

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA
UNDER HENRY FRASER MUNRO

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of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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PREFACE

The idea for this thesis came from the research done in connection with a term paper for Dr. Maurice Keating at St. Mary's University. In reading the Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Education, the writer was struck by their directness, their scholarly tone, and by their analyses of education in Nova Scotia.

Continued study of the Annual Reports, the Journals of Education, and a fairly extensive bibliography related to education in Nova Scotia, has served to confirm a conviction that Henry Fraser Munro was the most outstanding Superintendent of Education ever to serve Nova Scotia and another conviction that his peculiarly visionary approach to his work caused many people to fail to understand and to appreciate the idealistic place he accorded education in the modern democratic state.

One can only say that it would take a much longer work to do justice to the man as an educator and as a personality, but that an honest effort has been made to present him as an official who caused a tremendous growth in education in Nova Scotia and whose influence is still an integral part of the system.

A great many people have shown interest and have given assistance in the preparation of the paper. The librarians at the Nova Scotia Archives and at the Legislative Library have been cheerfully helpful on all occasions. Many persons have given their time for discussions and interviews, and some have offered new avenues of research. In fact, so many people have helped in so many ways that it would be impossible to mention all the names, and a collective word of thanks is offered to all.

A special word of thanks is recorded for Dr. Maurice Keating, who seemed to feel that this period was a suitable theme for a paper and who provided some of the most helpful background. Another special word is due to Father Dan Fogarty, the Dean of Education at St. Mary's University, for his kindness in allowing all the time and freedom that any one could ask.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to survey in some detail the changes and developments in education in the Province of Nova Scotia during the years of the superintendency of Henry Fraser Munro.

Dr. Munro's twenty years of office began in the period just before the depression, extended into the bleak 1930's, and continued until the end of the Second World War. Thus they coincided with a period in which public education, in its objectives and its practice, was being subjected in most countries to the close scrutiny which public institutions receive in times of popular apprehension and concern.

Neither biography nor criticism is a main objective of the thesis. The biographical references in the second chapter are there to provide the background of the man whose thinking dominated education in Nova Scotia for many years and whose influence is at hand in numerous branches of the complex educational system now functioning. There is no attempt to portray adequately the personality of the scholarly humanitarian who influenced his colleagues to the extent that, ten years after

his death, three of them independently referred to him as "the epitome of the cultured gentlemen".¹ Similarly, any critical comment included is incidental and not a main purpose. Critical study, to be worthy of the name, implies a more extensive and intimate knowledge of comparable backgrounds than has been sought for the purposes of this essay. The criticism that may be found will be constructive and friendly because the writer feels that Henry Munro was superior to any superintendent who preceded him, that he gave stature and ideals to Nova Scotia education, and that his broad and philosophical approach to educational problems was not appreciated nor understood by many people, particularly by politicians who considered fiscal competency the main criterion of efficiency.

The main objective of the thesis is to show that under Henry Fraser Munro education in Nova Scotia took on more comprehensive and varied aspects which are now manifest in the equality of opportunity and variety of program available to all of the children of this Province. That he did not originate all his ideas, that he had to be convinced of the value of some sides of education, and that he did not have the flair for administrative detail admired in civil servants, in no way

¹Interviews with Dr. M. E. Keating, Mr. Guy Henson, Mr. G.J. Redmond between July 26 and August 2, 1960.

(3)

detract from the largeness of his views, his consistent presentation of them, and his conviction that a good educational system can change the quality and stature of a people.

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION IN NOVA SCOTIA 1919-1925

The development of education in Nova Scotia can be clearly traced from the days of French control to the present time. From about 1645 until the release of the territory to England in 1713, there were schools in Acadia. These schools were few in number and operated for the most part on a basis of private tutoring. In some instances the French government provided support and there is a record of a school in Louisbourg which received a grant of 1500 livres from the King Of France. It seems likely, judging from early comments, that Acadian education extended little beyond the stage of bare literacy and that it was mainly religious in content. Some indication of the general situation can be gathered from the following comment:

... is the fact that fifty per cent. of the signatures to the petitions, sent from time to time by the Acadians to the English government at Annapolis, are by the petitioners' own hands. This indicates a moderate diffusion among them of at least the rudiments of education.¹

From 1713 the mainland of Nova Scotia was in English

¹James Bingay, Public Education in Nova Scotia (Kingston: The Jackson Press, 1919) pp. 2-3

possession and education was for many years in the control of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Schools and the licensing of teachers were almost entirely in the hands of the Church of England until the Education Acts of 1808 and 1811 provided the beginnings of the administrative structure based on local and governmental support. From these years until 1865, legislation in education dealt with two ideas. The first was inherent in the Acts of 1826 and 1832 and expressed the concept that where schools received government support, they should be free to all children. The second was that assessment for the support of schools should be compulsory. This principle was the subject of much contentious debate and fairly numerous changes in legislation from 1811 to 1865. In that year legislation making assessment for schools compulsory was passed despite the expression of considerable opposition.

At its second reading, opposition to the bill rapidly developed, and from then to the twelfth of April, when the bill passed its third reading in the Assembly, the government was kept busy defeating the numerous amendments which were moved.²

With the passage of the education legislation of 1865, the foundation was set on which public schools were built. Assessment for schools was compulsory, the schools had to be free to those attending them, and the provincial govern-

²Ibid., p. 63

ment, the municipality, and the local section all contributed to the support of the schools. The initiative for the quality of the school and of the education offered, lay with the local school authority. As the urban sections were larger and more wealthy, the result, already very evident before 1865, was that urban education developed in a much superior way when compared with the progress made in rural education. This distinction in quality was not due entirely to wealth but was caused also by the fact that the people who valued education the most lived for the greater part in the urban areas. Thus relative superiority in wealth, a sufficiently large unit to administer effectively, and a body of citizens among whom were more people who placed value on education were the great advantages which gave rise to the general superiority of urban schools. While the merits of the two types of schools are only incidental to this historical background, it is important to note that with the passing of the acts of 1864, 1865, and 1866 the basic organization of the schools was formed and also the relationships between the supporting bodies. As Judge V. J. Pottier says in his report:

From 1866 to 1942 there was no substantial modification of the principles of support laid down in the Acts of 1864-66.³

³Report of the Royal Commission on Public School Finance in Nova Scotia, 1954 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1954), p. 5

In 1942, the school section system of financing and administering public school education in Nova Scotia, was still in effect and virtually unchanged from the structure set forth in the Free School Acts of 1864, 1865 and 1866.⁴

Thus the arbitrary selection of the year 1919 as a point from which to begin viewing in greater detail the system over which Henry Munro took control in 1926 is not without some advantages. It enables one to observe an educational system which had been little changed in nearly two generations. Note can also be taken of the impact of a gigantic war on the system, the problems created by it, and the new and forward thinking which is engendered by world upheavals. Observation can be made, too, of the educational situation in Nova Scotia in the five years before Dr. Munro took office so that one can judge better whether succeeding changes are genuinely due to the new incumbent or whether they would probably have occurred in any case.

Section 93 of the British North America Act states that "in and for each province, the legislature may respectively make laws in relation to education...". In Nova Scotia this clause has been interpreted to mean that the provincial government has the responsibility of providing the organization and administration of public education but, to quote Judge Pottier again:

The said Section 93 did not place the responsibility of providing financial support for education on the Provincial Government alone.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 7.

⁵Ibid., p. 16.

From this interpretation of organizational responsibility and partial financial responsibility there grew an administrative structure whose several branches led back to the authority of the Executive Council as expressed in its legislation with respect to education. When considering matters relative to education the Executive Council was called the Council of Public Instruction.⁶

The members of the Executive Council shall constitute the Council of Public Instruction. Five of such members shall form a quorum. 1918, c.9, s.4.⁶

In practice, before the abolition of the Legislative Council, most of the members were from the House of Assembly with one or two from the Legislative Council. It seems apparent, too, that two or three members of the legislature who were not members of the Executive Council were also appointed to the Council of Public Instruction. The powers of the Council were sweeping and detailed. They ranged from the formulation of the regulations governing the expenditure of monies appropriated by the Legislature for education, to the classification and licensing of teachers, to the prescription of textbooks, and to a host of varied details whose effect was to insure a measure of conformity and uniformity in the schools operating under the Council's authority.

The secretary of the Council of Public Instruction and its executive officer was the Superintendent of Education.

⁶The Education Act (Halifax: Department of Education, 1947), p. 8.

In general terms his duties were:

(a) to have, subject to the Council, general supervision over and direction of the inspectors, the Provincial Normal College, model schools, county academies, high and common schools, and any other educational institutions receiving financial aid from the province;⁷

From the office of the Superintendent extended lines of authority which varied in strength. Authority was strongest where relationships with the public schools were involved and decreased, but did not disappear, in connection with such institutions as the Normal College and the Technical College where the principal or leading figure was a man well qualified for the position.

Under the Superintendent and responsible directly to him were the inspectors. In the words of James Bingay, an inspector was "a local secretary of the C.P.I., and assistant to the Superintendent". The inspector served in a dual capacity. He was an executive and statistician for the schools in his inspectorate and he was also the educational leader for the same area.

On the same level with the inspectors and working closely with them was an official known by the romantic title Acadian Visitor. His duties were confined to the French or Acadian Schools and his office originated from the report of the Acadian Commission of 1902 which recommended that a greater effort be made to establish bi-lingual schools for French-speaking pupils.

⁷Ibid., p.16.

The actual appointment of the Acadian Visitor was not made until 1908. Bingay refers to the necessity for the position as "questionable", although the tenor of his comment on this question leaves little doubt as to his prejudices.⁸

In 1919 the office of Superintendent of Education was occupied by Dr. A. H. MacKay who had assumed the position in 1893. Dr. MacKay was a graduate of Dalhousie University and had occupied the position of Principal of Pictou Academy, a post which carried with it a very considerable degree of prestige in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In 1919 the system which had been administered by Dr. MacKay for twenty-six years contained about 1800 school sections. Some of these were urban but by far the greatest number were rural. A total of 106,982⁹ pupils were in school with an average attendance of 61.6%. The total expenditures on schools were \$2,109,909 which represented the government contribution of \$444,812, the municipal fund of \$204,519, and the amount from local assessment of \$1,460,577.

There were in operation, 2812 classrooms staffed by 3012 teachers of whom 1640 were trained at Normal College. Over fifty per cent of the teachers had less than three years of experience. The largest groups of teachers were the females in the B (Grade XI), the C (Grade X), and D (Grade IX)

⁸James Bingay, Public Education in Nova Scotia (Kingston: The Jackson Press, 1919) pp. 73-75.

⁹All figures are quoted from the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education, 1919 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1920)

categories.

The rate of drop-out from the schools can be assessed by the fact that there were 242 pupils in Grade XII and 30,703 in Kindergarten and Grade I.

The number of inspectorates was twelve and in addition there was the Inspector for Acadian Bilingual Schools. There was a Director of Rural Science who undertook to give rural teachers training in science, nature, and homecraft projects which were suited to the backgrounds of the children they taught. Other institutions connected with the Department of Education were the Provincial Normal College, the College of Agriculture at Truro, the Technical College and the Technical Schools connected with it, and the Nova Scotia School Book Bureau. In addition there was a number of subsidized institutions such as the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind.

Dr. MacKay's report for 1919 is disappointing. One might have expected that, in the year following a great world conflict, a leader in education would attempt to point directions. This is not the case. The report can only be described as prosaic and filled with items which were relatively unimportant to the basic values in education. One receives the impression that the Superintendent saw little necessity to consider improvement, except those of a relatively minor nature. The Superintendent takes satisfaction

in the fact that in 1919 there were only 124 schools closed. The schools were better off than previously despite influenza and the "strong economic call for capable teachers into other employment".

