The Parliamentary Committee recorded "their high satisfaction with the tone, spirit, and substance" of these resolutions, and requested the chairman "to intimate this to the Committee of the Schoolmasters". Church of Scotland, Parliamentary Committee, 9 Feb. 1854. It was also agreed that deputations to London would include representatives of the parochial schoolmasters organization.

a petition in support of the parochial school system. Formally published in the early spring of 1854 this "Declaration by Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of Supply, and Heritors paying Public Burdens, Charged on Land in Scotland",⁷³ contained the names of over 1800 gentry and 35 Scottish Peers. According to the document the signers carefully abstained from referring to the state of education in the towns but expressed their conviction "founded on practical experience that the parish system had worked well and served all the children of the community regardless of denominational affiliation". It concluded:

The Undersigned, therefore, without in any way asserting that no other principle would be adopted, on which to found additional schools where the existing system is inadequate, - or does not apply at all, - declare their strong opinion to be, that except for the purpose of correcting defects in its workings and increasing its efficiency, the present system of Parochial Schools ought not to be interfered with; and that their connection with the Church of Scotland ought to be maintained.⁷⁴

73 Scottish Heritors, Declaration by Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of Supply, and Heritors (Edinburgh, 1854).

74 Ibid. The Scotsman was not greatly impressed by this petition or its signatories. In February it reported that despite an intensive canvas the petition was not attracting an overwhelming number of signatures and those who had signed were almost exclusively Tory supporters, a body of opinion the paper believed totally unrepresentative of Scotland. The "Declaration" in fact, amounted to "a restriction of the Church's Educational claims to the population living in the rural areas", a clumsy attempt to retain exclusive control with a "geographical" solution. In effect it was an acknowledgement by the Church that it was irrelevant and helpless in the bustling towns and cities, but since dissent was not limited to the urban areas and the Church could only claim "greatly less than one-half the population" even in the country, it was completely unacceptable proposals, 18 Feb. 1854.

In his speech introducing a Scottish education bill in the House early in 1854, the Lord Advocate took a similar view of the "Declaration" commenting that, "I think it may be doubted whether or not, notwithstanding the weight and respectability of many of the names attached to that document, it represents much of the Presbyterian feeling of Scotland". Moncrieff, Speech on Education of the People of Scotland, p. 17.

Organized opposition to educational reform sponsored by the Church of Scotland's Parliamentary Committee, continued through late 1853 and early 1854. Synods and presbyteries endeavoured, "to instruct congregations and awaken the minds of their people" and the country gentlemen held public meetings to oppose legislative interference with the parochial schools.⁷⁵ Some idea of the thoroughness with which this counter-reform campaign was conducted is conveyed in the Minute Book account of the deputation sent to London by the Parliamentary Committee in February. Armed with the General Assembly's 1849 "Protest, Declaration and Testimony on the Subject of National Education", the Heritors' "Declaration", and the Parochial Schoolmasters' resolutions, the delegation spent almost two weeks in the capital. During that time they interviewed the Prime Minister, the Lord Advocate, the Duke of Argyll and several Scottish peers as well as most of the Scottish M.P.'s and a good number of English and Irish members.⁷⁶ They returned north with recommendations for further lobbying activity.⁷⁷

The reformers, for their part, were not idle during this period. The National Education Association held a large and impressive public

75 The Scotsman carried an account of a public meeting in Kelso, sponsored by sixty or seventy of "the most influential gentlemen of the district". The meeting passed a series of resolutions against national educational reform. 18 February, 1854.

76 Among these were Gladstone, Walpole and Sir John Pakington. Church of Scotland, Parliamentary Committee, 14 Feb.-27 Feb., 1854.

77 One recommendation was to draw up a "fact-sheet" on the parochial schools and to circulate it widely among MP's. This was done and later published as a pamphlet. See J. Cook, Statement of Facts regarding the Parochial Schools of Scotland (London, 1855).

meeting in the Edinburgh Assembly rooms on 25 February 1854,⁷⁸ under the chairmanship of Lord Panmure, formerly William Fox Maule the M.P. for Perth and Secretary of War. Some indication of the increased political influence of the Association was the fact that, besides notables such as Guthrie, Professor J.S. Blackie, and Dr. Leonhard Schmitz, all of whom had been active in the initial formation and subsequent development of the N.E.A., the platform party included nine Scottish M.P.s.⁷⁹ Two more, Charles Cowan of Edinburgh and Murray Dunlop of Greenock, came to the platform to speak in favour of particular resolutions, and five others, including Macaulay, sent letters of support.⁸⁰ Other prominent figures on the platform were the Lord Advocate's brother, the Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, and the chairman of the Free Church's Education Committee, Robert Candlish, who had vigorously opposed the N.E.A. in 1850.

The resolutions passed at this meeting were evidently seen as additional to the principles laid down four years previously and not as substitutions for them.⁸¹ As such, they revealed both the strengths and the weaknesses of the educational reform movement. All present

78 National Education Association, Report of the Public Meeting of the Friends of National Education (Edinburgh, 1854).

79 Among them, most significantly, were two MPs who had voted against Melgund's bill in 1851 - A.W. Douglas (Viscount Drumlamrig) of Drumfrieshire and Alex Matheson of Inverness.

80 Compare this with the failure of the Scottish Rights Association to attract any parliamentary support. "None of the Scottish MPs joined the Association; only one (Cowan, Member for Edinburgh) attended the Edinburgh meeting, none the Glasgow meeting". Coupland, Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, p. 288.

81 The original resolutions of 1850 were included as an appendix to the pamphlet recounting the proceedings, N.E.A., Report of Public Meeting, 1854, pp. 96-98.

were agreed on a number of important points: that "no system of education which is sectarian or exclusive, or which operates by means of Privy Council grants to different churches or associations, can be said to be efficient; that to really be so, the system must be national, and not denominational";⁸² that "the status of the school-master should be raised, and the remuneration be made more worthy of his important position in the community";⁸³ that the deficiencies in the existing system were obvious and needed no further inquiry; that the government should look upon the review of the parochial school-master's salaries as providing a "fitting occasion" for the introduction of a comprehensive legislative proposal;⁸⁴ and that the necessary additional fund should be raised by a general assessment for the purpose, a tax which the N.E.A. believed would be "acceptable to the general community".⁸⁵ Some difference of opinion, however, arose concerning the management of the schools and the place of religious instruction. On these subjects the 1854 resolutions were more vague and general than the 1850 declaration.

On the issue of school management, the meeting reiterated that the official N.E.A. policy was that control "should be vested in committees elected by the heritors, and other contributors, and parents having children at the schools".⁸⁶ But because "many, who are zealous in the same cause, hold differing views on some of these

82 Ibid., p. 19. [See Appendix G for full text of 1854 Resolutions].

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid., p. 71.

85 Ibid., p. 40.

86 Ibid., p. 52.

points", the N.E.A. called on the government "to introduce a satisfactory measure on their own responsibility".⁸⁷ Presumably, the details could then be thrashed out in Parliament and supporters of national education would be free to criticize or support whatever aspects of the legislation they wished. The resolution which mentioned religious instruction was even more non-committal:

...it is satisfactory to know that, although the friends of a national system are not agreed as to the mode of securing religious instruction in schools, there is a large amount of agreement among the various classes of the community as to the vital and primary importance of a sound religious education.⁸⁸

The clergyman who seconded this resolution put it very much in the context of those principles earlier enunciated by the N.E.A. He believed that Parliament had no right to legislate on the details of religious education, and he was confident that "a very general harmony" would prevail among Scottish parents on the subject, that they would concern themselves with the religious character of the schoolmaster "as faithfully as any presbytery or body of clergy", and that they would have no difficulty in agreeing on the hours to be set aside or the books to be used. In any case, he concluded:

the cases of discord which may be expected to arise, either in working out or extending the system, will be, in comparison, so few and so exceptional, that without complicating the question in the meantime, they may be reserved for future legislation under the ever wakeful eye of public opinion.⁸⁹

Despite these explanations, the N.E.A. left itself open to attack on these questions. The Scotsman which wanted forthright

87 Ibid., p. 52.

88 Ibid., p. 71.

89 Ibid., pp. 88-89.

official support for the entire separation of secular education and religious instruction, now complained of the "lamed and equivocating policy of the Educational Association".⁹⁰ Those who were hostile to the educational reform movement were more scathing in their criticisms. "Men who never met together in common have met there now...", commented one critic. He charged they were united against the Established Church and agreed on all points but "the only vital one, - namely the national method of guaranteeing and securing, in every district, the religious as well as the secular instruction of the young...".⁹¹ The Edinburgh Evening Courant charged that the unity of purpose among the members of the N.E.A. was only apparent, because differences of opinion on detail would destroy it, and called the resolutions a "catalogue of conflicting confusions".⁹² The Montrose Review described the meeting as united only by "antipathy" to the parochial schools and a naive faith in government legislation and called the N.E.A. a coalition held together by "a rope of sand".⁹³

90 Scotsman, 18 February, 1854.

91 A Churchman, Strictures, p. 9. The author also attacked various individual speakers at the N.E.A. meeting, most notably Thomas Guthrie, who he described as the court jester of the Free Church: "In every travelling company there is a certain official who shall be nameless and who can hardly be said to represent anybody but himself. Not that, on that account, his services are to be undervalued. They are indispensable to the company wherever there are children to be entertained, or grown up people tickled, or an awkward gap to be filled up in the performance...Edinburgh is all too limited a sphere of action for a performer of his gifts and standing". p. 25.

92 Courant, 28 January, 1854.

93 Quoted in the Courant, 28 January, 1854. That the N.E.A. was receiving very wide notice is illustrated by the fact that the Courant also carried editorial excerpts on the meetings taken from the Dundee Northern Warder, the Scottish Press, the Berwick Advertiser, the Kelso Chronicle, the Arbroath Guide, the Aberdeen Herald, the Caledonian Mercury, the Kelso Mail, and the Edinburgh Guardian.

Certainly, these criticisms did reveal the basic difficulty of the educational reform movement. A great many people agreed that something should be done, that education should not be exclusively controlled by the established church, and that religious instruction was an essential part of the Scottish tradition. The problems of what precisely should be done, who precisely should control the schools, and how precisely religious instruction should be handled, were questions which divided allies. Nevertheless, it was also a measure of the success of the N.E.A. in attracting a very wide spectrum of reform support that it found it necessary to be somewhat less specific in 1854 about these problems, than it had been in 1850. Tactically, it made sense to leave aside the points of difference and unite in bringing pressure to bear on the government to present comprehensive legislation on Scottish education, and this the N.E.A. continued to do. The January meeting elected Lord Panmure as president of the Association and authorized an executive committee to revise the membership lists, to forward the 1850 and 1854 resolutions to Parliament in the form of a petition, and to mobilize support for whatever satisfactory legislation might be forthcoming.⁹⁴ Indeed, the winter and spring months of 1854 probably mark the height of the mid-century public controversy on education. On both sides of the question numerous public meetings were organized, petitions circulated and deputations dispatched to

94 The N.E.A. held meetings in Glasgow (9 February, 1854) and other centres and gathered names for its petitions. Free Church and other dissenting denominational organizations organized and forwarded petitions to Parliament, as did many town councils.

London. In June the Scottish Educational and Literary Journal estimated that about 125,000 people had signed a petition on the issue. As the Journal commented this was indeed "no small proportion of the male inhabitants of Scotland above twenty years of age".⁹⁵

95 SELJ June, 1854, p. 426. A letter in The Scotsman complained that the heritors' Declaration contained "the name of a late friend of mine who has been dead for two years". 28 Feb. 1854. Doubtless such curiosities were not rare on either side of the controversy.

Chapter 9

The Struggle for Reform, 1854-1856

I

On February 23, 1854, the Lord Advocate gave notice in the House of Commons of the government's intention to introduce a comprehensive measure dealing with education in Scotland.¹ Though he mentioned a few specific aspects of the proposed legislation, Moncrieff devoted most of his remark to the general background against which he hoped the measure would be discussed:

We have now, for twenty years, been discussing the modes, and forms, and theories of Education; during all that time I do not say that nothing has been done, but our efforts have been so partial and capricious, that very little has been done to reach the root of the evil.²

The basic problem, in his view, was the growing number of children, especially in the urban setting, who were receiving little or no education. Moncrieff saw, at the very centre of the great cities, "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 While sectarian and polemical disputes raged on, a "savage and barbarian race" was growing up in their midst.⁴

When it was made public in March, the Education (Scotland) Bill

1 3 Hansard, CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1173.

2 Moncrieff, Speech on Education of the People of Scotland, p. 6.

3 3 Hansard, CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1153.

4 Moncrieff, Speech on Education of the People of Scotland, p. 4.

of 1854 turned out to be an ambitious attempt to deal with the overall educational circumstances of Scotland, along the same basic lines as Viscount Melgund's proposals of 1850 and 1851.⁵ The main educational authority in the country was to be a powerful and prestigious "Board of Education for Scotland"⁶ which would "exercise a general superintendence of all the parochial and public schools of Scotland".⁷ The Board, with its permanent headquarters and staff in Edinburgh, would appoint inspectors for the Scottish schools, lay down rules and regulations for their superintendence, and report and present its estimates annually to Parliament, through the Committee on Education of the Privy Council.⁸

The bill dealt with three types of schools: the parish schools; a new type of school, to be established wherever needed, called a "public" school; and denominational schools, which it simply referred to as "others". The legislation made some very significant alterations in the parochial school system, but, within the new framework, left their management, as before, largely in the hands of the parish

5 The bill is printed in full in The Scotsman, 8 March, 1854.

6 Ibid. The Board was to consist of a government appointed permanent chairman, the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor-General of Scotland, a representative elected from each of the senates of the four Scottish universities, the president of the E.I.S., and several government appointed members up to a total of five. The Board was to meet in full session twice a year.

7 Ibid., Clause 4.

8 Apparently, though the Board was officially under the supervision of the Privy Council Committee, it was to exercise a good deal of autonomy. The 45th clause of the Bill gave the Committee on Education the power to alter any of the existing rules and regulations "with reference to the provision of this Act", which, presumably, it would do on recommendation from the Board. At the same time, the clause emphasized that unless specifically altered by the Committee, its rules and regulations "should be in no way affected by the passing of this Act".

minister and the local heritors. The most significant alteration, of course, was the abolition of the religious test for teachers in the parochial schools.⁹ Candidates for the post were to be examined by the inspector and certified by the Board. They were then to be officially appointed by the local management committee of the parish school, that is, the Church of Scotland minister and the heritors, who were also to supervise the day-to-day functioning and maintenance of those schools. The schoolmasters' salaries were set at a minimum of f50,¹⁰ they were to be provided with a house with at least three rooms plus a kitchen and a garden, and could be granted a retiring pension of f25 a year.¹¹ Besides the repeal of the religious test, and the overall superintendence of the Board of Education, the other main alteration in the parochial system was in the procedures for dismissing a schoolmaster. If the minister, heritors, or parents brought a complaint of "crime or moral delinquency" against a parish teacher, the inspector was to investigate the case and the Board, on the basis of his report, was to pass sentence of censure, suspension or dismissal if guilt was established.¹² The accused teacher had the right to appeal the sentence to the Sheriff of the county, but if he after conducting his own investigation of the case, upheld the

9 Ibid., Clause 15. "It shall not be necessary for a parochial schoolmaster to subscribe to any test, Confession of Faith, or formula".

10 Of this sum, f34 was to be provided by the heritors and the rest by Privy Council grants.

11 Whether or not to grant a pension at all was left entirely in the hands of the heritors and minister. If they did, the government would provide half of it.

12 It is worth noting, after all the fuss made about it, that the grounds for complaint did not include "inefficiency".

decision of the Board, the teacher had no further recourse.

Besides making these alterations in the parochial school system, the Lord Advocate's bill made provision for a whole new class of school, which it termed "Public Schools". The procedures to be followed in establishing these schools were outlined in some detail. The inspectors were to report on the need for new schools wherever appropriate to the Board.¹³ The Board, after receiving such a report, was empowered to order the sheriff of a county or the chief magistrate of a town or burgh to call a public meeting of the heritors and the ratepayers. This meeting was to consider the report of the inspector and the recommendation of the Board and to decide whether or not to assess the ratepayers and heritors of the district for the establishment and maintainance of a new school. The cost of building the school would be borne by the Privy Council Committee, with the government and the local ratepayers and heritors bearing the continuing expenses of the school jointly. In country parishes the school committee was to consist of heritors, up to a total number of 10, and equal number of elected ratepayers, and three nominees of the Board; in the towns and cities, the town council was to function as it did with the upper level burgh schools, as the school management committee. In terms of examination, appointment, salary, pension and living accommodation, public schoolmasters were placed on the same footing as parochial schoolmasters. The legislation, however, left the public schoolmaster in a much more insecure position than his

13 The inspectors were to begin to report on particular pressing needs as soon as the legislation went into effect. They were also to begin to compile an overall report on the state of education in their district, for presentation to the Board and Parliament in 1856.

parochial counterpart. The clause dealing with the dismissal of a public teacher simply read: "It shall be competent for the Board to dismiss any public schoolmaster, at any time, with or without notice, and without any reason assigned".¹⁴

The proposed legislation also outlined a procedure by which a parochial school might become a 'public' school. It was up to the heritors to decide to initiate this procedure, which involved incorporating an equal number of elected ratepayers, plus the Board's three nominees, in the school management committee. The role of the parish minister was reduced to that of an ex officio member. Finally, the bill also dealt with the great number of denominational and voluntary schools in existence by providing for continued support out of a general educational assessment to be levied in Scotland, "at a fixed rate per scholar...of any schools which shall be reported by the inspector to be useful and efficient".¹⁵ Though such schools had, therefore, to accept the Board's inspection, conform to its

14 Ibid., Clause 13. It will be noticed that, unlike the clause dealing with the parochial teachers, there was no definition of the grounds for complaint against a teacher, no procedures of investigation or deliberating were outlined, and no right of appeal whatsoever was provided. A writer in the SELJ indignantly protested the absence of security of tenure for both parochial and public teachers in the bill: "It proposes to deprive every teacher in Scotland, in every school that shall be placed under the influence of the proposed bill, of every vestage of rational liberty, to place them all in a condition not superior to that of Russian serfs". "Educators and the Education Bill", p. 294. Though the author was probably a parish teacher and hostile to any comprehensive educational reform, the most enthusiastically reform minded of the teachers would certainly have agreed that these provisions, especially for "public" teachers, gave them absolutely no protection against "capricious and injurious intermeddling". p. 295.

15 Ibid., Clause 36. This section also enabled the Board to aid industrial and reform schools.

rules and regulations, and be "open to the children of all denominations", no mention was made, as there had been in the sections dealing with the parochial and 'public' schools, of the necessity of eliminating religious tests for the teachers.

In trying to strike a compromise, on the difficult question of religious instruction in Scottish schools, the Lord Advocate followed along the lines suggested by Thomas Chalmers and incorporated in Melgund's earlier proposals. The preamble of the bill declared that all its clauses were based on the assumption that:

...the principles of religious knowledge and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, as heretofore in use in the parochial and other schools in that country, is consonant to the opinions and religious professions of the great body of the people, while at the same time ordinary secular instruction has been and should be available to the children of all denominations.¹⁶

Religious instruction in the parochial schools was, therefore, to continue in a traditional way, despite the fact that the teachers might not be members of the Church of Scotland. Similarly, in the new "public" schools, the management committee was "to appoint certain stated hours for ordinary religious instruction by the master" which was, by inference, to follow the traditional form of "the principles of religious knowledge and the reading of the Holy Scriptures...". Since this form was the same in almost all the denominational and voluntary schools, the act made no specific mention of them. As the Lord Advocate had said in his February speech, since "ninety-five per cent [of Scottish schools] teach the very same doctrines in the same way out of the same book", it seemed to be possible to establish a comprehensive system which

16 Ibid., Preamble.

would preserve this tradition and extend the benefits of education much more widely and efficiently.¹⁷

None of this, however, seemed to make the slightest difference to the Church of Scotland and those who supported its educational policy. "It is vain to deny that the Lord Advocate's Education Bill is the heaviest blow which, for many years, has been aimed at the Established Church of Scotland", declared the Montrose Standard, a Tory newspaper.¹⁸ The Church's Parliamentary Committee intensified its lobbying activities against the bill and made plans to send another deputation to London when the bill came before the House of Commons for debate. The Synod of Perth and Stirling held a special meeting of all its clergy and elders and, although they expressed a desire for legislation that "would improve the means of education and extend them to all classes", decided they must "express their entire disapprobation of the bill, in its present shape".¹⁹ The ministers, in turn, campaigned against the bill in their own presbyteries and congregations, urging their parishoners to conduct door to door canvasses and to circulate petitions to be forwarded to Parliament,²⁰

17 Moncrieff, Speech on Education of the People of Scotland, p. 13.

18 Quoted in The Scotsman, 4 March, 1854.

19 Church of Scotland, Perth and Stirling Minute Book, p. 238. The Synod's special watching committee drew up a petition against the bill, circulated it to all its ministers, and sent it off to Parliament.

20 These efforts sometimes led to remarkable flights of rhetoric. One clergyman in Cupar declared in his sermon that an invasion "by the barbarous Russians and the streets of our town swimming in blood" would be preferable to the passage of the dreaded Education Bill. Quoted from the Fifeshire Herald in The Scotsman, 25 March, 1854.

In March the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland discussed the question and declared its opposition to the legislation. The Scotsman thought it detected indications that the Church was confused and in some disarray on the issue - "there are 47 ministers and elders who declare themselves utterly opposed to the Bill, 37 who declare themselves not so opposed, while the rest won't trouble themselves much about the matter one way or the other", - but concluded that the overall effect was that the Church of Scotland had, "more faintly than usual, set upon the Lord Advocate's Bill that stamp of her disapprobation which is borne by every measure carried during this generation by public opinion and by the public good...".²¹

Despite The Scotsman's impression that the Church of Scotland's opposition to broad educational reform was weakening somewhat, it is difficult to find evidence in this period that would indicate any significant degree of dissension on the issue, either within the Established Church or between it and its anti-reform allies. One speaker at the National Education Association meeting in January 1854, who identified himself as a member of the Church of Scotland, had vehemently disagreed with that body's interpretation of educational reforms as an attack upon the establishment principle and had declared amidst great cheers: "Let them not delude themselves with the vain imagination of supposing that on this question they have the laity of the Establishment with them".²² Such examples, however, were rare. More typical was the fact that, at the special meeting of the Synod of Perth and Stirling called to consider the Lord

21 Scotsman, 25 March, 1854.

22 N.E.A., Report of the Public Meeting, p. 26.

Advocate's Bill in March, a motion that it would be "inexpedient and unwise to offer opposition to the Bill", failed to find a seconder.²³ When criticism arose in the St. Andrew's Presbytery, to the effect that the Church's Education Committee had put forward no positive educational reform plan of its own as an alternative to the Lord Advocate's, the Committee's chairman, Dr. John Cook, denied the charge. The results of their efforts, he maintained, had been positive. After all, they had "twice defeated Lord Melgund's Bill", in the face of "a wide-spread combination".²⁴ The Church, he continued, did not demand a monopoly on education, but was determined to protect and extend what it had:

He did not mean to say that connection with the Established Church was an indispensable qualification of a teacher; but he, for one, saw no guarantee for a sound system of national education, unless in its connection with the National Church.²⁵

With this view most members, elders, and clergy of the Church of Scotland seemed to concur.