In discussing the problem of educational finance the Superintendent gives great praise to the theory of the Municipal Fund. This fund was established by a levy of fifty cents per person in the municipality. This amount was raised by the taxes on the county assessment and was distributed on the basis of the number of teachers employed by a section, and the total of the days attended by the pupils. There were certain "first" charges against the Municipal Fund. These were payments to the schools for the deaf and the blind according to the number of children attending from the municipality, and there were special payments to "poor" sections, which were areas in which the total assessment did not exceed \$4,000.00.

The Municipal Fund was intended to be a stabilizing factor in the meeting of educational expenditures for it took from the wealthier sections and was distributed to the total number of sections chiefly on a per teacher basis and in assisted sections in excess of the fixed payment per teacher. Unfortunately, by 1919 the Municipal Fund had become a very small part of the financial support, being in that year some \$204,519 or just under ten per cent.

Dr. MacKay apparently did not see that the Municipal Fund had become a minor factor when compared to the amounts received from the government and from local assessments. In this report, speaking of the financial problems in education, he says:

The system is probably the best in existence to balance the inequality of wealth, were it only used as originally intended, or at least as it is fitted to function. We failed to exploit it in the past. Those who feared our system was not up to date failed to see how the Municipal School Fund was all ready to be used with much better effect than the municipal school taxation units lately developed in other provinces. It gives us the equality of taxation advantage, without eliminating local initiative, enthusiasm, and control.⁸

Dr. MacKay's confidence in the efficacy of the Municipal Fund as an equalizing factor was sufficiently great to cause him to recommend that the per inhabitant levy be increased to one dollar. This was done by the legislature in 1920 and the fund as reported for 1921 was \$495,242.⁹ Despite this increase the Municipal Fund remained the smallest source of school revenue, and as total expenditures increased it became proportionally smaller.

The reports of Dr. MacKay lead one to the conclusion that he did not see any great defects in the Nova Scotia system. He equates improvement in education with higher salaries for teachers:

It may be said that the schools today are not much

⁸Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia (Halifax: King's Printer, 1920), p.xv-xvi.

⁹Ibid., 1932, p. xxxix.

improved as compared with last year. But improvement can only be gradual. Salaries are now approaching in many places the level of the competing positions. Our best teachers may be expected to remain in the profession which will henceforth attract the abler men and women going through our universities....The Academic Class will develop into the typical high school teacher, and Class A into the superior common school teacher.¹⁰

He goes on to say that the other classes of teachers will disappear.

Dr. MacKay objected strongly to any form of municipal control or to suggestions of school consolidation. He saw no defects in the system of numerous local school sections and was convinced that the enthusiasm of the people for education would bring any improvements which might be needed. In one of his reports he says:

We have reason to be proud of our people who have so rapidly, voluntarily, and in so many places, so enthusiastically, increased the local vote for the advancement of their schools, especially during the last three years.¹¹

On the question of improvement of educational service through the consolidation of schools he was firm and negative. He believed that good work was being done in the rural schools and that genius was often discovered:

The birth of genius is not confined to the vicinity of a well-staffed school, important as such institutions are.¹²

¹⁰Ibid., 1922, p. xiv.

¹¹Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education For Nova Scotia, 1922 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1923)p. xvii.

¹²Ibid., 1923, p. xxi.

The problems which gave Superintendent MacKay concern were usually those of a minor nature. There appears no discussion of aims or objectives from a philosophical point of view. Even when he became concerned with a matter so vital as health in the schools, he does not suggest in general terms what the objectives of the health program might be but emphasizes the lack of sanitary facilities in the schools, undoubtedly a matter requiring attention but only one facet of a complete health program:

It is respectfully submitted that the earliest possible attention should be given to the construction of sanitary toilets for all schools throughout the Province, that each school not connected with a public water service be supplied with its own well and the water piped to the school room for drinking and ablution purposes.¹³

The 1924 Report refers to two developments which are worthy of mention. There were some administrative changes which lightened the work of the inspectors. The clerical load was lightened by transferring some of the burden to the Education Office, and the payment of the Provincial Aid funds to teachers was also made the duty of the Department. The purpose in relieving the inspectors of clerical detail was to allow them to use more of their time for educational and inspectorial duties.

The other important item in the 1924 Report was the reference to Free Public Library system. The plan was to have a library in each school which was to be available for use by the public of the community as well as by the

¹³Ibid., 1920, p. xxiv-xxv

school. Each library was to be inspected annually, was to be supported locally, and was to be assisted by a small government grant.

The theme of the Superintendent's Reports for the five years preceding the appointment of Dr. Munro is consistently one of satisfaction and optimism. There is simply no critical comment and no constructive suggestions for major improvements in the system. The problem of sufficient qualified teachers was to be solved by favorable economic conditions but not by any administrative action. Consolidation of schools or any consideration of change in the unit of organization was not favored. There was no blueprint of possible post-war improvements and, in fact, the impact of the war was not mentioned except for brief references to educational programs for veterans. The programs for development, valuable as some were, were all of the single item, inexpensive type, and were really variations of the existing system.

The preceding remarks are not stated with the purpose of subjecting Dr. MacKay to severe criticism. They are included to illustrate that he saw nothing seriously wrong with education in Nova Scotia. It is possible that this was the attitude a superintendent was compelled to take. Education has never been a popular expenditure with politicians and in the early twenties it is rare indeed to find

it the subject of debate or of a platform. It has also been stated that Dr. MacKay was essentially an excellent schoolmaster who was at his best in the school or classroom, and was not fitted fundamentally with the broad, critical, and flexible attitude which a public educator requires.¹⁴ In any event, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish that there was much thought given to possible improvements in education in the five years preceding Dr. Munro's appointment.

Fortunately there is some impartial and objective evidence to support the opinions expressed in the preceding pages. Reference to the condition of education in Nova Scotia was made in a study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This organization, supported by the resources of the Andrew Carnegie fortune, has as one of its functions the investigation of various fields of education.¹⁵ In 1922 it published a report of a study conducted in the Maritime Provinces which commented mainly on university education but included some forthright and interesting views on the state of general education.

¹⁴Interview with H. P. Moffatt, Deputy Minister of Education for Nova Scotia, August 6, 1960. Also earlier telephone interview with M. E. Keating, Assistant Supervisor of Schools for Halifax, N. S., July 26, 1960.

¹⁵"Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching", The American Peoples' Encyclopaedia, 4th ed., Vol. IV.

On the subject of politics and public education, the report reads:

Education must "keep its place"; an aggressive policy of public taxation for education is thought to be out of the question for a body that desires reelection; the department of education is managed by whatever proposals a cabinet will consider harmless.¹⁶

The accuracy of this observation is supported by the fact that in the 1925 provincial election, three years after the publishing of this report there is no mention of education in the platforms of either the Conservative or the Liberal Party. The only reference to education is in an editorial glorifying the accomplishments of the long-established Liberal administration. The editor makes a brief reference to "the primacy of our school system"¹⁷, a statement characterised by the pressure of expediency more than by the editorial desire for accuracy.

The Carnegie Report emphasizes the tremendous importance of examinations in the system in Nova Scotia, a tendency which the years have not diminished to any great degree:

Examinations are everywhere, they play a leading part in education, and the selection is merciless. Those who pass, proceed, but there is little effort to guarantee that all who deserve it are made fit to pass.¹⁸

In referring to the attitude of the Cabinet toward

¹⁶William S. Learned and Kenneth C.M. Sills, Education in the Maritime Provinces, Bulletin No. 16 (New York: Carnegie Foundation, 1922), p. 6.

¹⁷The Morning Chronicle (Halifax) June 4, 1925.

¹⁸Learned and Sills, loc. cit.

heavy expenditures for education, and to the apparent fact that the appointed school boards of urban areas were usually composed of people chosen because they would take care to be frugal with education expenditures, the Report says:

These two administrative features are responsible in very great measure at least, for the widespread apathy toward public education in Nova Scotia. It chills one like an east wind.¹⁹

Thus the situation with respect to education in Nova Scotia prior to 1926 can be summarized as follows. The system had been virtually unchanged for sixty years, the provincial government had no firm or positive policy about education, the administration of the Department of Education was advancing no constructive plans involving fundamental changes, and there was no strong public voice urging educational reform. This was the situation to be met by the new superintendent.

¹⁹Ibid., p.7.

CHAPTER II

HENRY MUNRO AND HIS FIRST REPORT

THE MAN

Henry Fraser Munro, the seventh Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, was born in Pictou, Nova Scotia, on March 27, 1878. He was educated at Pictou Academy at a period when it was the most noted school in Nova Scotia and when the load of approximately twenty subjects was so heavy that he described the condition of earnest students at the end of the year as one of suffering from "brain-fag".¹ He was considered an able and, in fact, brilliant scholar and upon completing his work at the Academy, he entered Dalhousie University from which he was graduated in 1899 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Following the completion of his undergraduate degree, he taught English at Pictou Academy from 1900 to 1911. It can be assumed that his teaching experience contributed to his interest in education and provided the background for the very considerable reflection on education which his superintendent's reports show.

After his years of teaching at Pictou, he went to Harvard University where he received his Master of Arts de-

¹Interview with M. E. Keating, Assistant Supervisor of Schools for Halifax, N. S., July 26, 1960.

gree in 1914, at the same time serving as an assistant lecturer in international law. From 1914 until 1921, he lectured in international law and diplomacy at Columbia University.² During the Columbia period he wrote, both alone and in collaboration, essays and books on international law, Canadian history, and citizenship.

In 1921, he returned to Dalhousie as the Eric Dennis professor of political science, a position which he held until 1926 when he accepted the post of Superintendent of Education and Secretary to the Council of Public Instruction.

He was associated with a number of organizations, all of which were formed for cultural or educational pursuits. He served as president of the Canadian Education Association and also as president of the Canadian Association for Adult Education. In 1932 he had been a delegate to the League of Nations Assembly. During the years 1940-46, he was the chairman of Atlantic Coast Committee of the Canadian Legion Educational Services. He served also as chairman of the Nova Scotia Regional Libraries Commission. Because of his many public services, he was created an officer of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

²Unless stated otherwise, all biographical material from H. P. Moffatt, "Munro, Henry Fraser", Encyclopedia Canadiana, VII(1958), 202.

His students at Dalhousie regarded him as a brilliant and inspiring teacher. His scholarship was extensive and very definitely along classical lines.³ He took a keen interest in the work of students who were genuine scholars and spared no effort to help them.

It has been stated earlier that education was not a platform item of either the Liberal or the Conservative party in the early 1920's. The rumor persists, however, that when the Conservatives swept to power in July, 1925, they felt that something must be done to improve education. In just about one year, the former Superintendent retired, and the post was offered to Dr. Munro who took the office on August 1, 1926.

Immediately and in succeeding years, the new Superintendent gathered about him a group of brilliant, energetic young men who have since risen in the field of education or have been notably successful in other fields.⁴ Dr. Munro commanded the respect of his staff and relationships were always friendly but fairly formal. Once he had indicated the objectives of an assignment, he left the detail

³Interview with G. J. Redmond, Manager of Radio Station CHNS, Halifax, N. S., August 2, 1960.

⁴Among them are H. P. Moffatt, now Deputy Minister of Education for N.S.; Guy Henson, now Director of Dalhousie Institute of Public Affairs; G. J. Redmond, Manager of CHNS, Halifax, N.S.; G. C. Campbell, Principal of Sydney Academy and historian;

to the person given the task. To some degree he overdid this and at times created the impression that he was no longer interested in a project.⁵

It is difficult to assemble the facts about the political contacts which were an inseparable part of his job. Conjecture has given rise to the story that before accepting the position from the Rhodes government in 1926 he had refused the post under the Armstrong government. This guess has led to the persistence of a rumor that he and the late Liberal leader, Angus L. MacDonald, were not particularly compatible. There is possibly some truth in this just as there is probably truth in the carefully phrased suggestions that Dr. Munro was at his best in planning the broad needs of a program and at his weakest in determining the details of procedure or in projecting the full fiscal impact of his proposals. Situations and characteristics like these can seldom be fully substantiated, although the writer has some confirmation from sources which prefer not to be quoted.

In any case, it was the appointment of this scholarly man which resulted in the many developments which have changed completely the character of education in Nova Scotia. There is, too, something ironic in the fact that it was a classicist and not a professionally trained educator who

⁵Interview with G. J. Redmond, August 2, 1960, and H. P. Moffatt, August 6, 1960.

created the situations which have resulted in the numerous criticisms of "modern education".

The First Report

When Henry Munro took office on August 2, 1926, he had been a professor of political science at Dalhousie for four years. He had completed his last year and had been in the western part of Canada during the summer. When he was interviewed on his return he told the reporter:

I shall go into the office Monday morning, and take over, feeling my way very much for the first.⁶

It is evident that he became familiar very rapidly with the problems facing him for his first report dated January 20, 1927, is noteworthy for his analysis of the needs and purposes of education. His perception is the more remarkable when one remembers that when his report was written he had been in office less than six months.

He began his report by paying a graceful tribute to his predecessor who had been his Principal in his student days at Pictou Academy. Having done this by giving Dr. MacKay credit for maintaining and extending the system⁷, he proceeds to outline in broad and precise terms the function and the necessities of a good educational system.

⁶The Morning Chronicle (Halifax), August 2, 1926.

⁷Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1926 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1927), p. ix.

One of the first points made in his report is that the educational problem is world-wide:

The field of education, as it opens before us today, is wider, more various, but less clearly defined than that which the late Superintendent contemplated thirty-five years ago. Not only are new subjects and methods proposed, but the aims and scope of education itself are everywhere matters of keen debate. It is important for Nova Scotians to keep this in mind, for sometimes they are prone to think that their educational problems are peculiar to the Province.⁸

Coming directly to the organization of education in Nova Scotia he deploras the multiplicity of rural school boards and shows his awareness of the great disparity between the quality of urban education and rural education. This inequality is clearly illustrated by a study of the license distribution of rural and urban teachers.

TABLE I

LICENSE DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL AND URBAN
TEACHERS IN NOVA SCOTIA FOR SCHOOL YEAR
1925-26^a

LICENSE	RURAL TEACHERS		URBAN TEACHERS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Academic	..	3	30	19
A	11	65	57	199
B	34	327	23	486
C	35	614	8	276
D	37	748	6	80
Temporary and Permissive	34	222	1	5
TOTAL	151	1979	125	1065

^aCompiled from: Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1927 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1927), p. xiii.

⁸Ibid., p. x.

As the foregoing table clearly shows, the great proportion of the teachers with the lower licenses were to be found in the rural schools. Two other factors also worked against the rural schools. The average length of tenure was much less than in the urban schools, and the teachers with university training, among whom were to be found the leaders and scholars in the profession, were greatly concentrated in the urban systems. At that, less than six per cent of the teaching personnel had university degrees in the year reported in Table 1.⁹

On the question of the democratic control of the schools the Superintendent made two observations. He noted that the sectional boards of trustees function more in response to the people because they were elected at annual schools meeting; whereas urban boards were appointed in part by the local government and in part by the provincial government. The great difficulty with the rural schools was the high degree of over-organization due entirely to the very large number of rural school sections each with its own board.

His second comment in connection with the democratic functioning of the schools was a reminder that women were eligible for membership on boards and should be encouraged to assume the privilege and responsibility:

⁹Of the teachers reported in Table One, 195 had university degrees, of whom 163 were in towns and cities.

Hence she has a distinctive contribution to make to the schools and should be given every opportunity to play her part as citizen, voter and trustee.¹⁰

He saw a close connection between the economic status of the teacher and the problem of staffing the schools with people of professional standing:

The problem of putting the professionally trained in every school in the Province is essentially one of finance. But the administrative difficulty also looms large.¹¹

Improvement was vital but it could be made only over a period of years.

In his first official report Dr. Munro, as has been reported, saw that the differences in quality between rural and urban education were caused by the weaknesses in administration and by the qualitative distribution of the categories of teachers. When he proceeded to report on the distribution of the pupils in the schools there was sufficient evidence to show the relationship as one of cause and effect.

Seventy per cent of the pupils in the schools were not going beyond Grade 8 and the High Schools Grades, including Grade 9, had just over ten per cent of the total school enrolment.

¹⁰Ibid., p. xii.

¹¹Ibid., p. xiv.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF PUPILS IN NOVA SCOTIA FOR
SCHOOL YEAR 1925-26^b

RURAL	60,288	COMMON	100,443
URBAN	52,103	HIGH SCHOOL	11,948
TOTAL 112,391		112,391	

^bIbid., p. xv.

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION BY GRADES OF RURAL AND URBAN
HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS FOR SCHOOL YEAR
1925-26^c

GRADE	RURAL	URBAN
IX	3125	2412
X	1637	2049
XI	732	1395
XII	4	595
TOTAL	5498	6451

^cIbid., p. xv.

From Table 3, it can be observed that almost one-half of the High School students were in the rural schools, with the poorest teachers. It was also the practice in these schools for the grades to be together, whether there were six or eleven. Thus particularly in Grades XI and XII there was a very great difference between rural and urban population in the proportion of pupils achieving matriculation

status. Dr. Munro noted that only one and one-half per cent of the total school population entered college, and it is a safe inference that the percentage of the rural school population was much less.

In his first report, Dr. Munro shows that his concept of curriculum is one based on the child rather than on the subject.

The problem of the course of study is today based not on the uniformity of the pupil mind but on its infinite variety.¹²

In his opinion, the schools did not exist in a vacuum but were interrelated with the whole social life of the community. He had pointed out the many areas in which the structure of the schools needed improvement but he also saw that the means of improvement were largely economic:

If they (the schools) have failed to realize their perfect work the cause is largely economic--.... Nova Scotia, in common with the rest of the Maritime Provinces, has been caught in the doldrums for a time. But there are signs that the trade winds are beginning to blow and their beneficent influence will surely touch the whole school system of the Province and, so far forth, help to revitalize it. A fine spirit pervades the teaching body. An intelligent public opinion in education is steadily being formed.¹³

In summary of this first report of the new superintendent it can be said that he showed remarkable insight into the fundamental aspects of education. He postulated

¹²Ibid., p. xxv.

¹³Ibid., p. xxvii.

the basic necessity as one of generous economic support, and on this support would depend and could be built a true teaching profession, a true equality of educational opportunity, a more effective administrative structure, and a curriculum adapted to pupil requirements.

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHING PROFESSION UNDER DR. MUNRO

Qualifications and Training

In his first report and in his last report, Henry Munro emphasized his conviction that good education depended upon an adequate supply of educated and trained teachers. The consistency of his viewpoint may be had from the reading of two quotations:

In the field of education there is much diversity of view. But on one point unanimity prevails. All agree that the teacher holds the key position. From the kindergarten to the university.¹

Again, it may be repeated, the supreme thing needed, in common with the rest of the troubled world, is the emergence of an adequately-trained, socially-adjusted teaching profession with a secure status, conscious of its own significance as the determinant of a new society and prepared to magnify its office.²

The first of these comments was written in his first report and the second was the closing paragraph in his last report written in February, 1947.

Having established the esteem in which he held the teacher, one can now proceed to note in some detail how the teaching profession fared in the twenty years during which Dr. Munro was superintendent. There are three main

¹Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1926 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1927), p. xxiv.

²Ibid., 1946, p. xxxv.

criteria by which the record can be assessed. These are the changes in the qualifications which occurred in the period, the changes in the degree of security offered the teacher at the end of retirement, and the changes in the range of salaries.

Judgement on the improvements in the professional and economic statuses of the teacher in Nova Scotia must in some degree be modified by an acknowledgement that the war years from 1939 to 1945 affected considerably objectives in both of these directions. With such modification must also be included an admission that most of the 1930's were depression years in which unqualified progress was difficult to achieve.

The most serious defect in the teaching profession in 1926, when Dr. Munro became the Superintendent of Education, was the ease with which a person could become a teacher in the public schools of Nova Scotia. Of the 3320 teachers in service in 1925-26, 60.2% had a license of C (Second Rank) or lower, and 1373 had no professional training whatever.³

There were two routes to the teaching profession. One was by writing the examinations set to establish Minimum Professional Qualifications. At one time, professional subjects of pedagogical content were included in the actual

³Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1926 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1927), p. xv.

high school courses. These were required subjects for the course and examinations had to be written.⁴ In 1893, these subjects were transferred to the Normal College curriculum,⁵ but the privilege of writing the examinations was open to those high school students who were willing to prepare for them by self-study and who wished to become teachers without attending a training course. As early as 1919, Bingay was very critical of this means of entering the teaching profession:

It is hardly necessary to state that the examination is purely a written test on prescribed texts, there being no means by which the examiners may know whether the candidate has any natural or acquired aptitude for teaching. It would be a decided reform to abolish these examinations, ensuring the necessary supply of teachers by making the recompense for their services attractive enough to induce more to train seriously for the profession.⁶

The M.P.Q. examinations were open to holders of Grade X, XI, and XII certificates but in practice were written at the same time as the high school examinations. Success in both examinations entitled the candidate to a license one rank lower than attendance at Normal College would have entitled him.⁷

The other route to the teaching profession was by means of attendance at the Provincial Normal College at

⁴James Bingay, Public Education in Nova Scotia (Kingston: The Jackson Press, 1919), p. 104.

⁵Ibid., p. 104

⁶Ibid., p. 113-14.

⁷Ibid., p. x.

Truro. This was the preferred route but it, also, was open to the criticism of being too easy. Possession of a Provincial Grade IX certificate entitled one to apply for admission to the Normal College for the shorter course resulting in possession of a D (Third Rank) License. A short course of six weeks in the spring was open to university graduates. This policy had been adopted in 1915 to help alleviate the teacher shortage caused by the out-break of World War I and was still being followed in 1926.⁸

Thus, to recapitulate, when the new superintendent took office in 1926, a person could secure one of five license ranks by holding a certificate varying from Grade IX to a university degree and by writing an appropriate examination without training or by attending a Normal College course varying from six weeks to nine months.

Dr. Munro deplored these two most undesirable factors affecting the quality of the teaching profession, that of permitting entrance without training and that of permitting entrance to training with far too low academic requirements. Of the untrained teacher, he said:

Hence the intellectual in-breeding in many of the country schools. The untrained teacher, often the product of the very school over which she presides, transmits her office, it may be, to her own pupil

⁸J. P. McCarthy, "One Hundred Years of Teacher Education", Journal of Education, March, 1956, (Halifax: King's Printer), pp. 8-9

equally untrained.⁹

The reform of the requirements for entering the teaching profession began in his first year of office. Three important steps were announced within three months of his assumption of his new post. In October, 1926, came the announcement that there would be no more M.P.Q. examinations.¹⁰ Writing about this step in his 1927 Report, the superintendent said:

It is unnecessary to repeat that the essential factor in any system of education is the trained teacher. Over 40% of the profession in Nova Scotia are still untrained, and it was felt that, so long as an alternative route to a license remained open, this condition would obtain. Accordingly, the Minimum Professional Qualifications examinations, so called, have been abolished.... After August 31, 1930 professional training at a regularly recognized institution for the training of teachers will be a prerequisite for a license to teach in the Province.¹¹

He went on to state that any license which might have to be issued in the intervening period would be temporary until August 31, 1931, and would be then cancelled unless the conditions of qualifications were fulfilled. At the same time he announced the abolition of the D (Third Rank) License with the condition that all permanent licenses of this rank would still be valid. Associated with these pronouncements, which are interrelated, was another which said

⁹Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1926 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1927) p. xxiii.

¹⁰Journal of Education, October 1926, (Halifax: King's Printer), p. 261.