As has been discussed above the position of the parochial schoolmasters was a difficult one.²⁶ Though officially they stood firmly by the Establish Church throughout this period, their interests were not always identical with the official position of their own denomination and they were more subject to a conflict of loyalties than were clergymen, heritors, or conservative politicians. They were specific indications of these tensions during the late winter and spring of

23 Church of Scotland, Perth and Stirling Minute Books, p. 238.

24 Church of Scotland, "Presbytery of St. Andrew", SELJ (January, 1854), p. 177.

25 Ibid.

26 See above, Chapter 7.

1854. On March 10th a committee, headed by William Knox, met in Edinburgh to consider the results of a Presbyterial survey conducted among schoolmasters. Fifty-three teachers had responded, at that point, "all, with one or two exceptions, approving of the resolutions of December 30th" against any national education reform that would alter the relationship of the Established Church and the Parochial Schools.²⁷ Later in the same month about 150 teachers, "pretty fairly representing the parochial schoolmaster of Scotland" gathered at the High School in Edinburgh to discuss the Lord Advocate's Bill.²⁸ Knox proposed a series of resolutions raising specific objections to the clauses of the legislation which dealt with matters like security of tenure, salary, pensions and so on. The Scotsman's correspondent observed that, from the tenor of the ensuing discussions, the schoolmasters appeared to feel that the bill, "so far from deserving condemnation in toto, would with a few amendments, be an excellent measure".²⁹ This was, perhaps, an overstatement, but some deviation from the Church of Scotland's unqualified opposition to the measure was obvious. On the matter of the provisions in the bill for religious instruction, a member of the committee which had prepared the resolutions explained that they "as a matter of prudence, had considered it inexpedient to make any reference on this subject, as it was a point concerning the clergy more than the schoolmasters; and it was not desirable for them to increase unnecessarily their

27 Parochial, Schoolmasters, "National Education", SELJ (March, 1854), p. 280.

28 Parochial Teachers, "Meeting on Lord Advocate's Bill", SELJ (April, 1854), p. 326.

29 Scotsman, 22 March, 1854.

objections to the bill".³⁰ Despite such gestures of independence, however, the parochial schoolmasters officially stood by their Church. The March meeting, for example, while concentrating on the specific grievances which affected the teachers, included in their petition to Parliament the more general resolutions against national education reform they had passed in December 1853.³¹

Moreover, the steering committee had earlier adopted a memorial, addressed to the heritors, appealing for their support against educational reform, which, because of its extremely subservient and conservative tone, deserves quotation in full:

That the arrangement which places the election [of parish schoolmasters] in the hands of the landed proprietors, who have so large a stake in the country, and so deep an interest in the stability of its institutions, and which places the superintendence [of the parish schools] in the hands of the Established Church, having a fixed and permanent standard of faith and doctrine, has secured the appointment of teachers of sound constitutional and religious principles; and that a change in the system which would place the election and management in the hands of parties without property and without the requisite education, and a totally different kind of teaching, and could not fail to give an impetus to the democratic element in this country, of which past history affords no parallel.³²

30 Ibid. Though this policy, according to The Scotsman was enthusiastically approved by the meeting, one prominent teacher rose to condemn "the absence of religious security in the bill and the Lord Advocate's, as a Free Church member, advocacy of it". These strictures were greeted with "Great disapprobation" and the chairman "recommended the speaker to forget for a time to what Church the Lord Advocate belonged (Cheers)".

31 See above, Chapter 8. A deputation consisting of William Knox, Robert Burton, and William Young met the Lord Advocate in London on 24 March, and reported that "his Lordship intimated an intention of recommending certain alterations on the Bill, which would obviate some of the objections to it". Parochial Teachers, "Meeting on Lord Advocate's Bill", p. 327.

32 Parochial Schoolmasters, "National Education", p. 280. Underlining mine.

Besides illustrating, with particular force, that the parochial schoolmasters, whatever their yearnings for independence, ultimately lined up solidly with the status quo, anti-educational reform forces, this Memorial, in the terms it uses to appeal to the heritors and gentry, illuminates the basic political motivation of the Episcopalian landed proprietors in supporting the Church of Scotland's school system. A more democratic system would be fraught with grave social and political implications. It was to be avoided.

In early May the annual county meetings began to add their official support to the opposition of the Church of Scotland. These meetings, at which the Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of Supply and other notables in each rural district gathered to discuss matters of mutual concern and interest, were, in the opinion of The Scotsman, mere farces at which the proprietors decided what position the county would take on important issues of the day. The paper noted that at the Fifeshire county meetings, the views of several influential gentlemen who wished to give support to the Lord Advocate's Bill were completely overridden and predicted that "it may be taken as settled, that every county in Scotland will, on the wrong grounds, petition against the Education Bill, - just as they did against the Reform Bill and every good thing".³³

Amongst reform forces, the reaction to the Lord Advocate's Act was generally favourable. The Scotsman noted with approval the existence of "an apparently almost universal desire to deal cautiously and respectfully with a measure whose author has manifestly brought not only good intentions, but great skill to cope with great

33 Scotsman, 3 May, 1854.

difficulties".³⁴ There was some objection to the fact that such a large measure of the superintendence of the parish schools was left to the heritors and the clergy of the Established Church.³⁵ The greatest contention, however, arose over the issue of religious instruction. Though the secularist Scotsman went so far as to concede that the Lord Advocate had made "nearly the best that can be made of a bad principle",³⁶ other observers were less sympathetic. The Perthshire Advertiser accused the Lord Advocate, of setting up a system which would pit Church against Church and greatly encourage sectarian education.³⁷ The 'voluntaries' had the most difficulty in accepting the bill, believing as they did both that the state should have nothing to do with the religious affairs of the country and that religious instruction was an essential and integral part of education. To them the Lord Advocate's Bill seemed to establish direct state subsidization of all religions, including the dreaded Catholicism. Presbyterians, as one indignant editorialist put it, would have to help pay "for the inculcation, under the watchful eye

34 Scotsman, 4 March, 1854. The Scotsman also quoted from other press reaction. The Banffshire Journal, after expressing its own secular preferences, hoped that the bill would receive the "candid consideration of the country" and the Falkirk Herald, a strong Free-Church and anti-popery paper, believed that the Lord Advocate's proposals deserved "respectful consideration".

35 The Kelso Journal felt that the absence of popular control over the parish schools must be corrected and added: "the favourable reception so unaccountably given to the scheme by several of the Liberal members of Scotland renders our advice the more necessary". Quoted in The Scotsman, 4 March 1854.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

of the Romish priest, the soul destroying doctrines of the Man of Sin".³⁸ The Scotsman reported that some United Presbyterians, the largest of the voluntary denominations, had been embarrassed by the "premature support" that some of their leading members had expressed for the Lord Advocate's Bill. They felt that this support "had given their Church and Dissenters generally a degrading position, as going to the government in the attitude of a beggar, saying what they would take...".³⁹

But it was the feeling that the proposed religious clauses had been formulated mainly in terms of how they would sit with the Free Church and liberal members of the Church of Scotland, and in no significant way met the objections of the Voluntaries, that prompted the greatest defections from the reform forces. As The Scotsman put it in an editorial in April, the legislation was basically sound and received widespread support because of that; "yet it is only on this religious difficulty, and on no other, that this Bill in daily increasing danger of becoming a wreck".⁴⁰ The Scotsman was perhaps being a trifle alarmist for, even with this serious defect, it was clear that the reform coalition was holding together during the months leading up to the Parliamentary debate and that the Bill was generally

38 Ibid. Quoted from the Falkirk Herald.

39 Ibid., 11 March, 1854. This feeling was expressed during a meeting of the United Presbyterian Presbytery in Cupar, at which a number of resolutions against the bill were proposed. No vote, however, was taken.

40 Ibid., 12 April, 1854. The paper had earlier suggested that a way out of the difficulty would be to eliminate the words "by the master" in the clause dealing with the religious instruction to be given at specified hours. It was those few words, "which invest the schoolmaster with certain ecclesiastical functions", which were offensive to the voluntaries.

supported by the majority of the Scottish people. The Free Church, with a few reservations on specific points⁴¹ gave its approbation to the legislation and agitated actively on its behalf. Most of the town councils in the country gave the Bill their approval, evidence The Scotsman thought that the people of Scotland wanted to settle the education question "by a quicker process and on a better basis than the contending Churches".⁴²

II

During the discussions in the Commons of the Lord Advocate's Scottish education bill of 1854,⁴³ much the same arguments were used on both sides of the question as had been heard in 1850 and 1851. Opponents of the measure saw its main aim as being the dissolution of the ancient connection between the Church of Scotland and the parish schools, and prophesied dire consequences for Scottish religious security and public morality. They argued that the measure had been brought forward in haste and that a more "mature consideration"⁴⁴ was needed. As it stood this proposal would begin the work of educational reform "with the work of destruction", in a "spirit

41 The Scotsman considered the alterations the Free Church proposed to be "chiefly, of course, for the worse". 22 March, 1854. One amendment Candlish and his committee favoured was the substitution of some sort of general test of religious faith to replace the strictly denominational test used by the Established Church. Free Church of Scotland, Education Bill, p. 5.

42 Scotsman, 8 April, 1854.

43 The bill was discussed when the Lord Advocate gave notice of it on 23 February and again when it was presented for second reading on 12 May. 3 Hansard, CXXX and CXXXIII.

44 Ibid., CXXXIII, 12 May 1854, p. 237.

of retaliation".⁴⁵ Some even saw the legislation as an attack on the principles of religious establishment itself and one speaker quoted Thomas Guthrie as having described the bill as the first step towards "further encroachments on the rights and priveleges of the Established Church".⁴⁶ The abolition of the religious test for schoolmasters in the parochial schools they regarded as especially pernicious and another opposition member warned that the abandonment of such tests in Europe "had brought about nearly universal incredulity".⁴⁷ The centralizing tendency of the legislation was also objected to by its opponents and an English M.P. professed to see "a vast scheme in embryo to be managed by one man, for practically, the secretary of this Commission would have the whole education of Scotland under his thumb".⁴⁸

Supporters of the Lord Advocate's bill dealt with these objections as effectively as they could. The Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, speaking in the February debate, tried to put the bill in a somewhat wider national context than its opponents might have wished:

45 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 272. Several members attacked the measure as a Free Church strategem to achieve an equal footing with the Church of Scotland. The most cogent outline of this view was offered by Cumming Bruce who declared that the Free Church's considerable independent efforts in education had overextended its resources and had established more schools "than they could probably well support; and as they wished to see them kept up in a state of efficiency, they looked to the right honourable and learned Lord [Moncrieff] to take them under his case". p. 246. The charge was not completely without validity.

47 *Ibid.*, CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1180.

48 *Ibid.*, CXXXIII, 12 May 1854, p. 262.

But this whole question occupies ground much larger and wider than that which relates to the connection between the parochial schools and the Church of Scotland, and I own I should be sorry if any jealousy on the part of the Church of Scotland should interfere to throw obstacles in the way of this scheme. There have been obvious signs this evening of such obstacles being interposed.⁴⁹

These signs did not diminish, and in May the Scottish member for Elgin, G.S. Duff, expressed deep regret at "the character of the opposition that had been offered to these provisions by the majority of the established clergy". It was impossible for him to imagine, he continued "that the true interests of the Established Church had been consulted [by the Opposition] in their wholesale condemnation of this Bill".⁵⁰ The Lord Advocate, indeed, bitterly concluded, towards the end of the debate that most of the opposition arguments were trivial and that the "real reason why they wished to sacrifice this Bill was, because it proposed to take the exclusive power out of the hands of the Established Church of Scotland".⁵¹

On the whole, then, this latest round of parliamentary debate on the Scottish education question was neither spirited nor novel. Most of what was said had been said before and said better. Two themes in the discussions are worth noticing, however. The first was the very considerable attention paid to the state of Scottish public opinion and the various assertions regarding it. Both sides, of course, claimed its support. Joseph Hume referred to "an ardent desire for education on the part of the people of Scotland",⁵² which

49 Ibid., CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1188.

50 Ibid., CXXXIII, 12 May 1854, p. 258.

51 Ibid., p. 289.

52 Ibid., CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1174.

led him to hope for the success of the measure, and Lord Elcho pointed to the great number of favourable petitions as representing a "very large amount of public opinion in Scotland in its favour".⁵³ The opposition, for their part, claimed general satisfaction with the educational arrangements of the country as they stood and presented as evidence the united support of the heritors for the parish system.⁵⁴ Colonel Blair, the M.P. for Ayrshire was moved to declare that, with the exception of one sect, by which he meant the Free Church, he believed the bill was "generally unpopular in Scotland" and that from the United Presbyterian denomination, the largest of the 'voluntary' groups, "he had not seen an opinion favourable to the measure expressed at any meetings of its synods or presbyteries".⁵⁵

Public opinion, has always been a slippery and elusive force either to define or to measure. It seems clear, however, that in several important ways Scottish public opinion, through this period, was increasingly more in favour of comprehensive educational reform that opposed to it. To be sure, there were considerable disagreements among those supporting reform, but the urban, liberal, majority view increasingly supported legislative action. The tide was running steadily against the defenders of the educational status quo and their support was restricted to a more narrow, though still extremely powerful base - the staunch adherents of the established church and the

53 Ibid., CXXXIII, 12 May 1854, p. 244.

54 Ibid., p. 271. Though Mr. Kinnaird believed in February, that the "Declaration" had been signed "under considerable misapprehension" and that, when the bill had been fully studied, "he had no doubt that many of those who had signed it would withdraw their names". 23 February 1854, p. 1182. He was disappointed in this expectation.

55 Ibid., p. 271.

rural, conservative, Episcopalian gentry. It was, perhaps, the realization of this trend that prompted the Church of Scotland and her allies to look farther afield for support in opposing educational legislation. Whatever the doctrinal or national ironies might be, the Church of Scotland's Parliamentary Committee, almost from the outset, determined to argue their case among the English and Irish parliamentary representatives as well as the Scottish M.P.s.⁵⁶ Nor were these efforts confined to secular figures, for the support of the leaders of the English and Irish establishments was vigorously sought.⁵⁷

It was this strategy by the opponents of the bill that raised the second theme of interest in the 1854 debates; namely, the question of the proper relation of English and Irish attitudes on the conduct of Scottish affairs. The particular issue was Scottish educational reform but it also served to illuminate the broader problem posed by the nationalist movement - the difficulties facing the survival and continued development of Scottish national life and custom within the context of the Union. During the course of the discussions in the House in 1854, Scottish opponents of the bill made several appeals for assistance from their English and Irish colleagues. Cummings Bruce warned the latter to beware:

Addressing himself, however, to the English Members, he might perhaps be allowed to describe this Bill as a sort of pilot balloon sent out to warn them as to

56 See above, Chapter 8, for the report of the deputation to London in February 1854.

57 For example, a later deputation of the Parliamentary Committee in 1856 reported that it had "called on most of the Bishops" and, though many were out of town, "those seen agreed". Church of Scotland, Parliamentary Committee, 29 July, 1856.

the kind of educational system they were yet to expect as it was intended, before proceeding to legislate for England, to victimize an institution on which Scotland had such great reason to pride herself.⁵⁸

As a counter to this line of appeal, Scottish supporters of the Bill generally expressed the hope, as one of them put it, "the honourable Gentlemen in that House would bear in mind that a great distinction existed between the cases of England and Scotland".⁵⁹ Another speaker called "the careful attention of English Members to this Bill, as one eminently adapted to the wants of Scotland" and added:

...he trusted that no dread of its being sent out as a pilot balloon to some projected measure for England would induce them to withhold a boon which was so earnestly desired by the people of Scotland.⁶⁰

It must be acknowledged, however, that a few supporters of the legislation also made appeals to non-Scottish members. Charles Cowan called on Irish M.P.s, "who could bear testimony to the benefits which in spite of the difficulties it had had to encounter, the national system of education had conferred upon their own country", to join in the introduction "into the northern parts of this island, where the same difficulties did not exist, of a system which was likely to be productive of so much advantage".⁶¹ Even the Lord Advocate himself lent some credibility to those who wished to represent Scottish

58 3 Hansard, CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1178. In May, a similar view was expressed by F. Scott: "It must also be borne in mind that this Bill was held up as the pattern and model upon which another Bill might hereafter be framed, and he therefore claimed the support of English Members in the opposition which he felt it his duty to offer to the measure. 12 May 1854, p. 283.

59 Ibid., p. 1181.

60 Ibid., CXXXIII, 12 May 1854, p. 259.

61 Ibid., p. 274.

legislation as a mere stalking-horse for further educational reform in England, when he declared that the fate of his bill "would in fact decide whether a national system of education was possible not only in Scotland, but also whether a system of national education was possible in Great Britain".⁶²

In any case, a number of English and Irish M.P.s did participate in the debates, usually prefacing their remarks with an apology for interfering in Scottish affairs. Both Walpole and Newdegate, on the one side, saw in the legislation an attempt to import "the Irish system of national education with all its faults into Scotland".⁶³ They vigorously opposed the bill. On the other side, Lord John Russell expressed the opinion that Scottish education was in a much better position to be reformed than English education:

And I think, both with regard to that system [the parochial schools] and to other points, the practical good sense of the people of Scotland has solved many difficulties over which we are still disputing in England.⁶⁴

Richard Cobden, too, after speaking in favour of the bill, expressed his respect for the judgement of Scotsmen on the matter:

He should vote for the second reading also because the majority of Scotch Members on his side of the House were going to do so and they ought to know best what their country required...⁶⁵

Cobden's prediction of the outcome of the vote among the Scottish M.P.s was certainly correct. Forty-eight of the 53 Scottish

62 *Ibid.*, p. 283.

63 *Ibid.*, CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1189.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 1187.

65 *Ibid.*, CXXXIII, 12 May 1854, p. 282.

representatives voted on the motion to give the Bill its second reading: 34 in favour of doing so and 14 against.⁶⁶ The majority consisted of 22 burgh representatives and 12 county members. No burgh representatives voted with the 14 who opposed second reading. The results indicated a major shift in favour of educational legislation among Scottish MPs since 1850 and 1851 when Melgund's bills had been considered. Then, the Scottish majorities in favour of the measures had been a matter of two or three votes. By 1854, the only two burgh representatives who had opposed Melgund's bills had come over to support the Lord Advocate's proposal. Even more significant, support for educational reform had increased outside the towns to the point where the opposition could only muster two more votes than the reformers even in the county seats.⁶⁷ However, despite this convincing Scottish majority in favour of the Scottish education bill, it suffered the same fate as its predecessors. Overall, the Commons voted against second reading by a majority of 9.⁶⁸ The Scottish opponents

66 There is some question about the exact number in favour of the second reading. The Scotsman reported (17 May, 1854) that 36 Scottish MPs voted for it. This figure was quoted elsewhere as well. Using Hansard, however, it seems that 34 voted for, 14 against, and 5 were absent. The difference does not, in any case affect the basic implications of the vote.

67 To analyse the shift further: 31 Scottish MPs voted on the educational bills of 1851 and 1854 - in 1851 they voted 16 in favour and 15 against, in 1854 they voted 22 in favour and 9 against (all the switches were from 'No' to 'Aye'); of the 4 MPs who had been absent in 1851 and were still in the Commons in 1854, 3 voted for and 1 was absent again; 16 MPs who in 1851 had voted, 7 for, 4 against, with 5 absent, had been replaced by 1854 by 16 MPs who voted 9 for, 5 against with 2 absent. Of the five MPs who were absent in 1854, 4 were county reps. Assuming they had all voted against, the majority in favour of second reading among the Scots might have been reduced by 3 to 35 for and 18 against.

68 The total vote was 184 in favour and 193 against. The non-Scottish majority against second reading, therefore, was 29.

of educational reform had succeeded in rallying their allies outside the country.

In analyzing the outcome of this vote, it quickly became apparent to the reform forces that, whatever their own differences of opinion over particular aspects of the legislation,⁶⁹ the bill had been defeated by the absolute intransigence of a minority of Scottish Tory MPs, representing the interests of the Church of Scotland and the landed proprietors, supported by the English and Irish votes that that minority had rallied to its cause. Later in the spring of 1854 Moncrieff and others used the opportunity presented by the introduction of a temporary measure designed to deal with parochial schoolmasters' salaries, to drive this conclusion home. It was now perfectly clear, the Lord Advocate charged, that the "real difficulty in the way of the education scheme was not owing to the religious difficulty so called, but to the peculiar and exclusive privileges which the Established Church held with regard to those schools".⁷⁰ Moreover,

69 The Lord Advocate later recalled that the Bill had been well received initially, but that "sectional differences began to tell", as it progressed through Parliament. Educational Retrospect, p. 110. In fact, it received fair consideration all the way along though, since it was consciously framed as a moderate measure by Moncrieff, it did not satisfy any of its supporters entirely. The Scotsman's treatment of it, critical of some of its principles yet sympathetic to the difficulties educational legislation faced, is a good example. The paper consistently urged all parties to "consider that the time has now come when the question must be approached in a spirit of conciliation and concession..." 11 March 1854. This they did, generally speaking, and as the Lord Advocate acknowledged at the time, the bill had received a "very large amount of support in Scotland, not just from Free Churchmen, but from moderate men of all denominations". 3 Hansard, CXXXIII, 12 May 1854, p. 287.

70 3 Hansard, CXXXIII, 29 May 1854, Parochial Schoolmasters (Scotland) p. 133. As The Scotsman put it, the bill "while refused adequate support for not being better, was slain mainly on the accusation of being too good", and it called its defeat a "hollow and temporary triumph" for the Church of Scotland. 17 May, 1854.

the realization that the bill's defeat was gained only by the intervention of non-Scottish votes raised a great deal of indignation among many Scottish liberals and reformers who were not normally exercised by the 'Scottish rights' cause.

In Parliament, Murray Dunlop, the member for Greenock, voiced this resentment of English interference in Scottish affairs. The Scots' desire for a national system of education in their country's tradition, he declared, was entitled to the sympathy of English Members, because "the origin of the present dissensions in Scotland might be traced to the legislation of the English Parliament acting in opposition to the voices of Scotch representatives".⁷¹ Perhaps the best example of the intensity of the indignation felt in Scotland over the defeat of the Lord Advocate's bill, was the editorial reaction of The Scotsman, a paper that, far from being sympathetic to nationalist sentiment as embodied in the Scottish Rights Association, had been among its most scathing debunkers.⁷² Educational reform, however, it regarded as a genuine and legitimate national issue and it called

71 Ibid., p. 1135. In his Educational Retrospect, Lord Moncrieff pointed out that the Scottish MPs had been overwhelmingly in favour of his bill and concluded: "Therefore, it is plain, it was fully more an English than a Scotch difficulty which impeded our operations. The English members were afraid of the bill being an example for England..." p. 12. Of course it would have been, but many Scots doubted that this constituted sufficient justification for blocking Scottish educational reform.

72 See Hanham, "Scottish Nationalism", pp. 159, 166, 167. Undoubtedly, The Scotsman had a considerable influence in preventing the S.R.A., even in its most judicious and reasonable aspects from being taken very seriously. Its comments on a speech in the Lords by Lord Eglinton, the S.R.A.'s president, serves as a good example of The Scotsman's unrelenting hostility to the movement. The speech was "a contemptible outcry", its references to Scottish grievances were "the old twaddle", and its author, a man "opposed by every Scotchman about whom Scotland cares or even knows". 8 April, 1854.

the defeat of 1854 bill by non-Scottish votes a "national humiliation".⁷³ It also used the defeat as a club with which to beat the S.R.A. and to expose the reactionary and unpatriotic role it had played in the education question.

Although, during the course of the debate in the Commons, one Tory M.P. had expressed the view, perhaps facetiously, that he "could not help supposing that the Government in this instance was acting under pressure from the 'Society for the Vindication of Scottish Rights'...".⁷⁴ most of the leading 'romantic' members of the S.R.A. were, in fact, totally out of sympathy with the proposed educational reforms, and their social and political implications. With considerable irony The Scotsman, invited the attention of the S.R.A., and especially of its president, "to the exasperating fact that here is a Scotch Bill supported by the Scotch members in the proportion of two to one, rejected by English and Irish votes". Moreover the paper charged that this indignity had been brought about "mainly by the importunity and merely physical activity of Colonel Blair", who happened to be Lord Eglinton's own member for the county of Ayr.⁷⁵ In another editorial a few days later The Scotsman dwelt on the uncharacteristic silence of the S.R.A.:

No such thing as the rejection of a Scotch Bill supported, like the Lord Advocate's measure, by a sweeping majority of the Scotch members, has happened since the Reform Bill. Here is a grievance at last - substantial, irritating, and humiliating. Yet strange, monstrous to say, the glorious patriots whose indignation

73 Ibid., 17 May, 1854.

74 3 Hansard, CXXX, 23 February 1854, p. 1177.