¹¹Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1927, (Halifax: King's Printer, 1928) p. xiv.

that as there would be no further necessity for holding Provincial Grade IX examinations, none would be held on and after June, 1927.¹²

The second important step related to teacher qualification had to do with the training of teachers who were university graduates. On frequent occasions, Dr. Munro had spoken of the importance of having university-trained teachers in the profession. The brief spring training given university graduates at the Normal College was considered inadequate and unsatisfactory, by both the administration of the Normal College¹³ and by the Superintendent.¹⁴

Accordingly the 1927 Report contained the new arrangements which had been completed with three universities to enable students to take their education training as part of their final year. Training in English and the Social Sciences was mandatory together with three professional courses in education. There was also to be some practice teaching as arranged by the university. The professors of education were to be advisers to the Superintendent for which service they were to receive an honorarium. In addition they were to be available for service at teachers' institutes and similar professional gatherings.¹⁵

¹² Journal of Education, October 1926, (Halifax: King's Printer), p. 261.

¹³ McCarthy, loc. cit.

¹⁴ Annual Report, 1927, loc. cit., p. xii.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. xiii.

It was intended by Dr. Munro and the universities that the professional studies in education be extended to the work of a graduate year when circumstances of teacher supply made the action expedient. This possibility was realized in 1933 when the cooperating universities, Acadia, St. Francis Xavier, and Dalhousie-Kings, each added a year of teacher training beyond the work for the undergraduate degree.¹⁶

The sincerity and hope which motivated Dr. Munro in his policies in connection with the training of university graduates are well illustrated by the following quotations:

The Education Office, therefore, is guided in the present undertaking by a wish to attract into the ranks of the teaching profession as many graduates and university-trained men and women as possible.¹⁷

It is hoped that Distinction and Honour courses, as well as post-graduate work in Education, may ultimately be developed.¹⁸

The third action affecting qualifications of teachers was the organization of the Nova Scotia Summer School at Halifax in 1927. The purpose of this school was to offer to teachers of the higher licenses, summer courses in pedagogical and professional fields and also courses with a content in the social sciences and in cultural pursuits.¹⁹ In the first six years of operation, attendance at the Summer School was optional, but from 1933 attendance was

¹⁶ Ibid., 1932, p. xxiii.

¹⁷ Journal of Education, October, 1926 (Halifax: King's Printer), p. 261.

¹⁸ Annual Report, 1927, loc. cit., p. xiv.

¹⁹ Ibid., 1932, p. xxiii.

mandatory as a condition for making B and A licenses permanent.²⁰ The staff of the Summer School was selected from local educators and from specialists lecturing in distant universities and professional schools.

A typical characteristic of Dr. Munro's proposals, exemplified by the following remark anent the introduction of the Summer School, is that each was always fortified by his wide knowledge of its success in other countries or some region of this continent:

Among the recognized agencies for increasing the efficiency of the teaching profession is the summer school, an institution which is now everywhere established both in America and abroad.²¹

Continuing with the policy of raising the minimum education requirement for admission to the teaching profession, Dr. Munro abolished the Provincial Examination for Grade X in 1931. He also announced that no more C (Second Rank) Licenses would be issued after 1933. To this end attendance at Normal College for a complete year was imperative after 1932, and the same year marked the end of the Normal College Summer School which had provided the brief training for many of those teachers holding Second Rank licenses.²² Except for permissive licenses entitling a person to teach for one year in one section only, no license based on education lower than Grade XI has been issued since 1932. During the war, however, it was found

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 1927, p. xv.

²²Ibid., 1932, p. xxiii.

necessary to make some concessions in the training period and to issue temporary licenses.²³ Provision was made for a shorter attendance during the Normal College year, and the Normal College Summer School was reopened.²⁴ Despite this retrograde action, it was still necessary to follow the pattern set in 1933 to obtain a permanent license, but the reduced training periods for temporary licenses were extended well into the post-war period before they were abandoned.²⁵

In six years, Dr. Munro did more to improve the qualifications of teachers than had been done in any previous period in Nova Scotia's educational history. Since then, particularly since the war, attention has been directed to the importance of raising the standard of admittance to Grade XII and to a Normal College course lasting two years instead of one. At the time of writing, these requirements are still in the planning stage.²⁶

To summarize the contributions of Dr. Munro to the enhancement of the teaching profession, one must first of all pay tribute to his firm conviction that the teacher was the most important element in education. In the second instance recognition must be accorded his belief that teachers required both education and training. Thirdly,

²³Ibid., 1942, pp. 121-22.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., 1956, p. 114.

²⁶Ibid., 1959, pp. 12, 108.

he must be credited with a dynamic policy which marked the beginning and the continuance in Nova Scotia of interest in a genuine teaching profession. It is a fact that teaching as a profession is still in an evolutionary stage. That it is evolving at all, is in greatest measure due to Dr. Munro's idealistic conception of what a teacher should really be.

To close the discussion of the development of qualifications in the teaching profession, the following table illustrates that the aims of the late superintendent are being realized despite the setback of the last war. The years selected for the table are his first year of office, the year the war began, his last complete year of office, and the last year for which statistics are complete.

TABLE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS' LICENSES FOR FOUR
SELECTED YEARS^a

Year Ending	Number Teachers	Univ. Grad.	% of (3)	Ac	A	B	C	D & Per.	% of 8 & 9
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1926	3320	195	5.9	52	332	870	933	1133	62.2
1939	3829	645	16.8	140	1510	1444	601	137	19.3
1946	4276	519	12.1	144	1524	1127	749	732	37.0
1959	6177	1430	23.2	330	3648	1396	533	270	13.0

^aCompiled from: Annual Reports of Department of Education, 1946 and 1959, pp. xxv and 30 respectively. License categories of 1959 transposed to those of 1926-46.

The Pension Plan

Reference has been made to Dr. Munro's conviction that most of the problems of education could be solved by financial aid. In this connection he thought that the tremendous turnover in the teaching profession would be alleviated by the security offered by a pension plan.

The annuity regulations in effect when Dr. Munro undertook his duties were an eloquent commentary of the status of the teaching profession in the years from 1906 to 1926. An annuity act passed in 1906 had provided that teachers retiring under certain conditions of service or health would receive an annuity equal to their provincial aid at the time of retirement. As the provincial aid then was based solely on the license held, it did not change in amount from the teacher's first year of service until her last. The scale of provincial aid varied from sixty dollars a year for a teacher with a D License to two hundred ten dollars a year for a teacher with an Academic License. Accordingly the annuity varied from sixty dollars a year for the teachers with the lowest license to something over five hundred dollars for holders of Academic Licenses meeting certain qualifications, for certain more generous concessions had been granted the holders of the highest licenses,

by amendments to the original act of 1906.²⁷

For most teachers, the retirement situation to be faced in 1926 was the acceptance of an annuity of sixty or ninety dollars a year, if one bears in mind that the majority of teachers were in the two lowest categories.

Within two years the new superintendent was able to announce in his report that a pension plan had gone into effect for which legislation had been passed at the 1928 session of the House of Assembly.

By present day standards, the 1928 pension plan was quite insufficient for its purpose, which was to give teachers a measure of security in their retirement years. Compared, however, with the meagre provision previously in effect the details of the plan were fairly generous.

The fund was to be known as The Nova Scotia Teachers' Pension Fund. It was to be contributory in nature with the teachers' contribution of eight per cent of their Provincial Aid being matched by a like contribution from the consolidated revenue of the province. The fund was to be administered by the Provincial Treasurer and a yearly report of its state was to be incorporated into the Annual Report of the Superintendent.²⁸

²⁷James Bingay, Public Education in Nova Scotia (Kingston: The Jackson Press, 1919), pp. 84-85.

²⁸"Nova Scotia Teachers' Pension Act, 1928", Journal of Education, (December, 1932), p. 96.

Pensions were to be based on the Provincial Aid a teacher was receiving at the time of retirement, and were to be three times that amount. Thus the highest pension, based on the new scale of Provincial Aid also authorized in 1928, was \$1020.00 and the set minimum for a D License, was \$365.00. Retirement could be elected after thirty-five years of service, after thirty years if the age of sixty had been reached, or after fifteen years for reasons of health.²⁹

At the same time as the enactment of the Pension legislation, consideration was given to the plight of the annuitants who were under the earlier legislation. Action was not taken until the legislature met in 1932, but in that year the annuities were increased to one and one-half times the new provincial aid.³⁰

At the end of five years of operation, the number of pensioners had reached one hundred, and the fund was increasing yearly. This situation prompted Dr. Munro to report:

The state of the Pension Fund reveals a steadily increasing balance which, it is expected, will take care of the charges on the fund for years to come, if not ultimately rendering it self-sustaining.³¹

The foregoing statement gives one cause to consider whether Dr. Munro had the facility for detail that he might have had. The pension plan was sorely needed and great cre-

²⁹Ibid., p. 97.

³⁰Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1932, (Halifax: King's Printer, 1933) p. xxi.

³¹Ibid., 1933, p. xvii.

dit is due for the conception of it, but it was not actuarially sound and the five year trend, good as it seemed, offered sufficient signs of the trouble that was to come.

By 1939, his report on the state of the Pension Fund read:

As was pointed out in the Report for 1938, the Pension Fund, which was created during the first years of the present system, is now dwindling, with the result that the annual contributions together with the interest on Fund investments do not meet the annual pension payments, as the system is not actuarial.³²

At the 1941 session of the Legislature, an amendment to the Pension Act provided for a deduction of sixteen per cent from the Provincial Aid instead of eight, with a like contribution from the provincial government. This amendment doubled the yearly receipts of the Fund and made the situation for the future seem quite optimistic to the Superintendent:

It would seem that this adjustment will keep the Fund self-sustaining for some years to come and that no major change in the original Act will be required to maintain the Fund until the number of pensioners become stationary.³³

His optimism was not justified. Within a very few years it became obvious that the Fund would never be sound. Combined with this fact were the demands from the teachers for a revised pension plan with pensions based on salary rather than Provincial Aid. Thus the first report written

³² Ibid., 1939, p. xviii.

³³ Ibid., 1941, p. xix.

by H. P. Moffatt, the Assistant Superintendent, states:

The capital sum in the Pension Fund increased slightly over the figure for the prevailing year. The Fund, however, is not in a sound actuarial position, as payments by current teachers are being used to pay those now on pension-- a practice that cannot continue indefinitely without disaster. The Nova Scotia Teachers' Union working in cooperation with the Department has prepared a new teacher's pension Bill, which is now being examined by an actuary.³⁴

The new Bill was passed by the Legislature in 1949 and provided greater pension benefits based on larger contributions. At the time of writing, it, too, is under revision chiefly with a view to the impact of meeting increased benefits requested by the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union. The details of these are not within the scope of this work, but the topic may be closed with the following quotation:

The second five-year actuarial study is now being completed and the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union has requested that the actuarial soundness of the fund be examined carefully to determine whether or not some of the rather stringent provisions now contained in the Act can be modified.³⁵

The first Pension Act was really conceived, as its critics say, without the actuarial consideration it should have had to guarantee soundness. It was, nonetheless, a tremendous step forward in the degree of security needed to make teaching an attractive profession. Dr. Munro deserves great credit for seeing the need and for bringing about action in connection with it. The mathematical fac-

³⁴Ibid., 1947, p. xviii.

³⁵Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1959

ility that he apparently lacked may well have been better for the teachers than they knew, for undoubtedly a plan in 1928 calling for tremendous government outlay would have been difficult to obtain.

Teachers' Salaries Under Dr. Munro

It has been established that Dr. Munro, in his capacity of Superintendent of Education, emphasized on every appropriate occasion the basic economic structure upon which an improved educational system must be built.

In his 1926 Report he discussed the relationship which must obtain between the community and the teacher. He said that the community must recognize the worth of the educated and trained teacher, but that at the same time, the teacher must become conscious of the importance of his profession. In short, the rewards of the teaching profession depended upon the degree of recognition and value the community and teachers accorded each other. He finished his discussion with the statement:

Hence an improved financial status must be in sight before the Department of Education can require all its teachers to become professionally trained. But given such a teaching body in the Province, imbued with a love of its work and clearly informed as to its functions, and the future of education in Nova Scotia will be assured.³⁶

³⁶ Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1926 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1927), p. xxv.