75 Scotsman, 17 May, 1854.

was so uncontrollable about 'the repairs of Holyrood', and such like matters, are, at this great Scottish crisis, nowhere to be seen or heard.⁷⁶

Indeed, the editorial notes, many Scottish Tory newspapers which formerly protested loudly at what they considered untoward English interference in the affairs of Scotland, "are full of delight and thankfulness that the Scotch members have been swamped by a host of English Tories and Chartists, and Irish Orangemen and Papists".⁷⁷

III

The indignation and resentment expressed in 1854 was still evident when the Lord Advocate made yet another attempt to reform the educational institutions of Scotland in March of the following year. As Moncrieff emphasized, the 1855 bill "was the same in substance" as the one he had sponsored the year before, and he dwelt at some length on the fate that proposal had had.⁷⁸ Its failure he made

76 Ibid., 20 May, 1854.

77 Ibid. G.W.T. Omond, the great historian of the Lord Advocates of Scotland, also describes the defeat of the 1854 bill in a nationalist context. It was, he wrote, rejected by a "solid phalanx of Conservatives, English dissenters, and some Roman Catholics...", and added: "The members from Scotland had been outvoted, not for the first time, on a purely Scottish question". Omond, Lord Advocates of Scotland, p. 184.

78 3 Hansard, CXXXVII, 23 March 1855, p. 989. One significant alteration in the bill had to do with the place of denominational schools, which, under the 1855 legislation were no longer to be supported indefinitely through the Privy Council grants. Apparently it was intended to bring as many as possible of such schools under the wing of the public system. Roman Catholic and Episcopalian schools, however, were to be aided and protected while still maintaining considerable independence. The opposition charged that this concession was nothing more than a bribe to the Catholic M.P.s to win their support for the bill (see Hadfield, Ibid., 14 June, p. 1951) and one county member, Sir John Ferguson, who was a supporter of the legislation, told the House that it had raised "a storm of opposition in the Protestant papers of Scotland". Ibid., 9 July, p. 627.

it clear, "had not arisen from any fault or indisposition of the Scotch Members", but rather had been defeated "by the votes of English Members and mainly by the votes of the honourable Gentlemen opposite".⁷⁹ The 1854 bill had become a party issue solely because it did not continue the "exclusive privilege" of the Church of Scotland in the control of the parochial schools.⁸⁰ There was, however, "a considerable difference between the positions of England and Scotland with regard to education".⁸¹ Using an English bill recently presented by Sir John Pakington, the Lord Advocate illustrated several of the salient differences, and concluded with this appeal:

As Scotland was agreed upon this matter, and had voted in the proportion of three to one upon it, and as every borough Member in Scotland had supported it, he asked the House now, in common consistency, if they did not think it desirable in England to give a preponderance to a majority [Pakington's bill did not give exclusive privilege to the Church of England, even though the majority of the people were its adherents], not to saddle the people of Scotland with the preponderance of a minority.⁸²

Other Scottish M.P.s also expressed their indignation at the outcome and nature of the 1854 voting. Lord Elcho charged that the 1854 bill had failed "owing to a large number of English Members who had come down to vote rather than to hear any discussion upon it".⁸³ Two thirds of the Scottish M.P.s had voted for the measure, which

79 Ibid., 23 March 1854, p. 989.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid., p. 991.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid., p. 1002.

"proved that the people of Scotland, unless representative government was a farce, were in favour of the Bill".⁸⁴ He hoped that the English Members would bear this fact in mind and now "endeavour to pay some respect to the wishes and the feelings of the people of Scotland".⁸⁵ Perhaps the direst warning of the consequences of not paying such respect was offered by the representatives of the Montrose District of Burghs, W.E. Baxter. Further insult might well, he thought, induce Scotsmen to behave like Irishmen:

The House of Commons would scarcely like to see the Scotch Members become as loquacious and even as pugnacious as the Members from the sister island - taking every possible opportunity, because justice had been denied them again and again, of thrusting their particular grievances before the House. Scotchmen were generally slow to anger and not easily excited; but once convince them that they were the victims of gross injustice, and they would become just as noisy and a great deal more obstinate than the most eloquent agitators for a Parliament on College Green.⁸⁶

Even without this daunting prospect, it was clear that the Scottish burgh and liberal county M.P.s were aroused by the issue. Despite the appeals of the Scottish Tories for outside assistance⁸⁷

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid., p. 1003. See also similar sentiments expressed in the speeches of J. Macgregor (p. 1003), Viscount Duncan (p. 1004), A.M. Dunlop (27 April 1855, p. 1913-14) and Viscount Duncan again (Ibid., p. 1919).

86 Ibid., 27 April 1855, p. 1918.

87 Mr. Stirling, for example, "deplored the natural bent" which led Scottish M.P.'s into the "habit" of sitting on the Liberal side of the House and maintained that he "and those who took the same view he did, were consequently obliged last year to their English friends, in order to get rid of a Bill which they conscientiously believed would be injurious to Scotland". Ibid., 23 March 1855, p. 994.

and the active intervention of several English members,⁸⁸ the motion to have the bill read a second time passed the Commons, with a majority of both the Scottish and non-Scottish M.P.s supporting it, by a vote of 210 to 171.⁸⁹

Besides the fact that, for the first time since 1803, a Scottish education bill had survived second reading in the House of Commons, the 1855 chapter of the educational reform controversy was notable on two other counts. One was the fact that the Scottish Tories in the Commons were remarkably unperturbed about this setback, perhaps because they felt secure in the expectation that the Scottish peers in the House of Lords would give such a bill short shrift if it ever came up for their consideration. In any case, the small band of conservative Scottish county members opposed the proposed legislation more effectively and coherently than in 1854, and skilfully employed every parliamentary tactic to impede its passage and alter its nature. The other notable aspect of the progress of the bill was that, as a

88 The most notable contribution was made by Sir John Pakington, whose bill had been admirably referred to by the Lord Advocate and other Scottish supporters of educational reform. He astonished them by rising to oppose the Scottish measure on the grounds that "the destruction of the present schools was a leading feature of this measure for Scotland ('No, no!')", that the religious test was essential, and that the parochial school system as then stood, was "the very system he was advocating for England". *Ibid.*, 27 April 1855, pp. 1920-1921. The Lord Advocate responded by congratulating Scotland on "having acquired an interest in the mind" of Sir John, but regretted that he "had not shown a more intimate acquaintance with the facts of the case and with the intent of the Bill than he had displayed". *Ibid.*, p. 1922. *The Scotsman* commented that Pakington's attack on the Lord Advocates Bill had been excessive, misconceived, inaccurate and inconsistent; "the man who in England would divide the schools among all sects would restrict them to one sect in Scotland". 5 May, 1855.

89 The Scottish vote remained almost unchanged from 1854 with 34 in support, 13 against and 6 absent, a majority of 21. For the first time there was a non-Scottish majority of 18.

result of the frustration caused by the Tories' unrelenting filibustering, combined with the disgruntlement caused by various fruitless efforts on the part of the Lord Advocate to conciliate the opposition, the educational reform movement began to lose heart and to splinter.

In addition to all the arguments usually employed against any comprehensive educational reform measure,⁹⁰ the Scottish Tories in 1855 put forward a counter-proposal to the Lord Advocate's Bill; a counter-proposal that seemed in some ways to offer a reasonable compromise. This counter-proposal was, in effect, an offer of support for the Lord Advocate on condition that he leave the parochial schools basically as they were and apply his legislation to the urban areas where the need was clearly most pressing.⁹¹ All were agreed, so went the Tory argument, that any Scottish educational legislation must guarantee the continued combination of religious and secular education, as well as extend the means of education wherever this was needed. The Lord Advocate's bill, however, put these two essential elements in mutual opposition, for, by radically altering the constitution of the parochial schools, ostensibly in the interests of extending and improving education, the union of religious and secular instruction was destroyed. Most of those who were opposing the present legislation so the argument ran would acknowledge the "duty of the State to construct new channels of education" and, if the Bill were divided into two parts, the section dealing with the continued

90 The best statement of the opposition case was made by Cumming Bruce in a speech on 10 May 1855. 3 *Hansard*, CXXXVIII, pp. 370-375. Overall the opposition's standard of debate was higher than in previous years.

91 The suggestion to separate the legislation in this way may originally have been made by Lord Brougham. It was first presented in the Commons by the MP from Perthshire, W. Stirling, in the debate following the Lord Advocate's introduction of

maintenance of the parochial system, "would in no way interfere with conferring additional means of education where they may be required".⁹² Indeed, the parish schools themselves might be legislatively modified regarding "such changes of detail as might enable them more effectively to carry out the objects of their institution".⁹³ In short, separate the proposed Bill into two sections, one dealing with the rural situation and one with the urban.

The Lord Advocate's initial reaction was to comment simply that he would have presented a bill with separate rural and urban sections if he could "have been that there was less difficulty" in trying to solve the problem that way.⁹⁴ Later on, however, he pointed out that, to a considerable degree he had treated the parish schools as a problem distinct from other aspects of the education question. But to remove completely the parochial schools from major educational reform legislation would be, to accept the two false assumptions upon which the Tories based their argument. The first was that dissent was limited to urban areas and that the Church of Scotland, fully representing the rural population, could exclusively furnish their educational needs.⁹⁵ Secondly, Moncrieff challenged the notion that the parochial schools of Scotland were the exclusive possession of the heritors and the Established Church:

the 1855 bill in March. It was most cogently argued by Cumming Bruce in a subsequent debate in May.

92 3 Hansard, CXXXVIII, 10 May 1855, pp. 365-366.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid., CXXXVII, 23 March 1855, p. 1015.

95 Ibid., 27 April 1855, p. 1922. The Scotsman commented that if "dissent, and other sources of objection to the present parochial schools, were confined to the towns, there might be some

Hon. Gentlemen talked continually of 'our schools'; but the schools were not theirs. They were the schools of the nation, and the Established Church never had the right of property in them. He denied that these schools belonged to the heritors. They were nothing but trustees, and the power which had placed them there to administer that trust was competent to take it from them.⁹⁶

At a later stage of the bill's progress, one speaker dismissed the opposition's counter proposal as merely "an attempt by a side wind to get rid of the principle of the Lord Advocate's Bill, which had already been affirmed by the second reading".⁹⁷ And, indeed, the proposal may have been nothing more than one of a whole range of delaying tactics that the opposition used through the committee stage of the bill,⁹⁸ an "obstructive policy", as The Scotsman called it,⁹⁹ that dragged the discussion on until the second week in July. In vain, the Lord Advocate complained that the subject had been "completely exhausted" and appealed to both sides to lay aside their "polemical weapons". The Tories, naturally, claimed that Moncrieff was trying to rush legislation through without the detailed

show of sense in such a proposal...". In fact, the paper went on, the forces of dissent, though often smaller in number in the country than in the towns, were usually "more jealous and inveterate". 12 May, 1855.

96 3 Hansard, CXXXVIII, 18 May 1855, p. 823.

97 Ibid., p. 817.

98 The opposition tried to prevent the bill going into committee at all on 10 May 1855 by objecting to the lateness of the hour (it was 10:45 P.M.) and when they were defeated, after considerable discussion, 165 to 119, one of their number held the floor until the 12:30 adjournment. Ibid., 10 May 1855. The House met in Committee on the bill on six occasions (10 May, 18 May, 14 June, 22 June, 2 July and 9 July). Fifteen recorded divisions are listed in Hansard and there were numerous amendments, each of which took up time in discussion, which were eventually withdrawn or accepted or defeated by voice vote.

99 Scotsman, 12 May 1855.

consideration which they felt duty-bound to demand.¹⁰⁰

This unrelenting opposition was not without effect and important substantive changes were forthcoming in the bill.¹⁰¹ Moreover, since the most significant of these alterations were introduced by Moncrieff himself, apparently in an attempt to placate the implacable opposition, increasing frustration and irritation was expressed by the Lord Advocate's allies. The greatest controversy centred on those parts of the legislation having to do with religious instruction and the role of the churches in education. The fourteenth clause provided for the examination of a candidate for the office of parochial schoolmaster by the government school inspector. Upon the result of the exam, the Board of Education in Scotland would issue the teacher with a certificate. Only upon presentation of this certificate could the candidate be inducted by the minister and heritors of the parish school to his position.¹⁰² Apparently, the Tories waged a determined but unsuccessful assault on this clause in attempt to increase the

100 3 Hansard, CXXXVIII, 10 May 1855, p. 1955. See exchange between the Lord Advocate and Cumming Bruce.

101 It should be noted that a reading of Hansard does not reveal the full extent or significance of those changes. It is only by comparing the original printed bill (Parliamentary Papers, 1854-55, Vol. II, p. 269), with the amended version (Ibid., p. 289) that the differences can be noted. A good guide to their significance is provided by the editorial comment in The Scotsman.

102 In this, the 1855 bill was very similar to its predecessor in 1854. Both specifically repealed former legislation requiring a Presbyterian examination of the schoolmaster, though the 1855 bill allowed the minister and heritors to participate in the inspector's examination of a candidate. The minister and heritors were to continue as the school management committee. The Lord Advocate declared that they could not reasonably expect more power to be left to them than that, and added: "His doubt had, indeed, been from the communications made to him, whether he had not left rather too much power in their hands". 3 Hansard, CXXXIX, 12 July 1855, p. 827.

power of the heritors and minister in the election of the schoolmaster.¹⁰³ Thwarted on Clause 14, the Tories achieved a breakthrough on Clause 15, the clause abolishing the religious test for parochial schoolmasters. As a concession, doubtless after background discussion and pressure, the Lord Advocate added the following words:

Provided always, that every such Schoolmaster shall, prior to his Election, produce to the Electors a Certificate, signed by a Minister of the Religious Denomination to which he belongs, attesting to his Religious and Moral Character.¹⁰⁴

The Scotsman was infuriated by this requirement, which it considered, "more vicious and degrading" than the old religious test.¹⁰⁵ Such a certificate would be an ecclesiastical obstacle to a civil office which could be granted or refused purely on capricious grounds, and the paper asked:

is there not a curious degradation in the men of one profession being thus made subject to the license or veto of men of another profession! If a man could not be a doctor without a certificate from a lawyer we could see an insult and

103 The Scotsman seems to have thought they had succeeded. So it reported on 4th July 1855 and again on 7 July. On the latter date, the paper also reported that the Scots MPs had voted 25 to 14 and 26 to 14 against two amendments "preserving" the power of the established clergy in appointing parochial teachers. Since there is no difference between the two printed versions of the bill, either The Scotsman failed to notice that Clause 14 did preserve this power to some extent or, since that is unlikely, the amendments were aimed at increasing or decreasing that influence. On 11 July the paper admitted to being uncertain about Clause 14, but concluded that such confusion by then existed in the clauses of the bill as to likely make the legislation unworkable.

104 Parliamentary Papers, 1854-55, Vol. II, p. 269. Clause 15. The same words were added to Clause 26 which dealt with the certification and appointment of public schoolmasters.

105 Scotsman, 16 June, 1855.

absurdity, and we see the same thing as plainly, and do think that our friends, the schoolmasters, should be men enough to feel it, in this law that no man shall be a teacher without a license from a preacher.¹⁰⁶

To see the Lord Advocate giving way on such important points of principle was distressing enough, but what was especially galling to the educational reform coalition was that no concession great or small made the slightest difference in the position of the opposition. Early in the committee stage, The Scotsman had warned of the "entire hopelessness of attempts to obtain from the clergy of the Established Kirk any practical acknowledgement of the fact that all things do not remain as they were at the time of the first Book of Discipline",¹⁰⁷ and its spirits declined noticeably with each fresh attempt by the Lord Advocate to elicit such a response from the opposition. Through June, 1855 despite various alterations made in the Bill, The Scotsman remained hopeful of its prospects and value, concluding, at the end of the month, that while the legislation did not call for wild rejoicing on the part of reformers, it was good enough that that newspaper, for one, could "feel absolved from any persistent opposition"¹⁰⁸ The amendment to Clause 15, and the complete failure of that concession in gaining a positive response from the opposition, led the paper to reverse its stand a few days later, however. Noting that

106 Ibid. The paper also printed a letter, protesting this requirement, which concluded: "Are the parents of Scotland prepared to submit to a state of things which may place the tuition of their children under men mean-spirited enough to truckle under a servitude so ignominious? Is a man who would thus stoop fit to be a teacher?". 4 July, 1855.

107 Ibid., 2 June, 1855.

108 Ibid., 30 June, 1855.

the Scots' opposition "fought every inch of the ground and courted alliances with the so-called English Voluntaries and all others who would help them in a vote", it asked what the Lord Advocate had gained by conciliation and gloomily concluded that the "Bill as it now stands...is, we believe, unworthy of its author's good intentions and of the country's acceptance".¹⁰⁹ A week later it commented that the bill had been so altered that "we hear that both parties in Parliament have become somewhat indifferent to its fate, and even puzzled as to its purport"¹¹⁰ and predicted that even if it survived a third reading either it would be further mutilated or would simply fall apart under the weight of its own contradictions.¹¹¹

In fact, the bill did receive third reading in the Commons on 12 July 1855, though the vote was extremely close, 105 in favour and 102 against.¹¹² The depression and disarray among the reform forces was evident. One Scottish Tory congratulated his opponents on the ground that "the representatives of many of the largest towns in Scotland, who were originally in favour of the Bill..., had, in the division which had just taken place, reversed their previous votes,

109 *Ibid.*, 4 July, 1855.

110 *Ibid.*, 11 July, 1855.

111 I believe The Scotsman's mood through this period fairly reflects reform attitudes to the proposed legislation. Even the Lord Advocate himself seemed to be losing patience and heart by July. Speaking about some compromise that he had worked out with the Tories he declared: "But finding that they opposed it as much as ever after that alteration, his eyes were opened to the nature of their opposition".
3 Hansard, CXXXIX, 9 July 1855, p. 628.

112 *Ibid.*, 12 July 1855, p. 818. One Tory claimed that the majority would have been only a single vote but for the fact that two English MPs "had by accident gone into the lobby with the Government". p. 830.

and had done so in a manner most honourable to themselves".¹¹³ The Scotsman believed that the main reason for the switch in these votes was that a number of members who were voluntaries or secularists felt that the bill had been "sectarianized".¹¹⁴ Some M.P.s who had voted for the bill on third reading declared that they would oppose its final passage and a number who intended to support it all the way declared their dissatisfaction with the alterations that had been made in it.¹¹⁵ Murray Dunlop made a final effort to remove the requirement that the candidates for schoolmaster obtain a character certificate from a clergyman, on the grounds that the clause was "inconsistent with those portions of the Bill which abolish all religious tests upon the appointment of schoolmasters".¹¹⁶ The Lord Advocate made a spirited speech in response to the amendment, accusing both sides of discussing "miserable abstract questions" which raised "insurmountable barriers" to progress on the question.¹¹⁷ The amendment was subsequently defeated by a majority of 37 votes, and

113 Ibid., p. 820.

114 Scotsman, 14 July 1855. One voluntary M.P. declared that the bill "cast the firebrand of religious bigotry amongst the people of Scotland" (3 Hansard, CXXXIX, 12 July 1855, p. 819), and another, Alexander Hastie, who was a staunch supporter of educational reform concluded that it "was not likely to benefit his country or to promote concord among his countrymen". Ibid., p. 822.

115 Charles Cowan, for example, who voted for the bill at Third Reading announced his intention of opposing its final passage: "There was a great deal of good in the Bill, but, in his opinion, it had been very much impaired in its progress through Committee". 3 Hansard, CXXXIX, p. 820.

116 Ibid., p. 826.

117 Ibid. His argument against the amendment, however, was not very convincing since he merely declared that it should be rejected "because it would put both the schoolmasters and the Presbytery in a false position". p. 827.

the entire bill passed with 130 votes in favour and 115 against.¹¹⁸

In analyzing this result The Scotsman was bitterly critical of the Lord Advocate's strategy of conciliation towards the opposition:

Those who think that religious teaching is a thing to be dealt with separately and otherwise [i.e.: the secularists and Scottish voluntaries], have not stirred a finger against him; and many of them - as the United Presbyterian Synod - have lent him a powerful helping hand. Those opponents for whom he so entirely forgot his friends, and sacrificed so many of his own wishes, have never given him a single vote nor a kind word.¹¹⁹

All this, however, was rather beside the point since, as expected, the Lords, would have none of the bill, no matter how moderate and half-hearted it might seem to The Scotsman and other liberal educational reformers. A week after it had cleared the Commons, the Duke of Argyll introduced the bill in the Lords with a hesitant speech which began by acknowledging that "many of their Lordships were keen opponents of this particular measure", admitted that "he could not hope to ensure for any measure on the subject of education any general or party support", but did point out that the bill "was the only one which had successfully fought its way up through the other House and come up for their decision".¹²⁰ The only speaker on behalf of the Lord Advocate's Bill, in the upper House, was Lord Panmure who ably defended it and claimed that, instead "of overthrowing the parochial system,

118 Ibid., p. 829.

119 Scotsman, 14 July, 1855.

120 3 Hansard, CXXXIX, 19 July 1855, p. 1034. Argyll, after describing the leading features of the bill, also warned his colleagues that if it was rejected, another was sure to put forward which might "result in a change more complete than that now proposed" (p. 1040), pointing to the strong support the bill had among Scottish MPs as proof.

this measure would strengthen it".¹²¹ He also warned the Lords and, more specifically, the Established Church:

A great majority of the Members of the other House belonging to Scotland, a vast majority of the laity of that country were in favour of some measure similar to this, and he thought that the Established Church would do wisely in not continuing its opposition.¹²²

Panmure had the distinction, in fact, of casting the only vote in favour of the bill in the Lords.¹²³

The grand lesson of the Lord Advocate's Bill of 1855, declared The Scotsman gloomily surveying the result, was the fact that "though his [the Lord Advocate's] friends are long-suffering, his enemies are unappeasable".¹²⁴ No compromise, however great or abject, would satisfy the Church of Scotland and its allies. On the other hand, those who formed the educational reform coalition were unlikely to remain neutral or friendly while the Lord Advocate attempted to construct yet another compromise measure and steer it through Parliament. Better, The Scotsman urged, to be bolder in future.¹²⁵

121 Ibid., p. 1048.

122 Ibid., p. 1049.

123 Ibid. Argyll tried to withdraw the bill when he saw its fate was certain, but was not allowed to do so by the opposition. The vote was 86 "Not Content" to 1 "Content" to have the bill read a second time. Lord Eglinton estimated that 15 of the 16 Representative Peers of Scotland were opposed to the bill - the 16th was in India (p. 1046). The Scotsman commented that this estimate by "that great champion of 'Scottish Rights'" only proved that "our representative Peers represent only themselves". Scotsman, 1 August, 1855.

124 Scotsman, 25 July, 1855.

125 Ibid. It should also be noted, in view of the preceding discussions of educational reform and mid-century Scottish nationalism, that The Scotsman continued to express many of its objections to the treatment and progress of the 1855 bill in a nationalist context. The paper noted that several amendments

IV

This advice was not heeded, when, in April 1856, the Lord Advocate made what was to be last attempt of the 1850's to effect a major reform in Scottish education. In fact, there were some grounds for considering his proposal to be a retreat from his policy of previous years. Though he emphasized that the basic principles embodied in the bills of 1854 and 1855 were not to be sacrificed,¹²⁶ Moncrieff announced his intention of introducing several distinct pieces of legislation to deal with various aspects of the education problem. Legislation would eventually be introduced, the Lord Advocate stated, to establish new schools and school committees along the lines indicated in the proposed bill of 1855.¹²⁷ For the moment, however, he wished to ask leave to present two bills: one which would give burgh

were carried "against a majority of two to one of the Scotch members, and by the votes of English ultra-Tories, combined with the so-called English Voluntaries" (7 July 1855), and it again poured scorn on those who claimed to be the defenders of Scottish rights: "...here we see the votes of the overwhelming majority of the Scotch members swamped on a Scottish question by the votes of English members, not only without a rebellion or even a remonstrance, by those who have generally undertaken the defence of our Scottish Rights, but on their entreaty and by their instrumentality". 7 July, 1855.