The salary of the teacher in Nova Scotia depended upon three factors. These were the Provincial Aid, the Municipal Fund, and the contribution of the local school board. In theory the first two sources were intended as supplementary grants to augment local effort, but in practice, for most of Dr. Munro's term of office, they were an extremely important part of the total income of the teacher. It has already been pointed out that the Municipal Fund varied very little from year to year. Therefore, while it was a valuable grant toward the salary of the teacher, it was not a source from which an increase might confidently be expected. Local assessments were difficult to get increased. Some of the townshad fairly good scales, but for the most part, salaries were low. Thus the most likely source from which to get increases applying universally was the Provincial Aid because it came from provincial revenue which was, relatively speaking, more fluid than the other sources. As a result, it must be reported that the main improvements in teachers' income during Dr. Munro's administration came from the action of the provincial government.

While Dr. Munro is on record many times as favouring good salaries for teachers, one must recognize that the greatest improvements in salaries came during and after World War II, and particularly after The Nova Scotia Teach-

ers Union became stronger and more militant in its representations. It is not pertinent to this paper to discuss the nature of the demands or the negotiations but it would be a serious oversight to fail to record that the Teachers' Union played a major role in salary improvement.³⁷

The first step resulting in a salary improvement was an increase in Provincial Aid in 1928. Mention has already been made that this grant was paid on the basis of license and before 1928 ranged from sixty dollars for a D License to two hundred ten dollars for an Academic License.³⁸

It had been Dr. Munro's concern to consider the teacher as the first object of the reforms he considered necessary. This had been true in his moves to improve qualifications and in the inauguration of a pension plan. The same purpose motivated him in the revision of Provincial Aid. To support his contention that the teaching profession had to be made more attractive from the aspect of holding entrants he introduced into the new scale of Provincial Aid, the principle of rewarding for experience as well as for qualifications. Thus the new scale gave more than the old one for license held and considerable increases, from

³⁷Roy Ernest Love Watson, "The Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organizations" (Unpublished Doctor's thesis, University of Toronto, 1960) pp. 121-22

³⁸Bingay, loc. cit.

a percentage viewpoint, for experience.

TABLE 5
PROVINCIAL AID SCALE INTRODUCED IN 1928^a

Experience	Ac	A	B	C	D
0-5 yrs.	\$230	190	155	115	75
6-10 yrs.	260	200	160	120	80
11-20 yrs.	280	220	175	130	90
21-up yrs.	340	265	210	160	105

^aThe Education Act (Halifax: Department of Education, 1947), pp. 46-49.

From 1928 until 1941 there was no further government action taken to increase salaries. In each year the Superintendent referred to the trend of salaries, but the improvement brought about by local action was meagre, to phrase it as generously as possible. It is true that the years of depression were felt heavily in many parts of Nova Scotia, but it is probably just as true to say that there was no local spirit for the improvement of teachers' salaries. Reporting in 1932, The Superintendent quoted an average salary of \$757 compared with a 1927 average, before the increase of Provincial Aid, of \$669.³⁹ It takes little research to conclude that this increase was due primarily to the new scale of government contribution.

Without describing the detailed changes from year to year, it is sufficient to show the static condition of

³⁹ Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1932 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1933), p. xx.

salaries to note that in the 1939 Report, Dr. Munro, speaking of average salaries said:

This was further increased last year to \$778, the highest average yet attained.⁴⁰

In 1941 the Legislature added fifty dollars to the provincial payment to each teacher. Half of this was a permanent addition to Provincial Aid, and the other half was intended as a wartime bonus.⁴¹ As 1941 was the year in which the pension contribution was increased, the net effect on spendable income was almost insignificant.

There was some effect on salaries with the passage of the legislation for the Larger School Unit in 1942, but as that is part of the rather long story of the development of the change in administrative structure, it will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Substantial grants were added to salaries by the action of the Council of Public Instruction in 1944. These arose from a militant and publicized request of The Nova Scotia Teachers' Union.⁴² The request had been for a flat increase of \$300 a teacher, but the action of the government took the form of grants ranging from fifty dollars to three hundred dollars based mainly on experience.

⁴⁰Ibid., 1939, p. xxvi.

⁴¹Ibid., 1941, p. xlii.

⁴²Watson, loc. cit., pp. 106-116.

TABLE 6
SALARY GRANTS FROM PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
EFFECTIVE 1944-45^a

Experience	License	Amount
0 yrs.	Perm. D to Ac.	\$100.00
1-5 yrs.	"	150.00
6-10 yrs.	"	200.00
11-20 yrs.	"	250.00
21-up yrs.	"	300.00
1-up yrs.	Temp. C	100.00
0 yrs.	"	50.00
0-up yrs.	Permiss- ives	50.00

^aCompiled from: Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1944, (Halifax: King's Printer, 1945), p. ix.

These grants were not added to Provincial Aid but were given to the school boards for distribution. This action foreshadowed a policy of salary payment which was soon to become the prevailing practice for all teachers:

These increases are to be paid to school boards... It is hoped this payment through the boards will ultimately lead to a simplified provincial scale in which local salaries, provincial aid and the recent government supplement will all be combined and paid to the teacher from one source.⁴³

The return of Angus L. MacDonald to the position of Premier of Nova Scotia introduced a fresh approach to the consideration of teachers' salaries. While Mr. MacDonald had been in the Federal Cabinet, his position in Nova

⁴³Report of Superintendent, 1944, loc. cit., p. ix.

Scotia had been held by Mr. A. S. MacMillan who was not willing to undertake projects involving large expenditures.⁴⁴

Early in 1946 a joint committee on salaries was organized. The committee was composed of representatives from the Department of Education, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, and the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union.⁴⁵

The report of the committee was to recommend the introduction of a Minimum Salary Scale to become effective in the year 1946-47. For all rural teachers and for many urban teachers, this scale was an undreamed of improvement over previous earnings. It provided a base below which no teacher was to be paid and it introduced, at least implicitly, certain principles of salary payment. These were the single scale of salary, irrespective of grade taught or of the sex of the teacher; recognition of differences of training and qualifications; recognition of experience; and administrative responsibility for principals and vice-principals. While it was received with approval and enthusiasm by most teachers, its effect was to reduce the salary advantage heretofore enjoyed by urban teachers and also to reduce the salary advantage that the senior high school teacher had traditionally enjoyed.⁴⁶ The money to introduce and to maintain the scale was all to come from the provincial

⁴⁴Watson, loc. cit., p. 121

⁴⁵Watson, loc. cit., p. 122

⁴⁶Watson, loc. cit., pp. 132-135

treasury, and it was estimated that the cost of the scale would require an addition provincial yearly outlay of \$1,200,00.⁴⁷ The scale which went into effect in 1946 provided a minimum salary of \$900 for the lowest permanent license and additions for qualifications and experience formed the salary for other licenses. In 1947 the basic salary was increased to \$1020 and increases were given for years of training and for experience.

TABLE 7

SALARY RANGES PROVIDED BY MINIMUM SALARY
SCALE INTRODUCED IN 1947-48^a

License	Salary Range	Increment Span	No. Increments
Ac	\$1920-2640	1-20 yrs.	12
H.S.	1740-2460	1-20 yrs.	12
A	1200-1920	1-20 yrs.	12
B	1020-1740	1-20 yrs.	12
B(1946 on)	1020-1500	1-9 yrs.	8
C	900-1140	1-5 yrs.	4
C	900-1020	1-3 yrs.	2

Increments of \$60 a year; allowance for each year of training \$180; allowance for principals \$100 up based on number of departments.

^aWatson, loc. cit., p. 139.

⁴⁷Report of Superintendent, 1947, loc. cit., p. xxvi.

The positive development of teachers' salaries since 1947 is not a matter for this discussion, and the question of salaries under Dr. Munro can be closed with a few brief comments. Under his administration, salaries rose to heights previously unknown and quite unanticipated. The Superintendent had always favored good salaries for teachers and he had begun the work by the improvement of Provincial Aid in 1928 and by his insistence on the reformation of the administrative unit as a necessary prerequisite for rational education expenditures. In point of fact, a province-wide minimum scale worthy of the description did not actually occur until after the whole province was organized in the larger unit. Some commentators are inclined to suggest that Dr. Munro was not at his dynamic best in the years of the greatest salary development and that he responded rather coldly to the increasingly militant requests of the Teachers' Union. While this may be so, and it is difficult to establish accurately, the fact remains that it was under his administration that salaries for teachers reached the point where the Union was able to cease talking about the necessities of life and to begin asking for "professional parity".

CHAPTER IV

CURRICULUM AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

The Curriculum Revision

For Dr. Munro, the criteria of a satisfactory curriculum were its recognition of the individual differences in pupils and the needs of the community or society in which the pupils lived. The necessity for a modernization of the curriculum was postulated in his first Report, but he had felt that the most pressing educational reform was needed in the direction of improved teacher qualifications.

Consequently, it was not until 1930 that he was able to say that a Committee on Studies had been organized to review and revise what was being taught in the schools. In his comment on the important steps forward in 1929-30 he said:

The first (step) is the authorization by the Council of Public Instruction of a representative committee of educationists commissioned to examine fully into the program of school studies, especially as it relates to the present social, economic, and intellectual needs of the Province.¹

The powers assigned to the Committee were wide and inclusive:

¹Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1930 (Halifax: King's Printer), pp. xxvi-vii.

This committee shall have power to organize and direct sub-committees for special purposes and to make recommendations on all matters relating to the curriculum, including organization of classes, text-books, and methods of examination. This committee shall be appointed not later than December 31, 1930, and shall report from time to time to the Superintendent of Education.²

The members of the Committee on Studies were all men of outstanding reputation in the educational life of the Province. All had university posts or experience as administrators of large school systems. The chairman was Dr. F. H. Sexton, the President of the Nova Scotia Technical College and a man greatly interested in all phases of learning but particularly in technical and vocational education. The other members of the Committee were Dr. F. G. Morehouse, then the Supervisor of Schools for Amherst and later for Halifax; Mr. G. K. Butler, then the Supervisor of Schools for Halifax; Dr. James Bingay, then the Supervisor of Schools for Glace Bay, later the first provincial Supervisor of Attendance, and the author of the much-quoted Public Education in Nova Scotia; Dr. M. M. Coady of the staff of St. Francis Xavier University, then, and later, world-famous for his leadership in the Antigonish cooperative movement; Dr. D. G. Davis, the Harvard trained Principal of the Normal College; Mr. W. C. Stapleton, Inspector

²Handbook to the Course of Study (Truro: New Publishing Co., Ltd., 1935), p. iii.

of Schools for Colchester County; Professor J. E. Comeau, Instructor of French at the Normal College and an Acadian; and Dr. M. V. Marshall, then the Supervisor of Schools at Yarmouth and now Professor of Education at Acadia University. Numbered among those persons asked to cooperate with the Committee as consultants were Dr. Soloan, formerly the Principal of the Normal College and at this time the first Chief Inspector of Schools; L. A. DeWolfe, the Director of Rural Education; Dr. Trueman, the Principal of the Agricultural College; and Professors Wilson Smith and Robinson, respectively the professors of education at Dalhousie and Acadia Universities. The Secretary of the Committee was Mr. H. P. Moffatt, then Research Assistant at the Education Office, a Harvard post-graduate in Education, and now the first Deputy Minister of Education for Nova Scotia.³

The Committee proceeded in its work by first establishing the aims and purposes of public schools, and the distribution of the various school subjects which were to help realize those objectives. The work of preparing course outlines was given to sub-committees of teachers, of whom about sixty-five cooperated in some phase of the work.

While Dr. Munro referred to the progress of the

³Ibid., p. iv.

Committee on Studies in successive reports from 1930 to 1933, and interim reports were published from time to time in the Journal of Education the official report, as authorized by the Council of Public Instruction, was published in the Handbook to the Course of Study in 1935 and most of the following comment is drawn from that source.