126 3 Hansard, CXLI, 8 April 1856, p. 664. Moncrieff was referring to such basic principles as the right of the state to legislate in Scottish educational matters; the desirability of a national, comprehensive Scottish school system; and the definition of the parochial schools as 'national', not 'denominational' and, therefore not the exclusive property of the Church of Scotland or the Scottish heritors.

127 One change in that legislation, according to Moncrieff would be the elimination of a Board of Education for Scotland because of the "great deal of discontent...excited against...[it]... last year". p. 667. Instead, he hoped that a Minister of Education would be created under which management of Scottish education could be vested.

councils the power to establish and manage new schools;¹²⁸ the other, which would deal with the parochial schools.

Though the Lord Advocate had separated the legislation dealing with the parochial schools from other educational reform measures, he dealt with them in 1856 virtually as he had in 1855. In both versions, though the Church of Scotland clergy and the heritors retained a measure of control over those schools, they were now to do so in conjunction with government inspectors and the Privy Council's Committee on Education, and the teaching posts were no longer to be open solely to adherents of the Established Church.

Moncrieff reminded the House that he had been urged by the opposition to deal with the parish schools separately and he hoped, by doing so and by, "altering some of its details", to make "some improvement in the present state of education in Scotland".¹²⁹ He also used the opportunity to express his strong agreement with those who felt that education should be treated as a non-partisan issue although, he added, he was unable to remember when "during the twenty-five or thirty divisions which had taken place last Session upon his Bill, it had been treated otherwise than as a party question".¹³⁰ The Lord Advocate concluded by declaring his intention "if the two Bills were received favourably" and "if the question on the tests raised by the first Bill was settled", of coming forward with a more final and

128 The burgh school legislation was never presented for discussion and, on 2 July 1856, The Scotsman reported that it had been withdrawn.

129 3 Hansard, CXLI, 8 April 1856, p. 664.

130 Ibid. Moncrieff also expressed the hope that, when the bill was passed in principle on second reading, that the opposition would not again "wage a protracted contest upon every clause".

comprehensive piece of educational reform legislation. But, he also made a pledge to the Church of Scotland and her allies; if the parochial schools legislation passed, "he did not propose to interfere further in their management, and any general management would be substantially confined to new schools and borough schools".¹³¹

The Scotsman, though it supported them, was not enthusiastic about the Lord Advocate's proposals:

They do not embody the principles nor meet the wishes of any party; but no section of the movement party has an obvious interest in resisting them, and the standstill party may well be deterred by the danger of refusing so small an installment of a debt so large and just.¹³²

In the House of Commons the reaction was similarly mixed among the allies of educational reform. A Scottish burgh member expressed his regret at the necessity of a piecemeal approach instead of "some really liberal and comprehensive system" and declared that "a general feeling prevailed in Scotland last year that the House had attached too much importance to the memorials of clerical combatants".¹³³ An English speaker, supporting educational reform, "thought that no reasonable fear could be entertained by the opposition that this was an attack on the Established Church of Scotland, and that it was only getting in the thin edge of the wedge, preparatory to an attack of a similar character in this country...".¹³⁴

131 Ibid., p. 667.

132 Scotsman, 16 April, 1856. Abolition of the tests, the paper thought, was "a change of moment and significance", and the other modifications would make the existing system "somewhat more tolerable".

133 3 Hansard, CXLI, 8 April 1856, p. 668.

134 Ibid., p. 673.

Such optimism could not have been much heightened, however, by the Scottish Tories' initial cautious and unresponsive reaction. One leading opponent of educational reform offered no comment beyond expressing approval that the Lord Advocate intended to take their advice of 1855 "to leave these parochial schools in pretty much the same position as they were at present",¹³⁵ and another, not only claimed, for the opposition, the credit for any improvements in the proposed legislation, but also expressed with a degree of redundancy his conviction that the "existing state of education in Scotland was in a very satisfactory state".¹³⁶ It quickly became obvious that the Tories would not accept any significant change in the constitution or management of the parish schools, certainly not such alterations as the abolition of the religious test for schoolmasters or the sharing of control with government inspectors. The Church of Scotland's legislative committee met and declared its "deep surprise and regret" at the Lord Advocate's introduction of such a bill and began to actively lobby against it".¹³⁷ Cumming Bruce told the House on 2 June that the abolition of the test was aimed directly "at the entire separation of the long connection which had existed between the parochial schools

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid., p. 674.

137 Church of Scotland, Parliamentary Committee, 14 April, 22 April, 2 July, and 29 July, 1856. The Scotsman noting the General Assembly's decision to petition against the bill, described the Church's policy as consisting of "standing in the way of public opinion till the latter is compelled to overleap or drive down the opposition it would fain have conciliated". 24 May 1856. Less than a third of the General Assembly delegates had voted on the question, however, and The Scotsman praised an "illustrious minority of three, who had the manliness to stand forth for truth and sense...". Ibid.

and the Established Church" and that the bill, if passed, would be a "heavy blow and great discouragement" to the Church.¹³⁸ Despite this familiar refrain, however, the bill received a second reading on 2 June without a division - an event which to The Scotsman seemed "a success almost too sudden and easy to be lasting".¹³⁹

The Scotsman also voiced the suspicion that the bill's progress had only been achieved in return for some behind-the-scenes concession - most likely by the Lord Advocate agreeing, as he had in 1855, to some sort of humiliating character certificate for the schoolmaster in place of the traditional religious test. When the matter arose in committee, however, Moncrieff held firm, declaring that such tests "were a stumbling-block to honest and conscientious men, while they were readily taken by the unconscientious".¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the Parochial Schools Bill emerged from the committee stage almost unaltered and received its third reading in the Commons on July 4th.

In the Lords, too, the bill seemed to make swift and satisfactory progress, receiving its second reading, without opposition, on July 11th. In reality, however, the hostility of the Scottish peers and their colleagues in the Lords to any significant change in the constitution of the parochial schools was undiminished and their apparent acceptance of the measure until it reached the committee

138 3 Hansard, CXLII, 2 June 1856, p. 889.

139 Scotsman, 4 June 1856. There was even a notable Tory defection on the vote. Sir James Ferguson of Ayreshire denounced the test as "unjust in principle and oppressive in practice". 3 Hansard, CXLII, 2 June 1856, p. 886. He also urged that the Church of Scotland, "by timely concession, obviate the necessity of future changes more sweeping and possibly, more dangerous". Ibid., p. 887.

140 3 Hansard, CXLII, 26 June 1856, p. 1991. An amendment to introduce such a requirement was defeated 107 to 51.

stage was merely a tactic aimed at securing improvements in the conditions of parish teachers without yielding any ground whatsoever to educational reform.¹⁴¹ When, on 14 July 1856, the Duke of Argyll expressed surprise at an amendment by the Duke of Buccleuch¹⁴² to strike the clause abolishing the traditional religious test for parochial schoolmasters, since the latter had not objected at second reading, Buccleuch defended himself by pointing out that the Scottish county members of the Commons had voted against the Bill by two to one and by claiming that the specified clause "was intended to afford an opportunity for substituting Free Church schoolmasters for masters who were members of the Established Church".¹⁴³ Despite protests from Panmure that this was not so and that to reject this clause was to reject the entire measure, Buccleuch's amendment was carried 50 votes to 20, the Scottish peers voting about 16 to 4 in its favour.

141 The Scotsman had earlier reported a meeting of the Scottish Tory Peers in London in June, which, under Buccleuch's leadership, had agreed "unanimously we believe", to oppose the abolition of the religious test for prospective schoolmasters. 11 June 1856. The Church of Scotland's Parliamentary Committee Minutes provide the explanation for delaying this opposition until the committee stage in the Lords. A deputation reported that the peers had decided it would be unwise to appear to oppose the suggested improvements in the schoolmasters' position contained in the bill, and, therefore, they would reserve their attack until a late stage and concentrate it entirely on the clause abolishing the test. 29 July 1856. Accordingly no opposition was offered until the second week in July, when "urgent summonses" were sent out to all the Scottish peers to ensure their attendance". Scotsman, 12 July, 1856.

142 Of Buccleuch The Scotsman gloomily observed that he was "singularly and unhappily...accepted as a sage, or almost as a dictator, in all Scotch affairs". 25 June, 1856.

143 3 Hansard, CXLIII, 14 July 1856, p. 731.

After several more alterations had been made in the legislation, Argyll declared that, in view of these changes, "the Bill could no longer be considered the Bill of the Government".¹⁴⁴ Buccleuch replied that the bill had been "brought in by the Government, and they must take care of it".¹⁴⁵

When the bill returned to the Commons the Lord Advocate "greatly deplored" the alterations that had been made in it. He rejected the imputation that the bill was designed to favour Free Church schoolmasters and urged the Commons to re-emphasize the principle that the parochial schools should not be the exclusive preserve of Church of Scotland teachers. Further, he charged that he had been offered a solution by the opposition the terms of which:

...would have had the effect of letting in all the Free Church teachers while it kept out others; but those terms he refused, so that there could be no pretense whatever for calling it a Free Church measure.¹⁴⁶

The Commons, of course, refused to accept the Lords' amendments and presented their reasons through Argyll to the other House. Argyll predicted that this state of affairs, if unresolved, would leave Scottish education to denominational effort which would exacerbate sectarian jealousies and that the Lord's failure to accept any reforms to improve and extend general education would arouse fresh resentment against "the great landowners of Scotland".¹⁴⁷ Buccleuch was unmoved. He was, he did not hesitate to state, proud of his role in maintaining

144 Ibid., p. 733.

145 Ibid.

146 Ibid., 21 July 1856, p. 1175.

147 Ibid., 24 July 1856, p. 1353.

the "great principle upon which the parish schools of Scotland were founded",¹⁴⁸ especially when presented with a measure which he viewed as "but the first step towards a direct attack on the Establishment".¹⁴⁹ The Lords rejected the Commons objections and the bill died. No direct change in the constitution of the parochial schools was to occur until 1861, and general educational Scottish reform was to be held in abeyance for more than a decade beyond that date.

Looking back, some thirty years later, James Moncrieff reflected on the parliamentary battles on the issue of educational reform and the arguments and tactics that had been used to block one legislative proposal after another:

In the days to which I have referred¹⁵⁰ a perfect barricade of vital questions was carefully reared between the people and their education, and on the discussion of these, many long and valuable years were consumed, and much eloquence was expended. What has become of them all? They have vanished like phantoms at sunrise. They have not been solved, but forgotten.¹⁵¹

Very often, so it then seemed to Lord Moncrieff, these "vital questions" had cloaked quite different issues and had concealed more mundane interests and motivations:

I am far from saying that all these discussions were unimportant in themselves; but their urgency was exaggerated, for the battle was often about ascendancy and privilege, not about education.¹⁵²

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid., p. 1354.

150 Though Moncrieff was writing of the late 1860's as well as the 1850's, his observations are particularly apt for the period discussed in this chapter - the 'fifties.

151 Moncrieff, Educational Retrospect, p. 4.

152 Ibid., p. 5.

Moncrieff had believed this at the time and had stated as much through the course of the debates of the 50's, though usually in more moderate terms, lest his comments obstruct the reasonable compromise he was seeking. Others had been less circumspect. In 1855, The Scotsman commenting on various inconsistencies in the opposition's position, such as, Episcopalian boards supporting a Presbyterian establishment; the Church of Scotland agreeing to let the Lord Advocate have the towns if he would just leave the country to it, and so on, had concluded:

Such things could not be done if it were not true, as we have often said..., that when people choose to give a religious name to their doings they may do almost any wrong or absurdity they have a fancy to, and need be in no great fear of those who...take the liberty of remarking that they are merely playing a game of political humbug.¹⁵³

In surveying the failure of the Parochial Schools Bill of 1856, the Scotsman emphasized the moral it had drawn several times before. "In the Bill of this year", it concluded, "conciliation had certainly reached its utmost limits". The results of these gestures would, it hoped, finally convince the Lord Advocate and others "that concession is mere waste of strength and time, and in this matter to go farther is the best chance of faring better".¹⁵⁴ Though it was more than a decade before this advice was taken seriously, the judgment made in 1856 about the role of the Parliamentary opposition to educational reform in the 1850's seems just. The history of the 1856 Bill, concluded the Scotsman showed that "the Scottish Tory

153 Scotsman, 5 May, 1855.

154 Ibid., 16 July, 1856.

members, or rather, the Scottish Tory Peers, are as obstinately opposed to the smallest alleviation of the present monopoly, as to its entire abolition".¹⁵⁵

155 Ibid., 23 July, 1856.

CONCLUSION

I

The conventional account of Scottish educational history through the period 1850 to 1872 is notable in two respects: firstly, its treatment of the major educational issues of the time is cursory; secondly, its approach to the development of mid-century Scottish education is uncritical. There is, to begin with, usually little or no reference to the intense national controversy in the early 1850's on the educational reform issue.¹ Somewhat more attention is paid to the Revised Code in the early 1860's and the generally unfavourable Scottish reaction to it, though most accounts seem somewhat unclear about exactly how the Code's regulations were applied in Scotland or what influence it had.

The few official alterations and developments of the period are similarly dealt with. The 1861 Act, which opened up the parochial schools for schoolmasters of all denominations and partially removed their management from the exclusive control of the Church of Scotland, is mentioned briefly. More space is

1 H. M. Knox in his Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Scottish Education writing about Horace Mann's report on education in Britain and Europe in the late 1840's, describes the nature and influence of his impressions of Scottish and English schools: "The pages dealing with Scottish schools, which he regarded as second only to those of Holland, are among the most amusing in pedagogic literature, although his editor considered that he had been too favourably impressed by what he had seen. On the English system - or the lack of it - he was, on the other hand, very severe, and his strictures no doubt stimulated a series of unsuccessful bills, designed to establish a better integrated educational system, which were introduced into parliament between 1850 and 1855". p. 31. No mention at all is made of the Scottish controversy and the impression is conveyed that Scottish education was progressing satisfactorily, while England struggled along with a chaotic system.

usually given to the Royal Commission which investigated Scottish education from 1864 to 1867 and made a number of recommendations for its reorganization.² The report was certainly the most extensive study of Scottish education ever made and, it is implied, its recommendations led directly to the major Scottish Education Act of 1872. Though it followed an equally important English Education Act by two years, most Scottish educational historians seem to feel that the 1872 Act was significantly distinctive from the English legislation of 1870 and that it preserved the essential traditional character of Scottish education while modernizing and rationalizing the system.

In short, one concludes from reading the standard versions that, generally speaking, satisfactory progress in Scottish education was made between mid-century and 1872. Those changes that were necessary were effected at the right time and for the right reasons. On the surface, it is true, that the period is a deceptively calm one certainly from 1856 to 1872.³ Below that surface, however, powerful forces were at work which were changing the shape and character of Scottish education in a number of significant and, it can be argued, detrimental ways. The conventional accounts of the period do not indicate this in any satisfactory fashion. Neither do they convey the moods of the

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- 2 The reasons given for the establishment of the Royal Commission vary in several accounts. For some it was the controversy over the Revised Code which prompted the government to set it up; for others, it was simply that the government felt it to be an appropriate stage at which to investigate Scottish education.
- 3 I find it difficult, however, to account for the omission of almost any reference to the turbulent years, educationally speaking, of 1850 to 1856.

period; the deep concern evinced by many Scotsmen for the educational development of their country. The sense of urgency and crisis of the 1850's, the subsequent frustration and apathy when all reform attempts failed, and, finally, the reluctant and gloomy resignation, when the future of Scottish education seemed charted in a direction considerably different from its past; all are missing from the Scottish educational history of this period.⁴

This thesis has attempted to identify and analyze the underlying trends which were influencing nineteenth century Scottish education and has examined, in considerable detail, the mid-century national education controversy and the failure of the attempts to reform the Scottish system. In the light of these themes, a very different picture, from that usually presented regarding the 1850's and 1860's, begins to emerge. This hypothesis would suggest that the 1861 Act, far from being a timely and sensible reform amicably agreed upon, was a grudging, minimal concession, wrung from an obdurate establishment-rural conservative alliance. Similarly, the Argyll Commission of the middle 'sixties, though undeniably a major investigation of Scottish education, would

4 Educational history, generally, has, until recent years, been rather isolated from other types of historical investigation and writing, and has suffered from what might be described as the "onward and upward" syndrome. Education is by nature and definition a rather hopeful enterprise and those involved in and committed to it - as most educational historians have been - are, perhaps understandably, loath to consider its past, present, or future pessimistically or even sceptically. Educational historians have also been hampered by writing about education as if it were removed from the general economic social and political developments of the times. In terms of Scotland, though some of the county histories of education have tried to relate education to wider developments in their areas, the most outstanding examples, so far, of educational history in a broad national context are L.J. Saunders in Scottish Democracy: 1815-1840 and G.E. Davie in The Democratic Intellect.

seem to be the last resort of a government and Lord Advocate unable to get any important Scottish educational legislation through Parliament and with no option but to mark time and hope that, at the very least, all the familiar evidence would be gathered into one overwhelming and irrefutable report. Finally, the 1872 Act, rather than standing as the culmination of mature Scottish political and educational judgement, seems to become more a measure considerably eroded by the passage of time and the effects of external influences, and severely buffeted by the winds of political expediency; the achievement of a new Lord Advocate absolutely determined, now that even an English education act had been passed, to get some sort of comprehensive legislation through a Parliament which, after two decades of discussion about the subject, was thoroughly tired of the Scottish education question.⁵

To conclusively substantiate the contention that the period from 1850 to 1872 was a period of stagnation and decline in Scottish education, at least in the sense that some of what was most positive and distinctive in the Scottish tradition of education was eroded and lost during those years, would require more intensive investigation than I have been able to devote to it and more space than a concluding thesis chapter affords. Nevertheless, it is possible to examine some of the evidence, in particular the shape and progress of the legislative proposals on the subject, which suggests that such a hypothesis is likely to provide a more coherent and fruitful approach to this phase

5 As one of its critics put it at the time, the 1872 bill was "a reckless but determined effort on the part of the government to get rid of troublesome question". Mr. Whamond in his presidential address to the E.I.S. Scotsman, 23 September 1872.

of Scottish educational history than the more typical views described above.

II

It should be reiterated, first of all, that, during the twenty-two years between Lord Melgund's legislative proposal to reform Scottish education in 1850, and Lord Advocate Young's successful Scottish Education Act of 1872, the Privy Council's educational system continued to extend its operation and influence in Scotland. Though the Revised Code's payment system was never applied north of the border, its principles and inspectoral procedures were, and these had a great effect on the conduct and atmosphere of Scottish schools.⁶ So too did the growing number of graduates from the Normal Schools and of holders of government examination certificates. That the Privy Council's overall influence tended to dilute the Scottish educational tradition is undeniable.

Another important factor to be considered is what seems to have been the gradual disintegration, through this period, of the broad liberal coalition which had supported educational reform along Scottish lines in the 1850's. The parliamentary debates of the late 'sixties and early 'seventies display much more confusion, inconsistency, and disagreement on the nature of the Scottish

6 The secretary of the Privy Council's Committee on Education told the Argyll Commission: "In Scotland it is only in operation to this extent - the schools are examined and inspected according to the Revised Code; but the grants are paid as they used to be under the system which existed previous to the Revised Code". Argyll Commission, 1865, p. 322.

educational tradition than had the mid-century, and a number of Scottish radicals seemed less sympathetic to it than did their Conservative colleagues. Moncrieff's bill of 1869, in fact, can be seen as the last distinctively Scottish educational reform proposal of the period. Lord Advocate Young's proposals of 1871 and 1872 were markedly different from that bill and, though they were distinctive from the English legislation on several significant grounds, in other important, perhaps vital, respects they departed radically from Scottish educational custom.

After the defeat of Lord Advocate Moncrieff's bill of 1856 there was a lull of several years. Though there were annual rumours of a pending Scottish Educational Bill, nothing further was done until 1861. The Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters' (Scotland) Act of that year, Moncrieff's only legislative success in education, somewhat reduced the control of the Church of Scotland and the heritors in the management of the parochial schools and, correspondingly, increased the role of the civil power. No longer was the candidate for parish school teaching post required to declare his faith in specifically Church of Scotland doctrines or his submission to her government and discipline, although he had to pledge himself to "never endeavour directly or indirectly to teach or inculcate any Opinions opposed to the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, or to the Doctrines contained in the Shorter Catechism". And though he was no longer completely subject to her authority, the schoolmaster had also to undertake not to "exercise the Functions of the said Office to the Prejudice or

or Subversion of the Church of Scotland ... or the Doctrines and Privileges thereof".⁷

As might have been expected, the Conservative opposition in Parliament charged that these rather limited changes "totally sacrificed" the fundamental basis of the parochial schools, and denounced the bill as "revolutionary" and "iniquitous".⁸ There were, however, some indications from the Church of Scotland alliance that the measure was recognized as a compromise favourable, if anything, to the establishment. The parish schoolmasters accepted its terms. William Knox told the Church of Scotland's Parliamentary Committee that, although it was not what the parochial teachers themselves would have put forward, they were willing to yield to it for the sake of some national agreement on the parochial schools and that they were "very desirous" of having the committee's support in this policy.⁹ Indeed, a special report to the Parliamentary Committee even pointed out that, though several traditional powers were removed from the minister and heritors, many were left unaltered. Moreover, a few new powers were granted to them.¹⁰

7 Parliamentary Papers, 1861, Vol. III, p. 720. The legislation created university boards of examiners to certify teachers, though their election to a parish post was left in the hands of the heritors and minister. Dismissal proceedings, still to be initiated in the traditional way, were to involve the inspector and the sheriff in supervisory and appeal capacities.

8 3 Hansard, CLIV, 25 July 1861, pp. 1467, 1468.

9 Church of Scotland, Parliamentary Committee, 5 March 1861. That support was refused.

10 For example, they could now remove an infirm or inefficient teacher with greater ease. See D. Smith, "Report as to the changes made by the Act 24 and 25 Victoria, 107, on the Powers of Ministers and of Presbyteries in regard to Parish Schools and Parish Schoolmasters". Register House, Ch. 1/S/94.

There were criticisms of the bill from the other side as well. Adam Black spoke strongly against its concessions to the established church and urged its defeat in the hope that a future ministry would be able to reform Scottish education "in a liberal spirit".¹¹ But the general feeling, both in Parliament and outside it, seemed to be that at least it was something. The Scotsman, though it agreed with liberal criticism of the bill, summed up this attitude:

But against these serious deficiencies, have to be set the hard and pressing facts, that all better Bills have failed and that year after year the existing state of things, instead of ripening or rotting for a more thorough remedy, is by the operation of the Privy Council grants, spreading and hardening - every year getting both worse and stronger, more sectarian and more powerful to resist any change towards nationalism.¹²

Nothing more than this, in fact, could be gained. A more general scheme presented in 1862 by the Lord Advocate was withdrawn by him when it became clear that the opposition would not relax their hostility to comprehensive educational reform and would fight the bill at every stage. After the passage of the 1861 Act, the opposition took the line that "legislation was inexpedient until the House is in possession of more accurate information on the subject of education in Scotland".¹³ Moncrieff, with considerable misgivings,¹⁴ yielded to this demand and announced the government's

11 3 Hansard, CLIV, 12 July 1861, p. 794.