In the Foreword to the Handbook, Dr. Munro stated his conception of the nature and function of a curriculum. On reading this foreword, one is again struck by the sense of vision and depth of thought that characterised all of the proposals which he advanced.

For, after all, the business of education is with knowledge, in the widest sense of the word, to the end that we may adjust ourselves effectively to the world about us, both in the physical and social sense. Hence the need, first, to secure a social-minded teaching profession and, secondly, to put into its hands a flexible instrument by means of which the pupils may be adjusted to this changing, complicated, almost baffling order of society in which he must play his part.

Such an instrument is a curriculum which, from its nature, must be ever evolving, never static. It must have regard to the past and look equally to the future. One generation receives from its predecessor an accumulated body of knowledge, sifts out what is worth keeping and transmits the product to the succeeding generation which, in turn, must repeat the process for itself. Thus one sees why revision of the curriculum is necessary from time to time -- 'never ending, still beginning', and at the same time why such a change is an event of moment, for through it the life and character of the people are moulded for years to come.⁴

⁴Ibid., p. iii.

The fundamental features of a curriculum are the broad objectives it is intended to achieve, the general organization of the subjects and grades, and the specific purposes of each broad division of pupil groupings. It is from these points of view that the following comment on the curriculum is made.

In their discussion of the aims of public education, the members of the Committee first agreed that the foremost purpose is to give each child the fullest preparation for participation in adult life consistent with the abilities he may possess. They saw no fundamental conflict between the aim of preparation for adult life and the recognition of the child's personality. The crevasse, if any, was one to be bridged by the skill of the teacher.

With these facts in mind the curriculum committee has set forth preparation for adult life, in its fullest sense, as the fundamental aim for public education in Nova Scotia.⁵

Thus the main purpose of the schools was established. This broad purpose was expressed in three sub-divisions, each dealing with a main phase of adult life. These were:

I. The social aim; to train the pupil for effective participation in adult group activities.

II. The avocational aim; to train the pupil for the fullest enjoyment of leisure time.

III. The vocational aim; to train the pupil for participation in productive labor.⁶

⁵Ibid., p. ix.

⁶Ibid., p. ix.

The committee realized that the statement of broad aims did not necessarily mean their fulfillment. They understood that it was the duty of each teacher to visualize the central idea of each subject and its possible contribution to the future life of the children whom she taught.

The members of the committee agreed that two basic principles must determine the content of a curriculum. One was the nature of children and the other was the nature of the universe. Learning was useless unless it had meaning for children, and to have significant meaning it must relate in some understandable way to the world the children lived in. Thus the curriculum as devised must have certain qualities:

I. The curriculum must be democratic; that is, it must give to each child -- normal, subnormal and superior -- an opportunity to develop his talents along socially desirable lines.

II. The curriculum should be related to life as we find it -- material, social and spiritual. The fault of public education, not only in Nova Scotia but in all countries, primitive and civilized, is that both its practices and its materials tend to lag far behind contemporary social conditions.

III. The curriculum should provide materials and activities which will guide the children toward the life for which they are best fitted.

IV. The curriculum, if possible, should offer training in the student's chosen field.⁷

In addition to these desirable characteristics, or rather implied in them, was the suggestion that the curri-

⁷Ibid., p. x.

culum must be broad and flexible from every approach, for the teacher to adapt it to her class, for the pupil to get what he could grasp, and for the community to give its children what seemed best for that part of the world.

The "Three R's" were important but only as background for the real education of the child. Other curriculum activities must tend to develop health and character, effective citizenship, worthy home membership, and wise use of leisure time. The criterion of successful teaching was not to be found in knowledge alone. There must be an answer to "What does he know?", but just as important were the answers to "What can he do?", "What does he think?", and "How does he feel?". In short, the intellectual development must be accompanied by a corresponding development of desirable attitudes.⁸

The general plan of curriculum organization was the 6-3-3 structure, which divided the twelve grades into three groups -- the Elementary School, the Junior High School, and the Senior High School. The justification for the introduction of the Junior High School division, a new idea in Nova Scotian education, was found in the experiences of England and the United States where successful intermediate schools had been operating for a decade or more. In the words of the Committee:

⁸Ibid., pp. x-xi.

... It is sufficient to say that the school organization comprising eight years of strictly elementary education followed by an abrupt transition to four years of academic high school studies is out of harmony with present day knowledge of child development and with the need for a broader understanding of the modern world.⁹

In the Elementary School, education was to be common to all pupils. No subject was to be optional and the first aim was to give a degree of mastery of the tools of learning -- reading, writing, spelling, oral and written expression, and speed and accuracy in the operations of arithmetic. To this, the foundation of aesthetic appreciation was to be added through art, handwork, music, and literature. Citizenship and the manifold features of the natural world were to be introduced by instruction in Social Studies and in Natural Science. A final aim of the Elementary School was the establishment of effective and permanent health habits through daily instruction and practice.

In the opinion of the Committee, the intermediate or Junior High School was the most important division of the tripartite structure. The reasoning for this conclusion arose from the fact that the majority of the pupils did continue their formal education beyond Grade IX. In the three Junior High years there were five main objectives. First, there was the recognition of the changes which come

⁹Ibid., p. xi.

with adolescent growth. In the opinion of the Committee, these could be met in school by the introduction of elective subjects to appeal to a variety of interests and to have some bearing on future educational and vocational needs. In these years, also, greater proficiency in the fundamental "tool" subjects was to be developed. The major courses in English, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics were to be broadened so that a wider view of the field of knowledge and of the total experiences of man could be offered. The fourth objective was to reduce the abrupt change from the present Grade VIII to Grade IX by a more natural process through the gradual introduction of elective subjects, departmentalized teaching, extra-curricular activities, and social activities, all of them practices belonging then almost entirely to the Senior High School. The final objective was the development of a guidance program through which teachers and principals could help the pupils make intelligent choices about their future work in society.

The Committee emphasized that the concept of a Junior High School must not be in terms of separate buildings, college-trained teachers, and other external features but it must arise from the courses offered and the spirit of the teachers. Unless the teaching body produced a change in teaching spirit, the revised courses would be no more effective than the older curriculum.

In their discussion of the particular functions of the Senior High School, the Committee was of the opinion that, in theory, the High School courses should be as varied as possible so as to appeal to the wide range of interests which should be evident in pupils leaving the Junior High School. While they felt that conditions of buildings, equipment, and staff imposed limitations, they did, nevertheless, suggest three groups of pupils for which High School programs should make provision. A first group was those pupils intending to enter universities. For these students, the High School must provide the subjects required for entrance and for undertaking university studies. A second group included the pupils who wished to complete their secondary education but who had no intention of proceeding to university training. The third group was composed of the pupils who were definite enough about their future to require some introduction to vocational education in the form of courses in Commerce, Industrial Arts, and Household Arts. The Committee thought that the first two groups could be accommodated by the variations possible in the selection of the same courses, but it was felt that in the larger industrial and commercial centres, separate vocational schools would eventually be required.

The Committee completed its work to the extent of pro-

viding fairly definite topical outlines of all courses to be used in the schools. In many instances, suggestions for procedure were included for the guidance of the uncertain teacher. Special advice on the rotation of courses and on the combining of class groups was inserted for the consideration of the rural teacher.

A considerable portion of discussion was given over to the distribution of time. Observation and studies had established that under the old curriculum the amount of time given to certain subjects, particularly Arithmetic, was greatly varied and distorted. Many schools were giving over 600 minutes a week to Arithmetic. This was about two-fifths of the school time. When a comparable amount of time was taken for Reading, there was not much left for other subject activities.

In the Elementary Program, as recommended by the Committee, all the activities connected with English were to receive the major portion of the time. Arithmetic and Health were to be given about the same emphasis, although Nature Study was to be combined with Health. Art and Music accounted for about fifteen per cent of the time, and from Grade III to Grade VI Geography and History became increasingly important, using from ten to twenty per cent of the time. The Junior High Program consisted of basic subjects which all pupils were required to take and

one or two additional subjects which were selected by the pupil from a limited choice. The most important subject, getting the greatest proportion of time, was English Language and Literature. Of equal second importance, were Social Studies, comprising History, Geography, and Civics; Science and Health; and Mathematics, comprising Arithmetic and the first stages of Algebra. Third in importance, from the time allotted, were the elective subjects, Art, Industrial Arts, Household Arts, French, Latin, and Music. The choice was not as wide as it appeared because many schools were not able to teach Music adequately in Grades VIII and IX, Industrial and Household Arts were not available in most rural schools, and Latin was not readily available in many schools.

The recommendation for a full year's work in Senior High School was that it consist of English and History as compulsory subjects with the addition of at least three and no more than four elective subjects. The major subjects were to have five periods a week. The choice of subjects varied from grade to grade but for the most part it meant a selection of Mathematics (Algebra and Geometry or Trigonometry), Science (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics), Languages (French, German, and Latin), and studies in the Social Sciences which were not compulsory (Commercial Geography, Economics, and in some areas, Commercial Subjects

and Household Arts).¹⁰

There were several features of the revised curriculum which differentiated it from the older one. First of all, it established the approach that curriculum had to be adapted to the pupils and not the reverse. Thus the nature of the pupil had to be considered in applying the curriculum. It also emphasized the importance of training in health as **D** had never been done previously. With this, it also emphasized the relation of the pupil to the society in which he lived and to his natural environment. Finally, in the application of tool skills, it emphasized function rather than form. This feature was particularly true in English Language and in Arithmetic. It denied the premise that doing a particular kind of exercise developed the intellect more than another kind, and for that reason, intellectual development was always the concomitant of function or use.

There is little question that this revised curriculum marked the beginning of the criticism of the "soft" courses and of the charge of progressive influence in the public schools. Undoubtedly, the influence of Dewey's concept of the functioning school asserts itself, but one must remember that the group accepting the primary responsibility for the objectives set for the curriculum were, for the most part, traditionalists in education. That they set so much emphasis

¹⁰Ibid., pp. xiii-xv.

on flexibility, social-mindedness, and functional knowledge can certainly be interpreted as a reaction against the rigidity and regard for form which marked the former curriculum.

How much of the criticism offered "modern education" comes from a true knowledge of education in Nova Scotia prior to 1925, and how much comes from a sentimental and uncritical remembrance of "the little red schoolhouse", it is difficult to say. Certainly, regarded as an effort to offer an intelligent program for all children, the 1933 Curriculum was a great forward step. From the viewpoint of comparison with the past, it showed a humane and democratic desire to recognize the needs of all children. One of its obvious weaknesses was its lack of emphasis on the intellectual side of education. In their desire to provide a better curriculum for all, the Committee might be criticised for overlooking the importance of intellectual development in favor of social development. The word "social" occurs time and time again. The word "intellectual", rather infrequently.

The curriculum was never intended as a perfect instrument, and Dr. Munro frequently emphasized the necessity of frequent revision because as life changed, the curriculum, to have meaning, must also change. His closing sentence in his Foreword illustrates his opinion of the work done:

Whether or not the curriculum produced is, in the abstract, an ideal one, its authors may apply to it

the words of Solon, when he gave his constitution to the Athenians -- that it was not the best he could devise but the best they were in a position to receive under the circumstances.¹¹

The Related Developments

Throughout most of the administration of Dr. Munro, new positions and new functions were introduced in the Department. In this section it is planned to enumerate in brief detail those occurrences which appear to be more closely related to the application of the curriculum than to any other phase of education. Space and the individual importance of each item does not permit a full treatment, and yet the omission of these items would result in a failure to grasp the versatility of the department growth.

Dr. Munro had a considerable influence on the growth of the Home and School movement in Nova Scotia. In his 1927 Report he spoke of the importance of the organization and he associated the school with the extension of the home. By 1936 he was able to report the formation of the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations. While it is possible that Dr. Munro may have idealised the importance of the Home and School movement, one must at the very least, credit it with doing a very great deal to arouse public interest in the schools.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., p. v.

¹² Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1936 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1932), pp. xxiv-v.

The Superintendent also created the position of Chief Inspector of Schools in 1928. The first appointee was Dr. David Soloan, who had previously been the Principal of the Normal College. Dr. Munro felt that the schools required more inspectors, there being one inspector for every 38,571 pupils at the time of the appointment. He also stated that future policy in inspectors appointments would call for at least two degrees, one of them being in post-graduate work in Education.¹³

From his great emphasis on the importance of books came the Teachers' Central Library. This began as a few shelves of professional books for inspectors and teachers. Each year it increased in numbers and in the variety of literature it possessed. Undoubtedly this was a development which came from the Superintendent's vision of the cultured teaching profession and just as undoubtedly it has contributed greatly to the end for which it was designed. In April of 1946 the Central Library had grown to the point where it was placed under the supervision of a professionally-trained librarian who was expected to offer a more complete library service to teachers and to students of education.¹⁴ Concurrent with the growth of the teachers' library, was the policy of building school libraries by gifts of books to schools. Each school library was under the direction of a

¹³Ibid., 1927, pp. xxiii-iv.

¹⁴Ibid., 1946, pp- xxx-xxxi.

teacher who received a small yearly grant of ten or fifteen dollars depending upon the value of the books in the library.¹⁵ These grants, as well as the department's gifts of books, were given to rural schools not qualifying for any special high school grants. This policy was so successful that in his last (1946) Report, Dr. Munro said:

The Department has continued its policy of distributing school libraries to rural schools. This service is of incalculable value to rural schools where supplementary reading is so greatly needed. It is gratifying to note that increasing numbers of schools are installing libraries on their own initiative.¹⁶

One of the greatest influences for the improvement of rural education and the building of local pride in schools was the formation of the Division of Rural Education in 1928. L. A. DeWolfe, who had been the Director of Rural Science under Dr. MacKay, was the first director of this new division. His activities as Director of Rural Science had been concerned with the training of pupils in elementary agriculture. As Director of Rural Education, he became involved in all the problems related to rural culture. His general directive from Dr. Munro was to infuse life and spirit into the rural scene. He did this first with a staff of helping teachers who worked to improve the teaching in the rural schools by assisting teachers and demonstrating to them wherever possible. Gradually the work of the Division passed to other branches of the Department and it was

¹⁵The Education Act (Halifax; Department of Education, 1947), p. 131.

¹⁶Annual Report, 1946, p. xxxi.

dissolved in 1952. For twenty-four years its officials worked in little recognition among the backward rural areas of Nova Scotia. Their work passed through three phases -- the one just described in which school improvement in all aspects was the primary objective. This was followed, particularly after the helping teacher service was discontinued in 1934, by assistance in the development of the Home and School movement. The third phase grew from the second in the form of enlarging adult education activities.

The complete story of the Rural Education Division could in itself furnish material for a long essay, and one of the more moving accounts of complete dedication of purpose is to be found in the summary of the work of division contained in the 1952 Report of the Department of Education.¹⁷

Two services which have contributed greatly to the improvement of teaching services in the schools are those of Radio Education and Visual Education. The former was instituted in the school year of 1927-28 with broadcasts from Halifax and Sydney. From relatively small beginnings it has grown to a valuable teaching adjunct, due to the improvement of programs and the increase in the number of radios available to schools. Visual Education was not begun until about 1936, and in his 1936 Report, Dr. Munro forecast accurately the development of films and slides as major teach-

¹⁷ Annual Report of Department of Education, 1952 (Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1953). pp. 126-33.

ing devices.¹⁸ Both of these divisions are functioning on a larger than ever scale in 1960 and continue to be used by increasing numbers of teachers in rural and urban schools.¹⁹

In 1930, Dr. Munro reported that a Common Examining Board for the provinces of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia had been established. The purpose of the Board was to provide a uniform standard of marking for the papers written in the last two years of high school. This board has functioned ever since in both the marking and the setting of the papers. Closely associated with the concept of standards was the establishing of accredited high schools in 1932. The general plan was to accept the school-leaving certificates of certain selected high schools, with staffs of good qualifications, as equal to the certificates of the Common Examining Board. This idea was in accordance with Dr. Munro's belief that teachers could be depended upon to set their own standards. This plan was not very successful, the participating schools became fewer and fewer, and it was finally dropped in 1954.²⁰

To this brief section on developments related to curriculum could be added a substantial number of innovations each of which is worthy of treatment of considerable length. The development of studies leading to the passing of the Regional Libraries Act in 1937, the institution of

¹⁸Ibid., 1936, p. xxv.

¹⁹Ibid., 1959, pp. 53-56.

²⁰Ibid., 1954, p. 64

"shopmobiles" to bring Industrial Arts Training to the pupils of rural schools, the revised program for Acadian Schools in 1939, the development of a Physical Fitness Program, the emergence of a Division of Adult Education, and the inauguration of a pupil guidance program are a few of the many worthy accomplishments which come readily to mind. Each of these programs passed through the process of all Dr. Munro's accomplishments. There was first the philosophical consideration, sometimes discussed in reports years before any action was taken, then the passing of legislation or regulations, and finally the action to bring the idea into actuality.

CHAPTER V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LARGER UNIT OF ADMINISTRATION

In his 1932 Report, after speaking of the reforms instituted in connection with teachers' qualifications and with the revision of the curriculum, Dr. Munro said:

There still remains the third, and perhaps the most needful, reform -- the adoption of the enlarged unit of school administration and all that goes with it. It is well to raise the standard of teaching and to improve its content, but unless modern methods of organization and finance keep pace with these, teachers and curriculum alike will fall far short of realizing their perfect work.¹

The importance of reforming the administration of the schools of Nova Scotia was emphasized by Dr. Munro in his first Report and consistently in every report after 1926. It was obvious that he considered that there could be no substantial gains in rural education unless there were radical changes in the organization of schools.

He had brought home this point to the delegates attending the proceedings of the Union of Municipalities at Lunenburg in the Summer of 1927. He first pointed out to the gathering that the present system was not providing equal opportunity for every boy and girl in the Province, and for

¹ Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1932 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1933) p. xxx.

that reason was failing as a democratic process. People must come to recognize:

...the inequality of talent or ability. The sooner we recognize that, the better. Men are not born equal in ability and they should be given the very widest opportunity in every case to realize their own particular talents.... Every democratic system should see to it that each pupil gets an opportunity to realize himself to the full.²

He informed the representatives of the municipalities that there were many educational conditions in Nova Scotia urgently requiring improvement. Teachers were untrained, salaries were the lowest in Canada with the exception of Prince Edward Island, and expenditures per capita for education were also the second lowest in Canada. He went on to emphasize the basic requirements for improvement:

I am here to advocate expenditures on education. If we are to get trained teachers, it will cost money. An adjusted curriculum will cost money. Every time I take up a particular phase of education, I get into that financial alley. We want more money for education and we cannot do without it.³

He then demonstrated that the fundamental weakness lay in the multiplicity of sectional school boards, each of which was too small to provide an adequate education for the children of its area. Particularly was the disparity evident when one considered the lack of opportunity for high school

²Henry F. Munro, The Municipality and Education, A Speech delivered to the Nova Scotia Union of Municipalities at Lunenburg in July, 1927, p. 6. Reprint in Legislative Library at Halifax.

³Ibid., p. 7.

education afforded rural children:

Intimately bound up with the change of unit, although not necessarily depending on it, is the question of high school training in rural schools.... The two proposals reinforce each other; the enlarged unit makes possible rural high schools.⁴

The sectional school system had been devised in the earlier days of education in Nova Scotia when life in the villages was almost self-sufficient, and when the need for education beyond the literacy level was not so apparent nor so necessary to enter the world of work. Urbanization and transportation combined with modern communication had changed conditions of living and made the opportunity for a good education imperative if the implications of a democratic society were to have any real meaning. The question of administrative reform was inextricably bound up in the improvement of rural education whose deficiencies had been noted by Dr. Munro from the time he undertook his office.

Despite his annual mention of the need for improvement, by 1934 nothing had been done, and in his report of 1933-34 he recapitulates at some length his previously expressed opinions on this matter. As his whole theme in this connection was the great disparity between rural and urban education the following statistics are quoted from 1934 figures, but they must be regarded as typical of any year prior to the adoption of the larger unit.

There was first to be noted the financial gap between rural and urban education which was, as Dr. Munro frequently

⁴Ibid., p. 15.

said, the great difficulty to be overcome. Before municipal and provincial grants were added, the rural village classroom was supported by local funds to the extent of \$392 a year as compared with the urban support of \$1510. When the other grants were added, there was available for each rural classroom, \$650 a year and three times that amount for each urban classroom.

In 1934 there were 1715 rural and village school sections and 45 urban sections. Apart from the financial differential there were some rather ridiculous administrative proportions. As there were in that year, 2219 rural and village teachers and 1345 urban teachers, it is apparent that in rural administration there was one board for every 1.3 teachers as against an urban proportion of one board for every 29.9 teachers, a ratio that in itself was hardly necessary.

From the pupil proportion, the situation was just as ridiculous. For every 36.4 rural and village pupils, there was one school board, while for urban pupils there was only one board for every 1230.2 pupils.⁵

After reiterating the necessity for administrative reform in every report from the year he took office, the Superintendent was able to be fairly optimistic in his 1937 Report. Pointing out again the inherent inequities of the

⁵All figures taken or compiled from the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education, 1934 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1935) pp X-XIV.

sectional system combining in a financial make-up of the patch-work quilt variety he stated:

Thus, far from school support in Canada being on a democratic basis of equality, the contrary prevails-- inequality as between provinces, inequality as between municipalities, and gross inequality as between sections. The first falls within the sphere of the federal government to correct; for the other two conditions, the remedy lies with the provinces themselves.... In our own province a decade of discussion at last seems to be bearing fruit. Signs multiply that the public is beginning to appreciate the issue. During the past year, resolutions favouring the proposal have come in from district school boards, home and school associations, teachers' conferences, and from municipal councils. The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities at its annual meeting last summer has also gone on record as supporting the proposed change. Gradually, the movement gathers momentum and must necessarily result in some action before long. Otherwise, hundreds of our rural schools will continue to put the new wine of progressive education into the bottles of an out-worn and futile system of school finance.⁶

Finally, after years of repetition of the same theme, a Commission on the Larger Unit was appointed by a Minute of the Council of Public Instruction passed on November 19, 1938.⁷ The terms of reference of the Commission were:

To examine fully the various types of school administration, with a view to the adoption of a unit larger than the present sectional organization prevailing throughout the province and to present their findings and recommendations to the Council of Public Instruction.⁸

Dr. Munro was the Chairman of the Commission and H. P. Moffatt was the Secretary. Other members were Dalhousie Professor of Education, Basil A. Fletcher, Inspectors

⁶Ibid., 1937, p. xxxviii.

⁷Ibid., 1939, p. xliii.

⁸Ibid.,

H. M. MacDonald and L. A. D'Entremont, and two citizens, R. D. Crawford, and Andrew Fraser.

The Commission met a number of times and submitted its Report on October 17, 1939 together with a minority report from Andrew Fraser.⁹

The Report began with a review of the present administrative organization and by referring to the top-heaviness of officials as compared to teachers. The Report sums up the weaknesses in the sectional system by quoting the words of the Superintendent as contained in his 1928 Report -- "inefficient, wasteful, inequitable and hopelessly out of date".

To support this emphatic contention, several of the most glaring deficiencies are listed. First among these was the inequality in the ability to support education as between the sections and as between the counties themselves. Using the amount of the assessed valuation per classroom as a criterion of inequality, the Report states that this figure ranged from \$700 a classroom in a poor fishing community to \$166,667 in a wealthy village with a large industrial plant. The richest section of one county was one hundred times greater than that of the poorest section in the same county.