12 Scotsman, 12 June 1861.

13 3 Hansard, CLXVI, 26 May 1862, p. 2195

14 The Lord Advocate expressed his agreement with those who believed that "the present opportunity might never recur of placing the whole system on a proper national footing", (p. 2194) and his fear that a lengthy official study would "embarrass the whole question". (p. 2195).

intention of setting up an official investigation of the whole situation.

This official investigation was conducted, in due course, by a Royal Commission which sat for three years under the chairmanship of the Duke of Argyll. Its voluminous reports did not contain anything very new for any of the parties to the national education dispute.¹⁵ By taking the unusual step of embodying its recommendations in the form of a draft bill at the end of its report, however, the Argyll Commission opened what was to be the final stage in the long struggle to reform Scottish national education. The Commission proposed a moderate, but unmistakably comprehensive and national, education system. As the report put it:

The conclusion at which we have arrived is, that by a judicious improvement of the Parochial or National Schools, and by taking advantage of the existing schools outside that system, combined with a reasonable modification of the rules on which the Privy Council grants are administered, and the extension of Government inspection, the existing schools may be rendered thoroughly efficient; and we also think that provision may be made under which these schools may all in time assume a national character.¹⁶

The parochial and voluntary denominational schools, then, were to be left under their traditional management. Those that were judged to be functioning satisfactorily and satisfying a real educational need would be eligible for aid from the central government, provided that they were open to government inspection and respected the consciences of those pupils who did not belong to their particular denomination.

15 See A. Nicolson, Recommendations of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Schools in Scotland: With the Text of the Proposed Education Bill (Edinburgh, 1867), for a complete description of the Argyll Commission.

16 Quoted in Nicolson, p. 22.

The Commission, however, believed that the combined efforts of the parochial and voluntary schools still left a large and serious educational deficiency:

Even then (i.e. with the new organization), however, it will be necessary, especially in large towns, to provide for the institution of new schools; and we have endeavoured to do so without proposing any sudden or violent changes in the framework of the existing system.¹⁷

These new schools, which would form the basis of the reformed national system, were to be established by an appointed Board of Education for Scotland representing the Scottish universities, urban and rural areas and the central government. It was this board which would decide whether an existing parochial or denominational school was necessary or redundant. On the basis of its investigations of each parish or burgh, the board would also decide where new schools were necessary and would establish them.

The new schools were to be managed by local school committees, elected by the ratepayers and landowners, and would be supported from a local rate assessment, as well as from the central government. It was here that the new national schools were to have an attractive advantage over the continuing parochial and denominational schools. The latter, because they retained their traditional management, would get no financial support from the local rates, but only from the central government. "This", said the Commission, "is the price which the managers and subscribers will pay for being allowed to retain the superintendence in their own hands".¹⁸ Provision was made, however, for the managers of the parochial and denominational schools to turn over their schools to the local committees, in which case of course, they surrendered their

17 Quoted in Nicolson, p. 22.

18 Quoted in Nicolson, p. 27.

superintendence, but their schools became eligible for local support. Moreover, in order to further discourage the continuation of the denominational system, any voluntary schools which were established after two years from the passage of such legislation, would not be eligible for either local or central financial aid.

Despite its broad powers the Scottish Board was not to replace the Privy Council. The latter was to continue to run the inspection system and administer the government's grants on the basis of the Revised Code, modified for application to Scotland. Altogether then, the Argyll Commission recommended the establishment of what could be termed a 'mixed national' educational system, operating over time in such a way that it would become gradually but surely less 'mixed' and more 'national'. It did not propose to overthrow the basic "payment by results" philosophy of the Privy Council's Revised Code, but it did want to see the Code altered to make it more suitable for Scotland.

One further important aspect of the Argyll Commission's recommendations is particularly relevant for this thesis. The commissioner's concluded that the life tenure arrangement enjoyed by the parish schoolmasters was "one great cause of the inefficiency, where it exists, in the Parochial schools".¹⁹ It, therefore, recommended that, although "careful provision against unjust or capricious dismissal" should be ensured, permanent tenure should

19 Quoted in Nicolson, p. 23. In view of the earlier discussions about tenure and dismissal, an examination of the evidence upon which the commission based this conclusion, and an analysis of the significance of the inefficiency thus caused, in relation to the whole parochial system, would seem to be interesting areas for further study.

be abolished and that all future appointments made at the pleasure of the school managers or committee.²⁰ The report, however, did not suggest how the protection it desired for the teacher was to be established under the new conditions, nor did its draft bill contain procedures for appeal or review of the cases of teachers dismissed by boards. This problem became a major issue of contention in the national education debate.

The Argyll Commission's recommendations and Lord Advocate Moncrieff's proposed legislation of 1869, which followed them closely, seemed calculated to attract as wide a basis of support as possible. The Scotsman's reaction to the latter showed the success of this tactic. While the bill was not so sweeping as advanced reformers would wish, the paper noted, it would eventually produce a "system founded on a popular and unsectarian basis, and possessing within itself the means of extension and adaptation to the growing wants of the population". Because of this, The Scotsman gave a "general and hearty concurrence in support of the measure"²¹

The progress of the 1869 bill was, however, extremely erratic and confused. Probably because of his chairmanship of the Commission, the government took the unusual step of having Argyll introduce the proposal in the Lords. His colleagues gave it a rough reception and made a number of serious alterations in it, the most crucial of which removed the prohibition on future denominational schools receiving Privy Council support. When the bill reached the Commons, Moncrieff managed to restore the bill to much of its former condition, without having to discuss the Lord's amendments, by re-committing it. To this parliamentary manoeuvre the opposition vigorously objected. Then the government managed to offend many of its own supporters by first resisting and then permitting a major amendment to the legislation as

20 Quoted in Nicolson, p. 23.

21 Scotsman, 1 March 1869.

it concerned the parochial system, the effect of which would be, as the Attorney General explained to the Commons, "that the parochial schools would no longer be included in the operation of the Bill, and no provision would be made for their conversion into national schools".²²

Some of the advocates of educational reform in the Commons were very disturbed by this turnabout. "Could this be called a national system?", asked one M.P.,²³ and another suggested that the legislation be re-titled "a Bill for encouraging a new system of sectarian schools in Scotland".²⁴ Lord Elcho, who, as he reminded the Lord Advocate, had been a strong ally in the reform efforts of the 1850's, compared the 1869 bill unfavourably with its predecessors and withdrew his support.²⁵ In its editorials The Scotsman bitterly criticized the amendments and hoped for the defeat of the "mangled bill".²⁶

Despite these difficulties the Lord Advocate struggled on, holding frequent meetings of the Scottish M.P.'s in the committee

22 3 Hansard, CXCVIII, 2 August 1869, p. 1096. It is very difficult to sort out this development. The original bill proposed the treatment of the parochial schools recommended by the Argyll Commission. Many Scottish M.P.'s seem to have been against this for reasons that are not clear. The solution then put forward by the government, apparently suggested by Duncan McLaren, was merely to return the management of the parish schools to their pre-1803 condition and do nothing else. The main importance of these proceedings, in terms of this discussion, is as evidence of government mismanagement of the bill, which did not improve its chances of success. Disraeli charged that the government's handling of the bill was having a very "injurious effect upon the conduct of other Public Business" and he described its conduct as "inconsistent", "incoherent", "capricious and vacillating", and "diametrically opposed on most important points from night to night". Ibid., 6 August 1869, p. 1374.

23 Ibid., 2 August 1869, p. 1096.

24 Ibid., 3 August 1869, p. 1229.

25 Ibid., 6 August 1869, p. 1338.

26 Scotsman, 4 August, 9 August 1869.

rooms,²⁷ and pushing the House as hard as he could through interminable wrangles. At last, the bill passed the third reading, without a division. It was not, in fact, without its merits. They were put best, perhaps, by Lyon Playfair who emerged during the course of this debate as the most articulate and knowledgeable defender of the Scottish educational tradition in Parliament.²⁸ Early in the debate Playfair made a speech in which he expressed strong support for the proposed Scottish Board of Education. He was greatly concerned to ensure that Scottish education be managed separately and in such a way as to protect its comprehensive character:

- 27 This prompted several critical reactions. One English M.P. saw it as the beginnings of the American caucus system (3 Hansard, CXCVIII, 3 August 1869, p. 1263), and another hoped that this would be the last time great Scottish social questions were settled by "a Scotch Parliament sitting in a committee room upstairs". Such issues, he went on "could not be settled by Scotchmen alone for Scotland alone. The whole Empire would be affected by what happened in Scotland. He, for one, would not consent that, whilst a social revolution was brewing in Scotland, English Members should sit still, without taking any part in the discussion, without attempting to check or control it, until it overflowed the Border and they were submerged. Ibid., 7 August 1869, p. 1464.
- 28 Dr. Lyon Playfair (1818-1898) was educated at a parish school in St. Andrew's and at that university and went on to get a Ph.D. in chemistry at a German university. He was active in the middle years of the century in university teaching and in advising the government on scientific matters. He became Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh in 1858 and a decade later he entered the Commons as a liberal member for the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews. While he represented them, according to the D.N.B. he "confined himself entirely to social and educational questions". (Vol. XXII, p. 1143). He became Baron Playfair of St. Andrews in 1892.

There is a peculiarity of Scotch education which requires the special consideration of any executive body charged with educational administration in Scotland. It separates so completely English elementary schools from those in Scotland, that in this peculiarity rests the justification and necessity for the creation of an educational body outside the ordinary organization of the Committee of Council.²⁹

Playfair was referring specifically to the inclusion of higher subjects in the curriculum of Scottish elementary schools. It was this feature which made these schools feeders for the universities and which made them an important means of social mobility. He was deeply suspicious, therefore, of the restrictive influence of the Revised Code's emphasis on the 3 R's. "This Bill brings us under Privy Council and the Revised Code," he told the House, "and you need not be surprised that we are nervously anxious that our scholars should not be deprived of their meat, while the inspectors look to the polish of the implements of education."³⁰

In response to Playfair's comments, the government went out of its way to emphasize its awareness of and sensitivity to the distinctive characteristics of Scottish education. W.E. Forster, the vice-president of the Privy Council's Committee on Education, concluded one of several statements he made to this effect, with these words:

He thought he ought not to sit down without stating - as there seemed to be a not unnatural jealousy of the Privy Council in the distribution of State aid in Scotland - that they were perfectly aware of the different circumstances of Scotland from England, and that they had no wish to thrust the Revised Code down the throats of Scotchmen.³¹

The Scottish Board of Education was one feature of the 1869 bill that the government steadfastly defended throughout its

29 3 Hansard, CXCVII, 12 July 1869, p. 1725.

30 Ibid., p. 1728.

31 Ibid., CXCVIII, 27 July 1869, p. 828.

progress, and Playfair responded by defending the bill, even in its severely amended state. He acknowledged that the government's concessions were "a sort of contradiction to the efforts of nationalizing our schools" and that the bill "abounds in compromises to the Churches and their schools".³² But he argued, since 1843 the development of Scottish education had been denominational to such an extent that it would be impossible to suddenly impose a "truly national system". What the proposed legislation did do was to give Scotland an "organization, efficient undenominational inspection, and a graduated scheme of adoption, which must before long end in a thoroughly national system."³³

Though this kind of support got the bill through the Commons, the Lords threw it out by a vote of 55 to 43. The Scotsman was amazed that the Scottish Tories had defeated the bill since it seemed to give them so much, a sentiment later echoed by the Lord Advocate himself:

I own to a certain amount of grim amusement when I remember how for that last vote in the Lords, enormous exertions were made by my opponents to destroy, although they knew it not, the last chance they were ever to have of retaining a single shred of their old influence over the parish schools.³⁴

The 1869 bill was to be James Moncrieff's last attempt to achieve Scottish educational reform. Over the course of almost twenty years, he had presented half-a-dozen legislative proposals to Parliament and had only enjoyed one limited success, the 1861 Act.

32 Ibid., 3 August 1869, p. 1235.

33 Ibid.

34 Moncrieff, Educational Retrospect, p. 14.

III

The 1869 bill was, in several respects, the last legislation of its kind. It was, in conception and general outline, more similar to the first bill of 1854 than either were to the bills of 1871 and 1872. The latter were both more complete and systematic than their predecessors, but, at the same time, I would argue, significantly less Scottish in spirit. Lord Advocate Young, to whom the honour fell of finally piloting a major Scottish education act through Parliament had a considerably different approach to the task than had Moncrieff, less sympathetically attuned to the distinctive national subtleties of the Scottish educational tradition, more determined to force through an efficient, utilitarian reform of the school system of Scotland, regardless of charges that such a measure was an Anglicizing influence.³⁵

The general provisions of Young's bills of 1871 and 1872 are quite well known, the passage of the latter having made it a

35 George Young (1819-1907) was educated at Dumfries Academy and Edinburgh University, and began a brilliant legal career in 1838. He was elected to Parliament in 1865, a seat he held until 1874. He became Lord Advocate in 1869 and quickly established a reputation for administrative ability and somewhat ruthless efficiency. His obituary in The Scotsman described his handling of Scottish business in Parliament as "autocratic and masterful". The contrast between himself and Moncrieff as Lord Advocates was also evident in the courtroom. As two of the leading advocates in Scotland, they often found themselves on opposite sides of a case, where, the D.N.B., says of Young, "his cool logic was often more than a match for the eloquence of Moncrieff". Second Supplement, 1901-1911, p. 721.

major landmark in Scottish educational history.³⁶ The overall management of Scottish education was to be vested in a department of the Privy Council's Committee on Education, to be called the Scotch Education Department (Hereafter referred to as S.E.D.) and to be located in London. The S.E.D. was to administer and supervise the Parliamentary grants to Scottish education, inspect the schools, and devise and conduct certificate examinations for Scottish teachers.

Local school management was to be in the hands of district school boards, elected by the local ratepayers. Their authority was to supersede the authority of the heritors and ministers, in the case of the parochial schools, and of the town councils in the case of burgh schools. The last vestiges of exclusive Church of Scotland control would be thus erased.³⁷ The school boards were to levy a local assessment to finance the schools under their jurisdiction, necessary additional funds to be supplied by the S.E.D. As for denominational schools, they were to remain eligible for grants from the S.E.D., but not for support from the local assessment. School boards would be empowered to accept the transference, under specified conditions, of denominational and other privately managed schools.

Neither of the bills mentioned religious education. As Young put it, the "matter would be left to the people themselves by

36 The two bills were very similar. The 1872 version, to which most references here are made, can be found in the Parliamentary Papers, 1872, Vol. I, p. 519; (Commons' Amendments) p. 595; (Lords' Amendments) p. 635.

37 The bill read that "all jurisdiction, power or authority possessed or exercised by Presbyteries or other church courts with respect to any public schools in Scotland, are hereby abolished". Ibid., p. 519, Clause 20.

by the simple expedient of saying nothing about it".³⁸ Nor did the bills have much to say about schoolmasters. One of the great aims of the legislation, according to the Duke of Argyll in 1872, "was to establish free relations between the employers and the employed". Parochial teachers in office at the time of the passage of the bill were to retain their traditional security and privileges, but subsequent parochial appointments and all other teachers were to receive no protection at all - not by statute at any rate. The legislation stated that teachers were to hold office at the pleasure of the local boards.

No minimum or maximum salary levels were set and it was left entirely up to the local boards as to whether they would allow the schoolmaster to keep the fees he earned, whether they would provide him with a house or living allowance, or whether they would provide retiring teachers with a pension. A government certificate, examined and issued by the S.E.D. was to be required of all candidates for teaching posts, though a university degree would earn some reduction in examination requirements.

It will be noted that in its main features the Lord Advocate's bills of 1871 and 1872 accomplished several things that most Scottish educational reformers had been urging for twenty years or more. First, they removed the parochial schools entirely from the restricted control of the Church of Scotland and the rural landowners. Secondly, they discouraged the extension and continuation of the denominational schools, without prohibiting them outright, by excluding them from local rate support. Moreover, the legislation

38 3 Hansard, CCIX, 12 February 1872, p. 261. All schools accepting government grants had to respect the religious views of other denominations by means of a conscience clause.

39 Ibid., CCXI, 12 July 1872, p. 1025.

significantly liberalized the management of all the schools it brought under the control of the civil power. Finally, the bills left the conduct of religious education entirely in the hands of local communities, just as many reformers had long advocated.

In two very important respects, however, the proposals of 1871 and 1872 departed considerably from what had been the mainstream of nineteenth-century Scottish educational reform. For the first time, they placed the administration and supervision of Scottish education directly under the Privy Council's Committee on Education and did not provide for a national policy body located in Scotland. They also treated the Scottish teacher in an entirely novel way, removing all statutory regulations - except for the necessity of holding a government certificate - from his conditions of work.⁴⁰

If the bills of 1871 and 1872 were significantly different from their predecessors, so too were the debates which accompanied them. It seems, for one thing, much more difficult to sort out the political affiliations and motivations of the participants than it does for the debates of the 1850's and 1860's. Previously, when attacking educational legislation as unpatriotic, godless and despotic, the Conservative Scottish county M.P.'s had been isolated

40 It must be acknowledged at once that the great majority of Scottish teachers did not enjoy the guaranteed income, independent position, and other advantages of the parochial schoolmasters. Nevertheless, as has been emphasized above, the position occupied by the parish teachers had a great symbolic importance and influence. Other school managers were influenced by its standards in dealing with their own teachers and previous bills had contained modified features of the parochial arrangements for all teachers. The complete absence of such provisions in the 1870's bills, made them markedly different.

as the spokesmen for narrow ecclesiastical and political interests and as reactionary obstacles to the preservation and strengthening of the Scottish educational tradition. In the 'seventies, Young's bills gave them the opportunity to make a reasonably convincing appearance as the defenders of that national tradition. They repeated their familiar arguments against the proposals, but they also seized on the absence of general Scottish management and the unsympathetic treatment of the teachers with enthusiasm and made much of the running in pressing these criticisms.

On the government side, the picture is even more confusing. From the outset the Lord Advocate revealed his absolute determination, particularly in 1872, to get the bill through and he, together with W.E. Forster, presented and defended the bill vigorously.⁴¹ Most of the Scottish Liberals said very little, a fact of which the opposition made mention, accusing the Lord Advocate of keeping his supporters tightly reined.⁴² Several of the more radical of Young's supporters fully endorsed those principles of the bill that seemed farthest from the Scottish educational tradition. Duncan McLaren, for one, was outspoken in

41 As Young's former secretary later recalled: "That Act was the work of one man alone and unaided. He drafted every line of it with his own hand ... and no Bill of that magnitude ever passed through both Houses of Parliament with such trifling additions or alterations". A.C. Sellar, Scotch Educational Progress: 1864-1887 (Glasgow, 1887), p. 5. I think Forster probably had a considerable part in the formulation of the bill. but Sellar's estimate of Young's role and influence is pretty accurate.

42 I think the charge had some strength. There are some indications that some Scottish M.P.'s were more uneasy about the bill than was evident in the debates and that the Lord Advocate exerted considerable pressure to keep them in line. One would want to know a good deal more about the private opinions of Liberal Members from Scotland on the bill before one could accurately assess their mood.

in his support of the "payment by results", direct parliamentary responsibility for government educational expenditures, and market economy doctrines which characterized the legislation. He opposed the establishment of a Scottish Board of Education⁴³ and expressed complete faith in the power of the forces of supply and demand to protect competent teachers.⁴⁴ Those Scottish Liberal M.P.'s who did have serious misgivings, most notably Lyon Playfair, were in a difficult position, caught between their commitment to achieving real reform after the years of unproductive debate, and their unease about the motivations of their new found Tory allies.

Compared to other years there was relatively little discussion of the treatment of the parochial schools or the problems of religious education. On the latter, indeed, most of the discussion was carried on by English members who managed, over the opposition of most Scottish M.P.'s, to insert a preamble, declaring the desirability of continuing the traditional custom of religious

43 In 1869 McLaren's opposition to a Scottish Board, combined with his suggestion that the parochial schools be dropped from the legislation, caused The Scotsman to exclaim indignantly that "some people seem to have forgotten who they are, what they are, and from what rock they were hewn, or what pit they were digged". 10 August 1869.

44 As he declared at one point, "when good men were got there was always a desire to keep them. The same rule applied to railways, municipal offices and partnerships". 3 Hansard, CCXI, 13 June, 1872, p. 1701.

instruction in Scottish schools.⁴⁵ Other than this, the government yielded no other changes on these issues.

It was the questions of the control of Scottish educational policy and of the treatment of Scottish teachers that received the most attention and provoked the bitterest controversy in the debates on the bills of 1871 and 1872. Much of the discussion on these two issues was, moreover, in terms of the extent to which their handling in the proposed legislation did or did not constitute an Anglicizing influence on the Scottish educational tradition. From the outset, widespread concern was expressed from both sides of the House as to the personnel, duties and location of the Scotch Education Department. "For anything that appeared,"

45 The overall majority in support of the preamble was only 7, the Scottish M.P.'s voting 38 to 12 against it and the non-Scots 204 to 171 in favour. Outside Parliament the most notable renegade from the educational reform cause was James Begg, who bolted on the religious issue. The Scotsman found this switch "utterly unaccountable on any national or even public ground" (8 March 1872) and Professor Blackie accused Begg of opposing in 1872 what he had led in agitating for in 1850. Not at all, replied Begg, "for whilst at that time it was mere separation that was being urged - no one proposing to leave religious instruction unprovided for - now it is proposed that secular instruction shall be provided for by compulsion, whilst religious instruction is treated with contempt, and no security is afforded that it may not be wholly neglected or set aside". Recent Educational Struggles in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1872), p. 15. See also The Duke of Argyll's Bill on National Education Considered (Edinburgh, 1869) National Education (Edinburgh, 1871). It is worth noting that while Begg's primary objection to the bills of 1869, 1871 and 1872 was on religious grounds, he bitterly attacked them on national grounds as well. In 1869 he wrote: "Let the machinery be purely Scottish and open to public inspection; and, whilst we get our fair share of Government money, so long as Parliamentary grants are made, let the Privy Council be excluded altogether from Scotland, and let the Revised Code and all other alien codes and cumbrous appliances be sent to the tomb of the Capulets. Let the teachers be properly selected, maintained in an honourable position and, whilst amenable to fair discipline, guarded from undue interference. Let attendance on school be made indirectly compulsory. Let all this be honestly done ... and the country may be expected to flourish ... But if measures are persisted in, complex and cumbrous, conceived in a hard grasping spirit, fitted to secularize education, degrade teachers and lead to interminable complications and disgusts on the part of the people, we need not imagine that any good will be secured". Duke of Argyll's Bill, pp. 6-7.

observed one member in 1871, "it might be that the proposed Scotch Education Department would consist of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the English Department (i.e. W.E. Forster) and the Lord Advocate, sitting with or without appropriate national costume".⁴⁶ What was wanted, the same speaker declared the following year, was some "institution distinctly Scotch in its constitution ... to be interposed between the Privy Council in London and the Scotch school boards and schools, with the view to maintaining the Scotch standard of education".⁴⁷ With this sentiment many, perhaps most, of the Scottish M.P.'s agreed.

The most telling critic of the government bills of 1871 and 1872, as he had been in 1869, was Lyon Playfair. He could not be dismissed as a rural reactionary; indeed he welcomed the general shape and intention of the proposed legislation and, in 1871, congratulated the Lord Advocate on having, on the whole, "grappled with the difficulties boldly and with knowledge".⁴⁸ He was emphatic in his support of the bills' approach to the religious problem and in his denunciation of ecclesiastical rivalry as the main obstacle to Scottish educational progress over the previous quarter of a century. But he was, nevertheless, deeply concerned about the nature of the Scotch Education Department and whether it would be merely a "mythical" body or a real force capable of aiding the vice president of the Privy Council "not only in preserving but also in extending the peculiarities of education" in Scotland.⁴⁹ "If I felt confidence on this point," Playfair declared, "I would hail this

46 3 Hansard, CCIV, 27 February 1871, p. 972.