Inequalities in assessment were matched by inequalities in the effort put forth to support education. Rates of tax-

⁹Ibid.,

ation for school purposes varied from a matter of cents per hundred dollars to a rate as high as one-fifth of the assessment.

Another deficiency was the increasing tendency for the system of local support to break down entirely in the poorer school sections. Many sections had total assessments of less than \$4000 and many of the sections dependent upon the fishing industry were receiving special grants to help them keep open their schools. With this, it was also found that collection of school rates in all districts was becoming more and more difficult.

In the business administration of the schools there was much inefficiency. Many of the secretaries had no knowledge of business methods, supplies were not purchased centrally, and frequently buildings were not sufficiently insured.

Finally, and the most important of the deficiencies, was the fact that the sectional system simply could not provide adequate instruction, particularly in the high school level and in the fields of music, industrial arts, handicrafts, and physical education.¹⁰

After referring to the development of the larger school unit in the United States and in other parts of Canada, the Report postulated four general principles from which their recommendations were derived:

¹⁰Ibid., pp. xlvi-1.

1. The burden of supporting a desirable minimum of education should be spread as equally as possible over all the school sections of the province. It is the antithesis of democracy for some sections to put forth from two to forty times as much effort as other more favored sections, and still be able to provide the most elementary educational services.

2. As far as possible there should be equality of educational opportunity as between rural and urban districts. No child should be deprived of educational privileges because of the financial weakness of the community in which he resides.

3. The financial unit should be large enough to provide a modern programme of education, competent administration, and efficient control and accounting of school funds.

4. In enlarging the financial unit very considerable powers, both of finance and administration, should be left to the local school sections. While the trustees should be relieved from some financial responsibilities, there should be a widening of their educational powers so that in the final result the position and influence of the trustees should be stronger under the new scheme of organization than at present. The local school meeting, perhaps the surviving form of pure democracy, should assume its proper place as a forum for discussion of educational affairs.¹¹

Two viewpoints of educational finance were presented by the Report. The first outlined the advantages of having the Province as the financial unit because it had all the financial resources under its control, and the power to see that they were distributed equitably for educational purposes. Under this proposed provincial plan would come all rural and village sections of the province and the inclusion of urban sections would be at the latter's option. There would be a minimum program of common and high school ed-

¹¹Ibid., pp. lx-xi.

ucation provided by a uniform tax rate based on a provincially equalized assessment and supported by a provincial school equalization fund to make up the inequities between municipalities.¹²

The main significance of this proposed provincial plan was that it was very similar to the financial recommendations continued in the Pottier Report of 1954.¹³

While favoring a provincial plan for school finance, the members of the Commission felt that immediate action was imperative, and that a plan based on the municipality as the financial unit was more immediately feasible.

In each municipal unit there was to be a Municipal School Board composed of members appointed by the Municipal Council and of members appointed by the Provincial Government. The Inspector of Schools, although continuing to be paid by the Provincial Government, would act as advisor to the Municipal School Board and would receive clerical assistance from the Board. Each section would submit an annual budget to the Board for checking, and each budget would be met by a municipality-wide school tax plus the existing municipal school fund. As there was to be a minimum school program, deficiencies in funds were to be met by a provincial equalization fund which would, in effect, underwrite

¹² Ibid., pp. lxiv-lxv.

¹³ Report of the Royal Commission on Public School in Nova Scotia (Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1954), pp. 68-72.

the educational deficit in each municipality. School sections would be preserved and retain some of their present powers.

A minimum scale of salaries for teachers was recommended for each Municipal Board with a minimum of \$400 for a first-year teacher exclusive of Provincial Aid. After one year of experience the minimum salary was to be \$500 a year. Extra pay was granted to principals of schools with two or more departments.

The raising of funds by local taxation at the section level was to be replaced by a municipal tax rate yielding sufficient funds to support, with presently existing sources, a minimum program of education in each section. The rate for school purposes was not to be higher than the median tax rate of the sections in the municipality nor was the amount to be raised to be substantially less than the total then raised in all of the sections.

The general formula of estimated expenditures included teachers' salaries and maintenance, clerical charges, and transportation costs. The general formula of receipts was the present municipal fund less amounts payable to towns not included in the Municipal School Board, the amount raised from the municipal school tax from a median tax rate, transportation grants from the province, and the high school grants going to village schools. The difference between the

expenditures, as approved by the Municipal School Board, and the receipts were to be met by the provincial equalization fund, which was estimated at about \$200,000.¹⁴

Legislation extremely similar to the recommendations of the Commission was passed by the House of Assembly in 1942, and almost immediately two counties, Antigonish and Halifax, organized their school systems on the new basis. By 1946 all the municipalities in Nova Scotia were similarly organized.¹⁵

The organization of the public schools on the Municipal Unit system did not solve all the problems, but certain trends marked its inception. The most notable trend, due to the application of the equalization fund, was the gradual narrowing of the spread in revenue between rural and urban classrooms. While the ratio continued greatly in favor of urban classrooms, the gap was narrowing.¹⁶

Another immediately noticeable trend was a marked increase in the provincial proportion of educational costs. In 1942, when the larger unit legislation was passed, the provincial proportion of education costs was 31.2%. In 1946 it was 44.6%, and during a four-year period in which provincial contributions increased by nearly \$1,800,00, the

¹⁴Report of Superintendent, 1939, loc. cit. lxxiv-v.

¹⁵Ibid., 1946, p. ix.

¹⁶Ibid., p. xii.

total of sectional appropriations increased by only one-third of that.¹⁷

Education costs increased very rapidly in the post-war years due to inflation and due to the large increases in enrolment. By 1951 the provincial proportion of total education costs had reached 61.5%, and the government took the action of freezing the equalization fund at what it had then reached in that year -- \$1,211,040 or six times the original estimate in 1939. The result of this action was to put all new costs directly on the municipalities. The final result of this strain was the appointment of a Royal Commission whose ultimate recommendations were, in principle, quite similar to the provincial plan proposed by the Commission on the Larger Unit in 1939.

Dr. Munro had always associated the municipal or larger unit with the development of improved secondary school facilities for rural pupils. This hope was realized with the passage of legislation in 1945 providing the terms under which rural high schools could be built, and on which many have been built since the first two at River Hebert and Digby in 1948.¹⁸

To one unfamiliar with the effect of post-war inflation and the growth of school population on education costs, there might be a tendency to think that the larger

¹⁷Ibid., pp. xi-xiv.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. x-xi.

unit brought financial confusion to the province. That it did just the opposite and provided the means of avoiding anarchy in school finance is supported by H. P. Moffatt in the 1948 Report:

The most far-reaching and significant change, and one whose merits and potentialities have never been fully revealed, was the adoption in the short period from 1942 to 1947 of the Municipal Unit of school finance. It is no exaggeration to say that had not this system come into effect in the period when educational costs were doubling, the fiscal structure of the local school sections, particularly in the poorer municipalities, might have collapsed altogether.¹⁹

¹⁹Ibid., p. xl.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the opening words of the introduction to this thesis, it was stated that the purpose of the paper was to survey in some detail the main developments of education under the superintendency of Henry F. Munro. In doing this, a conscious effort has been made to concentrate on the three sides of education which were considered most important by Dr. Munro. These were the teacher, whom he always placed first; the curriculum, which, however well-devised, could be effective only in the hands of good teachers; and the administrative organization whose function it was to provide the suitable environment in which the teacher could work.

A person who gives any serious study to the accomplishments during the twenty years from 1926 to 1946, soon realizes the impossibility of including, with adequate treatment, all of the developments in a paper which is intended to be of limited length. Reference has been made in some detail to the teacher, the curriculum, and the administrative structure. Other developments have been mentioned more briefly. Some have not been touched upon at all.

Among the latter are the grants given to assist the training in Mechanic and Domestic Science, the extension of high school grants to all secondary schools, the appointment of a research assistant, the provision of regulations for the organization of Junior High Schools, the appointment of a Supervisor of Attendance with the consequent improvement in school attendance, and the transformation of the Journal of Education from a statistical record to a publication of a very high professional and cultural content.

All of these items, if traced in their conception, introduction, and influence, would be worthy of considerable comment. In general, however, one can say that Dr. Munro saw all his ideas as efforts to improve the function of the teacher in her school or to enlarge the experiences of her pupils.

Little has been said about the introduction of free school books in 1934 because this was essentially a political matter rather than one of educational reform. In actual fact, Dr. Munro had spoken rather firmly against free school books in his 1928 Report on the grounds that the expense for each family was not very great and that the money could be used by the government for many more useful educational purposes. He suggested that a program of rural high schools could be placed in operation for about the

same expense. His attitude may later have changed but there is no evidence of it having done so, and judging from his consistency in most views that he adopted, it is likely that he retained his original judgement about free text books. It seems probable that his state of mind came not from any desire to limit educational opportunity, but from a feeling that many citizens were not making any real contribution to educational expenditures, and that the free books simply tended to reduce even that limited contribution.¹

There has been included no discussion about the development of vocational training, although it came about in this period of Nova Scotia education. In his earliest reports, Dr. Munro made frequent references to the importance of technical education, and it was referred to in the Curriculum Report in 1933. The true story of vocational education is, however, a fairly detailed one and, while he undoubtedly favored the extension of all kinds of learning, Dr. Munro was not the most dynamic figure in its development and he would have been the first to accord that credit to Dr. F. H. Sexton, the late Principal of the Technical College and for many years the Director of Technical Education for Nova Scotia.

¹Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, 1928 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1929), p. xxii.

In making judgments about persons whose colleagues and contemporaries are still living and about whom very little of an appraising nature has been written, there is always the possibility that one's evaluations will be weakened because they lack the support of previous commentators. This is true whether one is discussing assets or liabilities.

On the liability side one runs into the spoken or inferred criticism that Dr. Munro lacked genuine administrative ability, and that he had little talent for seeing the probable fiscal effect of an idea. There is, too, the suggestion that he was too ill in his last years of office to be effective, and that his assistant carried the burden of his post.

Taking the last criticism first, one can answer that Dr. Munro had an exceptional talent for selecting able assistants and for getting the most from them. There is no doubt that the assistant who carried much of the department responsibility in the first half of the 1940's would be the first to acknowledge the advantages of his long years of association with Dr. Munro, and his greatness as a leader in educational development. For the other two criticisms, one can say only that all men do not have all qualities in equal proportions and that it was probably

all for the good of education that he had his weaknesses in the details of practical application and calculation, rather than in the scope of his ideas.

For essentially, Dr. Munro was a philosopher in education and not a doer. Primarily, he was interested in the debate and the discussion. He wanted growth and favorable results, but these were secondary to surveying the scene far and wide and reaching conclusions by a deductive process based on the generalized experiences of reading or observation.

One must have first knowledge of education in rural Nova Scotia in the first third of this century to appreciate the magnitude of the task he undertook, the large and humanistic view with which he approached it, and the intense faith he must have had in the processes of education and democracy. There was no leadership at all for public education, either from the universities or from politics. As the Carnegie Report stated:

At present, leaders tend to excuse existing conditions with a sort of fatalistic philosophy; the man of destiny will force his way thru the obstacles, and having done so, will find that they have made him strong; therefore be not too anxious about the obstacles. There is too little appreciation on the part of the provinces of their obligation to fit each individual to perform well the duties of an intelligent citizen.²

Apathy and disinterest were the foes he had to overcome,

²Learned and Sills, loc. cit., p. 29.

and the strong public interest in education today, whether expressed in favorable or unfavorable terms, is merely proof that Nova Scotia now has a population which can search for and demand values in education. This is exactly what he would have wished. To the impatient critics who can see no progress or good, he would have said that the process of mass education is a new and ponderous one. It is evolutionary in nature but its trends can be guided by a process of examination, reason, and revised action.

His death in 1949, after a lengthy period of ill health, deprived Nova Scotia of a truly great and wise public servant who conceived public education as a means of bringing man to his full stature as an individual and as a citizen, a concept as close to Aristotle as it is to John Dewey.

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