47. Ibid., CCIX, 7 March 1872, p. 1562.

48 Ibid., CCIV, 13 February 1871, p. 214.

49 Ibid., 27 February 1871, p. 965.

Bill as a great boon to my country".⁵⁰

On this occasion, however, in contrast to 1869, the government did not go out of its way to reassure such fears by declaring its awareness of and sympathy towards Scottish custom. Indeed, the Lord Advocate told the House that he did not "exactly understand what was meant by an expression which had been very frequently used by his hon. and learned Friend, 'the peculiarities of the Scotch system of education'"⁵¹ In any case he found this concern about the Scottish control of education puzzling, he said, since there would be "plenty of school boards, and everyone of which would be charged with the duty, within its own district, which was proposed to be conferred on the Central Board at Edinburgh by the Bill of 1869 with respect to the whole of Scotland".⁵²

By 1872 Playfair's suspicions had hardened and he delivered a scathing attack on the bill. The Lord Advocate, he charged was "determined to Anglicize our Scotch schools in every possible way" and he described the three bills of 1869, 1871 and 1872 as "successive steps in the Anglicizing and lowering of Scotch elementary education"⁵³ The 1869 Bill was the best of the three, according to Playfair, for while it brought the schools fully under the Privy Council system, it had provided some protection for the Scottish tradition with a national board in Edinburgh, and a modification of the Revised Code. In 1871 the national board had disappeared with the invention of the Scotch Education Department, and in 1872, the "last shadow of protection" had been destroyed, since only elementary subjects

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., p. 986.

52 Ibid., p. 987.

53 Ibid., CCIX, 7 March 1872, p. 1590.

would be paid for under the Code.⁵⁴ The Lord Advocate had remarked earlier that the higher subjects had been taught in Scottish schools, only at the expense of the elementary ones, a view Playfair challenged. In fact, he claimed, "the life and vigour thrown into a school by its higher subjects pervades every part of it ..."⁵⁵ Even if the higher subjects were paid for, however, the Lord Advocate's elimination of graded salaries for teachers to accompany the graded certificates, removed all incentive for schoolmasters and would produce a race of teachers unqualified to teach them. Young and Forster virtually admitted that the S.E.D. would consist mainly of themselves and while he held them in considerable personal esteem, "neither of them has that inner faith in the advantages of a Scotch system that induces me to put unreservedly into their hands the unknown future".⁵⁶

Playfair concluded his lengthy speech⁵⁷ by calling on his colleagues for their support, in the national interest:

This Bill is the testament by which the Scotch Members of Parliament of this generation will be judged by posterity. Let us support it in its excellences, but try to remove its defects before it acquires the force of law.⁵⁸

It is evident that Playfair's concern struck a responsive chord with many of the Scottish M.P.'s which the Lord Advocate's

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., p. 1585.

56 Ibid., p. 1591.

57 "I have spoken," he said, "much more at length than I am accustomed to in this House; but you must recollect that this is a question of supreme importance to Scotland." Ibid., p. 1595.

58 Ibid.

somewhat vague reassurances did little to mute.⁵⁹ The demand for an independent Scottish governing authority, located north of the border, increased both inside and outside Parliament. Indeed, in June an amendment proposing such a board was introduced and looked highly likely to succeed. Even Duncan McLaren reported that despite his personal opinion against such a body, "he now found that at least nine-tenths of the people of Scotland were in favour of the establishment of a Scotch Board at Edinburgh, and, in deference to that opinion, therefore, he should support the amendment".⁶⁰ Faced with the prospect of defeat, the Lord Advocate, who had given no previous indication of yielding to such demands, suddenly accepted a suggestion to establish a temporary Scottish commission, to sit in Scotland, and to assist in the establishment of the new system. It was not much - one critic warned the Scottish M.P.'s against being taken in, fobbed off with what he described as a powerless, "phantom Board"⁶¹ but it was enough. This concession was welcomed by many and even Playfair announced that, though he was still suspicious of the S.E.D., he would vote with the government, in the hope that the Lord Advocate would maintain a conciliatory attitude and would "accept other amendments".⁶² In fact, Young seems to have given very little away

59 The bill did not, he pointed out, prevent local school boards from paying higher salaries to teachers with higher certificates thus preserving the higher subjects. Of course, he acknowledged, there were differences in Scottish and English education and these would be fully taken into account by Forster and himself when devising the Scottish regulations.

60 Ibid., CCXI, 3 June 1872, p. 1065.

61 Ibid., 1069.

62 Ibid., 1078. The proposal for an independent, permanent Scottish board was defeated by a comfortable majority.

with the establishment of the temporary board and did nothing during the rest of the bill's progress to fulfill Playfair's hopes of further conciliation. Indeed, just prior to the final reading of the legislation, Playfair was still seeking "some assurance as to the composition of the Scotch Education Department", on behalf of many Scottish petitioners who had urged that "the national characteristics of Scotch education should be preserved".⁶³

The other provisions in Lord Advocate Young's bills which created almost as much controversy as the ones concerned with the control of Scottish education, were those dealing with the relations between the local school boards and their schoolmasters. It was the Argyll Commission which had first suggested abolishing the traditional statutory tenure regulations governing parochial teachers;⁶⁴ the bills of 1871 and 1872 pursued the implications of this alteration into every aspect of the schoolmasters' conditions of work. Certainly, the treatment accorded the teacher in these measures constituted a marked departure from the ideals, if not always the practice, of the Scottish educational tradition. Again

63 Ibid., CCXII, 30 July 1872, p. 178.

64 The Commission's main concern, of course, had been the difficulty these regulations provided in the removal of allegedly 'inefficient' teachers. One could argue that this concern indicated a kind of creeping Anglicization through the operation and influence of the Privy Council's system and attitude, the cumulative effect of the Newcastle Commission and the Revised Code. I suspect that there would be something in this contention, but the Argyll Commission was, after all, composed of Scotsmen. For the Duke himself the efficiency/tenure issue seems to have been almost an obsession. In 1872, he went so far to tell the Lords, that although the immense growth of the population partly accounted for the inadequacy of the old parochial system, "the main cause of its failure was owing to the irremovability of the schoolmasters". Ibid., CCXII, 5 July 1872, p. 685.

it was Lyon Playfair who best expressed the objections to the bills on this score. The Lord Advocate's approach magnified the importance of the school managers "who count for very little", and deprecated the importance of the teachers, "who count for very much in a school". Instead of "cultivating the individualities and excellences of schoolmasters, this Bill treats them as it would not treat traders",⁶⁵ Playfair charged. Even Adam Smith, he pointed out to the Lord Advocate had relaxed his allegiance to pure market forces when it came to educational matters.

Every attempt to improve the position of the schoolmaster failed, however. In committee, for example, after other M.P.'s had unsuccessfully attempted to insert provision for minimum and maximum salary scales in the bill, Playfair introduced a carefully worded amendment which would have required local boards to pay specified sums for each certificate level; not less than £10 to a teacher with the lowest grade certificate, not less than £50 to a teacher with the highest. His object, he said, was "to retain for Scotland the advantages of its present certification system, without preventing the Government from adopting the Revised Code in future, for I bow to the inevitable"⁶⁶; Playfair argued that the qualifications of teachers under the Revised Code in England had steadily deteriorated, and again in national terms, contended that the amendment would help to "maintain the characteristics of Scotch education" and to "prevent one uniform Anglicizing of our schools, regardless of our national peculiarities formed by the experience of centuries, and which ought not to be thrust aside by the 12 months' experience which England has had of a national system".⁶⁷

65 Ibid., CCIX, 7 March 1872, p. 1592.

66 Ibid., CCXI, 11 June 1872, p. 1622. My underline.

67 Ibid., p. 1626.

Lord Advocate Young, however, would have none of it, terming the amendment, an unwarranted interference "with the just rights of schoolmasters and school boards to make their own bargains".⁶⁸ The amendment was defeated.

The same attitude was apparent in the Lord Advocate's explanation of why he opposed any attempt to protect the schoolmaster from arbitrary dismissal by providing for appeal or review procedures. There were, he acknowledged, educational advantages in life tenure arrangements, but these were greatly outweighed by the disadvantages. The government, however, had been unable to find "any satisfactory ground between the two extremes of holding office during pleasure and conferring a freehold".⁶⁹ He had, he admitted, considered the possibility of an appeals procedure, but Forster "had convinced him that a Government Department could not satisfactorily interfere between a school board and its teachers".⁷⁰ He expected that the school boards would be fair and, in any case, he concluded, "to give the masters a right to appeal would hardly tend to the smooth working of the system".⁷¹

68 Ibid., p. 1628.

69 Ibid., 13 June 1872, p. 1703.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., p. 1704. Forster himself gave three main reasons for opposing appeal procedures: first, local school boards must be responsible for their schools in all respects; second, "it was most important that the master should feel that his position depended upon his merits as shown by results"; third, that it would be expensive. These views, he said, were based on "the experience he had gained from the working of the English Education Act and from a study of education". Ibid., pp. 1706-1707.

The Duke of Argyll, the government's spokesman on the bill in the House of Lords, confidently asserted that the bill of 1872 was built on a solid Scottish foundation:

But the more they looked at the Bill the more they would see that the edifice it proposed to raise was an edifice raised on the lines of the ancient Scottish system, with no other changes in it than those which were required by the changed condition of society and the changed relationship of the Churches to that society.⁷²

Against that description can be set Lyon Playfair's pessimistic view that the bill failed "to grasp the characteristics of Scotch education and will seriously deteriorate its quality".⁷³ The legislation, he believed, should be titled not, "a Bill for promoting Scotch education", but rather "a Bill for extending low elementary English education throughout Scotland".⁷⁴

Which of these contrasting views of the nature and potential influence of the Scottish Education Act of 1872 is more accurate, could only be decided with a large degree of certainty, on the basis of intensive examination and evaluation of its operation in the post-1872 period. Certainly the problem seems a worthwhile topic of further study. Yet, even on the basis of the limited evidence presented and discussed here - the mid-century failure of educational reform, its aftermath of inaction and frustration during the late 1850's and 1860's, the issues which were raised concerning the bills of 1869, 1871 and 1872 - I would expect Playfair's view to be confirmed. The Act of 1872 seems to me to have been based, to a greater degree than previous legislative proposals on the subject, on ideas about education and, indeed, about society, more characteristic of England

72 Ibid., CCXII, 5 July 1872, p. 687.

73 Ibid., CCIX, 7 March 1872, p. 1586.

74 Ibid., p. 1591.

than Scotland. Moreover, a number of the provisions it contained could not have had anything but a deteriorating effect on several important aspects of the Scottish educational tradition.

IV

For most Scottish teachers, particularly those who were members of the Educational Institute of Scotland, the 1872 Act provided bitter evidence of the low esteem in which they were held. To be sure, tributes to the schoolmasters had been both plentiful and fulsome during the course of the debates on the legislation. Some of these expressions of sympathy and support were sincere enough, but the teachers might have been forgiven their scepticism had they wondered at the motivation of some of their defenders and the use that was being made of their plight.⁷⁵ To the Institute, in fact, the words of the Duke of Argyll would have seemed the truer voice of prevailing opinion. "He did not know," remarked Argyll, discussing a proposal for a board of examiners one member of which was to represent the E.I.S., "that the Educational Institute of Scotland ...

75 Even the Archbishop of Canterbury intervened on their behalf to point out that, it "was an error ... to suppose that the social position of the Scotch schoolmaster or nearly so with that of the English schoolmaster". *Ibid.*, CCXII, 12 July 1872, p. 1013. Sir James Elphinstone rather condescendingly placed his own interpretation on the schoolmasters' hostility to the proposed legislation. "The Bill was opposed by the whole body of schoolmasters in Scotland", he stated, "with a proper esprit de corps and a due respect for religion". *Ibid.*, CCXI, 6 May 1872, p. 322.

was a body that commanded any great amount of respect.⁷⁶ The assessment was another painful reminder of how far short of the hopes and objectives of its founders the Institute had fallen. In 1850 it had been a vital, growing organization, confident that it would play an influential role in the educational development of Scotland; in 1872 it was beleaguered, though still defiant, isolated and without influence, forced to concentrate its energies on trying to defend the occupational interests of its members.

The combined failure, in the early 1850's, of the Institute either to achieve an officially sanctioned licensing power or to formulate and promote a coherent, united policy on national education, dealt the Institute a severe blow.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, it did not abandon its attempts to play a constructive role in Scottish education, despite the fact that each such attempt failed. Teacher education, for example, was a subject of continuing concern to the Institute. Worried about the influence of the pupil-teacher and normal school system on the Scottish custom of at least a term or two of attendance at the university, the E.I.S., as early as 1854, suggested the establishment of university chairs in education. A

76 Ibid., CCXII, 16 July 1872, p. 1227. This comment must have been particularly demoralizing for it was Argyll, himself, who in the 1869 bill had included an E.I.S. representative on the Board of Education for Scotland. "I think it also necessary," he said at the time, "that the schoolmasters, who are on the whole a most respectable and intelligent body, and have done excellent service, and will be able to supply valuable information, should likewise have a voice" Ibid., CXCIV, 25 February 1872, p. 288. When this proposal ran into stiff opposition, however, Argyll was quick to yield: "I have a strong opinion on the subject; but if the House should think that the parochial teachers are not of a sufficient importance to have a representative on the Board, I am not wedded to my own plan." Ibid., 19 March 1869, p. 1778.

77 See above, Chapters 6 and 7.

formal overture to the government, on the subject, was coldly rebuffed⁷⁸ in 1855; protracted discussions, in the late 1850's, with the trustees of a large bequest, designated for educational and charitable purposes, came to naught; and a memorial to the University Commissioners in 1859 received little response⁷⁹ Chairs of education were not established in Scottish universities until the mid-seventies.

Similarly the E.I.S. took a strong interest in the problem of the relationship of the parochial and burgh schools to the universities. Leonhard Schmitz had discussed the issue at the Institute's first general meeting in 1848 and others added their views as time went on.⁸⁰ In the 1860's the Glasgow local association led in a careful study of the problem which led to a

- 78 R.R. W. Lingen informed the Institute: "With regard to the foundation of Professor's Chairs at one of the Scotch universities for the delivery of lectures on the Principles of Education, the Lord President desires me to state that the Government contributes largely to the maintainance of two training colleges for teachers in Edinburgh, and for two others in Glasgow, and that provision appears to my Lords to be sufficient at present for the class of schools under inspection by this Committee". E.I.S., Minute Book, II (1854), p. 183.
- 79 The memorial presented a carefully argued case that university involvement in Education would be solidly in the Scottish tradition and would improve the quality of the teachers significantly. The E.I.S. saw the chairs of education as being "to the Normal School, what the Chair of Medicine and Surgery is to the Hospital." Ibid., p. 319.
- 80 See for example William Brunton's paper to the Social Science Association in 1861, "State of Intermediate Education in Scotland". Transactions, 1861.

recommendation for the institution of entrance examinations for the Arts faculties. The Institute sent 200 copies of a well documented petition to the four Scottish universities in 1864, but nothing further seems to have been done.

In terms of educational legislation, while the Institute had decided to refrain from declaring an overall opinion of any particular bill, all its members believed that it was imperative for the E.I.S. to scrutinize and evaluate each legislative proposal as it directly affected Scottish teachers. In 1856, on a joint motion from James Bryce and William Knox a Standing Committee on Educational Legislation was established which subsequently performed this function.⁸¹ While most of the recommendations of this committee, and the suggestions it forwarded to the Lord Advocate and Members of Parliament, dealt with the provisions directly concerning teachers,⁸² it occasionally declared itself on slightly wider issues such as the establishment of intermediate schools or the protection of children from employment exploitation.

The attempt to offer constructive recommendations was extended in 1861, when, besides its usual suggestions, the Institute endorsed the Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters Bill, on the grounds that it

81 In 1854 and 1855 there had been a temporary committee struck for the purpose. Bryce served on it until 1861 and Knox seems to have been a member right up to 1872.

82 The E.I.S. consistently advocated the following points: (1) Institute representation on any general national board of education; (2) recognition of the E.I.S. as the (or an) official licensing body for Scottish teachers; (3) ex officio membership of teachers on local school boards; (4) life tenure for all teachers; (5) adequate appeal procedures for dismissed teachers; (6) a minimum salary of at least £50 (with a $\frac{1}{8}$ pension); (7) the recruitment of inspectors from amongst teachers. The closest the E.I.S. ever got to a real success was in 1856 when a bill containing a clause which recognized both an Institute diploma and a Privy Council certificate as a pre-requisite for teaching. The clause, along with many others, was amended by the Lords and the bill was defeated.

it provided for "both the improvement of the position of the Parochial Schoolmasters, and the opening up of the Schools to Teachers of other Denominations besides the Church of Scotland".⁸³ In 1864, the E.I.S. even managed to formulate a general policy on the shape of a desirable national education bill, for presentation to the Argyll Commission, though not without some indications that the old basic division of opinion still existed.⁸⁴ Still, agreement upon such a comprehensive proposal was a notable step forward. The events of the 1860's, however, completely destroyed the attempts of the Educational Institute, and of teachers generally, to pursue positive, constructive policies. These events put the Scottish schoolmasters' traditional position and status at such risk that the Institute had of necessity to adopt a negative, defensive attitude and to speak out far more often against things than for them.

The first of these events, of course, was the introduction of the Revised Code into Scotland in 1862. From its inception Scottish schoolmasters opposed the Code and actively lobbied for its

83 E.I.S., Minute Book, II (1861), p. 351.

84 Objection was made to William Knox's proposed preamble: "That in establishing any new system of schools, the present constitution of the parochial schools should remain untouched". Ibid., (1864), p. 462. The preamble stood and the rest of the presentation went on to recommend a comprehensive elementary and secondary system, financed by government grants and local rates, managed by local elected school committees, the whole to be overseen by a general national board composed of 4 government appointments, 4 university representatives and 4 teachers elected by the E.I.S. Teachers were to enjoy the same tenure conditions as the parish schoolmasters, receive a minimum of £60 salary, be able to appeal dismissal to the national board, and, after 1870, have attended a university.

suspension and repeal⁸⁵ As has been discussed previously in this thesis the Revised Code was based on educational and social philosophies more appropriate, or at least familiar, to England than to Scotland. Scottish schoolmasters found the Code's narrow and minimal definitions of both the content and results of teaching offensive. The teachers who appeared before the Argyll Commission were outspoken in denunciation of the Code's influence.⁸⁶ Perhaps the best statement of the schoolmasters' objections to the Revised Code was contained in a petition the E.I.S. organized in 1867 and presented to the government in 1868. It read:

While your petitioners would hail with satisfaction any sound system of examination by which the progress of individual pupils may be tested, they have at the same time a strong conviction, confirmed by experience of its workings, that the Revised Code is founded on principles which can never be fairly applied; that it interferes perniciously with the proper classification of scholars, and with the system of instruction which has hitherto been pursued with success in Scotland; and that if carried out, it cannot fail to prove disastrous to the progress of education.⁸⁷

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- 85 The Kirkcaldy Local Association, for example, conducted a discussion of the "New Revised Code of the Council's Committee on Education shewing its injustices, impractability and absurdity" in 1861 and, 1863, petitioned, to the Lord Advocate, "against the Introduction of the Revised Code into Scotland and in favour of a National System of Education". Minutes of Kirkcaldy Association, 26 October 1861 and 25 April 1863. In 1864 the Institute itself petitioned for the suspension of the Code and in support of the Royal Commission on Scottish education, Minute Book, II (1864) p. 436.
- 86 One charge they made was that the philosophy and administration of the Revised Code left "abundant room for falsification" and thus put great "temptation very strongly in the way of teachers and managers". Many they made clear were not resisting that temptation. Argyll Commission, 1864, p. 291.
- 87 This petition, though it is referred to in the E.I.S. minutes (see Minute Book, II, p. 530) is not included in them. T.R. Bone quotes this passage in Scottish Inspectorate, p. 77. He includes the information that it was signed by 2705 schoolmasters and professors and 867 schoolmistresses. He also gives a very good description and evaluation of the workings and the influence of the Revised Code in Scotland.

Scottish teachers were not alone in their condemnation of the Revised Code. Nevertheless defenders of the Code, most notably Robert Lowe, suggested that those teachers who objected to it did so as the result of a combination of base motives, occupational inadequacy and personal prejudice. They were afraid, according to these critics, that the Code would damage them financially; they were too lazy and probably not competent enough to teach the basic subjects successfully; and they were snobbish and felt it beneath them to teach the children of the poor. These charges the teachers hotly denied. As the E.I.S. president, a Mr. Whamond, put it, schoolmasters could make more money under the Code, but only "at the risk of deteriorating our Scottish education", by turning out large numbers of passes.⁸⁸ To concentrate on the basic subjects would also be easier than trying to strike a proper balance between them and the higher subjects, and certainly was well within their competence.

Whamond's most scornful rejoinder, however, was reserved for the charge of social snobbery and was put firmly in the context of the Scottish educational and social tradition. "Mr. Lowe," he charged, "talks about the poor in a way that we in Scotland have not been accustomed to talk about them". His views demonstrated that he had "no proper knowledge of our educational ways and wants". There had never been in Scotland, Whamond concluded, an education for the rich exclusive of the poor and he roundly attacked Lowe's view of the function of education in society:

88 Scotsman, 23 September 1872.

And Mr. Lowe pretends to be the poor men's friend! (Laughter) He would take from them their educational birthright. He assumes there is a low ... educational standard, above which they should not dare to think of rising. He would give them just as much education as would establish them to hew wood and draw water and no more. We, the teachers of Scotland have never regarded the children of the poor in this light, and by God's⁸⁹ blessing we never shall. (Applause).

In their steadfast opposition to the application of the Revised Code in Scotland the schoolmasters were on firm ground and their views were widely shared by many educational observers.⁹⁰ From the time of the publication of the Argyll Commission's recommendations in 1868, onwards, however, the teachers began to feel more and more isolated. The reason for this was, of course, the way in which the whole subject of the schoolmasters role and conditions of work was dealt with by the Argyll Commission and then by the government in subsequent bills. This made the position of the Educational Institute very difficult. If it vigorously condemned the treatment of the schoolmaster it ran the risk of appearing to be the spokesman of particular and selfish interests. On the other hand, to remain silent would be to accept a position of total irrelevance in the educational affairs of the country and to be

89 Ibid

90 Most writers on the subject have found little to say in favour of the Revised Code. T.R. Bone gives a very balanced view of its influence in his Scottish Inspectorate. The Code was never fully applied in Scotland and its worst effects were not experienced. It had a good effect on the ordinary teaching in many schools, Bone believes, without damaging the higher subjects. But it was essentially a mechanical system which tended to produce mechanical teaching and, thus, "was certain in the long run to have a deadening effect on the intellectual life of the schools". (p. 106) The Scottish inspectors generally did not seem to recognize this, a failure which Bone says, is the "one real criticism that can be made of them". (p. 106). The same certainly cannot be said of the E.I.S.

derelict in its responsibility to its own members and teachers in general. If the role and the status of the Scottish teacher made as crucial a contribution to the overall vitality and excellence of the Scottish educational system and its tradition, then the E.I.S. had no option but to speak out.

The Institute was furiously indignant about the Argyll Commission's proposals regarding tenure and salary. Of its dismissal procedures, the Institute declared:

That the power of dismissing the schoolmaster carried out in the manner proposed would be arbitrary, uncalled for, unjust, and harsh to the schoolmaster in its immediate withdrawal of salary, and cruel in its hasty mode of ejection from the school and school-house; would be subversive of the constitution of the parochial schools, degrading to the profession, detrimental to education, and destructive to the independence of the master, and hence to the moral discipline of the school.⁹¹

As for the salary recommendations the E.I.S. expressed its "astonishment that no notice had been taken respecting the amount of the fixed salary to be given to the National Schoolmasters; that no proposal had been made to increase their income; but that, on the contrary, great facilities had been afforded for decreasing it".⁹²

A deputation armed with copies of resolutions expressing the Institute's views, was quickly despatched to London to interview the Lord Advocate, M.P.'s and Peers. The deputation was somewhat encouraged by the results. "As to the question of tenure", its secretary reported, "which occupied, we may say, the principal place in our different interviews, we are unanimously of the opinion

91 E.I.S., Minute Book, II (1867), p. 511.

92 Ibid., p. 513.

that ... there is good hope that the status quo will be maintained in the case of the present incumbents, and that a life tenure, or at least a court of appeal and fair protection will be afforded to all."⁹³

There was not much to show for their efforts in the government's 1869 legislation, however. The parochial schools and schoolmasters were excluded from the bill and a minimum salary of £35 was set, but the only provision made for the schoolmaster's protection was that, in dismissal proceedings, the government inspector was to investigate the case and the local boards were to give "such teacher a full opportunity to be heard", and the E.I.S. diplomas were not recognized. The government's abandonment of its own proposal to have the Institute represented on the general Board of Education was disheartening as were the attacks on the E.I.S. which prompted the government to do so. Lord Abinger's remarks were the most hostile:

He had an especial objection to a member being appointed by the associated schoolmasters. The associated schoolmasters were in fact neither more nor less than a trades union, not the less dangerous because its members were educated, and able to draw up Petitions, and they already had more influence in Parliamentary elections than it was advisable they should have.⁹⁴

The Institute was keenly aware of the danger of seeming to be merely the representative of narrow occupational interests. At its 1869 general meeting, in fact, the president, Dr. Donaldson, specifically referred to Abinger's charge and the difficulty it symbolized. "Not many who know anything of educational matters", he said, "will be so ignorant as to compare the Educational

93 Ibid., p. 524.

94 3 Hansard, CXCV, 19 March 1869, p. 1762.

Institute to a trades-union; but many may suppose that we are seeking to raise our profession at the expense of the public",⁹⁵ He went on to suggest a number of ways in which the Institute might demonstrate to the public that it was concerned with the national interest and that the improvements it urged respecting schoolmasters were consistent with, indeed vital to, that interest.

A further indication of the danger the E.I.S. faced in this respect was provided a few days later by The Scotsman. The 1869 general meeting had experienced its usual difficulty in expressing an opinion in principle about educational legislation. After some debate it had decided merely to accept, with thanks to the committee and to sympathetic M.P.'s, the report of the standing committee on legislation, a report which gave general support to the 1869 bill.⁹⁶ The Scotsman used this as the occasion for an attack on the whole conduct of the schoolmasters towards the national education issue. "The dealings of the Scotch schoolmasters with the subject of educational legislation," it began, "have not, throughout this long controversy, been fortunate for either the public interest or their own."⁹⁷ It was perhaps, natural for the schoolmasters to be mainly concerned with their own interests

95 Scotsman, 20 September 1869. The Minute Books of the Institute from 1867 on seem to be missing. One is not able therefore to see in great detail the development of E.I.S. policy on the 1869, 1871 and 1872 bills. This is unfortunate, but, since the annual meetings were reported in the press, one can identify the main positions taken by the Institute in retrospect at least.

96 Donaldson had moved to accept the report, expressing the Institute's regret at the defeat of the bill; a parochial schoolmaster, strongly supported by none other than William Knox, moved to omit any expression of regret; a compromise motion was passed, Ibid.

97 Scotsman, 22 September 1869.

and, therefore to tend to be rather short sighted in their views, but whenever they had considered other aspects of the problem, "they have contributed nothing but doubts and obstacles".⁹⁸

Their failure was basic:

They have never grasped or even looked at the question in its entirety, or in its general principles, but have merely kept 'pottering' over it, with a general inclination to conclude that whatever is is right, and that whatever is new is doubtful.⁹⁹

At its recent general meeting, The Scotsman continued, the E.I.S., 'which we assume to contain the best if not the bulk of the teaching profession', had not only the opportunity, but a "moral necessity", to speak out on the question of its entirety. "But very little was proposed and as near as possible to nothing at all was agreed to".¹⁰⁰

In some respects the charge was inaccurate. In its resolutions dealing with the Argyll Commission's recommendations in 1868, the Institute had been almost as indignant about what it saw as the absence of Scottish control of the proposed system. It attacked the "utter inconsistency" of the recommended relationship between the Privy Council's Committee on Education and the Scottish Board of Education and resolved:

That the Central Board in Scotland should have the sole control of the whole National Schools in Scotland; that it should have the sole administration, including the examination of the schools and the distribution of the Parliamentary Grants to be hereafter

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

voted for Scotland, from the date of the passing of the proposed Act; and that thereafter the administration and inspection of schools, the examination of schoolmasters, and the distribution of Parliamentary Grants by Her Majesty's Committee of Council should cease and determine.¹⁰¹

Despite its objections to the 1869 bill's treatment of the schoolmasters the Institute's legislative committee regretted the failure of the bill, and Donaldson, in his presidential address, declared that, even as it stood, it would have given Scotland the "best system of primary education in the world".¹⁰² But, despite these important qualifications, the Institute's persistent inability to express itself forcefully and unequivocally on the general principle of national education left it very vulnerable to the type of criticism levelled at it by The Scotsman.

This was even more the case when the bills of 1871 and 1872 removed from the schoolmasters even the very limited protections and privileges left to them by the 1869 legislation. The dilemma faced by the E.I.S. was very clearly expressed by its president, Mr. Whamond, in his address to the general meeting in September 1872. He and the executive had recognized that for the Institute to petition against the 1872 bill would leave it open to widespread misrepresentation and the charge of putting their own selfish interests above the good of the country. On the other hand the bill of 1872 was only "the bill of 1871 made worse".¹⁰³ It ignored the "almost unanimous demand in Scotland for a Scottish Board" and it treated schoolmasters miserably.¹⁰⁴ "With only one

101 E.I.S., Minute Book, II (1867), p. 513.

102 Scotsman, 20 September 1869.

103 Scotsman, 23 September 1872.

104 Ibid.

exception that I know of," Whamond declared, "the Scottish press declared its treatment of the teachers to be harsh, unreasonable and illiberal."¹⁰⁵ The disadvantages of the bill had so outweighed its merits, Whamond told them that the Institute had had to take the risk of hostile criticism and vigorously oppose the entire bill. They had been right, he believed, in opposing the Revised Code for similar reasons, and they were right to oppose the 1872 bill.

But the bill had passed with little improvement and they must face its implications and make the best of them. Whamond urged them to keep the interests of Scottish education uppermost in their minds, pointed out that the bill had some good points, such as its provisions for supplying education to destitute localities, and expressed the hope that the traditional Scottish respect for schoolmasters would lead to their opinion being sought on educational matters. Finally, he concluded with these brave words:

We have been defeated, but we refuse to acknowledge that we have been conquered. Our defeat will unite us and our union will give us strength. We must not and we will not be put down. (Applause). There cannot be good education without good teachers

105 Ibid. The exception was The Scotsman. The paper's attitude towards the 1871 and 1872 bills was curious and would bear some study. In comparison to former years, The Scotsman evinced no great interest or concern for the issue of educational reform. It devoted less space to commenting on the bills than before and used most of that for discussions of the religious problem. It was not, as one might have expected it to be, exercised over the question of a Scottish Board. It apparently fully supported the bills' approach to the schoolmasters. It called the passage of the bill a "great triumph" for the Lord Advocate and praised Young for his "very skilful mixture of firmness and concession". (5 August 1872). Yet it was strangely non-committal in its assessment of the bill itself, commenting simply that "it was important and ... in some respects will work great improvements". (14 August 1872).

and there will not be a supply of good teachers unless they are well treated and respected. We must in no manner try, either directly or indirectly, to prevent this Education Act from being successful. We must do all we can to prevent it from fulfilling our worst anticipations.¹⁰⁶

V

A recent writer on Scottish schoolmasters has observed that some of them are "occupationally prone to turn into auld wives, prissy, precise, prim-mouthed wee men always keeking over one shoulder in case 'they' are watching".¹⁰⁷ It would be incautious, as well as presumptuous, of me to suggest how far that description could serve as a generalization about the characteristic personality of Scottish teachers. Certainly, the stereotype of the teacher in countries other than Scotland, bears a close similarity to the phrase quoted above. And, indeed, it seems not to be mere slander. Psychological and sociological studies do indicate that teachers tend to be less independent, imaginative, colourful and innovative than members of those other occupations generally called 'the professions'. Social and economic factors seem to have a good deal of influence in creating this situation, but I believe that the traditional concept of the teacher's proper role and function makes an important contribution as well.

Put simply, this traditional view has it that matters of general educational policy are not the teacher's concern, while matters

106 Ibid.

107 Charles McAra, "Scottish Schoolmasters", in K. Miller, ed., Memoirs of a Modern Scotland (London, 1970). This book is not included in the bibliography as I came across the description after it was typed.

of educational administration are; in short, the teacher's job is to help run the educational machine, not to question its basic assumptions or scrutinize its overall shape and direction. This attitude exerts a powerful influence in modern education, although it is increasingly being challenged by teachers themselves.

This thesis has been, in part, a case study of a remarkable, though unsuccessful, attempt by nineteenth century Scottish teachers to overthrow this concept and to achieve a position of influence in matters of educational policy. In the transition from a denominational to a state controlled educational system, there seemed for a brief period to be a chance that Scottish teachers, in their corporate identity, could assume an unprecedented degree of influence and control in the conduct of their country's schooling. They failed to achieve this status, partly because of a disunity which made their voice less distinct and powerful than it might have been, but more, I think, because it was refused them. Control passed from the clergyman, unaltered, to the government official, just beyond the teacher's grasp. Moreover, not only did the teachers not acquire a share of this control but, at the end of the transition period, in 1872, they found themselves bereft even of those advantages and privileges which certain of their number at least had previously enjoyed.

The significance of these developments for the teachers of Scotland were immense. Their first concern became, naturally enough, self-protection. As T.R. Bone shows in his article "Teachers and Security of Tenure, 1872 to 1908", the conditions under which they held and were dismissed from office, always of importance to the teachers, became almost an obsession to them in the years following the 1872 Act. The E.I.S. crusaded against

the complete lack of safeguards, a campaign that was eventually successful. But the cost to the Scottish teacher's spirit, his confidence, and his independence was undoubtedly considerable. Indeed, Bone, who acknowledges the justice of the schoolmasters' case, is critical of their efforts to seek redress which, he says were more often inept and ill-judged than not.¹⁰⁸

What the effect would have been had the Scottish teachers been successful is only a matter for speculation. Like most 'professional' occupations their motives were mixed and their influence doubtless would not always have been for the best. Nevertheless, I believe that Scottish teachers in the nineteenth century, at least as represented in the E.I.S., had generally enlightened views about education and were keenly aware of the most important aspects of the Scottish educational tradition. Had the E.I.S. diploma been accepted as one way of gaining certification I think the Institute would have flourished. Had it flourished I think that its ideas - ideas about teacher education, about the reorganization of the schools, and so on - would have been influential and that their influence would have been generally beneficial. Whether the E.I.S. and Scottish teachers were conquered by the events of the 1850's and 1860's and the Act of 1872 or merely temporarily defeated is a large question. Perhaps the establishment, several years ago, of an official national teachers council in Scotland is an indication of the survival of the same spirit and objectives among Scottish teachers that led to the formation of the Educational Institute of Scotland in 1847.¹⁰⁹

108 Bone, "Teachers and Security of Tenure", pp. 43-44.

109 Perhaps an even more significant indication that the same vitality and excellence which characterized the leading founders of the E.I.S. still survives among Scottish teachers is the fact that a recently published book, Memoirs of a Modern Scotland, a collection of essays on Scottish politics, culture and society, is dedicated to the memory of a contemporary Scottish schoolmaster.

Just as the Scottish teachers failed to achieve a new role and influence for themselves, so too Scotland itself, failed to achieve a general reform of its school system at a time when Scottish public and political opinion seemed to favour such a move. Scottish educational reform was delayed for about two decades and, during that time, the nature and direction of that reform may have been fundamentally altered. Again both internal and external forces were at work, though their complexity defies the drawing of simple conclusions.

In the 1850's, the Church of Scotland and the Scottish rural Tories, both in the Commons and the Lords, put up a vociferous and unrelenting opposition to comprehensive reform, though they had ultimately to rely on non-Scottish votes in Parliament to reject such reform. During the late 1850's and the 1860's, then, Scottish education remained a mixture of parochial denominational, burgh and private school systems, all increasingly affected by the operation of the expanding activities of the central government, based on policies administered from London and in large part determined by attitudes and priorities that were more English than Scottish.

These policies had an important and perhaps permanent influence on the management of and teaching in Scottish schools through this period. Moreover by the late 1860's and early 1870's those policies seem to have acquired a greater measure of acceptance by influential Scotsmen than ever before. Whether this was the reason or whether it was simply a case of a government forcing an overdue legislative measure through Parliament, it is certain that the 1872 bill had features that would not have been acceptable to Scotland a decade or two before, features that seemed a marked departure from the Scottish educational tradition.

Again, to decide whether the essence and quality of the Scottish educational tradition was permanently destroyed or merely damaged in 1872 is extremely difficult to judge and beyond my courage to pronounce upon. It would require a great deal more close study of the years following 1872 and detailed comparisons of various aspects of Scottish education before and after that date, to even approach a conclusive view on the question.

The further problem of what influence these educational changes had on the Scottish national identity is, of course, even more formidable. That the Scottish educational tradition made an important contribution to that nationality I have no doubt, or that changes in the one were significant for the other. The implication of this thesis is, of course, that the vitality of the educational tradition was undermined and, therefore, probably exercised a deteriorating influence on the national identity. Again, one would want to explore these connections and influences much more fully than has been possible here.

What is certain is that Scottish educational reform was delayed for almost two decades and that, when it was achieved, its form was considerably different from what it would have been at the beginning of that period. Scotland, which in 1850 had seemed about to adapt to altered conditions a system of education which had earned an international reputation, did not finally manage to do so until two years after the passage of an education act for England, a country with a very different and much less distinguished educational tradition. These facts alone, it seems to me might well prompt a Scotsman to view the approaching centennial of the Scottish Education Act of 1872 with somewhat mixed emotions.

Appendix A

Biographical Notes

These notes are not intended to furnish complete biographical summaries of the individuals included. Rather, they are intended to add what seems to me relevant or interesting information to what is contained in the text of the thesis about them. A number of these figures have entries in the Dictionary of National Biography and I try to indicate other sources where background material is available. The sketches are in alphabetical order.

James Bryce (1806-1877)

James Bryce, younger brother of R.J. Bryce (see below), father of the famous James Viscount Bryce, followed a similar educational path to his elder brother, going up to Glasgow at age 14 and later winning the Greek Blackstone Prize there. His interests, however, were scientific and, on graduating in 1828, James came to Belfast and taught natural philosophy and mathematics at the Royal Academy. This was a considerable innovation at the time (see Ch. 1, p. 7 & 8 on science in education and ff. 39 describing James' later difficulties in teaching these subjects at the Glasgow High School), but James who was familiar with and sympathetic to Combe's views on science and religion (see Bryce Papers. Letters of W. Keir, Belfast, to James Bryce, 25 Nov. 1850 and 3 Jan. 1851), had no difficulty reconciling the two. He was a devout United Presbyterian, who served as a church elder and taught Sunday School, as well as an outstanding science teacher and an eminent geologist. He was a founder of the Natural History Society of Belfast and a Fellow of the Geological Societies of Dublin and London, and an L.L.D. from Glasgow. Like his brother, he was a man of wide and progressive interests. He was the main mover behind the Glasgow Graduates Association which lobbied successfully for special parliamentary representation for the universities. Besides his scientific papers, he wrote on educational subjects (eg: "The Minutes of Council viewed in connection with Scottish Conditions", delivered to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences in 1861). He served as the president of the E.I.S. in 1852-53. William Graham placing his name before the delegates said that Bryce "occupied a place in the first rank of practical teachers in Scotland;...and... was one of the few with whom the movement which ultimately led to the formation of the Institute originated..." (E.I.S., Proceedings of the Sixth General Meeting (Edinburgh, 1852) p. 3). In 1846 he became the Mathematics Master at the High School, Glasgow, and taught there until his retirement in 1874. He was killed three years later by a rock fall near Loch Ness.

Reuben John Bryce (1798-1888)

Reuben John Bryce was the eldest son of a remarkable family (The following account is taken from information contained in the Bryce Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford; H.A.L. Fisher, James Bryce,

Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, O.M. (London, 1927); H. Shearman, Belfast Royal Academy 1785-1935 (Belfast, 1936); R.M. Young, "Rev. Reuben John Bryce, L.L.D." in Belfast Literary Society's Centenary Volume, (Belfast, 1902); and some of R.J. Bryce's own writings). His father, the Reverend James Bryce, had been the minister of a dissenting church in Wick, Caithness, until 1803 when he was attacked and suspended for the tolerance of his views. He then came out to Killaig in Ireland where he headed a tiny group of seven congregations called the Associated Presbytery of Primitive Seceders. He and his wife raised a family of eleven, three of whom, Reuben John, James, and Archibald, became prominent teachers. Another two sons became doctors, and a grandson, the son of James, became the famous historian and politician, James, Viscount Bryce.

The boys were educated at home. Mrs. Bryce was something of a Greek scholar (Young) and Shearman writes: "The Bryce family were all very clever and very learned, and Latin was commonly spoken in the family circle" (p. 17). R.J. was sent off at age 15 to Glasgow College where he studied Arts, Medicine, and Theology. (His original intention, apparently, had been to be a physician, but he switched into Theology) and, through his experience tutoring during vacations, developed a lasting interest in education. It was at this early stage of his career that he first conceived of the idea that was to prove the major preoccupation of his life. He described it thus, in the preface to his Three Lectures on Early Education published in Belfast in 1875:

When an undergraduate in Arts, in a Scotch University, I was led to pay some attention to Mental Science; and I soon saw that some of the facts which it taught me, had a practical value in Education. But it was not till I was a Medical Student of the Second Year, that, reflecting one day on the relation of Anatomy and Physiology to the practical science of Medicine, the thought flashed upon me - "Might there not be constructed, a regular and complete SCIENCE OF EDUCATION, bearing a similar relation to Mental Philosophy, which has been called 'the Anatomy and Physiology of the Mind?'" I was not then aware that the same idea had been started nearly a century before, by the Abbé Condillac, and had been adopted by some of the most eminent philosophers of my own country.

In 1824, Bryce was appointed Mathematical and Mercantile Master at the Belfast Royal Academy (where, Shearman notes, he also taught Oriental and Modern Languages, p. 17), and was made Headmaster of the school later the same year. He was only 26 years old at this time and he held the post for the next fifty-four years. (For a good deal of this period he was also the minister of the York Street United Presbyterian Congregation in Belfast).

Most of Bryce's educational views were extremely enlightened and progressive and in his efforts to construct a systematic science of education he drew on the work of the Scottish philosophers, particularly the famous Dugald Stewart of Edinburgh, and incorporated the ideas of Pestalozzi, the Edgeworths, and others. He wrote

extensively and lectured widely on this and related topics (He delivered addresses and lectures in Cork, Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London, as well as his own city), was a witness to a select parliamentary committee on Irish education, and was given an L.L.D. by Glasgow. According to Young, "it was generally understood that he would have been chosen to be Professor of Greek there but for the existence at that time of a form of theological test which he refused to take" (p. 135). In 1875, at the age of 77, he made a strong but unsuccessful application for the first Chair of Education established at Edinburgh (see Testimonials of the Rev. R.J. Bryce, L.L.D., Hon. Principal of the Belfast Academy (Belfast, 1875)).

The picture would not be complete, however, without reference to another, entertaining but much less flattering, view of R.J. Bryce. It is provided by Hugh Shearman, the historian of the Belfast Royal Academy and himself a master at the school. In his record of the B.R.A. Shearman writes:

Dr. Bryce was an extremely clever man, with a quick mind and wide reading. He had an impressive manner and was a plausible speaker. He had great confidence in himself and could arouse confidence and esteem in other people, He was rather erratic, often full of energy, but sometimes very careless (17).

The school had a very complicated and difficult constitution and organization and, under Bryce, fell into some neglect. In the 1860's his management, along with that of the trustees, came under public criticism and Bryce found himself in the midst of a rather unsavoury controversy (See Charges Against the Reverend Dr. Bryce with Dr. Bryce's Reply (Belfast, 1869)). Shearman himself is of the opinion that these developments "do not reflect credit on the Principal and trustees" (p. 21), and at another point, comments dryly Bryce showed "a pathetically exaggerated confidence in the capacities of Scotchmen" (23) in his appointments to the staff, a number of whom turned out to be incompetent, among them his niece.

In a delightful personal letter, Mr. Shearman expresses himself even more candidly about Bryce. He writes:

My subject was, of course, the Academy here in Belfast; and from that point of view Bryce was a rather preposterous old ass, full of grandiose ideas. I can look out of the window as I write this and see one of them embodied in stone on the other side of the road - the main school building of the Academy. Bryce was not a practical man. The portrait of him at the school rather suggests a well meaning wafty bumbler - but perhaps I read too much into it from hindsight. My father began to attend the Academy in 1886 when it was still staggering after the general effect of Bryce's regime. It went on staggering under his painstaking successor who got so depressed by the school's condition and its inanely frustrating constitution that he committed suicide. His

successor, T.R. Collier assisted by my father who was then back on the staff of the school, gradually refounded the Academy and by about 1920 it was a fully viable and expanding institution. But it had taken about forty years to recover from Bryce.

R.J. Bryce, it seems to me, was a very interesting and, on balance, an impressive figure. The goals of a science of mind and a science of education have proved elusive, but the search for it was not an ignoble or lunatic pursuit. Like George Combe, Bryce was one of those 'less eminent early Victorians' whose concerns, however misconstrued or barren in their application, startle by their ring of modernity. Bryce was certainly over-optimistic, as were many Victorians, in his expectation that the principles and methods of the physical sciences could be immediately and successfully applied to all other spheres of human activity. Nonetheless, his insights about the processes of learning and of teaching were advanced, perceptive and sensible. In the context of this thesis, moreover, he stands in, and was aware of, the Scottish tradition of education, however much he tended to overrate its virtues. That he also possessed some notable weaknesses as a headmaster is not perhaps surprising. Acknowledging the peculiar difficulties of managing the Belfast Royal Academy as Shearman does, there is no doubt that fifty-four years is too long to function effectively as the head of anything. It may be that Bryce was disappointed in not gaining a university chair or in achieving more eminence than he did. Certainly, his many outside activities in connection with the ministry, education, and public questions, must have detracted from his effectiveness as a principal. In any case, R.J. Bryce, seems to me to stand as a representative Victorian middle-class teacher and clergyman; somewhat pious, pompous, and verbose - all the moreso when the foibles and frailties they possessed come to light - but nonetheless, intelligent and learned, and striving, often with a high degree of concern and real compassion, to improve the conditions of life which surrounded them.

George Combe (1788-1858)

One of the most interesting lesser figures of the period, Combe was born under the shadow of the Castle, educated at the High School and Edinburgh University, and eventually became a writer to the signet. His book on phrenology, The Constitution of Man, made him both unacceptable to Edinburgh society and widely known outside it. He travelled and lectured on the continent and in the United States and Canada and his ideas about human nature and education had a considerable influence on liberal and progressive thought. He took part in many movements for public reform and corresponded with many prominent men, numbering Lord Jeffrey, Richard Cobden and Horace Mann among his friends. The young S.S. Laurie, later to be the first Professor of Education at the University of Edinburgh, wrote regularly to him for advice and valued his views on education. He has been treated, in retrospect, perhaps somewhat too condescendingly: John Morley wrote of him that, "Few second-rate minds have done such first-class work as George Combe"; and the Dictionary of National

Biography similarly observes that, "He was essentially a man of one idea". (See C. Gibbon, The Life of George Combe (London, 1878), 2 Vol; D.N.B., XI, pp. 427-429.)

William Gunn (1806-1851)

An outstanding example of a man who represented both the higher level teachers and the Free Church teachers was Dr. William Gunn, the Classics Master at the High School, Edinburgh, whose strong and independent views on the position of the schoolmaster and his relation to the church have been quoted above. Born in Stirlingshire in 1806, Gunn was a gold medalist in both the Rector's class at the High School in Edinburgh and in the Humanity class at Edinburgh University and was later given an L.L.D. by the latter. He began teaching as a private tutor and established his own school in Edinburgh in the late 1820's. He was made Rector of the Haddington Burgh School in 1838 and was appointed to the High School in 1843. In 1850, a letter in The Scotsman described him as "a man whose fame as a classical scholar and teacher is established over Scotland" (23 November, 1850). Gunn was very active in church affairs and was an elder in Thomas Guthrie's Edinburgh Church. Together with Guthrie, James Begg and Hugh Miller, Gunn had been a leading figure in the Free Church educational controversy (see Withrington) and was an outspoken advocate of national education. Though more radical than most of his colleagues, he played an active and influential role in the formation of the E.I.S. and was elected as the first president of the Edinburgh Local Association of the Institute. Unfortunately he died of typhus in 1851, at age 45. (Guthrie preached the only funeral sermon of his career which was later published under the title "Christ and Christ Crucified").

Thomas Guthrie (1803-1873)

Guthrie was the most famous Scottish preacher of the generation following the illustrious Thomas Chalmers. In the decade before the disruption, the two leading publicists for the "liberal" part in the Kirk were Guthrie, on public platforms, and Hugh Miller, in the public press. As a speaker Guthrie was hugely effective - colloquial, anecdotal, humorous and sentimental (a master, as the Victorians put it, of the "pathetic") and reached an even wider audience through published collections of his sermons, essays and speeches (one such collection sold over 50,000 copies).

In 1843-44 Guthrie waged a vigorous fund raising campaign for the separate Free Church clergy which raised £ 116,000. He was a strong temperance supporter and a liberal in politics, advocating national education reform against the general opinion of his Free Church colleagues. His influence on these issues was wide; the Lord Advocate, James Moncrieff, for example, later paid tribute to the role Guthrie's convictions on national education reform played in arousing in Moncrieff a concern about the question (Lord James Moncrieff, An Educational Retrospect (London, 1886), p. 8.) He was granted a DD by Edinburgh University (1849), served as moderator of the Free Church (1862), was tendered a testimonial

of £ 5,000 (1865), and was elected to the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1869). His funeral was "the occasion of a great public demonstration" (Dictionary of National Biography, XXIII, p. 382; See also Guthrie, Autobiography).

William Knox (1799-1873)

A perfect example of what one writer called "our old kings among our teachers", William Knox seems to have embodied all the attributes of the ideal Scottish parochial dominie. Born in Roxburghshire, he began teaching, at age 16, in the parish school in Yetholm and was appointed to St. Ninians in 1823, holding that post for the next fifty years. St. Ninians was one of the largest parishes in Scotland and Knox established a high reputation for its school.

Besides being a master teacher, Knox was very active in the affairs of the community. Indeed, in the words of his biographer, "at one stage he was undoubtedly the 'Pooh-Bah' of the parish, though admittedly his remuneration was wholly adequate in return". Alexander Pollock, William Knox, L.L.D. (Address to the Stirling Branch of the E.I.S., 1957) p. 2. Besides acting as clerk to the heritors and the kirk session, Knox was the parish' Poor Inspector, a post worth f50 per year (his brother was the Assistant Poor Inspector), the Clerk to the Parochial Poor Board, and the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths.

He was equally active in educational politics. In the 1840's he was the treasurer of the Scottish School Book Association and was treasurer of the Burgh and Parochial Schoolmasters Association for over twenty years, being elected president of the latter organization in 1847-48. He was among the first group of vice-presidents of the Educational Institute and was its second president in 1848-49. He was vice-president again in 1853-54, and was a leading member of the Institute's Legislative Committee through the 'fifties and 'sixties. He believed in the necessity of having forceful and independent teachers, and strongly supported the traditional parochial tenure arrangements. Mostly for this reason I think, he fiercely opposed any proposals to change the parochial schools, leading the forces within the Institute that wanted it to stay out of the national education controversy. Though he never altered his position regarding the parochial system, he did realize, by the mid-sixties at least, that major educational reform was necessary in order to remedy the educational deficiency in Scotland.

His career spans the entire period under discussion. He first appears in the 1826 parliamentary survey of the parish schools (see Parochial Education in Scotland, 1826) and was selected by the EIS to appear as a witness before the Argyll Commission in 1865. Although I have not come across any writings by Knox, it is clear that his influence was considerable. One evidence of this was the conferring by Glasgow University of an LLD on him in 1863.

According to Pollock, his epitaph reads:

He filled many important offices connected with the district, and held the most Honourable trusts which the schoolmasters of Scotland could confer. His intellectual powers commanded universal respect, while his private worth secured the affection of those who knew him.

Simon Somerville Laurie (1829-1909)

Alexander Morgan called Laurie the "most outstanding educationist in Scotland during the latter half of the nineteenth century" (Makers of Scottish Education, p. 193.) The son of a clergyman, Laurie was educated at the High School and the University of Edinburgh. Morgan emphasizes the influence of James Pillans on Laurie, particularly in stimulating an interest in education in the young classicist. He makes no mention of Combe, however, who seems to have been equally important. Laurie was just rising to prominence in the mid 1850's with his appointments to the Church of Scotland Education Committee and the Dick Bequest and did exert an enormous influence in the second half of the century.

I am not aware whether others have attributed the pamphlet The Present Aspects of the Scottish Education Question to Laurie, but its tone and attitude fits with his views as expressed to Combe and with his commitment to the development of Scottish teachers. It is significant, however, that Laurie wrote under a pseudonym and, as a witness to the Argyll Commission in 1865 was much more restrained and conservative in his comments. Laurie was a strong advocate of university education for teachers, pressed for the establishment of chairs of education in the Scottish Universities, and was the first holder of the Edinburgh professorship.

Hugh Miller (1802-1856)

"There was in the crowd at St. John's, Guthrie's Church", wrote a biographer of the time, "always one conspicuous figure. Looking at the rough red shaggy head, or at the checked plaid, flung over the broad shoulders, you may think it is some shepherd from the distant hills, who has wandered in from his sheiling among the mountains to hear the great city preacher. But look again; - the massy head, the broad projecting brow, the lips so firmly closed, the keen grey eye, and, above all, the look of intelligent and searching scrutiny cast around, all tell us of something higher than shepherd life. It is Hugh Miller, the greatest of living Scotchmen, never to be missed in this congregation, of which he was not only a member but an office bearer". (William Hanna, the biographer of Thomas Chalmers, quoted in Guthrie's Autobiography, II, p. 222.)

Despite the florid style, it is a memorable portrait, and other accounts corroborate that Miller in physical appearance, strength and integrity of character, and intellectual force was

truly a striking man. Born in Cromarty, almost entirely self-educated, a master stone-mason and a serious and influential geologist, and, later, an inspired polemicist and newspaper editor, Miller is one of the most romantic and attractive figures, in the tradition of James Hogg, of the first half of the century. His autobiography, My Schools and Schoolmasters is one of the classics of Scottish letters.

A close friend of Guthrie's, Miller was one of the leading reform protagonists in the ecclesiastical controversy culminating in the 'Disruption' and the establishment of the Free Church. As editor of The Witness, from 1840 on, however, Miller was not a mouthpiece for any ecclesiastical party. He had pronounced anti-clerical sympathies, though a devoutly religious man, and opposed the Free Church's efforts to build an independent denominational education system, arguing, eventually successfully, that it should devote its influence to supporting a national education system. On 24 December 1856, burdened by overwork and illness, Miller shot himself to death. (See DNB, XXXVII, p. 408-410; R. Cochrane (ed.), Treasury of Modern Biography (London, 1878), pp. 325-336.)

Leonhard Schmitz (1807-1890)

Schmitz was an outstanding teacher of the period and a distinguished classical scholar. Born in Germany, he was a brilliant student at the University of Bonn, from which he received a Ph.D. in 1841, and established his reputation mainly through his edited translations into English of German classical studies.

He first came to Britain as a private tutor in the 1830's and was appointed Rector of the High School in Edinburgh in 1845, a post he held for 21 years. As Rector, Schmitz attracted a number of prominent pupils including the Prince of Wales (1859) and the Duke of Edinburgh (1862) and tried to reform and modernize the curriculum of the school. He was an outspoken advocate of radical national education legislation and took a prominent part in organizing and promoting the Educational Institute of Scotland, putting the High School at its disposal for meetings (this became a tradition) and serving as its first president in 1847. Though he was disappointed in the teachers' reluctance to take a public stand (see correspondence with G. Combe) he continued to actively support national education and was one of the vice-presidents of the National Education Association of Scotland formed in 1850. (Scotsman, April 10, 1850).

Schmitz applied for several university chairs while Rector at the High School and finally left to become principal of the London International College of St. Isleworth (1866-74). He later served as the classical examiner at London University (1874-79 and 1884-89). He was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1846), received LL.D.'s from Aberdeen (1849) and Edinburgh (1886), and was awarded civil pensions and private testimonials in his later years. (See Dictionary of National Biography, L, pp. 418-419).

Appendix B

The Number of Schools in Scotland, 1815-1855

The figures used here have been gathered from a number of sources including: Digest of Parochial Returns, 1819; Church of Scotland Education Committee, Educational Statistics (1833), and Report (1850); Kay Shuttleworth, Public Education (1853); Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1854, LIX, Abstract of Returns Relating to the Population and Number of Schools in each of the Counties, Cities and Burghs, Scotland (according to the Census of 1851), pp. 247-268; and Saunders, Scottish Democracy.

	1815	1819	1834	1850	1853	1855
Parish Schools	942	942	900? 1250?	981	1049	(963) 1049
Gen. Assembly			179	179	177	181
Burgh	80-90			52		86
Sessional			100	104	119	120
Endowed		212	270	175	201	210
Subscription				96	127	130
Ladies Gaelic					35	35
SSPCK			136	136	252	232
	7					
FC					614	620
UP					78	60
EPISC					48	70
RC					63	40
			400*	815		*8 misc.

	1815	1819	1834	1850	1853	1855
Workhouse Schools				(1) 1684 (922 connected with Church of Scotland) (2) 4000 - 4500 (Hetherington)	47	
Ragged Schools					approx. 30	
Adventure	2222	2222	2222		1684	2500
Private Academies					500	
Home Tutoring						
Dame Schools		257				
Normal Schools					2	2
	3249	3633	3985 -4335	4222 -6143	5026	5247

Appendix C

D.R. Fearon's Account of the Contrast between a 'typical' English and a 'typical' Scottish Higher-Level School at 3 P.M. on a day in 1867.

"The long room empty and vacant in the middle, with the massive old fashioned desks ranged round the walls. The three seats for the teachers, carefully graduated in size; the largest and most imposing for the master at the top of the room; the second at the bottom for the usher; and at one side a smaller desk, inferior in comfort and dignity, for the occasional French master. The thirty boys divided nominally into six forms, of which the sixth contains two or three boys, boarders, who are reading 'Greek Play', and one of whom is said to be preparing to try for an open scholarship at the university. The fifth form perhaps, 'vacant just at present', and the bulk of the scholars in the lower forms classified according to their different degrees of proficiency in Eutropius, Caesar and Ovid. The master well clothed and fed, lounging in his chair of state, 'hearing the sixth form', who sit or lean round him, in every variety of posture that can indicate indifference or weariness. The usher, an ignorant untrained drudge, - to whom is committed the care of the boarders in their bed-rooms, and the instruction in those inferior subjects known as 'the English branches', - wearing the listless and depressed look of one who has known or has been vainly hoping for better days. The whole scene one of sleepy monotonous existence; resembling rather a gathering of priests and worshippers of Morpheus than of the Muses.

And then the contrast between such a scene, and that presented by the classroom of a Scotch burgh school, crowded with 60 or 100 boys and girls, all nearly of an age, seated in rows at desks or benches, but all placed in the order of merit, with their keen thoughtful faces turned towards the master, watching his every look and every gesture, in the hopes of winning a place in the class, and having good news to bring home to their parents at tea-time. The dux seated at the head of the class, wearing perhaps a medal; the object of envy and yet of pride to all his fellows; fully conscious both of the glory and the insecurity of his position; and taught, by the experience of many falls, the danger of relaxing his efforts for one moment. In front of this eager animated throng stands the master, gaunt, muscular and time worn, poorly clad, and plain in manner and speech, but with the dignity of a ruler in his gestures, and the fire of an enthusiast in his eye; never sitting down, but standing always in some commanding position before the class; full of movement, vigour and energy; so thoroughly versed in his author or his subject that he seldom requires to look at the textbook, which is open in his left hand, while in his right he holds the chalk or the pointer, ever ready to illustrate from map or black board, or perhaps flourishes the ancient 'taws' with which in former days he used to reduce disorderly newcomers to discipline and order. The whole scene is one of vigorous action and masterly force, forming the greatest possible contrast with the monotonous, unmethodical, ill-seconded working of the English teacher". (From the Fearon's "Report on Certain Burgh Schools and other Schools of Secondary Education in Scotland" for the Argyll Commission. Parliamentary Papers, 1867-68, XXVII (V), pp. 51-52).

Appendix DEducational Institute of Scotland,
Resolutions on National Education, 1853

- I. That every endeavour should be used to prevail upon the government to recognize the diplomas assigned by the Institute to the different grades of members, as a sufficient attestation of their qualifications and therefore rendering unnecessary an examination by any officer appointed for the purpose of examining candidates for the office of teacher.
- II. That any system of education which may be devised for Scotland ought to be general and national, and not founded on denominational distinctions; and that the circumstances of the country are such as to afford peculiar facilities for the establishment of a general system.
- III. That the office of teacher ought to be made so attractive by inducements held out by the profession itself, and by a provision for furnishing adequate retiring allowances to superannuated teachers, as to lead able and well-educated men to devote themselves to the profession.
- IV. That in providing for the superintendence and management of a national system of education for Scotland, the educational profession ought to be duly and fairly represented by gentlemen selected by them from their own body and responsible to their respective constituencies.
- V. That any system of education for Scotland or any interference with the educational arrangements at present in operation there, which does not provide for the independence of the teacher, and guarantee the permanence of his appointment, will have an injurious effect upon the education of the country.
- VI. That for the purpose of raising the qualifications of teachers, and increasing their efficiency, and thereby elevating the standard of education in Scotland, due provision should be made for the thorough instruction of young men in the theory and practice of teaching, in addition to the usual course of education, previous to their engaging in the duties of their profession.

Appendix ECaithness Association Resolutions
on National Education, 1853

1. That the parochial schools of Scotland, at the period of their institution were well adapted for the education of the then united people; but that in consequence of the increase of population, and the religious sections into which the community is divided, they are inadequate to the education requirements of the country.
2. That a system of National Education, founded on an extended liberal and Scriptural basis, is now necessary.
3. That, in carrying out such a system of National Education, regard should be had to the necessities of particular localities and a well-endowed school planted wherever there is a sufficient population.
4. That the teachers should not be taken from only one religious denomination but from all evangelical denominations; and that the schools should be placed under the superintendence of properly qualified Government inspectors.
5. That a certain test be applied to all teachers, by which a guarantee should be given that they shall neither directly nor indirectly do anything to the prejudice of the Church of Scotland as presently established.
6. That the salaries of teachers ought to be sufficiently ample to enable them to take that position in society to which, from the importance of the office of teacher, they are entitled and from which they have hitherto been excluded in consequence of their poverty.
7. That a retiring allowance, sufficient to enable superannuated teachers to live in comfortable circumstances, should be provided for all who have taught for a period of twenty-five years, or are incapable of teaching from infirmity.

Appendix FNational Education Association of Scotland, Resolutions on National Education, 1854 (in N.E.A., Report of Public Meeting, 1854).

The subscribers of this document, believing that the state of Scotland and the general feeling of its inhabitants justify and demand the legislative establishment of a comprehensive plan of national education, have determined that an effort shall be made to unite the friends of this great cause on principles at once so general and so definite as to form a basis for practical legislation: and with this view then adopt the following resolutions, and recommend them to the consideration of the country:

1. That while it might be difficult to describe, with a near approach to statistical precision, the exact condition of Scotland at this moment, there can be no doubt that as a people we have greatly sunk from our former elevated position among educated nations, and that a large proportion of our youth are left without education, to grow up in an ignorance miserable to themselves and dangerous to society; that this state of matters is the more melancholy, as this educational destitution is found chiefly among the masses of our crowded cities, in our manufacturing and mining districts, and in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, where the people are not likely spontaneously to provide instruction for themselves; that the quality of education even where it does exist, is often as defective as its quantity; and that this is a state of things requiring an immediate remedy.
2. That the subscribers hold it to be of vital and primary importance that sound religious instruction be communicated to all the youth of the land by teachers duly qualified; and they express this conviction in the full belief that there will never be an enlargement of education in Scotland on a popular and national basis, which will not carry with it an extended distribution of religious instruction; while, from the strong religious views entertained by the great mass of the people of this country, and the interest which they take in the matter of education, the subscribers can see in the increase of knowledge only an enlargement of the desire and of the capacity to communicate a full religious education to the generation whose parents have participated in this advantage.
3. That the parish schools of Scotland are quite inadequate to the educational wants of the country, and are defective and objectionable in consequence of the smallness of the class invested with the patronage, the limited portion of the community from which the teachers are selected, the general inadequacy of their remuneration, and the system of management applicable to the schools, inferring as it does the exclusive control of Church Courts; that a general system of national education, on a sound and popular basis, and capable of communicating instruction to all classes of the community, is urgently called for;

- and that provision should be made to include in any such scheme, not only all the parish schools, but also all existing schools, wherever they are required by the necessities of the population, whose supporters may be desirous to avail themselves of its advantages.
4. That the teachers appointed under the system contemplated by the subscribers, should not be required by law to subscribe any religious test; that normal schools for the training of teachers should be established; that, under a general arrangement for the examination of the qualifications of schoolmasters, the possession of a license of qualification should be necessary to entitle a teacher to become a candidate for any school under the national system; and that provision should be made for the adequate remuneration of all teachers who may be so appointed.
 5. That the duty and responsibility of communicating religious instruction to children have, in the opinion of the subscribers, been committed by God to their parents, and through them to such teachers as they may choose to intrust with that duty; that in the numerous schools throughout Scotland which have been founded and supported by private contribution, the religious element has always held a prominent place; and that, were the power of selecting the masters, fixing the branches to be taught, and managing the schools, at present vested by law in the Heritors of Scotland and the Presbyteries of the Established Church, to be transferred to the Heads of families under a national system of education, the subscribers would regard such an arrangement as affording not only a basis of union for the great mass of the people of this country, but a far better security than any that at present exists both for a good secular and a good Christian education.
 6. That in regard to a legislative measure, the subscribers are of the opinion with the late lamented Dr. Chalmers, that 'there is no other method of extrication' from the difficulties with which the question of Education in connection with religion is encompassed in this country, than the plan suggested by him as the only practicable one, - namely, 'That in any public measure for helping on the education of the people, Government [should] abstain from introducing the element of religion at all into their part of the scheme, and this not because they held the matter to be insignificant - the contrary might be strongly expressed in the preamble of their act - but on the ground that, in the present divided state of the Christian world, they would take no cognizance of, just because they would attempt no control over, the religion of applicants for aid - leaving this matter entire to the parties who had to do with the erection and management of the schools which they had been called upon to assist. A grant by the State upon this footing might be regarded appropriately and exclusively the expression of their value for a good secular education'.

7. That in order to secure the confidence of the people of Scotland generally in a national system of education, as well as to secure its efficiency, the following should be its main features: - 1st, that Local Boards should be established, the members to be appointed by popular election, on the principle of giving the franchise to all male heads of families being householders; and with these boards should lie the selection of masters, the general management of the schools, and the right, without undue interference with the master, to direct the branches of education to be taught. 2nd, that there should be a general superintending authority, so constituted as to secure the public confidence, and to be responsible to the country through Parliament, which, without superseding the Local Boards, should see that their duties are not neglected - prevent abuses from being perpetrated through carelessness or design - check extravagant expenditure - protect the interests of all parties - collect and preserve the general statistics of education - and diffuse throughout the country, by communication with Local Boards such knowledge on the subject of education, and such enlightened views, as their authoritative position, and their command of aid from the highest intellects in the country, may enable them to communicate.

Were such a system adopted, the subscribers are of the opinion that it would be quite unnecessary either for the Legislature or any central authority to dictate or control the education to be imparted in the National Schools, or to prescribe any subject to be taught or any book to be used, and should a measure founded on these suggestions become law, not only would the subscribers feel it to be their duty, but they confidently believe the ministers and religious communities in the various localities would see it to be theirs, to use all their influence in promoting such arrangements as, in the working of the plan, would effectually secure a sound religious education to the children attending the schools.

Appendix GNational Education Association of Scotland, Resolutions on National Education, 1854 (in N.E.A., Report of the Public Meeting, 1854).

1. That a good general system, by which every child in the kingdom may receive a sufficient education, is of essential importance to the well-being of the country; and measures should be taken that the benefits of such a system may be speedily as well as satisfactorily attained. That no system of education which is sectarian or exclusive, or which operates by means of Privy Council grants to different churches or associations, can be said to be efficient; that to really be so, the system must be national, and not denominational; and that under such a system the best qualified teachers should be eligible without regard to sect or party. That the machinery for education in Scotland, however beneficial it may have proved in former times, is not now adapted to the altered circumstances of the country; that in many districts, and especially in the large cities, not only are a great number of school houses and better accommodation required, but the standard of the education itself should be elevated; and that the status of the schoolmaster should be raised, and the remuneration for his labour be made more worthy of his noble position in the community.
2. That, as these extensive advantages cannot be secured without an addition to the funds presently provided by law, the imposition of an assessment would be the equitable, and would, it is believed, be acceptable to the general community - the area of the assessment being so adjusted as to raise the necessary funds without bearing heavily upon any class.
3. That, while it is the declared opinion of the National Education Association, adhered to by the members now present, that the management of the schools, the appointment and removal of schoolmasters, the control over the expenditure, and such of the powers presently vested by law in the heritors and presbyteries of the Established Church as are necessary in the conduct of the new system, should be vested in committees elected by the heritors, and other contributors, and parents having children at the schools, yet, inasmuch as many, who are zealous in the same cause, hold different views on some of these points, this meeting are of the opinion that it is the duty of all the friends of a comprehensive and unsectarian system of national education, reserving all questions of detail, to unite at the present stage in urging her Majesty's Government to introduce a satisfactory measure on their own responsibility.
4. That the necessity which has occurred for adjusting the salaries of the parochial teachers, under the statute of 1803 (43 Geo. III c. 54) is a fitting occasion for securing such a measure as shall not merely prevent the reduction of these salaries, but effect the higher purpose of placing the education of the

Scottish people on a truly national footing; and that, in regard to the latter purpose, it is satisfactory to know that, although the friends of a national system are not agreed as to the mode of securing religious instruction in schools, there is a large amount of agreement among the various classes of the community as to the vital and primary importance of a sound religious education.

5. That Scotland is now ripe for a bill embodying the principles of an unsectarian system of education, that, while there may be matters of local adjustment which may require the appointment of a superintending board under the bill, this meeting earnestly deprecate any delay in the introduction of an education measure on any alleged necessity for preliminary inquiry, or on any other ground, and if the Government, instead of dealing with the question of education in any fragmentary way, would take the present opportunity of introducing such a comprehensive bill, they would secure the support of the country generally, would confer an inestimable boon upon the nation and earn the gratitude of future generations.
6. That the Rt. Hon. Lord Panmure be elected President of the National Education Association (loud cheers), that it be remitted to the acting Committee of the Association to revise the list of office-bearers, and that the office-bearers be authorised to follow out the foregoing resolutions by petitioning Parliament, and the adoption of such measures as may appear to them advisable in the circumstances.

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